



MAYOR & COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

December 20, 2022

Subject: Discussion and Direction Relating to Fare-Free Transit for Sun Tran, Sun Link and Sun Van (City Wide)

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Issue – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor & Council directed the City Manager to suspend the collection of transit fares on March 17, 2020. Since that time, Sun Tran, Sun Link and Sun Van have been operating fare-free. The suspension of fares for Sun Tran, Sun Link and Sun Van is set to expire on December 31, 2022.

City Manager's Office Recommendation – Time has been set aside for Mayor and Council to continue the discussion on fare-free transit. Staff recommends Mayor and Council extend fare-free transit to June 30, 2023.

Background – On March 17, 2020, Mayor and Council directed the City Manager, in coordination with the Department of Transportation and Mobility (DTM), and Sun Tran, to suspend the collection of fares as part of the City's efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and lessen the negative financial impact of the pandemic on Tucson residents. Since the initial suspension of fare collection, Mayor and Council has extended the moratorium on fare collection three additional times, most recently on June 7, 2022.

Present Consideration(s) – Sun Tran, Sun Link and Sun Van are currently operating fare-free until December 31, 2022. Per Mayor and Council direction, City staff continues to have ongoing discussions with funding partners such as the University of Arizona and the Tucson Unified School District. The intent of these discussions is to identify opportunities for increased funding from our transit partners. Extending fare-free transit until the end of the fiscal year will allow time to develop funding strategies for the transit system.

Plan Tucson Consideration(s) – The discussion of this item relates to the following Built Environment Goals and Policies:

Goal 22. Well-maintained public facilities and infrastructure that support coordinated cost-effective service delivery for current and future residents.

Public Infrastructure Policy 1. Invest in highest priority needs to manage and maintain public infrastructure and facilities that are fundamental to economic development and to sustaining and enhancing living conditions in the community.

Public Infrastructure Policy 2. Prioritize major public infrastructure investments in developed areas and for improvements of the existing infrastructure.

Land Use, Transportation & Urban Design Policy 13. Continue to explore and monitor opportunities to increase the use of transit, walking, and bicycles as choices for transportation on a regular basis.

Land Use, Transportation & Urban Design Policy 22. Participate in efforts to develop a coordinated regional, multi-modal transportation system that improves efficiency, safety and reliability of transporting people and goods within the region and to destinations outside of the region.

Financial Considerations – The revenue deficit from operating fare-free for transit services is approximately \$10M per year. The investment plan contains a total of \$9.1M for fare-free transit.

Operating Cost and Maintenance Input – None at this time.

Legal Considerations – None at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy M. Thomure, PE, ENVSP
Assistant City Manager

TT/SC/hw
Transportation and Mobility