



Executive Director's Report

During our first Regional Council meeting of the new year, we learned about the many ways MAG is continuing to move this region forward into the future. For example, Transportation for America recently released a guidebook for metropolitan planning organizations called "The Innovative MPO," and highlighted MAG as a national leader and model for other Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Along with praise for the agency's use of innovative modeling tools, MAG was recognized as a national leader in planning for economic competitiveness. Specifically, the report cites the creation of the MAG Economic Development Committee as a best practice and commends MAG for "advancing strategies to ensure that future growth better serves the region's economic and environmental needs."

Some may ask why an agency with a core federal mission of transportation and air quality is focused on economic development. Interestingly, federal transportation law includes an economic goal, stating that transportation should support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency. Transportation infrastructure—including highways and transit—is inextricably tied to our economy. It provides connections to job centers, accommodates freight movements, and promotes business development. A transportation poll conducted by MAG last year found that the public recognizes this link between transportation and the economy, but they indicated they prefer not to fund improvements until the economy has had more time to recover from the recession.

The current half-cent sales tax provides 51.6 percent of the freeway funding in the current Life Cycle Program, and it provides 44.3 percent of transit funding. Growing the economy without new funding sources means that we must find ways to grow exports, promote business retention and expansion, support incubators and explore other best practices. MAG has been able to tap into its data and research capabilities for use in economic development tools, such as our online demographic and employment viewers. Because of our deep analytical "bench," MAG had nine research papers/presentations recently accepted by the Transportation Research Board to promote innovation and progress in transportation through research.

Using these tools, we are able to identify ways to do more with what we have in tough economic times. For example, our analysis found that 69 percent of those graduating from Arizona State University remain in our state. Knowing the fields from which these students are graduating means we can explore ways to prepare

the region to accommodate them. In this way, we have been able to use the power of data analytics to help member agencies make more informed decisions.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Action Items

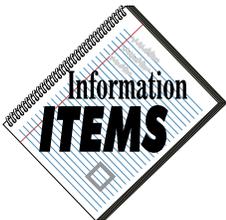


Appointment of Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat to TPC

The MAG Regional Council approved the appointment of Mayor Cathy Carlat to represent the city of Peoria, as one of the seven largest cities/towns, on the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). The composition of the TPC was established by the Regional Council in April 2002 to oversee the development of the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan and to guide transportation planning in the region. The TPC is made up of 23 members representing cities and towns across the region, the business community, the Arizona Department of Transportation, Maricopa County, the Native American Indian Community, and the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee.

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

Information Items



Interstate 10/Interstate 17 Corridor Master Plan Update

The Regional Council received a briefing on the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 Corridor Master Plan Study, a proactive effort to anticipate and respond to future traffic needs along the I-10 and I-17 corridor. This 35-mile long corridor, which extends from the I-17/Loop 101 interchange in the north Valley to the Loop 202 Pecos Stack interchange in the south, has been named the “Spine,” because it serves as the backbone for transportation in the metropolitan Phoenix area. In fact, more than 40 percent of all daily freeway travel uses the Spine Corridor. Staff reported that studying both corridors together means that economies of scale can be realized to establish a common vision and operating principles for accommodating existing and future travel demand.

The Spine Study will integrate information gathered during two previous studies conducted over the past decade. The Spine Study will examine long-term options to improve travel mobility using a combination of traditional methods, new technology and increased use of transit (such as buses). Study recommendations will be programmed in the MAG Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. The current MAG Regional Transportation Plan allocates \$1.47 billion for improvements within the Spine Corridor.

Staff provided a demonstration of a soon-to-be-released online survey through a public outreach tool called MetroQuest. The survey will be used to help identify stakeholder and public priorities for the corridor and to test potential strategies linked to those priorities. Staff also discussed a number of near-term improvements planned in the corridor, including the addition of a lane on outbound Loop 202 from State Route (SR) 51 to US-60; improvements on Interstate 10 between SR-143 and US-60 that include improvements to eliminate severe traffic weaving movements; a bicycle-pedestrian crossing on Alameda Drive to allow Tempe Diablo Stadium traffic to park on both sides of the freeway; another bicycle-pedestrian overcrossing at Guadalupe Road; and reconstructing ramps and adding auxiliary lanes on I-17 between 16th Street and 19th Avenue. Additional strategies being explored are using “active traffic management” techniques such as sign messaging, variable speed limits, and other lane control techniques.

Staff noted that public input is extremely important to the study process. Beginning in early February, community members can complete the online MetroQuest survey to identify their priorities and preferred improvement strategies for the study at spine.azmag.gov. Public meetings also are planned at the following times and locations:

North meeting - Deer Valley Community Center

Thursday, February 26, 2015

6:00-8:00 p.m.

2001 W. Wahalla Ln., Phoenix (south of Loop 101, west of 19th Ave.)

Central meeting - Academia Del Pueblo Elementary School Gymnasium

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

6:00-8:00 p.m.

201 E. Durango St., Phoenix (north of I-17, east of Central Ave.)

South meeting - Four Points by Sheraton, Phoenix South Ballroom

(formerly known as the Grace Inn)

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

6:00-8:00 p.m.

10831 S. 51st St., Phoenix

Members of the public can provide direct input to the study at any time at spine.azmag.gov or email at spine@azmag.gov, calling (602) 759-1916, or writing Spine Study Team, 302 N. 1st Ave, Suite #200, Phoenix, AZ 85003.

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

Discussion of the Development of the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget

Each year, the MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget is developed in conjunction with member agency and public input. The Work Program is reviewed each year by federal agencies in the spring and approved by the Regional Council in May. In January, MAG provides the draft dues and assessments and the proposed budget production timeline. This provides an opportunity for early input into the development of the Work Program and Budget. Staff reported that the FY 2016 draft dues and assessments reflect an estimated 1.62 percent increase from FY 2015. Currently approved population numbers are used to calculate the individual dues and assessments.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services 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

Staff provided an update on the status of a lawsuit on the MAG 2012 Five Percent Plan for PM-10. The U. S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals allowed MAG to submit an intervenor brief for consideration by December 31, 2014, in the lawsuit filed by the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. MAG's legal counsel is closely coordinating with the State of Arizona and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Staff reported that the EPA brief states that the EPA acted reasonably to approve the MAG 2012 Five Percent Plan, met all requirements, and acted reasonably when it approved the plan and the contingency measures included. The State's brief points out that this is the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest's sixth petition on PM-10, and that the Center is following a strategy of "sue and settle." The MAG brief outlines how the MAG plan was developed and demonstrates the intensive process undertaken for documenting exceptional events. Staff reported that the court will decide whether MAG will have a seat at the table as an "intervenor," or if MAG will be considered a "friend of the court," in which it may provide information. At this time, it is unknown when the court will make a decision on the MAG brief.

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

Legislative Update

Staff provided on update on agency efforts to prevent sweeps of the Highway Users Revenue Fund (HURF). MAG reported that, following approval by the MAG Executive Committee, MAG included its signature on a letter to Governor Doug

Ducey and the State Legislature requesting an elimination of transfers from the HURF. The letter notes:

- Since 2001, over \$1.8 billion has been diverted from the HURF.
- FY 2014: \$119 million transferred to support Department of Public Safety (DPS) activities.
- FY 2015: \$96 million transferred; replaced with \$30 million in general fund transfers.

The letter was coordinated by the Rural Transportation Advisory Council and was signed by councils of governments, metropolitan planning organizations, various chambers of commerce, and other interested organizations statewide. Staff noted that last year the MAG Regional Council also sent a letter to the Governor and Legislature requesting that the HURF not be swept above the statutory limit of \$20 million.

Staff reported that Governor Ducey has released a budget proposal that recommends dedicating the motor vehicle registration fee to the DPS and authorizing the director of the Arizona Department of Transportation to determine the amount of the fee, such that total fee collections would cover 50 percent of the cost of highway law enforcement operations. The funding restructure would provide approximately \$65 million for DPS in FY 2016, saving the General Fund \$30 million and leaving the overall funding amount for DPS unchanged.

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

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be Wednesday, February 25, 2015, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are expected to include an update on the FY 2016 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, an update on the Regional Community Network, and a presentation regarding domestic violence arrest data. Additional agenda items are pending.

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