COMMUNITY

Resident Ambassadors, who live in Sunnyslope, worked as the voice of their community on the "Access Sunnyslope" project alongside the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH). They focused on finding ways to improve residents' experiences using the free SMART Circulator bus to access low-cost and free resources (photo by John Trevino).

Sunnyslope residents seek more walkability

Many residents of the Sunnyslope community are pushing for improvements in residents' experiences using the free SMART Circulator.

Over the last several months, 17 members of Sunnyslope worked as the voice of their community on the "Access Sunnyslope" project alongside the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH). The focus of the project was to identify ways to boost residents' experiences using the free SMART Circulator bus to access low-cost and free resources for food, care and places to be active. The community members involved in this project, called "Resident Ambassadors," recently finished orientation and training on how to assess the walking environment and conducted several field trips using the Circulator bus.

At a recent capstone event, the results of the Resident Ambassadors' walkability and field trip reviews were revealed. The group said there were five areas of concern: speeding and traffic calming issues, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks and walking areas, shade, and neighborhood stewardship. Resident Ambassadors said the issues they saw created barriers for many residents in using the SMART Circulator. For example, not having proper shade can make it difficult for many people to stand in the heat of summer while waiting for the bus. Creating safe places for people to walk and cross the streets is also important to the group.

Besides the walkability study, a community survey was conducted at various sites in Sunnyslope and online through the Nextdoor app. The community survey revealed several areas of concern that aligned with what the Resident Ambassadors discovered. Some areas survey respondents said needed the most attention were the addition of street signs and bike racks

please see WALKABILITY on page 4

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