

Transit



Bus Rapid Transit

Modern Streetcar



Importance of Transit

Transit is a general term that encompasses all major forms of public transportation, such as bus and light rail. Transit services provide affordable mobility options for residents and visitors, and can positively benefit the environment by reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

What is high-capacity transit (HCT)?

A high-capacity transit (HCT) system carries a greater volume of passengers than a standard bus system by using larger vehicles and/or more frequent service. The main goal of HCT is to provide faster, more convenient and more reliable service for a larger number of passengers. With rising gas prices and increased awareness about global climate change, HCT is gaining popularity. HCT often stimulates economic activities along its corridors and raises home values. Examples of high-capacity transit options that may be feasible in the Tucson region are explained below:

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):

BRT is an express bus service that integrates rail transit features. These features may include:

- Higher operating speeds
- Modern low-floored buses
- Improved stations
- A dedicated right-of-way

Commuter Rail:

Commuter rail is designed to serve longer trips than other fixed-rail transit alternatives. Often commuter rail:

- Travels at high speeds
- Has limited stops
- Connects suburban areas with urban destinations

Light Rail Transit (LRT):

LRT generally serves shorter trips than commuter rail and longer than modern streetcars. LRT:

- Is powered by overhead lines that supply electricity
- Often operates on its own dedicated right-of-way
- May also operate on a shared road with traffic

Modern Streetcars:

Modern streetcars generally serve passengers traveling short distances. Modern streetcars:

- Typically operate at street level
- Make frequent stops

Tucson's first modern streetcar is expected to be operating by FY 2011-2012.

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) is developing a new long-range transportation plan for eastern Pima County and the Tucson metropolitan area. PAG's 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) will be a 30-year plan that provides a framework for transportation investments in the PAG region by identifying projects that could potentially be developed with federal, state and local funding through 2040.



Commuter Rail



Light Rail



How do the different high-capacity transit options compare with each other?

Measure	SunTran Fixed-Route	Express Bus	BRT	Commuter Rail	Light Rail	Streetcar
Average Corridor Length	18.68 miles	18-34 miles	4-16 miles	30-98 miles	14-30 miles	5-9 miles
Station Spacing	¼ mile	2 blocks - 30 miles	.37 – 1.19 miles	3.3 – 10.3 miles	.7 – 1.3 miles	1 block – 0.15 mile
Average Daily Corridor Ridership	350 – 9,500	205 - 1,350	4,450 – 20,000	10,150 – 36,750	11,900 – 30,000	2,500 – 8,700
Capital Cost Per Mile	N/A*	N/A*	\$0.2M - \$31M	\$5M - \$28M	\$17M – \$73M	\$3.5M - \$30M
Operating Cost Per Passenger Mile	\$5.29	\$0.28 - \$8.93	\$0.56 - \$0.75	\$0.28 - \$1.24	\$0.24 - \$2.95	\$0.82 - \$8.97

Where are we now?

- There are a number of transit agencies providing a variety of transit services in the PAG region, such as neighborhood shuttles, paratransit (special needs) service, regular fixed-route and express bus services.
- There are around 20 million rides per year made on transit in the PAG region.
- Transit ridership over the past five years has experienced tremendous growth at a rate of over 27 percent.
- Thanks to voter approval of the RTA Plan in 2006, a number of transit improvements have been implemented and are planned for the next five years, including: increased frequencies and expanded weekday evening and weekend service of the Sun Tran system, new express routes, six new park-and-ride centers and the addition of a modern streetcar connecting the University of Arizona to downtown Tucson.

What transit improvements will be included in the 2040 RTP?

In the long term, the PAG region will need to continue to expand the transit system to provide transportation options for more than 800,000 new residents. With gas prices on the rise, a growing transit-dependent population and increased concern about environmental issues, we need to explore a variety of cost-effective and creative solutions. PAG is developing a High-Capacity Transit System Plan to determine how HCT may best be used in our region. Recommendations from the plan will be included in the 2040 RTP. As part of the 2040 RTP public involvement process, there will be two open houses for public comment on the High Capacity Transit Plan.

Intercity Rail Between Tucson and Phoenix

The state has received a federal grant to study the environmental impacts of a passenger high-speed rail system between Tucson and Phoenix. A recently completed High-Speed Rail Report assessed the impacts of passenger rail along the I-10 corridor and included cost estimates for implementation and operations. A larger Statewide Passenger Rail Framework Study will make recommendations for statewide rail passenger improvements. The framework study is anticipated to begin by the end of the 2008 calendar year. Results of the study and citizen input regarding the intercity rail will be taken into consideration for the state-wide project list as part of the 2040 RTP.

For more information on transit and high-capacity transit contact:

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How can you stay informed or get involved?

To stay informed and get involved in PAG's 2040 RTP and/or other PAG planning activities:

- Visit the PAG Web site at www.pagnet.org
- Add your name to PAG's 2040 RTP mailing list by calling PAG at (520) 792-1093
- Schedule a speaker for your next meeting