

Transportation Matters

A Health Impact Assessment on NM SCRTD bus transit services

What is a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

- Published scientific methodology
- Brings together scientific data, health expertise and public input to identify the potential effects of proposed laws, regulations, policies, projects, and programs
- Offers practical recommendations for ways to minimize risks and capitalize on opportunities to improve health
- Informs decision-makers

Who funded it?

- Led by University of Texas at El Paso
- In collaboration with New Mexico State University at Las Cruces and The South Central Regional Transit District
- Grant from the Health Impact Project, a funding collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts

Our Goal

Collect information on the impacts of public transportation with respect to access to health care and services, education, and economic opportunity to inform the decision on providing public transportation in rural Doña Ana County.

What we did...

From January 2015 to May 2016:

- We conducted a community survey with 1,054 individual residents of South Doña Ana County before the services were offered
- We interviewed 44 professional or community members and 1 focus group of community health workers from the area
- A ridership survey with 33 SCRTD users at the beginning of their service

“...transportation is part of the fabric that connects everything together.”

-Mayor of Sunland Park (Key Informant)

Main Findings



In our community survey, 9 out of 10 residents expressed the need and interest to use the SCRTD services to access the following health, education, and economic opportunities and achieve the desired outcome.

Finding

Outcome

Health

Transit would improve:

- Access to all types of health care services (47%)
- Access to fresh fruits and vegetables (53%)
- Access to senior services and support groups (45%)
- Reduce risky behaviors due to isolation
- Physical activity (52%)



Improve everyone's overall health, especially for older adults

Education

Transit would improve:

- Access to formal (51%) and informal educational opportunities (50%), especially job training (48%)
- Engagement with local schools and communities
- Education and job skills in young people



Create a skilled workforce for employers

Economic

Transit would improve:

- Access to employment opportunities (50%)
- Access to goods and services (49%)
- Household budget related to owning a vehicle and purchasing local goods
- Communities access to local businesses



Improve the economy for Las Cruces, Anthony, Sunland Park, and smaller rural communities

(% from community survey responses; other findings confirmed and/or identified through interviews)

Main Findings (Cont'd)

Other

Transit would:

- Reduce emissions and dust created by vehicles
- Improve road traffic safety by replacing substandard vehicles and reducing automobile collisions
- Improve quality of life in rural communities



Build individual and community capacity



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Challenges to transit expansion identified by this study include:

- Lack of paved roads
- Travel times, route designs, and poor walking conditions to bus stops
- About the sustainability of the transit system bus

Main Findings (Cont'd)

From our ridership survey.....

SCRTD passengers are going to these Top 3 destinations:



To work



To health care



To shopping

Top 3 Reasons in Health



Doctor's appointments



Prescriptions



Fresh fruits and vegetables

Top 3 Reasons in Education



DACC south campuses



Public libraries



NMSU

Top 3 Reasons in Economic



Pay bills



Better jobs



Shop at better stores

What all this means.....

Access to these services can have an economic and societal impact, for example access to health care, especially preventative healthcare, can:

- Address the most prevalent chronic conditions in this county which are hypertension, diabetes, depression, and asthma
- Reduce work absenteeism related to these conditions



14,312
work days

...(estimated) were lost in 2010 in the southern area of DAC because of these chronic conditions

Main Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings from this study, we suggest the following recommendations in Nov. 2016:

1. SCRTD should implement the bus system for rural Doña Ana County
2. SCRTD should seek additional funding to continue service
3. SCRTD should design system to meet identified access needs in rural communities
4. SCRTD needs to develop and implement a communications plan with education and marketing components
5. SCRTD needs to implement an evaluation plan to document impacts, benefits, and to monitor sustainability of the transit system



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For more information about Human Impact Partners and Health Impact Assessment go to: www.humanimpact.org

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† Word cloud created using worditout.com and generated from interview responses, and images are from openclipart.com. Infographics created using vennage.com.

