

# SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization

## Cochise County Intercity Bus Feasibility Study



February 3-4, 2017



**SouthEastern Arizona  
Governments Organization**

# Core Objectives

- Identify and quantify demand for intercity bus service
- Determine if such service will be financially sustainable
- Receive feedback on proposed intercity service alternatives



# Survey Results

- More than half of all respondents indicated Sierra Vista/Huachuca City as the most common travel destination.
- 73 percent of respondents would use a bus service between Douglas/Bisbee and Sierra Vista.
- 60 percent of respondents would use a bus service between Benson and Sierra Vista.
- Outside of Cochise County, the most desirable location to access via public transit is Tucson.



# Community Workshop Findings

- There is demand for public transportation options between neighboring communities.
- There is a desire to connect each community in Cochise County with each other and Tucson through reliable transit service.
- Residents lack transportation options to access medical services (hospitals in Sierra Vista and Bisbee) and to fulfill jury duty obligations.
- Residents would like to see an intercity service which will allow people to go to the movies, go shopping, etc., in other communities.



# Community Workshop Findings

- Potential services must collaborate with ViCAP to include an advocate/volunteer to accompany patients to appointments.
- Providing service every 30-60 minutes would appeal to more users as a convenient and reliable option.
- Education and marketing to the general public is a priority, including travel training and rider education.



# Proposed Recommendations

- A. Inter-community service
- B. Regional services
- C. Other recommendations



# A. Inter-community service

- **Option 1:** Scheduled service linking Benson (Amtrak), Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista
- **Option 2:** Scheduled service linking Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista only



# Option 1: Service linking all four communities

- Sierra Vista is the most common travel destination in Cochise County
- Would provide affordable inter-community service to Greyhound and Amtrak
- Addresses recent relocation of several Cochise College classes to Sierra Vista Campus
- No less than two round trips/day, Monday to Saturday
- Larger service area limits route frequency
- Pilot project on Douglas-Bisbee-Sierra Vista portion of route has already been funded through a Legacy Foundation grant





# Option 2: Service linking Douglas, Bisbee, and Sierra Vista only

- Sierra Vista is the most common travel destination in Cochise County
- Pilot project has already been funded through a Legacy Foundation grant
- Smaller service area can result in greater route frequency
- Does not provide connections to Greyhound and Amtrak
- Does not provide service to Sierra Vista for persons living in Benson



# A. Inter-community Service

- Discussion/Comments



# B. Regional Services

- **Option 1:** Scheduled service to Tucson
- **Option 2:** Scheduled service to both Tucson and Phoenix



# Option 1: Service to Tucson

- ViCAP and volunteer drivers currently provide to access healthcare and VA services in Tucson – would continue to coordinate with these groups
- No less than one round trip/week
- Would need to accommodate travel companions/patient advocates through reduced/discounted fare



# Option 2: Service to Tucson and Phoenix

- Phoenix provides greater options for healthcare, education and entertainment
- Greater operating cost as compared to service to Tucson
- No less than one round trip/week; less frequent service to Phoenix



# B. Regional Services

- Discussion/Comments



# C. Other Recommendations

- Option 1: Subsidize intercity fares on Greyhound and/or TAP Royal
- Option 2: Establish an on-demand (reservation-based) service linking Bisbee/Douglas and Sierra Vista
- Option 3: Implement a subsidized vanpool program



# Option 1: Subsidized fares on Greyhound and/or TAP Royal

- Provide a fare subsidy for trips to Tucson
- Greyhound and TAP Royal are established operators
- Current one-way fare from Benson to Tucson is nine dollars
- TAP Royal service could be adjusted to include Sierra Vista





# Option 2: On-demand service linking Bisbee/Douglas and Sierra Vista

- Would operate along an established route at scheduled time
- Advance reservations would be required
- If no one has reserved a seat on a given trip, the trip would not operate



# Option 3: Implement a subsidized vanpool program

- Benefits those with regular work- and school-related travel
- Vanpool users shares the cost of operating and maintaining the vehicle
- Provide an initial subsidy to encourage formation of vanpools
- Schools and/or employers can sponsor vanpools for students or employees



# C. Other Recommendations

- Discussion/Comments



# Next Steps

- Address community feedback
- Provide recommendations findings to decision-makers
- Develop financial and demand forecasts for preferred recommendations
- Final decision-making process
- Implementation timeline

