



Executive Director's Report

The October Regional Council meeting was special, as we reported that projects that the MAG staff had worked on diligently for months—and in some cases, years—came to fruition. I was reminded of one of my favorite movies, “Being There,” where an analogy between gardening and the economy was made. In the movie, the main character, a gardener, states, “As long as the roots are not severed, all is well, and all is well in the garden.” This is true of our region. Our roots are not severed; the efforts by the state, regional and local agencies demonstrate that this region is coming back from the recession.

Among the projects that we celebrated in October was the formal launch of BIEN—Building an International Economic Network—to help connect businesses in Arizona, Canada and Mexico. The project involves a new website, www.ConnectBIEN.com, which uses technology instead of travel to “cross” the Mexican and Canadian borders. BIEN gives us a presence in cyberspace where the global economy lives.

The launch of the BIEN site was truly a group effort. A number of MAG divisions were involved in the success of BIEN. The MAG Information Technology Division led the way in building the platform. The Information Services Division provided the databases and support needed to build the platform. The result is a first-of-its-kind website that relies on an extensive database to help small and medium sized businesses directly connect to others in their supply chain and distribution networks. In other words, they can “fish” for partners across borders without a middleman. The site already has registered more than 500 businesses.

Another success noted at the meeting was the strategic expansion of Arizona’s presence and investment in Mexico with the opening of the Arizona State Trade and Investment Office, which received a portion of funding from MAG. Thanks to the City of Phoenix and the Arizona Commerce Authority, the office is a reality. It was not that long ago that we received the report from the Thunderbird School of Global Management noting that we had no presence in Mexico and that the state of Texas was ahead of us in developing economic ties with Mexico. Now, that has changed.

None of these projects would be possible without the energy, commitment and support provided by the MAG Regional Council and the MAG Economic

Development Committee. Thank you for supporting key economic development projects at MAG.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Action Items

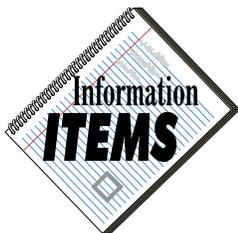


Service Contract for 9-1-1

The Regional Council was provided an update regarding a new managed services model being proposed by the State 9-1-1 Office, which is proposing that the fee for 9-1-1 services and equipment be changed to a bundled monthly fee. The monthly fee would include 9-1-1 equipment, maintenance and networking costs. The MAG 9-1-1 Oversight Team has noted some concerns over the proposal, and recommended that a study be conducted to provide an overview of the fiscal and technical status of regional and statewide 9-1-1 and an analysis of the 9-1-1 managed services proposal. While the bundled services proposal includes a number of benefits, such as a consistent budget and a digital network that is needed for communications such as text to 9-1-1, concerns raised by the committee included questions regarding the competitive bidding process, reliability of the proposed system, increased costs to member agencies, and whether the service will meet the needs of the Maricopa Region 9-1-1 system. The Regional Council approved the issuance of a Request for Qualifications to conduct the study.

For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, MAG Government Relations Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Information Items



Outcome of the Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study

The Regional Council received an update on the findings of the Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study, which was recently completed to identify long-range transportation needs for the center of the MAG region. The study encompasses an area bounded by Loop 101 on the north, east and west, and the Gila River Indian Community on the south. After significant outreach, stakeholder meetings, geographic dialogues, planning charettes and 14 Planning Partner events, the project has identified varying transportation opportunities to meet future transportation needs. Highlights of major findings include:

- A recommendation that an extension of Arizona State Route 30 be considered. SR-30 originally was planned as the I-10 Reliever Freeway in the West Valley. The study identified that unacceptable levels of congestion are expected on I-10 within the next 10-15 years. The recommendation was

to test an extension of SR 30 for about five miles, from Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway to I-17 at the Durango Curve.

- Twelve recommended locations for Direct High Occupancy Vehicle (DHOV) ramps were identified, including a potential location at Mountain View Road and I-17, which is near Metrocenter and the light rail extension.
- The study also looked at how the DHOVs can become hubs for park-n-ride lots and what cities can consider for development patterns around these traffic interchanges to encourage ridesharing and transit use.
- The study recommended that possibilities be explored for regional operations and maintenance funding. Study consultants demonstrated that fixing problems early can cost much less than if the problems are allowed to exacerbate over time.
- The study examined 66 railroad crossings. Nine locations were determined to be feasible for grade separation. The study also recommends other intersection improvements at more than 100 locations throughout the Central Phoenix area to improve travel mobility and efficiency.
- The framework study additionally analyzed recommendations from other related studies, including the US-60/Grand Avenue COMPASS Study, MAG Managed Lanes Network Development Strategy, The I-10/I-17 Corridor Master Plan and the Downtown Phoenix Core Connections and Operations Study. That study examined transit connections, changing one-way traffic patterns, expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities and converting Central Avenue to a transit/bicycle/pedestrian mall.

The study findings are being used to inform the development of the NextGen Regional Transportation Plan. The study started with a network of more than 200 projects, including bicycle, pedestrian, arterial, freeway interchange and transit projects. For more findings from the study, visit bqaz.org.

For more information, please contact Bob Hazlett, Senior Engineering Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.

FY 2015 Regional Freeway and Highway Program Update

The Regional Council received an update on the FY 2015 Regional Freeway and Highway Program. Staff reported that in October 2009 and May 2012, the Regional Council approved scenarios to balance an estimated combined \$6.9 billion shortfall in the program due to cost overruns and revenue shortfalls. In light of the rebalancing efforts, MAG and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) have made significant progress in delivering the \$9 billion program for meeting the region's transportation demand. The update included information on the program's implementation, including financial and construction updates.

Staff reported that during the beginning of the recession in 2007-2008, cost opinions provided by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) for the program

had ballooned to nearly \$16 billion. In order to balance the program to be more reflective of revenues during the recession, the Regional Council rebalanced the program, taking it down to \$9.4 billion. Another rebalancing effort in 2012 brought the cost to \$9.1 billion. Despite the revenue challenges, staff noted that the program is approximately 50 percent complete and the total cost is approximately \$8.9 billion.

Regional projects that have been completed since 2006 include State Route 24, the Loop 303/I-10 traffic interchange, and 13 new miles on Loop 303. Staff reported that 375 general purpose lane miles (52 percent) out of a planned 720 miles have been completed, while 215 high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane miles out of a planned 360 miles have been completed, for a total of 59 new miles. The HOV network in our region is the fourth largest in the nation, while the direct HOV (DHOV) network, which allows for seamless transitions between freeways, is the largest such network in the U.S.

Projects under construction include the Loop 303 and adding general purpose lanes to Loop 101 in Scottsdale and to Loop 202 between Loop 101 and Broadway Road. Additional HOV lanes are also expected on Loop 202, which will complete the HOV system on the Santan Freeway. An I-10 widening project on I-10 from the Pecos Stack to Riggs Road is also planned. Improvements on US-60 Grand Avenue include intersection improvements at Bell Road, Thunderbird Road, and a grade separation in Surprise. Work is underway on Loop 303 south of I-10 to MC-85. In addition, a near-term improvement strategy on I-10/I-17 (known as the Spine) has been identified to help accelerate improvements. Also planned for construction is the Loop 202/South Mountain Freeway. The Final Environmental Impact Statement was recently released, and a Record of Decision is anticipated at the end of the year. This freeway project represents one of the largest construction projects in Arizona history.

Staff summarized the program by noting that program expenditures appear to be in line with ADOT cost opinions and cash flow is working well. The next five years represent the highest activity for the program.

For more information, please contact Bob Hazlett, Senior Engineering Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Update on the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest Lawsuit on the MAG 2012 Five Percent Plan for PM-10

At its September meeting, the MAG Regional Council approved an action to allow MAG's Washington legal counsel to file a motion for MAG to intervene on behalf of the respondent (Environmental Protection Agency) in a lawsuit filed by the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. The lawsuit challenges the EPA's approval of the MAG 2012 Five Percent Plan for PM-10. Staff reported that MAG

is working on the motion to intervene. In August, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality filed its own motion to intervene in the lawsuit on behalf of the respondent. In September, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals granted the state's motion to intervene.

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

Next Meeting

There will not be a meeting of the MAG Regional Council in November. The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be Wednesday, December 3, 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.