

Regional Planning Agencies From Across State Support Border Resolution

Improving trade relations with Mexico and enhancing the flow of commerce into Arizona is the goal of a border resolution that has been supported by all of the Councils of Governments and all of the state’s metropolitan planning organizations throughout Arizona. The resolution calls for proactive support for infrastructure improvements at the Arizona ports of entry to improve traffic flow and improve trade between Arizona and Mexico.

Among the agencies signing the resolution are the Central Arizona Association of Governments, Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (which drafted a separate resolution in support of MAG’s efforts), Maricopa Association of Governments, Northern Arizona Council of Governments, Pima Association of Governments, SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization, Western Arizona Council of Governments, and the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization will consider the resolution later this spring.

A recent Freight Transportation Framework Study found that other



City of Nogales Mayor Arturo Garino briefs visitors on border issues.



Elected officials, including Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, San Luis Mayor Juan Carlos Escamilla, and Litchfield Park Mayor Thomas Schoaf, visit the San Luis Port of Entry.

border states like Texas are far outpacing Arizona when it comes to developing trade relations with Mexico. While Arizona exports to Mexico totaled about \$5.7 billion in 2011, in Texas the total was \$87 billion.

“Those numbers tell the story: We are losing valuable economic development opportunities to other border states. It is time for local governments to assist the state

in enhancing our trade relations with Mexico, and to capitalize on the numerous benefits that an improved relationship would bring,” said MAG Chair and Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman. “The support that we are receiving from our fellow planning agencies in this effort has been phenomenal, and it illustrates that Arizona is ready and willing to be proactive in this effort.”

Hallman noted that another little-known fact is that legal Mexican visitors spend approximately \$7.3 million each day in Arizona.

The idea for a border resolution was born out of a recent series of trips in which elected officials, business leaders and staff from Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties visited the Arizona ports of entry in Nogales and San Luis. The purpose of the trips was to better understand the challenges facing freight movement to and from Mexico and Arizona.

“Arizona’s border is the gateway for some \$26 billion worth of imports and exports and some 44 million people each year,” said Arizona-Mexico Commission Executive

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Message From the Chair



Mayor Hugh Hallman
City of Tempe

In June of 2012, my terms as Chair of MAG and Mayor of the City of Tempe will end. Because I am a native of Tempe, it has been my great pleasure to serve its residents, and for the past year it has been my honor to serve this region as MAG chair. It is important for me to take this time to reflect on our past and where this region is headed.

My experience on the MAG Regional Council has reinforced my belief that MAG's strength is in its diversity, from the eradication of domestic violence to freeway planning. The large reach of MAG is necessary to truly address the concerns of the citizens of our region.

Many important issues face our region. Many still need to be resolved, such as building the South Mountain Freeway and addressing dust pollution. But we have had many successes. One primary focus for me that recently came to fruition is to create a better organizational alignment for transit services for this region. The offices of the Regional Public Transportation Authority and METRO Rail have been integrated into one building and a single chief executive officer, Stephen Banta, has been tapped to lead both organizations. This represents a major shift in philosophy and was the culmination of many discussions and meetings on how to create a more efficient and robust transit system, which will result in benefits to our regional customers and communities.

We have more recently undertaken a new focus at MAG to better consider economic development opportunities when making

transportation infrastructure decisions. As a result, the Economic Development Committee was established. In just under two years, this committee has identified a number of major opportunities for growing our regional economy. As the mayor of a city that is landlocked in the middle of the Valley, I have become used to looking at our region holistically, recognizing that our municipal economies are deeply intertwined and that regional issues impact all cities. Although we are the 14th largest metro area in the United States, we need to work better to be globally competitive. Strong regions make strong states. For too long, we have been focused on sales tax revenue as the principal revenue source for cities. In order to grow, we need to shift our thinking to align our interests rather than competing against each other.

This region has a history of success in partnering. Propositions 300 and 400 are just two examples of how we have worked together toward a common goal. Today, we are driving on a state-of-the-art regional freeway system that is an outstanding representation of great regional decision making.

Thank you for enabling me to represent the MAG Regional Council over the past year. I believe MAG is on the correct path to work on the issues to collectively grow our regional and state economy. I wish my fellow Regional Council members well in meeting the challenges of the future, and I am confident that they will continue their tradition of cooperation to make this a better region for all of the residents of Maricopa County. 

Hugh Hallman
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MAGAZine is a quarterly newsletter of the Maricopa Association of Governments. It focuses on the issues and concerns of the cities, towns and tribal communities of Maricopa County. If you know of a friend or colleague who would like to receive MAGAZine, please call the MAG office, (602) 254-6300.

Visit www.azmag.gov and click on Regional Council.



We at Maricopa County continue to enjoy terrific working partnerships with our fellow MAG member agencies. Among the active projects where we are working together as partners are: El Mirage Road (with El Mirage and Surprise), Northern Parkway (with El Mirage, Glendale, Peoria and the Flood Control District), and Power Road (with Mesa, Gilbert and the Gila River Indian Community). And these are just the currently active projects in the MAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Beyond the RTP, there are too many to mention. In some cases, we are serving by leading these efforts; in other cases, we are serving by just being a partner to another MAG member agency's strong leadership.

Isn't it amazing what you can accomplish when you work together?

— Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chair Max Wilson



Three of the 25 semifinalists in the Arizona Innovation Challenge are located in Chandler's Innovations incubator. This is the next step toward meeting our goal of nurturing companies that will create jobs in Arizona.

—Chandler Mayor Jay Tibshraeny

Border Resolution (continued from page 1)

Director Margie Emmerman, who serves as the policy advisor for Mexico and Latin America for the Governor's Office. "In order to maximize the opportunities that this flow of goods and people present, we need to make the appropriate investments in inspection and transportation infrastructure. Having all of Arizona's Councils of Governments and planning organizations approve a resolution that highlights border infrastructure and trade is indicative of the growing recognition and understanding of the importance of the border to the state and to the nation. The Arizona-Mexico Commission remains committed to working with the border communities, the councils of governments and other stakeholders to ensure that we are ready for current and future growth and job creation throughout Arizona," she said.

As a result of these trips, a resolution of support for the borders was developed and reviewed by each organization. The Joint Planning Advisory Council, which consists of MAG, the Pima Association of Governments, and the Central Arizona Association of Governments, reviewed the resolution in February and comments were incorporated into the final resolution.

Issues being examined include increasing U.S. Customs and Border staffing; reducing commercial vehicle wait times; reducing the number of hours it takes to process rail cars through the border; and seeking dedicated funding sources for ports of entry.

Recently, Governor Jan Brewer announced the formation of the State Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance to also

explore infrastructure improvements and economic opportunities at the border.

"Enhancing global competitiveness and supporting the creation of quality jobs in Arizona is a principal objective of the Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance," said John Halikowski, director of the Arizona Department of Transportation. "By examining current and future infrastructure needs, we can chart a strategic course for Arizona's position as a leader in the trade, logistics, infrastructure and energy sectors. Support from the state's councils of governments demonstrates the widespread commitment to further the goals of the alliance."

The issue is additionally getting federal attention. With the U.S. global market share of spending by international travelers falling from 17 to 11 percent, in January, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing Visa and Foreign Visitor Process Goals and the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness.

"This issue now has national momentum and the support we have had from the local leaders is tremendous," said Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, who serves as vice chair of MAG and is also the incoming president of the National League of Cities. "We are unique in that our regional planning agencies are banding together in concert with the state to move Arizona forward in our global economy."

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Regional Profile: Mayor Elaine Scruggs



Mayor
Elaine Scruggs
City of Glendale



Glendale Mayor Reflects on Her Career, Accomplishments, and the Road Ahead

“Today I am announcing that I will not be a candidate for any office in the 2012 elections.”

After decades of service, those words by Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs in March sent a ripple of shock not only through her community, but the entire region. First elected to the Glendale City Council in 1990 and having served as mayor since 1993, Scruggs has become a West Valley powerhouse and a regional icon.

While the announcement came as a shock to all but her closest family and friends, Mayor Scruggs says her decision was reached more than a year ago.

“I wanted to really take the time to think it through and feel sure that this is what I want to do right now. I’ve watched others leave elected office and not be able to separate themselves from it, and I don’t want it to be that way. So I thought very seriously about it for two years,” says Scruggs. “It is based

on the fact that I’m ready to have a personal life again—I desire and crave a personal life.”

While she has had no recurrence of the breast cancer with which she was diagnosed three years ago, Scruggs admits health concerns did play a role in her decision—but not in the way one might think.

“Political life is a very unhealthy life. We do a lot of sitting in meetings, there is a lot of sedentary time reading. I probably sit and read 10 to 15 hours a week—not for fun, but to study up on material that I need for meetings. My own personality is such that if I am faced with an opportunity to go exercise or make another phone call to a citizen....I will always choose the work-related (option). So I have let my health suffer through all of this,” she says. In fact, Scruggs claims her “big plan” for retirement is to start using the fitness club membership that she has had for 15 years “and show up someday and surprise everybody at how buff I am,” she jokes.

Scruggs began her political career at a time Glendale was experiencing severe budget shortfalls. She is credited with orchestrating an economic turnaround, transforming Glendale’s historic downtown from a blighted, crime-ridden area into a tourism destination and thriving business community of specialty stores and restaurants. She helped lead Glendale from an unknown, bedroom community to a national-



From 1996-1998 Mayor Scruggs served as Chair of the MAG Regional Council, and helped MAG reorganize after separating from the League of Arizona Cities and Towns.

ly recognized sports and entertainment destination that attracts more than four million people annually. Attractions range from the holiday-themed Glendale Glitters event to a professional football stadium that already has hosted the 2008 Superbowl and has been tapped to host again in 2015.

She also has been a two-decade dedicated supporter of Luke Air Force Base. Her efforts were first focused on local and state legislative actions that protect Luke’s ability to continue its role as the Air Force’s premier jet pilot training base. For the past three years, she has been a leader in regional and statewide efforts for Luke to be selected as a training base for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which will replace the Air Force’s F-16s.

For Scruggs, however, there are two accomplishments that stand out as her preferred legacy: her commitment to involving the public in policymaking, and her work—often through her service on the MAG Regional Council—in the area of transportation.



Mayor Scruggs was a charter member of the Transportation Policy Committee. This retreat was the beginning of what would become a new Regional Transportation Plan approved by voters as Proposition 400.

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Mayor Elaine Scruggs (continued)

Even before taking office, Scruggs was involved in the 1985 “Get Out the Vote” campaign for Proposition 300, which implemented the half-cent sales tax for transportation that built the regional freeway system. She was also a charter member of the Transportation Policy Committee and an avid supporter of Proposition 400 to extend the half-cent tax another 20 years. She was instrumental in accelerating the regional freeway system completion by seven years. But Scruggs believes not enough improvements have taken place due to inadequate transportation funding.

“I still believe with my heart of hearts that the most significant achievement that we can hope for in regional transportation is to not have to get the legislature to pass a bill allowing us to go to our voters to ask them if they want to approve a revenue system for transportation...I’m frustrated that we don’t have that. I’m frustrated that we have to beg for legislation to be approved to allow us to hold an election so people can have a choice and free will.”

Mayor Scruggs is also proud of her work with citizens, saying she has always strived to be “very visible, very accessible, very approachable.” She implemented numerous initia-



Mayor Scruggs highlights work on the Loop 303 during a MAG video on the construction of Proposition 400 projects.

tives to improve public involvement in government, including a citizen participation ordinance, the creation of Glendale University, and the expansion of the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission.

“Most of all I really wanted to instill in the residents a belief that this is their government, they do have a role, they do have a say, and create venues for that to happen. It’s hard for people to start getting involved in government. Usually it happens through some negative activity, and they come in an attitude of opposition to something and then they go away. That is not civic engagement,” says Scruggs. “Civic engagement is sincere participation through the good and the bad. Some ideas you like, some you don’t, but all the time you are aware of where your government is going, what they’re doing, why they’re doing what they are doing, what the factors are behind decisions, and you find ways to be part of that.”

Scruggs admits it is “ironic and disappointing” that she entered office during a recession, and that she is leaving during a freefalling national economy that has left her community and the region struggling.

“The most significant issue we face in our region is a scarcity of resources. At this particular time, the

resources that are most scarce, of course, are financial. And this translates into difficulties for every city and for the region.” Mayor Scruggs says she believes the best solution for recovery is to diversify the economy by changing the region’s dependence on the housing industry and retail sector.

With her exit from office, that task will be up to others. In the meantime, Scruggs says she hopes to spend more time with her husband and also visiting her daughter and son-in-law who live in Tennessee. She notes that she and her husband have already made travel plans and is excited that she doesn’t have to consult a calendar to see what days she has to stay in town for meetings.

Before saying goodbye, she wants to thank her many MAG colleagues for their friendship and hard work. “Sometimes we have been on different sides of issues, but really I believe we are all working to achieve what is best for this region,” she says. She remembers MAG as an organization that existed under the auspices of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns, and says she is proud to have been part of helping the organization strike out on its own.

“We created this organization from scratch, and look at it now, how professional it is and on the cutting edge of everything that is going on. I just couldn’t be more proud of everybody who works there, and everything they have done to fashion an exemplary Council of Governments.”



Mayor Scruggs as Honorary Crossing Guard on Walk and Bike to School Day.



Mayor Scruggs discusses Glendale issues with neighborhood leaders at the United Methodist Church during her first Community Conversations meeting.



Dust Plan Completed

A draft plan to reduce dust emissions in the region by five percent each year until national air quality standards are met is now complete and will soon be on its way to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review and approval.

The MAG Five Percent Plan for PM-10 is expected to be submitted by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) in May after comments from a public hearing are incorporated and the plan is adopted by the MAG Regional Council.

It has been an arduous process for the plan, which was originally submitted to the EPA for approval in 2007, but was voluntarily withdrawn by the ADEQ in January 2011 to allow for the use of new paved road dust factors provided by the EPA. The new dust factors, which are utilized in the new plan, are more accurate and address concerns that had prevented the plan's approval. At the time of the plan's withdrawal in 2010, it was facing a partial disapproval action by the EPA.

While the withdrawal allowed the state to improve the plan, the move resulted in a finding of "Failure to Submit" by the EPA, which triggered a "sanctions clock" under which the region was given 18 months to submit a new plan or face penalties. If implemented, sanctions would initially include tighter controls on major industries and eventually the potential loss of federal highway funds. The EPA will need to issue a "completeness finding" on the plan before August 14, 2012, in order to prevent the sanctions from taking place.

"It took great staff effort to complete this plan quickly, and we are hopeful that the EPA can arrive at a completeness finding in time to avoid sanctions taking effect," said MAG Chair and Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman.

Hallman noted that in addition to the submission of the plan, the region needs three years of clean data (no violations of the standard at the monitors) for EPA to determine that the standard has been met.

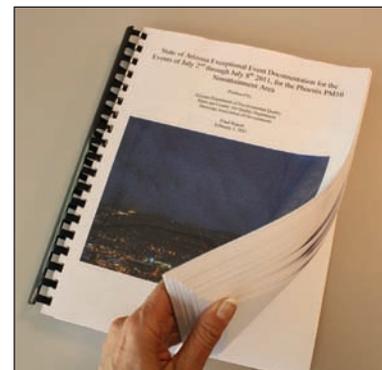
"It is critical for member agencies to maintain their aggressive efforts to prevent exceedances at the monitors and throughout the region," said Hallman. "To date in 2012, there have been three PM-10 exceptional event exceedances, two of which are believed to be caused by high winds and one by residual dust from high winds. While we believe these events won't count against us under the allowed exceptional events rules, we need to work together to prevent dust occurrences," he said.

Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, who has been actively working with the federal government on air quality issues, said documenting when an exceptional event such as a dust storm or forest fire event has occurred continues to be an onerous task. He cited the large haboob that hit the Valley on July 5, 2011, as a prime example.

"Most people who have seen videos or photos of that event recognize that there is no plan in the world that could have prevented the monitors from spiking that day," said Mayor Smith. "Yet it took a report that was more than 200 pages in length to document all of the necessary requirements to officially prove to the EPA that the exceedances were the result of high winds. It is time the EPA revised its rules to take away this resource-intensive burden." 



Mesa Mayor Scott Smith



The documentation needed for the week surrounding the July haboob totals more than 200 pages.



Photographer Daniel Bryant captured this dramatic photo of the giant haboob that engulfed the Valley last July.

Border Resolution Comments (continued from page 3)

For further insight into the importance of the Border Resolution, see the comments from the signers below.



This resolution is supported throughout all regions of the state because investing in Arizona's ports of entry with Mexico makes sound economic sense. Increasing border protection, reducing border delays and expanding trade are all important reasons to improve our infrastructure and border capacity.

—Casa Grande Mayor Robert Jackson, Chair of the Central Arizona Association of Governments



The CYMPO Board fully supports this effort to increase investment in border infrastructure and sees this as a critical step in improving economic development opportunities across the state of Arizona.

—Prescott Valley Vice Mayor Patty Lasker, Chair of the Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization



At the recent Greater Flagstaff Transportation Summit it was made evident that our greatest trading partner is the Phoenix-Metropolitan area and that some of our greatest potential lies in international trade with Mexico. Improving border operations certainly helps the state's economy, including Northern Arizona. We look forward to discussing this important resolution at our Executive Board meeting later this month.

—Coconino County Supervisor Matt Ryan, Vice-Chair of the Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization



The Pima Association of Governments Regional Council endorses and joins the Sun Corridor Regional Planning Agencies and Native American Communities in the "Resolution of Support for Arizona's Ports of Entry with Mexico." Especially noteworthy in the Resolution is the undeniable nexus between improvements in our state's ports of entry highway and rail transportation infrastructure and economic recovery and sustainability of commerce. We urge continued cooperation among all state partners and agencies with neighboring agencies in Mexico toward our mutual economic survival.

—City of South Tucson Mayor Jennifer Eckstrom, Chair of the Pima Association of Governments



We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our regional planning partners on the improvement of the state's transportation infrastructure in support of statewide economic growth. This is an important step to enhance Arizona's economic future and that of northern Arizona counties and communities.

—Yavapai County Supervisor Thomas Thurman, Chair of the Northern Arizona Council of Governments



The resolution is an example of intraregional collaboration at its best. Because the SEAGO region includes four international ports of entry with Mexico, two of which are responsible for the majority of the approximately \$30 million of international trade occurring each day with Arizona's primary trading partner, we appreciate and applaud the efforts of our fellow COGs and MPOs to draw attention to the direct link these facilities have to the economy of the state, as well as the unmet infrastructure and manpower needs at Arizona's ports. The trade statistics outlined in the Resolution speak for themselves. Hopefully the Resolution will cause policy makers at both the state and federal levels to recognize the return on investment that will occur when they appropriate resources targeted for border infrastructure and which are necessary to improve Arizona's global competitiveness and economic vitality.

—Executive Director Randy Heiss, SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization



The focus has always been on border security, which is important. However, it goes beyond security, to include economic development throughout the state. For instance, the positive side of legal crossings is that they (visitors) purchase merchandise, or attend event and tourist activities, and we know they come to buy goods and/or take their children places for entertainment. Therefore, if we look beyond security, we realize it benefits all of us within Arizona, because of the economic impact to all areas in Arizona. It is time for all of us to realize that united we make a strong case and we need to express, throughout Arizona, a united voice in favor of both border security and support for legal trade by improving Arizona's border infrastructure.

—Yuma County Supervisor Tony Reyes, Vice Chair of the Western Arizona Council of Governments



It is heartening to see this high level of cooperation between all of these transportation entities. That kind of cooperation is what we need to grow Arizona's economy.

—Yuma Deputy Mayor Paul Johnson, Chair of the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

Northern Parkway Project Now Underway

The stab and scrape of seven ceremonial shovels marked the launch of a long-anticipated Valley transportation project in February, as the groundbreaking event for the first phase of construction for the Northern Parkway Project was held in Glendale. The groundbreaking commemorated the first four-and-a-half-mile phase of construction between Sarival Avenue and Dysart Road.

Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Max Wilson, El Mirage Mayor Lana Mook, Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, and Peoria Vice Mayor Ron Aames were among those participating in the inaugural groundbreaking.

"I am thrilled to see this day," said Mayor Scruggs. "It has taken well over a decade to get here and it will take another decade to fully complete the project, but Northern Parkway will serve as a vital east-west link between major transportation corridors," she said.

Northern Parkway will extend along Northern Avenue from Loop 303 to US-60/Grand Avenue, and is a transportation partnership of El Mirage, Glendale,

Peoria, Maricopa County, and the Maricopa Association of Governments.

The initial phase of Northern Parkway includes the construction of an interim four-lane access controlled roadway between Sarival Avenue and Dysart Road. The interim facility will consist of two lanes in each direction separated by a median. The ultimate construction of Northern Parkway will result in a six-lane controlled access roadway connecting Loop 303 with Grand Avenue.

Additional aspects of construction for the inaugural project include connecting ramps for future overpasses; bridge structures at the railroad crossings at 143rd Avenue and Sarival Avenue; new curb, gutter and street lighting at on/off ramps and intersecting cross streets; and the installation of new traffic signals at Sarival Avenue, Reems Road and Litchfield Road. Work will start at the west end of the project at the intersection of Sarival Avenue and Butler Road and continue east to Litchfield Road, then shift to the southeast to connect with the current Northern Avenue alignment. The project then continues east to match existing

improvements at Dysart Road. Construction activity between Sarival Avenue and Dysart Road will take approximately 13 months and completion is slated for spring 2013. When complete, the parkway will extend 12.5 miles.

Max Wilson, chair of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, said the Parkway will serve as a gateway to the West Valley.

"This is the first of 14 funded Northern Parkway Program projects to break ground," said Wilson. "This is a major project from not only a regional perspective but from a federal perspective as well. The Maricopa County Department of Transportation successfully cultivated excellent working relationships with the Federal Highway Administration, the Arizona Department of Transportation and MAG to propel the project forward."

El Mirage Mayor Lana Mook said she was glad to be able to participate in "a celebration of another remarkable regional project," adding that the project demonstrates the region's commitment to improvement and will help economic development in the West Valley.

"Relieving congestion in this busy corridor and providing travel capacity is vital to the economic development of the region. Infrastructure improvements like these will improve the speed and flow of commerce throughout the Northwest Valley," said Mayor Mook. "This project is a huge step in the right direction and, along with other infrastructure investments happening around the region, will spur the local economy and ensure that our businesses have the infrastructure they need to compete, to expand, and to thrive."

The funded portion of the parkway project is approximately \$330 million, with 70 percent paid through MAG federal funds. The rest will come from Maricopa County and the cities it passes through. Glendale will contribute 40 percent; the county, 30 percent; Peoria, 20 percent; and El Mirage, 10 percent. 



Left to right: Al Kattan, Project Management Office, Maricopa County; Timothy Phillips, Chief Engineer, Flood Control District; John Hauskins, Director, Maricopa County DOT; Mayor Elaine Scruggs, Glendale; Supervisor Max Wilson, Maricopa County; Mayor Lana Mook, El Mirage; and Vice Mayor Ron Aames, Peoria.

Southwest Valley Residents Turn Out to Voice Transit Needs

More than 50 Southwest Valley residents attended a transit summit to tell regional planners the types of local transit services they need now and in the future. The summit was held in early April as part of an overall study on local transit needs in the Southwest Valley that is being conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments.

The Southwest Valley Local Transit Summit provided an opportunity for residents, business owners and community leaders from throughout the Southwest Valley to come together to review and prioritize local transit needs and suggest which local transit services might best meet the needs of the communities.

“This study will show us current transit services and will allow us to plan for the future by looking at current trends. Our cities are interconnected, and providing mobility to our residents only strengthens our communities,” said Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, who serves as vice chair of the MAG Regional Council. “All modes of transportation are important, and transit should be another tool in the toolbox for Southwest Valley residents, providing residents options for their commute and freedom to others to go about their daily lives without a car,” she said.



The Southwest Valley Local Transit System Study is being conducted by MAG in partnership with a number of its member agencies, including Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Phoenix,

Tolleson, and Maricopa County. Other partners in the study include the Regional Public Transportation Authority (Valley Metro) and METRO Rail.



“This study will incorporate a comprehensive evaluation of current transit services in the Southwest Valley

and determine the best strategic approach for expanding local transit service, in concert with development trends and available revenues,” said Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox, who participated in the summit. “This summit was a great opportunity for elected officials to hear more about what residents expect and want out of their transit system, as well as to hear what elected officials throughout the area envision for their communities,” she said.

Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck said the Southwest Valley is expected to grow from 330,000 people today to about 895,000 by 2030.



“The Southwest Valley has experienced an extended period of rapid population and employment growth,”

said Mayor Meck. “Current transit service is extremely limited in the Southwest Valley, and it is clear we will need a more comprehensive and connected transit system to serve this growing population. We are encouraged that MAG is conducting this study to identify needs and priorities, so that we can develop the best strategies for

SURVEY FINDINGS

Among the findings of the self-selected survey:

- Eight percent of respondents reported currently using transit; 44 percent of those use it daily.
- More than 60 percent of respondents drive alone for all trips.
- Existing transit services are generally lacking within the Southwest Valley, but people who live there and use transit may use regional bus services such as express bus service to travel to jobs in Central Phoenix.
- Bus use is highest for work, school and recreation trips. Respondents are most likely to carpool for school, recreation, social outings, shopping and entertainment trips. They are most likely to walk to elementary and high schools.
- Most important improvements desired were service later at night and on weekends, more frequent bus service, and that buses would go to more places. Respondents expressed a desire for bus stops within one-quarter to one-half mile of their home or work, and that they not have to wait for the bus longer than 10 minutes.
- In the future, growth in both population and employment is anticipated throughout the Southwest Valley. Perhaps in response to the additional growth and employment opportunities, forecasters believe there will be more trips that stay within the Southwest Valley in the future. Those are trips that could be met through local bus, circulators, or other types of services.

implementing new services to meet our residents’ needs.”

Summit participants were asked to describe their ideal transit system, who should be served, and the types of trips that are most important to them. Participants also heard the results of an online survey that was conducted as part of the process. More than 2,000 people responded. (*See findings, above.*)

The study is expected to be completed in November 2012. Once the study results are accepted, MAG will work with its member agencies to find ways to implement both short and long-term recommendations from the study. 

Partnering Charter Sets Vision for Grand Avenue

In a bold move that seeks to improve traffic mobility in the Grand Avenue Corridor while at the same time creating opportunities for economic development, the mayors of six cities have joined with Maricopa County and the Arizona Department of Transportation to sign a partnering charter to cooperatively create an overall vision for the Grand Avenue Corridor.

According to the charter agreement, the signers will create a vision that “embraces the important regional function of Grand Avenue” and will outline a process for moving forward with significant improvements. All of the signers are members of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG).

Unlike other studies, the process will be led by elected officials whose communities are served by the corridor.

The study will look at not only the engineering aspects for improving transportation mobility, but will also involve policy decisions, such as how to structure improvements to best serve economic growth.

“With a clear and agreed upon vision for the corridor, we can establish future projects that will improve traffic flow, provide reliability for commuters, increase mobility and safety, and make the corridor more attractive to economic development,” said Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, who was among those who signed the charter.

Other signers included ADOT Director John Halikowski; El Mirage Mayor Lana Mook; Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson; Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett; Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton; Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott; and Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault.

“Many improvements have been constructed along the US-60/Grand Avenue corridor in recent years, such as intersection flyovers, road widening, and traffic signal improvements,” stated Surprise Mayor Sharon Wolcott. “But as land uses and travel demands continue to evolve, we need a cohesive vision so that we can better plan, operate and maintain Grand Avenue.”

The charter commits the signers, individually and as a team, to successfully complete the project, known as the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization and Access Management Plan and System Study (COMPASS). “Corridor optimization” involves establishing operating principles to improve the effectiveness of traffic operations. The access management plan will provide a milepost-by-milepost description of adjacent property access to the corridor.

“The study will help the participating agencies develop goals and priorities for the corridor, and we will cooperatively define its operational character,” stated Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett.

Youngtown Mayor Michael LeVault, who helped develop the charter language and whose community was among the first to approve a resolution of support for the study, said the access management plan will focus on providing the most efficient means for accommodating intersecting roadways and access to and from adjacent properties.

“We want to ensure that the plan recognizes the unique character of the different sections of the corridor and the communities it passes through,” said Mayor LeVault. “After the system is recommended and agreed upon,

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The signers and key staff involved in the Grand Avenue Partnering Charter.

Grand Avenue Charter (continued)

each stakeholder will be requested to incorporate the recommendations into their transportation and development plans.”

Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton said Grand Avenue is important for commuters across the Valley. “Grand Avenue is a vital link for those traveling from Phoenix to the Northwest Valley, and on average, more than 40,000 commuters use the corridor every day,” said Mayor Stanton. “Whatever we can do to optimize the experience for these commuters will increase productivity and help economic development.”

Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson said he is pleased to see so many stakeholders working together to bring improvements to the corridor.

“The MAG study provides the opportunity for us to work with commuters, residents, property owners and users so that they can contribute to the study’s outcome and recommendations,” he said.

El Mirage Mayor Lana Mook said the study will provide insight regarding the appropriate investments for the Grand Avenue corridor. “In light of the improving economic conditions, this study will help provide the region with possible options to consider to make the right decisions about which projects should be prioritized.”

On March 19, 2012, the MAG Executive Committee approved the selection of a consultant, Burgess and Niple, Inc, to conduct the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization and Access Management Plan System Study. 

Region’s Leaders Plan for Explosive Growth in Aging Population

Meeting the needs of an exploding senior population that wants to “age in place” was the focus of a regional forum in February that featured local and national experts in aging services and attracted more than 200 participants.

The event followed a year-long series of focus groups to determine how the needs of older adults have changed in the past 10 years, and is part of a planning effort known as the MAG Municipal Aging Services Project. The goal of the project is to determine the most effective role for local government in meeting the needs of older adults by working in partnership with nonprofit agencies, faith-based organizations, and others.



The region’s population aged 65 years and more is expected to double by 2020 to more than 700,000 people, according to analysis conducted by MAG. Through the aging services project, leaders and service providers are preparing for the anticipated increase in the region’s older population.

“This impending surge in our senior population demands that we plan ahead,” stated MAG Chair and Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman. “We have a lot of work to do to accommodate this growth, not only in preparing to meet the needs of people aged 65 years and more, but also in harnessing the talents of this experienced population. The recession and the changing demographics of older adults make this a complex but important task.”

After engaging more than 1,300 seniors through focus groups, interviews, and surveys, MAG found that older adults want to live remain living in their homes. However, respondents overwhelmingly spoke of concerns about their income, health, and housing costs that may prevent them from living independently.

“We face serious challenges in preparing for the future,” said JoAnne Osborne, vice mayor of Goodyear and vice chair of the MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee. “Two years ago, we surveyed local governments and found that funding to support senior services had been significantly reduced. Yet the recession has meant many older adults no longer can provide for all of their needs.”

The MetLife Foundation and Partnerships for Livable Communities has selected the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Greater Phoenix region to participate in the City Leaders Institute on Aging in Place, a new national pilot project striving to help people aged 65 years and more to live independently in their homes. The region was chosen as just one of five areas in the country to develop strategies over the next year that will help seniors remain connected with their community. 



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MAGAZine

A Quarterly Newsletter Focusing on Regional Excellence

May 2012 - July 2012  Vol. 17: No. 2

Spring 2012 Calendar

May 2012

- 1st 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 2nd 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 2nd 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 7th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee (Chaparral)
- 8th 1:30 p.m. Street Committee (Chaparral)
- 9th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 10th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 10th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 14th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 15th 12:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 21st 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness (Saguaro)
- 22nd 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 22nd 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee (Ironwood)
- 23rd 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 24th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)
- 29th 10:30 a.m. 3-1-1 Business Plan Committee (Ironwood)

All meetings, unless indicated otherwise, will be held in the conference rooms located in the MAG office on the 2nd floor of the building, 302 N. 1st Ave., Phoenix. Parking is available under the building. Please ask for parking validation at the meeting. Transit tickets will be provided for those using transit to attend meetings. Bike racks are available at the entrance to the parking garage.

June 2012

- 5th 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 6th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 6th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 7th 2:00 p.m. Domestic Violence Council (Saguaro)
- 11th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee (Chaparral)
- 12th 1:30 p.m. Street Committee (Chaparral)
- 13th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 14th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee (Saguaro)
- 14th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 18th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 19th 1:30 p.m. Planners Stakeholders Group (Chaparral)
- 19th 1:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Ironwood)
- 20th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 20th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 26th 10:30 a.m. 3-1-1 Business Plan Committee (Ironwood)
- 27th 5:00 p.m. Regional Council Annual Meeting (Downtown Sheraton Hotel - 2nd Floor) followed by the 2012 Desert Peaks Awards
- 28th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 28th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee (Saguaro)

The dates, times and locations of all meetings may change. Other committees not listed here may meet during these months. For confirmation, call (602) 254-6300, or visit the website: www.azmag.gov/Events/

July 2012

- 10th 11:30 a.m. Economic Development Committee (Saguaro)
- 10th 1:30 p.m. Street Committee (Chaparral)
- 11th 10:00 a.m. Intelligent Transportation Systems Committee (Ironwood)
- 11th 1:30 p.m. Standard Specifications and Details Committee (Ironwood)
- 11th 12:00 p.m. Management Committee (Saguaro)
- 12th 9:00 a.m. PSAP Managers Group (Saguaro)
- 12th 10:00 a.m. Transit Committee (Ironwood)
- 12th 1:00 p.m. Human Services Technical Committee (Chaparral)
- 16th 12:00 p.m. Regional Council Executive Committee (Ironwood)
- 16th 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Planning Subcommittee (Chaparral)
- 17th 12:30 p.m. Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee (Ironwood)
- 18th 2:00 p.m. Building Codes Committee (Ironwood)
- 18th 4:00 p.m. Transportation Policy Committee (Saguaro)
- 23rd 2:00 p.m. Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness (Saguaro)
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Population Technical Advisory Committee (Chaparral)
- 24th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Safety Committee (Ironwood)
- 25th 10:00 a.m. Human Services Coordinating Committee (Chaparral)
- 25th 11:30 a.m. Regional Council (Saguaro)
- 26th 10:00 a.m. Transportation Review Committee (Saguaro)
- 26th 1:30 p.m. Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee
- 31st 10:30 a.m. 3-1-1 Business Plan Committee (Ironwood)

The newsletter is available in electronic format at www.azmag.gov. Click on the MAG Publications link and then MAGAZine Newsletter link.