DEVELOPING VALLEY TOURISM ALIGNED WITH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Balancing visitor needs and desires with a future-minded community focus

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OVERVIEW

- Advancements and areas of improvement in Phoenix and other Valley cities
- How ASU fits into the picture
- Ideas for the future
WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

- World Tourism Organization definition:

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the environment, and host communities”
CONSIDERING TOURISM…WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCES?

- What are the first things travellers look for when trip planning?

- Are tourists mindful of sustainability and sustainable choices?

- Phoenix’s accessibility strengths via transit and new housing development

- ASU creating transit/visitation nodes in tandem with tourism-related development
WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO “SUSTAINABLE TRAVELERS”?

- Seeking authenticity through experiences that reflect actual local culture
- Supporting companies that invest in their employees and communities and buy local
- Booking with companies that educate customers about the uniqueness of the destination (its history, culture, residents, and resources)

Source: Mandala Research, 2016
MAKING “GREEN” TRAVEL EASY FOR TOURISTS

- Using public transit can be a convenience or cost decision more than environmentally driven, but it can still have sustainability benefits for the community
  - Similarly, people might eat local/organic for experience or health-based reasons, but in the end the community and environment benefits

- Navigating public transit:
  - Do websites tell you how to get where you’re going? Are they user-friendly?
  - For instance, Valley Metro Trip Planner lists addresses of some Phoenix hotels, but not all
ONLINE TRIP PLANNING TOOLS

- Public transit:
  Valley Metro Trip Planner (http://trips.valleymetro.org)
EXAMPLE FROM ANOTHER CITY…
Trip Planner

3 Trip Plan Results:
MSP International Airport, Fort Snelling, Minnehaha Falls
Depart at 4:26 PM on Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Adjust Your Trip
- From: Address
  - airport
- To: Address
  - Attractions
- Time: Depart
  - 04:26 PM

Optional:
- Walking Distance
- Service Type
- Trip Type
- Wheelchair Access

Select Landmark
- American Swedish Institute
- Bakken Museum
- Basilica of St Mary
- Calhoun Beach
- Canterbury Park
- Cathedral of St Paul
- Childrens Theatre Company
- CHS Field
- First Avenue
- Fort Snelling Historic Site
- Guthrie Theater
- Hennepin History Museum
- Hopkins Center for the Arts
- James J Hill House
- Majorie McNeely Conservatory
- Mall of America
- Mill City Museum
- Minneapolis Convention Center
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Minnehaha Falls
- Minnesota Childrens Museum
- Minnesota History Center
- Minnesota Museum of American Art
- Minnesota State Capitol
- Minnesota Transportation Museum
- Minnesota Zoo
- Museum of Russian Art
- National Sports Center
- Orchestra Hall
- Orway Center for the Performing Arts
- Orpheum Theatre
- RiverCentre
- Science Museum of Minnesota

Trip Time 0:06
- Blue Line to Mpls-Target Field
  - Map | Stops
  - Personal Schedule (?)
  - Map
  - Text

Trip Time 0:06
- Blue Line to Mpls-Target Field
  - Map | Stops
  - Personal Schedule (?)
  - Map
  - Text

Fare Reduced Fare
- 5
- 2.25

Please have exact fare ready. Bus fareboxes and drivers do not make change.
Learn about Go-To Cards
TRIP PLANNING AND BOOKING RESOURCES FOR “GREEN” TRAVELLERS

▶ Business and traveller certification programs and online workshops
▶ Online travel info and booking sites (such as TripAdvisor GreenLeaders, and bookdifferent from booking.com)
PHOENIX TOURISM MARKETING AND MESSAGING
VISITOR RESOURCES

https://www.visitphoenix.com/learn-plan/getting-around/maps/
Ride Valley Metro to local destinations

Come on board and see all of the fun destinations you can reach on bus and rail. Avoid parking and traffic hassles and leave the driving to us. Click on the guides below to plan your adventure today!

http://www.valleymetro.org/planning_your_trip/destinations
Drinks By Rail

Who needs a car when a ‘conveyer belt’ can transport you between CenPho libations and indie food?

EMERGING TRENDS IN TOURISM DESTINATION CITIES

- “Slow Travel” – encouraging exploration via different means; emphasis on the journey as being as important as the destination
- Creative transit options – boats, street cars, trams, multi-person party bikes, shared bikes (Grid Bikes), bike taxis, etc…
- Mixed-use developments and transit-oriented development (not a new idea, but one that continually resurfaces in new places, in new ways)
TOURIST ACCESS TO THE VALLEY’S CITIES

- Sky Train at airport – flashy and fun design; sets a good first impression
- Light Rail provides quick and easy access from PHX to Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa
  - Public transit access to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway airport still a work in progress…
- Busiest stations for light rail onboarding include 44th/Washington (airport), McDowell/Central Ave (Arts District), Downtown Phoenix, Downtown Tempe, and ends of line
  - Emphasizes tourism and travel importance as well as commuter use
LIGHT RAIL AND TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

- New rail development (and bus connections) will change the very “nature” of the types of attractions visitors can easily access…Not just museums, restaurants, and hotels!
  - Southern extension (2023 anticipated completion)
    - Audubon Center and Rio Salado trail
    - Improved access to South Mountain, but rail won’t go all the way there (to Baseline only)
      - Phoenix has an opportunity to have some of the easiest urban public transit access to significant acreage for trails, outdoor recreation, and nature
FOSTERING CREATIVITY AND SENSE OF PLACE

- Featured art at stations to represent the neighborhoods served by light rail (clip source: http://www.valleymetro.org)

In an effort to enhance the urban landscape and beautify the communities, Valley Metro Rail features public art concepts at each station and at select facilities. The following art books contain photos of the public art at each Valley Metro Rail property and a summary of the artist's vision.
CAPITALIZING ON LOCAL OFFERINGS AND NEIGHBORHOOD UNIQUENESS

- Local First Arizona’s “Small Wonders Maps”

![Small Wonders Map Collection](http://www.localfirstaz.com/small-wonders)
DOWNTOWN PHX HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

Public transit-friendly, walkable, mixed-use, near venues and other attractions

Recent developments in downtown core:

- Brand-new Marriott just opening on south end
- Recently opened Found:Re incorporating gallery space
- Hampton Inn currently being built adjacent to ASU Downtown
- Hilton Garden Inn restoration of historic Hotel Monroe
- Hotel Palomar/CityScape condos mixed-use development

There are about 450 hotels in the Valley total!
CONVENTION AND BUSINESS TOURISTS: ENABLING CAR-FREE LIFESTYLES FOR VALLEY VISITORS ALONGSIDE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Mesa Convention Center
- Advertises itself as having on-site guest rooms and being only a half block from Metro Light Rail
- Also has 2 electric vehicle charging stations

Phoenix Convention Center
- Directly on light rail line, near many hotel options
- Added solar panels to its roof in 2008 to become the largest panel installation downtown and the first solar energy installation by the City of Phoenix
HOTELS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Some area hotels and resorts have embraced sustainability initiatives through:

- LEED certified buildings
- Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association’s (AzLTA) “Certified Green Lodging”
- Brand-wide or hotel-specific sustainability measures

Some local examples:

- Arizona Grand Resort and Spa
  - Has “Green Task Force”
  - Certified by AzLTA
- Kimpton’s (Palomar) brand-wide sustainability commitments
  - Green Key Eco-Rating Program
  - TripAdvisor GreenLeaders™ program
Sourcing locally for foods and other products & services

Reducing waste on provider and consumer sides

Supporting community initiatives and programs

City of Phoenix Green Business Leader Program

- Limited companies currently involved, hopefully program will continue to expand
THE STATE’S OUTLOOK ON SUSTAINABILITY

Challenges:

- Making sure dialogue continues across administrations
- Incorporating different state agencies into the conversation, as well as other stakeholders
- Developing programs that have lasting power
- Balancing and merging economic, social/cultural, and environmental priorities
Mission
To sustain the culture, heritage and environment of Arizona, while at the same time, promoting economic growth and social well being through tourism.

Benchmark
Identify current attitudes and perceptions related to sustainability in Arizona’s visitor industry and use to evaluate future performance.

Facilitate
Develop and enhance resources that reinforce sustainable practices around Arizona.

Market
Craft marketing resources that build Arizona’s tourism identity as a leader in sustainable practices.
WHAT ARE OTHER LEADING DESTINATIONS DOING?

- Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)  
  www.gstcouncil.org
  - Oversees certification processes for Destination Criteria (GSTC-D) and Hotel & Tour Operator Criteria (GSTC-H&TO)
  - Destination cities that have adopted the criteria include San Francisco, Baltimore, Miami

- Some states, regions and cities are developing their own standards and certifications
  - Example: Adventure Green Alaska (tourism businesses and outfitters, membership-based)
WHAT IS ASU’S ROLE?

- EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS
  - Fostering a passion for Arizona and perspectives of sustainability:
    This year’s master’s graduates going to work for Arizona Office of Tourism, Local First Arizona
  - Opening doors through undergraduate internships:
    Hospitality, outdoor recreation, and other areas in which conservation is key
  - Fostering student interest in the local community:
    PhD students involved with research on Phoenix Convention Center, downtown Phoenix hotels and bars, visitor use of ridesharing; projects that involve Phoenix museums and other tourism resources
COMMUNITY EMBEDDEDNESS

- One of the key tenets of ASU’s mission is to “enhance our local impact and social embeddedness”
- ASU faculty and students aren’t just stuck in the classrooms. We work within our communities in advisory roles, as board members, as consultants, and as volunteers

*Examples:*
- Arizona State Committee on Trails (ASCOT)
- Gilbert tourism advisory group
- Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition
- South Mountain Environmental Education Center
WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE VALLEY?

- Build on the progress of DTPHX, Local First, and other organizations’ efforts to encourage walkable/bikable/public transit-accessible communities that are sociable, place-specific, and enjoyable by both locals and visitors alike.

- Make sustainability an easy choice! Keep the question of “how can we make this easy, accessible and enjoyable to tourists?” in the forefront of planning decisions that affect tourists’ involvement.

- Work to unite transit planners, hotel managers, food and beverage industry, local attractions, municipalities, and researchers to create a united vision for the potential of sustainable tourism in the Valley.

- Continue to encourage green building practices, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and community-focused planning.
FIND THE CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ONLINE:

- https://scrd.asu.edu/sustainabletourism
- www.facebook.com/ASUCenterforSustainableTourism

Thank you!