Joint Chair Message

The theme of this Annual Report is 2020 Vision: A Sharper View. The theme took on new relevance in light of the drastic changes that the COVID-19 outbreak brought into our lives in recent months. The pandemic forced us to narrow our focus to the highest priorities for our region. It demonstrated as never before the importance of community collaboration.

While we serve very different communities on opposite ends of the Valley, we have a shared appreciation and concern for our residents that transcends lines on a map. A powerful sense of protectiveness now pervades our collective psyche. As we write this, we express hope that you and your families remain healthy, safe, and connected.

While our current sights are focused on the present needs of our communities, we appreciate the role that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) plays in preparing for our future. MAG continued its focus on its five critical areas, including Safe and Smart Travel, Protecting the Environment, Growing the Economy, Improving Quality of Life, and Safe and Efficient Operations.

While the pandemic hit just after the official kick-off of the Regional Transportation Plan update, MAG staff continued to work behind the scenes to gather data and analyze data related to the plan’s development. This work included the completion of the Regional Transit Framework Study, as well as the Active Transportation Plan highlighting bicycling and pedestrian activities. To help develop its Strategic Transportation Safety Plan and to promote bicyclist and pedestrian safety, MAG launched a task force focused on enforcement and education. MAG is a founding member of The Connective, a Smart Region Consortium, and began a program to test emerging technologies to improve daily life.

MAG continued air quality efforts to protect public health and ensure compliance with federal standards. In late 2019, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a final rule to determine that the region has met the 2008 eight-hour ozone standard. For the 2015 ozone standard, EPA classified the Maricopa Nonattainment Area as a Marginal Area. MAG is working on a new Marginal Area plan due to the EPA in August.

MAG’s Regional Analytics Division prioritized efforts to provide data to member agencies regarding vulnerable populations at greatest risk for COVID-19, and provided maps identifying all health care facilities and hospitals. The Human Services staff worked tirelessly to plan strategies for issues facing older adults, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Before the crisis hit, there were many important steps taken to improve the region’s economy, such as en- gendering support for the Southwest Tourism and Expansion Act. In late December, Sen. Martha McSally and Rep. Greg Stanton introduced the Act as companion bills in the House and Senate. The legislation would allow holders of a U.S.-issued Border Crossing Card to travel anywhere in the state of Arizona. If passed, it is expected to have a $181 million annual impact on the state’s economy, making this an opportune way to assist in our economic recovery.

MAG continued to seek the priorities and opinions of residents through online surveys, engagement at community outreach events, and social media platforms. A major effort was coordination of a Census 2020 regional outreach campaign. A successful census will affect the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funding to local communities for housing, education, transportation, health care and much more.

We thank everyone who has persevered to achieve regional success during one of the most significant challenges in history. Together, with continued focus, we will keep our region resilient and strong.
The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is a group of local governments working together on issues that affect the lives of everyone in the Greater Phoenix region. We are a regional planning agency that provides regional planning and policy decisions in five core areas, including safe and smart travel, the economy and growth, environment and sustainability, improving quality of life, and efficient and effective operations.

MAG serves a thriving region of more than 4.5 million people. Our members include 27 cities and towns, three Native nations, Maricopa County, portions of Pinal County, and the Arizona Department of Transportation. Our planning area encompasses more than 10,000 square miles.

Established in 1967, MAG is governed by a Regional Council. The policy-making structure also includes the Executive Committee, Economic Development Committee, Transportation Policy Committee, and Management Committee, as well as other policy and technical advisory committees. These committees guide planning and applied research to help frame public policy and further our core mission of strengthening the Maricopa region.

The MAG team consists of ten divisions that manage the programs, committees and projects with one goal: improving the quality of life in the region. Divisions include Administration, Communication, Environmental Programs, Fiscal Services, Human Resources, Human Services, Information Technology, Regional Analytics, Transportation Policy and Planning, and Transportation Technologies and Services.
Delivering what we’ve promised. That is a key theme of MAG’s transportation work. And MAG did just that—programming more than $1.2 billion for regional transportation investments in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

**South Mountain Freeway Opening**

One milestone: the opening of the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway. Also known as the Congressman Ed Pastor Freeway, the facility opened to traffic in December 2019. It provides a direct link between the East Valley and West Valley and serves as a much-needed alternative to Interstate 10 through downtown Phoenix. The freeway completes the Loop 202 and is already improving the quality of life in our fast-growing region.

Several other key Proposition 400 investments were completed in FY 2020, including construction of the Peoria Park and Ride, roadway improvements on Avenida Rio Salado between 51st Avenue and 7th Street, and widening of Chandler Heights Road between Arizona Avenue and McQueen Road.

**Building Momentum**

As the designated metropolitan planning agency for the greater Maricopa region, MAG is responsible for planning and prioritizing regional transportation investments. One of the major funding sources that enables these investments is a dedicated half-cent sales tax for transportation, originally approved by Maricopa County voters in 1985 and renewed again through Proposition 400 in 2004. The half-cent sales tax will expire in 2025. This year, MAG launched into development of its next Regional Transportation Plan. This includes planning activities for the extension of the sales tax to expand and improve the Valley’s transportation infrastructure.

MAG member agencies started 2020 by submitting their ideas for future multimodal transportation projects as part of a needs assessment for the region. Technical studies also continued, including completion of the Active Transportation Plan, planning work on the SR 347 and future SR 30 corridors, and initiation of a regional Bus Rapid Transit Study. MAG has identified a strategy to implement a comprehensive education program to address pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Education and Enforcement Task Force is working on safety messaging and an educational materials toolkit that will include testimonials, public service announcements, various print materials, and vehicle wraps.

**Transportation Technologies**

Many of us are experiencing the benefits of technology as never before. MAG continually monitors and evaluates smart mobility systems. But before large-scale investments are made, it’s important to know if the technology works in the real world. And that’s where MAG’s new field pilots program fits in. MAG contracts with a variety of qualified vendors and contractors to conduct field pilots to better test and study emerging technologies. Pilots range from testing driverless shuttles to developing sensors that allow traffic signals to communicate with one another.

**Seeing Traffic Through Fiber Optics**

MAG supports the Regional Community Network, a high-speed network that links cities through fiber optics. The network enables regional sharing of live traffic cameras so that operators in one city can see the traffic coming to them from another city. The network also provides critical 9-1-1 communication links and serves as a backup to the 9-1-1 system.

**Focus on Transportation**

The South Mountain Freeway grand opening ceremony featured Governor Doug Ducey and other local elected officials.

Installation of computer vision sensors on Chandler Boulevard.

Ramp from South Mountain Freeway on the south to I-10 on the west.
MAG strives to protect, preserve and enhance the environmental quality of our community, from the air we breathe to the land on which we live. MAG develops regional plans to meet federal and state requirements for clean air, water quality and solid waste management.

**Air Quality**

Our region’s air quality has improved significantly over the past five decades. MAG’s air quality efforts focus on three pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone and particulates (dust). MAG continued to make major progress in these areas.

**Carbon Monoxide**

A significant achievement was obtaining 23 years of clean data for carbon monoxide, thanks to local, state, and federal control measures.

The region continues to meet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) carbon monoxide standard as required. In fact, carbon monoxide levels are 74 percent below the federal standard.

**Ozone**

We continued progress in addressing ozone, which can trigger a variety of respiratory health problems. There have been no violations of the one-hour ozone standard since 1996, and no violations of the 1997 eight-hour ozone standard since 2004. In fact, we have seen 15 consecutive three-year periods with no violations of the 1997 standard. On November 12, 2019, EPA published a final rule to determine that the region has met the 2008 eight-hour ozone standard, based on complete, quality assured and certified monitoring data for 2015-2017.

On June 2, 2020, EPA approved portions of the MAG 2017 Eight-Hour Ozone Moderate Area Plan. These include emissions inventories, demonstration of attainment by the attainment date, reasonably available control measures, reasonable further progress, motor vehicle emission budgets for transportation conformity, vehicle inspection and maintenance programs, new source review rules, and offsets. For the 2015 ozone standard, EPA classified the Maricopa Nonattainment Area as a Marginal Area, effective August 3, 2018. A Marginal Area plan will be due to EPA by August 3, 2020.

**Dust**

Results from the past eight years indicate there have been no violations of the national standards for dust, known as PM-10 (particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less). Aggressive, coordinated activities to prevent exceedances at the monitors and throughout the region continue to ensure that the PM-10 standard is maintained. The region meets the air quality standard for smaller dust particles known as PM-2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns in diameter or less).

**Water Quality**

MAG continued to implement the Streamlined MAG 208 Water Quality Management Plan Process. Inquiries were received regarding wastewater treatment ideas and options. However, there were no new 208 Plan Amendments or Small Plant Review and Approvals in FY 2020.

**Conforming to Federal Standards**

MAG performed the 2020 Conformity Analysis for the FY 2020-2024 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and the 2040 MAG Regional Transportation Plan Update. Conformity ensures that transportation projects, programs, and plans will not cause or contribute to violations of federal air quality standards.

**Connecting for a Better Environment**

Our commitment to air quality extends beyond our region’s boundaries. We continued to strengthen our partnerships by providing technical assistance to the Sun Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MAG prepared the 2020 Conformity Analysis for the FY 2020-2029 Sun Corridor MPO Transportation Improvement Program and Sun Corridor MPO Regional Transportation Plan 2040 Update.

**Solid Waste**

The recycling markets have been significantly impacted by changes in international policy with regard to recyclable materials. Revenues from the recyclable materials have dramatically decreased, resulting in changes to solid waste and recycling programs in the region. MAG collected information on the solid waste and recycling challenges the MAG member agencies are facing and their current efforts to address these challenges.
Providing Vital Information in a Year of Uncertainty

The Regional Analytics Division at MAG develops socioeconomic projections for the region and collects and analyzes data to drive our planning efforts. When the coronavirus crisis hit, the division immediately turned its talents to fulfill a need for health data from the local governments that make up MAG.

Healthcare and Homelessness

The one-stop healthcare assets map centralizes information and reporting tools relevant to COVID-19. The map includes a “vulnerability index” of areas where people may be at high risk for contracting the illness. It also shows locations for hospital and healthcare facilities (public and private) as well as the number of beds available at each facility.

As with MAG’s other interactive maps, those using the tool can create customized reports. The tool answers questions such as which parts of the region are most at risk and where to find specific resources to help people affected by the virus. The map includes current COVID-19 cases by zip code as provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services. It also includes the number of hospital beds by county and at each facility. Facilities include hospitals, urgent care, and long-term care. Users can sort the information by county, jurisdiction, or zip code.

The Regional Analytics Division also used its data tools to assist member agencies with homeless outreach. By identifying and mapping encampment locations, outreach teams are better able to connect those experiencing homelessness to shelter and housing. The team also developed a heat relief map providing locations of cooling centers, hydration stations, and donation sites.

Data That Drives Your Daily Life

Looking for hiking trails so you can get out and exercise? Want to support small business during tough economic times? Or perhaps you own one of those small businesses and are looking for neighborhood demographics to better target your outreach?

MAG’s array of interactive maps are of even greater value during the public health crisis, including maps of demographics, business locations, biking trails and recreation areas. Go to maps.azmag.gov to access all of the available interactive maps.

iCount2020: MAG Supports Census Efforts

A complete census count can mean millions of dollars in federal funding to local communities. MAG continued to coordinate the region’s efforts to ensure an accurate count by providing training and technical assistance for updating local addresses. MAG tracked response rates and worked with local communities to target messaging as appropriate. MAG conducted a public outreach campaign, “iCount2020,” to increase awareness of the census and to provide information on how to participate in the first online census in U.S. history.

Information Technology

MAG Information Technology staff supports agency data collection efforts, such as the Trip Reduction Program Survey application that collects important information about commute patterns. This year, the IT team seamlessly responded to the need for all 116 MAG staff to work remotely, without any disruption in work activities.

MAG continued to work with its local governments to support recruitment of IT staff. MAG created the ValleyGovTechRecruiter.com site to serve as a one-stop shop for local government tech jobs.
Focus on Fueling the Economy

How to fuel our economy through regional collaboration and across international borders continued to be the focus of MAG’s Economic Development Committee (EDC). The Maricopa region is home to both the largest public research institution, Arizona State University, and the largest community college system in the country, providing a quality workforce that attracts some of the world’s largest employers. A world-renowned freeway system and a pro-business environment—combined with one of the fastest growing populations in the nation—make our region a player on the global scene.

MAG cultivates partnerships with government agencies, economic development leaders, and the greater business community to focus on infrastructure development and international trade. The EDC also recognizes best practices, promotes innovative research and highlights successes in the public and private sectors. These partnerships will be critical moving forward in the wake of the economic impact caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

Smart Region Initiative

MAG is a founding member of a new smart region initiative known as The Connective, a way to bring local governments and industry leaders together to collaboratively solve challenges and problems using technology. The goal of the Smart Region Consortium is to bring together infrastructure and technology to improve the quality of daily life and the well-being of people and businesses in the region. The Consortium is designed to ensure that all communities in the Great Phoenix Metropolitan region have the tools and skills necessary to evolve and prosper in the digital age.

Expanding Tourism Borders

Expanding our borders to boost tourism took an important step forward this year with the introduction of the Southwest Tourism Expansion Act. Sen. Martha McSally and Rep. Greg Stanton introduced companion bills in the House and Senate, with Sen. Kyrsten Sinema and Rep. David Schweikert signing as original co-sponsors. The companion bills would create a pilot program that would allow visitors from Mexico to travel throughout Arizona, generating up to $181 million in additional spending during the first year. The Southwest Tourism Expansion Act would eliminate the need for a permit and fee to travel beyond Tucson, allowing those with a U.S.-issued Border Crossing Card to visit anywhere in the state, including popular sites such as the Grand Canyon. The initiative also is seen as a means to economic recovery in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Ari-Son Megaregion

Strengthening cross-border relationships and the economies of both Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora is the goal of the Ari-Son Megaregion Council. Leaders from both states came together in Tucson to trade municipal best practices at the League of Arizona Cities and Towns annual conference. The event included workshops on transportation infrastructure, tourism and urban planning, assisting both states in taking advantage of the growth of their regions.

Luke Air Force Base Study

The Luke Air Force Base Targeted Growth Management Plan (TGMP) is a community-led collaborative study and planning effort between Luke Air Force Base (Luke AFB), its surrounding jurisdictions, and MAG.

The goals of this plan are to support the base and leverage the opportunities presented by the growth in personnel at Luke AFB due to an expansion in its mission as a training ground for Air Force pilots.

The TGMP is a way to leverage existing infrastructure and resources at Luke AFB and in the surrounding communities to ensure that the basic needs of both military and civilian residents are being met. It will help guide investment decisions that improve the quality of life for all Luke AFB personnel and area residents.
Envisioning a Better Future

A better future for all is at the core of MAG’s mission to serve the region. We collaborate with many partners to plan strategies for issues facing older adults, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Supporting Vulnerable Populations during COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 led to immediate measures to reduce the risk among the most vulnerable while preparing services for those in need. The Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care worked with the Maricopa County Health Department to identify three areas of focus for the community response, and adopted policies to ensure people who were at risk of contracting the disease could be prioritized for services. MAG staff also coordinated with homeless service providers to develop a list of items needed to safely and effectively respond to the health crisis.

Building Resilient Communities

For those limited by age or ability, access to transportation and services is critical for health and quality of life. In 2019, the region received more than $3.4 million in funding to support agencies providing transportation services to the underserved population. MAG’s Transportation Ambassador Program is a vital conduit that connects more than 900 stakeholders with resource information and coordination opportunities. It also incorporates feedback from the public into the planning process.

Numbers gathered by volunteers during a single night in January 2020 show 7,419 people experiencing homelessness within the region, an increase of 805 people over 2019. The unsheltered count increased by 18 percent over 2019.

Other initiatives included an interactive map that connects outreach providers with individuals and families experiencing homelessness for services and housing resources, working with frontline staff to implement best practices and drive down active numbers of people experiencing homelessness, and a report demonstrating the efforts of local governments to address homelessness.

Focus on Safety

Every minute, nearly 20 people are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. That’s more than 10 million women and men every year. In Arizona, one or more children witness domestic violence every 44 minutes. That means 804,048 women and 453,689 men in Arizona will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes. Keeping families safe is what drives MAG to help survivors by coordinating the regional response. We also work to increase efficiencies in arresting and prosecuting domestic violence abusers.

The sizzling Arizona heat contributed to at least 190 deaths in Maricopa County last year. Protecting at-risk people from the intense summer heat is the goal of the regional Heat Relief Network coordinated by MAG. The network consists of service providers, faith based groups, municipalities, businesses, and caring citizens mobilizing to provide water, refuge and resource collection locations throughout the Valley. Over 200 locations provided hydration, refuge and collection sites in the summer of 2019.

Building support for the region’s outlying communities is underway through the Rural Transportation Incubator (RTI) program. RTI’s purpose is to address the lack of access to transportation services by older adults in smaller communities.

MAG coordinates the Age Friendly Arizona network to support communities throughout the state in meaningfully engaging older adults. MAG continues to update The Age Friendly Arizona website with enhancements to provide resources supporting the independence and community growth of older adults at www.agefriendlyaz.org.
Communicating Amid COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak brought with it a need for rapid and reliable communication—all at a time when traditional methods of communication were not always available or appropriate. Fortunately, MAG had the solid digital infrastructure in place to pivot its efforts to communicate effectively with its key audiences.

MAG Responds to COVID Crisis

MAG took many steps to make information and resources easily available on our website and to ensure there was no interruption in business operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. MAG worked to ensure all public meetings held were available online and that the public had a means of providing comment. MAG created a response web page that included links to local, regional and state resources to provide the latest information within individual communities and statewide. A separate information page provided critical information for homeless service providers. MAG also created a gratitude page to recognize those on the front lines of the epidemic, as well as all residents doing their part to stay safe.

The significant media coverage of these activities resulted in tens of thousands of hits to the MAG website and enabled widespread distribution of vital healthcare information.

Census 2020

The online census option became particularly relevant this year given the impacts of COVID-19, allowing people to fill out their forms safely and securely at home. MAG was responsible for the coordination and implementation of a regional census outreach campaign to encourage people to fill out their form online. Called "iCount2020," the campaign communicated the many important reasons individuals benefit by completing the census. The campaign was able to adjust key elements during the COVID-19 situation, with greater emphasis on television, streaming video, social media and other digital resources. For every person counted in the census, Arizona receives $2,959 from the federal government, more than $20 billion every year for the next 10 years. The regional campaign, funded jointly by MAG member agencies, reached 90 percent of adults at least 16 times.

At the Table

Prior to the implementation of social distancing, MAG continued to host monthly community outreach tables at libraries and other places around the region. These tables gave us a chance to hear directly from residents and answer questions about MAG.

We also collected information regarding transportation priorities through an onsite electronic survey. Nearly 300 surveys were completed this year prior to the epidemic, providing valuable input.

Love It, Don’t Trash It

Arizona is our home to cherish, so why would we want to trash it? Litter is ugly, unhealthy and unsafe. Those are among the key messages of Don’t Trash Arizona, a litter prevention and education program created by the Maricopa Association of Governments in coordination with the Arizona Department of Transportation. Our goal is to increase awareness of the health, safety, environmental and economic consequences of freeway litter and to change the behavior of offenders. Combining paid and social media, the campaign resulted in more than 14 million audience impressions last year.

Stay in Touch With MAG

We want to connect with you! Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/MAGregion, or visit us at Facebook.com/magregional. You can catch our videos on youtube.com/MAGCommunications, or visit our website at www.azmag.gov.
Funding for MAG’s programs and activities comes from a variety of sources, with federal and state funding making up the main revenue source.

Membership dues and special assessments are received from each member agency based on population, and provide another source of revenue to support MAG’s regional activities.

MAG plans for more than $1.54 billion in total regional funding, including funding for the freeway program. MAG’s FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget is $33.6 million, which includes an operating budget of about $30.4 million. The difference is due to “carry forward” consulting contracts and pass-through agreements with other agencies.

Cooperatively Developed Funding
(in millions)

Total: $1.54 billion

Source of Funds

Total: $33,615,005

How MAG Uses the Funds by Program

Total: $33,615,005

Fiscal Information

Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2019

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MAG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information on rights afforded under Title VI, relevant activities at MAG, or if you feel these rights have been violated, please visit the agency website at www.azmag.gov or call (602) 254-6300.