



## Executive Director's Report

The December Regional Council meeting featured many voices being heard from the Council regarding the possibility of joining with the city of Phoenix in establishing an in-market trade, investment and tourism office in Mexico City. The discussion was not centered on the amount of money (\$25,000), it was about the appropriate role for MAG in pursuing this endeavor. The discussion brought the group back to considering the purpose of MAG. Is it primarily transportation, air quality, etc., or does MAG have a broader mission? I was impressed when Mayor Michael LeVault opened up the MAG Articles of Incorporation and read from MAG's purposes as a council of governments that predated our role as a metropolitan planning organization.

The articles state that MAG is to facilitate agreements among the governmental units for specific projects or other interrelated developmental actions or for the adoption of common policies with respect to problems which are common to its members. Another purpose is to attain the greatest degree of intergovernmental cooperation possible in order to prepare for future growth and development of the Phoenix urban area.

How do the articles relate to the discussion of an office in Mexico City? MAG's core mission as a metropolitan planning organization is transportation planning and the related socioeconomic and air quality analyses that support that mission. Due to the recession, MAG cut more than \$6.9 billion from the Regional Freeway Program. Transportation is dependent upon a vibrant, diversified economy. Working with Mexico is one way to diversify the economy to support transportation investments.

The discussion around investing in the Mexico City office with the city of Phoenix was a great example of the region working as a council of governments to support the mission of MAG as a metropolitan planning organization. This is a new direction for MAG. Our sister agency, the San Diego Association of Governments, is already very active in creating a megaregion that stretches into Baja Mexico. Looking beyond our metropolitan planning area is essential in our quest to be globally competitive.

I greatly appreciated the healthy discussion from all sides and the decision to proceed in partnering with the city of Phoenix in establishing the office in Mexico City. Regional Council members supporting the motion said the partnership will

help drive investment and tourism opportunities not just to Phoenix, but to the entire state of Arizona. The MAG Economic Development Committee recognized that in order to increase funding for the transportation slice of the funding pie, you need to grow the whole pie.

The motion that was passed included a recommendation that specific goals be developed to include measurable results, with progress reviewed in one year. We look forward to seeing the results as well as our continued progress in all of our border trade efforts.

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

## **Meeting Report for Wednesday, December 4, 2013**

### **Action Items**

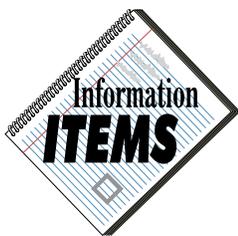


#### **Establishment of an In-Market Trade, Investment and Tourism Office in Mexico City**

As noted above, the city of Phoenix is seeking partners in establishing an in-market trade, investment and tourism office in Mexico City. The partners will include public and private sector organizations. It is anticipated that a consultant/contractor would be selected to provide a physical presence for the partners in Mexico City. A request for proposals is expected to be sent out in December by the city of Phoenix. In a vote of 22-3-1, Regional Council members approved the motion to provide \$25,000 to Phoenix to partner in the establishment of a trade office, including a recommendation that specific goals and measurable results be included with progress reviewed in one year.

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

### **Information Items**



#### **Winter Holiday No Burn Campaign**

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Maricopa County Air Quality Department have developed a Winter Holiday No Burn Campaign designed to reduce concentrations of small particulates (PM-2.5) during the winter holiday season. The campaign is an outreach effort to prevent the region from becoming a nonattainment area for this pollutant. Historically, the Valley has exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's 24-hour PM-2.5 standard over weekends and on holidays during the time period between late November and early January. The principal cause has been wood smoke from fires that are lit at gatherings or in celebration of the season.

The campaign will include traditional billboards that say, “No Burn Day? Don’t Burn Wood,” as well as electronic billboards that will notify motorists that a No Burn Day is in effect. Posters include the slogan, “Don’t let our air go up in smoke,” and handouts are available that describe what is and is not allowable on No Burn Days. Television and radio public service announcements will also be aired. Maricopa County has toolkit materials available on its website for member agencies to download and use. Visit <http://www.CleanAirMakeMore.com> to access the toolkit or for more information.

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

### **2013 Annual Report on the Status of the Implementation of Proposition 400**

Proposition 400 was approved by the voters of Maricopa County in November 2004, which authorized the extension of a half-cent sales tax for transportation. State law requires that MAG issue an annual report on projects included in the Regional Transportation Plan funded by Proposition 400, addressing factors such as project status, funding and priorities. The 2013 Annual Report is the ninth report in the series and covers the status of the life cycle programs for freeways/highways, arterial streets, and public transit. The full report is available on the MAG website at <http://www.azmag.gov/Projects/Project.asp?CMSID2=1126>

**For more information, please contact Roger Herzog, MAG Senior Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Draft Primary Freight Network**

In November, the United States Department of Transportation released the official designation of the Primary Freight Network as required in the federal transportation legislation (MAP-21). The public will have 30 days to comment on this notice and the Federal Highway Administration is seeking comments in five areas:

- Specific route deletions, additions, or modifications to the draft initial designation of the highway Primary Freight Network.
- The methodology for achieving a 27,000-mile final designation.
- How the National Freight Network and its components could be used by freight stakeholders in the future.
- How the National Freight Network may fit into a multimodal National Freight System.
- Suggestions for an urban-area route designation process.

Comments are due by December 18, 2013. The final initial Highway Primary Freight Network is scheduled for release in early 2014.

**For more information, please contact Tim Strow, MAG Transportation Planner, (602) 254-6300.**

## **Videos Encourage Residents to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle During the Holidays**

Americans produce 25 percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than they do at all other times of the year. Much of that waste is the direct result of holiday festivities. Items such as gift wrap, shipping materials and packaging, holiday cards, and disposable dinnerware from holiday parties all end up in landfills. The Regional Council heard an update regarding a series of MAG videos that were produced in cooperation with its Solid Waste Advisory Committee and the Valleywide Recycling Partnership.

Cities and towns receive more calls with questions on recycling during the holiday season than any other time of year. The six videos are geared to address some of the common questions residents have about reducing trash during the holidays. The fast-paced and fun 30-second videos encourage residents to "Think Before You Shop" and give tips for how to "reduce, reuse, and recycle" this holiday season. The videos are designed to get people thinking about ways to reduce the amount of trash generated as they plan their holiday activities.

The six videos discuss disposable dinnerware, gift wrap, greeting cards, foam packing, cardboard, and plastic bags. For example, more than two billion holiday cards are sold in the U.S. each year—enough to stack a football field 10 stories high. The video provides information on innovative ways to reuse holiday cards, especially when cards with glitter or foil most often cannot be recycled.

Since recycling programs may vary from community to community, residents are encouraged to contact their local jurisdiction for specific information on the program in their area. A new website, <http://recycle.azmag.gov>, was developed to provide contact information for the communities in the region and serve as a landing page for the videos.

**For more information, please contact Julie Hoffman, Environmental Planning Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be Wednesday, January 29, 2014, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are pending.

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