

Four community workshops were held on February 3-4, 2017, to discuss the potential introduction of an intercity bus route in Cochise County. One workshop was held in each of the focus communities of Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista. Approximately 40 attendees listened to a short presentation and participated in discussion.

At each meeting, the consultant's project manager gave a brief presentation including an overview of the project, results of the community survey, results of the first round of community workshops, and proposed bus service options. The proposed options include:

- Intercity service between focus communities of Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista.
- Regional service to Tucson and Phoenix.
- Other options such as on-demand services, a subsidized vanpool program, and subsidized fares for Greyhound and/or TAP Royal.

Following the presentation, the project team engaged in a question-and-answer session with meeting attendees.

A summary of each meeting follows.

**Community Workshop #1**  
**Legacy Foundation, Sierra Vista**  
**February 3, 2017, 9:00 am**

The Sierra Vista workshop was attended by 15 people, as well as representatives of the City of Sierra Vista, SEAGO staff, and consultant staff. Following the presentation, the project team engaged in a question-and-answer session with attendees. Key points from the discussion include:

- This study has potentially demonstrated demand for regional services beyond the four focus cities. This type of demand could interest a private transportation company such as Greyhound already serving Benson to extend services into Sierra Vista.
- One of the new service options, a regional service to Tucson, would be open to everyone. Early feedback suggests the primary trip purpose would be medical appointments.
- How would new transportation services affect private transportation providers? The goal of new services would not be to take business away from private shuttles or taxi companies, but to fill a need for people who do not or cannot use these services. SEAGO is interested in working with private providers, as long as they are able to meet FTA requirements (such as ADA accessibility) for funding recipients.
- Attendees wondered why the Legacy Foundation pledged money for new transportation services. The Legacy Foundation has pledged money to the project because intercity transportation has long been identified as a need in the community.
- Any new transportation service would be a three-year demonstration project. Attendees wondered what would happen to the new service after three years. The hope is that the new service will fill such a large need that it will qualify for new funding, and that fares will help sustain it. The goal is a service that can be continued sustainably well beyond the initial three-year period.
- Some attendees asked about the relationship between the new service and the City of Sierra Vista's existing service, Vista Transit. Given the grant funding that has already been secured, the

City will not be funding the service during the three-year trial period. In fact, it is hoped that the City's transit service can benefit from additional customers traveling into Sierra Vista and connecting to Vista Transit via the transit center.

- How will success be measured? The service will be judged on ridership growth, cost per ride, and passengers per service hour.

**Community Workshop #2**  
**Benson Senior Center**  
**February 3, 2017, 12:30 pm**

The Benson meeting was attended by 10 people, as well as representatives of SEAGO, the City of Benson, and the consultant team. Key points from the discussion include:

- Benson would be a valuable destination for new intercity service, given its connection point to Amtrak and Greyhound.
- Attendees were overwhelmingly in favor of the inter-community option that includes Benson.
- There is not currently a manned ticket sales office for either Greyhound or Amtrak in Benson. Tickets have to be bought online or in Tucson. A lot of people don't have access to the internet and going to Tucson to buy a ticket isn't practical.
- Although this study has focused on the communities of Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista, it's possible that more communities could be added later (such as Tombstone). It's better to start with a small focus area and then expand as need arises.
- The amount of available funding is currently undetermined, but enough has been secured through grants and a donation from the Legacy Foundation to provide some service for three years. No new taxes are currently under discussion.
- Service days and hours will be based on demand. Currently demand appears to be Monday through Friday.
- The new intercity route will be most successful if it is coordinated with the transit services in each of the four cities. This will likely include joint marketing efforts and possibly a joint fare program.
- Early goals of a new service would be to get people to try the service and show them how easy it is to use. Introduction of the service would be supported by outreach and education.

**Community Workshop #3**  
**Bisbee Senior Center**  
**February 3, 2017, 5:00 pm**

The Bisbee meeting was attended by 11 people, as well as representatives of SEAGO, the City of Sierra Vista, and the consultant team. Key points from the discussion include:

- At this time, new intercity services would focus on the needs of Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista. It's possible that other communities in between and beyond could be added later.
- Any private transportation providers receiving federal money would have to be accessible per the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Regional services are currently provided by several private carriers, Greyhound, and TAP Royal.
- Vanpool schedules would be determined by the members of each pool.

- The new services will need a robust outreach and marketing effort to let people know what is available and how to ride.
- All promotional materials and service information will be available in Spanish.
- A previous regional transit service (Cochise Commuter) was funded by HUD money. That service had ridership, but no funds were available to replace the HUD funding when it ran out.
- There is concern among meeting attendees about getting people dependent on the service and then funding running out. The goal of this project is to start services that will meet transportation needs for the long term.

**Community Workshop #4**  
**Douglas Visitor Center**  
**February 4, 2017, 9:00 am**

The Douglas meeting was attended by five people, as well as representatives of SEAGO, the City of Douglas, and the consultant team. Key points from the discussion include:

- Intercity service in Cochise County is already partially funded between Douglas and Bisbee. This study has looked closely at the need for service up to Benson and down to Agua Prieta.
- The Sierra Vista transit center would likely be a hub for intercity service. Sierra Vista welcomes this, as it would bring more riders to their door.
- Sierra Vista already draws many riders from Agua Prieta.
- There is a need for reliable transportation within the county. One nonprofit group mentioned that many of their clients have lost jobs due to absences caused by repeated car trouble.
- Local employers have even indicated a willingness to adjust schedules to match transit service.
- Tourism-based services have been considered, but are not likely to provide the primary customer base.
- The City of Douglas is under consideration as a provider of the new intercity transit service.