



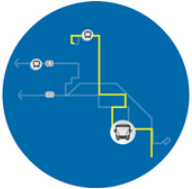
SunLine Refueled
**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
REPORT**

October 2020



INTRODUCTION

Community input and engagement is essential to creating effective and sustainable plans for the Coachella Valley Region. Outreach has been one of SunLine Transit Agency's top priorities in the development of SunLine Refueled, a plan that lays out short- and long-term initiatives that support the local economy, meet the transportation needs of Coachella Valley, and aims to aid in recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Refueled encompasses four different pillars: Consolidated Fixed Route Network, 10 Commuter Link, SunRide and Route 1X.

The Consolidated Fixed Route Network will optimize our resources, while maintaining services to low traffic areas through microtransit. This means less transfers and a more comfortable and leisurely ride for customers.



The 10 Commuter Link is aimed at improving regional service between the Coachella Valley and the Inland Empire. The 10 Commuter Link will travel to and from San Bernardino with enhanced options to connect to a number of key destinations in Southern California via transfers at a major transit hub.



To help attract new riders, we plan to utilize our most innovative new service, SunRide – a microtransit solution to supplement low-productivity corridors.

Route 1X is a weekday express service and is intended to improve productivity on SunLine's highest ridership route. Stopping at five locations in the Highway 111 corridor, Route 1X will provide an estimated 60-minute trip between Indio and Palm Springs.



In pursuing community engagement for SunLine Refueled in the era of COVID-19, the Agency created an entirely new out-of-the-box plan of tried-and-true distanced methods as well as establish new creative methods to ensure engagement across the 1,120 square mile service area.

Sincere thanks to all those who participated! This report offers a summary of what we heard, and how that input will be used in the final plan.

OUTREACH OVERVIEW

As a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the limitations for public gatherings, SunLine created a two-prong approach for the public outreach strategy to ensure there was diverse participation. From August through the beginning of October, the Agency hosted both in-person interactive outreach and virtual sessions. A key factor in all of our messaging has been creating all content in English and Spanish.

Our in-person interactions were all created with the current conditions and social distancing in mind.:

- **Five** Public Hearings - Scheduled as a longer amount of time to accommodate smaller groups to listen to a presentation and conduct a gallery walk with the maps. There were virtual hearings hosted as well.
- **97** Street Team Visits - 1-3 transit ambassadors were stationed at bus stops throughout the service network Monday-Saturday, where riders could ask questions and take the survey via iPad. Street team members are SunLine employees who have gone through our Transit Ambassador Program which trains them on the various parts of our service and helps give them the resources they need to address customer or potential concerns/questions.
- **Mobile Outreach Bus** – An entirely retrofitted retired paratransit bus housed mobile information including maps, videos, iPads and much more to educate and inform the most vulnerable populations who relied on public libraries and other public spaces to access digital information. One to two people at a time boarded our interactive mobile outreach bus to provide feedback and learn how SunLine Refueled would benefit them.

A plethora of virtual activities included Zoom webinars, social media events, meetings with local community organizations, and tele-town hall events.



*Map from 2014 Palm Springs Life Vision

SURVEY

As part of the outreach process, SunLine developed a 12-question survey to gain feedback on the different aspects of Refueled. These comments have been used to help determine the implementation plans for consideration. SunLine used PublicInput as the platform to run the survey project. This allows for a texting component and segmenting out geographic regions to help with data analysis.

The survey was accessible on every page of the new Refueled website. Survey cards were also distributed to members of the community at all in-person interactions each containing a QR code on one side for the English survey and, on the reverse side, the Spanish survey.

By participating in our survey, the community has helped us reinvent, reimagine and refuel public transportation in Coachella Valley.



Full survey results shown in separate report



530
Participants



3,373
Responses



52
Participated Via Text



193
Completed During
Street Team

KEY THEMES

ENHANCED BUS STOPS

Open ended responses indicated broad support for enhanced bus stops, with a range of suggestions including additional infrastructure and amenities.

CLEANLINESS

The importance of buses being clean, in the era of COVID-19, was a comment made by a majority of respondents.

FREQUENCY OF SERVICE

Support was expressed for an increased frequency in service with some respondents noting that this would encourage them to use public transportation more often.

SMARTPHONE ACCESS

The vast majority of respondents (87%) have access to a smartphone or tablet. This figure shows a 5 point increase from the last survey conducted in 2019.

ACTIVE RIDERSHIP

Of those who responded to the survey, 84% ride the SunLine transit system at least once per month.

EXPRESS SERVICE

90% of survey respondents indicated that they are likely to utilize the Route 1X when implemented in May 2021.



WHAT WE HEARD

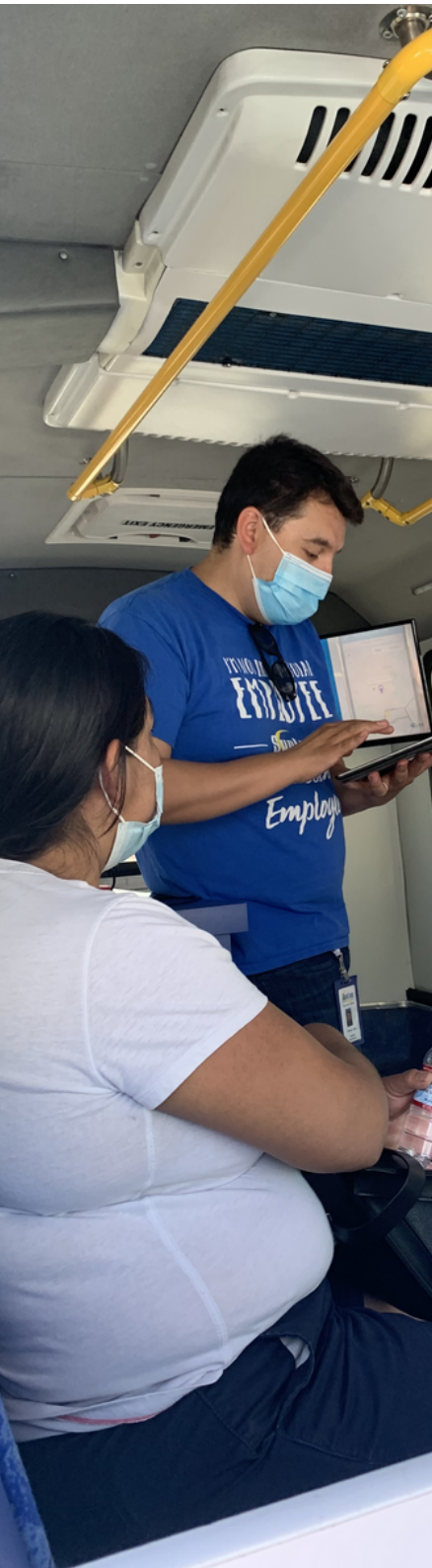
Not surprisingly, the survey responses reflected a wide diversity of opinions and perspectives on the future of public transportation in the Coachella Valley.

"More micro-transit options with mobile app features to track arrival time and weekend late service to downtown."

"Bus stops more accessible. Less transfers from one bus to another. My community is rural and I would like to see more bus stops in areas where people live near Mobile Home Parks. These bus stops will allow our families to access healthcare, groceries, and other crucial services."

"I love that idea of getting picked up from your home and getting dropped off at a bus stop. That would help seniors who are using public transportation, I think seniors should pay 1.25. Everybody else should pay 4.50. I went with 4.50 because you're paying for Luxury and convenience, and also even numbers help buyers to get the service or buy the product because of the number."

"Equip more buses with usb power stations to charge phones on the go!"



STREET TEAMS

Street teams were designed in an effort to put information about Refueled where people already are. From August to October, our street teams could be found throughout the Coachella Valley at major time points and transfer locations from Monday to Saturday. Each street team was equipped with an iPad so they could show riders how to access the new website and walk them through the survey.

959 AUGUST TOTAL INTERACTIONS

Week of 8/3	120 interactions
Week of 8/10	206 interactions
Week of 8/17	273 interactions
Week of 8/24	360 interactions

1,573 SEPTEMBER TOTAL INTERACTIONS

Week of 9/1	139 interactions
Week of 9/7	224 interactions
Week of 9/14	237 interactions
Week of 9/21	729 interactions
Week of 9/28	244 interactions

1,176 OCTOBER TOTAL INTERACTIONS

Week of 10/1	874 interactions
Week of 10/12	302 interactions

2,749 TOTAL INTERACTIONS



MOBILE OUTREACH BUS

To ensure that current and future riders are familiar with SunLine's new transportation offerings, we mobilized the Mobile Outreach Bus. What was a retired paratransit vehicle was revamped to be used as an outreach vehicle dedicated to the Refueled initiative. The vehicle completed its makeover and was deployed on September 9, 2020. Mobile outreach occurred Monday through Saturday near pharmacies, grocery stores, food distribution sites, etc. to engage with community members. This was in addition to engagement at bus stops.

The vehicle was used as a tool, in addition to Zoom meetings, to also engage both our bargaining and non-bargaining employees in the Refueled process.



DESTINATIONS

- UnitedLift Rental Assistance Pop-Up Events
- Mecca Drive-Thru Flu Clinic
- Cenus Pop-Up Events
- Weekly Food Distribution Sites
- Pharmacies
- Grocery Stores
- Meat Markets
- Laundromats

PARTNERSHIPS

In order to broaden and enhance outreach, SunLine partnered with local community-based organizations. These groups donated needed supplies, distributed information through their websites, in-person and social media channels.

County of Riverside

As part of the County of Riverside's Masks are Medicine Campaign, SunLine received 20,000 masks, which we were able to bundle into individual packages along with a pledge card and a Refueled information. The bags were distributed by our street team members to riders throughout the service network. In addition, Supervisor Perez's office helped distribute 1,000 flyers to communities and churches in the Eastern Coachella Valley.

FIND Food Bank

SunLine Transit Agency continues to volunteer on a weekly basis with FIND Food Bank in their warehouse helping put together 12 lb. bags of dry goods for families. The Agency has so far printed 5,000 flyers that have been included in bags that are taken to distribution sites throughout the Coachella Valley.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

1,500 flyers were provided to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to be included in their PPE distribution to local families.

Lift To Rise

Lift To Rise partnered with SunLine at four different outreaches. Their goal supporting the community's most vulnerable members, goes hand-in-hand with our goal of keeping Coachella Valley moving forward.



United Way of the Desert

PARTNERSHIPS



Cathedral City



Cities

A cross pollination of information has been shared with member agency city communication staff, who many have included it on their website, e-newsletters, digital billboards, events calendar, and social media.

Higher Education

Social media events have been held to help SunLine connect with students at local higher education facilities.

Coachella Valley Housing Coalition

Coachella Valley Housing Coalition distributed 1,000 Refueled flyers. This is an especially good partnership to have because their clients are also those we seek to serve through public transportation.

1-on-1 Meetings

Outreach is an active project with many meetings scheduled to occur with our community organizations with opportunities to continue spreading the word. 17 different agencies will soon assist SunLine during the education phase of Refueled.

INFORMATION DASHBOARD

SOCIAL MEDIA & VIRTUAL EVENTS

Social Media

Engagement: 2,119
Impressions: 37,277

Instagram Live: 362 views
Facebook Live: 407 engagements

Website (www.SunLineRefueled.org)

3,025 unique visitors

Social media live events have been especially useful in maintaining transparency and engagement with the public. Live events on Facebook and Instagram allow virtual audiences to engage in real time. Live events are also given priority in these platforms' algorithms, which means they are seen by more people than regular prerecorded videos or photos. This has been especially useful during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SunLine launched the first ever e-newsletter. The newsletter allows for more transparency and additional ways for disbursing information about Refueled. It also promotes us as a lifestyle service. The newsletter was sent to 128 inboxes (and growing), with a 36 percent open rate.

Zoom webinars were hosted and recorded versions are available on the website for community members to watch at a time that works for their schedule.

PRESS & PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

Newspaper

Quarter page ads ran for 5 weeks

- EL Informador de Valle - 130,000 impressions
- La Prensa – 232,500 impressions

Article from Virtual Media Roundtable

- Desert Sun – 20,000 impressions

Radio

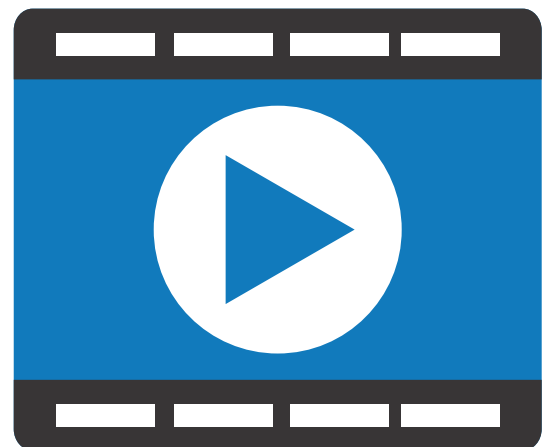
3,245 radio spots featured with over 4,552,400 impressions

- KCLB 1,120,00 impressions
- KDGL 720,000 impressions
- KPSI 1,120,000 impressions
- KKUU 1,520,000 impressions
- KUNA 72,400 impressions

TV News Hits

33 story hits from Virtual Media Roundtable

- Publicity value \$15,416.51
- Total viewers 94,904



TIMELINE

- A website dedicated to the Refueled initiative launched in August, available in both English and Spanish. The website is focused on the four pillars of Refueled and allows community members to explore and provide feedback.

- A-frame signs, bus shelter ads, on-board signs, flyers and survey cards were all designed and began posting/distribution in August.

- SunLine has been actively promoting Refueled on all three of our most used social media profiles: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

- During the month of September, targeted ads in local Spanish print publications, airing 30 second radio spots on English and Spanish stations, and convening a virtual media roundtable.

- Moving forward into the Education phase will begin in November and continue well into 2021.

- o Look forward to new TV commercials
- o Additional Radio Spots
- o Geofence digital ads
- o New bus shelter ads
- o New onboard signs
- o Door hangers





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