



Community Education and Engagement Plan

35th Avenue/Van Buren Street Corridor

Phoenix **BRT**
City of Phoenix Bus Rapid Transit Program

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Executive Summary

The City of Phoenix Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Program is an element of the Phoenix Transportation 2050 Plan (T2050). Approved by voters in 2015, the T2050 program is a 35-year street and transit improvement plan that introduces BRT corridors into the Phoenix transportation network. Based on direction from City Council, the BRT Program will move forward into design with the recommended BRT corridor: 35th Avenue and Van Buren Street.

Because it is a new type of transit for the area, the BRT community education and engagement effort will emphasize activities and information to promote citywide BRT education, along with corridor-specific community and business engagement.

Effective education and engagement support community contribution and foster meaningful input that help projects best serve community needs and desires. The purpose of this Community Education and Engagement Plan (CEEP) is to provide education, seek input, and foster community collaboration through the next phase of technical analysis and detailed planning that will identify specific design alternatives for the 35th Avenue and Van Buren Street corridor.

To help guide the education and engagement effort and address any anticipated questions or concerns, six main goals have been identified:

1. Assess the community's awareness of and opinions about the program.
2. Provide continuous and convenient education and community/business input opportunities.
3. Accommodate needs of non-English speakers and traditionally underserved populations.
4. Coordinate with regional partners and related ongoing efforts.
5. Link outreach activities to technical activities.
6. Develop a corridor alternative that meets community needs.

To maximize the effectiveness of the various activities and tools of the program by tailoring them to specific audiences, the community is categorized into six groups:

- Residents
- Property owners
- Businesses
- Transit riders
- General public
- Agencies

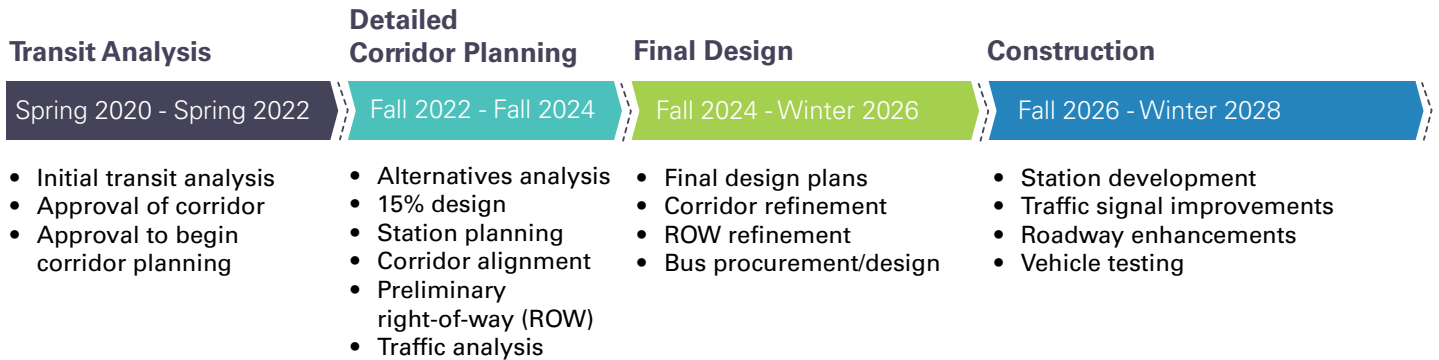
Corresponding with the planning work to develop the BRT Program, the community outreach efforts are organized into three main categories:

- Education
- Outreach
- Engagement

Conceptual Schedule

The plan describes activities and tools that will be implemented and, what categories they fall into, and what audiences they are intended to reach.

**WE ARE
HERE**
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Community and stakeholder engagement

Finally, the plan outlines how community information will be documented and incorporated into the project results.



Introduction

Following direction from Phoenix’s Citizens Transportation Commission and City Council, the first effort of the BRT Program was to evaluate the T2050 corridors—through technical analysis and community input—and present recommendations for corridor implementation. In April 2022, Phoenix City Council approved the Phoenix BRT Program to continue community education and engagement, alternatives analysis, and 15% design plans for the initial Bus Rapid Transit corridor: 35th Avenue and Van Buren Street. The community education and engagement effort is a major component of this program and will continue to include citywide education for BRT, as well as corridor-specific community and business engagement.

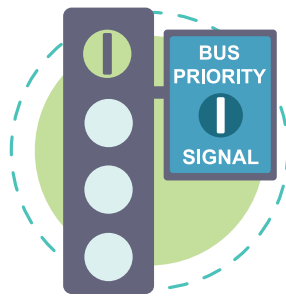
What is BRT?

BRT, or bus rapid transit, is a high capacity bus service that provides a fast, reliable, and convenient transit experience. BRT is unique because there are no universal standards; which means it can be planned and designed to best meet the needs of the community. However, there is a series of recurring elements found in successful BRT systems, and the more elements that are incorporated into a system, the more likely it is to succeed as an effective, efficient transportation service.

BRT Elements



Advanced Fare Collection



**Transit Spot Improvements/
Priority Transit Signals**



Enhanced Stations



Custom Buses



Dedicated Lanes



Unique Branding

Why BRT?

Phoenix BRT is a key piece of the T2050 plan and will be transformational for improving transit speed and reliability in Phoenix. BRT provides a valuable new “tool” in the mobility toolbox, adding to the metropolitan area’s comprehensive transportation system in a way that complements and enhances it. The need for priority bus investment is well documented, as traveling “across the grid” in Phoenix can be very time-consuming. Implementing BRT will be a major improvement to Phoenix’s grid-based transit network. There are many benefits of BRT for a fast-growing city like Phoenix, which include:



Faster and more frequent service. BRT is typically 20 to 25% faster than local bus service.



Increased cost efficiency. BRT can reduce costs because the vehicles make fewer stops, which increases the overall travel speed of the vehicle and therefore reduces the number of vehicles needed to provide the service.



Reduced travel delays. BRT can benefit transit users by removing the bus from mixed traffic in congested areas and keep passengers moving.





Purpose

Effective education and engagement support community contributions and enable meaningful input to best serve community needs and desires. Planners and engineers have the training and expertise to produce sound, feasible projects, but to develop and implement projects that truly meet a community's needs, the community must also be an active collaborator in the process. The purpose of this plan is to identify the strategies and activities to educate the community about the BRT Program and engage the community in the development of the BRT Program by incorporating community input.

The plan is built on the following guiding principles:

- **Education and engagement** activities directly linked to technical activities and decision-making.
- **Meaningful, equitable, and collaborative opportunities** to involve and inform community members about the program and create an understanding of how they can inform the process.
- **Clear connections** between community input and program results.
- **Consideration of the needs of those traditionally underserved** to ensure they are engaged in the decision-making.
- **Transparent and open network** for communication with community members and businesses.

Goals and Objectives

Introducing a new transit service to a community naturally creates questions, excitement, and concern. It is important to approach all community engagement activities with this in mind.

Based on previous experience and staff understanding of the general community and environment, this plan is designed to answer questions such as:

- What transportation needs does BRT address?
- What are the benefits of BRT?
- How is BRT different than current transit services?
- What has to happen before BRT begins service?
- How is BRT funded and how much will it cost?
- How can community members get involved?
- How was the corridor identified?
- How will construction impact the surrounding community?
- Which elements will be included in BRT?
- How will BRT impact ongoing/related projects in the area?
- How will my feedback be incorporated into design plans?

To help guide the education and engagement effort, and address the anticipated questions or concerns, six main goals have been identified:

1. Assess the community's level of education and opinions.
2. Provide continuous and convenient education and community and business input opportunities.
3. Accommodate needs of non-English speakers and historically underserved populations.
4. Coordinate with regional partners and related ongoing efforts.
5. Link outreach activities to technical activities.
6. Develop a corridor alternative that meets the community's needs and aligns with the five corridor priorities:
 - Develop a "showcase" BRT corridor
 - Support meaningful and equitable engagement
 - Collaborate with concurrent projects
 - Improve travel times and reliability
 - Provide safe and accessible multimodal connections

Audiences

Identifying all stakeholders affected by the implementation of the program is the first step toward determining the range of community education and engagement necessary to achieve meaningful participation.

Stakeholders are identified as any person or group that may be interested in or affected by the BRT Program and the 35th Avenue/Van Buren Street BRT corridor. Within this broadly-defined category are target groups made up of individuals and organizations directly impacted by the implementation of the program and corridor, those who are indirectly affected, and those with a related special interest. The groups listed here are considered the target audiences for the community education and engagement program and will be defined as the “community” throughout this plan.

Residents

This group includes not only individual residents, but also residential “groups,” such as:

- Registered, historic neighborhoods
- Multi-family units (apartments, condos, lofts)
- Homeowners’ associations (HOAs)
- Neighborhood watch groups

Property Owners

All individuals or groups who own property along the identified BRT corridor.

Community and Business Organizations

This group encompasses for-profit and not-for-profit business entities that may be directly or indirectly impacted, including but not limited to:

- Professional services, e.g.,
 - Health
 - Beauty
 - Legal
 - Real estate
- Large office complexes
 - Retail
 - Industrial/manufacturing
 - Restaurants
 - Entertainment/social
 - Motels/hotels
 - Places of worship
 - Educational
 - Institutions
 - Civic organizations (Chambers of Commerce, rotary clubs, etc.)

Transit Users

Current and future transit riders.

General Public

This group includes:

- Individuals more indirectly affected by the program than stakeholders, for example, someone who might live outside of Phoenix but drives through either the 35th Avenue/Van Buren Street BRT corridor or future BRT corridors.
- People with a general interest in the program. Community engagement activities have been designed to reach both the “public” within the corridor (aka “stakeholders”) and the “public” within the city of Phoenix.

Agencies

Individuals and members of government or civic organizations affected by/interested in implementation of the BRT Program, including but not limited to:

- Phoenix City Council
- Phoenix Transportation, Infrastructure and Planning Subcommittee
- Phoenix Citizens Transportation Commission
- Phoenix Commission on Disability Issues
- Phoenix Village Planning Committees
- Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department
- Phoenix Street Transportation Department
- Valley Metro
- Maricopa Association of Governments
- Arizona Department of Transportation
- Federal Transit Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Highway Administration

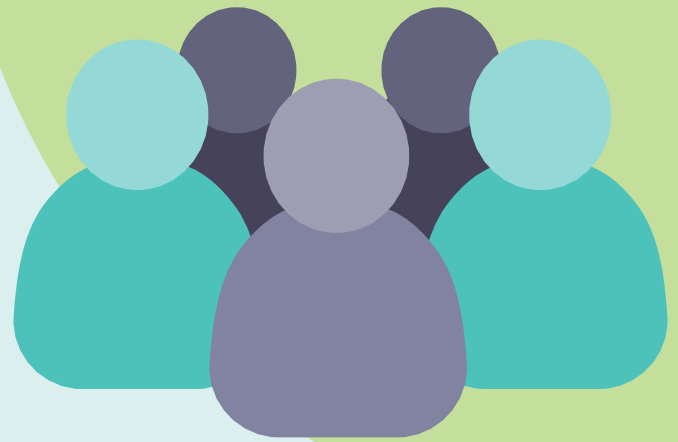
As a component to this audience group, the project team has established a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and an Executive Leadership Committee (ELC), which are made up of staff from some of the groups listed above, to gather technical insight and perspective on key decisions.

These groups provide an open and transparent communication channel with the BRT Program team to ensure the BRT Program is meeting its goals and objectives. Ultimately, the formation of these groups boosts project awareness, engages agency representatives, and facilitates critical input during key milestones.

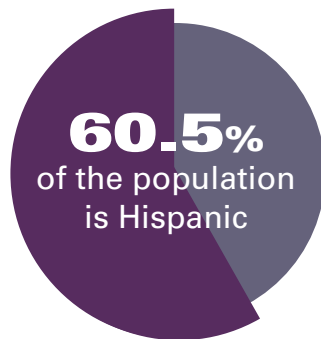


Community Overview

Engaging with the Phoenix community is a key component of the BRT Program. To better understand the community and how we may engage with them, a community assessment was conducted based on a general demographics and socioeconomic analysis within the selected corridor of 35th Avenue and Van Buren Street. Key findings¹ included:



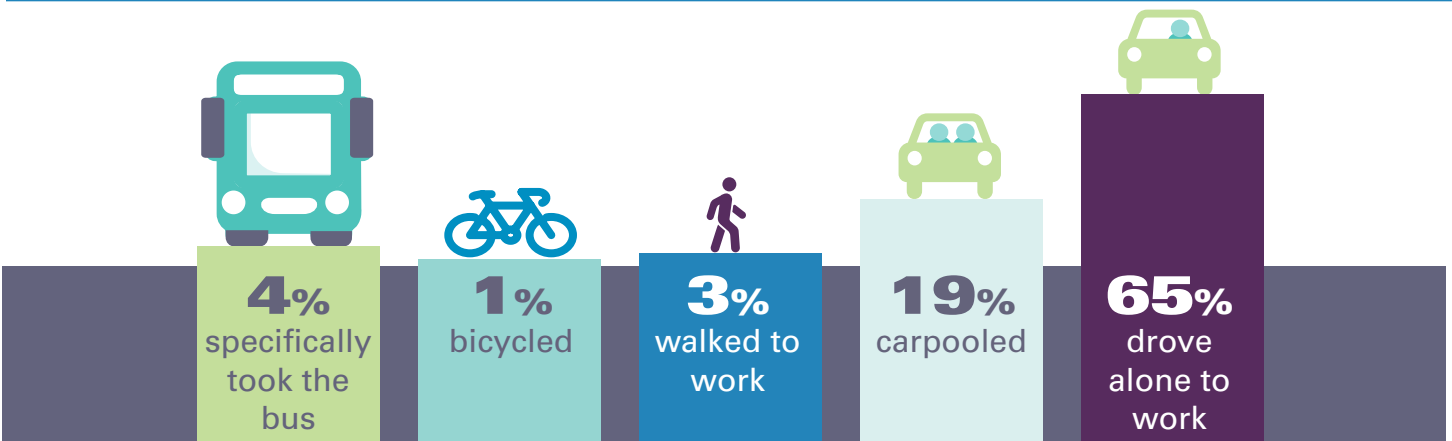
Overview



Key Facts



How This Community Uses Transportation



5% took public transportation

¹ It is likely that this section will expand once the BRT Program implements additional corridors to include more demographics and socioeconomic analysis pertinent to Phoenix's entire population.

Community Education and Engagement Activities

Community education and engagement activities during this phase of the program will focus on efforts to:

- Implement communication tools and techniques to provide varied and inviting opportunities for the community to gain a solid understanding of the project and of the corridor-specific elements/impacts.
- Work with city staff to develop/find opportunities to engage with the corridor community, building trust with the project team and awareness for the project.
- Develop and implement tools to provide equitable engagement, collaboration, and feedback opportunities to build a BRT design that best meets the needs of the corridor community.
- Create open and transparent communication channels with both businesses and residents within the corridor.

Conceptual Schedule



Community and stakeholder engagement

Outreach Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques will be used to educate and engage with the community.

Branding

Elements of the T2050 branding will be used as a guide to develop a preliminary program direction that increases recognition and creates an identity for the BRT Program that can evolve throughout its development. As we move toward the purchase and implementation of vehicles, the team will develop a full program branding which will include:



- Naming direction – One lead name and several possibilities within its brand approach
- Narrative – One story that brings the personality and rational and emotional attributes to life
- Visual expression – One mood board that captures the concept’s essence and design potential
- Design system
 - Color, typography, iconography, imagery, logo and any other graphic elements needed for the brand
- Usage guidelines

Collateral developed will include a naming structure (system name and route names) and options, messaging, up to three different and distinct brand concepts, and ultimately, one final refined brand option. Once the final concept has been identified and approved, materials will be developed to launch the new brand. This will include creating a style guide, templates, example vehicle wraps, and the planning of the brand launch campaign.

Website

Two websites were developed for the BRT Program to create a holistic communications approach. Phoenix.gov/BRT is the primary source for all technical and detailed BRT Program information. MeetPhoenixBRT.com complements the Phoenix.gov/BRT site by focusing on current activities.

Phoenix.gov/BRT

This website is an integral part of the education process as well as a critical resource for all technical materials. It houses technical reports, communication summaries and materials, and a general program overview.

MeetPhoenixBRT.com

The Meet Phoenix BRT website provides the latest BRT information and informs community members of future opportunities to co-create with the Phoenix BRT team. This site offers recent information on the program through blogs, infographics, videos, and more, and will be used to gather community input through surveys, online comment maps, and online meetings.

Surveys

Surveys are a key component in the community education and engagement process and will continue to be implemented through all phases of outreach.



Surveys will be multilingual and will be distributed through multiple outlets, including online (website and social media), at community events, and on board multiple forms of transit. The goals of the surveys will be adjusted based on the stage of outreach and technical analysis, but may include:

- Obtain an initial quantitative inventory of current community awareness of and opinions about the BRT Program, which will be used to adjust existing and/or develop new messaging or outreach tools, and to measure success of community education and engagement efforts.

- Gather communication preference information.
- Gather input on planned BRT service.
- Seek input to inform and incorporate as appropriate into key technical recommendations.

Messaging

Throughout the course of the study, messaging will be developed to correspond to the:

- Current assessed level of understanding/awareness of the BRT Program.
- Specific phase of education and engagement.
- Current state of technical analysis and results.
- Materials will be consistent with the current messaging and the overall goals of the plan.

Community & Pop-Up Events

To reach a higher percentage of the community in education and engagement efforts, the BRT Program team will participate and partner in existing events, such as festivals, fairs, sporting events, city council meetings, and community get-togethers. In conjunction with ongoing community events, the BRT Program will conduct “pop-up” events to provide educational materials, raise awareness, and encourage dialogue among community members. These staffed, information table-style events will occur at transit centers and other public locations frequented by community members within the corridor.

Graphics and Visuals

The design of all graphics and visuals will convey technical information and messaging that is easy to understand, meaningful, and engaging, ultimately leading to successful community education and engagement. In addition, creating simple and recognizable graphics and visuals allows us to efficiently reach diverse audiences from multiple cultural,

physical, and geographical backgrounds. Our graphics and visuals include:

- Handouts and flyers
- Presentations
- Surveys
- Brochures
- Infographics
- Advertisements
- Public meeting materials
- Exhibits
- Maps
- Videos
- Video/photo simulations
- GIS-based mapping tools
- Social media graphics
- Email blasts
- Pop-up meetings
- Canvassing

Presentations

Presentations will provide project information and seek input from the community. Presentations will be offered to community and business groups, other agencies, and industry organizations. The program will also look for opportunities to coordinate with existing education programs, such as WTS Transportation YOU and STEM to engage with youth.

Videos

Videos help illustrate and convey complex technical information in a visual and easy-to-understand format. A series of videos will continue educating the community on the concept of BRT, share insight into the initial BRT corridor and the determined elements, and include any critical “how-to” information related to the BRT system. These videos will be displayed on social media and the website, as well as at community events and public meetings.

Social Media

Developed in partnership with city staff, a social media strategy will be created to increase awareness, engagement, and knowledge of the program, which includes advertising events, sharing relevant media (videos, factsheets, infographics), distributing community surveys, and creating an open and transparent communication outlet. In addition to traditional social media, we will work closely with the city to build paid social campaigns that will be targeted to the BRT corridor or smaller sub-sections of the corridor, focused on area-specific information or meeting notifications.

Media

Led and implemented by the city, focused and ongoing media exposure in both print and broadcast media will help build top-of-mind awareness and an overall understanding of BRT. This includes exposure in community publications, newsletters, opinion/editorial pieces, radio, and TV. The BRT Program team will coordinate with city staff on opportunities for media releases or other print/broadcast media engagement.

Partnerships

Private and public sector partners whose resources could be utilized to inform and engage stakeholders and the community will be identified. Partners can include Village Planning Committees, City of Phoenix Water Department, Council offices, libraries, movie theaters, grocery stores, gas stations, coffee shops and other locations where BRT information can be efficiently dispersed. Distribution methods may include water bill inserts, newsletters, kiosks, flyer inserts for shopping bags, and advertisements prior to movies.

Community Meetings

Public Meetings (In Person and Virtual)

A variety of meetings will be scheduled to educate stakeholders on the BRT Program and the current BRT corridor. These meetings may include public meetings and/or open houses and smaller community group meetings, for example, with neighborhood associations, HOAs, and Village Planning Committees. In addition to the in-person meetings, the program will offer virtual meetings and online meeting tools to enable people to participate at their convenience and to expand the reach of engagement. Information will be presented in a variety of ways, through presentations, videos, roll plots, display boards, handouts, surveys and/or feedback forms.



Business Engagement

A critical component of the BRT Program community education and engagement efforts is targeted outreach to area businesses, and ultimately, a Business Assistance Program to support businesses during project construction.

Businesses typically have different needs, issues, and concerns than the general public. Business outreach will be focused on building open communication with businesses, as well as developing strong partnerships. Business outreach tools may include one-on-one meetings, large group meetings, canvassing, flyers, maps, brochures, infographics, or surveys. To maximize engagement with businesses, information should be targeted to their specific location, customer demographics, daily operations and more. Another incorporated business outreach tool is a stakeholder contact list. This list will be managed through a web-based stakeholder management software. Any comments received through email, phone calls, etc. are shared and logged in a comment database and are responded to accordingly.

A full business engagement plan has been developed; however, a summary of that plan can be found below.

Business Outreach Tools

Business Introductions (One-on-One)

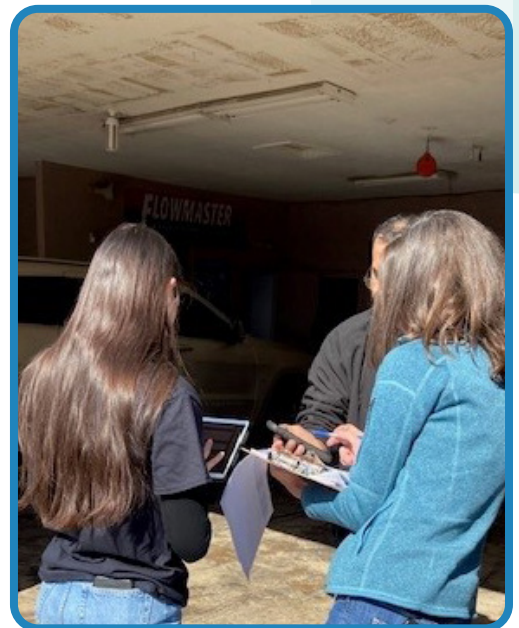
One-on-one business introductions are a critical piece to build initial relationships with businesses along the corridor. These initial conversations included visiting each business, introducing the project, sharing details on upcoming outreach opportunities, sharing a BRT information card (in English and Spanish), and walking them through a brief business questionnaire. This effort significantly helped us begin building a business stakeholder list.

Property Owner Coordination

We understand that one-on-one efforts may not reach the property owners of the businesses. To mitigate that, we will coordinate property owner mailers throughout the project to be sent to all offsite property owners within 500 feet of the corridor. These mailers will focus on current business outreach efforts and may include updates, survey links or information on upcoming business, or community engagement opportunities.

Business-Specific Surveys

Business-specific surveys will be developed throughout the project and may include initial data gathering for businesses, business-specific insight on critical technical milestones, or feedback on business engagement efforts. All of this information will be directly linked to our business stakeholder database and will allow us to easily collect and record details from specific businesses.



Speaker's Bureaus²

The BRT Program may offer presentations at regularly scheduled business group and community organization meetings to share information, solicit input from business community members, and answer questions. Email invitations will be sent to these groups to start identifying possible dates within/around the public outreach comment period. These groups may include but are not limited to:

- Phoenix West Rotary Club
- Phoenix Association of Realtors
- Greater Phoenix Chamber
- Grand Avenue Members Association
- Phoenix Metro Chamber
- Black Chamber of Arizona
- Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- North Phoenix Kiwanis
- North Phoenix Chamber of Commerce



Future Engagement

Using the information gathered throughout the business outreach, we will strategize additional tools and techniques to best engage with the businesses as the BRT Program progresses and future outreach phases are implemented.

Future phases will focus on an overall goal to design and implement a business assistance program that addresses business concerns and provides real relief for potential construction impacts.

As demonstrated by other complex, urban construction projects, businesses' primary concerns include:

- **Revenue loss during construction.** The City could consider a variety of loss-offset programs, such as direct grant funding or specialized loan programs which would be promoted to the businesses, along with more traditional assistance elements like sponsored marketing and events, free professional business consulting, specialized signage, and customer communication tools.
- **What impacts to expect, when.** Businesses will need clear, consistent information about what to expect in terms of disruption, e.g., traffic restrictions, driveway impacts, and noise levels. A communication plan will be developed, including detailed schedules, about construction and anticipated impacts and impact mitigation. For example, which noise monitoring and mitigation plans are in place, or how will business access be maintained.
- **Whom to contact and where to find information.** The project team will coordinate to clearly identify and maintain consistent project contact(s) and business resource repositories, for example, a dedicated website/webpage or special SharePoint.

Incorporating Information from the Community

Community education and engagement activities will include consistent procedures for recording and responding to community comments, and for relaying comments to key project team members and decision-makers. To create a more efficient process for this, we have acquired online stakeholder engagement software, which will allow us to track communications and engagement efforts more easily and efficiently throughout the life of the program. All comments received will be recorded in this software and will become a part of the permanent record.

To validate community contributions, build trust, and create a feedback loop, the project team will:

- Post public meeting summaries, including all comments received, on the program website following each public meeting.
- Clearly communicate how the public can participate, and how feedback will be incorporated into the program and/or corridors.
- At each public meeting, present the input received at the previous meetings and how it was incorporated into the program and/or corridors (what we heard and what we did).

All communications will be recorded and distributed to the project team.

Evaluation and Modification

As the community education and engagement process progresses, results and effectiveness will be evaluated and compared against the goals and objectives of the plan. Information regarding the effectiveness of the program will be gathered from agency groups, staff, and public feedback. If activities do not meet the objectives of the plan, the activity will be modified or replaced with an alternative activity.



Documentation

Regular progress reports of education and engagement activities will be prepared to provide a snapshot of overall activities and any emerging issues. Findings from the project's education and engagement activities will be compiled in an engagement book after each major outreach phase and may include engagement analytics from:

- Quarterly project update (MeetPhoenixBRT.com webpage)
- Social media
- Website engagement
- Email blasts
- Pop-up events
- Public/stakeholder meetings
- Canvassing
- Advertisements

At the end of the BRT study, a final memo report will also be developed to document and summarize all education and engagement activities and results.

In addition, the team will develop an internal monitoring and reporting dashboard that pulls in results from outreach efforts, stakeholder engagement statistics, website analytics, and more. This reporting dashboard will be used to develop quarterly reports that will be shared with the project team and partnering agencies and/or groups.

Resources

For program information:

City of Phoenix Webpage: www.phoenix.gov/BRT
Phoenix BRT Program Website: MeetPhoenixBRT.com
Email: connect@meetphoenixbrt.com
Phone: 602.262.7242

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Social Media:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CityofPhoenixAZ
Twitter: @PhoenixMetroBus
Instagram: @cityofphoenixaz
YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/cityofphoenixaz