

ELDERLY MOBILITY STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP

Meeting Notes

October 25, 2000

Maricopa Association of Governments Offices
302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 300
Phoenix, AZ

ATTENDING:

Maxine Anderson, City of Phoenix, HSD Senior Services
Melissa Bauer, Maricopa County Special Transportation Services
Donna Brower, City of Scottsdale
Betsy Buxer, The Community Forum
Teri Collins, RPTA
Margot Cordova, Valley of the Sun United Way
Michael J. Cynecki, City of Phoenix, Street Transportation Department
Cydney Demodica, ADOT/MVD
Martha Dennler, DES/A&AA
Harvey Friedson, Computran/AARP
Charles Ullman for Robert Garrett, PORA
Peggy Jones, Councilmember of Avondale
Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging
Gregg Kiely, Arizona Department of Transportation
Maureen Mageau-Decindis, RPTA
Christine McMurdy, City of Goodyear
Rev. Fran Park, Northwest Valley Regional Community Council
Chuck Post, American Red Cross
Norma Quevedo, City of Surprise
Phyllis Smith, Maricopa County DOT
Mike Brannan for Nicolaas Swart, Maricopa County DOT
Claudia Walters, Councilmember of Mesa, Discussion Leader

ABSENT:

Alberto Gutier, Governor's Office of Highway Safety
Mary Kihl, ASU College of Architecture and Environmental Design
Guy Mikkelsen, Foundation for Senior Living
Mary Lynn Tischer, Arizona Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT:

Betty Ullman
Sarath Joshua, MAG ITS Manager
Carol Kratz, MAG Human Services Manager
Suzanne Quigley, MAG Human Services Planner
Christopher Shipley, MAG Human Services Intern

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Councilmember Claudia Walters of the City of Mesa and introductions ensued. She thanked everyone for participating on the Working Group. Councilmember Walters stressed the importance of attending the meetings so that action could be taken at each gathering.

2. Working Group Purpose and Scope

Councilmember Walters asked Ms. Suzanne Quigley to provide a brief recap of the August 25, 2000 Stakeholder Dialogue on Aging and Mobility for those group members who might not have been able to attend.

Ms. Quigley provided background information on the events leading up to the creation of the Elderly Mobility Stakeholder Working Group. She stated that the MAG Human Services Committees have prioritized transportation for special populations as a key issue in their annual human services planning process for quite some time. Each year, the Human Services Committees conduct public input on the greatest needs in the Valley. In the last few years, transportation has been cited as one of the top issues challenging the elderly, low-income populations, cash assistance recipients and for persons with disabilities. Access to transportation is a critical quality of life issue for seniors.

Another reason MAG has started to focus on elderly mobility planning is because of its new Long Range Regional Transportation Plan which is currently being developed. This plan will guide the policy and funding direction of the region's transportation system over the next 25 years. MAG's new transportation manager, Eric Anderson, has emphasized the need to incorporate key demographic shifts in the policy and priority setting contained in the Plan.

In June, MAG was asked by the Deputy Director of the National Highway & Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to convene a local focus group on elderly mobility. This was a great opportunity for local stakeholders to share their ideas on needs and solutions with the leadership of NHTSA. Participants of the focus group requested that a larger group be convened to continue the dialogue. This led to the August 25, 2000 Stakeholder Dialogue entitled *Aging & Mobility: Implications for the Maricopa County Region*. We were fortunate to have Dr. Sandi Rosenbloom, Director of the Drachman Institute at the University of Arizona, present some of her research on elderly mobility at the meeting. Many important aspects of this issue were highlighted by Dr. Rosenbloom. For example,

- By 2025, Arizona will be one of 27 states where at least 20% of the population will be elderly.
- Baby Boomers are better educated than their parents, twice as likely to be unmarried in middle age, and considerably less likely to have large numbers of children. The last two factors will impact the number of seniors who live in isolation.
- Isolation is a concern when considering many boomers move to Arizona leaving behind their strong support networks provided by family and friends.

Dr. Rosenbloom highlighted three major implications related to the aging of the baby boomer generation and transportation: (1) environmental/land use (2) mobility and (3) safety. The environmental implications relate to greater mileage and the increased pollutants in the air. She also noted that we have to consider how our land use practices enhance or constrain the mobility of elder persons. Are we building walk-able communities where there are accessible “service clusters” or “one-stop shop” types of places?

In terms of personal mobility, older travelers will have to come to grips with their loss of driving capacity and take actions to minimize their isolation once they cease driving. This puts increased pressures on family and friends to provide essential trips to the doctor, supermarket, social services, recreation, and religious functions. The last major impact of the age wave is safety considerations. Research shows that there is greater crash rates among the elderly per exposure and that seniors are more likely to be seriously injured or killed in crashes because of their fragility.

Ms. Quigley also noted that a representative from the local Federal Highway Administration office (FHWA) provided an update at the August meeting on the policy direction coming from the federal government on the issue of aging and mobility. She noted that two documents will be released in 2001 which will help our local planning process:

1. The Transportation Research Board’s *Special Report 218 Update: Transportation in an Aging Society—Improving Mobility and Safety of Older Persons*

This document represents the state-of-the-art research and practice in the key areas related to elderly mobility. It suggests gaps and needs in research, implementation and promising solutions to identified problem areas. The document is an update of the first SR 218 published in 1987. Although it is not yet completed, Mr. John Eberhard of FHWA has provided us with an outline of the chapters which will be included in the final version.

2. U.S. Department of Transportation’s *National Agenda: Safe Mobility for a Maturing Society*

The Agenda was based on discussions and recommendations from series of regional forums sponsored by NHTSA, and regional focus groups conducted by the Beverly Foundation with assistance from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

Ms. Quigley stated that both of these documents highlight innovative solutions and make recommendations on actions which need to be taken at the federal, state and local level to promote safer and more accessible transportation for the elderly. She also noted that Dr. Rosenbloom has offered to work on an as needed and pro bono basis with the Working Group to assist in the analysis of the national research/recommendations as we begin to develop our Regional Action Plan on Elderly Mobility.

Ms. Quigley concluded her overview by stating that the stakeholders at the August 25th Dialogue agreed that a Regional Plan on elderly mobility should be developed. They also stressed that input from both boomers and seniors is critical to the development of a credible and implementable plan.

There was also consensus to explore the idea of having a national conference on aging and mobility issues in the Valley. MAG would look to other metropolitan planning organizations to assist in the effort as well. To summarize, the key elements of the MAG Elderly Mobility Initiative will be to:

- Analyze the national research and best practices;
- Develop a Regional Action Plan;
- Hold public forums; and
- Explore the potential of holding a national conference.

Ms. Mary Lynn Kasunic lauded MAG's efforts to bring the Working Group together. She expressed concern, however, in placing blame on the elderly for the region's transportation and air quality problems. She stated that she hoped the mission of the Working Group will be on identifying solutions that promote safe mobility across all transportation modes.

3. Key Components of the Plan/Formation of Ad Hoc Groups

Councilmember Walters stated that one of the first steps in beginning to develop an Action Plan is to identify the major issue areas that need to be addressed. The topic of elderly mobility is very broad— at the minimum, it involves both bricks and mortar issues related to our transportation infrastructure, but also social services and health care components. The Plan in the end should be balanced and comprehensive – recognizing that solutions in one area will not solve all the barriers seniors face in getting where they want to go. She noted that better signage and more left-hand turn signals are needed, but they will not address the person who can no longer drive but still needs to get to the doctor and to church on Sunday. These strategies will also not address the son who is searching for a way to convince his father that he needs to stop driving.

Councilmember Walters referred to materials in the agenda packet from the TRB and USDOT which delineate some of the key issue areas related to elderly mobility. She then asked Ms. Quigley to lead the Working Group in a discussion to identify the core components of the Plan. Ms. Quigley reviewed the TRB and USDOT documents and noted some commonalities in the issue areas that are addressed:

USDOT/Regional Forums

- Driver Competency
- Alternative Transportation Systems
- Highway Facilities and Automobiles
- Pedestrian Facilities
- Social Marketing to generate understanding of aging/mobility issues

TRB/SR 218 Update Chapter Outline

- Epidemiology
- Mobility Solutions
- Travel Performance/Driver Programs
- Vehicle Improvements
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Highway Improvements
- Policy Development
- Public Information and Education

Ms. Quigley also listed the issue areas that stakeholders at the August Dialogue raised as key areas which should be addressed in the Plan:

- Economic disparity
- Funding
- Multiple Options/Alternatives
- Relationship of Land Use and Access to Services
- Education of older users on how to use the available transportation services
- Education of the general public (targeting seniors and baby boomers, and housing developers)
- Utilizing new technologies (ITS)

Ms. Quigley stated that there are a number of topics that the group could focus on, and proposed a brainstorming activity to see if the Work Group could come to consensus on the issues areas the Plan should address. The Group members were asked to write down on separate post-it's the areas they thought were most crucial to promoting safer and improved mobility for seniors.

Discussion ensued about the common issue-areas that surfaced. Ms. Quigley then went through the different suggestions reading them out as they were handed in. Among the post-its were ideas like increased signage on highways and streets, transit development, driver training, and restrictive licenses. **(See attached summary of the ideas that were offered and the consensus of the group on the topics which the Plan should address)**

Mr. Gregg Kiely stated that the driving environment is indeed one of the biggest topics of discussion. Councilmember Peggy Jones discussed the different community meetings she has recently attended and that traffic flow always seemed to be the number one topic of concern.

Ms. Phyllis Smith noted that educating the public on how to access all the transportation services available in the region is also important. Ms. Carol Kratz stated the need for stable funding, especially in areas concerning other populations affected by this issue, especially the poor.

Discussion ensued regarding whether or not focusing on the elderly as opposed to all age-groups is a good idea. There was some sentiment that transportation improvements designed for the elderly will also be helpful to other travelers, regardless of age. Ms. Kasunic then told the group that some of the issues do need to be elderly specific, regardless of their impact on the general population.

Ms. McMurdy relayed to the group from her personal experiences that the elderly want their own roads where they can drive without interference. Ms. Betsy Buxer stressed the importance of asking the elderly what they think about needs and solutions throughout our planning process. Ms. Buxer stated that what is good for seniors is not always good for everybody and stressed that this issue is broader than any one group.

Mr. Harvey Friedson suggested that the Work Group address the relationship of land use and

elderly mobility. Rev. Fran Park spoke of the need for coordinating the existing transit services. He pointed out how difficult the transit system can be when programs like Dial-a- Ride cannot cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Ms. Cydney Demodica informed the Group about the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicle program that helps older drivers begin to identify signs related to decreased driving capacity. It is a voluntary program that works with elderly people and their doctors. Ms. Kasunic noted that the focus of this Group should not be on getting elderly people to stop driving; it is finding strategies which promote driver safety and greater access to transportation options.

Ms. Jones discussed the idea that neighborhood electric vehicles may be a good way to keep older people driving especially in places like Sun City or Palm Desert. Rev. Park pointed out that Sun City has been a good experiment for elderly mobility discussion and implementation of ideas. In addition, Rev. Park stated that health care involvement is critical for areas like Sun City. Ms. McMurdy stated that in most cases what is keeping elderly drivers behind the wheel is indeed a sense of pride.

Ms. Buxer stressed the issues of affordability and coordinating existing services. Ms. Margot Cordova asked about the transportation services already in existence that the general public may not know about. Ms. Quigley stated that hopefully the subcommittees of the Work Group will first do an inventory of what exists currently and then make recommendations about what can be realistically carried out now and what needs to be done in the future.

4. Process and Recruitment of Ad Hoc Groups

Councilmember Walters asked Ms. Quigley to discuss the process utilized to develop the MAG Regional Plan on Domestic Violence. Ms. Quigley informed the Group that a Steering Committee was created and they decided to divide the work up among four issue focused subcommittees. Since each subcommittee focused on a particular area (Prevention, Crisis Intervention, Systems Coordination, and Long-Term Response) an extensive recruitment of members occurred to ensure that people with particular expertise in the topic area were represented. In the end, over 150 people participated in the planning process which created 41 recommendations in the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Plan. The Steering Committee requested that the subcommittees complete their work in 4-5 meetings and asked them to do the following:

1. Conduct an inventory and gaps analysis;
2. See how national/local best practices and research may apply; and
3. Develop and submit to the Steering Committee recommendations according to the 5R

Format:

Recommended Best Practice

What is the best practice recommendation? This practice may already be occurring in some or all areas. It may not be currently be the standard but needs to happen.

Rationale for Implementation

Why is this a best practice? What will this recommendation achieve?

Roadblocks to Implementation

What issues, if any, will need to be addressed if this recommendation is to go forward? These roadblocks could be legislative, policy/protocol, financial, educational, or other.

Resources Available

What are the resources available to implement the recommendation?

Responsibility

Who are the responsible parties/jurisdictions or entities who are best suited to implement the recommendation? Who should take the lead?

Ms. Quigley referred to the aging and mobility plan developed by the Delaware Valley Planning Commission and noted that its recommendations are very broad and do not specify how and when they should be implemented. Hopefully, the Plan this region will create will be focused on both short and long term actions.

Ms. Kratz affirmed the idea of having subcommittees focus on one issue-area. Each group will be able to accomplish a great deal by being focused and committing to meeting for a short amount of time. Mr. Chuck Post stated that many of the ideas raised in today's brainstorming activity can be accomplished in the short term. He emphasized the need for the subcommittees to look not only at long-term solutions, but also short-term strategies that can be put in place rather quickly.

Councilmember Walters asked if the members wanted to structure the work of the Group using a similar process for the domestic violence planning effort. There was consensus to move forward in this fashion. Councilmember Walters asked staff to summarize the comments made about the key issue-areas the Plan should address for next meeting so that the Work Group could identify ad hoc groups to work on each issue area. Ms. Kasunic advised that the subcommittees should be multidisciplinary in order to ensure that different perspectives and areas of expertise are represented.

5. Public Input Process

Councilmember Walters noted that the stakeholders at the August Dialogue stressed the need to receive input from both seniors and baby boomers about their views on needs and solutions. The plan will be more credible if we provide community members with the opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas about solutions both before and after the recommendations are developed. She noted that good public involvement processes are very time and resource intensive.

Ms. Quigley informed the Group that MAG has set aside some financial resources to conduct a comprehensive public involvement effort. Councilmember Walters asked for volunteers to help design a public involvement plan which could be brought back to the Work Group for approval. Ms. Maureen Mague-Decindis, Ms. Teri Collins, Ms. Buxer, Ms. Kasunic, Ms. Maxine Anderson, Ms. Melissa Bauer, and Mr. Friedson volunteered to participate on this public involvement ad hoc group.

Mr. Sarath Joshua of MAG staff suggested the ad hoc group consider using the Internet as one method in the public involvement plan. He also noted that in addition to the Internet, several good methods exist to reach people in new ways, such as teleconferencing and telephone interviews. Ms. Jones pointed out that the public involvement ad hoc group should contact the Red Cross for some of the statistics and programs that are in place.

6. Next Meeting

There was consensus that Wednesday mornings around 9:30 a.m. was a good general meeting time. The next meeting was schedule for Wednesday, November 29, 2000. The third meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 20, 2000.

Before the meeting was adjourned, Councilmember Walters gave the members an assignment. A handout was given to each committee member, who were then asked to develop a vision and mission statement for the project. Ms. Quigley asked the members to fax back or e-mail their statements to her by November 10, 2000. Determining a vision and mission statement which will guide the planning process will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.