

Elevate SD 2020: Downtown San Diego Community Forum – Executive Summary

Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2019
Location: MTS Offices
Attendees: 14

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. Other (11)
 - Safety & security (6)
 - Did not specify (5)
2. Faster service (10)
3. Low-cost fares (9)
4. Connect directly to more destinations (8)
5. More frequent service (7)
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions/improve environmental health (7)
7. Provide viable alternatives to a car (6)
8. Mobility solutions for senior and disabled citizens (3)
9. Access to jobs/education (2)
10. Reduce traffic congestion (2)
11. Improve roads and highways to support transit (0)

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 three small groups:

- One key takeaway was a desire for faster, more direct service. All three groups discussed a system with fewer transfers and/or better connectivity, including two groups who listed it as a top takeaway.

- All three groups also discussed a desire for more frequency in the system, including at night and on weekends, and two groups had improved frequency as a top takeaway.
- Each group also mentioned integrating better technology and improving technology for the rider experience.
- Two of the three groups expressed a desire for more safety and security; and two of the three groups mentioned dedicated bus lanes.

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.

- More direct service (2)
 - Improved/faster service (less transfers, more direct)
 - More direct service/fewer transfers
- Expand bus and Trolley service (2):
 - Late-night, weekend, more frequency, special events/key destinations
 - Better connections/frequency on popular routes
- Low-cost fares
- Focus on existing service and make it better
- Help us improve air quality in downtown – benefit the environment
- Incorporate more technology/apps into riding experience

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

Round-Table 1
Connect directly - less transfers (think everyday destinations: doctor's, social service centers, Joan Kroc Center, etc.)
Before changes made - consider destination (tied to point above)
Faster trolley service - less stops/more express service
More frequent bus and Trolley service
More weekend service
Don't want to have to check schedules
South Bay to Clairemont connection (more direct/frequent service, especially weekends)
Low-cost fares across the board; work with companies to incentivize transit use
More mobility hubs in region
Improved real-time tech (2-3 people echoed)
Improved transfer times/coordinated schedules
Build out Rapid network
Dedicated bus lanes
More security (at night; at bus stops)
Top Three Takeaways:
1. Expanded service for bus and Trolley (late-night; weekend; more frequency; special events/key destinations)
2. Low-cost fares
3. Improved/faster service (less transfers, more direct)
Round-Table 2
Downtown security prevents more people from riding
Frequency - Green Line only 30 minutes at night - major inconvenience
Privatized system - MTS not looking after passenger
Bad connections system-wide
Values are all inter-connected
Connected service very important
Connectivity is key
Security is key - not-family friendly
Grade separation on Blue Line is big
No skyways in PB (tough to get community behind, time issue, Sorrento- maybe)
Dedicated bus lanes - do it. Important to viable option to car
Get better at what you have - think of the basic
Next arrival signs not accurate - need better technology
Better communication with passengers
OBA not good on Trolleys
Signal prioritization - too much traffic for buses and Trolleys on Blue Line
Third track on Blue Line
Mobility hub - San Ysidro

Top Three Takeaways:
1. Security
2. Focus on existing service and make it better
3. Better connections/frequency on popular routes
Round-Table 3
Plenty of Trolley, but reduced bus service (Route 11)
More bus service
Should be more direct service (North to South, ex: Cortez Hill to Convention Center takes two transfers)
Better on-time performance
Improve downtown air quality (benefit the environment/reduce GHGs)
From the ground up MTS app for next-time arrivals
Make the Silver Line a regular service downtown loop
Streamlined fares
Top Three Takeaways:
1. More direct service/fewer transfers
2. Help us improve air quality downtown - benefit the environment
3. Incorporate more technology/apps into riding experience

Open Comments
More youth involvement. Change the car culture early. Seems like an easy way to address increased ridership.
Dedicated bus lanes (El Cajon Blvd., University Avenue, Broadway, Grand Avenue). Increased frequency. Grade separations (H Street, E Street, Palm Avenue, Palomar Street, 8th Street, Taylor Street and Friars Road especially). Long-term plans for subterranean sections in downtown and new routes through Kearny mesa and Mid-City. Relocation of San Ysidro Station and realignment of tracks behind coach service area.
Great session! Youth outreach is critical. School districts are cutting funding for transportation - immediate need. Gamification, tech that engages them. The environment is a major interest to them as well.
Provide better rider info, especially for new riders. When I arrived in SD last year and got a monthly pass, no info was provided by MTS about establishing auto pay monthly pass fare. NCTD seems to do a far better job of this. I've learned much about riding MTS by actually reading NCTD's site.
Seeing that the objective of ElevateSD2020 is to get a measure on the ballot, I think we need to elevate the importance of transit to the broader community! My personal priority (low fares, faster service) seems irrelevant in one sense. What's going to get a 2/3s yes vote? What about more coordination with the COASTER? The COASTER could increase its frequency.
Timely accurate real-time status of arrival is so important. It's been my experience and was a big topic at tonight's meeting. Re: low-cost fares. Qualifying for senior pass was a night vs day change in my attitude: I ride more than twice as much based on fares alone.
Please bring back Route 11 to Market Street, Tenth avenue and Imperial Transit Center.