



Executive Director's Report

The September Regional Council meeting proved to be a great example of the concept of "regional accommodation." The special census item and the provisions of House Bill (HB) 2617 were especially complex.

Since the 1970s, state-shared revenues have been distributed using decennial or special census population numbers. Because of the length of time between decennial censuses, our rapidly growing region has relied on mid-decade counts (and in 2005, a census survey) to update population numbers. Due to the high cost of mid-decade counts and new procedures that do not allow census surveys, it was determined that a regionwide special census would not be conducted. This year, seven Valley cities opted to conduct their own special census counts. Following the expenditures by the cities to conduct their own censuses, efforts were launched to explore legislation that would allow the use of state or federal estimates to allocate the funding.

The challenge for MAG was to find an accommodation for the seven cities that had already proceeded with a special census and to work with all of the cities in Arizona for a legislative solution. A sub-group of city managers agreed that the cities proceeding with a mid-decade special census would receive 50 percent of their costs incurred through a special fund that would be created at MAG for reimbursement purposes. The seven cities can use these funds for transportation projects that will help defray the special census costs. The support of the Regional Council for this solution was greatly appreciated.

Another issue requiring an accommodation involved having Proposition 400 transportation sales tax monies diverted to fund the Arizona Department of Revenue (ADOR). Provisions in HB 2617 directed \$2.58 million from MAG and nearly \$500,000 from the Pima Association of Governments each year to fund ADOR operations. MAG Chair W.J. "Jim" Lane and other elected officials have been working closely with the Governor's Office to work cooperatively to resolve the funding issue. We remain optimistic that a solution can be found by working with the Governor's Office and State Legislature. We appreciate René Guillen from the Governor's Office discussing with the Regional Council ways to eliminate the diversion of MAG sales tax funds to ADOR.

The Regional Council meeting displayed how the MAG member agencies can work together to address challenging issues. One of the Regional Council members

noted at the meeting that it was similar to how the MAG member agencies worked together to implement the 9-1-1 system in the MAG region. The MAG 9-1-1 system celebrated its 30th year of implementation this September.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Action Items



Request for Second Deferral for Phoenix Multiuse Path Project

The Regional Council approved a request from the city of Phoenix to defer for two years its Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 multiuse path construction project on the Grand Canal near Indian School Road and 16th Street. This project was previously deferred from FY 2014 to FY 2015, the current request was to defer it to FY 2017.

The MAG federal programming guidelines require approval through the MAG Committee process for a second deferral of a project. To receive a second deferral, the project sponsor must establish that the cause of the project deferral was beyond the control of the project sponsor and that the sponsor has identified the problem causing the delay; that the sponsor continues to provide financial and staff commitment to the project; and that there is a plan and schedule for addressing the problem and completing the project.

Phoenix staff reported the project is important for connectivity between the Uptown Grand Canal Trail and will provide a safe crossing at 16th Street and Indian School Road by constructing a 10-foot wide pathway with a four-foot landscape buffer. It will ultimately connect Glendale to Tempe with pathways on Grand Canal.

Staff reported that the project was originally deferred due to timing for public involvement with the community. The city of Phoenix could not obligate the project this year because approximately 12 feet of right-of-way is needed from the Indian Medical Center, which is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The process for federal land acquisition is beyond the control of the agency. Staff noted the city is in active negotiations with the Bureau now and they are in support of the project. The project has support from the Phoenix mayor and council, and resources are available to complete this project. The projected schedule allows for sufficient time to ensure the land requirements are complete for a fall 2017 construction contract award.

For more info, contact Teri Kennedy, MAG Transportation Improvement Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Structural Issues with Using Special Census Numbers to Distribute State Shared Revenues

The Regional Council approved a resolution to establish a special projects fund at MAG to reimburse the seven cities in the MAG region that contracted to conduct a special census in 2015. The fund will be used to reimburse the seven cities for 50 percent of their special census costs, estimated at \$8.1 million.

Historically, since the 1970s, state-shared revenues have been distributed using decennial or special census population numbers. State estimates have not been used due to accuracy issues using state population numbers. Since Arizona is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, a regional mid-decade or “special census” was conducted in 1975, 1985, 1995, and a census survey in 2005.

Following the 2005 census survey, the Census Bureau notified MAG that a survey could no longer be conducted. The Bureau also provided cost estimates for conducting a door-to-door census, ranging in cost from \$65 million to \$70 million. The Bureau also noted that approximately 35,000 enumerators would need to be hired to conduct a regionwide door-to-door census. Due to the cost and the inability to hire the enumerators to conduct a special census in 2015, it was determined that a regional special census would not be possible. Although a regional special census was not contemplated, Arizona state statutes provide that individual cities could work with the Bureau and conduct their own special census. Seven Valley cities, including Buckeye, Chandler, Gilbert, Goodyear, Maricopa, Peoria, and Queen Creek, opted to conduct a special census.

To provide a better way to distribute state-shared revenues, cities are exploring legislation using either state estimates that are subject to improvement, or federal estimates to allocate the funding. This would provide all of the cities in Arizona a yearly number and avoid the sharp adjustments needed every five years. To find an equitable solution for the seven cities that are proceeding this year with a special census, it was proposed that these cities in the MAG region receive 50 percent of their costs incurred and that a special fund be created at MAG for reimbursement purposes.

For more information, please contact Anubhav Bagley, MAG Information Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

House Bill 2617

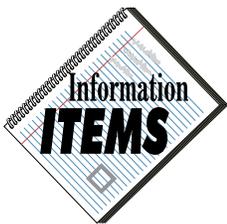
An update was provided on House Bill (HB) 2617 and the possible ramifications to the diversion of Proposition 400 sales tax funds for transportation (Regional Area Road Fund). Provisions in HB 2617 require that a portion of the sales tax be used to help fund operations of the Arizona Department of Revenue (ADOR). Approximately \$2.58 million from MAG and approximately \$500,000 from the Pima

Association of Governments would be assessed each year under the bill to help pay for ADOR. The Regional Council has expressed concerns that the provisions are contrary to what voters envisioned the transportation funds would be used for when they passed Proposition 400 in 2004.

René Guillen, policy advisor on government and transportation for the Governor's Office, has met with a MAG working group comprising MAG Regional Council Chair and Scottsdale Mayor W.J. "Jim" Lane, Tempe Mayor Mark Mitchell, Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault, Maricopa County Supervisor Denny Barney, and Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild to find alternatives to this issue. During a presentation to the Regional Council, Mr. Guillen discussed a potential remedy by solving other transportation funding issues, such as yearly sweeps of the Highway User Revenue Fund. In general, the proposal includes raising certain vehicle related fees, such as vehicle license registration fees and vehicle title fees. Since these are user fees, they are not considered as tax increases, and some have not changed for decades. In addition, there could be an element that provides a mechanism to accelerate needed transportation projects.

The Regional Council expressed appreciation to the Governor's Office for making staff available to finding a solution to the HB 2617 provisions. However, the Regional Council voted to send a letter to the director of ADOR expressing its objection to voter-approved Proposition 400 transportation funding being utilized to support ADOR operations, while also conveying to the Governor's Office and legislative leadership MAG's goal to work cooperatively to resolve the funding issue.

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



Information Items

Regional Response to Domestic Violence

The MAG Regional Council signed a resolution supporting October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The resolution notes that domestic violence calls are among the most frequent, dangerous, and costly calls law enforcement responds to throughout the region. The trauma and suffering caused by domestic violence destroys families, threatens the safety of neighborhoods, and weakens the ability of communities to thrive.

MAG creates a calendar of events each October to highlight all of the domestic violence awareness events taking place throughout the region. The current calendar of events is posted on the MAG website at <http://www.azmag.gov/Committees/Committee.asp?CMSID=1053>. Currently, there are 17 events listed on the calendar. MAG will continue to update the calendar throughout the month

of October as events are added. MAG also will provide technical assistance to any of its partner agencies in conducting an event to raise awareness about the impact of domestic violence.

A press conference is planned for October 16, 2015, as part of the month of activities. The press conference will focus on lethality assessments as a lifesaving tool for domestic violence victims. Lethality assessments are a type of “danger score” in which police or advocates ask a victim a series of questions to identify high-lethality risk factors and raise awareness in victims regarding their personal level of danger. Due to recently revised policies within law enforcement and the courts, this important evaluation tool is increasingly being used to identify victims at greatest risk of being killed. The press conference is part of the Protocol Evaluation Project, an initiative funded by the Governor’s Office and administered by MAG and additional criminal justice system partners to improve the way the region arrests and prosecutes domestic violence offenders.

For more information, please contact Amy Robinson, MAG Human Services Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Update on the ADOT Passenger Rail Study: Tucson to Phoenix

Staff from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) presented an update on the Passenger Rail Corridor Study: Tucson to Phoenix. ADOT was charged with looking at the marketability, ridership, alignment, route, technology and the cost of implementing passenger rail service between Tucson and Phoenix. Phoenix is the largest metropolitan area in North America without passenger train service and Phoenix and Tucson represent the 12th to 14th busiest travel pair.

ADOT currently is conducting a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). ADOT noted that one of the main reasons to conduct the study was anticipated population growth in the next 20 years, from approximately five million people to approximately 7.5 million people in Maricopa, Pinal, and Pima counties. Employment also is anticipated to grow, which will yield a higher travel demand. One purpose of the study is to develop a multimodal transportation system in the 120-mile distance between Phoenix and Tucson. Currently, Interstate 10 is the only high capacity transportation facility linking Phoenix and Tucson.

Several final corridor alternatives were determined in the study. Staff referenced on a map the brown line near Tucson, which follows I-10; the green line, which heads north along I-10; the yellow line, which follows existing rail right-of-way owned by Union Pacific from Eloy to Phoenix; and the orange line, which follows a north/south corridor in Pinal County and links to US-60, Loop 101 and Loop 202 in the Valley.

ADOT reported that the vision is to connect passenger rail to the West Valley, such as Buckeye and Surprise, using existing rail corridors. The passenger rail system could operate at speeds up to 125 miles per hour and provide service between Tucson and Phoenix, as well as local trips. Annual ridership forecast for 2035 shows that the yellow route has an advantage of approximately 20,000 riders per day. The yellow alternative is also the most cost effective of the alternatives at \$4 billion to \$5 billion (\$40 million per mile).

Public outreach was a key component of the study, and approximately 10,000 surveys were completed that showed strong support for passenger rail. The yellow alternative was identified by the public as the preferred alternative between Phoenix and Tucson. Strong support was shown for linking activity centers and for a system that results in effective travel times.

Based on the results, ADOT recommends advancing the yellow alternative for further study. In Tempe, there are two routes recommended to move forward and two options in Pinal County are being recommended to be advanced for further study. The preferred alternative will be determined at the completion of the Tier 1 process at the end of this year. The public comment period ends October 30. The study and service development plan are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2015. The next step is the Tier 2 Environmental Impact Statement, which would identify specific station locations, rail alignments, and connections. Staff stated that no funding for implementation of passenger rail design or construction has been identified.

For more information, please contact Marc Pearsall, MAG Transit Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 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.