



PINAL COUNTY TRANSIT FEASIBILITY STUDY
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW

June 2009



Prepared by:

Nelson|Nygaard
consulting associates

In Association with:

JACOBS



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROCESS 1

OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW RESULTS 2

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being greatest,
how would you rate the importance of transit for the County today? 2

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest,
how would you rate the importance of transit as the County grows? 3

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest,
how effective do you feel the County’s current transit services are? 3

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths and weaknesses in
current transit systems in your community and elsewhere in Pinal County? 3

5. How do you think that improved transit systems might benefit your community? 4

6. What do you think are the most important transit issues that need
to be addressed in the short-term? 4

7. What do you think are the most important transit issues
that will need to be addressed as the County grows? 4

8. Are there specific transit services that you believe
should be implemented or considered? 4

9. What has worked well in the past and/or what could be done
to improve how government deals with County and local transit needs? 5

10. What do you think will be the best way of including
County residents in this study process? 5

11. Please identify the major employers/business leaders from your community
that you recommend we include in the Stakeholder outreach. 5

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS A-1

APPENDIX B: DETAILED COMMENTS B-1



Pinal County Transit Feasibility Study Stakeholder Interview Report

INTRODUCTION

Over the next 20 years, Pinal County is expected to grow from 326,000 residents to as many as 1.1 million residents by 2025. This anticipated growth is expected to place significant new demands on the County's transportation systems and create greater need for effective and efficient transit services and programs. The Pinal County Transit Feasibility Study is intended to determine the need and feasibility of transit in the short-term and as the County grows.

One of the first steps in the study was to conduct a series of stakeholder interviews to determine transit opportunities, issues, challenges and perceptions. Information gleaned from these stakeholder interviews is intended to identify issues that will need to be addressed in the subsequent analysis in the study.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROCESS

Stakeholders were selected based on their representation of an important stakeholder group, particularly with respect to growth and transportation. The interviews, conducted with approximately 50 individuals who represented 21 organizations, consisted of a series of open-ended questions that explored interviewees' perceptions of area transit, transit opportunities, issues, and challenges in terms of:

- Stakeholder Interest in Transit,
- Transit Issues and Challenges,
- Most Effective Services,
- Least Effective Services,
- Recommended New Services or Improvements, and
- Service Evaluation Considerations.

Specific questions/topics included:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit for the County today?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit as the County grows?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how effective do you feel the County's current transit services are?
4. What do you think are the greatest strength and weakness in current transit systems in your community and elsewhere in Pinal County?
5. How do you think that improved transit system might benefit your community?
6. What do you think are the most important transit issues that need to be addressed in the short-term?



7. What do you think are the most important transit issues that will need to be addressed as the County grows?
8. Are there specific transit services that you believe should be implemented or considered?
9. What has worked well in the past and/or what could be done to improve how government deals with county and local transit needs?
10. What do you think will be the best way of including county residents in this study process?
11. Please identify the major employers/business leaders from your community that you recommend we include in the stakeholder outreach.

Because interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, any reference to the interviewee or their association is removed from the following analysis. Comments and opinions are often paraphrased to preserve the interviewee's message while maintaining confidentiality. In the detailed interview results presented in Appendix C and in theme identification, these paraphrased comments may represent one or multiple comments of the same theme and are included as if in the first person voice (I, we, our). Additionally, it is best to keep in mind that comments are based on interviewees' perceptions and while there were definitive themes that emerged during the interviews, there are also occasions where opposing opinions are evident. The following section summarizes the interview results.

OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW RESULTS

Unsurprisingly, a variety of opinions and perceptions exist amongst those interviewed. By the same token, there were a number of thematic clusters that emerged. These clusters, particularly those focused on services and routes, will be an important component of the study process as they are further explored.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit for the County today?

The majority of stakeholders believe that transit is very important today, but that it is virtually nonexistent across the County and in key population nodes. Lack of funding is considered to be the primary impediment to viable transit programs and options, in almost every case.

Stakeholders commented on the lack of connectivity and the need for links to and from major centers and cities. Top needs mentioned included seniors' medical transport, transit-dependent populations and job transit. There is currently a lack of services, but a real need for populations to get around.

Mass transit is seen as critical to economic growth.

Some current programs are functioning, and, with funding, could act as models for other County areas. These include vanpool programs, Cotton Express in Coolidge and Pinal County Rides.

There also is a perceived need for transportation for shopping and entertainment.



2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit as the County grows?

Nearly all of the stakeholders interviewed rate the importance of transit as the County grows as very high. Residents will need to get around for employment, education, medical appointments, shopping, and entertainment. The County will also need to move from its present auto-centric lifestyle.

Need exists for three types of transit: (1) Local service within the County's communities, (2) Better connections within the County, and (3) Commuter service into the Valley and Tucson.

Sun Corridor growth and rail options are also seen as important to meet growing transit needs and requirements. The western areas of the County have grown while the County's eastern regions have seen little growth. Studies see growth and the economy bottoming out from 2009 to 2010 and getting back to a high in 2015 to 2020.

Hunt Highway and Ellsworth also are challenges for future consideration. In addition, the potential of extending and expanding Valley Metro needs to be considered. Funding is seen as a problem for further transit expansion. Need exists to improve existing services before considering new services.

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how effective do you feel the County's current transit services are?

Current transit services in the County received a very low rating, mainly due to the lack of services and options. Selected services, such as Maricopa Xpress, Pinal Rides, and Coolidge's Cotton Express were viewed as successful. However, most other programs are only for seniors and persons with disabilities. Lack of transit is a frequent complaint of students and employees at CAC.

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths and weaknesses in current transit systems in your community and elsewhere in Pinal County?

Strengths:

There is a broad belief among stakeholders that something needs to be done to provide better transit options. Also, the County and cities do have many people who are interested in listening and working on the issue. Cotton Express, Maricopa Xpress, and the County's vanpool program are among programs that can be used as models for other communities. In some areas rail lines exist that could potentially be used for service. A common view is that a basic system infrastructure exists and that services should be built upon this infrastructure.

Weaknesses:

There is no unified vision for the County, and funding is a big challenge. In addition, existing services are not coordinated and have different fares. Long distances also impede the creation of transit options and opportunities.

Populations also are not aware of the transit services that do exist. Some stakeholders asked that a countywide database of services be created to help key populations know what services are currently being provided or planned. Currently, many people leave their community or the County to work and there are large gaps in existing transit programs.



5. How do you think that improved transit systems might benefit your community?

Quality of life could be improved through the provision of better transit connectivity within the county and to and from the Phoenix and Tucson areas. Transit can also help to drive economic development.

Also, transit could contribute to cleaner air and a better environment, money savings on fuel, a reduction of “leakage” of tax dollars outside the County, and fewer cars. Needs of single parent households also would be better met.

6. What do you think are the most important transit issues that need to be addressed in the short-term?

The most important needs were viewed as:

- The provision of transit service at a reasonable price and cost.
- Identification of funding for transit.

Overall, the County needs a vision to better care for and expand existing services (and roads). Also, issues of governance and sustainability need to be addressed.

7. What do you think are the most important transit issues that will need to be addressed as the County grows?

The primary need for the future is to develop better connectivity within and without the County. A regional, unified vision and system are required. Stakeholders see a long-term goal of bringing people to the County to live, work and shop. Externally, the County needs and will require intercommunity transit and transportation options to and from Phoenix and Tucson.

To date, County and local governments have largely played a passive role. The question for the future is whether that model has changed.

New, strong, well-populated centers need to be created within the County. These centers must be linked to centers outside of the County. Sustainability of transit systems is critical to growth. Funding is currently a significant problem and will increase in importance as the County progresses.

8. Are there specific transit services that you believe should be implemented or considered?

Broadly speaking, stakeholders share the view that developing connections within and outside the County are a priority. Particularly, regional services are required. Specific desires included:

- Service between Pinal County activity centers.
- Links to Phoenix and Tucson (including the extension of Valley Metro routes to Pinal County).
- Better rideshare options.
- The use of existing rail lines.
- Amtrak service.
- A mix of vehicles for different types of trips.
- Bikeways, sidewalks, and paths.



- Reduction of solid walls between subdivisions (for access to transit and to encourage walking and bicycling).

9. What has worked well in the past and/or what could be done to improve how government deals with County and local transit needs?

Three programs and services were highlighted as effective models:

- Pinal Rides
- Cotton Express
- Maricopa Xpress

Relationships, collaboration, and cooperation within the County and between the County and other governmental entities have also been very good. This is viewed as a considerable strength that will facilitate the development of regional improvements.

Many stakeholders also noted the importance of implementing programs in line with growth—to avoid falling behind but also don't get too far ahead.

10. What do you think will be the best way of including County residents in this study process?

There is a keen desire on the part of Stakeholders to include resident input in this study. Among ideas raised include: Council presentations, public meetings/open houses, informal public social events and activities, the development of a web site, newsletters/brochures, mailings, presentations to organizations such as homeowners associations, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and churches.

11. Please identify the major employers/business leaders from your community that you recommend we include in the Stakeholder outreach.

See Appendix B for a complete list.



Appendix A: Stakeholder Interviewees

Agency	Title	Last Name	First Name
Ak-Chin Indian Community	Planning Director	Owen	Jerry
Arizona State Prisons- Eyamn	Van Pool Coordinator	Davis	Kristina
Arizona State Prisons- Eyamn	Shop Supervisor	Rodriquez	Pete
CAAG	Executive Director	Brown	Maxine
CAAG	Consultant Planning Director	Tomasik	Jack
Central Arizona College	VP-Institutional Effectiveness & Advancement	Shaw (Dr.)	Susan
City of Apache Junction	City Manager	Hoffman	George
City of Apache Junction	Public Works Director	Fern	David
City of Apache Junction	Grants Coordinator	Hacker	Roger
City of Casa Grande	Councilman	Powell	Dick
City of Casa Grande	Councilman	Miller	Stephen
City of Coolidge	Council Member	Rotz-Lopez	Judy
City of Coolidge	Mayor	Shope	Tom
City of Coolidge	Council Member	Lister	Richard
City of Eloy	City Manager	Blanton	Joe
City of Eloy	Planner	Cota	Belinda
City of Maricopa	Transit Coordinator/Planner	Kelley	Kellee
City of Maricopa	Councilman	Farrell	Edward
Corrections Corporation of America (CCA)	Human Resource Manager	De la Cruz	Lois
East Valley Senior Services	Executive Director	Taylor	Daniel
Gila River Indian Community	Community Manager	White	David
Pinal County	Board of Supervisors - Dist. 1	Rios	Pete
Pinal County	Board of Supervisors - Dist. 2	Martyn	Bryan
Pinal County	Board of Supervisors - Dist. 3	Snider	David
Pinal County	County Manager	Doolittle	Terry
Pinal County	Assistant County Manager	Buchanan	Ken
Pinal County	Director, Air Quality	Gabrielson	Don
Pinal County	Director, Planning & Development	Stabley	Jerry
Pinal County	Director & County Engineer	Stanley	Greg
Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens	President/CEO	Guerrero	Olivia
Pinal Rides	Mobility Manager	Engan	Jan
San Carlos Apache Tribe	Transit Manager	Stevens	Andre
Town of Florence	Mayor	Kilvinger	Vicki
Town of Florence	Planner	Thompson	Mark
Town of Florence	Public Works Director/Engineer	Costa	Wayne
Town of Florence	Planning Director	Eckhoff	Mark
Town of Florence	Town Manager	Patel	Himahsu
Town of Florence	Assistant to Town Manager	Knudson	Jess
Town of Florence	Economic Development Coordinator	Powell	Scott
Town of Kearny	Town Manager	Eide	Gary



Town of Kearny	Clerk	Gaston	Margaret
Town of Kearny	Council Member	Stephenson	Sheila
Town of Mammoth	Public Works Director	Ponce	Juan
Town of Mammoth	Town Clerk	Sanchez	Rachelle
Town of Queen Creek	Mayor	Sanders	Art
Town of Queen Creek	Town Manager	Kross	John
Town of Superior	Public Works Supervisor	Brothers	Rebecca
Town of Superior	Mayor	Hing	Michael



Appendix B: Detailed Comments

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit for the County today?

- 1. Mass transit is nonexistent. Using soft/charitable money currently.
- 5, we need connectivity.
- 2, 3 relative to other needs.
- 3 to 4. New Maricopa Xpress service shows there is a need, but current focus is on autos.
- 5? Certainly is important. We have multiple providers in county. Service or employees is limited to vanpools and Pinal County Rides program.
- 4. We need transit.
- 1. Mass transit is nonexistent.
- Queen Creek did a transportation study.
- Need connectivity. That is the role of the county... regional planning.
- Need to plan for through traffic, i.e. EPA issues.
- No funding for MAG commuter options.
- 5. Very important today.
- Provides better educational, training and employment opportunities.
- 5. It is one of the biggest issues facing the county.
- Demand for transit at CAC increased when gas prices increased.
- 4,4. Transit's importance today is very high.
- 5. There is a need to think long-term, inside and out. Seniors' medical transportation needs are not being met. Transit also will drive the economy.
- The County is spread out, job centers are scattered.
- Creation of job centers and links is very important.
- State needs to use land to create job centers.
- About 5. Transit is currently a void from communities to both Maricopa and Pinal counties.
- Need services for trips to work, entertainment and medical purposes.
- 3.5. There is currently a lack of services, but a need to get around.
- There is a need for transportation for medical appointments and shopping.
- 5. But less important than public safety and education.
- 3 to 4 in terms of today's need, but planning and development are extremely important.
- Transit will become more important as the economy worsens.
- Planning for future is very important. We need to know how practical or affordable transit could be.
- Casa Grande has developed a draft plan for a 3-bus system, plus one spare bus.
- We will likely request state funding.
- If you implement transit too early could be backlash that could make it harder to implement later.
- Right now there are many requests for transit.
- 3 or 4. Several vans are currently operating in the community, purchased and operated with tribal funds. This is because there is a need for transport of the elderly and disabled. We have a concern about connectivity between the Indian community and the rest of the region.
- 5. Transit is important because many residents are dependent on taxis and bus service to access the renal care center and other medical services. 3 to 4, closer to 3. Transit is important, but is there demand for it to be sustainable?



2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how would you rate the importance of transit as the County grows?

- 5. Infrastructure's goal must be sustainability.
- Need to bring people to amenities and services.
- Need to move from our auto-centric lifestyle.
- Need to determine efficient and effective means to move people around, i.e. bus, walking, bicycle, etc.
- 5, residents need to be able to get to Casa Grande and Eloy.
- 4 to 5, especially in terms of reserving r-o-w that may be needed in the future, especially beyond 20 years. Transit will also become more important as the population increases.
- 5. A successful future for the county is with transit-oriented development.
- 5, maybe 6! There will need to be better connections, and service to airport, as well as local circulators.
- Longer term there could be a need for commuter rail and LRT.
- Florence has more jobs than residents.
- 5. People want to move. Western county has grown quickly while the Eastern County has seen slow growth.
- We don't have resources.
- Hunt Hwy needs to be expanded.
- We need population centers and to link them.
- We're still dependent on cars.
- We need developed areas. We need to reduce the number of cars in use.
- Need work clusters.
- Sun Corridor growth and rail options need to be considered.
- Must think outside the box.
- 5.
- 75,000 people live in northern Pinal County and travel north causing challenges.
- Hunt Hwy and Ellsworth Road are challenges.
- Need funding.
- 5. Transit will become even more important as the county grows.
- 5. Need two types of transit: 1. Local service within the county and 2. Commuter service to the Valley.
- Southern part of county is more spread out and challenging.
- There are 20 to 30 cars parked on SR79 near San Manuel. Obviously there is carpooling going on.
- Eastern part of the county is also challenging.
- Many residents work and live in Tucson during the week, and are at home only on weekends.
- 5,5. Transit will become even more important as the county grows.
- Transit is an important contributor to lifestyle and development/progress.
- Need more links between population centers.
- Current attempts at transit have not worked.
- County and impacted parties should see land plans.
- An ASU study has gas prices going back up to \$4 a gallon.
- Studies see economy bottoming out 2009 to 2010 and getting back to a high in 2015 to 2020.
- There are many foreclosures in the county. More are expected.
- We should interview developers.
- We see shift in ownership coming due to the economy.
- Jobs are being lost on a regular basis. New jobs are not being added. Per Jack Marshall's projections more will be lost.



- 5. There is significant need to help people get around.
- Transportation drives development.
- People leave our community to shop elsewhere.
- Apache Junction has two populations, year-round about 37,000 and with winter visitors that grows to about 80,000.
- Winter brings many volunteers who bring benefit to residents and visitors alike.
- There are not a lot of transit programs and options to meet existing needs.
- There is potential to do more with vanpools.
- There will be increased demand when economy comes back.
- 5. Community has been approached by MAG to expand rail study to Tempe South Corridor and Chandler. Also looking to consider expansion to Pinal County.
- Also looking to expand bus services.
- Need connections between park and ride facilities and LRT.
- There is zero transit in community. Finally attempting to change that.
- Are currently conducting SATS to look at circulation within Community. (Being conducted by Olson and Associates.
- Council has created Transportation Team that is initially focused on widening I-10.
- Would be interested in regional solutions and connections.
- Also plan to examine extensions of Valley Metro service to Community.
- 4. As the community grows, demand will also grow. Demand within the city should also grow.
- 4. Coolidge is a growth area and as area densifies, transit will become more important.
- Aging also increases transit needs.
- Look at new 2020 Casa Grande General Plan that designates 5-6 areas that are slated for concentrated mix-use development. Transit will be most appropriate to/from those areas.
- 5. A large majority of Mammoth's population, approximately 60%, is elderly and their transportation needs continue to grow as they age.
- 80% of Mammoth residents live in poverty so they could benefit from improved transit services.
- 5, especially among transit dependent populations in rural areas.

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the greatest, how effective do you feel the county's current transit services are?

- 2, FTA Section 5310 programs mostly on eastern side of the county. Not much circulation within the county.
- Need to provide better service to Maricopa seniors.
- 1 to 2, especially if services for elderly and disabled are not included.
- 1. Current services are very patchwork and sporadic. There has never been a regional approach.
- 2, but how much demand is there for service?
- Many are not aware of programs.
- Senior program is well received.
- Not much apparent demand for transit services.
- 3. Need some mode to Tucson.
- Seniors need transit for healthcare.
- San Carlos Tribe plans casino in Dudleyville.
- State Route 77 is seeing development on private land.
- San Manuel has planned to draw people.
- We have some involvement with CAG.
- 1. Current system is almost nonexistent.



- Lack of transit is frequent complaint of students and employees.
- 2. Transit is almost totally ineffective at present.
- Transit options are too expensive.
- RideChoice is working. Rate paid is 44 cents per mile. Van fee is \$8.80 per rider.
- Person who needs the ride gets the driver. It's working and could be a model for other communities.
- A coupon program is no longer. Seniors at 60 and older could use the program.
- East Valley Service Center receives a City of Apache Junction grant of \$33,000 to run the program from its facilities. Legal issues could/should be discussed.
- Veterans are an important population whose needs are not all being met.
- Discount Cab comes to Apache Junction. It is the only cab company to service the city.
- They could be better, although improvements continue to be made.
- Greatest needs are for disadvantaged.
- Costs for private services are too expensive for those caught in the middle.
- Volunteer driver program could be good idea, also look at graduated fee structure.
- 0. Service is nonexistent.
- 1 would be generous. There is a general lack of transit, and Pinal Rides is limited to elderly and disabled residents.
- 1.5 to 2. Existing services are good, but not as good as regional system would be.
- Even Cotton Express could be more effective and marketed better. Many people don't even know about it.
- Not aware of what exists.
- 0. The current transit services, where they do exist, are not coordinated in any fashion.
- 3. Current transit services do not meet existing needs; there are not enough.
 - Coordination of transit services and communication among the transit providers needs to be improved.
 - Many residents need some form of transportation and there are limited services in Mammoth.
 - Many residents travel to Tucson to shop and access medical services.
- 2, very costly now and limited. However, there are niche services that are better, such as Coolidge's Cotton Express.

4. What do you think are the greatest strengths and weaknesses in current transit systems in your community and elsewhere in Pinal County?

Strengths

- Recognize something needs to be done.
- Numerous models across county that can be shared amongst cities.
- Growing recognition of Pinal County by Phoenix and Tucson.
- What exists provides needed services.
- Cotton Express, Maricopa Xpress, and County vanpool program.
- Cotton Express, but expensive?
- Some senior services are very good, but serve small clientele
- There is an open slate to work with.
- Vanpool service is excellent.
- We have the ability to start from scratch.
- We have a population base.
- We have rail lines.
- Starter transit system for everyone.
- Not many.
- What transit?
- The county and cities both have people who are open to listening and to working with



people.

- Partnerships are working.
- Senior Center outreach makes a difference in people's lives.
- There are good/great programs in action. Some could be cloned.
- Some programs do exist. The little programs are a start. Build on what exists.
- Lots of opportunities for improvement.
- Various services for elderly and disabled.
- There is an existing infrastructure.
- There are no large impediments to improvements.
- A basic system is in place that could be expended.
- Cotton Express... provides good service and is a source of pride.
- People who run Cotton Express are very dedicated and very good.
- Ak-Chin does have a van program.
- At one time, Mammoth operated a bus service for the elderly and Public Works was responsible for providing maintenance for the vans.
- Local governments, organizations, and volunteers have responded to most important needs.

Weaknesses

- Funding.
- No unified vision.
- Existing services are uncoordinated and have different fares.
- Service is very limited.
- County declined to participate in Maricopa County vanpool program, due to cost.
- Lack of transit in many places, due to lack of critical mass of people and development.
- No dedicated funding for transit.
- Transit is non-existent in the mountains.
- Not much transit is offered.
- Not much information available.
- Not enough transportation in the county.
- Not much transit.
- Transit funding is almost totally lacking at present.
- Needs are not being met.
- Distance plays a role. Needs are just so great between population centers, large and small.
- Some offerings are pretty limited.
- Need connectivity/links to population/employment centers.
- Could we arrange a county database of programs being used in cities/towns in the county, so programs could be centralized?
- Many people who live here go elsewhere to work.
- There are large gaps in existing services.
- People are not aware of transit options and many needs for services are not being met.
- Services are very limited.
- Available services are not well known and not well publicized.
- Lack of funding.
- Services that exist are not well publicized.
- There are currently no connections to any other transit systems.
- Communication is lacking on existing transit services.
- Coordination of services needs to be improved.
- Lack of demand to support transit (Coolidge – Eloy – Casa Grande – CAC was originally every 15 minutes, but failed because of lack of demand.)



5. How do you think that improved transit system might benefit your community?

- Pinal County is identifying systems and vision for transit as it grows up.
- Maricopa is currently a bedroom community (70% commute to Maricopa County). Goal is to attract businesses and become more balanced.
- Transit would/could provide better connectivity to areas of Phoenix.
- It would also serve demand to Casa Grande, which has increased since the mall opened.
- In the long-term people will become more concerned with lifestyle. New residents will focus more on quality of life and options, and transit will be an important component of that.
- Transit will also be important and provide structure for economic development.
- It would provide another alternative for mobility. Serve an aging population.
- Could provide the county more identification as a region.
- Needed for economic future – connections to Tucson and Phoenix will be essential.
- Transit could be more effective than bigger highways.
- A second phase of Valley Metro LRT could be to Chandler, and a possible third phase could be to Pinal County.
- Would provide more options.
- Could reduce traffic.
- Local transit could reduce “leakage” of tax revenue to adjoining communities.
- Would provide access to jobs.
- Could be valuable connector to various areas.
- Cleaner air and environment.
- EPA issues raised.
- Save money, fuel.
- Better healthcare.
- Students mean better schools.
- Rail line is important.
- Reduce number of cars on the road.
- Better air and environmental quality.
- Help with EPA and ozone levels.
- Unemployment is very high on reservation.
- Many reservation residents don’t have transportation.
- Would make it easier to get around, to centers.
- Mobility to healthcare activities would benefit residents.
- Transit dependent populations will enjoy better lifestyles.
- Pinal and Maricopa Counties will see benefits, as well as other counties/cities.
- People will be able to work where they live.
- Public schools are thought to be not as good here. That could change.
- We need more regional links between counties, and within Pinal County.
- Transit is a development tool and will make a big difference.
- Local and countywide growth and progress could almost totally depend on transit.
- County and city need to think long-term.
- We require other services in addition to transit.
- Livability. Bring people here to work, live and shop.
- Retirees, elderly and disabled need transportation to essential services.
- Needs of households being run by single parents are not being met.
- Fill transportation need to employment, schools, entertainment and medical facilities.
- Choice of travel from the Community between Maricopa County and Casa Grande depends on which is closest.
- Provide the means to get basic services that are not available. Medical, pharmacy, etc.



- Provide better service to shopping and other critical needs.
- Provide connections/links to other areas for medical and shopping.
- Would improve quality of life.
- It would slow down phone calls and emails requesting transit service!
- It would be more cost-effective than taxi service. It would provide better quality of life and there would be less dependence on family members due to providing another form of mobility.
- Transit could create growth and employment opportunities.
- Transit could provide greater access to a broader range of medical services and shopping for residents.
- Reduce congestion.
- Provide people with the ability to get around.

6. What do you think are the most important transit issues that need to be addressed in the short-term?

- Sharing the vision, establishing the model process and obtaining the resources.
- County circulators to improve connections.
- Better services for seniors.
- To identify transit nodes and preserve rights-of-way.
- Develop park and ride lots and express bus routes. Potential routes could be from San Tan and Casa Grande, similar to Maricopa Xpress.
- Queen Creek had route to Tempe, but it didn't work. Maricopa and Queen Creek provide lessons learned, good and bad.
- Need funding to support continuation of existing services. It's critical to maintain what exists.
- Need to address aging of baby boomers and to provide services for lower income residents.
- Look at partnerships with neighbors.
- We don't have modes of transit.
- Need funding to widen and pave road system.
- We need point-to-point study to see if we can expand Valley Metro/Light Rail.
- Need a coordinated fixed route system throughout the county and reservation.
- Two major issues: Intercommunity transit and Transit to Phoenix and Tucson. High cost of commutes likely contributes to foreclosures.
- The disadvantaged and the elderly have very few services and options. Options are being eliminated, not growing.
- Transit options need to be developed for other demographic populations, not just the elderly and disadvantaged.
- Governance is at the top of the list. We must better maintain what we have.
- We need to ask how we can help the general population through better transit.
- Can we use the best practices others are using such as Cobra Valley, MAG, other cities/towns, etc?
- Can we receive County funding for some of these services?
- Make service available at a reasonable cost for people without other alternatives.
- Short-term needs are the planning that is now going on.
- Need to determine appropriate governance: Circulator routes could be locally operated. Regional routes could be part of regional system.
- Funding!
- Develop partnerships with other communities.
- The cost of service and who pays for it.
- Create a cohesive countywide system.



- Local community systems need to be connected. Maricopa and Ak-Chin need a circulator for those who do not currently qualify due to senior age or disability.
- Short-term needs are to improve transportation for the sick and elderly.
- Many residents live in poverty due to closure of the mines and they could benefit from transit services.
- Even in a poor economy, retirees are buying homes in Mammoth since they are affordable.
- Continued LTAF II funding.

7. What do you think are the most important transit issues that will need to be addressed as the County grows?

- Hope to refine our vision. Develop advocacy. Maximize resources and emergency options.
- Better circulation throughout the county.
- Need to develop bus stops, especially on main roads.
- Get officials together for coordination to develop unified system.
- Government model to date is to be a passive observer, to provide some expertise. That may not change.
- Regional leadership is bringing people together. May be more proactive.
- County may not want to be in the transportation business.
- Same as 6, plus better service to youth and elderly.
- Need to plan for transit and foster transit-oriented development.
- Also need dedicated funding.
- An important issue is that there are few viable downtowns. New activity centers need to become downtowns, and county needs to start building cities.
- Mid-term the county will likely become a non-attainment area, and it may be necessary to use transit to reduce auto travel.
- Increasing fuel costs will increase demand for transit.
- Need development clusters.
- Need to take land-use planning into account. Don't remove any options from the table.
- Are issues with long-term and newer residents?
- Need to upgrade transit technology, GPS, dispatch systems, coordination.
- Must establish links between counties and within Pinal County.
- Planning and particularly execution and building should be phased in by steps, not done all at once.
- We need options now, not only as the county grows.
- Land use planning needs to include long-term issues/needs. We're not looking far enough into the future.
- Sustainability must have an important role in planning for the future.
- Same as short-term, but on a grander scale.
- Possibly commuter services.
- More vanpool services are needed.
- We want to be included in planning to ensure access to the system.
- Expansion of transit to match the growth that will occur.
- Cooperation between communities.
- Funding.
- If possible, provide connections to Phoenix and Tucson.
- Figure out how to "put toe in water" and then expand incrementally.
- Connections between the cities, towns and communities and also mobility to the job centers. This includes traveling across county lines, such as to Maricopa and Pima County.



- Transit services should keep pace with growth.
- Mammoth recently annexed a large section of land near Highway 77 in the Oracle area.
- The planned area development (Cielo) consists of 5,000 new homes with commercial plazas and affordable housing.
- Service to the Phoenix area market.
- Connections between higher volume Pinal County markets.

8. Are there specific transit services that you believe should be implemented or considered?

- Systems to resolve the needs for healthcare services.
- Internal transit within Maricopa, especially to the new Walmart.
- Cities of Maricopa and Casa Grande services.
- Get as many park and ride lots as possible from developers.
- Links with Phoenix and Tucson.
- Connections to a new airport.
- Better rideshare.
- Amtrak connections.
- Local circulation.
- Expand vanpool program. Busy vanpool routes could become bus routes.
- Use existing rail lines.
- Provide connectivity.
- Make sure new services are cost effective.
- Use green technologies.
- We need employment clusters.
- Need transit to meet senior healthcare needs.
- Need exists for 4-wheel drive vans.
- There should be mix of vehicle types for different types of trips.
- Need transfer centers.
- Identify areas where demand is greatest... Casa Grande to Phoenix, Eastern County to Tucson.
- Service should be reasonably priced.
- Need bikeways, sidewalks, and paths.
- There should not be solid walls between subdivisions.
- Develop and expand park and ride lots.
- A seasonal adjustment should be made for transit during hot months.
- CAC will have growing, additional needs.
- CAC needs to meet the needs of seniors in the Southeast County.
- We also need to integrate services with other counties.
- Additional work is needed on I-10 and Highway 79 now.
- The area and the County require lots of plans, now.
- Keep it simple, easy and consistent in the future.
- Extend Valley Metro routes.
- Service to health facilities across the County.
- Services to entertainment.
- Services to colleges and universities.
- Provide regional connections, such as to Casa Grande.
- Provide service to jobs in prisons, and to Eloy Industrial Park.
- Provide commuter services to Phoenix and Tucson.
- Provide rail service.
- Fast rail between Phoenix and Tucson, with a stop in Coolidge.
- Get state rail study.



- Weekend service.
- Connections to new airport.
- Shuttle service to Phoenix? Serve with park and ride lot off of I-10?
- Casa Grande to CAC.
- Commuter rail between Phoenix and Tucson, with stop in Coolidge.
- Commuter rail in median of I-10?
- Other options in I-10 corridor.
- Would like to see the traditional types of transit, such as bus and rail.
- Improve and expand current transit services in the area.
- Service to CAC campuses (especially main campus, Maricopa, and AJ).

9. What has worked well in the past and/or what could be done to improve how government deals with county and local transit needs?

- Pinal Rides is shining light.
- Maricopa has done a good job at accessing funding through ADOT grant programs.
- Maricopa County didn't know what they wanted or needed, and didn't get rights-of-way early on.
- Transit should be accommodated in rights-of-way acquisition for roadways.
- To date there has been no connection between development and the need for transit.
- There needs to be a regional approach.
- Need to have good communications.
- Create regional solutions.
- Share resources.
- Understand that transportation does not end at the county line.
- Develop park and ride lots.
- Implement in small steps. Stay ahead of demand.
- Vans work.
- Relations between County and City have been great. There is more dialogue.
- Budget issues are demanding.
- Not sure what has worked well in the past. Everything has been minor or limited.
- There is a general sense that more is done in Maricopa County and Tucson, less in Pinal County, especially on I-10.
- City of Maricopa and City of Coolidge are working well and are good examples.
- RideChoice, partnering programs.
- Sharing information and working together (Collaboration and cooperation). Have recently started to engage with MAG, and starting to with CAAG.
- Ajo, Gila Bend, Buckeye, Westridge Mall service could provide a model for other rural areas.
- Not sure.
- Not sure, but Casa Grande is now thinking more multi-modally!
- There has been a lack of coordination between cities, towns and communities in the past and now look toward the future with new coordination and cooperation.
- Past bus service for the elderly was successful.
- Incorporate the needs of local government in transportation planning.
- Improve communication on existing transit services.
- Coolidge Cotton Express.
- Maricopa Xpress.
- Local services for residents with special needs.



10. What do you think will be the best way of including county residents in this study process?

- Identify target audiences, seniors, under-employed.
- Get residents involved.
- Hold public meetings during public events.
- Follow-up initial meetings to present results.
- The Comp Plan effort developed a database of email addresses. It should be possible to use that database for the Transit Feasibility Study.
- Web site.
- Council presentations.
- Pinal TV/PI Joe.
- Newsletters.
- Open houses.
- Council meetings.
- Need to get public input.
- People don't attend meetings, but do read their local newspapers.
- HOAs, Rotary clubs.
- People are pretty busy.
- Use ice cream social? Pancake breakfast?
- Paper surveys. Tribe has eight volunteers at different places to collect surveys. Very good return rate of almost 100 percent.
- Public meetings.
- Must anticipate citizen burnout from all the plans and meetings, we've had 25-plus in recent time.
- See Jerry Staley at county regarding all plans.
- See county Comp Plan.
- The county expects 20,000 to 30,000 in new population growth this year. New residents differ from older residents in terms of issues, etc. Need to listen to both.
- Be more aggressive in County resident outreach to include everyone possible.
- Reach out to educational institutions and students.
- Need to market available services.
- Show the benefits/payoffs of transit options.
- Build one step at a time; start small, then expand.
- Through the outreach component of the SATS. Also possible to have meetings at Government Center.
- Target people who use existing services, or that would use new services (Although it's tough to get people to come out).
- Mail out surveys to county residents with pre-paid postage.
- Council meetings.
- Well-publicized meetings.
- Advertise the public meeting notice at the town library.
- Public meeting notices could be advertised on the water bill.
- Surveys.
- Focus groups.
- Mailers.

11. Please identify the major employers/business leaders from your community that you recommend we include in the stakeholder outreach.

- Major employers. Talk to people at airport, MAG, Light Rail.
- Harrah's Casino



- VW test track, ethanol plant, school district, and new Walmart.
- CAREFEF in Casa Grande (Barry Albrect), Copper Corridor, and NEPAC.
- Pinal Partnership (development group).
- Shawn Lake and Ralph Pew (land use attorneys; Pew & Lake)
- Pinal Partnership, Pinal County Government Alliance, CAAG, homeowner associations.
- San Tan Coalition.
- Prisons, school district, HOAs, Pinal Partnership.
- See Resolution Copper, Salsbury, Chambers of Commerce. Work with Mayor Hing.
- Need to get people out. Make people part of the process.
- Help people feel "this is our county." Need resident buy-in.
- Parks and visitors center.
- Mark Schnepf of Schnepf Farms.
- School District.
- DME Steel, north of Germman. Mr. Green is contact.
- Phoenix-Mesa Gateway. Lynn Cousey, Executive Director.
- Look at all options, even park and rides.
- County is quickly urbanizing.
- Transit is critical.
- People don't ask about transit yet. Gas is going up. That may make a difference.
- Apache Gold Casino, San Carlos Satellite Center (part of Eastern AZ College), San Carlos Forestry and their Soil Conservation Program.
- County Supervisors, mayors, potential employers.
- Maxine (CAAG) has a Pinal County leaders list. She can email to Geoff.
- Talk to Casa Grande development group.
- Jack (CAAG) will send an employers list to Geoff as well.
- CDC, Chambers of Commerce, Main Street, Churches and the general public.
- Use working spaces format for public meetings where people can sit at different stations, after a joint briefing.
- Mining companies Resolution and BHP.
- Representatives of job centers/major employers.
- Gila River Gaming Enterprises (operator of the three casinos).
- Wild Horse Development Authority.
- Lone Butte Industrial Park.
- Robson Ranch.
- Prisons
- Belinda Akes, Chamber Director
- Edge, which is similar to the Pinal Partnership.
- Larger businesses.
- Medical facilities/hospital.
- Make presentations to tribal councils.
- Casa Grande Mall.

Other Comments

- Need connectivity, links. Coordinate services. Need standardization.
- Advice: Stay engaged. It's very important. Keep us updated.
- Three theme parks are currently in the works in Eloy; current status of all is uncertain.
- Central Arizona regional Economic Development Foundation recently completed a workforce study (contact is Holly Bergman, 520-836-6868).
- Maricopa Xpress' operator, All Aboard America, has been fantastic and helps create sense of community. Two routes, total of three trips in and three trips out. There is only a single stop in Maricopa, at a park and ride lot.



- Walmart is opening in April 2009.
- Are there private shuttles on Route 347?
- County vanpool program, additional information on AQ section of county web site.
- Also, consider AQ issues and global warming.
- Casa Grande wants an additional 1 cent sales tax.
- It is likely that transit streetscape projects could be considered street projects.
- Can only use ½ cent HURF gas tax funds for transit in areas with more than 1.2 people.
- It's hard to get into the vanpool program.
- 50,000 population is magic number to attract major chains.
- Andre Sevens extended the offer for open dialogue between Pinal County and the San Carlos Indian Community. Offer also extended for Indian Community representatives to visit the County to discuss this study and other topics.
- CAC has approximately 12,000 to 13,000 students, 4,500 full-time. Approximately 350 employees, and 100 faculty.
- CAC has three campuses and six centers, including the new center at San Tan.
- Signal Peak Campus has 10% of students from out of state.
- Enrollment for spring is up almost 20%, which is typical of community colleges during recessions.
- CAC does not have a parking problem and does not charge for parking.
- Many having to take jobs where they must commute long distances.
- Work trips are more to Maricopa County, but medical trips are more to Casa Grande.
- Try to resurrect Memorial Airfield project.
- Need better access to highways and to pave dirt roads.
- Population of Coolidge is approximately 11,500.
- Cotton Express is starting new service to CAC.
- Considering "dire-need" service to Casa Grande.
- Building transit center near police station.
- City is now planning areas for concentrated development.
- Congestion on I-10 will likely inhibit growth in Casa Grande, and the city may be over period of rapid growth.
- Casa Grande is strategically located at the intersection of I-8 and I-10.