



Executive Director's Report

At the March Regional Council meeting, I briefly commented on the work being developed by the MAG staff and our consultant, Sierra Research, to encourage the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to not count high wind events as exceedances at the West 43rd Avenue monitor. This has been a group effort, with MAG working with Maricopa County and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that the 2008 year is counted as a clean year for air quality. This is necessary to attain the standard, which requires three years of clean data at the monitors (2008, 2009, 2010). What is at stake is tighter controls on major industries and ultimately a potential loss of billions of dollars in federal highway funds.

The MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10 was submitted to the EPA on time. We believe the Plan could be considered a national model and many cities have actually exceeded their commitments. EPA did not act on the Plan, resulting in the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest filing a suit against the EPA for not taking action on the Plan. The EPA is currently reviewing the Plan and the monitoring information, and has expressed concerns regarding potential exceedances at the West 43rd Avenue monitor. We believe these potential exceedances are caused by high winds and should be considered exceptional events.

We hope that the EPA will closely consider the scientific data and determine that all exceedances were the result of exceptional events, and decide to approve the MAG Five Percent Plan. If not, our region could find itself threatened with a transportation funding crisis.

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

Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, March 31, 2010

Action Items



Transit Framework Study Findings Accepted

In cooperation with MAG member agencies, the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), and Valley Metro Rail (METRO), MAG has developed a Regional Transit Framework to identify regional transit needs beyond the current Regional Transportation Plan. The framework provides decision makers with a comprehensive perspective on the costs, schedules, trade-offs, impacts and policy implications of three distinct transit investment scenarios for year 2030. In addition, the framework defines more conceptual transit needs for year 2050.

The MAG Regional Council voted to accept the finding of the Regional Transit Framework as the public transportation framework for the MAG region. It also accepted the “Illustrative Transit Corridors” map for inclusion as unfunded regional transit illustrative corridors in the Regional Transportation Plan. Finally, the Council agreed to consider future planning actions identified in the study through the MAG Unified Planning Work Program process. The study documents are available on the Web at www.bqaz.org.

For more information, please contact Kevin Wallace, MAG Transit Planning Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.

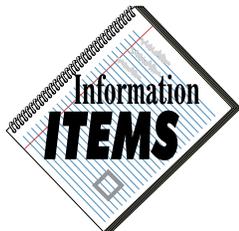
Approval of Transit Planning Agreement

A transit planning agreement (memorandum of understanding) that was developed among MAG, the Regional Public Transportation Authority and Valley Metro Rail has been approved by the Regional Council. The approval means the agreement will be sent to the Federal Transit Administration and included in the fiscal year 2011 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. The transit agreement discusses transit planning, programming and funding allocation. It also addresses the local role when conducting a Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis.

The approval of the agreement follows previous action in February in which the Council approved draft language for legislation that seeks to align MAG’s federal transit planning roles and responsibilities with state statutes.

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

Information Items



Financial Planning and Federal Funds Update

An update was provided to the Regional Council regarding a variety of fiscal issues. Federal transportation planning regulations require that the MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan demonstrate that adequate funding is available to build, operate and maintain transportation projects. The Federal Transit Administration is now requesting MAG to concur with grant requests that involve new or expanded service or new capital fixed assets, and to state that sufficient financial resources are available at the regional or local level to operate and maintain the assets for any grant being submitted. MAG staff reported that MAG is working to collect and analyze the necessary financial information to allow such determinations to be made.

MAG staff reported that issues related to MAG receiving financial information from ADOT to determine the status of remaining federal fund balances have been resolved. Of concern was the status of approximately \$40 to \$50 million that MAG carried forward from FY 2009 to FY 2010. Staff reported that MAG had received an updated financial report from ADOT showing that MAG has approximately \$48 million in obligation authority that was carried forward to FY 2010. The

apportionment that went with this funding was part of the federal rescission in September 2009 and is no longer available. However, the carry forward funds may be available through new apportionments for this fiscal year as a result of recent Congressional action to continue the transportation program through 2010.

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

Census 2010 Update

The U.S. Constitution requires a count of every person living in the United States every 10 years. On March 15, 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau mailed census questionnaires to 135 million households. Approximately \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year based on population data. In Arizona, approximately \$8 billion in federal funding and an additional \$1 billion in state shared revenue are distributed based on census counts. The Maricopa Association of Governments has been working closely with the Census Bureau to provide information to member agencies to assist them in developing strategies to encourage census response, with a primary goal of increasing the initial mailback response rates. To help identify areas where census response is slow, the Census Bureau developed an online, real time map to assist cities in tracking daily response totals. This tool will enable communities to target efforts in areas where response is slow. A link to this "Take 10" map is available on the home page at www.MAGcensus.com.

People who have questions about the form or who need help answering questions may call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance number toll free at 1-866-872-6868.

For more information, please contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include a presentation summarizing public comment received during the fiscal year 2010 MAG Mid-Phase Public Input Opportunity; recommended approval for conformity analysis of the Draft MAG Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update and for the Draft FY 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program; recommended priority listing of applicants for Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Transportation Program; requests from the City of Peoria and the Town of Buckeye to add three projects to the federal functional classification system; potential changes to the transit allocation methodology for proposed federal economic stimulus legislation due to loss of Local Transportation Assistance Funds; Interim Closeout of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2010 MAG Federally Funded Program; a discussion of a new law governing the use of public private partnerships and an update on the development of the FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget.

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