



The Coalition of Greater Scottsdale

7904 East Chaparral Road, suite A110- 127

Scottsdale, AZ 85250

www.COGSaz.net

e: mails: cogsboard@cogsaz.net

To: Scottsdale City Council

Re: Transportation Work Study Session, April 12, 2016

Scottsdale Transportation Master Plan Comments

Re-Designation of 128th Street:

COGS supports the recommendation of the Transportation Commission, McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission and McDowell Sonoran Conservancy that 128th Street from Ranch Gate to Jomax be re-designated from a Minor Collector to Emergency Access and Public Path and Trail. 128th Street traverses the “Gooseneck” section of Scottsdale’s Preserve. That relatively narrow strip of land connects the southern Preserve area to the Northern Preserve area and is a wildlife migration corridor that is critical to maintaining wildlife in our Preserve. Therefore, doing everything possible to limit traffic through it protects and maintains this crucial link in Scottsdale’s greatest single asset, our McDowell Sonoran Preserve.

Scottsdale Mass Transit Criteria

Scottsdale Mass Transit Must Do the Following:

- **Connectivity.** Must integrate into a valley-wide system to provide convenient transport throughout the valley including to and from Sky Harbor.
- **Flexibility.** Must have flexibility to adapt to changing community needs, demographics, employment and housing locations and the ability to embrace the newest technologies;
- **Financially viable.** Must be fiscally feasible with no unreasonable financial burden on taxpayers for the construction and ongoing operations.
- **Fit the Character of the City.** Must be environmentally and aesthetically appropriate to Scottsdale;

- **Impact on Existing Options.**
 - Must not disrupt Scottsdale Road, the city's only major street from south to north, and is particularly critical from Osborn to Camelback;
 - Must not negatively impact other transit options people will use.
 - Must maximize the use of the existing mass transit investment in the Scottsdale trolley and bus system;
- **Impact on Existing Businesses.** Must enhance mobility and commerce and not threaten the livelihood and existence of the merchants in its path;
- **Acceptable.** Must be approved by the voters of Scottsdale
- **Be Feasible.** Any future transit system must go through a complete analysis to prove if it is feasible for long-range planning without impairing the opportunity to embrace innovative transit systems of the future.

Fixed Rail Issues

- **Loss of tourism.** The tourism attraction to a Scottsdale Experience will be greatly reduced because of the destruction of the unique Downtown area and its character districts. The high-income traveler will seek other destinations.
- **Cost.** The rail construction and utility re-location costs will be a considerable drain on the city treasury, despite some federal funding. Buses and trolleys can be increased at considerably lower cost to meet the city's changing transportation needs.
- **Construction Impact.** The multi-year construction period will put many merchants out of business, increase vacancies, and lower property values. It will then substantially decrease sales/rental tax (TPT) revenue for the city and cause budget deficits leading to higher taxes.
- **Operation and Maintenance Cost.** Once built, Phoenix and other USA cities prove that fixed rail does not pay for itself and is a financial drain on the local community. The fee charged the rider is insufficient to fund operation and maintenance costs. Even in cities with relatively high ridership it has to be heavily subsidized.
- **Demographic Shift.** Scottsdale as a "resort/high income destination" has been negatively impacted in public safety costs and tourism reputation by the expansion of our Entertainment District bars and their "special events." The improved mobility between Tempe and Scottsdale will increase "party" crowd riders.
- **Increased Criminal Element Opportunities** Fixed rail statistics evidence that crime increases along the route for both businesses and private property.
- **Public Acceptance.** Scottsdale residents have consistently rejected Fixed Rail for Scottsdale. The majority of business and property owners do not want it. Because residents would have to pay for it, they should have the right to vote on the issue before approving it in the 20 year Transportation Master Plan.