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## NAIPTA MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** April 17, 2020

**TO:** The Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Heather Dalmolin, Mountain Line CEO & General Manager  
Bizzy Collins, Mountain Line Transit Planner

**SUBJECT:** Mountain Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

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***Background and Existing Conditions:***

In November 2018, Mountain Line initiated the development phase of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project to study potential long-term improvements and high-frequency bus service from Woodlands Village to the Flagstaff Medical Center (see attached map). BRT is a toolbox of transit enhancements that adds up to a **faster trip** and an **improved experience**. As a result of Mountain Link (Route 10), the first BRT that opened in 2011, system-wide ridership increased 66% in the first year alone and, in subsequent years, spurred economic development along the Mountain Link corridor. Mountain Line anticipates similar results with the second BRT.

The purpose of the BRT project is to identify, evaluate, and select a strategy and set of transit and multimodal transportation improvements to achieve the following goals:

- Enhance transit & multimodal mobility in Flagstaff to make it more compelling
- Connect neighborhoods and activity centers and improve local mobility
- Support economic development
- Strengthen the downtown core and transit connections to key activity centers
- Create an environment that will sustain over the long term

A team of agency stakeholders (City of Flagstaff, MetroPlan, ADOT, Coconino County, and NAU) was created to advise staff on technical aspects of the project. For the past year and a half, the stakeholders have been examining which BRT alternatives, or combinations of BRT tools, best achieve the project goals and make the most sense on the BRT corridor. The stakeholders began this process with six alternatives on the northern section (between Flagstaff Medical Center and the Downtown Connection Center) and four alternatives on the southern section (between the Downtown Connection Center and Woodlands Village).





Together, stakeholders defined criteria to screen alternatives so to narrow alternatives down to one locally preferred alternative for each section.

Mountain Line has identified the top-ranking alternatives that best achieve the project goals and is currently seeking feedback on the alternatives through a variety of presentations to commissions and business organizations.

### **Next Steps**

Other ongoing tasks include environmental analysis, determining bus station locations and design, and continued coordination with the ADOT Milton Corridor Master Plan (CMP). While the CMP and BRT are unique projects with different boundaries, they overlap for about one and a half miles on Milton Road and have the same stakeholders. The two projects have engaged in shared decision-making to finalize the evaluation criteria. The outcome of these two projects will be one recommended alternative for the overlapping portion on Milton Road. Ensuring ADOT's long-range plans include Mountain Line's BRT service enhancement project is vital for success.

The BRT Project Development phase will be completed by July 2021, if not sooner. Following completion, Mountain Line will submit the BRT project application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for evaluation, rating, and approval for funding under the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program. While the BRT is a transit project, the funding can be utilized to build bike and pedestrian infrastructure and streetscape enhancements. Therefore, this unique funding source can help the Flagstaff community realize its goals for climate action, bike and pedestrian mobility, and economic development. Below are just some of the City's goals, policies, and strategies a BRT can help achieve.

### **Connection to City Plans**

Climate Action and Adaption Plan (implementation is a City Council Goal)

- STRATEGY 2. Prioritize, incentivize, and promote transportation by biking, walking, and transit.

Flagstaff Regional Plan

- Goal T.7. Provide a high-quality, safe, convenient, accessible public transportation system, where feasible, to serve as an attractive alternative to single-occupant vehicles.
- Policy LU.12.8. Provide for strong connections from the Flagstaff Medical Campus to the Northern Arizona University campus via pedestrian paths, bicycle connections, streets, and transit service.
- Policy LU.15.4. Accommodate safe and convenient walking, biking, and transit facilities in existing and proposed employment centers.
- Policy T.1.1. Integrate a balanced, multimodal, regional transportation system.
- Policy T.1.6. Provide and promote strategies that increase alternate modes of travel and demand for vehicular travel to reduce peak period traffic.





## **Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority**

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- Policy T.1.7. Coordinate transportation and other public infrastructure investments efficiently to achieve land use and economic goals
- Policy T.2.2. Consider new technologies in new and retrofitted transportation infrastructure.
- Policy T.2.4. Consider dedicated transit ways where appropriate.



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