



Executive Director's Report

As the third decade video rolled at the April Regional Council meeting, it brought back many memories. When the election to renew the sales tax failed in 1994, it brought out the best and worst in agencies. MAG's transportation role was in jeopardy and freeway segments were being recommended to be slashed. These attacks actually brought out the best in MAG. The MAG member agencies regrouped, re-engineered, and restored the regional freeway system. It is said that out of failure comes great wisdom, and in 2004 we learned from our mistakes.

One of the mistakes made in 1994 was the elimination of the Paradise Freeway. Elimination of this freeway has contributed greatly to the congestion on Interstate 10. We learned that regional freeway connectivity is important and that taught us not to give up on the South Mountain Freeway. Elimination of that freeway would have major consequences for mobility in this region. We also learned from the congestion on Interstate 10 that another solution was needed for the West Valley. The Proposition 400 election included the I-10 Reliever, now named State Route 30. We took action on this corridor at the April Regional Council meeting.

When voters passed Proposition 400 in 2004, it included a process that guaranteed that any major amendments to the Plan would undergo rigorous review. The State Route 30 amendment provides for two segments of the corridor to be put into the Plan as future freeways. This freeway corridor is will provide congestion relief and allowing for freight movement to get goods in and out of the region.

Another amendment by the Regional Council starts the process for putting the I-11 corridor into the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan for the first time. I-11 has been designated by Congress as an Interstate corridor and will greatly facilitate north/south traffic coming from Mexico. When completed, I-11 will connect 8 million people and reinvigorate the economy by creating jobs, improving freight movement, and providing major development opportunities.

Putting both of these major amendments into the plan allows the necessary environmental work to begin in order to make these two important freeways a reality. What is important to note is that these amendments are based on an assumption that future freeway funding will be available. For that to happen, we will need to rely on voters to continue transportation funding when Proposition 400 expires.

The resilience of the MAG process was displayed at the April meeting, as it was in 1994. MAG continues look to the future to provide for the mobility and prosperity of this region for future generations.

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



Meeting Report for Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Action Items

Major Amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan Includes I-11 Segment

As noted above, the Regional Council approved a major amendment to add a West Valley segment of Interstate 11 into the draft MAG 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. As designated by Congress, the I-11 corridor will travel between Nogales, Arizona and Reno, Nevada. The segment included in the major amendment is between Interstate 10 and US-93 in the West Valley. Planning for an illustrative north/south high capacity corridor began with the 2008 Interstate 10/Hassayampa Valley Framework Study. The Regional Council approval means that segment will move from “illustrative” to “funded” status.

Staff noted that the corridor will help address the need to provide better connections between major population centers and stimulate community and economic development opportunities. By incorporating this segment of Interstate 11 into the Regional Transportation Plan, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has the opportunity to initiate a Tier II Environmental Impact Statement study to locate the freeway centerline.

Staff noted that ADOT already has initiated a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study to identify a wide corridor of roughly 2,000 feet along the segment, but that study does not provide a freeway centerline. Current Federal Highway Administration policy does not allow the centerline to be identified unless a project level environmental study, such as a Tier II EIS, is completed. A Tier II study would identify a centerline and provide for more certainty in both planning along the corridor by both the public and private sectors.

Based upon the fiscal projections of revenues identified in the MAG 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, currently in draft form, reasonable expectation of funding for the Interstate 11 segment can be identified. The Regional Council recommended approval of the major amendment.

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

Arizona State Route 30 Major Amendment

In a separate action, the Regional Council approved another major amendment to the draft MAG 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. This amendment adds two freeway segments along the State Route 30 (SR-30) corridor from State Route 85 (SR-85) to Loop 303 and from Loop 202/South Mountain Freeway to Interstate 17.

Staff noted that recent freeway rebalancing studies have again demonstrated the need for a continuous freeway between SR-85 in Buckeye and Interstate 17 in Phoenix to improve travel time reliability and congestion relief along Interstate 10 in the West Valley, a primary freight corridor. Planning for the entire length of SR-30 began with the 2008 Interstate 10/Hassayampa Valley Framework Study and continued with the Central Phoenix Transportation Framework Study in 2013.

Staff noted that by incorporating these segments of SR-30 into the Regional Transportation Plan, ADOT has the opportunity to initiate the appropriate environmental studies to locate the freeway centerline, which again provides greater certainty for both public and private sector planning along the corridor.

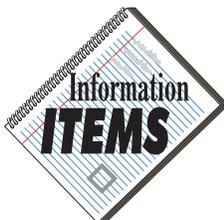
For more information, please contact Bob Hazlett, Senior Engineering Project Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Regional Support for “Hidden Heroes” Initiative

The Hidden Heroes Initiative is a national movement founded by Senator Elizabeth Dole to support the caregivers of U.S. military veterans. MAG Regional Council Chair Greg Stanton, mayor of Phoenix, requested a presentation from Hidden Heroes to provide the Regional Council with the opportunity to show regional support for the initiative.

The cities of Phoenix, Chandler, Gilbert Scottsdale, Tucson and Yuma, as well as the State of Arizona, have adopted formal resolutions supporting May 20, 2017, as Caregiver’s Day. The goals of the initiative include raising awareness about the issues caregivers of military personnel or veterans face, inspiring local action to support caregivers and connecting them with resources and support. The Regional Council approved a resolution to recognize May 20, 2017, as Caregiver’s Day and offer regional support for the Hidden Heroes Initiative.

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



Information Items

MAG at 50

MAG celebrated its 50th anniversary on April 12, 2017. The agency was formed on April 12, 1967 by concurrent resolutions from its member agencies. MAG

is documenting its 50-year history through a series of videos, with each video focusing on one of the five decades. The third decade included a look at two transportation elections, including ValTrans and Proposition 400 in 1994, both of which were rejected by voters. The elections resulted in a revised freeway plan being advanced by the Governor, which eliminated or unfunded a number of freeways. Despite the setback, within years MAG had found ways to add back in most of the freeway segments, with the exception of the Paradise Freeway. In 1996, MAG separated from the League of Arizona Cities and Towns and soon moved into its current location in downtown Phoenix. The videos are available for viewing at: www.YouTube.com/magcommunications.

For more information, please contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, (602) 254-6300.

I-10/I-17 Corridor Master Plan

The I-10/I-17 corridor is a crucial corridor that connects the north Valley to the south Valley and sees more than 40 percent of freeway traffic using it each day. All major Valley freeways feed into it, and it is called the “Spine” of the region’s transportation system. The Regional Council heard an update on the final recommendations included in the Corridor Master Plan. The project team includes the Arizona Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and MAG.

Recommendations included in the plan are the reconstruction of the congested SR-143 traffic interchange and its approaches and departures near the US-60/Superstition Freeway junction. Recommendations along Interstate 17 include a reconstruction between the I-10 Split and 19th Avenue, improving eight traffic interchanges for higher capacity, and improving drainage/flood control. In addition, staff noted that the plan:

- Improves safety by modernizing interstates to current design standards.
- Adds a minimum of one-lane throughout entire corridor.
- Expands managed capacity operation along I-10 from I-17 to US-60; and I-17 from the I-10 Split to Loop 101.
- Improves/reconstructs 24 of the 31 traffic interchanges throughout the corridor.
- Adds five Direct High Occupancy Vehicle (DHOV) ramps and new interchanges
- Plans and enhances bicycle/pedestrian connections across the corridor at 20 locations including nine new structures.

Staff noted that the latest public outreach efforts on the Master Plan in January of 2017 resulted in more than 680 comments from stakeholders. As a result of the input from the public and stakeholders, several projects were removed from

consideration, including the I-10/Sky Harbor Circle DHOV traffic interchange and the Osborn Road bicycle and pedestrian overcrossing. As a result of input the Glendale Avenue traffic interchange will be reconfigured and a bicycle/pedestrian (nonmotorized) crossing in vicinity of Knox Road in Tempe will be added.

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

Mid-Phase Public Input Opportunity

Public input is critical to the transportation planning process. MAG conducts a four phase public involvement process that provides members of the public the opportunity to comment on draft transportation plans and programs prior to MAG committee action, in accordance with federal law. The Regional Council heard a summary of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Mid-Phase Input Opportunity report, which included input on the FY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program, Draft FY 2017 Transit Program of Projects, Working Draft FY 2018 Transit Program of Projects, and the Draft 2040 Regional Transportation Plan.

Outreach included a public hearing on March 14, 2017, small group presentations, and feedback received via e-mail, telephone and website communication. The Mid-Phase Input Opportunity began on February 28, 2017, and ended on March 30, 2017. The Final Phase Input Opportunity began April 26 and concludes on May 25, 2017.

For more information, please contact Leila Gamiz, MAG Community Outreach Specialist, (602) 254-6300.

Systems Management and Operations Study

MAG staff provided an update on a MAG-sponsored study to develop a Systems Management and Operations (SM&O) Plan for the transportation network. The SM&O Plan will help guide the region in making the strategic investments needed to expand and support essential transportation technology and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) infrastructure. The study has developed a new approach for funding future ITS/SM&O projects by categorizing them into four broad priority-based categories. It is anticipated that this approach would enable the region make strategic investments in SM&O that would be critical for supporting the regional economy.

To date, \$145 million has been invested in traffic technology for the regional freeway system, which will cover 265 miles by 2020. On arterial streets, \$50 million in regional investments, plus local funds, have helped upgrade more than 3,000 traffic signals, with more than half of them equipped to prioritize traffic lights to accommodate emergency vehicles. Among the priorities identified in the study is adding or enhancing subregional traffic management centers.

For more information, please contact Sarath Joshua, MAG ITS and Safety Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Development of the FY 2018 Work Program and Budget

MAG's draft budget has been updated and is now about 70 percent complete. The budget is presented incrementally to provide adequate time for review prior to final approval anticipated in May. The FY 2018 proposed budget, including funding that is carried forward from the prior fiscal year, is projected to be \$32.7 million. Without the carry-forward amount, the budget is \$26.7 million, with about \$15.8 million in operating expenses. Staff noted that a capital expenditure of approximately \$500,000 was added to the annual budget for modifications to the 7th floor of the MAG building to accommodate a staff move from the current space on the first floor. This amount would be contingent upon a successful lease negotiation with the City of Phoenix.

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

Legislative Update

Staff reported on legislative items of interest. On April 13, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a request for comments to existing regulations in the Federal Register. According to the request, the EPA is seeking input on regulations "that may be appropriate for repeal, replacement, or modification." The basis for the EPA's solicitation of comments comes from Executive Order 13777 published on February 24, 2017: Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda. Staff reported that MAG is seeking comments for regulatory reform from member agencies to be compiled for consideration for submittal to the EPA. Staff will compile the comments for Executive Committee review. The comments must be received by the EPA on or before May 15, 2017.

Staff also provided an update on the status of efforts to extend the Border Crossing Card zone from its current 75-mile limit to the entire state of Arizona. MAG launched the effort to extend the zone to increase tourism revenue across the entire state. Mexico has a growing middle class and visitors typically have cash to spend. Border Crossing Card holders are frequent, low-risk travelers to the U.S. who have undergone rigorous security checks. A study done by the University of Arizona found that extending the limit to the entire state would result in a \$181 million increase in revenues in the first year. MAG is working with Capitol Strategies on this issue. Originally, MAG pursued a rulemaking request to Customs and Border Protection and received support from a bipartisan, majority of Arizona House members. Now that a new administration is in place, the strategy has shifted to including language in forthcoming legislation to extend the zone. In the meantime, a secondary strategy will be to continue to work on administrative rulemaking. This is proving to be a challenge as many administrative offices are vacant and awaiting political appointments. A coalition of members of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council will be on

Capitol Hill in the coming weeks and will provide information to lawmakers about the effort.

Staff noted that four O’odham Tribes are supportive and were instrumental in getting support from the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona.

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, May 24, 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 approval of the FY 2018 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget, approval of the I-10/I-17 Corridor Master Plan recommendations and a continuation of the celebration of MAG’s 50th anniversary with videos looking back at achievements by decade, this time highlighting the fourth decade. Additional agenda items are pending.

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