

MEETING MINUTES
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSIT COMMITTEE

August 12, 2010

Maricopa Association of Governments Office
302 North First Avenue, Suite 200, Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Phoenix: Debbie Cotton, Chair	*Paradise Valley: William Mead
ADOT: Mike Normand	Peoria: Maher Hazine
Avondale: Rogene Hill	*Queen Creek: Wendy Kaserman
#Buckeye: Andrea Marquez	Scottsdale: Theresa Huish
Chandler: Jeff Martin for RJ Zeder	*Surprise: Michael Celaya
#El Mirage: Pat Dennis	Tempe: Jyme Sue McLaren
*Gilbert: Tami Ryall	#Tolleson: Chris Hagen
Glendale: Cathy Colbath	Valley Metro Rail: Wulf Grote
Goodyear: Cato Esquivel	Regional Public Transportation Authority:
Maricopa County: Mitch Wagner	Paul Hodgins for Carol Ketcherside
Mesa: Mike James	

* Members neither present nor represented by proxy. + - Attended by Videoconference
- Attended by Audioconference

OTHERS PRESENT

Kevin Wallace, MAG	Kristen Sexton, Avondale
Marc Pearsall, MAG	Jenna Goad, Glendale
Alice Chen, MAG	Holly Hassett, Hexagon
DeDe Gaisthea, MAG	Jorie Bresnahan, Phoenix
Micah Henry, MAG	Stephanie Child, Phoenix
Jorge Luna, MAG	Stephanie Shipp, HDR
Eileen Yazzie, MAG	Lauren Neu, Strand
	Kevin Woudenberg, Pulice Const.
	Jennifer Pyne, URS
	Kammy Horne, URS

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:34p.m. by Chair Debbie Cotton. Chair Cotton welcomed everyone in attendance and announced that a quorum was present. She introduced three members of the Transit Committee, Ms. Pat Dennis, Ms. Chris Hagen and Ms. Andrea Marquez who were participating via teleconference. She asked if there were any public comment cards, and there being none, proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

2. Approval of Draft July 10, 2010 and Draft July 22, 2010 Minutes

Chair Cotton asked if there were any comments or corrections to the Draft July 10, 2010 and Draft July 22, 2010 meeting minutes. Hearing no comments or corrections to the meeting minutes, Chair Cotton called for a motion to approve both draft meeting minutes. Ms. Rogene Hill moved to approve the motion. Mr. Wulf Grote seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Cotton stated that she had not received any request to speak cards from the audience and moved onto the next item on the agenda.

4. Transit Program Manager's Report

Chair Cotton introduced Mr. Kevin Wallace from MAG to provide the Transit Program Manager's Report.

Mr. Wallace mentioned that there were three items in his report. He explained that the economic downturn had effected Proposition 400 funds. The year end report showed a decrease to \$300 million from a projected \$315 million, with \$99 million allocated to transit. He informed the Committee that the ADOT Risk Analysis Panel was convening in September to update the Proposition 400 forecasting.

Mr. Wallace then noted that the TIP amendments were approved by Regional Council in July, and thanked the Transit Committee members for their assistance with that effort.

Mr. Wallace also summarized MAG Region air quality issues, noting that there was a recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decision on PM-10 Exceptional Events. He mentioned that MAG Staff would be briefing the Transportation Review Committee (TRC) later in the month of August. He explained that the EPA's decision was significant, as it was related to the TIP, the RTP, industry, jobs and that the decision would impact Federal highway (FHWA) funds for the region.

Chair Cotton thanked Mr. Wallace for his report and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

5. Passenger Rail Planning Update

Chair Cotton introduced Mr. Marc Pearsall of MAG to report on current passenger rail planning activities, including projects at the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Western High Speed Rail Alliance.

Mr. Pearsall explained that on July 28, 2010, the MAG Regional Council approved a resolution supporting the expansion of Amtrak passenger service into the metropolitan Phoenix region as part of the National Intercity Rail Network. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) had forwarded this resolution along with other regional letters of support to Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in an effort to show regional unified support for improved passenger rail amongst Arizona municipalities.

Next Mr. Pearsall discussed a table showing the most populous metropolitan areas and cities in the U.S. lacking Amtrak service. Phoenix, which lost its Amtrak service in June 1996 was listed first, with a metro population of 4,281,899. Las Vegas, Nevada, which lost its Amtrak service in 1997 was second, followed by Columbus, Ohio and Nashville, Tennessee. He noted that Phoenix lost its service when Union Pacific downgraded the through-route line west of Phoenix to freight storage only, the downgrade relegating Phoenix to the largest city in North America without intercity passenger rail service. Mr. Pearsall displayed the current national intercity Amtrak service map and further noted that the map clearly showed a lack of basic passenger rail service in the Inter-mountain West (Rocky Mountain) region. He also noted that Amtrak had recently informed ADOT that they would prefer to return to the Valley in the future, but that the financial cost was something Amtrak could not cover without state and regional support.

Mr. Pearsall mentioned that the three MAG Commuter Rail Studies had been accepted by the MAG Regional Council on May 26, 2010. He noted those studies, as well as the MAG Regional Council approved resolution, would assist with ADOT's Phoenix-Tucson Rail Alternatives Analysis(AA)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) studywork, which was expected to commence in late September 2010. He referred to a map of the Union Pacific Railroad's downgraded Wellton Branch and explained that ADOT had submitted for a grant to study the possibility of reopening the dormant branch for the purpose of operating Amtrak on the line through Phoenix, and that the grant was due to be awarded in fall 2010. He also acknowledged that ADOT and Building A Quality Arizona's (BQAZ) new Arizona State Rail Plan Final Draft was available for public review on the bqaz.gov website, and that MAG had been an active partner in preparation of that document. The State Rail Plan was a crucial federal requirement in ADOT's continued pursuit of federal expenditures for passenger rail.

Mr. Pearsall summarized that ADOT was working with the US Department of Transportation to garner their support in officially recognizing the western corridors as potential future High Speed Rail (HSR) corridors. He noted that this action would allow for the solicitation of FRA funding grants to proceed with HSR corridor feasibility studies in the Western Region. Mr. Pearsall closed by informing the members that the Western High Speed Rail Alliance'

conference, entitled 'The Rail Ahead', was scheduled to take place in Las Vegas, Nevada during October 13-15, 2010. He noted that further information was available on the website at www.whsra.com.

Chair Cotton mentioned that in addition to the Regional Council's resolution supporting the return of Amtrak, other letters of support for improved passenger rail in the MAG Region had been recently issued by a variety of transit advocacy groups. She noted that those groups included the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA), Friends of Transit, Southwest Rail Corridor Coalition, and Arizona Rail Passenger Association, amongst others.

Chair Cotton thanked Mr. Pearsall for his presentation and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

6. State of Good Repair Initiative Grant Application

Chair Cotton introduced Ms. Alice Chen from MAG to present an update on the Federal Transit Authority's (FTA) transit Federal Funding Grant Opportunities.

Ms. Chen explained the results of Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s State of Good Repair Initiative Grant, which made available \$775 million in funding to be used towards improving and maintaining buses and bus facilities. The Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) was made available in May 2010, with a due date of mid-June 2010. Five applications from the MAG Region had been previously submitted with six local/regional operators participating. She noted that the projects had been presented to the members of Transit Committee at the June 10, 2010 meeting, but were not ranked or prioritized. Ms. Chen noted the FTA requested that each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) rate projects based on the objective criteria set forth in the NOFA, and then she provided an overview of the process for developing the final ratings that were provided to FTA.

Ms. Chen mentioned the details of the State of Good Repair Bus and Bus Facilities Initiative and its evaluation criteria. She acknowledged the components required that planning and prioritization was done at the local/regional level, the project was ready to implement and that there was technical, legal, and financial capacity to implement the particular project. Ms. Chen noted that the State of Good Repair (SGR) criteria showed: a demonstration of need, availability of full funding regardless of grant award, was consistent with the goals of the FTA, and was consistent with goals of the NOFA. She added that the scoring system featured four categories paired with point values: Very Highly Recommended(4), Highly Recommended (3), Recommended (2), and Low Recommendation(1), based upon a template provided by the FTA.

Ms. Chen also explained that for the State of Good Repair Bus and Bus Facilities Initiative, the six evaluation criteria consisted of: age of asset to be replaced or rehabilitated relative to its useful life, demonstrated backlog of deferred maintenance, consistent with fleet management plan, demonstrated positive impact on air quality, supports emerging technologies, and conforms to spare ratio guidelines. She then detailed the State of Good Repair Bus and Bus Facilities Initiative grant and its four 'bus facilities' evaluation criteria

which included: the age of asset to be replaced or rehabilitated relative to its useful life, demonstrated backlog of deferred maintenance, the support of emerging technologies, and compliance with “green Building” certification. Ms. Chen then summarized the Final Rating chart that detailed the federal funding amounts requested by City of Phoenix, Glendale/RPTA, Mesa, Tempe and Scottsdale.

Chair Cotton thanked Ms. Chen for her presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Jeff Martin inquired as to the reason why cities that did not own buses had submitted applications. He asked why the applications weren’t instead submitted through RPTA since they own the buses. Ms. Chen clarified that it was a city decision to submit, but that the cities had indeed processed the applications through the RPTA. She explained that the cities and jurisdictions were listed on the applications as local and regional supporters as well as stakeholders for each project.

Chair Cotton thanked Ms. Chen for her presentation and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

7. Transit Programming for FY2011

Chair Cotton introduced Ms. Eileen Yazzie from MAG to present an update on Transit Programming for FY2011.

Ms. Yazzie indicated that she had no formal presentation and invited Committee members to refer to their agenda packets. She also introduced and welcomed MAG’s newest employee, Mr. Jorge Luna, who was joining the Transportation Planning staff.

Ms. Yazzie then proceeded with an overview of Transit Programming for FY2011 and elaborated that through the MAG Committee process, MAG programmed federal funds for transit projects while working cooperatively with MAG member agencies, the designated grant recipient (City of Phoenix), and the transit operators in the region. She noted that Fiscal year (FY) 2010 was a transition year for transit programming. She mentioned that in the past, programming was led by RPTA, using prioritized guidelines, and in 2009, the responsibility shifted to MAG.

She explained that FY 2011 would continue the transition process by focusing on a variety of issues: MAG’s need to develop and formalize regional transit programming guidelines/priorities/evaluation criteria for federal funds, gathering information on operations, maintenance, and ADA budgets finalizing the FY 2011 Transit Program of Projects, submitting federal grants to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), updating and tracking the status of transit projects and transit service changes, and initiating how to integrate Transportation Life Cycle Program (TLCP) ‘Material Changes’ to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) through the MAG Committee process. She explained that there was not yet a formal process in place for transit programming, but that the Committee was charged with making recommendations on creating that process in the near future.

She also acknowledged that a recent request and motion from Mr. Dave Meinhart at Transportation Review Committee was the primary driver behind the stipulation that the MAG Region reevaluate the programming of Preventative Maintenance (PM). These potential amendments and administrative modifications were for the Draft FY 2011-2015 MAG TIP and had to be submitted no later than December 2010. She noted that it was a fast deadline, but that it was essential in helping the region understand the current crucial needs of transit.

Ms. Yazzie also explained that to better assist the Transit Committee in making informed decisions regarding regional transit programming, there would be two new working groups formed under the committee. She noted that Kevin Wallace, Marc Pearsall, Jorge Luna and Alice Chen were working on establishing the new Transit Operators Working Group. The group was to consist of transit service providers for the purpose of gathering information regarding operations, preventive maintenance, ADA, and vanpool expenses in order to aid in the regional discussion about transit programming guidelines and priorities for federal funds. She also acknowledged that a Transit Programming Stakeholders Working Group was open to all MAG Region Stakeholders. The working group's primary task was to provide an open forum for input and discussion on all the variables, directives and guidelines of transit programming.

Ms. Yazzie mentioned the need to integrate the Transportation Life Cycle Program (TLCP) 'Material Changes' to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) through the MAG Committee process. New legislation, Senate Bill 1063, was passed in 2010 to clarify the roles and responsibilities of MAG and RPTA in regards to planning and programming. She explained that through the MAG Committee process beginning at the MAG Transit Committee, programmed transit projects were to be funded with federal funds while working cooperatively with MAG member agencies, the designated grant recipient (City of Phoenix), and the transit operators in the region: City of Phoenix, Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), Valley Metro Rail (METRO), City of Surprise, City of Glendale, City of Tempe, City of Scottsdale, and the City of Peoria.

Ms. Yazzie acknowledged that there had been recent interest and requests that Transit Committee review regional transit policies. One of the topics of interest was analyzing structured parking in the region and gathering information on MAG Region peer regions and their policies regarding when structured parking should be constructed. She noted that the topic would be presented at a future Transit Committee meeting.

She also mentioned the requirement to finalize the Transit Program of Projects and that submitting federal grants to the FTA was ongoing. The list of transit projects for a fiscal year, in this case FY 2011, needed to be reconciled with the actual federal apportionments and allocations that were approved by Congress. The schedule of when MAG moves forward with the FY 2011 Transit Program of Projects was dependent on Congressional action, but in general Congress usually approved the apportionments and allocations in the spring, followed by the reconciliation of funds.

Ms Yazzie mentioned that MAG, the City of Phoenix as the designated recipient, and all of the regional partners worked on these documents and provided input for the grant applications. She noted that the competitive discretionary grant process was considered likely to continue at the federal level and that there was speculation that it may replace the traditional earmark methods and process in Congress. She further explained that the FTA and Federal Highway

Administration (FHWA) had requested that regional MPOs set up local processes for evaluation-guidelines of those grant opportunities, so that they may be ranked. Ms. Yazzie also reminded the committee of the importance for the region to work together to track transit service cuts and expansions, and that the Transit Operators Working Group would assist in that task.

Ms. Yazzie explained that over the next couple months, MAG staff was presenting The State of Transit In The Region to the TRC and other MAG Committees. The presentation was an educational tool to convey the historic and current status of transit, especially in lieu of the recent service cutbacks. She noted that she would return in the coming months to present the State of Transit In The Region and to seek guidance and input from the Transit Committee

Chair Cotton thanked Ms. Yazzie for her presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Rogene Hill requested clarification about the Transit Operators Working Group. She asked if the main focus was on preventative maintenance. Ms. Yazzie replied that focus was primarily focused on data gathering, budgetary, service levels, and could also include preventative maintenance issues. Ms. Hill explained that she was concerned that the Transit Committee could get disconnected if there was no open dialogue and information sharing between the Transit Operators Working Group and the Transit Committee. Ms. Yazzie replied that the group would be for information collection only with no decision making abilities and that the information would then be presented to the Transit Committee for review, comment and advisement.

Ms. Hill asked what the components of the Transit Programming Stakeholders Working Group would be. Ms. Yazzie replied that the MAG Region had been directed to create regional guidelines for transportation programs and the working group provided an open forum for input and discussion on all the variables, directives and guidelines of transit programming. She also noted that MAG had many stakeholders groups and that open dialogue in an informal discussion setting, rather than at the formal Transit Committee, was essential in acquiring needed technical information.

Mr. Jeff Martin asked for clarification on the definition of a 'Material Change' as it pertained to the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP). Ms. Yazzie noted that MAG was working to define a material change and that as an example, the San Francisco Bay Area spent over \$1 million and many years defining 'Material Change' for their region. She mentioned that the Executive Committee would take up the issue and that MAG staff was meeting with partners at RPTA/METRO to further discuss the definition of 'Material Change', which would eventually go through the MAG Committee process.

Mr. Martin mentioned that he thought the State of Transit in The Region presentation was a good idea. He added that considering the improvements that had been done for the region's freeway network since 1985, it was important to also compare with how transit was performing over the past twenty-five years in the MAG Region. Chair Cotton replied that the presentation may also touch on the direct correlation between population density and urban sprawl on the health of the transit system.

Mr. Paul Hodgins asked what kind of regional policies MAG may be reviewing in the future. Ms. Yazzie responded that one of the first topics for the fall would be regional policies regarding structured parking.

Mr. Wulf Grote stated that in regards to grants, the FTA continued to promote competitive funding grants, but that they were very rarely prepared collectively. He mentioned that Metro had been maintaining a capital improvement forecast wishlist for unfunded priorities. He added that if the MAG region was presented with a grant opportunity, it could use that wishlist if a project was needed to be quickly submitted.

Chair Cotton noted that the MAG Region did have a current list of that nature, however, it consisted of items and projects that had been deleted or deferred due to budget cuts. She explained that the list would need to take precedent and need to be reviewed prior to the addition of any new items. Ms. Jyme Sue McLaren concurred that Proposition 400 items that were deleted or deferred should be openly reevaluated before any new items were added or considered.

Ms. Hill inquired as to whether the working groups were formalized. Ms. Yazzie responded that the working groups were informal in nature. She also noted that the Transit Committee would call upon both the Transit Operators Working Group and the Transit Programming Stakeholders Working Group to forward their research and input through the Transit Committee process.

Mr. Wallace offered a further point of clarification. He noted that Transit Operators Working Group would consist of the MAG Region's transit operators. He then noted that Transit Programming Stakeholders Working Group would be open to all stakeholders from the entire region and that both informal working groups would then have their research and input vetted back through the formal Transit Committee process. Ms. Hill reiterated her concern that these groups should not rate, rank, prioritize projects or initiate policy without the adequate representation and vetting required from the Transit Committee.

Chair Cotton thanked Ms. Yazzie for her presentation and asked if there were any further questions or comments. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

8. Quarterly Status Report on Federal Grant Activity

Chair Cotton explained that agenda item 10 would be heard out of order as agenda item 8 and referred the Committee members to their agenda addendum. She noted that there was no formal presentation for the quarterly status report on federal grant activity, but that City of Phoenix and MAG staff was available to answer questions and discuss the agenda attachment. Chair Cotton clarified that this information would now be presented to the Transit Committee on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Wallace mentioned that the report covered grant activity for the April-June time-frame and was the second report presented to the committee by City of Phoenix staff.

Mr. Grote noted that in the Section 5339-0002 (Alternative Analysis program) on the second to last page, the information was incorrect. He recommended that the information be revised to show that the Mesa Corridor Extension study was complete and that the Tempe South Study was still in progress. MAG staff concurred and ensured the information would be corrected.

Chair Cotton asked if there were any further questions or comments and hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

9. Request for Future Agenda Items

Chair Cotton asked the members of the Transit Committee if there were any issues that they would like added as future agenda items. Hearing no further comments, Chair Cotton proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

10. Next Meeting Date

Chair Cotton thanked those present for attending the MAG Transit Committee meeting. She announced that the next meeting of the MAG Transit Committee would be held on Tuesday September 7, 2010 at 1:30pm at a conference room to be determined. There being no further business, Chair Cotton adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.