



Executive Director's Report

MAG continues to document its 50-year history through a series of videos covering each of its five decades. The second decade video, played at our March meeting, reinforced that MAG is different not only in its structure, but also in how our elected leadership is the backbone of MAG. These leaders have invested countless hours in making MAG a great organization.

In 1985, that cooperative approach led to the passage of Proposition 300, the half-cent sales tax to pay for a transportation system that would become the mobility fabric of this region. The Proposition 300 legislation also created the Regional Public Transportation Authority. This was a seminal moment for MAG, but more importantly, for Valley residents. Prop 300 would forever shape both MAG and the Valley's transportation system. It was the impetus for the construction of the 181 miles of freeway that we drive today. We also saw cooperative efforts result in the implementation of a regional 9-1-1 system, initial efforts in air quality, and a new regional approach to addressing serious issues of homelessness in the Valley.

MAG has seen many difficult issues arise in its 50-year history. Our elected officials have always found ways to work past controversies to make the best decisions for the region. We saw it during our second decade, when diverse interests pulled together to achieve the overwhelming passage of Prop 300. We saw it in 2003, when the Transportation Policy Committee came to a unanimous vote for the Regional Transportation Plan that was implemented in 2004 through Proposition 400. Similarly, at our March Regional Council meeting, the region again came together when the Regional Council approved a "rebalanced" program of projects amounting to \$1.25 billion. Combined with \$1.77 billion for construction and another \$2 billion in existing programmed projects, this equates to a total program amount of more than \$5 billion. This represents a significant boost to our economy that will have additional ripple effects.

Like many other moments in MAG history, the rebalancing effort was, at times, challenging. Determining how to spend transportation funds regionally often raises the dialogue level at MAG. What I have seen over the years at MAG is that in the end, the elected leadership at MAG understands the importance of their decision making and a consensus is reached for the good of the citizens of this region.

I would be remiss if I did not compliment the hard work of MAG staff in providing solid technical work and great communication with our member agencies in working toward a positive regional decision. MAG is blessed to have an outstanding staff.

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

**Meeting Report for Wednesday, March 29, 2017****Action Items****Regional Funding Reallocated to Gilbert Road Bridge**

In a move to direct regional funding to where it is most needed, the Regional Council approved an exception to the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) Policies and Procedures. The exception reallocates monies to the Gilbert Road Bridge over the Salt River. The Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) made the request to reallocate \$18.6 million in regional funding from the Dobson Road bridge project and \$10 million from the McKellips Road project. The monies instead will be used to fund the Gilbert Road Bridge, the cost of which has gone up significantly since the project was originally put into the ALCP. A 2015 technical bridge review concluded that the Gilbert Road Bridge has safety issues and traffic flow is impacted during water releases. The ALCP Policies and Procedures prohibit reallocation of project savings until construction has been completed or there is a high degree of certainty that it will be completed within the specified scope and schedule. However, staff noted that the Gilbert Road Bridge provides a critical all-weather connection over the Salt River and MCDOT will be able to move forward with the project with the reallocated funding, making this exception in the best interests of the public.

For more information, please contact John Bullen, MAG Transportation Planner, (602) 254-6300.

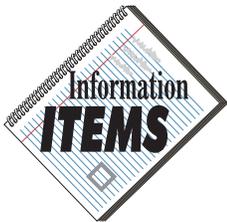
Regional Freeway and Highway Program 2016/17 Rebalancing

In a move that “rebalances” the Regional Freeway and Highway program, the Regional Council approved a group of projects totaling \$1.25 billion. These are projects that are being added or brought back into the program as a result of improved revenues and cost efficiencies that have been identified. Staff has worked closely with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and numerous MAG member agencies to identify a design and construction program for a total of 41 projects over the next 12 years. When combined with current construction efforts, such as completing the I-10/Loop 303 traffic interchange in Goodyear, and Loop 202/South Mountain Freeway in Phoenix, the scenario represents a \$5 billion program for meeting current and future travel demand throughout the MAG region.

Expansion of the Regional Freeway and Highway Program is possible due to improved Proposition 400 revenues, lower than anticipated costs associated with the current Loop 202/South Mountain Freeway construction, and an ongoing strategy by MAG and ADOT to continually reconsider and reevaluate design concepts for every project to deliver more program for the available dollars. These actions reflect a \$1.8 billion cash flow increase over previous revenue estimates in 2012.

Later this year, amendments will be made to the FY 2018-2022 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and 2040 MAG Regional Transportation Plan, both currently in draft format, to initiate the process for eventual environmental, design, right-of-way, and construction phases of all projects in the program. MAG staff recommended a quarterly monitoring process to oversee program cash flow and all varying phases for implementing these 41 projects over the next 12 years.

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



Information Items

Central Arizona Conservation Alliance Open Spaces Plan

Conserving the natural beauty of Arizona not only provides outdoor recreation, it also brings significant economic, health, social and ecological benefits to the region. Members of the Regional Council heard an update on the strategies and objectives proposed for the Open Spaces Plan, created by the Central Arizona Conservation Alliance. Goals for the Regional Open Space Strategy include preserving and supporting natural ecosystems and providing open spaces for healthy communities.

For more information, please contact Amy St. Peter, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.

Development of the FY 2018 Work Program and Budget

Each year, the MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget is 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. The March update included division narratives along with estimated funding needs by project. Although new projects for FY 2018 were added, there was a very large carryforward balance spent down during FY 2017 for a travel modeling project, and the adjustments made to the indirect cost plan rate also affect the balance. Staff noted that the Intermodal Planning Group meeting would be held on Wednesday, April 5, 2017. The meeting represents the budget review conducted by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Aviation Administration on MAG's proposed budget and compliance. MAG partners, including the Arizona Department of Transportation, City of Phoenix, Regional Public Transportation Authority, Valley Metro, and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, also attended this meeting.

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

Legislative Update

Staff reported on legislative items of interest. At the federal level, the President's proposed budget includes reducing funding to Amtrak, terminating support for long distance

service, and limiting funding for the Federal Transportation Administration's New Starts Program. Future investments in new transit projects would be funded by localities that use and benefit from them. Staff noted that leaves vulnerable the Tempe Streetcar and South Central Light Rail projects. The draft budget also would eliminate TIGER funding, which supports significant freight and highway projects, as well as Community Development Block Grants, which help to fund homelessness programs in the MAG region. MAG staff is tracking the budget through Congress. There is discussion from the administration of a major infrastructure package that could total \$1 trillion, largely through financing mechanisms.

On the state level, Senate Bill (SB) 1270, which provided for Maricopa County to call for an election to extend the half-cent sales tax for transportation, was passed by the Senate but failed in the House Ways and Means Committee along party lines. Committee concerns included the percentage of funding for light rail, general election timing, and concerns over a perceived tax increase.

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

Next Meeting

Please note that the next meeting of the MAG Regional Council will be held on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, at 11:30 a.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix, second floor, Saguaro Room. Agenda items are expected to include a report on the FY 2017 Mid-Phase Input Opportunity, development of the draft FY 2018 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, and a continuation of the celebration of MAG's 50th anniversary with videos looking back at achievements by decade, this time highlighting the third decade. Additional agenda items are pending.

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