

Elevate SD 2020: National City Community Forum – Executive Summary

Date: Thursday, June 6, 2019
Location: South County Regional Education Center, National City
Attendees: 41

Overview:

In addition to presentations from MTS marketing and planning staff, attendees were asked to participate in two interactive elements: a values priority activity, and small group discussions. The following summarizes the feedback provided from those activities.

Top Values:

Participants were given five stickers, and asked to identify their top values that should help shape the future of transit. Below are the results:

1. Access to jobs/education (31)
2. Faster service (30)
3. Mobility solutions for senior and disabled citizens (23)
4. Low-cost fares (23)
5. Connect directly to more destinations (22)
6. Provide viable alternatives to a car (22)
7. More frequent service (21)
8. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions/improve environmental health (20)
9. Reduce traffic congestion (19)
10. Improve roads and highways to support transit (15)
11. Other:
 - Consider land value recapture
 - Affordable housing clusters
 - New CEO
 - Give buses cool names
 - Put beautiful cultural art in outside of bus and at stops

Round-Table Summaries:

Participants also broke up into small groups for a round-table discussions facilitated by MTS staff. They were asked to share what their transit priorities were, and what values/projects

were most important to their communities. The following themes emerged among the seven small groups:

- Increased capacity and faster service (including direct connections)
- Youth (including college students) and seniors were discussed as two target audiences, and how to best support access to transit for them (examples included free or reduced fares, passenger amenities, access to schools, etc.)
- More than half of the groups discussed access to jobs and/or education (including the Navy, which is a major employer in National City)
- Safety and security discussed in approximately half of the groups – both increased security and improved relations with riders

Top Three Takeaways:

At the conclusion of the round-tables, each group was asked to identify their ‘top three takeaways’ for MTS based on their group’s discussions (i.e. of everything discussed at the event, identify what the three most important priorities/ideas were). Below is a summary of those priorities.

- Increased frequency and service (4)
 - On bus and UC San Diego Blue Line
 - UC San Diego Blue Line
 - Higher capacity vehicles and frequency at peak times
 - Faster, more frequent service
- Accessibility/support for seniors (2)
- Clean vehicles – electric buses / reduce greenhouse gas emissions (2)
- More security presence (2)
- Improve amenities (2)
 - Public bathrooms, public art
- Pedestrian/cyclist consideration (2)
 - Pedestrian protection
 - More bikeways
- Deal better with cargo
- Needs to be practical
- Like the Bay Ferry Concept – good for Navy (but have questions re: how much capacity/how fast)
- Skyways
- Connect more directly to destinations
- Connect with jobs/schools
- Incentivize behavior and/or companies
- Better educate youth – they are the future transit riders

A full report of the small group discussions, and open comment is included below.

Round-Table 1
Express service
Crowded buses
Better organization of buses
Ambassadors to help with crowds
Affordability cost for all families
Time, frequency
All seniors should ride free (students too, i.e. Grossmont college students)
Electric buses/ferries
Shuttles for Navy
Incorporate pedestrian plans (important connections)
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Amenities (public bathrooms, more public art)
2. Pedestrian protection
3. Deal better with cargo
4. Needs to be practical
Round-Table 2
Hub in National City for access to passes (especially for seniors)
Passenger amenities - shelters & lighting
Access to grocery stores, schools, shopping, church, healthcare
Better last mile connections (mobility on demand, but also integrate w/ micro-mobility like FRED, bikes, scooters)
Bay Ferry - like it, economic development opportunity & for tourism; add IB as stop?
Increased frequency on the UCSD Blue Line - maximize where people are riding
HOV lanes on I-5 for transit - express to downtown
Longer cars between border and downtown
Job center connections - Navy and hospitals = major employers
Travel training for youth
Top 3 Takeaways:
1. Accessibility for seniors
2. Like Bay Ferry Concept, good for Navy (how much capacity?)
3. Increased frequency on bus service and UCSD Blue Line
Round-Table 3
We need faster and more frequent service
Sometimes it takes me close to 2 hours to go from Lemon Grove to National City
Costs need to be lower, we need cheaper fares
We need cleaner/electric vehicles - NC already has very polluted air, being enclosed by freeways, so need zero-emission vehicles
More security presence

TVMs don't always work (problem when can't afford to miss train, risk ticket) - need security at TVMs to assist when machines are down
Implement a rider etiquette/educational campaign (similar to Medellin's Cultural Metro)
We need immediate solution
Implement improvement in phases so that the community can start seeing benefits in the short terms
Increase number of vehicles in fleet to provide more frequent service
In some areas consider Express Service from A to B without stops
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Faster, more frequent service
2. Cleaner vehicles, electric bus
3. More security presence
Round-Table 4
Get to work on time - express lanes/buses/freeway dedicated lanes for bus
Extended hours on Trolley
Security vs. checking tickets
Reduced fares for seniors
More frequency
Consolidated operations (MTS/NCTD/contractors)
Scooters/bikes - mobility hubs
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Security/clean
2. Skyways
3. Better amenities
4. More bikeways
Round-Table 5
Fare discounting (transfer, youth, low-income, extra fare for airport transit)
Skyways especially (ferries too)
Low-frequency service in eastern areas
Affordable housing on transit lots
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Connecting directly to more destinations
2. More capacity & frequency at peak times (+ higher capacity vehicles)
3. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Round-Table 6
Buses don't go where I need to go
Flexible routes
Free rides for seniors 70+ and students/youth
Too many transfers, no direct South Bay to Kearny Mesa service

Trolley transfers a challenge
Sync traffic signals + roundabouts
Bus + car conflicts
Flexible lanes for peak flow
Bus real-times information
Last-mile
Restrooms
Wheelchair space on bus
Managed, shared HOV lanes only
(No Top Three Takeaways Specified)
Round-Table 7
Connection to jobs and schools
Effort to get more students on buses/see what bus service they use/need (Sweetwater Unified cut funds for transportation)
Connect students with routes; familiarity for younger students
Focus more on students - transporting college students
Elimination of Route 963 route to Granger Middle made no sense
Add Trolley cars to each set on the Blue Line
Company sponsored/military provide shuttles; Allow employers to receive tax credit if they do
Build more employment centers in the South Bay to accommodate population clusters
Create markets/stores on routes or transit centers so passengers can purchase item & MTS gets revenue so fares can be less
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Making connections with jobs/schools
2. Being accessible
3. Incentivizing behavior and/or companies
4. Better educating our youth - they are the future transit riders
5. Support seniors more

Open Comments
I, along with 300 people, are employed at 3666 Kearny Villa Rd. Every day at 4pm, I ride bus 44, to bus 60, to El Cajon Blvd, to catch Rapid 235 to downtown. A Rapid bus 120 would relieve us, and many, many, many more would commute rather than drive.
Accelerate transition to electric buses. Military must provide shuttle/bus service from military housing to bases. Reduce congestion on local roads. Mobility on demand for disabled/seniors without extra cost. Clean bus stops! Give prizes.
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Free vouchers for students to get to school/work. Company sponsored transit routes to major employment centers (provide tax incentives). Safety – kid watch program (paid/verified/certified escorts to accompany youth on public transit). Trolley-bus-bike-shuttle accessibility (make connections available). Mandated relief days like Mexico City. Build job centers to population clusters. Privately funded transit to increase efficiencies (ex Lebanon)
Security not checking tickets. A new CEO with vision.
Synchronize traffic signals. More roundabouts. Moveable lanes (like on the bridge). Bathrooms. Last mile vehicles. Fix the roads, add freeway lanes (5, 805)
Changing demographics (e.g. increased electric wheelchairs riders require additional - more than 2 - harnesses on buses). I am concerned that limiting input to "likely voters" does not serve this process. Please include bus drivers. Trolley drivers, and union members. Please put placards in buses and Trolleys, or at least at high visibility transit centers. Thank you for the chance to be heard!
Electric buses. Build shelters at stops - quality/dignified experience. Continuous rider-focused service improvements, and public policy - equitable access to quality transit. Seattle's Sound Transit - low-income housing development and LA Metro offers low-interest loans to low-income housing developers. Skyways!! Target underserved areas (East County, etc.), density, predicted ridership. Incentives to train youth + young adults (alter culture). All routes should automatically stop at all colleges/universities in county (Southwestern CC to CSU Sa n Marcos)
More frequent service in evenings. I wish the 929 would go back to City College Transit Station. Going that extra half mile or so allows those riders to transfer to a lot more lines. I think it is important that all our residents feel they are being treated fairly. Originally, we needed more transit in South Bay + Mid-City/downtown but now North County/Mira Mesa + UTC need more mass transit too. It's important because we are all in on this 0 this comment is generally directed more towards SANDAG and I don't drive to those locations so I really don't know what their demand is.
My priority is the security when people travel in the Trolley
Safety and security are #1 priority; there's too many incidents of violence and unlawful behaviors for all users of MTS system, especially youth and seniors. My mother (senior) uses MTS frequently and concern of her safety. Reduce greenhouse gas; better, healthier environment necessary for children and adults, especially those with asthma like myself.
Bus express I think is the most important. Example: National City to La Jolla. Less expensive.
Put efficient and educated drivers who greet and wait to pick up passengers (translated from Spanish)
Clean, frequent, affordable transit
Reduce greenhouse gases by investing in electric buses, the bay ferry (with Navy parking structures) and better pedestrian access. Please build a pedestrian bridge from the 24th Street Trolley Station over I-5 for residents & workers in the Harbor District of National City. Please remove the MTS-owned-derelict train tracks in the middle of Cleveland Ave in National City.
skyways; Rapid bus projects (translated from Spanish)

Transit is a lifestyle. Take this meeting for example. There is a bus within a 10 minute walk from my house with the 962, a straight path to this location! I want to attend but I also want to go for a run after, I chose my truck. I thought about this the whole way her. What I realized is that transit is more than the typical bullet points. Transit is a way of life that dictates your movements. That lack of control and uncertainty is, in my opinion, the challenge of converting an auto-centric urban culture into a transit based one. Could it be that our focus needs a slight adjustment? The transit needs to be a brand, It needs to be cool. Not a thing that you ride when you don't have a car. How do you stitch together a fractured work live urban situation? Is transit ridership a cultural issue rather than a planning issue? Skyway in PB - totally awesome! Ferry - yes (need to limit stops...needs to be express). In LA they have DASH - it costs \$0.35. Understanding that LA has a larger budget to accommodate this cost - can SD "Dart" be \$0.50? Dash routes are short cyclical routes but connect through transfer. Every community can have a "Dart." Facilities tied in with new Trolley projects? Amenities? Training for children through schools to promote a change in culture of transit ridership (school outreach). Times and frequency are important.