

VOLUME II, SECTION IV. F.
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (MAG)
OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is the Council of Governments (COG) that also serves as the designated regional metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation planning in the metropolitan Phoenix area. The Governor's Office designated MAG to serve as the principal planning agency for the region in a number of areas including air quality, water quality and solid waste management. In addition, through an Executive Order from the Governor, MAG develops population estimates and projections for the region.

MAG is a public organization encompassing a multi-jurisdictional regional community. The membership consists of the 24 incorporated cities and towns within Maricopa County, the Gila River Indian Community, the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community, Maricopa County, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Citizens Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC). ADOT serves as an ex-officio member for transportation-related issues.

The region, which had approximately 2.5 million people in 1995, is centered around the communities of Phoenix and Mesa. The MAG planning area covers 9231 square miles, including 1515 square miles of incorporated areas.

MAG provides regional planning and policy decisions in areas of transportation, air quality, environmental analysis, regional development, and social services. The Articles of Incorporation for MAG state that the association was formed to do the following:

- Provide a forum for discussion and study of regional problems of mutual interest to the governments in the region.
- Insure through cooperation and the pooling of common resources, maximum efficiency and economy in governmental operations which will provide every citizen with the utmost value for every dollar.
- Identify and comprehensively plan for the solution of regional problems requiring multi-city, town and county cooperation.
- Facilitate agreements among governmental units for specific projects or other interrelated developmental actions or for the adoption of common policies with respect to problems which are common to its members.
- Attain the greatest degree of intergovernmental cooperation possible in order to prepare for future growth and development of the region.¹

The Bylaws express the underlying concept that the MAG "is based on the principle that cities, towns and counties, which are closest to the people, should exercise the basic

¹ Summary statement of MAG's purpose and responsibilities from the MAG. The Articles of Incorporation were not reviewed.

initiative and leadership and should have the primary responsibility for addressing those local problems and needs which require action on an area-wide or regional basis.”²

The **Regional Council** is the governing and chief policy-making body for the organization and is composed of elected officials appointed by each member agency. For the majority of MAG members, the city or town mayor serves as the Regional Council member. The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors usually represents Maricopa County on the Regional Council. The Maricopa County State Transportation Board member represents the ADOT. The Chairman of the CTOC also serves on the Regional Council. Currently, the Governor of the Gila River Indian Community and the President of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community serve on the Regional Council.

The **Executive Committee** consists of at least three Regional Council members that are elected at the annual meeting to serve for one year (until the next annual meeting). The Executive Committee is required to include the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Regional Council as ex-officio members. In June, 1997 the Executive Committee was expanded to five members to allow for additional participation by the member agencies. The MAG by-laws indicate that the MAG business which arises between meetings of the Regional Council may be conducted by the Executive Committee.

The **Management Committee** consists of the chief administrators from each member agency. For cities, towns and the County, the manager is the Management Committee representative. Community managers represent Indian Communities, and the directors of ADOT and the Regional Public Transportation Authority represent his or her respective agency on the Management Committee. The role of the Management Committee is to assist in policy making. Members of the Management Committee are strongly encouraged to brief their Regional Council representative regarding MAG related issues. The types of information provided by the manager include previous public input, pros and cons, technical and policy implications, prior committee actions, and action needed from the Regional Council.

Several technical advisory committees consisting of professional experts assist in program development due to the technical complexity of many MAG programs. The Management Committee generally appoints the advisory committees. The Transportation Review Committee, for example, is composed of high level officials from the MAG member agencies. The committee was established in 1994 to provide input on the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. Another group, the Intermodal Management System Working Group is made up of representatives from several of the MAG member agencies as well as representatives from transportation users and providers. Its purpose is to coordinate the development of an Intermodal Management System consistent with the Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Other transportation related committees include a Regional Bicycle Task Force and an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee.

² MAG information sheet. The Bylaw were not reviewed.

MAG has established several policy advisory committees to provide specific recommendations to the Management Committee and Regional Council. The committees are established by the Regional Council and are generally composed of local elected officials, agency staff, industry or business representatives and citizen representatives. One such policy advisory committee is the Valley Vision 2025 Committee, formally titled Region 2025 Vision. This committee is responsible for developing the 2025 Vision.

In June 1989, the Regional Council established the Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC) to assist in addressing the urban growth related issues in the MAG planning effort. Several key studies have been completed to assist in developing an urban growth strategy for this region.

In fulfilling its numerous ongoing transportation planning responsibilities, MAG implemented an enhanced public participation process in accordance with ISTEA. Conducted in conjunction with ADOT and the Regional Public Transportation Authority, this process provides complete information on transportation plans, timely public notice, public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement in the process.

The MAG Regional Council established, in 1992, the MAG Fiscal Analysis Unit. This unit was commended in the Performance Audit of the Arizona Department of Transportation's Urban Highway's Program for Maricopa County. Principal duties of the Fiscal Analysis Unit include monitoring the implementation of the MAG Freeway Program by ADOT, developing an Annual Report on the MAG Freeway Program and conducting public hearings on the Report.

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (MAG) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In Maricopa County, local government cooperation in the early 1960's resulted in the implementation of the multi-city sewage treatment plant at 91st Avenue. This regional activity occurred prior to federal and state initiatives and incentives for regional planning and cooperation. In 1962, changes in federal policy required more local and state involvement. As a result of changes in the Federal Aid Highway Act, cooperative transportation planning occurred with the creation of the Valley Area Traffic and Transportation Study (VATTS). As part of the federal government decentralization initiatives, federal regions were established to bring federal programs closer to the people and incorporate greater review of federal programs through the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act.³

The changing federal policies required more local planning and review. Due to the demonstrated success of previous regional efforts, the local governments in Maricopa County formed MAG in 1967 as a nonprofit corporation to act as the vehicle to address areas of common regional interest. The elected officials recognized the need for long

³ P.L. 90-577

range planning and policy development on a regional scale. They realized that many issues such as transportation and air quality affected residents beyond the borders of their individual jurisdictions.

MAG was formed in the spirit of cooperation. At the first meeting of MAG, the consensus of the Regional Council was that the areas of water, air pollution and solid waste disposal were of primary concern. It was also agreed that there was a need for the standardization of building materials and for public works specifications. In addition, the transportation planning efforts begun with VATTS were incorporated into the scope of MAG's work. Several key events in the early history of MAG are outlined below:

- Regional cooperation was encouraged by success of multi-city sewage system in the early 1960's.
- The 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act required regional transportation planning which resulted in the formation of the Valley Area Traffic and Transportation Area Study (VATTS) on March 12, 1965.
- The 1965 Federal Housing Act Amendments and 1966 Metropolitan Development Act provided legal and financial impetus for a full-fledged regional agency.
- MAG was formed in 1967 by concurrent resolutions from its member agencies to foster regional cooperation and to address regional problems.
- VATTS was incorporated into MAG in 1967.
- Executive Order 70-2 established six Planning Districts in Arizona in 1970.
- MAG designated as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Phoenix Urban Area by the Governor in 1973. As such the MAG is responsible for Section 134 of the United States Code which required continuous, comprehensive and cooperative (3C) planning as basis for any request for federal funding in transportation.
- MAG designated as the Water Quality Planning Agency by the Governor in 1974.
- MAG designated as the Lead Air Quality Planning Agency by the Governor in 1978.
- MAG designated as the Solid Waste Planning Agency in 1979.

In the last decade, significant developments have occurred in transportation planning and funding. In 1985, the legislature authorized a sales tax election. In 1986, the voters of Maricopa County approved Proposition 300 which included a one-half cent sales tax over a twenty year period to complete new freeways in the MAG system. Although a national recession followed the 1985 vote, significant freeway segments have been completed due to the passage of the one-half cent sales tax.

Following the passage of the tax, several mistakes were made in implementing the Freeway Program. An audit of the Freeway Program conducted by the Legislature and the passage of new legislation in 1992 instituted several reforms to the system. ADOT has implemented a Life Cycle Program to insure that costs and revenues are in balance. Also in 1992, MAG created the Fiscal Analysis Unit to monitor ADOT and issue a status report on the Freeway System. Since 1992, the Annual Report has indicated that the Life

Cycle Program developed by ADOT has been in balance with costs and revenues and construction schedules have been met.

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (MAG) – WORK PRODUCT

Urban Growth Planning

In June 1989, the Regional Council established the Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC) to assist in addressing the urban growth related issues in the MAG planning effort. Several key studies have been completed to assist in developing an urban growth strategy for this region. These include the Open Space Management Plan, Urban Form Study and the Congestion Management Plan.

In 1995, MAG adopted the Urban Form Study. This study examined four growth patterns with regards to future impacts on the region's air quality, traffic congestion, infrastructure costs and general quality of life factors. The study is the basis for the Region 2025 Vision and won the American Planning Association, Arizona Chapter, "Best Project" award in 1995.

The Regional Council has recently approved a plan to develop a vision for the future of the Region in the year 2025. A citizen-based Blue Ribbon Committee recommended the initiation of the project to MAG. The Blue Ribbon Committee conducted a nationwide study of over fifteen regions, made site visits to peer regions, and held extensive discussions with experts on regionalism. The Valley Vision 2025 program is a public/private partnership to involve citizens of the region in an intensive effort to form a vision of what this region should be in the year 2025. The vision addresses all aspects of the future quality of life in the region including transportation, land use, environmental quality, education and public safety. The effort is broad-based and participatory. Members were selected from 300 nominations made by elected officials who serve on the MAG Regional Council. The Valley Vision 2025 Committee will call upon local governments, the private sector, and regional civic organizations to provide perspective in their areas of expertise and to participate in issue-focused discussions.⁴

Regional Transportation Planning

MAG has been active in regional transportation planning for decades. As the regional MPO, MAG is responsible for Section 134 of United States Code which requires continuous, comprehensive and cooperative (3C) planning as the basis for any request for federal funding in transportation. The MAG Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) addresses all modes of transportation in the region. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and Transportation System Management (TSM) improvements are integral parts of the MAG LRTP with specific projects designated for funding in the MAG five year program. The LRTP is usually updated each year, and is based on a

⁴ A March 29, 1999 The Business Journal – Phoenix article, written by Clancy Jayne, a Maricopa County planning and zoning commissioner, noted that MAG's Valley Vision 2025 "seems to be bogged down, with no meetings scheduled at this time."

twenty year, or longer, time horizon. In the 1997 Update,⁵ the time horizon of the Plan is extended from 2015 to 2017.

In January 1992, the MAG Regional Council established the MAG Fiscal Analysis Unit. This unit was recommended in the Performance Audit of the Arizona Department of Transportation's Urban Highway's Program for Maricopa County. Principal duties of the Fiscal Analysis Unit include monitoring the implementation of the MAG Freeway Program by ADOT, developing an Annual Report on the MAG Freeway Program and conducting public hearings on the Report.

MAG publications on transportation include:

- Long Range Transportation Plan, 1997 Update, 1998 Addendum
- Analysis of Traffic Congestion and Related Problems in the MAG Area Final Report
- Congestion Management System
- Congestion Management Systems Alternatives Executive Summary
- Congestion Management Systems Alternatives Final Report
- MAG Intermodal Management System Report
- MAG Element of the Arizona Highway Performance Monitoring System
- MAG Long Range Transportation Plan Summary and 1993 Update
- Conformity Analysis MAG Long Range Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program Volume 1
- Transportation Improvement Program Appendices 1992/1993-1996/1997

The MAG Executive Director's Annual Report: Major Accomplishments 1998 lists these transportation related work products:

- Initiated Transportation Funding Discussions and "Fair Share" Analysis
- Completed Grand Avenue Corridor Study
- Developed Regional Light Rail Transit Plan
- Proposed Value Lane Study
- Initiated Intelligent Transportation Systems Program
- Partnered with ADOT in Intercity Corridor Studies
- Updated Regional Bicycle Plan
- Drafted 1998 Update to the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan
- Developed Transportation Funding Guidelines
- Continued Support for Multimodal Programs
- Supported Local Efforts to Accelerate Freeway Construction
- Provided Fiscal Oversight for the MAG Freeway Program
- Developed Transportation Improvement Program
- Established MAG Regional Council Transportation Subcommittee
- Conducted a Regional Congestion Study
- Developed a New Process to Estimate Mode Choice

⁵ MAG Long Range Transportation Plan, Summary and 1997 Update, September 1997, is available at the MAG webpage: <http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/newpages/transp.htm>

- Provided Travel Demand Forecasts

Population

Regional councils have a role in developing population estimates and projections under Executive Order. Each year, MAG recommends to the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) the population updates for July of the current year. These updates are utilized by the State for planning purposes and also for the distribution of lottery funds to local governments. MAG also produces long-range population projections for the region every five years.

ATTACHMENT

Arizona - Statutory Requirements For Transportation Planning Organizations

Executive Order 95-2 *Population Estimates and Projections*

Regional councils have a role in developing population estimates and projections.

Ariz. Rev. Code §40-1152 *Public transportation services; contracts and agreements*

Permits any county, city or town to enter contracts or to jointly form a nonprofit corporation to carry out public transportation services. (A.R.C. §40-1152C.) A regional council of governments or a regional planning agency created pursuant to a joint exercise of powers agreement or pursuant to nonprofit corporation statutes is not permitted to provide public transportation services nor to operate such services in duplication of common carrier services already provided.

Ariz. Rev. Code §48-5102 *Regional public transportation authority* [intercounty]

A regional public transportation authority, a tax-levying public improvement district, may operate both within and outside the corporate limits of the member municipalities in a county that has a population of one million two hundred thousand or more persons and that approves a transportation excise tax.

Ariz. Rev. Code §48-5121 *Regional public transportation system plan* [intercounty]

A regional public transportation system plan shall be developed by the board of a regional public transportation authority. The system plan must, among other requirements, define public transportation goals for each corridor, prioritize corridors for development, and select appropriate public transportation technology. (A.R.C. §48-5121B.) Capital and operating costs and revenue needed by source must be presented on an individual fiscal year basis. (A.R.C. §48-5121C.) The board must vote at a public hearing to modify the plan. (A.R.C. §48-5121F.)

Ariz. Rev. Code §§48-5301 et seq. *Regional transportation authority* [intercounty]

A regional transportation authority is a public, political, tax-levying public improvement and taxing subdivision of the state and a municipal corporation established in a county with a population of between 400,000 and 1,200,000 persons. (A.R.C. §48-5301, 5302.) Authority is vested in a board composed of members of the member jurisdictions of the regional council of governments. (A.R.C. §48-5303.) The regional transportation authority develops and submits proposed elements for a ten-year regional transportation plan to the electorate for approval. (A.R.C. §48-5304; A.R.C. §48-5309.) The regional transportation authority develops supplemental plans, set plan priorities, may appoint advisory committees, and has sole authority to implement the elements of the ten-year regional plan approved by a majority of the electors. (A.R.C. §48-5304.) A regional transportation fund is established for the authority. (A.R.C. §48-5307.) Through their regional planning agency, the county and municipalities in the county must list

transportation corridors by priority in the regional transportation plan. (A.R.C. §48-5311.)