



REGIONAL TRANSIT FRAMEWORK STUDY UPDATE



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS SUMMARY

MARCH 17, 2017

Cover Photo: Fara Illich, Downtown Phoenix Inc.





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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 2018 Regional Transit Framework Study (RTFS) Update is a technical update of the 2010 Regional Transit Framework Study. The purpose of the RTFS Update is to identify, validate, and prioritize future high-capacity transit investments through a data-driven, system-wide planning approach. The study will evaluate recent and projected changes in market conditions, development patterns and travel flows; review adopted plans with a transportation element; and consider rapid advancements in innovation and transportation technology.

The study area encompasses the entire Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) planning area, which consists of all of Maricopa County and portions of northern Pinal County (including Santan Valley, the Gila River Indian Community, the Town of Florence, and the City of Maricopa). The planning horizon of the RTFS Update is 2018-2040 and the study is anticipated to be completed by Spring 2018.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

To determine the desires, issues, and concerns regarding high-capacity transit (HCT) in the MAG area, members of the Nelson\Nygaard team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews in late 2016 and early 2017 with member jurisdictions, transportation partners, higher education institutions, and community groups. This report presents an overview of the input received via these stakeholder interviews.

Methodology

MAG and the consultant team identified 15 organizations with a significant interest in regional HCT. Meeting participants included directors, managers, planners, engineers, financial analysts, and sustainability officers.

All interview participants were asked to provide candid opinions and input, and were assured that their responses would not be individually attributed. For this reason, this report summarizes the feedback that the stakeholder interviewees provided, but in most cases does not attribute those comments to specific entities or individuals. A complete list of stakeholders interviewed is listed below.

Stakeholder	Participants	Date
Arizona Department of Transportation	Steve Boschen, Infrastructure Delivery and Operations Director Mike Kies, Multimodal Planning Division Director Clem Legocki, Interim Transit Manager	1/3/2017
Arizona State University	Melinda Alonzo, Director Parking Transit Services Leslie Forest, Sustainability Practices Mick Gavenpool Corey Hawkey, Sustainability Manager JC Porter, Assistant Director	1/4/2017



Avondale	Jessica Blazina, Assistant Director Intergovernmental Affairs Daniel Davis, Economic Development Director Gina Ramos Montes, Neighborhood and Family Services Director Pier Simeri, Community Relations and Public Affairs Director Tracy Stevens, Development and Engineering Services Director Kristen Taylor, Transit Coordinator	12/19/16
Chandler	Dan Cook, City Engineer (Former Transportation Manager) Jason Crampton, Transit Services Coordinator Ann Marie Riley, Transit Services Coordinator (Paratransit and Fixed-Route) Jeff Martin, Consultant	1/4/17
Federal Highway Administration	Ed Stillings, Senior Transportation Planner	1/3/17
Glendale	Matt Dudley, Transit Manager Randy Huggins, Economic Development Kevin Link, Transit Administrator Jean Moreno, Executive Officer, Strategic Initiatives and Special Projects Patrick Sage, Transportation Planner	1/9/17

Greater Phoenix Economic Council	Mitchel Allen, VP of Business Development Chris Camacho, President and CEO Mary Foote Hebert, Vice President	12/21/16
Local Initiatives Support Council	Terry Benelli, Director Anna Darian, Program Officer Rachel Webster, Program Officer Wendy Carlos, Administrative Assistant	12/21/16
Mesa	David Calloway, Transit Administrator Edward Jones, Transit Coordinator Jodi Sorrell, Transit Services Director	1/12/17
Phoenix	Joseph Bowar, Deputy Director Maria Hyatt, Public Transit Director Ken Kessler, Chief Financial Officer	1/3/17
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community	Suzanne Colver, Planning Manager Jennifer Jack, Roads Section Manager	1/11/17
Scottsdale	Gregory Davies, Senior Transportation Planner Ratna Korepella, Principal Transit Planner Pedro Rodriguez, Transit Operations Coordinator	1/4/17
Surprise	David Kohlbeck, Public Works Business Manager Martin Lucero, Transportation Planning Manager	1/4/17

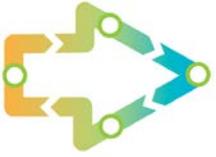


Tempe	Tony Balleau, TOD Planner Julian Dresan, City Traffic Engineer Eric Iwersen, Principal Planner Mike Nevarez, Transit Manager Chase Walman, Transportation Planner Robert Yabes, Principal Planner	2/2/17
Valley Metro	Abhishek Dayal, Manager - Capital Planning Paul Hodgens, Interim CFO and Life Cycle Program Manager Wulf Grote, Director of Capital and Service Development Carol Ketcherside, Deputy Director	1/3/17

Topics

Each interview consisted of an introduction to the MAG RTFS Update followed by a discussion that centered around the following questions. All questions were intended to be open-ended as a way to initiate conversation rather than to elicit specific answers.

- What do you consider to be the greatest transit-related issues/challenges for your community/organization?
- What are the most important things that should be done to make transit more effective/attractive?
- In what areas do you think new HCT services are most needed, and why?
- There will almost certainly be the desire for more new light rail service than the region can afford. In this case, how would you prioritize the development of new light rail?
- In areas where light rail will not be developed, what do you think the most important types of HCT improvements would be – for example, Bus Rapid Transit, more frequent service on local bus routes, expanded service hours, transit priority measures, better transit stop facilities, etc.?
- How much support is there within your community/organization for land use changes – specifically higher density development – to enable HCT?



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The summary of results highlights key themes that emerged from the stakeholder interviews. The following summaries are based on stakeholder perceptions of key issues and opportunities for HCT in the Valley.

KEY THEMES



More Frequent Service is Needed

One of the strongest sentiments expressed was the need for more frequent service – throughout the region, on all modes (including light rail transit), and on all days, including during the midday and evenings. Very little service currently operates frequently, and frequent service is needed to make service convenient and to attract more choice riders.



Light Rail Planning Should be More Regional

Many stakeholders identified specific corridors as potential and/or preferred LRT candidates. While many different opinions were expressed on where LRT should be pursued next, there was a fairly widespread feeling that LRT decisions were based more on politics than on regional need.



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Should Become an Important Component of the Region's HCT System

There is a fairly strong consensus that HCT planning is overly focused on LRT, a service that is unlikely to be implemented in many parts of the region. Stakeholders believe that more emphasis needs to be placed on other modes, in particular on BRT.



Rapid Bus Should be Considered

Although most stakeholders were initially unfamiliar with the concept of Rapid Bus, which is BRT-like service without dedicated bus lanes, they stated that it should be considered as a new HCT option.



Funding is Uncertain and Restricted

Most stakeholders expressed concern regarding future funding for HCT and transit in general, particularly with respect to a successor to Prop 400, which is the region's local sales tax initiative. Most with a knowledge of funding processes articulated problems with existing funding, particularly with respect to the split of funding between roads and transit, jurisdictional equity (the principal that each community should receive a similar amount of service), and transit operating and capital funding restrictions. Looking forward to "Prop 500," some suggested the use of regional funding for operating costs of a regional transit network, including LRT.



Planning is Fragmented

Many stakeholders identified several impediments to the development of a better regional system, in particular jurisdictional equity and inflexible funding formulas. Some stakeholders did not believe that the MAG RTFS Update could address the negative impacts of these issues. Stakeholders also noted that some services are designed with a greater emphasis on jurisdictional boundaries than actual demand.



More Community Engagement Will Be Needed

Several stakeholders stated in very strong terms that the "Prop 500" program will need very strong public support and, toward that end, suggested that more community engagement should be considered for this project.



RESULTS BY TOPIC

Due to the unique and, in some cases, competing needs for HCT, feedback varied significantly by stakeholder. This section includes a summary of responses by topic.

TRANSIT-RELATED ISSUES AND CHALLENGES



Funding Uncertainties

Several stakeholders expressed uncertainty regarding the future “Prop 500.” The current Prop 400 funding allocation consists of:

- Freeways – 56.2%
- Arterial Streets – 10.5%
- Public Transportation Fund – 33.3%

Transit stakeholders are generally in favor of increasing the transit funding allocation and reducing the freeway allocation. Stakeholders noted that state transit funding is not available, thereby increasing the reliance on federal and local funding. Many stakeholders desired to change funding splits for “Prop 500,” although they also recognized the challenges in doing so. Additional concerns included the new presidential administration, which many fear will be less transit-friendly.



Governance and Planning

Stakeholders generally expressed frustration with the current complexities involving regional connectivity and coordination. Stakeholders described the regional transit system as “fragmented” with an unnecessary emphasis on jurisdictional boundaries. One stakeholder suggested wiping the slate clean and having a single taxing district for transit with no funding expiration, or “sunset.” Others described regional planning as very fragmented with

planning staff spending more time coordinating with stakeholders rather than doing actual transit planning work.

Stakeholders noted that the Valley needs better transit service across jurisdictional boundaries. They gave examples of transit gaps, such as routes ending at city boundaries rather than continuing to serve obvious transit demand.

Stakeholders mentioned that many city leaders (e.g., elected officials and administrations) focus on local transportation needs without consideration of regional needs. Stakeholders mentioned a need to educate policy makers on the benefits of HCT, as well as on operating costs and ridership.



Limited Community Support

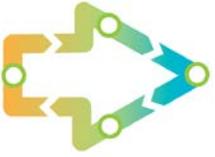
Stakeholders noted that many HCT projects face opposition from citizens, local businesses, and elected officials. In some cities, citizen opposition was partly based on the perception that light rail would result in increased crime. Small businesses along potential LRT corridors have expressed concern regarding construction impacts. An additional community concern was that LRT will take lanes currently dedicated to automobiles. While some stakeholders see LRT as a catalyst for economic development, they also noted that it can be challenging to overcome vocal anti-transit members of the community.

Some stakeholders noted that while not all city councils support HCT, a growing percentage of council members are supportive of HCT. Stakeholders suggested that BRT is more likely to be considered than LRT along some corridors.



Service Quality

Stakeholders stated that there were a number of problems with service quality. These include infrequent service, spans of service that are short,



little weekend service, service that is slow, and poor security on LRT (whether real or perceived).

The concern that there is “not enough service” was the issue expressed most frequently. Stakeholders thought that the largest problem in this area is the lack of frequent service, followed by short spans of service and no weekend service on many routes.

A lack of frequent service is a problem throughout the region – LRT runs only every 12 minutes for most of the day, few bus routes operate every 15 minutes or better during peak periods, and almost no bus service operates frequently during off-peak periods or on weekends. Many of the improvements currently planned by the City of Phoenix are designed to increase peak period service bus frequencies to partially address this problem. However, these improvements will not extend beyond the City of Phoenix. Short spans of service and limited weekend service create additional problems.

Some stakeholders noted that some service reductions made during the Great Recession have not been restored. Stakeholders on the edge of the contiguous urbanized area pointed out that their areas lacked frequent service and connections to employment destinations.

Stakeholders also believe that service is slow and travel times are long. Slow service is due to a number of factors, including many stops. Arizona State University (ASU) provides its own shuttles between different campuses primarily because students believe Valley Metro service is too slow. There is also a perception that LRT experiences reliability problems that create delays.



More Frequent Service

Many stakeholders suggested that faster and more frequent service throughout the region are important improvements. Stakeholders noted

that while Valley Metro LRT operates frequently throughout most of the day, most bus service is infrequent during middays.

Stakeholders also noted that infrequent service means that transfer times are often long. This, in turn, makes service inconvenient and increases travel times.

For improved cross-Valley travel, stakeholders suggested that the region should consider a network of HCT. Stakeholders also noted that 15-minute service would be necessary to make service truly attractive.



Safety, Security, and Comfort

Recent incidents on LRT have resulted in concerns from the community regarding transit safety. Stakeholders suggested increased security as a means of reassuring transit riders and the public. It was mentioned that 75% of ASU-Downtown campus students are female and some have stopped riding LRT due to concerns about personal safety. There is also a perception within segments of the population that buses are not safe.

Some stakeholders called attention to the seemingly growing rate of LRT crashes. Suggested remedies included more grade-separation at intersections with a history of conflicts.



Bus Stop Amenities and Accessibility

Stakeholders were nearly unanimous in supporting improvements to bus stops in terms of amenities and accessibility. Stakeholders mentioned more shade structures and seating at bus stops as high priority due to the extreme heat and infrequent midday and afternoon local service. Those interviewed also called attention to deficiencies in bus stop accessibility, particularly the lack of concrete pads and connecting sidewalks.

Stakeholders also called for more consistency among bus stops across the region in terms of the types of amenities provided based on usage.



Finally, stakeholders noted that frequent service, resulting in shorter wait times at bus stops, is one way to reduce exposure to extreme heat.



Highways Versus Transit

Some stakeholders criticized MAG for focusing on freeways at the expense of transit.

Dedicated transit lanes on highways did not seem like a viable option to some stakeholders as HOV lanes are already full during peak periods.

With regard to potential “bus on shoulder” opportunities, stakeholders suggested that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) would have to be the primary champion and, if implemented, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) would need to approve it on interstate highways. Stakeholders also noted that the presence of many auxiliary lanes could make bus on shoulder operations challenging.



Access to Employment / Economic Development

Several stakeholders believed that current transit service offerings do not meet the desires of major employers considering a move to the Valley. Stakeholders mentioned that tech companies were major employers that demand a high level of service for their employees. Phoenix, Tempe, and Old Town Scottsdale were each mentioned as potential locations for new tech industries. Planned ASU expansions were also mentioned as examples of future growth that will require increased transit options.

Stakeholders suggested that expanded HCT with good frequency and an extended service span is crucial for economic development objectives. Stakeholders also requested more information regarding the expected economic development benefits of BRT and LRT. Some stakeholders mentioned that serving transit-dependent employees should be a primary focus prior to attempting to attract more choice riders. Additional comments related to access to employment were that there were several

major employers without adequate transit service. Cheap fuel and low parking prices were also identified as factors that limit the potential for attracting new riders.

Stakeholders also suggested that new HCT projects should occur in corridors that will generate the greatest degree of economic development and redevelopment rather than focus on freeway corridors. They also suggested that LRT expansion plans focus on need rather than on politics.



Connectivity

Outlying MAG member jurisdictions expressed a desire for increased coverage and seamless integration between transit services. Additional suggestions for improvements to make transit more attractive include new routes, regional continuity, and timed connections.

Stakeholders identified service gaps:

- Between cities.
- Within Avondale.
- Connections to Luke Air Force Base.
- To Scottsdale Airpark.



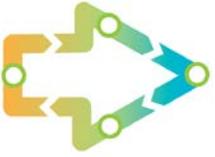
Parking Costs

Stakeholders stated that making parking in downtown Phoenix more expensive would increase transit ridership.



Fares

Some stakeholders also suggested evaluating the possibility of free fare zones in downtown areas as an incentive for transit use.



Park-and-Ride

Stakeholders mentioned that several park-and-ride locations are not well utilized in the Phoenix Metro Area. For example, the Thunderbird Park-and-Ride has 350 spaces and an average of 10 cars per day.

Many respondents noted that the Park-and-Ride market is mostly choice riders who are commuting to work and expect a high level of service. Some cities noted that adding stops to express routes reduces their attractiveness to choice riders. The tradeoffs between convenient stops and shorter running times was a theme throughout the conversations, as respondents considered how to balance the need to run a well-utilized service with the need to compete with the comfort and speed of a personal vehicle.



Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Stakeholders noted that LRT service frequencies had been cut from every 10 minutes to every 12 minutes when the Great Recession hit, that more frequent service had not been restored, and that service every 12 minutes is not sufficiently convenient.



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Several stakeholders expressed a strong interest in BRT service in major corridors where LRT will not be developed. BRT could also be developed as precursor for future LRT service. Some stakeholders expressed concern that converting BRT to LRT in the future would be difficult.



Commuter Rail

Commuter rail is an important part of the conversation to some stakeholders. If commuter rail is developed, stakeholders thought that it should be integrated with more local HCT services.

Some stakeholders, in particular the City of Surprise, identified commuter rail as an important component of an HCT network. Desired services included high speed east/west and north/south long distance connections.

AREAS WHERE HCT IS MOST NEEDED

As summarized below, a wide variety of input was provided on locations where HCT service should be implemented or included.

West Valley

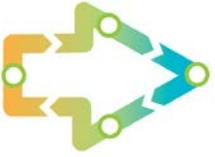
- The Grand Avenue corridor is critical to unlock economic development opportunities in West Valley.

Phoenix

- HCT lines as illustrated in the T2050 High Capacity Transit projects map. T2050 also provides the opportunity to create a strong core service area that surrounding cities will also likely benefit from just by the connections to destinations.
- LRT connection to Grand Canyon University.
- Direct LRT connection into Sky Harbor Airport.
- Connections to the Maryvale neighborhood.
- Desert Ridge, as it's an area that seems comfortable with high-density development; although ridership is low today. BRT on Tatum Boulevard should be considered.
- Deer Valley Airport.

Downtown Streetcar Systems/Circulators

- Downtown Phoenix.
- Downtown Scottsdale.
- Downtown Tempe is currently designing a streetcar circulator.



Phoenix/Scottsdale

- Mayo Clinic on 56th Street.

Tempe

- ASU to Loop 101 (Price Freeway).
- Washington/56th to Priest.
- Rio Salado Parkway.
- Papago Park (which is both a destination and a growing employment area).
- Loop connecting Papago area to SkySong Innovation District.
- Priest, north of McDowell Road/Hayden Road.
- McClintock to Apache Boulevard/Main Street.
- New sports and event complex in McClintock area.
- Improved connection between Tempe and South Scottsdale.
- Arizona Mills Mall.
- Southern Avenue.

Scottsdale

- BRT on Scottsdale Road.
- North Scottsdale Airpark.
- Downtown Scottsdale and resorts.
- Camelback Road/Indian School Road waterfront.
- McDowell Road in south Scottsdale.

Chandler

- Major investment study for HCT in 2003 identified three corridors that are still in consideration for BRT:
 - Rural Road.
 - Chandler Boulevard.
 - Arizona Avenue.

- The City is adding a bus route on Ray Road to fill in the east-west grid.

Mesa

- Extend streetcar to serve Riverview area.
- Extend LRT to the east toward Power Road.
- Serve the Fiesta Mall District with LRT to aid economic and redevelopment objectives.

Glendale

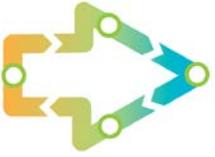
- Arrowhead Mall.
- Banner Hospital.
- West Phoenix Industrial Development.
- Westgate Entertainment District.
- LRT as a catalyst for Glendale redevelopment in low-income and historic areas.
- 59th Avenue and Glendale Avenue.

Avondale

- Full grid bus service as a precursor to BRT/LRT.
- Start with BRT and transition to LRT.
- Avondale Boulevard.
- Build SR-30 with High Capacity Transit infrastructure.
- Connection from Southeast Valley to Southwest Valley.
- HCT route to/from Goodyear along McDowell Road, 107th Street, through City Center is included Avondale General Plan.

Gilbert

- LRT extension along Main Street to Gilbert Road.
- Express bus service to Scottsdale from surrounding area.



Goodyear

- Connection to Goodyear Airport.

Surprise

- Grand Avenue commuter rail.
- Litchfield connector to link Surprise with Luke Air Force Base and a further connectivity to Goodyear and Camelback Road.

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport

- Connectivity to/from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport will be an important consideration for economic development.
- HCT should not run along the freeway but instead be in proximity to low-income areas.

Exurban Communities

- Connect communities with affordable housing to regional job centers:
 - Maricopa.
 - Casa Grande.
 - Buckeye.

High Employment Industrial Areas

- West Phoenix.
- Buckeye.

PRIORITIZATION OF LRT

A number of stakeholders believe that the region needs an LRT prioritization process that more strongly links the implementation of projects with need. They believe that some projects get added and moved ahead of other projects based on politics rather than on solid planning. For

example, before the Phoenix transit tax was passed, the South Central LRT line was planned for 2034. Now it is planned for 2023. One stakeholder suggested prioritizing projects based on how competitive each would be in the Federal Transit Administration New Starts process. Additional comments included:

- On a regional level, LRT should connect job centers, transit dependent populations, and major regional destinations (e.g., education institutions, entertainment districts, medical, etc.)
- Stakeholders were also concerned about the potential for affordable housing displacement in conjunction with new LRT services.

HCT IMPROVEMENTS BEYOND LRT



Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Many stakeholders noted that not every city has viable LRT corridors and that financial realities mean that LRT cannot be implemented everywhere. In these cases, there should be a greater emphasis on the development of BRT to improve transit. BRT is also seen by many as a “first step” toward LRT.

Many stakeholders also requested information about successful BRT projects. Some stakeholders also stressed the importance of removing local service from future BRT corridors. Stakeholders noted that Valley Metro is currently studying the feasibility of limited stop service on Grand Avenue between Surprise and Phoenix.



Rapid Bus

Many stakeholders were interested in the concept of limited stop bus service to reduce travel times. Stakeholders were also interested in signal priority, dedicated lanes, and level boardings. In this respect, the study team introduced the idea of “Rapid Bus,” or BRT-like service without



dedicated bus lanes. Most were initially unfamiliar with the concept, but after discussion, stated that it should be considered as a new HCT option.



Express Bus

Stakeholders provided differing opinions on freeway express services. Some stakeholders felt that express bus service is effective while others believe that it should be faster. Many also stated that express bus service was needed to locations other than downtown.



Highways

Stakeholders provided several comments regarding HCT on highways. Some stakeholders would prefer to see more transit services on HOV lanes. Other stakeholders touted the ridership success of operating double-decker buses on long-distance commuter routes.

Stakeholders discussed the potential characteristics and transit-related features that would come out of MAG's I-10/I-17 Spine Corridor Master Plan Study. The Spine Study will likely recommend adding managed lanes in both directions initially implemented as HOV lanes.



Streetcar

Stakeholders discussed the possibility of streetcar-type service replacing trolley service in Downtown Scottsdale. Stakeholders also expressed interest in streetcars providing circulation in major activity centers such as downtowns.



Frequent Service

Some stakeholders were interested in focusing on more frequent service rather than on bigger buses. The completeness of the network is also an issue, particularly for West Valley communities. Stakeholders suggested an

improved balance across the different cities so that the level of service is consistent between communities and is easy to understand for riders. Stakeholders noted that this will require additional funding from local jurisdictions.

SUPPORT FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)



High-Density Development

Support for high-density development has grown considerably in the last decade. Some stakeholder noted that the City of Phoenix has a new economic development director and that the region generally is beginning to look at HCT as a way of driving economic development. Several interviewees noted that LRT was a key component to attracting new residents and employers to older areas of the city.

However, stakeholders reported that policies supporting high-density development near HCT corridors have also been met with resistance. According to stakeholders, a lack of political will makes it so that the policy is not enforced. Several participants noted that this is especially true in communities that have traditionally been comprised of single-family homes.

Many respondents noted that there was a need for a data-driven study to demonstrate the benefits of HCT to economic growth and development.



Land Use Plan Updates

General plans and corridor plans now incorporate elements of transit-oriented development (TOD), specifically for light rail corridors and for HCT corridors. For example, the cities of Mesa, Gilbert, and Chandler indicated they will be including land use provisions for high-density development on Arizona Avenue in anticipation of a future HCT corridor. The City of



Avondale will include provisions for high-density development in its next update to the general plan.

Outlying communities also reported working to integrate active transportation, transit, and high-density development regulations into their land use plans. The City of Phoenix reported that it aims to add increased density in the southern area of the city near the Phoenix International Raceway.

Stakeholders noted that cities like Surprise and Avondale have recently added TOD incentives to their land use regulations to encourage development.

OTHER TOPICS



Community Engagement

Several stakeholders stressed the need for stronger community engagement as part of the RTFS Update and the upcoming Prop 500. Stakeholders also commented that MAG does not implement projects but instead creates plans. The City of Phoenix and Valley Metro were mentioned as two entities that could potentially support outreach efforts. Additional comments along these lines included:

- MAG should consider the use of an online survey to help the stakeholders and, ultimately, the public understand the cost and associated revenue to actually implement and operate HCT improvements.
- Stronger public involvement would make technical decisions and processes much easier.
- The Chandler General Plan Update community outreach phase included a survey regarding preferred mode improvements. HCT was the top priority, followed by bus, and lastly bicycle/pedestrian.
- Additional stakeholders to consider interviewing include:
 - Gila River Indian Community

- Fort McDowell Yavapi Nation
- Maricopa County (Nicolas Swart, Traffic Management Division Director)
- City of Gilbert



Creating and Evaluating New Service

Valley Metro's Regional Transit Standards and Performance Measures have been adopted regionally and are used to evaluate ridership on start-up routes after 3 years of operation. Because the start-up routes measured in the manner as established routes, it is difficult to add service to outlying areas like Surprise. There, five routes were removed in the Great Recession and have not been reestablished. A mechanism for adding service areas is needed to better serve the Valley population as it expands. Valley Metro has also prioritized adding frequency to existing services over expansion to new areas, which presents additional hurdles in expansion to new areas.