

Briefing to Member Agencies from Executive Director James M. Bourey



Executive Director's Report

The spotlight that shone on our region during the recent World Series revealed to the rest of the world what those of us who live here already knew: We have ARRIVED.

No one should view the Valley as anything other than a vibrant, attractive, cosmopolitan rival to any other region in the nation. And, as more people recognize that our region is truly a destination of choice, they will join millions of others expected to become part of this region over the next 20 to 50 years.

We already predict that there will be six to eight million people here by the year 2040. That's one of the reasons MAG has begun to plan now to develop the transportation system we will need to accommodate this growth. And, to help us determine what that system will look like, MAG is conducting three area-wide studies to look at the need for future transportation investments.

One of these studies encompasses southeastern Maricopa County and northern Pinal County. With increasing development along the border of the two counties creating common transportation concerns, the Southeast Maricopa County/Northern Pinal County Area Transportation Study will help analyze growth trends and identify upcoming transportation needs. This study represents a significant opportunity for us to work with our partners in Pinal County in coordinating our planning processes. The other two studies include the Southwest and Northwest areas of the Maricopa region, where heavy growth is also expected.

In each of these areas, the need for transportation improvements is already being recognized. The studies will help us define the types of projects that will need to be funded in the short and long term. Once major transportation needs have been identified and prioritized, MAG will develop and evaluate options for roadway, transit and alternative mode investments for the area. Selected investments will be included in the new MAG Regional Transportation Plan.

We believe this region has played pretty well in the early innings of transportation planning. But as we complete our freeway system and pause for the seventh inning stretch, we need to reevaluate our game plan. With the right regional management, we'll hit some home runs and beat our opponents of congestion, sprawl and pollution.



Regional Council Report for Wednesday, November 7, 2001

MAG Undertakes High Capacity Transit Study

The MAG Regional Council has approved the selection of IBI Group as the consultant to assist in the development of a High Capacity Transit Plan. The Regional Council approved funding for the study in May. It will address the feasibility of commuter rail along existing rail corridors, develop a regional commuter rail implementation plan, identify high capacity alternatives for existing rail corridors where commuter rail is not feasible, and identify new high capacity transit corridors. The study will be integrated with the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

IBI Group is a multi-disciplinary firm that provides a broad range of transportation consulting, planning, architectural and engineering services. It has offices across North America, Europe, and the Middle East.

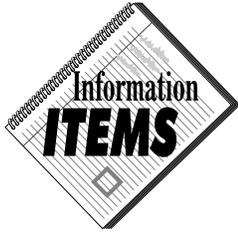
For more information contact Dawn Coomer, Multi-Modal Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Early Phase Provides Opportunity for Input

As part of its Early Phase Input Opportunity, MAG co-sponsored several public input opportunities from July through October in cooperation with the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Regional Public Transportation Authority, and Valley Connections. Opportunities included four transportation stakeholder meetings, a freeway opening, and a "MAG at the Mall" event. The stakeholder meetings took place across the region, including the East Valley, West Valley and Central Phoenix. The Pima Freeway/Loop 101 grand opening celebration was held in August, with comment cards and informative materials provided to individuals visiting the MAG booth. At the mall event, displays of light rail transit plans sparked many questions and comments.

Input received at all of the events is included in the MAG FY 2002 Early Phase Public Input Opportunity Report. Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting Jason Stephens at (602) 254-6300, or downloaded for viewing on the MAG Web site, www.mag.maricopa.gov.

For more information contact Jason Stephens, Public Involvement Planner, (602) 254-6300.



Information Items

Cost of Special Census May Be High

During the past several months, MAG staff has been conferring with the Census Bureau about the future of the Special Census program. MAG contracted with the Census Bureau in 1985 and 1995 to conduct a Special Census in order to provide an updated population count for the distribution of State-shared revenues and to provide a mid-year benchmark for the agency's socioeconomic projections. The Census Bureau has indicated that the Special Census program will continue, but the methods for conducting the census may change. The Bureau's preliminary cost estimates, inflated to 2005 dollars, indicate that a Special Census could cost \$25-30 million. MAG is continuing its dialogue with the Bureau on prospects for a Special Census, as well as investigating alternatives to a complete count. The issue is being raised now so that cities may consider the issue during their next budget cycle, so that if they choose to participate they can spread the cost of the mid-decade census over the next four years. **For more information contact Harry Wolfe, Socioeconomic Program Manager, (602) 254-6300.**



Upcoming Events

Management Committee, Regional Council Retreat Dates Set

Each year, the Management Committee and Regional Council conduct retreats to deal with major issues and to set goals and objectives for the coming year. The retreat for the Management Committee has been set for November 30 at the Doubletree Guest Suites, 320 N. 44th Street, Phoenix, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Regional Council retreat will be held January 11, 2002, at a location to be determined. Agenda items will include MAG governance issues, goals for next year, and potential strategies for supporting the extension of the half cent sales tax for highways and transit funding.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2001 at 5:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 302 N. 1st Ave., Suite 200. Agenda items are expected to include requested changes to the MAG Regional Freeway Program; a report and recommended approval on the MAG PM-10 Efficient Street Sweeper Study; an update on MAG's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Single Audit Report; and a review and presentation of recommendations by the MAG Governance Task Force.

For more information contact James Bourey, MAG Executive Director, (602) 254-6300.