



MAGAZine

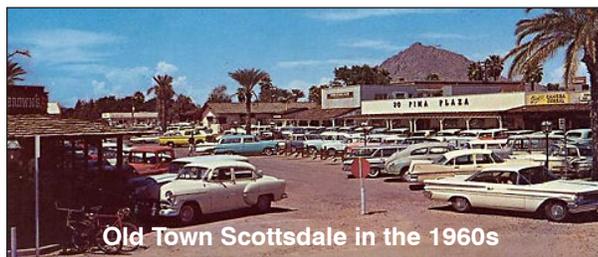
A Quarterly Newsletter Focusing on Regional Excellence

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MAG Celebrates Golden Anniversary

Decade One: 1967-1977

April 12, 2017, will mark 50 years that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has been serving the region. This is the first part of a five-part series that will cover the five decades of MAG and the major milestones that represent how MAG has made a difference to the residents of our region.

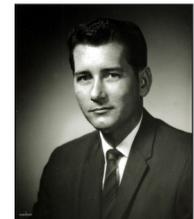


Pre-MAG

MAG was created in the wake of several events requiring regional cooperation. In 1960, Wilbur Smith and Associates completed the Major Street and Highway Plan for the Phoenix area. This plan contained the elements later included in the MAG regional Freeway/Expressway Plan. Also in the early 1960s, local governments worked together on a successful multi-city sewage treatment plant at 91st Avenue. Two years later, the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act required regional transportation planning. This resulted in the Valley Area Traffic and Transportation Study (VAITS) in 1965. The 1965 Federal Housing Act Amendments and 1966 Metropolitan Development Act also provided a legal and financial push for a full-fledged regional agency. In a December 1966 memorandum to city and town clerks, former MAG Secretary Jack DeBolske, who led MAG from 1967 to 1996, wrote, "Cities and towns, as well as the county, must cooperate with one another in order to solve regional problems and to maintain a semblance of local control over their own affairs."

MAG is Born

MAG was formed in 1967 by concurrent resolutions from its member agencies to foster regional cooperation and address regional problems. On April 12, 1967, the Regional Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. During the meeting, the Regional Council elected Scottsdale Mayor B.L. "Bud" Tims as chair. According to the minutes, Mayor Tims indicated that there were "many areas of common interest and concern to Valley cities" in the metropolitan area. He noted common interests such as highways, airports, utility sources and commercial centers.



Former Scottsdale Mayor B.L. "Bud" Tims, first MAG Chair

In determining priorities, the council identified "matters of water, air pollution and solid waste disposal" to be of primary concern. The council established standing committees to deal with each area. The new MAG members also called for a study on standardizing building materials and public works specifications. All are areas that MAG still oversees today. The first year also saw the expansion of topics addressed by MAG to include library services, law enforcement and criminal justice standards.

While initial boundaries encompassed only the urbanized area, in 1970 that expanded to include all

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Maricopa's Municipalities Organize

Groundwork for cooperation among Valley cities and towns on such matters as zoning, construction practices and irrigation negotiations was laid last night at the first meeting of the Maricopa Association of Governments.

B. L. Tims, Scottsdale mayor, was elected chairman of the group and Jack J. Taylor, Mesa mayor, was elected vice-chairman at the meeting in the Phoenix main library auditorium. The association is composed of representatives of incorporated governments in the Phoenix area.

COMMITTEES were appointed to study common water, sewage and air pollution problems and make recommendations at future meetings.

Phoenix Mayor Graham pointed out that cooperation among some Valley cities already had saved taxpayers money by establishing common standards for construction materials used in street paving.

While emphasizing the need for coordination among municipalities, he said, "I would like to make clear I'm not advocating metropolitan government.

"**WHAT WE NEED** is cooperative government on the metropolitan level."

Graham said the association could prove mutually beneficial in dealings with the Salt River Project on over legal rights to used irrigation water. The City of Phoenix is currently involved in a legal dispute with the SRP on this subject.

He said he hoped all the cities using SRP water would stick together and share information on their dealings.

"If we don't, we'll all get the short end of the stick," he said.

Newspaper story from *The Arizona Republic*, April 13, 1967, the day after MAG was founded.

Decade One: 1967-1977 (cont. from page 1)

of Maricopa County, and in 2013, portions of Pinal County. Originally, 15 cities and towns joined MAG, with all existing cities and towns in the county becoming members in 1970. Others joined as they were incorporated. The Gila River Indian Community joined in 1989, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in 1994, and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation in 2004.

The League Connection

Today, DeBolske recalls that MAG was unique because of the way it was born. To address concerns and ensure that local control was maintained, the elected officials had the League of Arizona Cities and Towns assign staff to perform MAG functions. Because of that relationship, there was a different mindset for MAG.

"All of the concepts about how to deal with local governments were League concepts, much different from those of a typical planning agency," recalls DeBolske. "A planning agency thinks that technical data drives everything. But planners weren't realistic about politics. They would focus on finding solutions without taking into account the politics of the situation," he said. "We had to show them that when you're distributing federal funds, it isn't always about what you need, but what is respectable."

DeBolske says many politicians at the time thought Councils of Governments were an unnecessary layer of government, with some going so far as to label them a 'communist conspiracy.'

"You can laugh, but it's true," says DeBolske. "You have to understand what things were like politically when MAG was created."

In his 1966 memorandum, DeBolske reassured the agencies that "the proposed association will not take the place of any local government" and that the association was "voluntary and advisory."

Current MAG Executive Director Dennis Smith says it was DeBolske himself who turned the tide.

"The only reason MAG could exist was Jack DeBolske," says Smith.

"They trusted Jack. He always put the elected officials out front, and they responded to that."

Former Goodyear Mayor Charlie Salem, MAG's second chair, also remembers that dynamic as a key to the development of MAG.

"The thing I enjoyed about MAG at the time is we really had a nice close-knit family of all the cities and it was a very congenial group. Jack DeBolske was a very good leader and very respected, and I think he made it happen."

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VALLEY LEADERS — B. L. Tims, Scottsdale mayor, third from left, was elected chairman last night of the Maricopa Association of Governments. Among other officials attending were, from left: Vernon Crist, councilman from Gilbert; John M. McCauley, Avondale mayor, and George Nader, Chandler mayor.

Photo above from the April 13, 1967, *Arizona Republic* article.



Former Goodyear Mayor Charlie Salem



(From left) Ken Driggs, Jack DeBolske, and Dennis Smith recount some of the early history of MAG.

50th
Anniversary



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MARICOPA
ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENTS

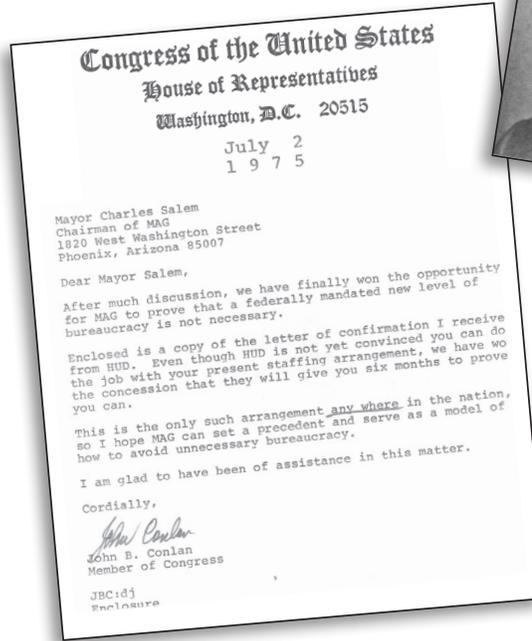
1967-2017

Decade One: 1967-1977 (cont. from page 9)

Former League Assistant Director Ken Driggs, who served as MAG staff coordinator, agrees.

“It was Jack’s reputation. He was a strong, powerful guy, but his whole idea was that he worked for the elected officials ‘and don’t you ever forget it,’ he’d tell us. He said, ‘They’re the smart ones. They got elected.’ And so he would always ask them what they wanted him to do, even if it was something he didn’t recommend. And they’d say, ‘We’ll let you know after you tell us what your recommendation is.’ And they would work things out.”

MAG developed a low-key, consensus approach, using existing League and Highway Department staff for administrative and technical services. All were either League employees assigned to MAG, or were contracted to work for MAG. In 1975, MAG faced unexpected political hurdles over the staffing arrangement, with federal officials uncomfortable with the idea



only Arizona Councils of Governments use this model.

Another unique MAG practice is the use of intergovernmental representatives to serve as liaisons between MAG and its member agencies.

Driggs notes that was also a Jack DeBolske-

inspired process. that local elected officials were in charge. Several federal agencies threatened to withhold funding unless MAG hired an independent staff. With the help of Arizona Congressman John Conlan (*see above*), MAG was given a chance to prove it could do the job.

“This is the only such arrangement anywhere in the nation, so I hope MAG can set a precedent and serve as a model of how to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy,” wrote Congressman Conlan to MAG Chair Salem in 1975.

The MAG Structure

DeBolske also brought another League-inspired model to MAG. DeBolske was a strong proponent of the council/manager form of government. Under this model, the city manager provides professional management to the board of directors. In setting up the MAG structure, DeBolske created a Management Committee, made up of city and town managers, to provide recommendations to the Regional Council, the main governing body of MAG. To this day,

that he would use as the conduit. Usually it was in the city manager’s office. But that’s how you would work things up through to the elected officials.”

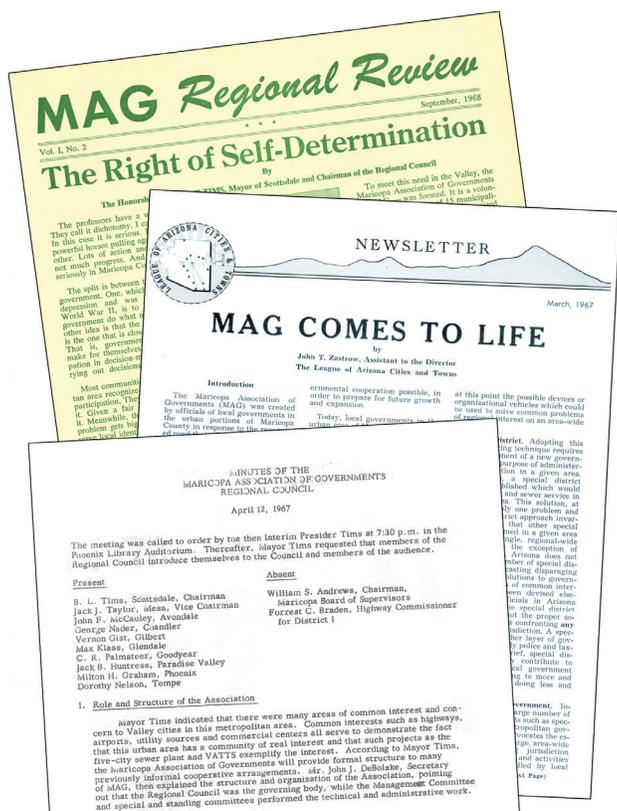
“Jack would have a person in every city, before the intergovernmental coordinators came into being, that he would use as the conduit. Usually it was in the city manager’s office. But that’s how you would work things up through to the elected officials.”

Transportation Milestones

In 1968, the Papago Loop was accepted for the federal interstate system. But the project faced opposition. In 1973, in what was called an “advisory referendum,” Phoenix voters rejected the 17-mile, eight-lane Papago Freeway. A *New York Times* article dated May 13, 1973, states, “The vote came as a severe setback to city and state transportation planners and elected officials who have been pressing for the Papago Freeway as the cornerstone of a 200-mile freeway grid for Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix.”

That same year, under requirements

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set by the Federal Transportation Act, the governor designated MAG as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Maricopa region. In 1975, MAG began a major reevaluation of the transportation plan and regional development plan. In 1977, as MAG ended its first decade of service, public hearings were held on the revised plan. The plan included freeway, bus and rail transit alternatives.

Along with transportation, MAG was involved in other important regional planning areas.

Water Quality/Solid Waste Planning

In the early 1960s, Gilbert, Glendale, Mesa, Scottsdale, Tempe, and Youngtown each contracted with Phoenix for the implementation of a multicity wastewater plan. Phoenix provided the management, operation and maintenance of the regional system. When the federal government called for regional wastewater plans in 1968, Phoenix agreed to conduct and pay for such planning to ensure continued federal assistance. In 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments mandated that water quality management planning be conducted “border to border” across the nation.

MAG accepted the designation by the Governor and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the Areawide Water Quality Management Planning Agency for Maricopa County. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided technical assistance.

In 1968, MAG conducted the first comprehensive solid waste needs assessment, concluding that the preferred approach was disposal in local landfills due to the amount of readily available land.



Land Use

In 1973, MAG developed the Composite Land Use Plan compiled from local land use plans. In 1974, MAG cooperated with the Valley Forward Association to prepare one of the early proposals to improve the Salt River channel. This proposal was called the Rio Salado Report. In 1975, a Growth Management Study identified critical issues of urban form options and provided a framework for a regional evaluation process.

Human Services

Early MAG leaders recognized that, just as other major issues require a regional approach, so do human services. In 1968, MAG designated the Health Planning Council as the body responsible for health planning in Maricopa County. In 1973, MAG became the designated planning agency for elderly programs. Unfortunately, in 1974, federal regulations thwarted MAG’s attempts to subcontract planning activities focused on aging.

MAG recommended the Community Council to be the planning entity for elderly programs and services. In 1976, the Department

of Economic Security contracted with MAG to produce a Regional Human Services Plan. It asked MAG to identify social services priorities to be funded by \$5.1 million in Title XX funding. In 1977, the Area Agency on Aging was established, while MAG’s contract to plan for social services funding was extended through 1980.

Air Quality

In 1977, MAG realized its life was about to change. The Clean Air Act Amendments required regions to develop plans if they fail to meet national standards. MAG would soon develop carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate plans—and embark on an ongoing mission to clean the region’s air. 🏞️

The story will continue in the next quarterly edition of MAGAZine, focusing on 1977-1987.



MAG Moment

The Intelligent Transportation Society (ITS) of Arizona presented MAG the award for the Best ITS Planning Project in 2016. The award was presented at the ITS annual conference in Mesa, attended by more than 400 professionals. Specifically, the award recognized the Benefit-Cost Evaluation that was performed by MAG, in partnership with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS), on the pilot project that co-located DPS troopers at the ADOT Traffic Operations Center.



Left to right: Brent Cain, ADOT; Sarath Joshua, MAG; Jamie Blakeman, President of ITS Arizona.