

September 11, 2003

TO: Members of the Transportation Policy Committee

FROM: Kelly Taft, Communications Manager

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE FINAL DRAFT STAGE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Background

Over the past two years, MAG has held dozens of public involvement events and spoken with thousands of individuals about their transportation priorities for the region. Activities have included numerous public meetings, small group presentations and special events to gather citizen input into the Regional Transportation Plan. Input included comments received during five public workshops held in May and June to receive early input in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. This input was considered by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) in the development of the Final Draft Stage of the Regional Transportation Plan.

In August and September, an additional six public meetings/hearings were held to garner input into the Final Draft Stage of the Regional Transportation Plan. The purpose of these meetings was to communicate the elements of the Plan, ensure that the Plan incorporated citizen priorities and addressed public concerns, and provide both a formal and informal opportunity to collect citizen comment.

All comments received during the Final Draft Stage, along with staff responses to comments, are included in the attached Final Draft Stage of the Regional Transportation Plan Input Opportunity Report. Please note that the attached report is in a draft stage and due to the mailing deadline, DOES NOT include comments received at the September 10, 2003 Northeast Valley meeting in Scottsdale. The results of this meeting will be provided as a supplement that will be sent out in a separate mailing.

Business Outreach

In addition to the public meetings noted above, six business meetings were also held to solicit review and comment on the plan by members of the business community. The business community was identified early in the process by the TPC as a key stakeholder in the development of the Plan, because of the impact of transportation on the Valley's economy. The TPC recognized that the movement of goods in and out of this region, as well as businesses' ability to attract high quality employees through an adequate transportation system, is vital to their livelihood and survival. The TPC wanted to provide an opportunity expressly to this community to comment on the Plan.

Meeting Format

The format for the business meetings and public meetings was the same. Business meetings were held from 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. with a presentation at 4:00 p.m. Public meetings were held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with

a presentation at 5:30 p.m. An open house preceded the meetings featuring maps, informational materials and displays.

During the presentation portion of the meeting, information on the draft plan was presented followed by a question-and-answer period. Comments and responses made during the question-and-answer period were recorded in summary form and are included in the Input Opportunity Report. A court reporter was available in a designated area to record formal comments. In addition, a "Public Input Form" was distributed to capture comments in a survey format. A copy of the Public Input Form is attached to this memo.

Following is the list of the six meeting dates and locations:

Central:	Tuesday, August 19, Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix.
Southwest:	Wednesday, August 20, Public Safety Building, Avondale.
Northwest:	Thursday, August 21, Midwestern University, Glendale.
Surprise/Sun City:	Tuesday, September 2, Ashton Ranch Elementary School, Surprise.
Southeast:	Wednesday, September 3, Mesa Rendezvous Center, Mesa.
Northeast:	Wednesday, September 10, Community Design Studio, Scottsdale.

Additional Input

In addition to the public meetings, MAG has solicited input through our Web site and via the U.S. mail. Additional comments were collected through small group presentations and special events, including the Latino Institute, the Grand Canyon Minority Business Opportunity Trade Fair, the East Valley Disability Advocacy Group, and the Mesa East Rotary Club.

Summary of Input

Comments received at the six public meetings were very diverse, covering a broad range of modes, issues and projects. A detailed summary of comments received on the Public Input Form, broken down by individual meetings, are included in the Input Opportunity Report. Also included in the Input Opportunity Report are transcripts taken during the formal comment period and staff responses to comments, as well as summary notes recorded during the question-and-answer phase of each meeting.

Results of the Public Input Form Survey have been tabulated. Following are highlights of this survey from all of the public meetings (with the exception of the Northeast Valley public meeting in Scottsdale September 10th), U.S. mail, online, special events and small group presentations combined.

Survey Results /Public Input Form

An overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) agreed there is a significant transportation problem in Maricopa County that needs to be addressed. A majority (77%) were aware that the half-cent sales tax passed by voters in 1985 will expire in 2005, resulting in no future regional funding source for transportation improvements in Maricopa County

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the level of improvements identified in the MAG Draft Regional Transportation Plan by mode. A total of 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the level of improvements identified in the plan for bus improvements. Approximately 82% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the level of improvements identified in the plan for freeway improvements. About 73%

of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the level of improvements identified in the plan for Light Rail improvements (with nearly half of respondents strongly agreeing), and approximately 87% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the level of improvements identified in the plan for street improvements.

When asked if they agreed overall that the elements proposed in the MAG Draft Regional Transportation Plan sufficiently address future transportation needs, 69% agreed with the Plan (30% strongly agreed, 39% agreed), while 22% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed.

Scientific Poll

On August 21, Behavior Research Center (BRC) began conducting a telephone poll of 600 Maricopa County voters. This poll was designed to serve as a follow up to a similar poll conducted by BRC in December, 2002. The poll sought to determine respondents' willingness to support the half-cent sales tax extension, and to test certain elements contained in the Draft Regional Transportation Plan. A report summarizing the findings of the poll is attached.

Presentations on both the Public Input Opportunity Report and the Scientific Poll will be given at the September 17, 2003 Transportation Policy Committee meeting.