



Executive Director's Report

Sometimes, we can see ourselves more clearly through the eyes of others. Last week, we had the opportunity to host a group from the Greater Dallas Planning Council, a coalition of elected officials, economic developers, planners and regional transportation leaders who came to the Valley to learn more about the regional cooperation and best development practices in a peer region. It gave us a chance to do some comparisons ourselves.

First and foremost, the Dallas group learned of the unique relationship MAG has with its member agencies, as Mayors from a number of large cities gave their time to meet with the contingent and answer their incisive questions. We are grateful to the many city staff members who prepared detailed and comprehensive itineraries for each segment of the group's visit. The group was astounded by the warmth and hospitality that greeted them throughout their trip.

In looking at the governance structure of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), which is the Dallas region's transportation planning body, it is clear that one of our main advantages in this region is our streamlined governance structure. While we have 32 members, including 25 cities and towns and one county, NCTCOG has 231 members, including 164 cities and 16 counties. While we can sit around a single table to make decisions, that doesn't happen in Dallas. They conceded that the size of their planning council can make it difficult to make unified decisions.

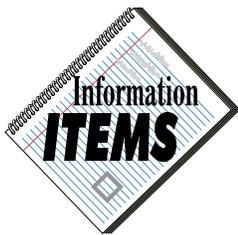
Although the greater Dallas region has two million more people in its planning area than MAG, we are growing faster in terms of annual percentage of growth. Our job growth in the MAG region has been incredible. We grew more jobs over the past year than Dallas, nearly twice the rate. Our unemployment rate remains very low. In fact, it is such a tight market that firms have recently been recruiting out of California, Colorado and yes, Texas, to get labor into the Phoenix market.

In employment, Dallas is more diverse with a higher concentration in traditional industries, such as manufacturing and transportation. Our employment is focused in construction, retail and professional services industries.

The professional services industry is the primary growth industry for both regions, and is likely to be a point of competition between the two regions for these higher paying, knowledge-based jobs.

The visit gave both regions the opportunity to compare our differences and similarities, to take pride in the areas in which we excel and to reexamine those areas that need improvement. But, I have to admit, there is one area that I am confident that we will always excel in, and that is the expertise, knowledge, and generosity of the elected officials and staff of our member agencies.

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



Information Items

MAG 2007 Early Phase Input Opportunity Report

The MAG Regional Council was provided with an update on the FY 2007 MAG Early Phase Input Opportunity. MAG conducts a four-phase public involvement process: Early Phase, Mid-Phase, Final Phase and Continuous Involvement. The FY 2007 Early Phase Input Opportunity was conducted from August through September and is the initial opportunity for input prior to the development of the Draft FY 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). During the Early Phase Public Input Opportunity, MAG participated in and cosponsored events with the Arizona Department of Transportation, Regional Public Transportation Authority (Valley Metro), and Valley Metro Rail (METRO). At the various forums, MAG received public comment. In addition, MAG also received comment via telephone and online correspondence.

During the phase, MAG hosted an Early Phase Transportation Stakeholders open house and meeting, in which staff from MAG, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Valley Metro, and METRO were present to respond to comments and answer questions. MAG also staffed an information booth at the Chicanos Por La Causa Business Seminar, and at several ADOT I-17 Road Shows to provide information related to the I-17 corridor. A report summarizing the comments received during the phase was prepared. The FY 2007 Early Phase Input Opportunity Report is available for review on the MAG Web site at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

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

Update on Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs Account

The Regional Council received an update on staff activities related to the Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs (STAN) account. House Bill 2865 created the account, which provides \$307 million to be used for the acceleration of the construction or reconstruction of freeways, state highways, bridges, and interchanges that are included in the Regional Transportation Plan. The Maricopa region will receive 60 percent (\$184.2 million) of the fund, the Pima County area 16 percent and the remainder of the state 24 percent. The Transportation Policy Committee will meet November 15, 2006, and may establish recommended priorities for the funding, which would then be forwarded to the MAG Regional Council at its December 13, 2006 meeting.

For more information, please contact Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, (602) 254-6300.

Efforts To Reduce Domestic Violence Among Youth

MAG Regional Council members received a report on efforts underway to give help and hope to young people experiencing domestic violence at home or in dating relationships. The MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council and the MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee Youth Policy Stakeholders Group are partnering on a project to address the impact of domestic violence on youth. The Youth Empowerment Project is designed to provide teens direct access to accurate, accessible and age-appropriate resource information.

In recent focus groups conducted by MAG, in which more than 400 teens provided feedback, teens indicated that when they experience domestic or relationship abuse, they most frequently seek assistance from their peers rather than adults. Implementation of the project, which is funded by the Governor's Office Division for Women, will involve the development of a teen-specific resource list, recorded peer testimonials, and a fact sheet about the process and consequences of reporting domestic violence. All of these materials will be available on a new Web site developed by MAG specifically for teens, at www.WebofFriends.org. To help market the Web site, MAG is sponsoring an ad contest in which teens are encouraged to help produce messages "by teens, for teens." The winning public service announcements will be professionally produced and marketed.

For more information, please contact Amy St. Peter, MAG Human Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.



Next Regional Council Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG Regional Council is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 2006, at the MAG Offices, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 200, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include possible approval of projects to receive funding under the Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs Account. The projects approved by the Regional Council would then be forwarded to the State Transportation Board. Additional agenda items include recommended approval of the MAG Public Participation Plan; recommended approval of the Maricopa County resident population and employment projections for 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, 2030 and 2035; and a status report on the Arterial Life Cycle Program.

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