



Executive Director's Report

Recently it was my privilege to represent Mayor James Cavanaugh, who is the Chair of the Arizona COG/MPO Association, in a presentation before a Listening Session conducted by the Governor's Growth Cabinet. It was interesting to hear the many perspectives from the organizations making reports to the Cabinet. I would like to share some of the comments from our statewide association.

The overriding principle of the Association has been that only together can we address our growth needs, especially when it comes to providing more transportation infrastructure throughout the State. We urged the Governor to work through the existing regional organizations, where local governments have the largest voice in the transportation planning process.

In regard to transportation, we described the upcoming Reconnaissance and Framework Study. This statewide effort, conducted jointly by Councils of Governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), will identify the choke points in the state highway system that need relief. Conducting this effort will require the development of a preliminary statewide modeling tool that will provide some basic statewide transportation information. The study will also identify high growth areas in the state for future, more detailed, framework studies. We are planning to have the major working papers available from the study by the end of 2007.

Another topic involved the establishment of an Arizona Growth Office. Through an Executive Order, the Governor established the Arizona Data Estimates and Projections Task Force. A key recommendation of the Task Force is to create an independent State Demographer's Office. The office would increase the professional capacity and capability for the state to improve the population estimates and projection work in Arizona. We suggested that the state demographer be a part of a broader Arizona Growth Office, and that this office be given responsibility to coordinate growth issues from the various state agencies. We believe this would greatly increase coordination on growth issues among state agencies and would serve as a key agency to conduct research on growth issues.

We also discussed the need to increase the planning capability of the State Land Department. It is interesting to note that Yavapai, Maricopa, Pinal and Pima Counties will account for 85 percent of the state's growth. Of the one-third of the land that is available for development in these four counties, more than 50 percent is State Trust Land. To avoid developments leaping over State Trust Land, the Land Department needs the necessary planning resources to make the land available.

These were just a few of the ideas that were submitted at the Listening Session. We are encouraged that the Growth Cabinet requested input from the regional planning organizations.

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

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Action Items



Regional Council Receives Update on Air Quality Plans

The MAG Regional Council received an update on a number of air quality issues, including two air quality plans that are due to the Environmental Protection Agency in 2007.

The Maricopa Association of Governments has until the end of the year to submit a plan to the Environmental Protection Agency outlining how the region will cut PM-10 particulate pollution emissions by five percent each year until the particulate standard is met. This "Five Percent Plan" is expected to include aggressive measures for reducing particulate pollution in the Valley. The MAG Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee has been working on identifying recommended measures to reduce particulate pollution. If the region fails to produce a plan that reduces PM-10 emissions and meets federal requirements, future sanctions could include the loss of millions of dollars in federal transportation funding. In order to inform the public about ways to reduce dust pollution, Maricopa County has implemented a "Bring Back Blue" public education campaign that was also highlighted at the meeting.

In addition to the Five Percent Plan, the Eight-Hour Ozone Plan is due to the EPA by June 15, 2007. In order to be in attainment, the region will need clean data at the monitors in 2006, 2007, and 2008. To date, the region has two years

of data with no violating monitors. Based upon preliminary modeling data, it appears that existing measures may be sufficient to attain the standard.

In other air quality developments, a recent court ruling vacated the EPA's Phase 1 Eight-Hour Ozone Implementation Rule, which included the classification of the nonattainment areas. Also, in January 2007, an Air Quality Executive Order was issued which required the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to develop an Air Quality Improvement Action Plan by March 31, 2007 and to develop requirements for state agency Air Quality Impact Reports on proposed State funded transportation projects in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties.

The Executive Order requires each jurisdiction that receives funds from ADOT for road construction, expansion, modification, or repairs within Maricopa County to certify annually to ADOT that, during the preceding 12 month period, the jurisdiction has met its commitments under the State Implementation Plan. These commitments are PM-10 efficient vacuum street sweepers at least weekly, to pave roads, alleys and shoulders (including quantifying the paving) and to install curbing.

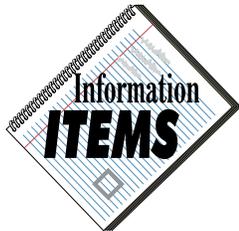
For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Services Manager, 602-254-6300.

Regional Office Center

MAG staff presented information to the Regional Council on the proposed Regional Office Center. The regional center would house the Maricopa Association of Governments, the Regional Public Transit Authority (Valley Metro) as well as Valley Metro Rail (METRO). In March 2006, the MAG Regional Council approved the preliminary site selection of the McKinley and 1st Avenue site and authorized MAG to obtain financial, legal and program management services for the Regional Office Center. Since that time, MAG staff and the partnering agencies have worked with the developer and the architects to complete a schematic design package. A value engineering process was performed to develop an estimated cost for the Regional Office Center.

On January 8, 2007, the MAG Executive Committee and Building Lease Working Group (BLWG) were jointly given an update on the cost estimate based on the schematic design package. The Executive Committee and the BLWG suggested that staff move forward to the boards of directors of the partnering agencies with the cost estimates. The item was on the partnering agencies, Management Committee and Board of Directors meeting agendas for February. The Management Committees for all three agencies recommended

moving forward with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). They also requested additional information on the fiscal impact as well as the impact on funding sources. A workshop was recommended and held March 5, 2007 to help answer additional questions regarding the proposed building. **For more information, please contact Denise McClafferty, MAG Management Analyst, (602) 254-6300.**



Information Items

Update on Development of the Draft MAG FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget

The Regional Council received an update on the FY2008 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. Each year, the MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget is developed in conjunction with member agency and public input. The Work Program is reviewed each year by the federal agencies in the spring and scheduled for approval by the Regional Council in May. The Regional Council received an overview of the proposed budget production timeline, which provides an opportunity for early input into the development of the Work Program and Budget, as well as an overview of MAG's proposed new projects and estimated dues and assessments. Proposed new projects include, among others, a Transportation Safety training for school crossing guards, plans for commuter rail corridor development, and bicycle design assistance programs.

For more information, please contact Becky Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, 2007, at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include recommended approval of the proposed Regional Economic and Growth Outcomes work plan; recommended approval of the July 1, 2006 Maricopa County and Municipality Resident Populations Updates; consideration of proposed conformity processes for the 2007 MAG Conformity Analysis; consultation regarding potentially Regionally Significant Projects of the FY 2008-2012 MAG Transportation Improvement Plan; budget update; discussion of response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Congestion Initiative; discussion and approval of the Suggested List of Measures to Reduce PM-10 Particulate Matter; and a recommendation to authorize MAG to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding for the Regional Office Center.

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