



## **Interim Executive Director's Report**

With the appointment of the Transportation Policy Committee, MAG has launched the policy process that will set the course for future generations for determining transportation investments for the region. It is expected that within the next 12 months, the newly-created Transportation Policy Committee will develop a plan delineating the investments for the extension of the one-half cent sales tax for transportation. Approval of the extension in 2004 will be necessary for maintaining mobility in the region.

This is one of the largest overhauls ever undertaken of the MAG transportation plan – and represents an exciting point in our transportation history. But assembling a transportation plan takes a lot of behind-the-scenes coordination to ensure that all elements are included and considered.

There is no doubt that the year ahead will be a busy one. The development of the plan will be supported through a variety of MAG activities. MAG is wrapping up a series of vital transportation studies, including three subarea studies, an east-west mobility study, a freeway bottleneck study, a high-capacity transit study, and more. The information collected in these studies will be analyzed to determine the most pressing transportation needs for this region. The Transportation Policy Committee will be able to use this information to develop the investments that will serve as the basis for the new Regional Transportation Plan.

Another crucial component in development of the plan will come through MAG's preparation of new population and employment projections. MAG staff will be working hard over the next few months to develop the projections, which will provide important information as to the number of new residents who will need to be served by our transportation system, as well as data projecting the employment centers that will serve as travel destinations. Final approval of the projections is anticipated next summer.

Our Environmental Services Division will continue to work with the Transportation Division to ensure that the new Regional Transportation Plan conforms to federal air quality requirements. This "conformity analysis" is expected to be completed by January 2003.

All of these efforts will be additionally supported by MAG's ongoing efforts in its other planning areas.

We have a lot to do in the months ahead. We recognize that the work we will be doing in a relatively short time frame will impact this region for decades to come, but we're confident that through our expanded regional partnerships and ongoing cooperation, we will leave a legacy that includes sustained mobility as part of the high quality of life we enjoy here in the Valley of the Sun.



## **Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, July 24, 2002**

### **\$4.5 Billion Transportation Improvement Program Approved**

Each year MAG develops a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that lists all major transportation-related projects in the MAG region for the next five years. In April, the Regional Council approved the Draft FY 2003-2007 TIP for the purpose of conducting an analysis to ensure the plan conformed to all applicable air quality plans. The analysis is now complete, and the council approved the plan contingent upon a finding of conformity by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, in conjunction with the EPA.

The TIP includes a total of 1,264 projects, including 948 highway projects costing more than \$3.2 billion, and 316 transit projects costing more than \$1.3 billion.

**For more information, please contact Paul Ward, MAG Transportation Programming Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Long Range Transportation Plan 2002 Update Approved**

Along with the Transportation Improvement Program outlined above, which includes projects to be built over the next five years, each year MAG also updates its long-range transportation plan, which guides transportation projects for the next 20 years. Key items addressed in the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan 2002 Update include extending the time horizon to 2022, adding a half-diamond interchange on the Agua Fria Freeway at Bethany Home, and incorporating the West Valley Multi-modal Transportation Corridor Plan. The Regional Council unanimously approved the Long Range Transportation Plan 2002 Update, which will eventually be integrated into the new Regional Transportation Plan that is currently underway and scheduled for completion in 2003.

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

### **Final Phase Input Opportunity Solicits Citizen Input**

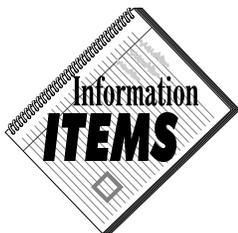
Bike safety, light rail routes, expanded bus service, and bus rapid transit were just a few of the issues touched on by citizens attending events held as part of MAG's Final Phase Input Opportunity. The comments are detailed in the FY 2002 Final Phase Input Opportunity Report.

The first opportunity for input on state and regional transportation plans came in June through a "MAG at the Mall" event held at Arizona Mills Mall in Tempe. Staff members from MAG, the Arizona Department of Transportation, Valley Metro and Valley Connections were on hand to distribute information and answer questions about freeways, light rail and bus service.

A more formal opportunity for citizen input came July 1, 2002, during an open house and public hearing held at the MAG offices. During the open house, citizens were given the opportunity to ask questions and fill out comment cards. At the public hearing, presentations were given on MAG's short- and long-range transportation plans, as well as on an air quality analysis of the plans. A court reporter was in attendance to record all comments. A transcript of the hearing and staff responses to the comments are included in the Final Phase Input Opportunity Report.

A presentation outlining input received during the final phase was given to the Regional Council July 24. The MAG Regional Council voted to accept the report, which is available for review on the MAG Web site at [www.mag.maricopa.gov](http://www.mag.maricopa.gov).

**For more information, please contact Jason Stephens, MAG Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.**



### **Information Items**

#### **County Provides Update on Dust Control Efforts**

Maricopa County has stepped up enforcement against violators who fail to comply with dust control measures, according to Environmental Services Division Director Al Brown. In a presentation to the MAG Regional Council, Brown reported that there were 1,404 citizen complaints assigned in 2001. There were 906 notices of violation issued, and 238 of the cases were referred to the county attorney. These cases resulted in more than \$333,000 in penalties. Along with the stronger enforcement efforts, Brown said the county is

working to revise the “microscale” plan dealing with dust pollution, because an air-quality monitor in the Salt River bottom continues to record levels higher than allowed by federal law.

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

### **MAG Hosts Storm Water Management Discussion Group**

During a recent discussion with city and town managers, it was suggested that it would be valuable for MAG to form an informal group to work with the Maricopa County Flood Control District on storm water management issues such as best practices, public education and outreach.

The Environmental Protection Agency has established a March 10, 2003 deadline for small municipal separate storm sewer systems to submit storm water permit applications and meet specific application requirements. The federal program now contains storm water program requirements for many MAG jurisdictions that were not previously subject to the requirements. Member agencies requested that MAG staff collect and distribute information to assist them in meeting the new requirements.

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



### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Agency Stakeholders Meeting Scheduled**

Each year, staff from the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Valley Metro and Valley Connections (the light rail project provider) come together to co-host a meeting designed to share information on transportation projects with MAG member agency representatives and stakeholders in the Valley.

This meeting kicks off the most important of MAG’s cooperative four-phase public input process – the early input phase – which allows for input before the submission of transportation projects. Stakeholders and the public are encouraged to come and provide comments and suggestions, which are especially critical in the development of the new Regional Transportation Plan. If you are interested in attending, please e-mail Public Involvement Planner Jason Stephens at [jstephens@mag.maricopa.gov](mailto:jstephens@mag.maricopa.gov) or contact him at the number below.

**For more information, please contact Jason Stephens, MAG Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

There will be no August meeting of the Regional Council. The next Regional Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 25, 2002 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are pending.

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