

How Are My Tax Dollars Being Spent?

PROP 400 UPDATE



Projects Improve Mobility and Stimulate Economy

When Valley voters entered the polling booth in 2004 and checked “yes” for Proposition 400, their overwhelming support resulted not only in continued mobility for the region, but a much-needed stimulus to our regional economy.



“Our region has begun implementation of one of the most aggressive Transportation Improvement Programs in Arizona history,” says **Gilbert Mayor Steve Berman**, who chairs the Maricopa Association of Governments Transportation Policy Committee. “Over the next five years, we will be investing more than \$7 billion in this region in transportation projects.”

The projects are included in the *FY 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program*, or “TIP,” a five-year list of projects that includes \$6.4 billion in highway projects and \$1.5 billion in transit projects. The TIP contains 665 street projects, 314 transit projects, 182 freeway projects, 94 bicycle and pedestrian projects, 90



Intelligent Transportation Systems projects, 38 air quality and travel demand management projects, 15 bridge projects and eight “other” projects.

“These projects can be seen as our own regional ‘stimulus package,’” says Berman. “This construction translates into thousands of jobs, not only for construction workers but for planners, suppliers, shippers, purchasing agents and many more. And when those individuals and companies in turn spend money, it generates additional retail and service jobs,” he says.



It has been just four years since voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 400, an extension of the half-cent sales tax to fund a \$20 billion Regional Transportation Plan over a 20-year period. But while construction is a common sight across the Valley, many residents may be surprised to learn of the many ways their tax dollars are being used to improve their regional quality of life.

While the struggling economy will undoubtedly mean some challenges for the Regional Transportation Plan in the future, for the next five years the funding has been committed—and the bulldozers are busy. The following summary highlights just a few of the key projects that are taking place in our region, thanks in large part to voter passage of Proposition 400.



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Message From the Chair



**Councilmember
Peggy Neely**
City of Phoenix

It is with both honor and humility that I assume the title of MAG chair. I am excited to be taking on this leadership role and am grateful for the support of my fellow Regional Council members. I look forward to their continued support and counsel in the months ahead as we work together to strengthen our commitment to our region's success. We have a lot of work ahead of us. One effort that I am initiating immediately is to convene a group of stakeholders from member agencies who will evaluate current MAG processes and procedures to help make MAG an even stronger regional organization.

Local governments are facing critical economic challenges. We have experienced the pain of deep cuts in our own communities and we have witnessed the impacts on this region as a whole. Many of us had hoped that the economic stimulus legislation in Congress would include significant funding for transportation and public works projects, providing an immediate and positive impact to our regional economy by stimulating construction activity.

MAG staff, working with member agencies, compiled nearly \$7.5 billion in infrastructure projects. These projects include, but are not limited to, surface transportation, transit, aviation, water and wastewater facilities, public safety, and housing. Unfortunately, current

congressional bills fall significantly short of the project needs indicated by MAG members. For example, the highways and roads projects portion for the MAG region is about \$3.8 billion. The anticipated amount for the MAG region in the current House bill for these projects is approximately \$237 million. This anticipated amount represents approximately 6.2 percent of the indicated need, which falls short of the infrastructure needs of this high growth region.

A recent report by the Congressional Budget Office highlights concerns that state and local governments may be unable to spend funds in a timely manner, if and when proposed legislation is enacted. It is important to note that the MAG region is prepared to utilize proposed federal funds as intended: to stimulate our regional economy in the preservation and creation of jobs and to improve our local infrastructure. In short, MAG member agencies are prepared to start projects in a timely manner to jumpstart the regional economy.

Once the final legislation is signed by the president, MAG and its member agencies stand ready to work with the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration Division Office to work as a team to implement projects as quickly as possible. 



MAGAZine is a quarterly newsletter of the Maricopa Association of Governments. It focuses on the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of Maricopa County. If you know of a friend or colleague who would like to receive MAGAZine, please call the MAG office, (602) 254-6300.

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Avondale, *At-Large Member*

Mayor Steve Berman

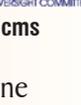
Gilbert, *At-Large Member*

Mayor Scott Smith

Mesa, *At-Large Member*

Mayor James M. Cavanaugh

Goodyear, *Past Chair*



www.mag.maricopa.gov/members.cms



Queen Creek appreciates MAG's regional transportation modeling outside of Maricopa County to include the effects of Pinal County. As a result of this expanded regional view, we can see the needs and benefits of State Route (SR) 802 for southeast Maricopa County in terms of traffic congestion relief, improved air quality and new economic development. Working with the MAG Regional Council, Queen Creek will be supporting Mesa in its efforts to leverage approved State Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN II) funds into construction of the first portion of SR 802.

—Queen Creek Mayor Arthur Sanders



Chandler congratulates all those who worked so tirelessly to bring METRO's light rail to the Valley. We are working hard to build upon this success. Buses on Chandler's major north-south thoroughfares are carrying our transit riders to light rail stations, and some of these routes have been extended to our new 455 space park-and-ride facility that opened in December in south Chandler. Planning is underway for two new transit centers in central and south Chandler, plus new bus rapid transit service on Arizona Avenue. Community meetings are being held to identify high-capacity transit corridors that will extend light rail's reach into south Tempe and west Chandler.

—Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn



We have made a big difference in the air and we are going to continue to do that. Dust is a problem, but I do think it is a problem we can solve. We can do a lot better job by paving some of our roads. You know when our traffic gets pretty high on these roads, we need to be able to pave them so we're not creating dust. And we need to make people aware of where they shouldn't drive, on dirt shoulders or vacant dirt lots. We're carrying a big hammer and we will continue to use it if people don't want to cooperate.

—Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Max Wilson, on the county's continued efforts to reduce dust pollution through education and enforcement.



When I first became a mayor, we really did not have a freeway at all. And we realized in Glendale that our future was going to depend on that (Loop) 101 freeway coming through. The 101 (Agua Fria Freeway) was completed through Glendale in October 2000, and in April of 2001, just six months later, we entered into an agreement to build the arena for the Coyotes hockey team. And entertainment and everything just followed after that. If that doesn't demonstrate what transportation means in this Valley, I don't know what does.

—Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, on how transportation improvements play a major role in the regional economy.



Proposition 400 has given us the opportunity to expand our freeway system and other transportation elements so that people in the Valley can continue to enjoy a great quality of life. It also helps to market the region so people will come to Arizona for the great amenities, including a holistic, integrated public transportation system.

—Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, on the benefits of Proposition 400, which extended the half-cent sales tax for transportation.



The role of MAG is especially important in terms of transportation issues. MAG provides an excellent forum for all of us to work together regionally as we talk about where transportation dollars are coming from, where they are going, and how we can get things done that assist everyone in Maricopa County.

—Surprise Mayor Lyn Truitt, on the role of the Maricopa Association of Governments.



Supervisor Max
Wilson
Maricopa County



Supervisor Max Wilson

*"We Are Fortunate to
Live Where We Are."*

It is a tough economic time for people across the United States, and Maricopa County is no different. Yet Maricopa County Board Chairman Max Wilson says Valley residents are more fortunate than many other Americans, simply because we live *here*.

"There is some new construction going on and some development in spite of the downturn, which hasn't been able to stop our growth completely, because this is such a great place to live—blue skies and sunshine in the middle of the winter. Even in our down times there are people who like to get out of the winter and spend some of their time here, so our economy has a tendency to be a little better because this is such a great place," says Wilson.

Wilson points to the recent National Football Conference championship game as a great example of how attractive the Valley can be to others.



Chairman Max Wilson with Presiding Judge Barbara Rodriguez Mundell of the Maricopa County Superior Court.



County Supervisors attend a ribbon cutting ceremony for a drugstore serving county employees. In the foreground, left to right are: Supervisor Fulton Brock, Chairman Max Wilson, Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox and Supervisor Andy Kunasek.

"We had large jet airplanes coming in all morning long landing in Glendale in order to go to that game. And that game was on television all over the country. We are here in 70 degrees while other places it is 30 below zero, so you want to know a good place to live? You absolutely couldn't buy that kind of publicity for any dollar amount," he says.

Wilson also believes the county's leadership philosophy will help the county through this tough economic time.

"We are running things like a business, because government is a business. We are doing more checks and balances than have ever been done with government before. We try to make everyone who works for Maricopa County, and every supervisor, accountable."

Wilson represents District Four, which encompasses the West Valley. His first political office was serving on the Litchfield Park City Council, where he also served as vice mayor. In 2002, with the support of then-Supervisor Jan Brewer, who left her seat to run for Secretary of State, Wilson was appointed to the Board by a unanimous vote of his peers. He was elected in 2002, and reelected in 2004 and 2008. His fellow board members elected him to serve as the chair in 2005, an honor he recently received again for 2009.

In his spare time, Wilson enjoys fly fishing. "My dad started me fishing when I was probably four years old with a worm, then later he taught me how to use a fly rod. Then when he passed away, why, my granddad showed me a little of that. And I still enjoy fly fishing, I enjoy getting out."

Continued on the next page



Wilson (continued)

After his father's death, Wilson was raised on his uncle's cattle ranch in southern Utah, where he discovered a love for horses that he carries with him today. "Horses have kind of been a part of my life. They're good friends," he states, although he remembers that his uncle had his doubts when Wilson first moved to the country from the city.

"Many times my uncle said that you can always take the boy out of the city, but you can never take the city out of the boy. In spite of all that, I



Chairman Wilson presents Senator Linda Gray with the Legislator of the Year Award.

learned how to be a cowboy," recalls Wilson, who later went on to own his own thoroughbred horse ranch in Yavapai County.

Wilson served in the United States Air Force from 1959 until 1963. After briefly working for Luke Air Force Base, he started a career in real estate and development. Supervisor Wilson credits his real estate background with teaching him early that the way to survive in a changing economy is to keep debt service at a minimum.

"We got so that we would build every fourth house for cash rather than borrow money on it so you would borrow less. Those were important issues when good times were here to help you through the bad times." Wilson notes that he is not a fan of recent economic stimulus packages. "I am a pretty solid believer that you cannot borrow your way out of debt. Never have been able to, never will. All you do is add debt onto debt when you begin to do that. Somebody has to pay for that infusion. It sounds good politically, but the truth of it is, paying it back is not much fun," he says.

Wilson represents Maricopa County on the MAG Regional Council and also serves as a member of the Transportation Policy Committee. He is also appointed by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security to be a member of the Central Region Advisory Council.

Wilson has been married for more than 44 years to Judith. They have four daughters and eight grandchildren—four of whom are in college.

"That is grandpa's job, to get them in and out of college," says Wilson, who laughingly amends, "Well, actually, my job is to get them in, it is their job to get out." ❧

MAG Elects New Regional Council Chair

On January 28, 2009, the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council selected **Phoenix Councilmember Peggy Neely** to serve as the new chair of the organization, filling the unexpired term of former chair Mary Manross, whose seat became vacant as a result of recent city elections.



In addition to Councilmember Neely's election as chair, **Litchfield Park Mayor Tom Schoaf** was elected to serve as vice chair and **Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman** was elected to serve as treasurer. **Mesa Mayor Scott Smith** was elected to serve as an at-large member of the MAG Executive Committee.

Councilmember Neely has represented the city of Phoenix on the MAG Regional Council, the organization's governing body, since 2006. She has been a member of the MAG Executive Committee since 2006, and served as treasurer in 2007. She has served as MAG vice chair on the Regional Council since June 2008.

Councilmember Neely will lead the organization at least until June 2009, when the next annual election of officers is scheduled. Neely anticipates seeking the chair position for one more year at that time. In the meantime, she says there is a lot of work to be done.

"I am very excited about working with my fellow Regional Council members to address the challenges that lie ahead," stated Neely. "We have a large task at MAG to find a way to manage our budget during this economic downturn, especially when it comes to balancing the Regional Transportation Plan. The best way for us to do this is to work regionally. I am hoping that through this process we can become a stronger region and develop a greater understanding as to the importance of this region to our communities," she said. ❧



WEST VALLEY

Two significant transportation projects taking place in the West Valley are freeway widening projects along Interstate 10 and the Loop 303, providing significant improvements that will relieve congestion and improve regional, state, and even interstate connectivity. Arterial projects, such as the Lake Pleasant Parkway, are also vital to the Regional Transportation Plan, and represent nine percent of the funding.



I-10

Interstate 10 through the West Valley experiences significant congestion west of Loop 101, where the road narrows from four general purpose lanes plus a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction to only two general purpose lanes in each direction. In addition, due to the barrier of the White Tank Mountains, traffic to and from the west is concentrated on I-10, making it one of the critical links in the regional freeway system. By 2010, a major widening will be complete with four new general purpose lanes and an HOV lane in each direction.



Median widening on I-10 from Loop 101 to Sarival Avenue is ongoing with an estimated completion mid-2009. Sarival Avenue to Verrado Way median widening is scheduled to begin soon, while the Dysart Road to Sarival Avenue outside widening is set to begin in mid-2009.

Goodyear Mayor James Cavanaugh, a member of the TPC, notes that I-10 is a major transportation corridor, not only for the rapidly growing West Valley, but as a major freight corridor that connects ports in Los Angeles/Long Beach with the rest of the U.S.

“This particular roadway is one of the main commercial arterials in the United States,” says Cavanaugh, who believes the I-10 widening is important to the West Valley’s economic development. He credits the project with helping to attract a major cancer treatment center, a new mall, and a number of colleges to the West Valley.

“It’s because of transportation,” he says. “It’s going from mediocre in this area to exceptional.”



“The widening west of Loop 101 has already begun, with the expansion of bridges and construction of new lanes in the median,” notes

Avondale Mayor

Marie Lopez Rogers, who serves as the vice chair of the MAG Transportation Policy Committee (TPC).

“Due to concerns over safety and mobility, the project was accelerated in 2006 through a unique joint effort of Avondale, Goodyear and Litchfield Park. With the help of state funding provided by the legislature, we were able to accelerate the widening of I-10 by up to five years,” she adds.



Loop 303

Loop 303 also represents a key corridor for travel within the West Valley, providing north-south mobility for cities and towns west of Loop 101, directly linking Glendale, Goodyear, Peoria and Surprise. When an interim roadway from Happy Valley Road to Lake Pleasant Parkway is completed in 2012, it will finally connect the Loop 303 to I-17.



“Those of us in the West Valley have been waiting for this for so many years because this will provide us a much needed east-west connection to take care of the people who have moved further north,” says Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, who also serves on the TPC. “This is a tremendous, tremendous time for the West Valley,” she says. “It’s certainly going to relieve congestion on I-17

Continued on next page

and I think the 303 will also help relieve congestion going through our neighborhoods.”

Surprise Mayor Lynn Truitt agrees. “It will be the economic spine of the entire West Valley,” says Truitt, who is also a member of the TPC. “One of the things I’m particularly proud of is that the 303 is going to be a minimum of six lanes...That means that cities like Buckeye, Goodyear, Glendale, Surprise and Peoria are going to benefit from that reliever route. It’s going to take traffic off of (Loop) 101 and it’s going to help people get to their jobs in a much more timely fashion.”



CENTRAL VALLEY

The implementation of the first 20 miles of light rail has brought a new vitality to downtown Phoenix, while improvements to freeways in the central core will also help relieve congestion—not only in the city of Phoenix, but also portions of Tempe, Phoenix and Scottsdale. Improvements to Interstate 17 in the far north Valley are already making a difference for commuters in Anthem and the north central employment corridor, while the completion of HOV lanes on State Route (SR) 51 are providing faster commute times and HOV connections to Loop 101 to the east.

Lake Pleasant Parkway Arterial Project

Being able to utilize Proposition 400 funds for arterial street projects is a vital development for the regional transportation system, because the arterial system carries about 60 percent of the total vehicle miles traveled in the region. One such project is the widening of Lake Pleasant Parkway, a project that will improve the arterial street network from Union Hills to SR-74. In 2008, the Union Hills to Dynamite Road segment was completed and reimbursed for more than \$22 million in Regional Area Road Funds.

The Lake Pleasant Parkway project includes the construction, reconstruction, or widening of the roadway to improve mobility and safety in the region. The project also includes multimodal features, such as provisions for bike lanes, sidewalks and multi-use paths within the corridor.

“Arterial projects such as ours represent an important component of the Regional Transportation Plan,” states **Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett**. “Many residents forget that our major streets carry more traffic than our freeways and transit systems combined, and with the cities contributing \$1.2 billion in local funding along with the \$1.6 billion allocated in the Plan, we can complement the regional freeway system and serve vehicle, transit, bike and pedestrian traffic, giving residents more opportunities to get to where they work, live and play.”



I-17

Interstate 17 is the key north-south spine of the regional freeway system, stretching north from downtown Phoenix to the Yavapai County line and to major points north. It not only provides north-south mobility for Phoenix and its neighboring suburbs, but is also a vital connection to I-40, which crosses northern Arizona and provides important linkages to the Midwest.



“I-17 north of the 101 has become a major choke point as the road narrows to two lanes in either direction, affecting northern communities,” says **MAG Chair Peggy Neely**, a **Phoenix councilmember**. “With the development of Anthem and commercial development in the far north region, congestion has increased significantly. The I-17 widening will help relieve congestion for those traveling north, not only to Anthem and New River, but also those heading up to Flagstaff and the northern part of the state,” she says.

Current widening is taking place from the Loop 101 Agua Fria Freeway to Carefree Highway, with completion estimated in late 2009. Construction will begin soon from Carefree Highway to Anthem Way, with estimated completion in late 2010. The widening efforts include the reconstruction of a number of traffic interchanges. The construction of interchanges is complete at Carefree Highway (SR-74), Jomax Road, and Dixileta

Continued on page 8

Prop 400 Projects (continued from page 7)

Drive, while construction of the interchange at Dove Valley and an interchange connecting I-17 with Loop 303 is estimated to be completed this year.



SR-51

State Route 51 provides freeway access for vast areas of northeast Phoenix and northeast Scottsdale, which would otherwise have to depend solely on the arterial street system for long-distance mobility. Current widening projects will provide one HOV lane from Shea Boulevard to Loop 101 in each direction, as well as HOV ramp connections from SR-51 to Loop 101. This means travelers using HOV lanes can travel from northbound SR-51 all the way around the Loop 101.

“This is especially important in serving major employment centers in the Northeast Valley such as Desert Ridge and the Scottsdale Airpark,” says MAG Chair Neely.



Loop 202 Red Mountain Widening

A \$200 million widening project on the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway from Loop 101 to the mini-stack will provide a key alternative to I-10 and the Superstition Freeway for travel from the East Valley into the core area of the region.

The project will include one general-purpose lane eastbound from the I-10/SR-51 traffic interchange to Scottsdale Road, and two general-purpose lanes from Scottsdale Road to the Loop 101/Loop 202 interchange. Westbound widening will include two general-purpose lanes from the Loop 101/Loop 202 interchange to McClintock Drive. The project also includes one general-purpose lane from McClintock Drive to Scottsdale Road.

“This stretch of Loop 202 will relieve congestion for Phoenix residents and provide a vital link to downtown Phoenix for East Valley residents,” notes **Phoenix Councilmember and MAG TPC member Maria Baier**.



Light Rail

With 350,000 riders trying out the system during the first five days of service, implementation of the first 20 miles of light rail service in the Valley got off to a successful start. The Regional Transportation Plan includes 37 miles of extensions of light rail in six high-capacity transit corridors. While transportation

planners must still determine the specific transit route for each corridor, and to examine whether light rail, bus rapid transit, local bus service or some other transit mode is best to serve these corridors, all of the high-capacity transit corridors are scheduled to be in place by 2025. The first extension, the Northwest Extension, will add a little more than three miles to the system, running north on 19th Avenue to Dunlap Avenue in Phoenix.

Continued on next page



COUNTY	
PROPOSITION 400	
RELATING TO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION EXCISE (SALES) TAXES	
Do you favor the continuation of a county transaction privilege (sales) tax for regional transportation purposes in Maricopa County?	
A "YES" vote has the effect of continuing the transaction privilege (sales) tax in Maricopa County for twenty years to provide funding for transportation projects as contained in the regional transportation plan.	
A "NO" vote has the effect of rejecting the transaction privilege (sales) tax for transportation purposes in Maricopa County.	
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

Actual text of the Prop 400 ballot measure.

EAST VALLEY

In the East Valley, major widening projects on the US-60 and Loop 101 will not only improve mobility for single occupant vehicles, but also will allow for increased carpooling and express bus service, resulting in shorter travel times and reducing the overall number of vehicles on the road. The implementation of light rail in Tempe and Mesa and planned extensions will improve connectivity to the central core of the Valley.



US-60

The Superstition Freeway (US-60) is the east-west backbone of the freeway system in the East Valley, extending all the way from I-10 to the Pinal County line and points east. The last remaining bottleneck on US-60 will be fixed when eastbound and westbound general purpose lanes are added from west of Hardy Drive to east of McClintock. This supplements major widening projects on the Superstition Freeway completed in June 2007, which widened the facility to five general purpose lanes and one HOV lane in each direction from Loop 101 to Loop 202.



Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, also a member of the TPC, says the US-60 widening, combined with the expansion of the Loop 202 and other improvements, will help eliminate choke points and create a more integrated and efficient regional transportation system.

“Prop 400 has supplied the dollars to allow us to address immediately the concerns that people have about their commute,” says Hallman. “Going from one place in this region to another shouldn’t be painful, and we’re all working together to try to make it a more enjoyable experience.”

Loop 101

When widening projects are completed, Loop 101 will be expanded—including an HOV lane in each direction—from SR-51 on the north (Pima Freeway), through Scottsdale and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC), south to the Price Freeway adjacent to Tempe and Mesa and ending in Chandler. Other improvements include a new permanent concrete median barrier, median lighting and new rubberized asphalt to reduce traffic noise.



The new HOV lanes will also accommodate expanded express bus service for the east Valley.

“It’s a significant project because obviously it provides more commuter space during the rush hour; it provides a means for rapid bus transit to get where it wants to go; it provides more access,” says Chandler Mayor and TPC member Boyd Dunn. “Also, the cement barriers are going to provide safety, and we have rubberized asphalt, so I think the taxpayers are appreciating the fact that their freeways are going to be more functional and they’ll be able to get to where they want to go more quickly,” he says.

SRPMIC President Diane Enos

says Freeway Management System facilities will be installed on a 15-mile segment of the Loop 101 Pima Freeway within the existing open median from Princess Drive to the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway.



“These improvements will include variable message signage and traffic monitoring systems to provide traffic information to drivers and ADOT,” says Enos. “Ramp metering will be added to manage the flow of traffic entering the freeway.”

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State Route 87

This important safety project area runs from the Tonto National Forest boundary approximately five miles north of Shea Boulevard (milepost 194) to the new Four Peaks Road turnoff (milepost 204). Improvements will include a new 10-foot shoulder added to the right and a new four-foot shoulder added to the left of the northbound lanes. It will also include a new traffic interchange at the Bush Highway/Saguaro Lake turnoff and improved left turn lanes at four median crossings. Construction will last approximately 18 months.

Transit

There are a number of transit projects in the TIP, including many benefitting the East Valley. Light rail service through Tempe into Mesa is augmented with express and bus rapid transit services, which are designed specifically with commuters in mind to connect residential areas to major employment centers. The new Valley Metro Link system in Mesa, for example, helps extend the reach of the light rail system.



“The new route for the Valley Metro Link runs from the Sycamore station in Mesa, 12 miles east to the Superstition Springs area, where there is a new large park-and-ride,” says **Mesa Mayor and TPC member Scott Smith**. “These buses are configured very similar to light rail cars. They run on a low sulfur diesel, which makes them very environmentally friendly, and they are an express type of bus meant to get you from

one area of the park-and-ride down to the start of the light rail line,” he says.

Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn, who also serves on the TPC, points to the new 511 Express Route as another example of how the system is integrated. The route travels between Chandler and the Scottsdale Airport.

“And that’s a key employment corridor. It will also tie into light rail along the Loop 101 and that’s going to give another opportunity for people to take that bus here and be able to switch to light rail and use that avenue of transportation. So it is really exciting,” says Dunn, who adds that such choices are key to Chandler’s future. “We’re done with our freeways, we’ve built our freeways. So if we need more capacity, if we need more avenues of transportation, we have to look at other types of transportation, mainly in terms of mass transit,” he says.



SUMMARY

While these projects represent only a few of the improvements that are included in the Regional Transportation Plan, all of the mayors interviewed expressed sincere gratitude to the voters who passed Proposition 400.

“I think voters recognized the benefit that transportation has on their lives,” summarizes Mesa Mayor Scott Smith. “It really comes down to a quality of life issue. We throw that term around a lot, quality of life, but really it gets to how individuals think about their lives. And people have shown, voters have shown, time and time again, that they are willing to pay for things that improve their lives. And they look at transportation as being an integral part of the quality of their life,” he says.

MAG Executive Director Dennis Smith notes that the success of the transportation system is the result of having the right planning model.

“For more than 20 years, it has been the key mission of MAG to address mobility. MAG is led by local elected officials, who are closest to the people, who listen to the concerns of their communities and help shape our regional transportation plans. It is a ‘bottom up’ approach,” he says. “The successes of Proposition 300, which built our current regional freeway system, and Proposition 400, which improves that system through a variety of transportation modes and solutions, prove that this is the right model.” 

2010 Census Operations Kick Off With Celebration

Recruiting Begins for Thousands of Temporary Jobs

With millions of federal dollars on the line, elected officials opened the first Census 2010 office in the Valley with a plea for everyone to return their census forms next year. Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon and Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett, joined by State Senator Leah Landrum-Taylor, State Representative Ben Miranda, and other civic and community leaders, kicked off the Spirit of Community Celebration. The purpose of the event was to mark the beginning of the 2010 Census in Arizona and officially open the local Phoenix office.

“Local governments, together with state and community organizations, are participating in 2010 Census preparations by working together to celebrate the importance of the census to local communities and to begin recruiting for thousands of temporary jobs for the early local census operations,” said Mayor Barrett.



Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett

Cathy Lacy Illian, director of the Denver Regional Census Center, was on hand to encourage communities to get involved early.

“The countdown to Census 2010 has begun, and the U.S. Census Bureau is looking to national, tribal, state and local officials and community leaders to ensure an accurate count,” said Illian, who noted that census numbers are used to distribute \$300 billion per year in federal funding as well as to apportion

congressional seats. She also noted that everyone will receive a short form in the 2010 Census. The long form is now administered separately as part of the American Community Survey.

“The 2010 Census helps ensure that your community receives its fair share of political representation and government funding,” said Illian. “We look at it as 10 minutes of your time for 10 years of investment.”

The local census office has begun hiring for thousands of temporary jobs. Thousands of employees are needed now for temporary jobs to update address lists and conduct interviews with community residents. Most positions require a valid driver’s license and use of a vehicle.

To apply for a census job, call toll free at 1-866-861-2010, or visit www.2010censusjobs.gov. 



IT'S IN OUR HANDS

census.gov/2010census



Attendees at the celebration each signed a hand cutout, representing the theme that the success of the census is “in our hands.”

Focus Groups Delve Into Littering Behavior



“It’s a habit.”
“It’s convenient.”
“I don’t like a messy car.”
“It gives someone a job.”

Those were just a few of the excuses focus group participants gave for admittedly throwing trash out of their car windows onto Valley freeways—even though the same groups classified freeway litter as a big problem in Maricopa County.

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) commissioned WestGroup Research to conduct the two focus groups in December. The purpose of the groups

was to provide insight into littering attitudes and behavior as part of the *Don't Trash Arizona* litter prevention and education program.

Participants were males between the ages of 18 and 34 who had admitted to littering during the past three months.

The target group, which represented areas across Maricopa County, was

selected because previous studies have shown that men in the 18-34 age group are the most common offenders when it comes to littering from vehicles.

Littering Behavior

Participants were most likely to admit that they or someone in their vehicle had thrown a cigarette butt out the window. The other most commonly experienced situations involved having items thrown or blown out of a vehicle they were riding in, with some littering done purposely as a matter of “convenience” and other littering done “accidentally” from items blowing out of the bed of a pickup or a car window. Some participants readily admitted to tossing things out of the window rather than messing up their own car, and not caring or thinking about the impact of the litter. One participant said when the cup holders became full, the empties were tossed out of the window to make room.

While most said they would be less likely to litter if they received the \$500 fine for freeway littering, virtually all

said they felt the chances of receiving a litter citation were minimal.

“If there is not a consequence for something, people will do it,” said one participant.* “It’s hard to get caught, (and) if no one is going to see you, you just don’t feel bad. The consequence will never occur—you are gone from the scene of the crime.”

When asked about the littering of cigarette butts, most indicated it was out of “habit” or convenience. Motorists flick the ashes out the window already and it just follows that when the cigarette is done, they flick it out the window as well. Most rationalized this behavior because cigarette butts are small. They did not realize or consider that cigarettes contain toxic chemicals that can seep into the water supply. A few members in both groups faulted the auto manufacturers for not putting ashtrays in cars anymore, “forcing” them to toss the butts out the window.

Participants did say there were circumstances in which they would call a hotline to report a litterer, especially if the safety of others was being compromised.

“Furniture falling out of a moving vehicle, that would make me find the number to call to report it,” said one participant.

Litter Attitudes

Participants in both groups began the discussion by first indicating the magnitude of the problem they felt litter was along the roads and highways in Maricopa County. Most classified litter as a “big” or “pretty big” problem. They felt that they see garbage “everywhere” along the roads, from paper to tires to furniture. Without prompting, most felt that residents just “don’t care” and are “lazy” when it comes to properly taking care of their garbage.

Although the participants recognized it was hypocritical, they indicated they do not like it when they see others litter and often think of those who litter as “slobs.” Most said they would be embarrassed to be thought of in the same way. Most also said they would not litter in front of work colleagues, girlfriends, or parents.

Messaging

When asked to rate radio commercials done previously for *Don't Trash Arizona*, participants gravitated toward a spot highlighting the \$500 fine, not only for its use of humor but also stating it was important to point out that littering does have consequences.



**Participants are not identified in order to protect their confidentiality as a condition for receiving honest feedback.*

Eight-Hour Ozone Standard Attained: MAG Requests Official Redesignation

At the conclusion of the groups, participants were asked what message would work to motivate people such as themselves to stop littering. Many cited more visible enforcement of litter laws as the primary deterrent. Some also suggested that community service should be required instead of a fine to have a bigger impact. Some felt there needed to be more awareness of litter as a problem, with more television advertising.

But what messages work? Each participant was asked to write down what they would tell a friend or peer in order to persuade that individual not to litter. Below is a sampling of the results:

- *Dude, did you know you could get a \$500 ticket for that? Don't throw that out the window.*
- *Littering is selfish and it really could cost you big in terms of a large fine of \$500.*
- *It's harmful and hazardous to everyone.*
- *You shouldn't litter. One, its bad for the environment and two, you could get a fine. Take pride in yourself and who you are.*
- *Hey man, don't throw that. I could get a fine. Look, can you not be a pig and wait until we get to a stop and throw your trash in a can?*
- *Don't do that, because if you think about it, this is where your kids will be living years from now, and if that continues, imagine all the problems.*
- *Be responsible for your actions and don't litter. Have respect for your community and take care of it.*
- *Littering destroys the environment. C'mon man, this is where we live and we need to take care of it for ourselves, for our kids, and for our kids' kids.*
- *You shouldn't litter because it makes our surroundings look like crap. If you feel it doesn't, then try throwing every piece of trash in your backyard.*
- *Dude, that's not cool. All the girls are going green and they'll think it's hot if you place your trash in a proper receptacle.*
- *That's nice...Do you throw trash on your floor at home?*

Whether the group will take their own messages to heart is a question that could be up to future surveys to determine. 

The Maricopa Association of Governments is requesting that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) redesignate the Maricopa area to attainment for the 1997 eight-hour ozone standard. No violations of the standard of 0.08 parts per million (ppm) have occurred since 2004, the same year the area was designated to be in nonattainment of the standard as required under the Clean Air Act.

“Due to the sustained efforts of local governments to reduce ozone pollution, we have made significant progress in addressing both the one-hour ozone standard and the eight-hour ozone standard,” said John Kross, chair of the MAG Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, who is also the town manager of Queen Creek. “We have already been redesignated as in attainment for one-hour ozone, and we are confident that we have demonstrated that we have now attained the 1997 eight-hour ozone standard,” he said.

In addition to the redesignation request, MAG also submitted a “maintenance” plan that provides monitoring data to support the finding that the standard has been met and

demonstrates that the standard of .08 ppm will continue to be maintained through 2025.

Ground-level ozone is a gas formed by a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight during the summer months. Motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, chemical solvents, and even natural vegetation contribute to ozone formation. But Kross says the Valley is up to the challenge.

“The health of Arizona families and our quality of life depend on our continued success,” he said. “Maintenance of the standard will be achieved despite major increases in population, employment, and vehicle travel in the area between now and 2025,” he said. “The more stringent federal emissions controls, combined with the previous commitments made by state, county and local governments, will more than offset the future growth in the nonattainment area.”

Valley residents can help reduce ozone pollution by reducing driving, minimizing the use of gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment, waiting until evening to fuel vehicles, and making sure vehicle tires are properly inflated. 



Light Rail Rolls Into Service

Thousands of riders waited in line for hours to experience a historic opening day ride on the new light rail system, which officially rolled into service on December 27, 2008.

“I wanted her to experience this,” said one rider as he and his three-year-old daughter slowly crept along in line to board a rail car. “It’s a big thing for Phoenix. It’s historic, so I wanted her to be part of it. I was a proponent for it and I think it’s going to be a great thing for the city of Phoenix,” he said.

“I came all the way from Tucson—I wouldn’t have missed this for anything,” said another nearby passenger.



Long lines wait to board the light rail on opening day.



Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon takes questions from the media.

Connor D’Aliesio, an elementary school student, jittered with excitement as he prepared to ride the rail from end to end. “I’ll be real excited to go over the (Tempe Town Lake) bridge,” he said. “It might be a little scary, but I know it will be fun.”

Many riders said they would follow up their opening day ride with regular trips. “I work at the ball park during ball season,” said Phoenix resident Judy Sperbeck. “So this will be perfect for me. I will avoid the hassle of driving during ball season and the traffic.”

“I am so excited about this train, because I have been here 32 years, and this is progress for Phoenix,” said Viviana Gormaz, who will use light rail often to visit friends in Mesa. “I have been in rush hour going to Mesa and it’s a nightmare, so this is perfect. You’ve got to get the headache out of traveling, so I am very glad,” she said.

METRO estimates that more than 350,000 riders rode the rail in the first five days of service. It expects that number to settle into approximately 26,000 boardings a day.

For more information visit: www.valleymetro.org/metro_light_rail/



Thousands of people attend the light rail opening ceremonies.

MAG Moment

Regional Council Members Preview Light Rail System

Several Regional Council members ride the rail before the December 3, 2008 Regional Council meeting.



Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault, Supervisor Max Wilson and Goodyear Mayor James Cavanaugh



Phoenix Councilmember Peggy Neely



Gila Bend Mayor Fred Hull

The Path to Light Rail

It is a seamless, 20-mile system that smoothly glides across city boundaries. But it took many years and many players—including voters in individual communities willing to pay for it—to bring light rail to the Valley. Below is a brief history of how the light rail system finally got on track through a variety of funding sources.



September 1996—Tempe voters take the lead on light rail when they approve a permanent half-cent sales tax dedicated to transit.



January 1997—A fixed guideway transit starter corridor is adopted into the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan, allowing cities to pursue federal funding for light rail.



May 1998—Mesa voters approve a half-cent quality of life sales tax, providing the ability to fund high capacity transit.



City of Phoenix

March 2000—Phoenix voters approve a four-tenths cent sales tax increase to fund transit over 20 years, including the light rail segment through Phoenix.



November 2001—Glendale voters approve a half-cent sales tax for transportation, 65 percent of which goes toward transit.



October 2002—METRO, the agency that will design, build and operate the Valley's light rail system, is formed. METRO is a nonprofit corporation formed by the cities of Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa and Glendale.



November 2003—The Regional Transportation Plan, which contains 37 miles of extensions to the 20-mile starter segment, is approved unanimously by the Transportation Policy Committee and Regional Council during their November meetings. In addition to funding the extensions, the Plan also includes \$259 million to fund regional elements in the original starter system (such as light rail vehicles and the operations and maintenance facility), representing about 18.5 percent of the system cost.



November 2004—Groundbreaking is held for the METRO Operations and Maintenance Center.



January 2005—A Full Funding Grant Agreement is signed, providing METRO with \$587 million in federal funding for the 20-mile starter segment.

February 2005—The official kickoff of construction for the light rail sections takes place at Tempe Town Lake.



March 2006—The first 200 feet of track is installed at the border of Phoenix and Tempe at Washington and 56th streets.

March 2008—Light rail vehicle testing begins.

December 2008—Passenger service begins.



February 2009

- 4th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 4th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 5th 1:00 p.m. Domestic Violence Council
- 10th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 10th 2:30 p.m. Planners Stakeholders Group
- 11th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 12th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 17th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 17th 1:30 p.m. Regional Bicycle Task Force/ Pedestrian Working Group Joint Meeting
- 18th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 18th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 19th 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 25th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 26th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG offices on the second floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. Transit tickets will be provided for those using transit. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.

March 2009

- 4th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 4th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 10th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 11th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 12th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 17th 1:30 p.m. Regional Bicycle Task Force/ Pedestrian Working Group Joint Meeting
- 18th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 18th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 19th 10:00 a.m. Technology Advisory Group
- 23rd 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 25th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 26th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

For confirmation call (602) 254-6300, or visit the Web site: www.mag.maricopa.gov/meetings.cms

Please note that due to the economic stimulus legislation, special meetings of MAG policy committees are anticipated. Please check the MAG Web site frequently for updates.

April 2009

- 1st 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee
- 1st 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee
- 2nd 1:00 p.m. Domestic Violence Council
- 8th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee
- 9th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee
- 13th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee
- 14th 1:00 p.m. Street Committee
- 15th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee
- 15th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee
- 21st 10:00 a.m. Human Services Coordinating Committee
- 21st 1:30 p.m. Regional Bicycle Task Force/ Pedestrian Working Group Joint Meeting
- 21st 2:30 p.m. Planners Stakeholders Group
- 22nd 5:00 p.m. Regional Council
- 23rd 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee
- 30th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee

The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months.

The MAGAZine newsletter is available in electronic format and in Spanish on the MAG Web site: www.mag.maricopa.gov/project.cms?item=433



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