

# Sun Van Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) *Draft Recommendations*

# Overview



Project Background



Service Analysis



Customer Survey



Draft Recommendations

# Project Background

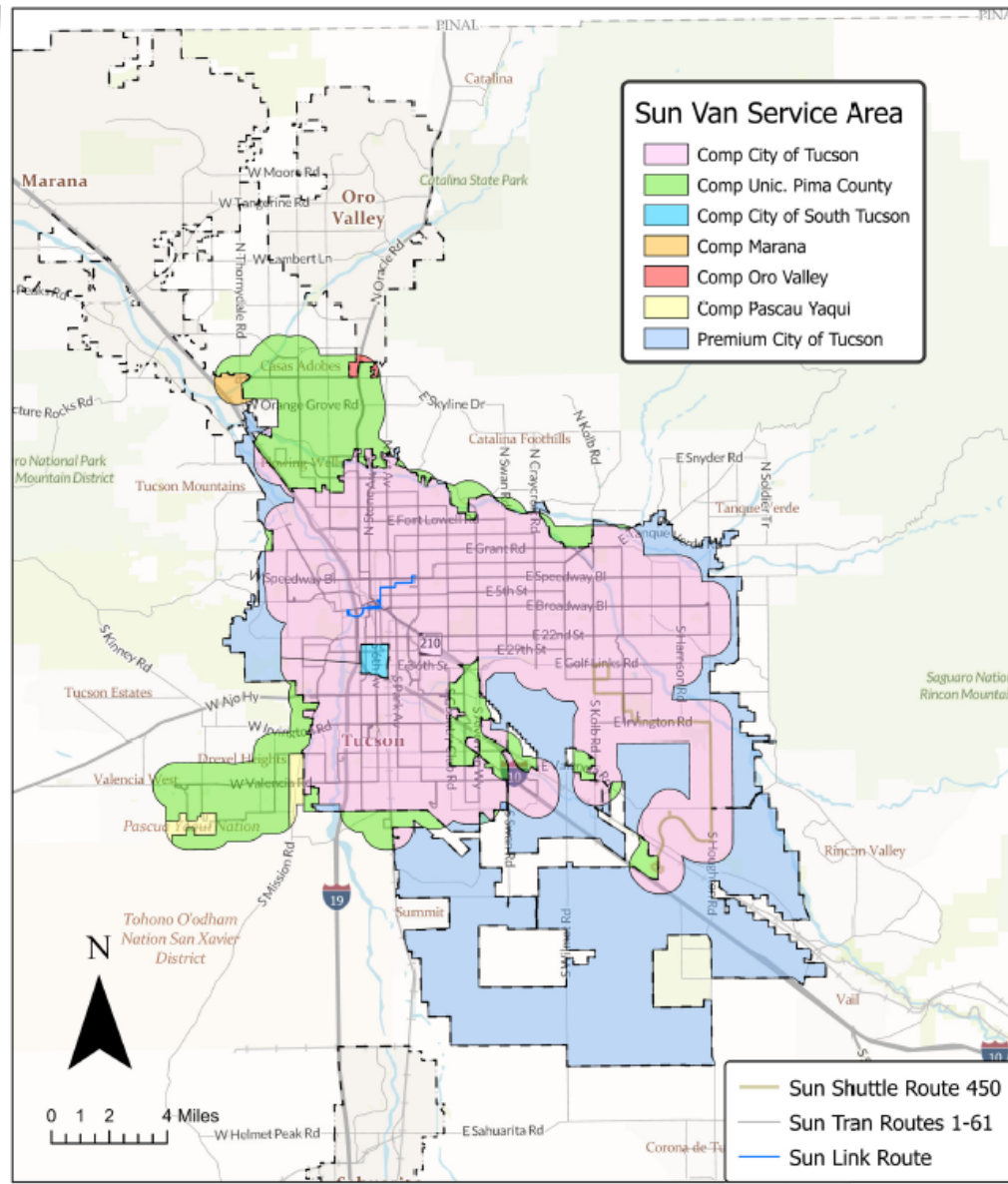


# What is Sun Van?

- Shared-ride, public transportation service for people who have a disability that prevents them from using Sun Tran or Sun Link
- Must be found eligible before using service
- Service provided to/from destinations within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of Sun Tran and Sun Link routes during times these services operate
- Premium service offered to destinations and hours beyond requirements when available



# Sun Van Service Area



# What is a COA?

- The Sun Van Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) objectives are to:
  - Evaluate existing Sun Van service, policies, and procedures
  - Identify opportunities for improvement to Sun Van and create a more equitable, effective, and efficient transit system
  - Propose recommendations for future Sun Van service changes or expansions to better serve the community.
- Sun Van COA complements Sun Tran COA

# Project Team & Timeline

- Partnership between City of Tucson, RATP Dev, and TMD



- Project Timeline

**Community  
Meetings & Survey**  
*Spring 2024*

**Feedback on Draft  
Recommendations**  
*Spring 2025*

**Final Report**  
*Summer 2025*



# Service Evaluation





# Peer Review

- Higher portion of transit budget used for paratransit
- Rides per capita higher
- Productivity similar
- Better cost effectiveness
- Lower On-Time Performance
- Higher Customer Cancellations

## Twelve Peer Agencies

Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA)

City of Albuquerque

City of Colorado Springs

City of El Paso

City of Memphis

City of Phoenix

Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority

Jacksonville Transportation Authority

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority

Milwaukee County

RTC of Washoe County (Nevada)

# Sun Van Service Evaluation

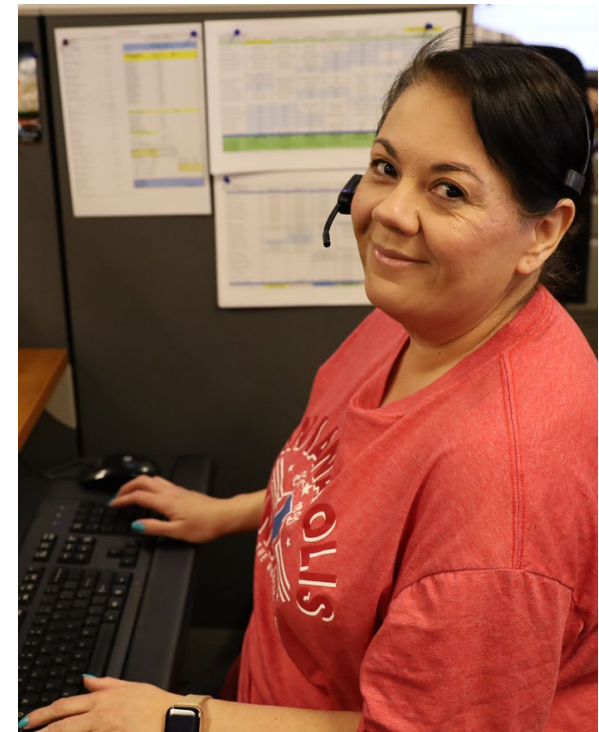
- **Post-COVID Trends**  
(2019 vs 2023)
  - Monthly boardings by client increased 2%
  - No major shift in trips to top destinations
  - 33% of clients new since 2019
- **Eligibility**
  - Number of applications received unchanged
  - Medical verification process overly complicated for staff and customers



# Sun Van Service Evaluation

- **Reservations**

- Calls take longer than typical because of how trips are scheduled
- Social service agencies making many trips reservations per call which takes additional time
- Trip negotiation not being used effectively which make schedule less efficient
- Pick-up times round to every five minutes which is also less efficient



# Sun Van Service Evaluation

- **Operations**

- Not currently meeting On-Time Performance (OTP) goal which is lowest on weekdays from 3-5pm
- Five-minute call outs to customers take too much time for dispatchers
- Sun Van travel time compared to Sun Tran travel time exceeds current policy on 15% of weekday trips



# Customer Survey



# Satisfaction/Importance

- Exceeding expectations for cost, comfort, and safety
- Not meeting expectation for the on-time performance and ride scheduling

Service Attribute	Average Importance (1 to 5)	Average Satisfaction (1 to 5)	Importance/ Satisfaction Gap
Ability to schedule a ride when you want it	4.77	3.78	(0.99)
On-time drop-off at your destination	4.83	3.94	(0.89)
On-time pickup within the 30-minute window	4.75	3.88	(0.86)
Where service is available to	4.74	4.02	(0.72)
Length of the ride time	4.28	3.77	(0.51)
Hours when service is available	4.70	4.24	(0.46)
Reservation call answer time	4.31	3.94	(0.37)
Sun Van App	3.64	3.28	(0.37)
How far in advance trips reservation are accepted	4.40	4.06	(0.34)
Professionalism of reservations staff	4.60	4.43	(0.17)
Comfort of ride	4.23	4.17	(0.07)
Professionalism of driver	4.56	4.53	(0.04)
Safety onboard vehicle	4.67	4.67	-
Cost of riding	4.42	4.64	0.22



# Emerging Mobility Options

- 37% of existing Sun Van clients used ride share companies such as Uber or Lyft in the previous month.
- About half of clients indicated that they would use a rideshare company if it was offered. Most would use the service less than three times per month.





# Draft Recommendations



# Draft Recommendations

*For short-term, immediate implementation*

## Eligibility

- Explore outsourcing eligibility process
- Track and enforce No-Show policy
- Diagnose technology issues that make software slow for City eligibility staff

## Reservations

- Reduce call hold times so that 95% of calls are answered within three minutes and 99% within five minutes
- Implement new phone tree to have dedicated sub-queues for each call category. For example, Reservations, Ride Status, and Cancellations.

# Draft Recommendations

*For short-term, immediate implementation*

## Reservations continued

- Implement Trip Negotiation in Sun Van app, to be consistent with phone reservations
- Update procedures and conduct call taker training
- Reallocate staff from call taking to scheduling

## Operations

- Hire additional Sun Van drivers to 2019 levels
- Conduct dispatch training
- Track and report service performance data by service type. For example, track Sun Van and Pima Co separately as well as ADA compared to Premium service.

# Draft Recommendations

## *Public Feedback Requested*

### **Eligibility**

- Simplify medical verification form and require applicants to provide with rest of application for more efficient processing

### **Reservations**

- Offer negotiated trip times for more efficient and on-time scheduling
- Provide pick-up windows to the minute instead of rounding to every five minutes
- Limit to four trip reservations per call to reduce hold time
- Implement voice response and/or texting options for “Where’s my ride?” calls for faster responses

# Draft Recommendations

## *Public Feedback Requested*

### **Operations**

- Implement voice response and/or texting for call outs, allowing dispatch to better monitor service
- Change “On-Board” comparability (Sun Van vs Sun Tran) to less than 5% of trips exceeding fixed-route time plus 25 minutes

# Draft Recommendations

## *Public Feedback Requested*

### **Optional/Premium (Non-ADA) Service**

- Temporarily narrow Sun Van “Optional” service to before 7am, between 10am-2pm and after 7pm on weekdays until on-time and on-board time meet standards.
- Negotiate premium trip rates with social service agencies or handle trips same way as rest of trips.

# Draft Recommendations

## *Public Feedback Requested*

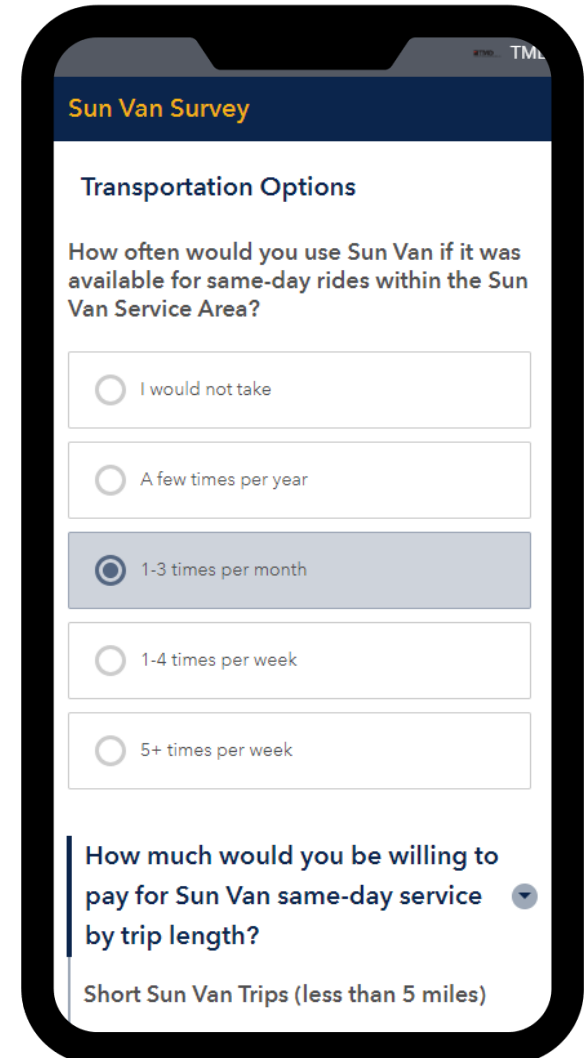
### **New Mobility Choices Program**

- Piloting program for existing Sun Van clients for one year with a 6-month assessment
- Service would use combination of TNC (Uber/Lyft) and ADA accessible providers (UZURV)
- Options Under Consideration
  - \$15 fare for trips of any distance
  - \$12 fare with trips limited to 8 miles or less



# Getting Involved

- **Visit Our Website**
  - [suntran.com/sunvancoa/](https://suntran.com/sunvancoa/)
  - Improved accessibility for screen readers
- **Take Our Survey**
  - Provide feedback on draft recommendations
  - Survey questions designed to work well on screen readers



**Sun Van Survey**

**Transportation Options**

How often would you use Sun Van if it was available for same-day rides within the Sun Van Service Area?

☐ I would not take

☐ A few times per year

☒ 1-3 times per month

☐ 1-4 times per week

☐ 5+ times per week

How much would you be willing to pay for Sun Van same-day service by trip length?

Short Sun Van Trips (less than 5 miles)

**Thank You!**

