



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

NEWS RELEASE [2001-I-07]

Contact: Earl de Berge
info@brc-research.com

LIGHT RAIL TERMINAL AT SKY HARBOR HAS STRONG APPEAL

Phoenix, Arizona, February 2, 2001. Escalating congestion at Sky Harbor Airport coupled with higher parking fees and longer times required to secure parking, may be major factors underlying consumer interest in using a proposed public transit system that would enable people to travel directly to and from Sky Harbor Airport terminals via light rail. A surprisingly large proportion, 36 percent, say they would definitely make use of such a system and another 33 percent, although more tentative in their commitment, indicate they would “probably” use it.

Only 27 percent of the public flatly rule out any likelihood they would use light rail to get to or from the airport and only four percent indicate they make no use of the airport.

The findings outlined in this report are based on interviews with a random sample of 421 adults in Maricopa County conducted in January by the Behavior Research Center’s independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. For more information you may visit www.brcpolls.com.

Working age people in their mid-30s to mid-50s are among the most likely to show a definite interest in leaving their cars at the office or at home in favor of hopping aboard a light rail train to be dropped off at the airport, avoiding traffic congestion and parking fees. Fully 42 percent of people in these working age groups maintain they would “definitely use” the light rail system for this purpose and another 37 percent indicate they would probably use it.

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Consumers between 55 years of age and retirement appear to be the least interested in making use of the system (30%), but at retirement, interest in getting to and from the airport on a light rail system jumps to over 41 percent, perhaps reflecting lower tolerance levels of older people to deal with the traffic and congestion issues as well as reluctance to pay for long term parking, even at current rates.

Finally, interest in an airport-connected light rail system for this purpose rises with income, possibly a reflection of more travel being done by upper income families and with that, greater familiarity and use of existing airport-connected light rail systems in such cities as Washington D.C., Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Atlanta.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2001-I-07), is based on 421 interviews with adult heads of household in Maricopa County between January 10 and 15, 2001. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.9 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

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“As you may be aware, parking at the Sky Harbor Airport is increasingly hard to find and airport officials recently announced that they may double parking fees at the airport. At the same time, a new light rail system for the Phoenix area could enable people to go to and from their communities and Sky Harbor terminals without having to drive to or park a car at the airport. If it were available today and you needed to go to the airport, would you definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not use a light rail train service that goes directly to the terminals?”

	Definitely Would	Probably Would	Total Potential Users
Valley wide	36%	33%	69%
Phoenix	40	34	74
West Valley	35	26	61
East Valley	34	42	76
Scottsdale/P. V.	44	20	64
<u>AGE</u>			
Under 35	37	31	68
35 to 54	41	37	78
55 +	30	29	59
Retirees	41	35	76

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