

## NOTES FROM 5/17/18 FOCUS GROUP MEETING – Discussions on Initial Project Team Assessments Lists

### Input on 'What we Have' Project Team Assessments List:

- Are there bike lockers at transit stations?
  - No, taken out due to misuse.
  - Bike lockers are at parking garages (Pennington, Library, Public Works, City/State) and at Park-N-Rides (Old Vail, Broadway/Houghton, Speedway/Houghton)
- Is there enough security for people to feel comfortable leaving their bikes at stops? At transit centers in bike racks? Other?
- Renting a bike locker requires planning, pre-meetings to let staff take off Sun Tran locks so you can add yours, and ongoing payments (\$2/month cost is great)
- Sun Tran is looking at this issue as part of their 1<sup>st</sup>/Last Mile Solutions programming:
  - Analyzing where buses are picking up the 2<sup>nd</sup> bikes that may indicate the bike use “congestion” (bus racks only hold 2-3 bikes)
  
- Additional things to add to 'What we Have':
  - Some HAWKs
  - Some “next arrival” signs at some locations
  - High rates of bicycle ridership in the UA/Downtown areas = as high as 20%-30%
  - Momentum and political awareness – and political will – to make transit better and put higher priority on it
  - Customer Service hotline that can help anyone with questions that integrates both Sun Tran and Sun Link
    - Can use even while you are actively in transit, or as a planning tool
    - Phone number is in the Ride Guide, but not everyone uses that
    - How to make people more aware?
  - The revitalization of downtown that is largely linked to Sun Link going in
    - Increased economic development
    - Increased density and compact development
    - Mayor and Council were a part of this entire effort, big supporters and its paid off – we can't forget that; They are part of the solution we are looking for with the FTN
    - Created a new example of a lifestyle and development pattern (transit-oriented), a new paradigm that involves transit and active transportation
  - Funding for maintenance of shelters, primarily based on ad revenues
    - This has been in place since 2002 and has been really successful previously, but it is starting to plateau and maintenance needs are growing
    - Need to rethink these contracts – do they provide a conflict with the need for better wayfinding signage for shelters?
  - Great opportunities with new companies are coming
    - Caterpillar, Amazon Distribution Center, Geico
    - Trend in employees not wanting to own a car or to not have to drive everywhere

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- These companies can help up the ridership
  - Companies might be investment partners on projects
  - Our rapidly degenerating air quality in the region is an opportunity
- Could improve on consistency across the system
- Can look at high rates of bicycle ridership and walking as individuals that could be attracted to transit
- Current bus riders are a valuable resource
  - Think a lot about what works and doesn't
  - Would enjoy being asked what they think
  - A free pass or some other idea would be an incentive to participate
- Neighborhoods could be viewed a lot like businesses and recruited/incentivized to use transit
- Political support for transit needs to be consistent
  - Transit-oriented/smart growth versus sprawl
  - Not subsidizing parking
- People even in the middle city are driving into downtown – at rates of 70%-80%
  - Due in part to inconsistent times of bus schedule
  - Current Headways
  - And missed or no connections to get them where they need to go

### Input on 'What we Need' Project Team Assessments List:

- Additional things to add to 'What we Need':
  - Dedicated Right-of-Way /lanes for buses
    - Evaluate routes to dedicate lanes on
  - Signal priority for buses
  - Support for land use patterns that support transit, bringing uses closer together so it isn't as hard to access what we need (transit-oriented development)
  - Add bus stops to Sun Link maps
  - "Next arrival" signs at bus stops
  - EQUITY:
    - Avoid displacement
    - Serve the most vulnerable
    - Avoid gentrification
    - Might begin to address these by looking at higher need areas, such as where car ownership is low, income is low, or other
  - PARKING:
    - Work to eliminate parking subsidies
    - Increase cost of parking, including weekends and evenings (new source of revenue)

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- Eliminate parking minimums/replace with parking maximums (planning & development)
- Brace and prepare for pushback with tangible list of improvements and integrate transit use into all parking communications from Park Tucson
- Set targets for modal splits that reflect a commitment to reducing number of people driving alone in cars (instead of continuing to plan for that number of people driving)
- FUNDING:
  - Explore FTA funding
  - Revenues for shelter maintenance:
    - Rethink ad contract
    - Look at opportunities for businesses to sponsor stops in front of their businesses
    - Explore other ideas
    - Also need to know what we need at the transit centers and the 1,000 bus shelters (analysis)
- Review this initial list and quickly identify: what we can do now? what with no additional cost, low resources?
  - Need to also remember that the focus of this work is on the FTN; may need to refocus on this – some of the recommendations coming out of this process are too big and address the whole system
- Travel times need to be shorter
  - Service planning uses a rule of thumb that taking the bus should be no more than 1.5x slower than taking a car; Tucson is currently 2x slower than driving
  - Factors to consider are:
    - Marketing the convenience of not having to drive – you can be doing other things
    - Using larger buses, making fewer stops (express service, such as Bus Rapid Transit)
  - Continuing to favor cars is a detriment to the transit system; Need to find the lowest impact ways to give advantage to transit
    - For example, buses getting out of Ronstadt Transit Center have a terrible time with traffic; however, a solution that should NOT be entertained is to move the Transit Center out of downtown. Fix the traffic engineering to support them getting out of rush hour traffic faster
- DENSITY:
  - Need a way to help people in the community understand this concept better
  - It is a much harder sell than people think
  - Parking/Density = they are related and drive each other
  - Views and View Sheds are important to the community and concern that

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- TECHNOLOGY:
  - There is a segment of the community that doesn't use technology to ride a bus
  - There is also a segment of the community that ONLY gets information through their handhelds
  - Many have handhelds to be able to get information; they don't have the ability to pay electronically (cash-based)
  - What about technologies as they relate to fuels used by the buses? Does that matter to this discussion?
    - Yes, in that it can be important to public perception of supporting better care of the environment
    - Sun Tran fleet is predominantly CNG, some bio fuel, and 1 year pilot beginning for an electric bus
    - Political will is important
- Need to know where people are getting on and off transit
- Explore the idea of using/deputizing regular bus riders as “ambassadors”
  - Some organized mechanism to allow bus riders the ability to actively help other riders and support the system
  - Ask them about signage and marketing ideas to get their feedback and input – may be better than focusing on the Transit Task Force
  - Bus riders will do a lot for free passes!
- Change City policy to require that any notifications sent out about City public meetings include information about nearest bus stops and routes
- Need to include as part of standard designs those things needed by people who are differently-abled (e.g. visually impaired, use wheelchairs, use walkers, deaf)
  - Bus stop indicators in braille at the bus stops
  - Truncated domes at every crossing, and placed at same location
  - Pedestrian push buttons located in same place at all intersections
- Sun Tran does training with SAAVI – also a good group to access for input on what we need in our system
- Create a policy to ‘let the bus back in’
  - Create PSAs to broadcast informing drivers on why this is good
- Higher frequency bus routes can actually save money
- Reduce dwell times for buses
  - All door boarding
  - Off board payments