



DATE PREPARED: July 23, 2019
DATE: August 1, 2019
TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Board
FROM: Bizzy Collins, Transit Planner
SUBJECT: Update on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

RELATED STRATEGIC WORKPLAN OBJECTIVE

Guiding Principles:

- Show initiative, imagination and creativity
- Collaborate to enhance service delivery
- Be fiscally responsible and responsive to changing demographics

5 Year Horizon:

- Apply imagination, creativity and innovation to improve the service we deliver.

BACKGROUND:

In 2016, NAIPTA completed the Spine Study Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Report which identified the need for a high capacity transit corridor in Flagstaff, commonly referred to as Bus Rapid Transit or BRT. The Spine Study was the basis of an application for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts Project Development program to bring the BRT project to 30% design. This phase of the project is known as Project Development.

The purpose of the grant-funded project is to identify, evaluate, and select a strategy and set of transit and multimodal transportation improvements to:

- Connect key activity centers by transit,
- Reduce transit travel times,
- Improve transit operations,
- Improve transit ridership connectivity, and
- Reduce the reliance on the single automobile vehicle.

BRT improvements include a variety of tools from which a community can draw upon to achieve these goals, including but not limited to: off-board fare collection, Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and Intelligent Transportation Signals (ITS), bus only lanes, high quality bike and pedestrian connections, wayfinding and unique marketing and high levels of visibility. Tools can be applied as they make sense throughout the corridor.





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While the original Spine Study identified a 13-mile BRT route from the airport to the Flagstaff Mall, the decisions outlined in the 5-Year Transit Plan have led NAIPTA to focus the initial BRT alignment from Woodlands Village to the Flagstaff Medical Center (see attached map). NAIPTA has adjusted the scope of the Small Starts Project Development accordingly. The BRT is shown in the FMPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) illustrative year and the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 20-year program of projects.

Project Development of the BRT officially began in November 2018 when NAIPTA signed a Task Order with AECOM to achieve the following deliverables (*timeline in parentheses*):

- Outreach (*January 2019 to August 2020*)
 - Stakeholder Workshops (*February 1, April 16*)
 - BRT Meetings with Impacted Groups (*underway*)
 - Board of Directors Updates and Recommendations (*on-going*)
 - Public Meetings (*early 2020*)
- Environmental (*December 2018 to June 2019*)
 - Traffic Modeling (*underway*)
 - Environmental Analysis (*September 2019*)
- Engineering (*November 2018 to November 2019*)
 - Utility Impact (*underway*)
 - Right-of-Way Evaluation (*underway*)
 - Alignment & Bus Station Design
 - Traffic Signal Improvements

Coordination with agency partners is critical to successful BRT Project Development and is ongoing in many ways. Traffic modeling has been completed with FMPO and ADOT agency input and review to ensure all projections are agreed upon. Major businesses with key activity centers along the BRT—such as the Flagstaff Medical Center (NAHealth) and Downtown Business Alliance—are key stakeholders in the Project Development and meetings have been initiated. The Milton Corridor Master Plan (CMP) is a vital coordination piece to ensure ADOT's long-range plans include NAIPTA's BRT service enhancement project. As the synchronization of the Milton CMP with BRT is an important component, delays in the progress of the Milton CMP have impacted the schedule and timeline of the BRT Project Development phase.

TAC DISCUSSION:

The TAC was supportive of the outlined process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

NAIPTA's BRT Project Development phase costs \$2.2 million and is 80% funded by a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grant. The project is included in the NAIPTA FY2019 and draft FY2020 budgets.

This Project Development phase of the BRT will be completed by September 2020, if not sooner. At that time, the report will be submitted to FTA for evaluation, rating, and approval for a Small Starts



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Grant Agreement. FTA rating and approval recognizes that NAIPTA's BRT project has sufficient engineering and design detail, firm and reliable cost estimates, and detailed scope and schedule for the project, thus making it eligible for a construction grant agreement. With these components in place, FTA may choose to recommend the project for funding under the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program. Local funding details of the BRT will be explored more specifically as part of the Project Development process and would be identified in future NAIPTA budgets.

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Bizzy Collins
Transit Planner

Erika Mazza
CEO and General Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. BRT Alignment Alternatives

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