

Elevate SD 2020: City Heights Community Forum – Executive Summary

Date: Wednesday, July 24, 2019
Location: East African Community and Cultural Center
Attendees: 84

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. Low-cost fares (147)
 - Includes 121 no-cost youth-specific
2. Faster service (39)
3. More frequent service (30)
4. Provide viable alternatives to a car (30)
5. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions/improve environmental health (26)
6. Access to jobs/education (23)
7. Mobility solutions for senior and disabled citizens (19)
8. Other (16):
 - Youth opportunity passes (6)
 - More no/low-cost fares for all riders (2)
 - Airport Trolley/train/people mover
 - Address over-policing
 - Better onboard bus announcements at all Trolley Stations (human recorded voice)
 - Get the University & ECB plaza decks running
 - Santee: they cancelled all of Prospect Avenue side but not Santana, West Hills – our Prospect side has been stopped weekends event Mission Gorge to Fanita (2)
9. Reduce traffic congestion (16)
10. Connect directly to more destinations (9)
11. Improve roads and highways to support transit (9)



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 nine small groups:

- As evidenced by the values activity, low and/or no-cost fares was a top priority among the attendees. All nine round-table groups had low/no-cost fares as a top priority, with six groups prioritizing youth passes, two groups prioritizing income-based passes and one group who wanted low-cost fares in general.
- Adding frequency was a close second, with eight on the nine small groups listing it as a top priority.
- More than half of the groups (5) mentioned faster/more direct service in discussions, and five groups also discussed equity and prioritizing needs of communities currently using transit.
- Nearly half of the groups (4) discussed access to jobs as a value/focus; a desire for more safety and security on board; and prioritizing environmental health/benefits.

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.

- Low/no-cost fares (9):
 - Lower-cost fares (income-based)/No-cost youth passes
 - Low-cost fares
 - Youth opportunity passes
 - Income-based discounted fares
 - Low-cost passes for youth (emphasis on age instead of income)
 - Youth opportunity passes
 - No-cost/free for youth
 - Low-cost/no-cost fares (youth, including college students)
 - Youth opportunity passes, senior discounted passes
- Increase frequency (8)
 - More frequent service
 - More frequency/routes
 - Frequency increased
 - Frequency/faster/MTS efficiency
 - Greater level of bus around school bell times
 - More frequency, night/weekend service
 - Higher frequency
 - More frequency and better connections
- Amenities (2):
 - Amenities (benches/shelters/cleanliness)
 - Improved amenities (shelters, benches, more bike capacity)

- Equity (2):
 - Consider equity
 - Improve service where riders already are
- Alternative to a car
- Enhanced customer experience (wayfinding)
- Increase fixed rail – Purple Line!
- More direct connections
- More security in buses, Trolleys and stations

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

Round-Table 1
Faster service
Frequent service
Connect residents to jobs (hotels in Del Mar/Sorrento Valley)
No-cost youth passes (middle/high school students)
Better real-time information at rail stations
More announcements at stations for safety
Lower-cost fares (income-based discounts)
Focus on people without smartphones
Security at stops/comfort with loitering
More direct service
Improve service where riders already are
More mobility on demand for riders with special needs
Airport connection (people mover to Trolley station)
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Lower-cost fares (income-based)/No-cost youth passes
2. More frequent service
3. Improve service where riders already are
Round-Table 2
Alternatives to car
Access to jobs
Low-cost fares (people without cars; free youth)
Faster service
Frequent service
Mobility for disabled
Transit security/policing concerns
Park n Ride options
Community colleges
Proximity to transit stops
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Low-cost fares
2. Alternative to car
3. More frequency/routes
Round-Table 3
Values: GHGs (2), lower fares (4), bus frequency, electrify buses, more direct service in communities, youth (jobs, other comm, school, peer influence)
Mobility hubs (2) - good entry point for transit
Lower fares - no cost youth (2)
Purple Line

Bus-only lane connectors
Bus on shoulder
Sorrento Valley connections
Connecting to job centers
Make it cool!
Wifi
A system to make youth earn a pass - volunteer
High-speed grade separation
Wayfinding, numbering
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Youth opportunity passes
2. Enhanced customer experience (wayfinding)
3. Increased fixed rail - Purple Line!
Round-Table 4
Free transit service - income based subsidy/income based-fares
Monthly free ride days
All passes available for purchase on mobile app
More bike racks on buses and at transit centers, rail stations, bus stops
Frequency (2)
Span of service (2)
More direct connections (2)
More weekend service (2)
Dedicated bus lanes
Security
Lower-fares
Free rides for students
Easier to understand routes
First/last mile
More routes
Direct service from communities to beaches in summer
Smaller buses at night but more frequent
Cleaner buses
Quieter buses
Electric buses
Transfer at no cost
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Frequency increased
2. More direct connections

3. Income-based discounted fares

Round-Table 5

Consistent service/changes

Lower cost or no cost (student discounts) (2)

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Convenience for seniors

To know which buses are or are not

Frequency/faster service/MTS efficiency

Benches/shelters/cleanliness

Youth passes (emphasis on age instead of income)

Be fair to needs of everyone in the community

Special service/stops/fares for students/age

Safety

Clean spaces frequently for next riders

Top Three Takeaways:

1. Low-cost passes for youth (emphasis on age instead of income)

2. Frequency/faster service/MTS efficiency

3. Amenities (benches/shelters/cleanliness)

Round-Table 6

More transit service in East County

Youth opportunity passes to give them access to jobs/school/extracurriculars

More service to meet the demand

Greater level of bus around school bell times

Not interested in skyways

More service to the beaches

We need to consider equity

Top Three Takeaways:

1. Greater level of bus around school bell times

2. Youth Opportunity Passes

3. Consider equity

Round-Table 7

Low-cost and no-cost for youth

More routes connecting communities

More frequency

Transportation hubs (Miramar College)

Youth outreach to middle/high school

Late-night/weekend service

Access to jobs and education

Affordable housing in underused real estate
Transit not as a last resort but a viable choice
Last mile connections (transit hubs)
Frequency, nights/weekends, fuller service
Weekend service - 916/917 on Sundays
MTS impressions: Been improving in reliability/dependability, unsatisfactory frequency/speed, more info at stops, more seating
Prioritize our needs in our communities that will improve day-to-day life (vs big projects, awareness/education about routes that are expensive and lengthy)
Top Three Takeaways:
1. No cost/free for youth
2. More frequency, night/weekend service
Round-Table 8
Dependability with arrivals and departures
Support for limited mobility riders (benches/amenities, shade/shelter)
Invest in technology (fare)
Bus-only lanes
Increased frequency
Low-cost fares (youth opportunity passes) - encouraging youth ridership
Mobility hubs (first/last mile)
Smaller circulator routes
Prioritize service south of I-8
More direct connections: City Heights to...US-Mexico border, Kearny Mesa/Clairemont (jobs), beach communities
Electric buses
Improving roads (including bus lanes)
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Low-cost/no-cost fares (youth, including college students)
2. Higher frequency
3. Improved amenities (shelters, benches, more bike capacity)
Round-Table 9 (Translated from Spanish)
More frequency and better connections
Free for children 12 & under
More security in buses, Trolley and stations
Longer destination routes and faster (La Jolla to La Mesa, Rancho Bernardo to South County, El Cajon to Chula Vista)
More service on weekends
Late night service, at least to 1 or 2 a.m.
Automatic payment or prepaid card

Better infrastructure, pedestrian bridges
More shelters
Bathrooms at main stations
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Youth opportunity passes, senior discounted passes
2. More frequency and better connections
3. More security in buses, Trolley and stations

Open Comments
I would like to us youth get no-cost + youth opportunity bus passes. I also would like for MTS to prioritize what communities need more than just buildings like such as condos, housing, many more. Please give us the improvements that we need on the roads better transportation. Help the areas that need services on the weekend, help out with fixing late-night routes or Trolleys.
No-cost transit passes for youth, to address the transit needs of inner-city youth, and create life-long public transit riders.
1. I think we should have youth opportunity bus passes so our youth have the opportunity to get to school on time. After school activities. Also make the pass low cost.
2. The Purple Line Trolley. So far it is 42 years. It will be a great connector. 3. Buses and Trolley running on time. 4. On the SR-15 we need electric signs telling when the next bus is coming. 5. Plaza decks need to be up and running.
PLEASE prioritize free transit for youth (up to 24 years old)!!! PLEASE invest in increasing frequency & routes!!
NO-cost youth opportunity passes are a priority for City Heights specifically because a lot of youth in this community are bussed out to other high schools/rely on transit to get to work/school & being unable to afford these passes becomes a huge barrier in their path to success. City Heights is a transit dependent community so their needs should be prioritized over these expensive projects like gondolas. That would be appreciated, but not needed, by more affluent communities who don't ride transit as often. We also need more routes, more frequencies, & weekend service.
YOP! More frequency, more routes.
Youth Opportunity Passes at low cost or NO COST. More buses around school bell times. Expand more electric buses to cut carbon. More frequent buses from 20 mins to 10 mins. Expand to East County (due to no buses)
Ensure walkability
Addressing the toxic policing/harassment of patrons AKA decriminalizing the poor. Training MTS personnel to not be transphobic/homophobic. Youth opportunity pass.
NO COST bus passes for the youth -> youth opportunity passes. Extended hours. Specific stops and routes and time efficiency. Seniors.
More frequent routes; including weekends. Longer hours of service. Youth opportunity passes - free for youth/students, lower/discounted for everyone else. Electric buses.
Passes for students, free for high school children and also for minors (translated from Spanish)

I would like to see bus only lanes for the Rapid 215 & 235. Once they leave the transit hubs they end up getting stuck in traffic. I would like to see Youth Opportunity Passes for our youth. These are no-cost bus passes for youth. Specifically from ages 12 - 24 y/o. Lastly, we need more frequency in our City Heights neighborhoods. More frequency in our transit lines.
More frequency. Free youth passes. More direct connections.
Please focus on projects that will provide immediate relief to environmental justice communities/transit-dependent communities. Projects like enhanced service, increased frequency and lower fares. More large projects should also connect underserved communities to high paying job centers like Sorrento Valley and Kearny Mesa. Thank you!
We need no cost passes for youth!
I want to see more frequent service and low-cost youth passes. Also for more buses so people won't miss anything important. And lastly, more connecting routes. For example is you live in City Heights and need to get to Mission Gorge then you don't have to hurry.
I think MTS has an opportunity to make a real impact with youth opp. passes at no cost. You can help kids be able to attend school, lower drop out rates, less gang activity. This will effect the most people! You can truly make a difference!
Youth opportunity passes.
I would like to have youth passes free or very low cost. Make taking the bus "cool" campaign. It is our duty to ride bus - climate action. Build housing over the bus yard.
Youth Opportunity Passes! Focus on climate change impact. Converting choice riders - improving speed and frequency. Electrifying buses or just using rail instead! Subway = great option.
1. Connect to job centers - I wanted to sell my car and really only had two places I could live in all of San Diego and still be able to get to work (Sorrento Valley) - either downtown or Old Town. Blue Line extension should extend to Sorrento Valley. The various job centers in Sorrento Valley also need better connection to the COASTER and/or Blue Line. Two buses don't go everywhere and they didn't event service all the COASTERS that come to the station. 2. Transportation hubs simplify transit - reduce barrier to entry of learning the web of routes if they know they just need to get to the nearest hub. Fixed rail creates natural hubs. 3. Better connection to the beaches from downtown, especially weekends (no current buses to PB or OB on the weekend!) Ferry plan would help with this and make transit fun and interesting.
Below ground heavy rail for downtown and Mid-City. Priority at stoplights for Trolley and bus. Gondola Fashion Valley to North Park/Hillcrest. More fare boxes, more places to get Compass Cards. WAYFINDING is incomprehensible as it is today - major initiative is needed to help people find their way. Train bus drivers to kick our abusive riders. Improved bus stops - today many are unshaded, colonized by vagrants, have no wayfinding, have no way to know when the next bus is
Bus-only lanes/Rapid buses. Prioritize buses over S.O.V. Last mile solutions to transit: safe streets for bikes and scooters. Housing near transit. Congestion pricing to pat for above.
The most important is (illegible) bus, it needs to be free for our youth. Also, we need low-cost bus for (illegible) to have access for job and other needs.
1. Youth and senior access to bus passes. 2. Clean and safe bus/Trolley rides. 3. Program implemented and that they (illegible) more than 1 year. 4. Change of culture to ride the bus/Trolley start with youth. 5. Invest more than 1/8 of 1/2 cent on transportation. Need 1 cent.

More benches for disabled persons who cannot walk or stand for long periods of time. Also better structures to wait under when there are rainy days.

1. Better bus routes. 2. Benches at bus stops in City Heights. 3. I do feel for drivers they are just doing their jobs. 4. SD is behind time this is 21st century.

More frequent service on bus/Trolley. Better real-time display signs at Trolley stations. Arrival announcements for all Trolley lines (preferably human voice). Better voice announcements on buses (preferably recorded human voice). Highway Rapid buses with right-of-way lanes. Accommodations for riders who do not or cannot use the app. Call boxes at Trolley stations and certain Rapid bus stops. Airport train connecting Trolley to airport terminals.

More shade at bus stops. Who maintains bus stops? At Euclid at Landis - it's a mess. Seniors/disabled also need sidewalks that are not broken. Many broken sidewalks. Also see Euclid near Landis. Sometimes I have to get off the bus because somebody on the bus smells so bad. I love how often bus 7 runs. How about more direct routes to the beach with frequent weekend services? My senior mom rides the 7 and says they need new socks. She gets bruises because the ride is so bumpy. Mobility hubs and support facilities need bathrooms that are monitored.

1. No cost bus passes for youth - Youth Opportunity Passes. 2. Extended services. 3. Increased security at transit stations.

1. Low-cost/no-cost fares 2. Higher frequency

I would like to see bus fleet electrification as well as fare discounts. I also want to see less MTS officers. Free passes for youth up to 26 yrs.

In 2015-2016 I worked for an organization that provided no-cost bus passes to high school students. What I noticed was that youth in the program gained a great amount of value from it. Youth increased their mobility and used their passes more frequently for things that they originally did not think they would. A great majority used public transportation after they stopped receiving them.

Outreach in multi-languages that mirror the SD County Registrar of voter's office: Filipino, Vietnamese and Chinese. Create more opportunities for faster service by providing frequent pick-ups in densely populated neighborhoods to take riders to bus stops and/or Trolley stations.

MTS city bus 834 canceled all our side of Santee. Weekdays we've been totally cancelled out. Meaning all Prospect Avenue and housing off ETC, all our side. Plus won't even take us up Mission Gorge toward Fanita Dr stop on weekends! (We're cancelled on weekends even) on our whole side of Santee. Note: they take people home on Santana High School (weekdays and weekends 832 route). 5 family members dies - dad just died 5-6-19 so I have no way around (I live alone). It's totally wrong having to ride in the hot sun! I have seizures. Our west end of Prospect Avenue has a new neighborhood event (Camdon Drive area). Areas get bigger while route gets smaller in Santee ZIP 92071. I'm handicapped and work at one of those centers. Trolley goes to Gillespie that would only be good for citizens who live on Olive Lane or part of Atlas View. Part of east side too.