



Executive Director's Report

Numbers are often how MAG communicates. The MAG planning area represents 64 percent of the state's population, 68.6 percent of the state's sales tax, etc. What does this mean when it comes to policy? At the Regional Council meeting, the members needed to decide what projects to support for federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant funding. Do we think just about ourselves, the MAG region, or do we have a greater responsibility? The Regional Council answered that we have a greater responsibility.

The four requests for the TIGER Grant funding included two urban applications in the MAG region, one supporting a project in Casa Grande, and a statewide application for a border transportation project. In approving the four requests, the Regional Council recognized that transportation is a system. One of the requests supported a transit connection to the urban freeway system. Another recognized that an arterial street in a underserved community has considerable safety issues. The third request, in Pinal County, looked at the need to connect to a future north-south freeway. Finally, the fourth request recognized that Arizona needs to be globally competitive and an interchange near the border in Nogales supports all of Arizona and the nation.

The Regional Council's support of all of these TIGER applications is a recognition of MAG's role of stewardship not only in our own region, but in our state. It is fitting that we recognize the importance of the transportation system feeding into and out of our region. We hope all of these worthwhile applications are successful in obtaining federal funding.

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

Meeting Report for Wednesday, April 27, 2016

Action Items



Regional Council Supports Four TIGER Grant Requests

The MAG Regional Council unanimously approved letters of support for four TIGER Grant requests (*see above*). In February 2016, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the eighth round of TIGER Discretionary grant funding. A total of \$500 million is available

through a multimodal, merit-based, competitive grant program. Nationally, there is a set-aside of \$100 million for rural areas, with the remaining \$400 million for projects in urban areas.

Urban grants range from \$5 million to \$100 million, with a 20 percent local match requirement. Rural grants range from \$1 million to \$100 million, with no local match requirement. The MAG Transportation Review Committee and Management Committee recommended support for three urban applications: two within MAG's region and one in the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (SCMPO) region. The committees also recommended support for one statewide rural application.

The two regional applications included urban applications from Valley Metro and the Town of Guadalupe. The Valley Metro request is for the construction of a dedicated bus ramp to enhance direct access to downtown Phoenix and the State Capitol complex. The Town of Guadalupe request is for the reconstruction and modernization of Avenida del Yaqui. Home to a principally minority population, this project embodies Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx's "Ladders of Opportunity" initiative by contributing to the revitalization of traditionally disadvantaged communities.

The third urban application was for the City of Casa Grande for a traffic interchange between Interstate 10 and Kortsen Road. The project is expected to improve east-west connectivity and link to the future North-South Freeway and passenger rail routes.

The rural application was from the Arizona Department of Transportation for needed improvements to State Route (SR) 189 in the border community of Nogales, Arizona. Grant funding would construct an interim flyover ramp directly connecting SR-189 traffic onto northbound Interstate 19. With 3 million northbound vehicles being processed through the Mariposa Port of Entry each year, the interchange would relieve freight congestion for a critical international commerce connection.

For more information, please contact Audra Koester-Thomas, MAG Transit Planning Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Ozone Boundary Designations

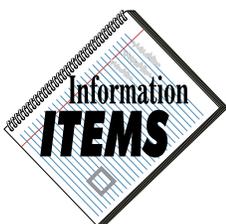
The Regional Council heard an update on the ozone nonattainment area boundary designation process. The process is being conducted by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to address the new strengthened 2015 ozone standard. Staff noted that, based upon 2013-2015 data, the Queen Valley monitor in Pinal County and the Tonto National Monument monitor in Gila County slightly exceed the new ozone standard of 0.070 parts per million (ppm). MAG staff has provided information to ADEQ showing a downward trend in the concentrations at the monitors and that the two monitors are at 0.071 ppm.

Due to the downward trend and the fact that the monitors are only slightly over the standard, MAG staff indicated to ADEQ that the Maricopa ozone nonattainment area should not be expanded at this time. Monitor data from the 2016 ozone season should be evaluated first to determine if the monitors have met the standard or if it is necessary to expand the boundary. MAG staff noted that within nonattainment areas, there are tighter controls on business and industry and transportation conformity requirements apply.

In April, ADEQ conducted a stakeholder meeting and proposed an expansion of the Maricopa eight-hour ozone nonattainment area to include portions of Pinal County and Gila County. By October 1, 2016, states are required to submit designation recommendations for nonattainment/attainment to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In order to meet this deadline, ADEQ will have a draft document for public review in May 2016. By October 1, 2017, EPA anticipates finalizing the designations, classifications, and attainment dates based upon the ozone levels in the area (Marginal-Extreme). EPA will be taking into account monitor data from 2014-2016 and possibly 2017.

The Regional Council approved sending a letter to ADEQ requesting that the Maricopa ozone boundary not be expanded at this time, since the Queen Valley and Tonto National Monument monitors only slightly exceed the standard and there is a downward trend at the monitors. Monitor data from the 2016 ozone season should be evaluated first to determine if the monitors have met the standard or if it is necessary to revise the boundary recommendation.

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



Information Items

Update on Socioeconomic Projections

Staff provided an update on efforts to develop socioeconomic projections for the region. Under an Executive Order, MAG, working with its Population Technical Advisory Committee, prepares subcounty socioeconomic projections every three to four years for housing, population, and employment. These projections are based on the County population projections that are prepared by the Arizona State Demographer and are approved by the Regional Council. The projections are used as input to the transportation and air quality models.

In addition to the Maricopa County projections, staff noted that MAG also is working on Pinal County projections. Combined, the projected population of these two areas in 2050 is approximately 7.7 million and employment is 3.6 million. Staff noted that the projections developed three years ago were close to these projections.

Staff reported on both 2015 and 2050 projection. The 2015 population projections for the MAG region include: Central area/Phoenix, 36.7 percent; East area, 35.7 percent; West area, 22.1 percent; and Pinal County area, 5.4 percent. The 2050 population projections for the MAG region are: Central area/Phoenix, 29.7 percent; East area, 28.1 percent; West area, 34.2 percent; and Pinal County area, 7.9 percent.

2015 employment projections for the MAG region include: Central area/Phoenix, 42 percent; East area, 42 percent; West area, 14.3 percent; and Pinal County area, 1.7 percent. The 2050 employment projections for the MAG region are: Central area/Phoenix, 33.8 percent; East area, 35.9 percent; West area, 26 percent; Pinal County area, 4.3 percent.

Action on the projections is anticipated in May by the MAG Population Technical Advisory Committee, and in June by the MAG Regional Council.

For more information, please contact Scott Wilken, MAG Regional Planner, (602) 254-6300.

Development of the FY 2017 MAG Work Program and Annual Budget

Staff provided an update on the development of the fiscal year 2017 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. The work program and budget are developed incrementally in conjunction with member agency and public input. The Work Program is reviewed each year by the federal agencies and approved by the Regional Council in May.

Staff noted that the elements of the budget document are about 70 percent complete. The April presentation includes a request for three staff positions, including an application developer, human services planner, and accountant. A member of the Regional Council requested additional information regarding the positions.

Staff noted that for FY 2017, MAG is recommending that a proposed three percent increase be included for budgeted salaries and that any increases to individual MAG salaries be performance-based. The annual performance evaluation is the basis for any potential salary increases for MAG staff. Each MAG staff has an annual performance evaluation in June and may receive an increase based on this evaluation. The total proposed amount for increases would not exceed \$250,000.

Staff reported that the overhead rate of 1.4174 percent was finalized and applied to the budget. The FY 2017 proposed budget is \$2.7 million less than the FY 2016 budget, due to reductions in pass through and new consultant projects.

For more information, please contact Rebecca Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Meeting

Please note that the next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, May 25, 2016, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are expected to include the Arterial Life Cycle Program closeout process, an update on the rebalancing of the Regional Freeway and Highway Program, an update on ozone boundary designations, and a final update and recommended approval of the FY 2017 MAG Unified Planning Work Program. Additional agenda items are pending.