



Executive Director's Report

On Friday, October 17, 2003, the State Transportation Board unanimously passed a historic resolution supporting the extension of the one-half cent sales tax for transportation. The resolution clearly stated the intention of the Board to support a multimodal approach in addressing the mobility needs of this region. This resolution, and recent actions on rubberized asphalt and noise mitigation, signifies an organization that is increasingly addressing the quality of life issues in this region.

The support of ADOT was an indication of the hard work of State Transportation Board members, including Rusty Gant and Joe Lane from this region, in shaping the final outcome of the Plan. It has become apparent in the many places that we have presented the Plan that many individuals can see their input in the final document. I believe this is a testament to the open process used to create the Plan.

On the legislative front, the city intergovernmental staff and Maricopa 2020 members have been hard at work, explaining how the Plan was developed and the unanimous support it has received. Eric Anderson and I have made several presentations, including a briefing to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. We are encouraged by our meeting with the Speaker and his staff, and we are looking forward to presenting information on the Plan during the current Special Session so that we can be ready for the Regular Session in January.

Now we are on to the public review and hearing for the air quality conformity of the Plan. The hearing is scheduled for November 21, 2003 (see following story). The Regional Council will review the analysis and vote on the Plan November 25th, and the certification of the Plan will be sent to the governor and legislature by November 30th. We believe the legislature will recognize the value of this Plan and allow citizens to vote on their transportation future in May 2004.

For more information, please contact Dennis Smith, Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.



Regional Council Meeting Report for October 22, 2003

Regional Council Advances Strategy to Improve Transportation Operations

The MAG Regional Council unanimously approved a Memorandum of Understanding on a Regional Concept of Transportation Operations. The Memorandum marks the final step in a 12-month project to develop a regional strategy to improve transportation operations utilizing advanced technology-based Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) applications. The Regional Concept of Transportation Operations seeks to develop goals for using ITS to help manage the urban freeway system, streets, regional transit, incident/emergency management, and traveler information.

The Memorandum expresses regional support for the initiatives developed through the project, with the end goal of providing a safe, reliable, efficient and seamless surface transportation system for the MAG region. Among the steps called for in the Memorandum is development of an operations manual, the designation of 10 volunteers to serve as local champions to lead initiatives utilizing the existing institutional resources, a pledge for the MAG ITS committee to provide oversight for operations from a planning perspective, and the tracking of progress and information to support operations via the MAG Web site.

For more information, contact Sarath Joshua, P.E., Ph.D., MAG ITS and Safety Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Council Approves Draft Special TIP for Air Quality Analysis

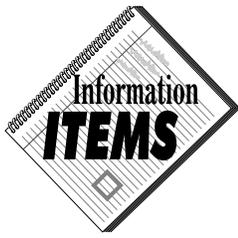
The MAG Regional Council approved the Draft Special FY 2004-2007 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for an air quality conformity analysis. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments require that the MAG TIP be in conformance with applicable air quality plans. The Special TIP serves as a four-year regional guide for the preservation, management and expansion of public transportation services, including highways, rideshare programs, transit facilities and various congestion mitigation and air quality improvement projects.

For more information, contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.

Desert Peaks Awards Program Restructured

On February 26, 2003 the Regional Council voted not to hold the 2003 Desert Peaks Awards due to local budget conditions. On September 15th, the Executive Committee recognized the importance of the event in honoring regional accomplishments and discussed ways to restructure the event to reduce costs. The Committee recommended limiting the event to a reception in place of a formal dinner, distributing awards during the MAG Annual Meeting, and announcing award recipients prior to the event. Under the restructuring, the projected cost of the event would be cut in half, with no cost to attendees. The Regional Council voted to accept the Executive Committee's recommendations for restructuring the Desert Peaks Awards program.

For more information, contact Denise McClafferty, MAG Management Analyst, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Update on Regional Transportation Plan

The Council was provided an update on the Regional Transportation Plan. On September 24, 2003, the Regional Council unanimously approved the Regional Transportation Plan for an air quality conformity analysis. The analysis is underway and a special Regional Council meeting is scheduled for November 25, 2003 to approve Plan based on the analysis. The Plan must be certified to the governor and legislature by November 30, 2003.

During its October 15th meeting, the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) discussed major policy concepts, including a recommendation for an independent performance audit every five years beginning in 2015. The purpose of the audit would be to evaluate the implementation of the Plan and examine the performance of projects in relieving congestion and improving mobility. The light rail component would use federal criteria for evaluation. Other concepts discussed included definitions for major and minor amendments and the establishment of "firewalls" to ensure that funding stays in the corridor to address the mobility challenge in that corridor. Major amendments would need to go through the public involvement, consultation, TPC review, air quality analysis and Regional Council action.

The TPC also recommended a maintenance resolution to have dedicated funding for maintenance (\$279 million), stating the resolution is designed to ensure more accountability in the maintenance funding process by tracking maintenance funding and reporting on it in the MAG Annual Report.

For more information, contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Information Gathering Begins for Regionally Significant Development Projects

In June 2003, the Regional Council approved a policy for MAG to compile information on Regionally Significant Development Projects. The purpose of the effort is to provide MAG member agencies with the regional transportation costs of major development projects. The Council was provided an update on the progress of the report. The Planners Stakeholders Group has developed specific criteria for defining Regionally Significant Development Projects. Projects will be reviewed if city council action is taken on the project, and if the land use intensity is sufficient to create capacity of a single freeway lane in one direction. The review of Regionally Significant Development Projects will also be triggered based on building permits. If information is requested from the member agency, MAG staff will compile information on the project, including land development, socioeconomic buildout, and regional transportation impact. Staff will then meet with the submitting member agency to share information. To date, 13 Regionally Significant Development Projects have been transmitted to MAG.

In addition to information collected on each project, each year MAG will compile an annual report examining the cumulative impact of all development in the region.

For more information, contact Jack Tomasik, MAG Regional Development Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Telecommunications Group Furthers Goals

An update was provided on the efforts of the MAG Telecommunications Advisory Group (MAGTAG). MAGTAG was formed by the Regional Council in 1994 to encourage the development of telecommunication infrastructure and applications which increase government efficiency, improve access to public information, and expedite delivery of local government services in the region. Major accomplishments to date include:

- Completed a Regional Connections Project that provided Internet and e-mail connectivity to MAG member agencies previously without these services.
- Conducted a Regional Community Network Study to develop initiatives for a physical telecommunications network to connect MAG member agencies.
- Initiated a "Digital Oasis" program to develop, certify and market wired buildings; promote infrastructure development; encourage telework; and serve as an economic development tool.

- Implemented a Regional Videoconferencing System to provide videoconferencing systems and support to all member agencies to reduce trips and improve air quality.
- Conducted informational sessions to focus on telecommunications capabilities and uses.

For more information, contact Heidi Pahl, MAG Telecommunications Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Domestic Violence Awareness

In order to raise awareness about the growing problem of domestic violence and its impacts, MAG formed the Regional Domestic Violence Council in 1999. In observation of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, reports were given on recent efforts to address domestic violence in the region. Among the Council's efforts over the past four years was the creation of Employers Against Domestic Violence (EADV), a group of 112 public and private employers concerned with the effects of abuse on the workplace. The group focuses on helping organizations develop workplace protocols and policies. EADV conducts quarterly training forums and sponsors activities such as the annual Walk to End Domestic Violence. Regional Council members were encouraged to participate in the 2nd Annual Walk and Run to End Domestic Violence, which is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2004.

For more information, contact Debra Determan, MAG Human Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Upcoming Events



Public Hearing Scheduled

A public hearing has been scheduled for Friday, November 21st at 5:00 p.m. to receive public comment on three MAG documents, including the Draft Special FY 2004-2007 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, MAG FY 2003 Conformity Analysis, and Regional Transportation Plan. The hearing will be held at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, in the Saguaro Room. An open house will be held in the second floor lobby prior to the hearing at 4:30 p.m. Staff will provide brief presentations on the documents prior to public testimony. A court reporter will be on hand to record public comments.

For more information, contact Dean Giles, MAG Air Quality Planning Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be a Special Meeting to be held on Tuesday, November 25th at noon at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, in the Saguaro Room. Agenda items are expected to include approval of the FY 2003 MAG Conformity Analysis and approval of the MAG Regional Transportation Plan. Additional agenda items are pending.

For more information, contact Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.