MARICOPA ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

VALLEY METRO

METRO

PEER REGIONS

Fact Sheet #2
August 2008

MAG Regional Transit Framework Study

To understand how the transit system in the Phoenix Region compares to other transit systems, six peer regions were reviewed. Peer regions were selected based on their location, size, age of current system and plans for expansion, land use development patterns, and other factors. The six peer regions selected for the review include:

- Atlanta, Georgia;
- Denver, Colorado;
- San Diego, California; and
- Dallas, Texas;
- Salt Lake City, Utah;
- Seattle, Washington

POPULATION AND POPULATION DENSITY

Population and population density can impact the performance of and need for public transportation services. In comparing the Phoenix urbanized area (UZA) to the six peer regions, Phoenix ranks third in both population and population density.

Population & Density

REGION	2006 UZA Population	2000 UZA Land Area	Population per Square Mile
Atlanta	4,051,000	1,963	2,064
Dallas	4,809,000	1,529	3,146
Denver	2,316,000	585	3,959
Salt Lake City	945,000	231	4,094
San Diego	2,722,000	782	3,479
Seattle	2,875,000	954	3,015
Average[1]	2,531,143	1,007	2,932
Phoenix	3,228,000	779	4,040

Source: National Transit Database
[1] Average does not include Phoenix

TRANSIT SERVICES OPERATED

All of the peer regions, including the Phoenix region, operate several common transit services. Each region provides bus and vanpool service and operate or are currently constructing light rail or heavy rail service. The primary difference between these two modes is the amount of people that each can carry. Heavy rail has the capacity to carry more passengers, but both are designed to operate frequent all day service.

Transit Services

REGION	BUS	Light Rail	Heavy Rail	Commuter Rail	Vanpool
Atlanta	●		●		●
Dallas	●	●		●	●
Denver	●	●		⊙	●
Salt Lake City	●	●		●	●
San Diego	●	●		●	●
Seattle	●	⊙		●	●
Phoenix	●	⊙			●

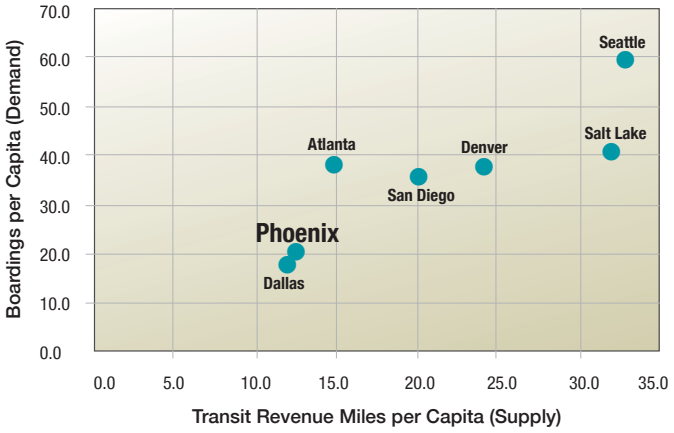
Source: National Transit Database ⊙ = Under Construction

Only the Phoenix and Atlanta regions lack commuter rail service. This mode of rail service is generally designed to have a limited number stops and serve busy activity centers during peak periods.

TRANSIT SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Knowing how many people use transit and how much transit service is available for use is important for understanding the differences between each regions' transit system. Transit level of service or transit supply is a measurement of the number of miles of service that all transit modes (buses, trains, etc.) operate in each region. Transit use or demand is a measure of the number of passenger boardings that occur in each region. In general, the relationship of transit service supplied and transit service consumed (demand) in the peer regions indicates that as revenue miles per capita increase, passenger boardings per capita follow. This relationship does not directly account for other potential variables such as land use/development patterns, traffic congestion, auto ownership rates, parking costs, etc. Nonetheless, the relationship of ridership to transit service supplied among the peer regions generally indicates that as service increases (supply) so do riders (demand).

2006 Transit Boardings & Miles of Service



Source: National Transit Database

INVESTMENT IN TRANSIT

The amount of investment that each peer region puts into transit service varies greatly. Averaged together, the peer regions expend approximately $130 per person per year. In comparison the Phoenix region invests just over $71 per year.

2006 Transit Operating Costs

REGION	Total Operating Costs	Operating Costs per Capita	Cost of Living Index
Atlanta	$331,704,840	$81.88	96.1
Dallas	$399,393,985	$83.05	91.2
Denver	$320,088,805	$138.21	103.4
Salt Lake City	$136,824,236	$144.79	100.7
San Diego	$264,244,089	$97.08	139.5
Seattle	$848,865,748	$295.26	121.0
Average[1]	$383,520,284	$129.87	---
Phoenix	$229,507,781	$71.10	100.6

Source: National Transit Database and Council for Community and Economic Research
[1] Average does not include Phoenix

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about the study or how to get involved,
visit **bqaz.org** and select
"*MAG Regional Transit Framework Study*"
or
Contact Kevin Wallace of
Maricopa Association of Governments
phone: 602-254-6300
e-mail: kwallace@mag.maricopa.gov