Appendix A: Defining Community Values
October 2015
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Appendix A: Defining Community Values

1 DEFINING COMMUNITY VALUES

Introduction

The NextGen project is organized around three project phases, each of which includes extensive community engagement. The first phase (Phase 1) involved defining transit needs and exploring community values, aspirations, and priorities about the importance of future public transit. In the initial stakeholder meetings and interviews, NextGen staff collected ideas about central Ohio’s future including the role public transit could and should play in that future. These thoughts and insights were translated into a series of values, to help organize and more clearly articulate priorities. The draft values were shared with the Project Advisory Group (PAG) as well as at 16 public and stakeholder meetings held in downtown Columbus and at locations around Franklin County (see list at end of this section).

As part of each meeting, members of the public discussed each of the values and were asked to rank and prioritize them. They were told that the values and priorities would be incorporated into the evaluation framework and would guide the project selection. The following section describes how the values were developed and the results of the “voting” process.

Initial Values and Priorities List

The first round of outreach engagement consisted of interviews with community leaders and “focus group” style meetings with populations that tend to use public transportation but are often left out of traditional public outreach processes (i.e., older adults, people with disabilities, young professionals, Latino and Somali communities, and representatives from social service organizations). The NextGen team solicited input on future transit needs and different priorities for how investment should be made. Based on this round of input, the NextGen team developed an initial list of eight values. This first attempt to articulate central Ohio’s values for public transit was shared with COTA staff and at the first PAG meeting held in March 2015. The initial values were defined as:

- **Thrive**: transit should support neighborhood and community development.
- **Manage**: transit should help the region manage growth and ensure development is accessible.
- **Preserve**: transit should be used as a strategy to help preserve and improve Central Ohio’s quality of life.
- **Sustain**: transit should be used as a strategy to help protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gases.
- **Equitable**: transit should support access to jobs, employment centers, medical facilities, and educational opportunities.
- **Attract/retain**: transit should help attract young professionals to Central Ohio and retain the ones that are already here.
- **Connect**: transit should connect people with regional destinations and strengthen local circulation.
- **Develop**: transit should support regional economic development goals and needs.

**Values and Priorities List, Version 2**

PAG members both provided input to the overall list and voted for the three values they believed were the most important guiding principles for transit investments in central Ohio. Through this process, some values were combined, some were eliminated and others were refined. At the end of the PAG meeting, the list was narrowed into five values:

- **Make Better Connections**: extend transit’s reach deeper into the communities it already serves.
- **Invest in Overlooked Communities**: direct investment to specific corridors and neighborhoods.
- **Follow the Growth**: strengthen fast growing areas.
- **Build on Success**: make existing transit service more compelling.
- **Save the Earth**: protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gases.

**Values and Priorities List, Version 3**

The list of five values was used to conduct the values and priorities exercise during the first public and targeted meetings conducted the week of April 20th, 2015. After the first of these meetings, COTA staff and members of the project team decided to add a sixth value to the list that reflected the goal of using public transit to focus growth and influence land use. This sixth values was verbally added to the list during the values and priorities exercise of subsequent meetings. The sixth value was defined as:

- **Focus the Growth**: use new transit investments to attract and concentrate growth.

At the May and July 2015 PAG meetings, PAG members reviewed the research to date and revised the list of values again. Several members commented that the two values related to growth (Follow the Growth and Focus the Growth) were both too similar and failed to accurately capture their intent. As a result, the two values were combined into Coordinate with Growth; this value was further defined as coordinating transit investment with regional growth, to serve fast growing areas but also as a tool to guide and concentrated growth. In addition PAG members suggested some changes to the wording of the values. As a result, the following final list of values was incorporated into the evaluation framework:

1. **Make Better Connections** – Improve existing transit service’s reach further into the communities it already serves.
2. **Invest in Underserved Communities** – Direct transit investment to specific corridors and neighborhoods.
3. **Coordinate with Growth** – Encourage inward growth and serve existing neighborhoods. Strengthen fast-growing areas.
4. **Build on Success** – Make existing transit service more compelling.
5. **Sustainability** – Protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Please note that the final wording of the values was refined by the PAG and COTA after the conclusion of the Phase 1 outreach process. The exact wording of the values above differs slightly from the wording of the values that were identified at the conclusion of the Phase 1 outreach process that is detailed in the Community and Stakeholder Outreach Summary of Phase 1 Findings published under a separate cover as part of this study.

**Results of Values Exercise**

At each community event, participants were asked to rank and prioritize the list of values. Meeting participants voted for up to the three values they believed were the most important guiding principles for transit investment in central Ohio. Nearly everyone who participated in the exercise voted using the list of six values (this included Focus the Growth and Follow the Growth, prior to the consolidation of the two into Coordinate with Growth). During some of the meetings, participants voted interactively as well as by using a form handed out at the meeting (see Appendix B). In other meetings, there was no interactive voting and participants voted solely using the form. In order to be consistent and in an effort to avoid double counting, only votes submitted using the form were included in the final tally of votes. The NextGen team compiled these values and analyzed the results of the exercise across all participants.

In total, nearly 200 people cast 569 votes. Make Better Connections received the most votes with 118, or 21% of all votes. Build on Success received the second highest number of votes, with 104 (18%). However, the next three values (Focus the Growth (17%), Invest in Overlooked Communities (16%) and Follow the Growth (16%) were valued similarly. Save the earth received the lowest number of votes by a significant margin.

**Figure 1: Summary of Public Input on Transit Values**

![Figure 1: Summary of Public Input on Transit Values](source: NelsonNygaard Consulting Associates)
NextGen Phase 1: Stakeholder and Community Outreach Events

Public Meetings
1. COTA William G Porter Board Room, Columbus, OH – 4/23/2015, midday session
2. COTA William G Porter Board Room, Columbus, OH – 4/23/2015, evening session
3. The Westerville Senior Center, Westerville, OH – 6/1/2015
4. Dublin Community Recreation Center, Dublin, OH – 6/2/2015
5. Barack Recreation Center, Columbus, OH – 6/3/2015
6. City Hall, Grove City, OH – 6/4/2015

Meetings with Stakeholder Groups
7. Social Services Targeted Workshop, Columbus Public Health Room 119C, Columbus, OH – 03/09/2015*
8. Young Professionals Targeted Workshop, Columbus Public Health Room 119D, Columbus, OH – 03/10/2015*
9. Somali and New Americans Targeted Workshop, Columbus Public Health Room 119D, Columbus, OH – 03/10/2015*
10. Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Targeted Workshop, Columbus Public Health Room 119C, Columbus, OH – 03/13/2015*
11. Latino Community Targeted Workshop, Columbus Public Health Room 119C, Columbus, OH – 03/13/2015*
15. Short North Alliance, Columbus, OH – 5/7/2015

Outreach at Neighborhood Events
17. MORPC State of the Region Event – 04/01/2015
18. Earth Day Columbus Neighborhood Session, Columbus Commons – 4/25/2015
19. Latino Job Fair, Holiday Inn Worthington – 05/05/2015
20. Columbus Young Professionals Summit, Creekside Conference Center, Gahanna, OH – 5/15/2015

*Note: Events marked with an asterisk took place during Phase 1 outreach before the values exercise was created. These discussions were used to develop the initial list of values.
2 EXHIBITS FROM VALUES EXERCISE
What are your ideas?
Tell us how you think transit can support and strengthen Central Ohio. It’s your move!

1. What is public transportation’s role in shaping the future of central Ohio? See below and circle your top three priorities.

- **Make Better Connections**
  Extend transit’s reach further into the communities it already serves

- **Follow the Growth**
  Strengthen fast-growing areas

- **Save the Earth**
  Protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gases

- **Invest in Overlooked Communities**
  Direct investment to specific corridors and neighborhoods

- **Build on Success**
  Make existing transit service more compelling

- **Focus the Growth**
  Use new transit investments to attract and concentrate growth

2. Have you experienced a transit service or investment we should make here in Columbus? If so, where and what service was it? Why does it fit in Columbus?

Please provide any other comments here or online by June 15, 2015 at www.cota.com/NextGen

Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) | 33 N. High St. | Columbus, OH 43215
Where should transit go by 2050 and why?

1. Please indicate on the map the top three areas where you think a significant new transit investment should be made by 2050. (For example, between downtown Columbus and Columbus International Airport or other popular destination, suburb to suburb [be specific], a specific neighborhood, etc.)

2. Tell us why here.