



NEWS RELEASE

New Report Shows Mountain Links a Smart Move Forward

Mountain Links, a joint project of Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Transportation Authority (NAIPTA), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the City of Flagstaff received strong encouragement from a new report issued by the Transportation Research Board, sponsored by the Federal Transportation Administration. Mountain Links will connect the NAU campus to downtown Flagstaff with high frequency bus service and a seamless connection to the Mountain Line system.

The study, *Transit Systems in College and University Communities*, validates the Mountain Links concept, stating, "Systems are adapting to new demands and new opportunities to increase transit presence on and around campuses...The evidence can be seen in the myriad creative partnerships, new uses of technology, and other innovative practices to streamline, expand, and market services."

Key aspects of Mountain Links are addressed in the study as forward-thinking approaches. According to the report:

"In an era of increasing campus populations, higher fuel prices, and concern about climate change, transit systems are adapting to new demands and opportunities."

Mountain Links addresses all of these issues, focusing on transportation between NAU and downtown Flagstaff as well as improving on-campus access to public transit.

"Although transit is already considered a 'green alternative' to driving to campus, a greater focus on environmental awareness is causing transit providers to look deeper into their role." **The Mountain Links fleet will feature low emission, Hybrid-Electric buses that offer 40% better fuel efficiency and reduce both emissions and noise pollution.**

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"The amount of traffic generated by faculty, staff, students, and campus visitors to and from the campus is a key concern because it necessarily affects both the campus and the surrounding community." **Mountain Links will reduce traffic on and around campus by providing easy access to downtown and Woodlands Village businesses as well as the new NAU Conference Center. It will offer better connections both on and off campus, providing an affordable alternative for students, staff and visitors.**

Mountain Links directly addresses many of the congestion and transportation issues that are key components of NAU's master plan. In addition, Mountain Links will help to alleviate parking problems, both on the NAU campus and in downtown Flagstaff.

The Mountain Links project will be funded through a variety of sources. Mountain Links received a competitive \$6.2 Million "Small Starts" grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the purchase of Hybrid Electric buses and Flagstaff voters approved a ballot measure to pay for the "off-campus" costs of operating the Mountain Links route. NAIPTA, the City of Flagstaff, and NAU continue to pursue funding for capital construction of the on-campus transit-way through pending economic recovery legislation.

For more information about the progress of Mountain Links, please visit www.naipta.az.gov.

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