



Being Mayor of Glendale includes the responsibility of representing our city in discussions and votes on important issues that affect the entire metropolitan region. This is accomplished through various regional organizations where cities work together to develop best solutions for complex issues such as transportation, military affairs, economic development and water rights. Today, I would like to give you information about one of the regional organizations that tackles one of these critical issues.

We all know how important transportation is. We understand how frustrating it can be to be late to an appointment because of excessive traffic or road construction. Creating transportation corridors and options in the right places at the right time is a very complicated issue that requires an enormous amount of study and a lot of work in planning and design. Decisions need to be made many years before projects begin. Much of that decision-making and prioritization is done by the Board members of an organization called Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG).

MAG is a Council of Governments that serves as the regional agency for the metropolitan area. Transportation is just one of the issues that MAG deals with long range planning and policy issues related to meeting your needs with regard to human services and air quality and much, much more. MAG also develops population estimates and projections for the region.

MAG is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation planning in Maricopa County. As you know, in 2004 voters approved Proposition 400 which authorized a ½ cent sales tax. The tax is applied to purchases made in Maricopa County and will continue through 2025. It was through the MAG approval process that we established the long term Regional Transportation Plan that provides a vision for the use of the Proposition 400 dollars for the next two decades.

There are four policy committees that provide direction and guidance to MAG staff for the future of transportation. Each city in Maricopa County and the County government itself have the opportunity to be represented on each of the committees.

Study of issues begins at the technical committee level. Staff members from each jurisdiction look at needs, resources, and options based on their expertise in the transportation industry and profession and provide recommendations to the MAG Management Committee. The Management Committee is comprised of key administrative officials from member jurisdictions. Our managers scrutinize the recommendations sent to them and work in a collaborative manner to further refine them. The recommendations are

then sent to the MAG Transportation Policy Committee (TPC).

The State Legislature felt the TPC was so important to managing the Proposition 400 Plan and revenues that they passed legislation that put this Committee into state statute. The TPC membership consists of both elected officials and private sector representatives. At TPC we use the studies and recommendations developed at the technical and managerial level to develop policy positions that address regional connectivity, cost, adherence to the promises made to voters in Proposition 400 and all other relevant factors. Our final recommendations are then sent to the MAG Regional Council for ratification.

While only a limited number of cities are represented on the TPC, all cities in Maricopa County, the Maricopa County Government, Native American communities, and the State Transportation Board have seats on the MAG Regional Council. Once the MAG Regional Council votes, the recommended actions are then implemented.

As you can see there is a tremendous amount of planning and consideration that goes into these important decisions that affect all of our futures. I encourage all of you to find more information on MAG's website, www.mag.maricopa.gov. I also want to invite you to view the schedule for MAG meetings. These meetings are open to the public and we encourage the involvement and participation of the citizens who are directly affected by transportation related decisions.

Transportation is such a complicated issue that MAG only represents a portion of the planning and decision-making that takes place. There are other organizations that also have Boards that make transportation related decisions. Valley Metro's Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) makes important decisions about busses and other public transportation in our region as well as the METRO Light Rail Board of Directors that makes decisions about the future of light rail in the valley. Eventually, though, the recommendations from those organizations must pass to the MAG Regional Council for review, consideration, possible changes, and finally ratification.

Stay tuned for upcoming bulletins where I will discuss these and other important regional organizations on which I and other city leaders also serve.