

SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPORT



To: Transportation Commission
From: Madeline Clemann, Transportation Planning and Transit Operations Manager
Subject: Scottsdale Paratransit Programs for Senior Citizens
Meeting Date: October 16, 2014

ITEM IN BRIEF

Action: Information

Purpose: This presentation will update the Commission on the City's transportation programs for Senior Citizens (65+), introduce the Greater Phoenix Age-Friendly Network, and explain the Community's involvement in Age Friendly programs.

Background

Scottsdale provides an interconnected network of transportation services for senior citizens (and disabled individuals) with three programs: 1) East Valley Dial-a-Ride; 2) Cab Connection; and 3) Scottsdale Trolley. In addition, all seniors are eligible for reduced-fare on Valley Metro bus routes and light rail. Every Scottsdale senior, whether or not they are disabled, is eligible for all three of these programs.

EAST VALLEY DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE

Provision of paratransit service to individuals living within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of any fixed route transit service is a Federal requirement. The majority of jurisdictions nationwide provide Dial-a-Ride service to comply with the Federal law. By 1995, several East Valley Cities either did not provide paratransit service, or found it extremely expensive to do so. In 1999 the East Valley Dial-a-Ride program was started as a partnership with Scottsdale and Tempe, Mesa, Gilbert and Chandler to comply with the Federal requirement.

The program today provides door-to-door paratransit service, during the same days and hours as regular fixed route bus service. Participants can qualify to use paratransit service through a Valley Metro certification process (called "ADA" Trips); or, if they are age 65 or older certain cities within the program will provide "non-ADA" Trips without requiring a certification process (Scottsdale provides both "ADA" and "non-ADA" trips). The non-ADA service is not federally required. All trips are scheduled through a call center. Various types of vehicles, other than taxis, are used to fit each participant's need.

In the beginning of Fiscal Year 2012-13 the service delivery method changed from a collector/distributor system using large vehicles, to a taxi-based smaller vehicle system. Under the old system large vehicles picked-up multiple participants and delivered them to their destination all along a single route (routes were designed daily by the stops scheduled). This system kept participants on bouncy vehicles for a long time, sometimes for up to an hour and a half. By scheduling a taxi trip for one or two individuals, the trip time for riders was shortened and the vehicles used were much more comfortable. The majority of taxi trips are now taken in more fuel efficient electric hybrid vehicles (like the Toyota Prius), while larger lift equipped vehicles are also used when needed.

In line with the City's growing population, and the nation's aging population trend, the number of Dial-a-Ride trips steadily increased over the years until the recent recession when the number of

trips declined. Three years later as the recession ended, a more convenient and comfortable taxi based system was implemented; ridership and program costs began to grow again. The ridership trend (number of annual trips provided) is shown in Figure 1 below.

The use of more fuel efficient vehicles has resulted in contract cost savings, even though fewer individuals are transported per trip. The dramatic cost savings to Scottsdale between Fiscal Years 2012-13 and 2013-14 can be seen in Figure 2 below both in terms of cost per trip type, as well as total cost.

Figure 1. East Valley Dial-a-Ride Annual Trips Provided Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated 2014-15

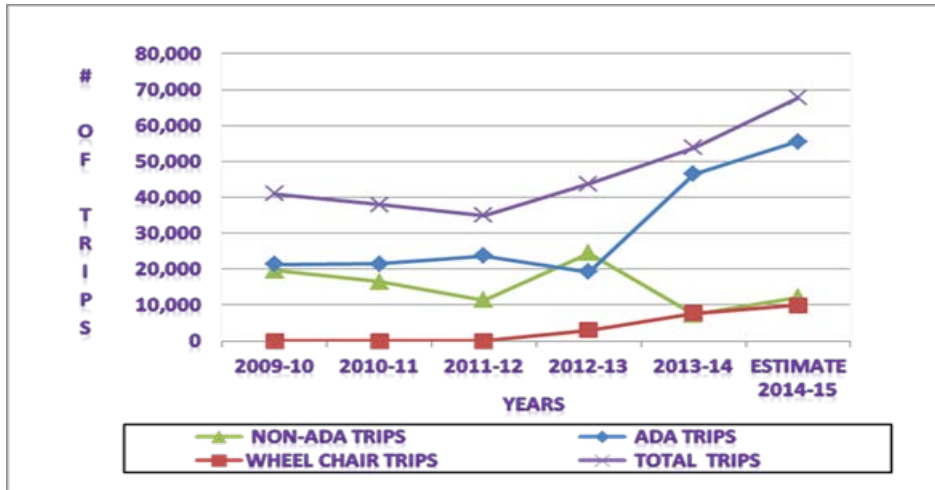
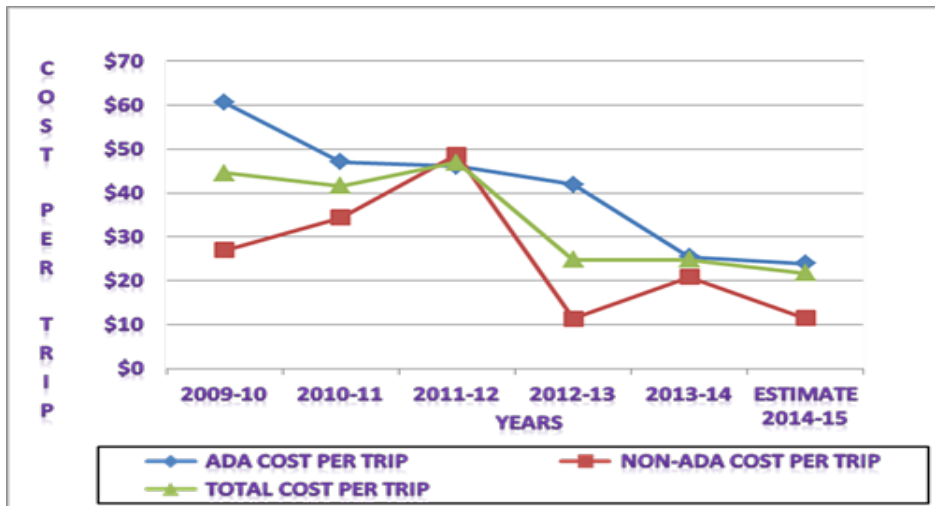


Figure 2. East Valley Dial-a-Ride, Total Cost per Trip (ADA vs. Non-ADA) Fiscal Years 2009-10 to 2014-15



In October 2013, the region raised the ADA fare from \$3.50 to \$4.00, and the non-ADA fare from \$1.00 to \$2.50. Soon after the ADA fare was raised it was noticed that individuals who were ADA certified, actually were scheduling their trips as non-ADA to avoid the higher ADA fare. Figure 2 above shows the decrease in ADA trips taken compared to the dramatic increase in non-ADA trips in Fiscal Year 2013-14. In July 2014 the non-ADA fare was raised to \$4.00 to be equivalent to the ADA fare.

While all these changes over time have improved service to the customer and have helped control costs for the City, there is still work to be done. The contractor, Total Transit, is currently working to improve scheduling, increase ride sharing (the number of people riding in a cab per trip), and improve data collection.

CAB CONNECTION TAXI VOUCHER PROGRAM

Scottsdale's taxi service program for seniors actually started in the late 1950's as an informal program. In 2001 the service became more formalized and was named Cab Connection. It now provides over 45,000 taxi rides a year, primarily to senior residents. Cab Connection has four sub-programs:

1. Regular vouchers
 - a. For those 65+ or certified disabled.
 - b. Each participant receives up to 16 monthly vouchers (1 voucher = 1 one-way trip).
 - c. Each voucher pays for 80 percent of the trip cost, up to \$10.00.
 - d. Approximate miles traveled per voucher are 2.92.
 - e. The average fare paid per participant per voucher is \$3.51.
2. Dialysis vouchers
 - a. Each participant receives 26 dialysis vouchers per month in addition to 16 regular vouchers.
 - b. The voucher covers 100 percent of the trip cost and also pays a 15 percent driver tip.
3. Wheels to Meals vouchers
 - a. Each participant receives between 38 – 46 vouchers per month depending on city business days.
4. City Volunteer Worker vouchers
 - a. Senior or disabled volunteers enrolled in a qualified work skills program with the City receive vouchers for transport to volunteer stations as needed.

The most recently implemented program, Wheels to Meals, was developed by Transportation and Human Services staff. The Wheels to Meals program provides free transport for low income seniors from their home to the Granite Reef Senior Center for a nutritious lunch each day. This noon meal is the primary, and sometimes the only, daily meal for these seniors. Participants are qualified based on income by the Human Services staff, and receive vouchers for up to 5 round trips per week to the Senior Center. Wheels to Meals started as a pilot program in 2013 with 15 individuals and due to its success has now become a permanent program with 21 current participants.

As expected, just as our community's population ages, the number of participants served in the Cab Connection program increases every year, as does the program cost. A study of voucher use in Fiscal Year 2008-09 indicated that the majority of participants used an average of only 16 vouchers. To curb costs the number of vouchers was decreased from 20 to 16 for all participants. Proposition 400 funding was used to fund trips provided for ADA certified individuals. Currently, 50 percent of the program cost is covered by Proposition 400 funding. While the current level of Proposition 400 ADA funding will remain available, future program cost increases will need to be funded directly from the Transportation budget.

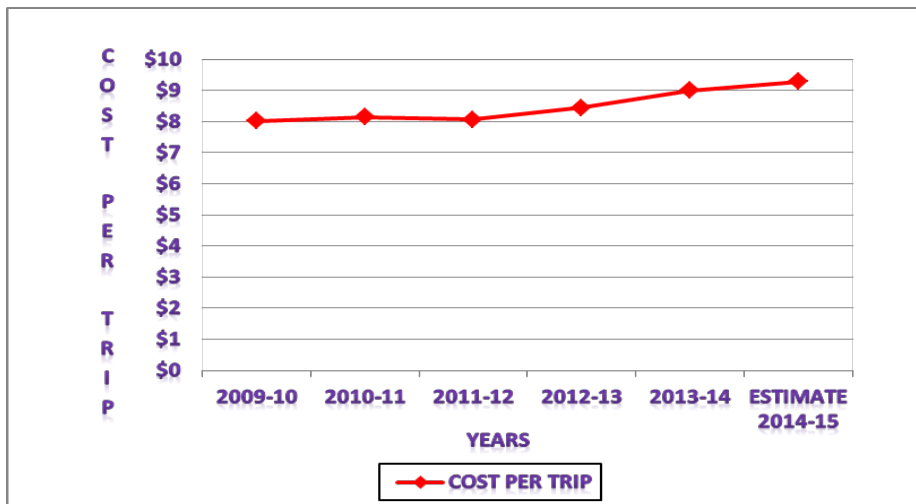
The number of trips provided and the program costs are depicted in Figure 3 below. The figure illustrates the increase in participants served and vouchers used. The cost per trip compares well to the East Valley Dial-a-Ride trip cost.

Once the Dial-a-Ride non-ADA fare was increased to \$4.00, Scottsdale staff expected to see an exodus from East Valley Dial-a-Ride to the Cab Connection as the average fare for participants on Cab Connection was less than \$3.00. Unfortunately that shift did not occur. There are still non-ADA participants taking short trips (less than 5 miles) using the more expensive East Valley Dial-a-Ride program instead of using the City's less expensive Cab Connection vouchers. A program goal this year is to bring the shorter trip non-ADA Dial-a-Ride users over to Cab Connection.

**Figure 3. Cab Connection Annual Trips Provided
Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated Fiscal Year 2014-15**



**Figure 4. Cab Connection Annual Budget
Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated Fiscal Year 2014-15**



SCOTTSDALE TROLLEY SYSTEM

Scottsdale's trolley system is well known throughout the valley, and not just for using old-fashioned Trolley replica vehicles. Two of the three routes (Miller Road and Neighborhood) have higher average daily ridership than many of the Valley Metro fixed routes. These two routes primarily serve neighborhoods in the southern portions of Scottsdale with the highest senior populations.

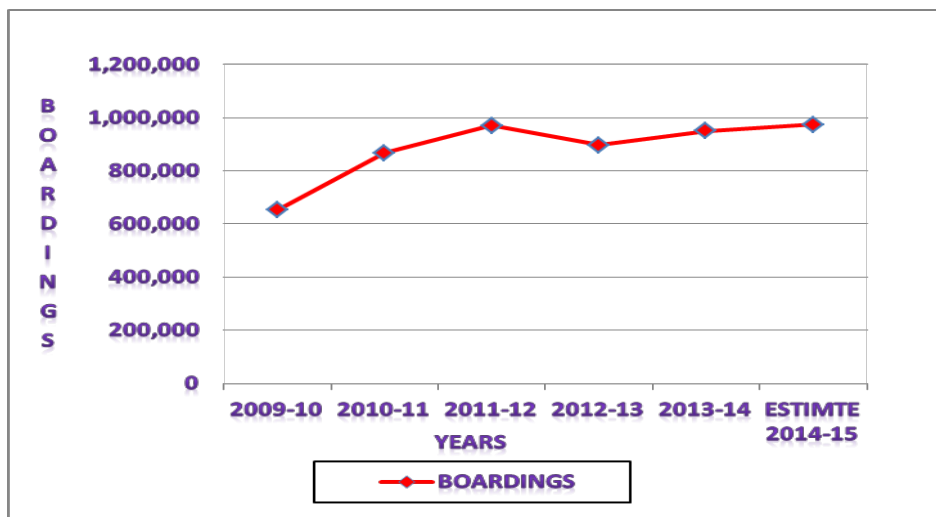
The routes pick up seniors from near their homes and take them to local activity centers. By serving at the neighborhood level, senior citizens have a shorter walk to a transit vehicle.

A third Downtown Route provides service primarily for tourists. The route provides a tour of the city for visitors in a nostalgic vintage looking trolley replica vehicle, introducing them to key attractions such as the Districts, Scottsdale Fashion Square, and many of the City's public art sculptures. Transfers are accommodated between all three Trolley routes. In addition, the three trolley routes provide access to all Valley Metro bus routes, the light rail system, and the Tempe Orbit system.

The annual ridership of the system over the last five years has increased as shown in Figure 5. The increase in boardings shown in Fiscal Year 2011-12 is the result of the addition of Valley Metro Route 76 to the City's Trolley system (Miller Road Trolley). Upon the changeover to a fare-free system, the route ridership doubled per month and continues to rise every year. Miller Road Trolley provides access throughout to a large number of senior housing units along Miller Road.

The System's annual cost is shown in Figure 7 below. The slight increase estimated in Fiscal Year 2014-15 is the result of the new contract rate that went into effect October 1, 2014.

**Figure 6. Scottsdale Trolley Boardings
Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated 2014-15**



**Figure 7. Scottsdale Trolley System Annual Budget
Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated 2014-15**

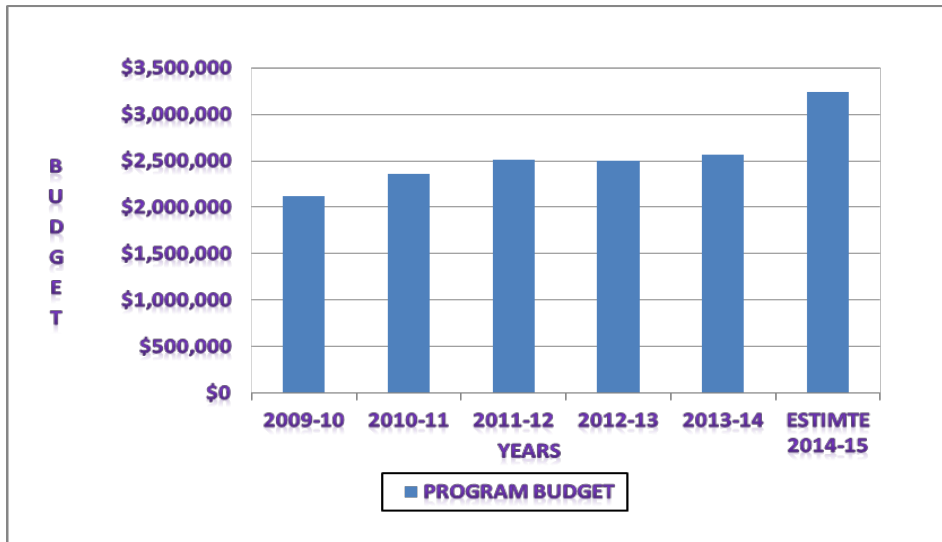
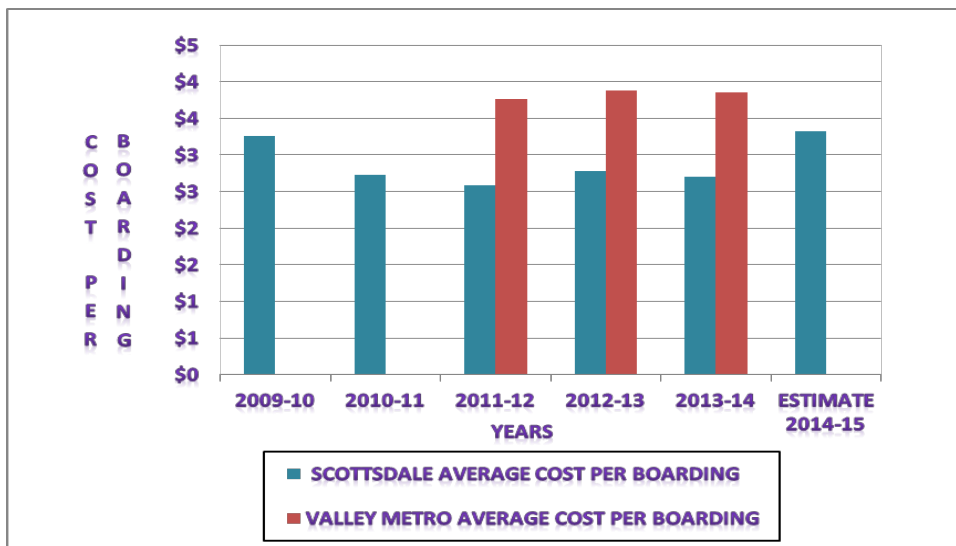


Figure 8 below compares the average cost per boarding to Valley Metro’s average cost per boarding per year. Scottsdale’s system cost is lower despite the fact that the system is not dependent on collecting a fare. Scottsdale’s annual system cost fluctuates slightly each year depending on the number of days service is provided each month.

The most important benefits for seniors is the fact that the service is provided free (no fare), and every vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair boarding ramp or lift. Thirteen of the 21 vehicles have a low floor (loads at almost curb height) and a ramp making boarding for seniors as easy as walking on. By 2016, all vehicles will be low-floor with a curb-height loading ramp.

Figure 8. Scottsdale Trolley vs. Valley Metro, Average Cost per Boarding Fiscal Years 2009-10 to Estimated 2014-15



SCOTTSDALE SENIOR TRANSIT SYSTEMS SUMMARY

The transportation programs for Scottsdale’s seniors are all interrelated. A senior can use a Cab Connection voucher to access a Trolley route, and then transfer to a Valley Metro fixed route, or if needed they can make all these transfers using one Dial-a-Ride trip. Together these programs can

increase a senior's quality of life by enabling them to meet basic life needs. While seniors can't take exotic vacations using this transportation system, they can attend doctor appointments, grocery shop, visit relatives and friends, and visit some activity centers including a senior center.

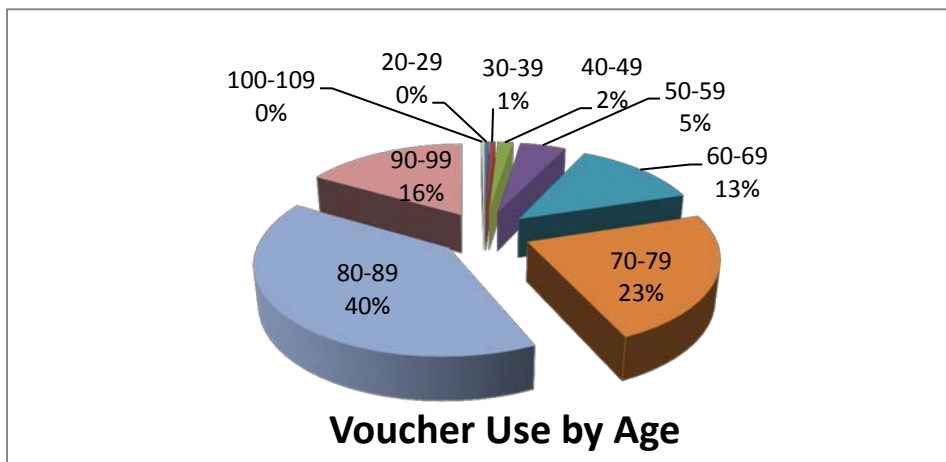
The ridership for all our programs is very robust. Together the three programs provided 1,066,981 trips in Fiscal Year 2013-14. Senior ridership is as follows.

Cab Connection Senior Use: Figure 9 below for the month of August 2014 is representative of monthly voucher orders for the past year. It indicates that 76% of those served are age 60 and above. The highest age group served is between the ages of 80 and 89 with 40 percent of the vouchers used. Notice there are three participants over the age of 100 that use vouchers on a regular basis.

Dial-a-Ride Senior Use: The percent of seniors served by Dial-a-Ride service in 2014 was slightly over 50 percent.

Scottsdale Trolley Senior Use: During the next year an onboard survey is scheduled to be conducted on all three Trolley routes to determine the number of senior riders as well as other information.. To date, no such survey has been conducted. The 2010 Census demographics of the whole City indicated a population of 218,000 with: 1) 42,946 (20%) age 65 and over; and, 2) 10,853 (0.05%) age 65+ with a disability. Trolley routes provide service in the areas with the highest numbers of these two population groups. The census also shows that Scottsdale has the highest percentage of people 65 and older among cities with 100,000 or more. The national average is 13 percent.

Figure 9. Cab Connection Voucher Use by Age, August 2014

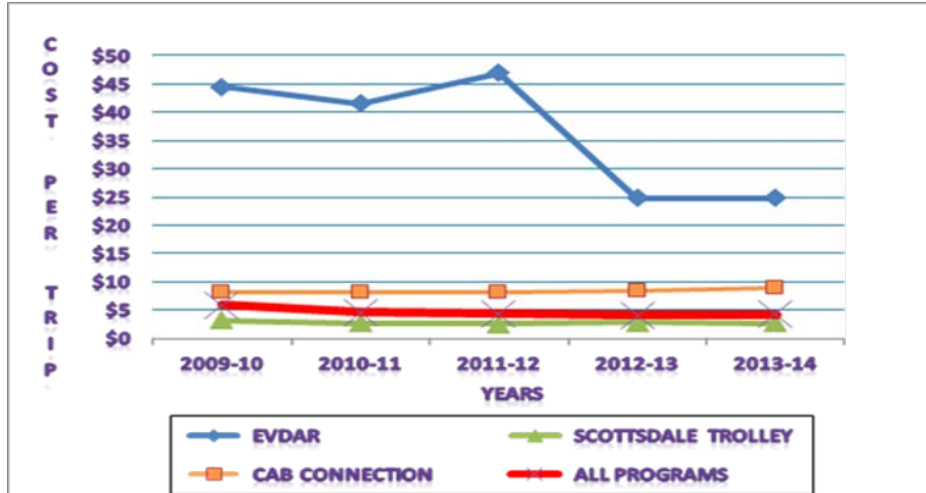


Service Program Costs

Figure 10 below indicates the overall cost per trip for all three programs. The cost per trip has actually decreased slightly since 2009-10 for most of these services. The biggest single factor is the decrease in the East Valley Dial-a-Ride system costs due to the change in service delivery method. The East Valley Dial-a-Ride changes combined with smaller decreases in the number of vouchers issued per Cab Connection participant, and use of our more fuel efficient Trolley buses have resulted in this cost reduction per trip trend.

Together the three programs provide a significant number of alternative transportation options for seniors at a reasonable cost to the City.

Figure 10. Scottsdale Senior Transportation Programs, Average Cost per Trip, Fiscal Year 2009-10 to 2013-14



GREATER PHOENIX AGE FRIENDLY NETWORK

Our special guest at this meeting, Amy St. Peter, will give an overview of the Greater Phoenix Age-Friendly Network. Amy is the Maricopa Association of Governments Human Services and Special Projects Manager. The following is information from a Greater Phoenix Age-Friendly Network overview brochure. Ms. St. Peter will provide more information on this program.

Goal

The goal of the Greater Phoenix Age-Friendly Network is to connect people 60 years plus with people of all ages in their community.

Impact

People will have more meaningful roles in their community. These roles will better leverage the talents and time of each person, facilitating greater contributions to their community, resulting in stronger communities for everyone.

Elements

- Technical assistance to communities to become more inclusive of older adults.
- An introduction to other people and new ideas through www.Connect60Plus.com.
- Ongoing training through a monthly webinar series, "Feed Your Mind," on the first Friday of each month at noon, and an annual conference featuring national and local best practices.

Partnerships

The network is made possible through strong collaborations with a number of local governments, Non-profit agencies, foundations, academic institutions, places of worship, and community residents.

- Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, Phoenix, AZ
- Grantmakers in Aging and Pfizer Foundation as part of Community AGEnda

- Partners for Livable Communities and MetLife Foundation as part of the City Leaders Institute on Aging in Place

Main Areas of Focus

Data analysis and extensive community engagement have identified transportation and social isolation as the main concerns of people 60 years plus. Connecting to others and living an active lifestyle are the main priorities. The network builds capacity to resolve concerns through the assets and strengths within the community.

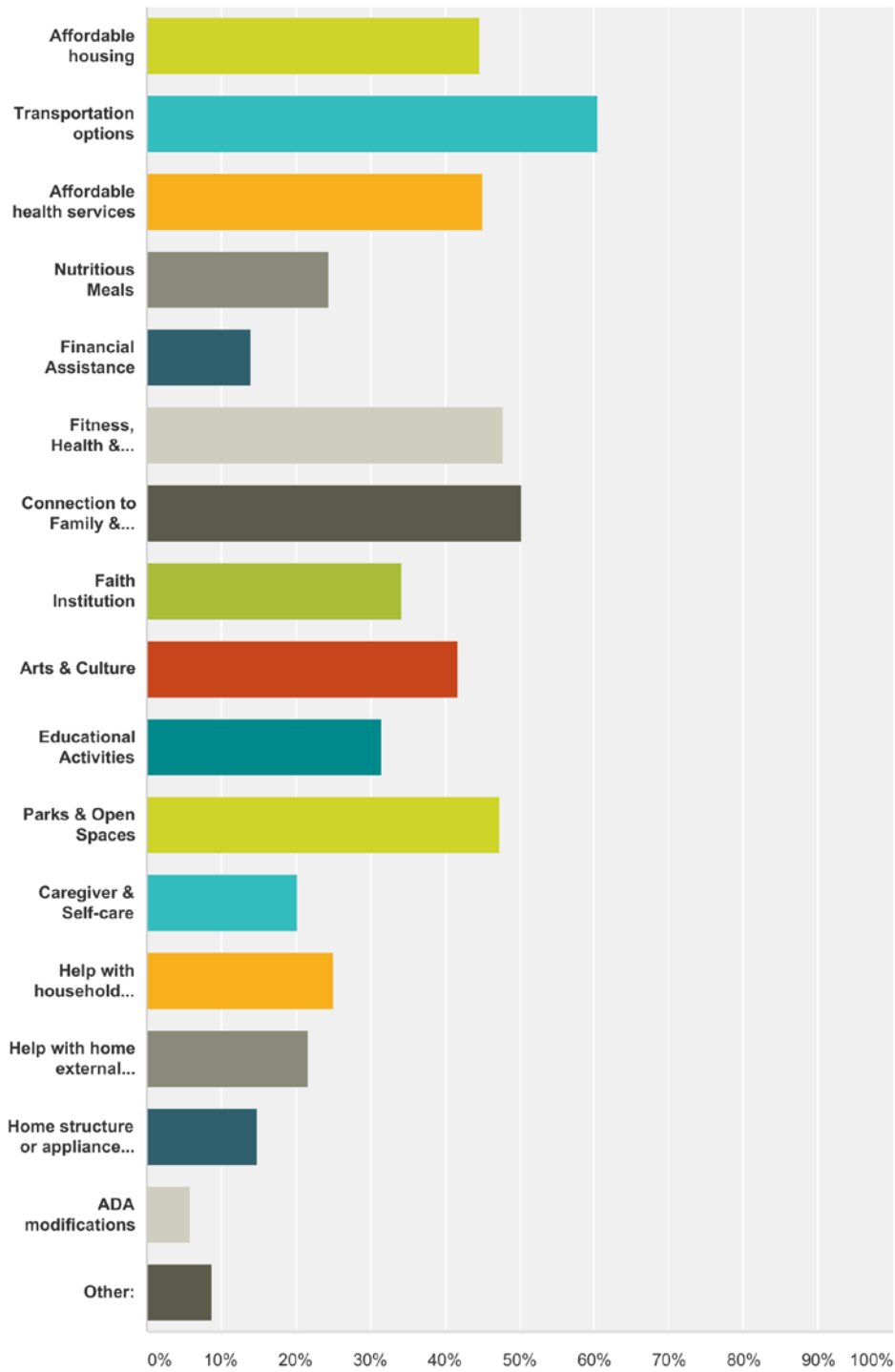
Scottsdale's Age Friendly Group

Scottsdale's role in the age friendly program linked to the Phoenix program and is through our own Age Friendly Planning Committee. Scottsdale's program is attended by approximately 15 community individuals who have an interest in transportation, shared housing and home modifications, health advocacy and care transitions, time banks, and villages.

In February 2014, a survey was taken by participants in programs of Duet, the Senior Expo, and Cab Connection program. There were 1,257 survey respondents total. In several questions relating to maintaining lifestyle, transportation was a high ranking response, compared to other responses such as health, nutrition, finance, etc. In one particular question: "What do you most value about your community and/or most value to assist you to live independently?" Over 60 percent of the 1,157 respondents that answered the question indicated Transportation was the most valued community asset (see Figure 11 attached).

The goal of the Age Friendly Scottsdale group is to rally residents and community leaders around the most viable opportunities for residents of all ages to be connected to their community. The group has an upcoming forum event to be hosted in two locations on October 21st and October 29th. Attendees will be invited to participate in Opportunity Presentations. These unique presentations will allow participants to engage in discussions with citizens, non-profit leadership, business owners and community members who are working with older adults in programs and projects that can be replicated here in Scottsdale, or are currently operating in Scottsdale with capacity for growth. Organizers are also hopeful new creative ideas will incubate out of the discussions as well.

Figure 11. Age Community Survey, 2014, Question #8 Responses
Answered: 1,257 Skipped: 100



Staff Contact: Madeline Clemann, 480-312-2732, mclemann@scottsdaleaz.gov