



SOUTH CENTRAL TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY BETWEEN THE CORRIDOR AND THE REGION KEY FINDINGS

Light Rail will Improve Accessibility

- Current travel times to many job centers are long, and current transit services are too infrequent, leading to low use of the transit system both outbound and inbound
- Highway access is modest, current traffic volumes and projected volumes do not assume mode shifting from improved transit, which will result in less automobile traffic
- Transit access to retail and amenities will improve once the new light rail service is implemented

Potential for Even Greater Access with Targeted Development and Transportation Improvements

- Attention must focus on accessibility to and from South Central. This includes complementing light rail service with better “first and last mile” options and coordination of transit (fixed-route and scheduled service) with on-demand, shared-use options
- There is a shortage of critical amenities in the corridor ranging from full service grocery stores to hospital and medical care facilities, and the lack of mixed-use (residential + commercial amenities on site) development further limits convenient access to such services, requiring additional travel

Traffic volumes on corridor-- connected arterial streets are modest and transit use is relatively high compared to citywide and regional profiles. But travel times can be long whether by driving or by transit.

South Central Avenue at Southern and the average block group in Tempe have almost identical transit levels of service for two areas. Both areas are slated to enhance transit with fixed-route, scheduled service—South Central with the light rail and Tempe with the recently approved streetcar. Although the overall performance scores are identical, it is likely that without intervention, Tempe will pull ahead. Tempe benefits from a large mall and enhanced local planning; anecdotally, more people in South Phoenix shop there or in Ahwatukee than locally.

Switching to a comparison with 19th and Camelback is instructive. The total level of service is only slightly higher—3,558 versus 2,559 scheduled transit stops within ½ mile per week, but the number of jobs accessible within 30 minutes is 50% higher than Tempe, and the number of potential transit-riding customers is almost double, so it shouldn't be surprising that transit ridership to work is almost double too. The higher transit ridership is further leveraged with a higher percentage of people who do not drive alone to work. People using such services keep their cost of living reasonable, their savings higher and their local business institutions viable and growing.

Report Prepared By: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Getting to and from the new light rail by non-driving means is most likely by bus, which currently does not run as frequently, with small exceptions, as light rail. Most jobs in the City of Phoenix are within walking distance of transit, but that is not as true for all activity and job centers in the broader region. A finer grained mapping reveals the need for better, near-term options for “first and last mile” trips to help Phoenix make full use of its significant transit investment. Doing so will increase utilization and increase attractiveness of transit-oriented locations for business enhancement and expansion.

Strategies for enhancing regional accessibility include:

Work with Valley Metro to increase the frequency and hours of availability of east-west bus connections at new South Central Extension LRT stations. Few bus routes currently meet the recommended frequent-service threshold averaging every 15 minutes or less.

Work with employers, Valley Metro, the City and MAG to develop a Transportation Management Association or TMA. TMA’s are non-profit organizations that supplement fixed-route, scheduled service such as the services offered by Valley Metro. They benefit from (a) the ability to blend resources for operating costs from multiple sources; including employers, local governments, metropolitan planning organizations such as MAG or community foundations, and (b) the ability to either directly provide or contract for services from non-governmental organizations. In addition to familiar vanpool type services, TMA’s are experimenting with partnerships to provide new mobility services (car-sharing, bike-sharing, ridesharing). And FTA annual data shows that some of these services have among the highest farebox recovery ratios in the country. Certain specialized services can be cost-effective alternatives, for example, ridesharing for the elderly and disabled can complement traditional paratransit services.

Explore methods of using a portion of future referendum-authorized tax receipts to support such expanded services. The referendums which passed in Los Angeles County in 2008 and 2016 allow that for every dollar of sales tax collected, 27% is used for transit operation and maintenance (specifically, 5% for Metro rail operations, 20% for other transit operations and 2% to support ADA compliant services and discounts for seniors & students); 2% for a “Metro State of Good Repair” fund; 17% for necessary upgrades to connecting streets and highways; and 2% for Metro Active Transportation, a dedicated fund for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Of the total expected 40 year yield of \$120 Billion across Los Angeles County, 52% is paying for transit construction and vehicles and 48% for these tandem community improvements. This additional operating assistance has kept LA County’s Metro services stable or growing instead of shrinking.

