



Executive Director's Report

Compromise was the byword at a special meeting of the MAG Regional Council on September 6, 2007. Regional cooperation prevailed as the Council reached agreement on the distribution of interest reimbursement for the acceleration of the I-10 widening project in the West Valley. The Council agreed to provide 70 percent (\$7 million) of the funding available through the Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN) subaccount to reimburse participating West Valley cities for their share of the interest costs for the acceleration. Thirty percent (\$3 million) was allocated to the Regional Freeway Program to cover a portion of the Arizona Department of Transportation's share of interest costs for the project.

The I-10 widening issue was technically complex with policy issues on both sides of the debate. I would like to commend the members of the Regional Council for agreeing to hold a special meeting to further address the concerns of the West Valley communities. All of the Regional Council members realized that the I-10 widening issue addressed a serious safety issue and worked diligently to reach a solution.

To the credit of the Regional Council members, they were passionate and articulate in their debate. Many times, the cooperation that was present in building the Regional Transportation Plan was mentioned, and I believe this spirit of cooperation will continue to be the mainstay of this region in implementing the Plan.

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

Regional Council Meeting Report for Thursday, September 6, 2007

Action Items



Regional Council Approves Interest Reimbursement for I-10 Widening

The MAG Regional Council approved a motion to provide 70 percent of the Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN II) subaccount funding to be used to reimburse the cities for their interest costs to accelerate the widening of Interstate 10. The action reduces the cities' obligation from \$9.7 million to \$2.7 million, to be paid over seven years. The action supersedes a motion approved on August 22, 2007, which would have provided 60 percent of the funding to reimburse the cities and 40 percent to the Regional Freeway Program.

As part of the FY 2008 state budget, the Arizona State Legislature transferred \$62 million from the State Highway Fund to the State Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN) account. In House Bill 2793, the Legislature established a subaccount for the reimbursement of interest expenses incurred by or on behalf of a local jurisdiction for the acceleration of transportation projects. The bill allocated \$10 million from the \$31.2 million in funding given to the MAG region for this purpose.

The law requires that, for a project to be eligible for reimbursement of the interest cost, an agreement needs to be in place with at least one other city or county, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the regional planning agency.

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

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, August 22, 2007

Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer Appointed to TPC

The Regional Council ratified the appointment of Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer to fill the unexpired portion of the geographic balance seat on the Transportation Policy Committee. The seat became vacant when committee member Cliff Elkins stepped down from the Surprise City Council to run for mayor. Council Member Elkins was required by law to resign his seat and council-related duties. Mayor Shafer's name was put forward by West Valley Mayors to fill the seat.

The Transportation Policy Committee comprises both elected officials and members of the private sector. The 23-member body makes recommendations on regional transportation issues, including the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), amendments to the TIP and Plan, material cost changes to the Regional Freeway Program, and accelerations to the freeway program.

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

Material Change to Purchase the Mesa Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility

The Regional Council approved an amendment to the MAG Regional Transportation Plan and FY 2008 to 2012 Transportation Improvement Program to allow for the purchase of the Mesa Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility. The material cost change was requested by the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) after it evaluated a number of options, including continuing to lease the facility from the City of Mesa. The RPTA determined that the best fiscal option was to purchase the facility.

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

Right-of-Way Approved for I-10 Reliever

The Regional Council concurred with proposed changes to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Program to advance right-of-way acquisition in the SR 801 (I-10 Reliever) corridor. In addition, the Regional Council approved implementation of a design-build project on the Red Mountain Freeway to be initiated in FY 2008.

The SR 801 request increases funding from \$3 million to \$15 million for right-of-way protection in FY 2008 for future freeway construction in the I-10 Reliever corridor. The Red Mountain Freeway request implements a \$185 million design-build project in which funding would be provided from six previously programmed projects for the freeway, which has been scheduled for fiscal years 2008-2011. MAG staff reviewed the program changes and determined that they are reasonable, benefit the overall implementation of the Regional Freeway Program, and can be accomplished within available ADOT cash flows.

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

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, September 26, 2007, at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include, among others, a reexamination of the MAG Highway Acceleration Policy; a discussion regarding how to work with state and federal legislative partners when funding is assigned to the MAG transportation program; an update on the Commuter Rail Strategic Plan; a presentation on the Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Transportation Framework Study; an update on the Youth Empowerment Project to address dating violence; and two Draft MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan amendments for the Hassayampa Utility Company for its northeast and southwest service areas.

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