



## Executive Director's Report

Just as every type of business in the nation faces challenges in an uncertain economy, regional planning agencies must also cope with changing revenue projections and cost increases. While these challenges may occasionally lead to strained policy discussions, they also help us appreciate the value of sound regional governance principles. This point was unexpectedly brought home to me on July 31, when a delegation from South Korea visited MAG.

Of the 49 million people in South Korea, 23.6 million reside within the Gyeonggi Province, home to Seoul (population 10.4 million) and Incheon (population 2.6 million). The province also contains numerous municipal and provincial governments for a total of 66 autonomous districts. You begin to see why their metropolitan region is facing some major governance challenges! The delegation of university professors and a state government official visited the United States to learn more about establishing a regional governance structure. The delegation selected MAG for one of its key stops during its U.S. visit as a "best practices model" of regional governance. The delegation hoped to determine whether some of our principles could be applied in South Korea.

The desire to enhance local governance reportedly comes from newly-elected President Lee Myung-bak. President Lee, a former businessman and Seoul city mayor, has vowed to boost economic growth by seven percent, double average income, and make South Korea one of the world's top seven economies. It is interesting that the Korean President recognizes the need to enhance local control to achieve these economic goals.

We were able to share MAG's key philosophy that local governments, which are closest to the people, should exercise the basic initiative, leadership and the primary responsibility for addressing local problems that require action on a regional basis. Delegation members indicated they had found significant value in the visit. From our end, we were given the opportunity to step back, look at the big picture, and recognize how fortunate we are to have an effective and cooperative regional governance process.

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

*Regional Council meeting report begins on next page.*

**Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, July 23, 2008.****Action Items****Regional Council Approves Noise Barrier Projects**

The MAG Regional Council approved the construction of noise barriers at 11 sites along Valley freeways using Proposition 400 noise mitigation funding. The noise mitigation funding was included as part of the Regional Transportation Plan approved by voters under Proposition 400. All of the sites recommended for funding are within one decibel (A-scale or dBA) of the 64 dBA noise threshold. The cost of constructing all 11 noise barriers is estimated to be \$15.6 million, which is within the available funding. The 11 projects include:

**Phoenix**

I-17 and Camelback Rd.  
I-10, 7th Ave to 15th Ave.  
Loop 101 and 51st Ave.  
Loop 101 and 7th St.  
State Route 51 and Greenway Rd.

**Peoria**

Loop 101, Peoria Ave. to Grand Ave.  
Loop 101, Olive Ave. to Peoria Ave.  
Loop 101, Northern Ave. to Olive Ave.

**Scottsdale**

Loop 101 and 90th St.  
Loop 101 and Cactus Rd.

**Maricopa County (unincorporated)**

Loop 303, Deer Valley Rd.  
to north of Robertson Drive

During public comment at the meeting, a representative for residents living in one of the neighborhoods impacted by the freeway noise thanked the Regional Council for including the funding and helping to improve their quality of life.

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

**Regional Council Approves Use of I-10 for High Capacity Transit**

The Regional Council voted to adopt the I-10 freeway right of way west of I-17 as the Locally Preferred Alternative for high capacity transit improvements. The Regional Council also voted to explore further options to the west in the MAG Transit Framework Study, including intermodal connections.

The Regional Transportation Plan includes a high capacity transit project serving the I-10 west corridor, the Capitol mall area, and connecting with the light rail system in downtown Phoenix. Valley Metro Rail is currently conducting the required Alternatives Analysis (AA) for this project. The AA will result in the selection of a locally preferred alternative that includes the definition of the alignment and technology to be used for the project. The selected technology will likely be light rail or bus rapid transit. The findings of the AA have recommended that the alignment be in the I-10 corridor from approximately the I-10/I-17 interchange and

79th Avenue, although it was noted in discussion at the meeting that the project limits should be expanded to 83rd Avenue.

The Environmental Impact Statement for I-10, which was completed in 1977, designated the 50-foot open median of this section of I-10 for possible public transit use. Since the project will utilize space in the corridor for dedicated transit use, Valley Metro Rail requested that MAG recommend the high capacity transit project be located in this section of the I-10 corridor. In addition, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) asked that the adoption of the locally preferred alternative and the alignment be formalized as quickly as possible as ADOT moves forward on design work on the potential South Mountain freeway connections.

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

### **Federal Fiscal Year 2008 MAG Final Closeout**

Due to the deferral of two projects, the funding amount available for Federal Fiscal Year 2008 MAG Final Closeout increased from \$14.7 million to \$15.2 million. The identification of these additional funds for closeout resulted in Regional Council approval to allow additional projects, in order of rank on the contingency list, to be funded. The Regional Council approved the FFY 2008 MAG Final Closeout, and amended/modified the FY 2008-2012 MAG Transportation Improvement Program to allow the projects to proceed.

**For more information, please contact Eileen Yazzie, Transp. Programming Manager, at (602) 254-6300.**

### **New Finding of Conformity**

On July 25, 2007, the MAG Regional Council approved the Finding of Conformity for the FY 2008-2012 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) 2007 Update. Since that time, an amendment was proposed to include changes to Arizona Department of Transportation projects, changes to Arterial Life Cycle Program projects in Gilbert, Maricopa County, Mesa, Peoria, and Scottsdale, and changes to Queen Creek projects. The conformity assessment on the proposed amendment, which included a regional emissions analysis, concluded that the TIP and Plan update meet all applicable federal conformity requirements and are in conformance with applicable air quality plans. The Regional Council approved the new Finding of Conformity for the TIP and Plan as amended.

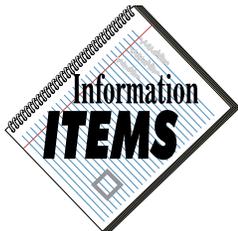
**For more information, please contact Lindy Bauer, MAG Environmental Director, (602) 254-6300.**

### **Regional Office Center**

The MAG Regional Council voted to not pursue further negotiations with several other regional agencies for a Regional Office Center. The board voted to direct staff to negotiate an approximate two and a half year extension of its current lease, with the lease including favorable early termination provisions that will allow MAG to pursue other long term rent-to-own, rent or own/build options.

MAG had been working with the Regional Public Transportation Authority (Valley Metro), Valley Metro Rail (METRO), and the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) to examine possibly colocating the agencies in a joint facility. A working group, comprised of the agency board chairs and administrative officials of each agency, was formed in April 2008. After examining several location opportunities, the working group recommended presenting one of three alternatives to the respective agency boards for further consideration. With METRO noting concerns regarding its ability to participate in the project and the future direction of the project uncertain, the Regional Council accepted a recommendation from the Executive Committee to redirect MAG's efforts from participating in a joint facility to proceeding with a MAG-only relocation project and initiating appropriate next steps for a lease, lease-purchase or build option.

**For more information, contact Alana Chavez, MAG Management Analyst, (602) 254-6300.**



## **Information Items**

### **Teens Speak Out Against Dating Violence**

The MAG Regional Council was provided an update on efforts to end teen dating violence by utilizing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for radio broadcast. More than 300 teenagers from throughout the region helped to develop and test the message against dating violence contained in the radio PSA, which promotes the resources available through the MAG Youth Empowerment Project. The PSA, titled *That's Not Love, That's Abuse*, highlights for teens the importance of recognizing the signs of an abusive dating relationship. Teens will communicate to their peers that their dating partners should never be verbally, mentally or physically abusive.

MAG Chair Mary Manross, who also chairs the MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council, noted that the PSA highlights the verbal, psychological and physical abuse that many young people are facing in their dating relationships, adding that focus groups conducted by MAG revealed that more than half of teens in our community say that they, or someone they know, have been involved in an abusive dating relationship.

The update was provided to present information about the project and to request assistance from MAG member agencies in delivering the PSA to the region's teens.

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

### **Clean Air Initiative**

The Regional Council received a presentation regarding the Maricopa County Clean Air Initiative. On February 13, 2008, Maricopa County kicked off the "Running Out of Air" initiative. Maricopa County is committing to 38 dust pollution prevention

measures in the MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10, which was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency in 2007. In addition to increasing staff and ramping up enforcement, Maricopa County is using a variety of public outreach methods to inform the public about dust pollution and to ask all residents to do their part by making a clean air commitment. More information on the initiative can be found on the project Web site at [www.RunningOutOfAir.com](http://www.RunningOutOfAir.com)

**For more information, contact Holly Ward, Community & Media Relations Manager, Maricopa County Air Quality Department, (602) 506-6713.**



### **Next Regional Council Meeting**

The August 27, 2008, meeting of the MAG Regional Council is cancelled. The next Regional Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in the Saguaro Room, 302 N. 1st Avenue, Phoenix. Agenda items are pending.

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