

DESTINATIONS

Making a Difference

When public transportation is more than just a ride.

As a Transportation Project Coordinator at the Community Forum, Donna Powers is actively involved in helping people with disabilities use our public transit system. The Community Forum provides information about transportation for people with disabilities, assists callers with trip planning, and conducts peer travel training. Last fall, Donna spoke on her experiences using and promoting public transit at the Transit Information and Exchange Conference, a gathering of transit marketing professionals from across the country that was held in Phoenix October 23–24. As a follow-up to that presentation, we asked Donna to introduce herself to the readers of Destinations and to tell us how transit has made a difference in her life.



Donna Powers boards the bus near her workplace.



All Valley Metro buses are equipped with wheelchair ramps or lifts.

I saw a movie with some friends last Saturday night and, as I got on the bus to go home, I remembered when I couldn't join in the fun.

Using a wheelchair reduced my level of independence, and there was a time when I turned down many social invitations. But things have changed. As I approached the stop near my home, I realized how much independence I've gained by using the bus.

I haven't always used the bus, nor have I always used a wheelchair. My life changed in one split second on August 27, 1988, when I was injured in a motorcycle accident. As I was thrown from the motorcycle, I changed from an active, athletic 23 year old to a quadriplegic—paralyzed from the shoulders down—and a wheelchair user. My spinal cord injury affects my mobility, sensation, and balance and has introduced me to an array of "assistive devices." I use a speakerphone, a roll-in shower, and write, type, and paint with tools I hold in my mouth. I depend on personal caregivers to

do everything from make my lunch to get me dressed for work, and buses allow me to travel alone. I depend on this assistance, for without it, I wouldn't be able to live independently.

Traveling by bus has opened up my world and given me the ability to go out with friends, to the store, church, and to work. The bus system also helped me get to ASU, where I graduated with honors. But bus travel at that time was not very convenient, as many routes ran less than once an hour, and the vehicles were old and had an unpleasant smell. Sometimes the hassles just weren't worth it. Then one evening back in my college days, a bus operator boarded me on an empty bus while others

waited outside. He closed the doors, secured my chair, and then smiled at me and said kindly, "My name is John." After I told him my name, he continued, "Now that we've been properly introduced, let's let the rest of the people on." That brief greeting meant a lot. I felt confident in myself, confident in the operator, and confident in the system as a whole. My stage was set with John's introduction, for without it, I might not be a bus rider today.

This experience taught me that both operator attitude and passenger experience matter in whether people ride the bus. Now, several years later, I have an opportunity to put this experience into practice in my work at the Community Forum, where I manage two important programs. Disability Awareness Training classes improve bus travel for passengers with disabilities by enabling interaction between bus operators and people with disabilities. The Peer Travel Training Program encourages people to use the bus by dispelling fears of public transportation and providing transit experience under the wing of a trainer with a similar disability. I also make presentations about travel and related issues to seniors, transportation professionals, and various agencies. *(Continued on page 2)*

Very fine particles of dust are created from sources such as construction projects and dirt roads.



We deserve one collective pat on the back when it comes to reducing air pollution in Maricopa County. There have been no violations of the carbon monoxide standard for the last three years and no violations of the ozone standard for the last four years.

Yet there is a third type of pollutant that still seems to elude us when it comes to escaping without violations: PM-10. PM-10 refers to particulate matter less than 10 microns in size—finer than a human hair. Unlike the winter threat of carbon monoxide and summer concern for ozone, PM-10 is a year-round problem. PM-10 is made up of very fine particles of dust from sources such as construction projects and even the breakdown of brake linings. In the winter, we become more aware of particulate matter because it is more visible, as evidenced by the “brown cloud” that muddies the view of our most beautiful desert sites.

The good news is that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has a regional plan to reach attainment of federal dust standards by the year 2006.

“Reducing particulate pollution in our region is a top priority for MAG,” said Executive Director James M. Bourey. “The MAG plan consists of com-

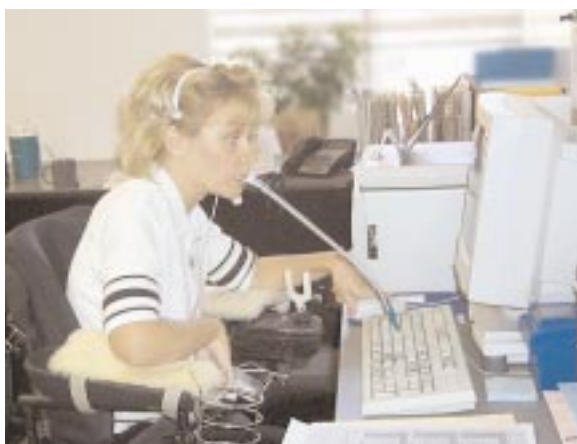
mitments from the cities, towns, and Maricopa County to help reduce dust pollution. These commitments range from paving projects to better enforcement of dust control rules. With these commitments, we’re confident we can reach our goal of attainment by 2006.” +

Steps to reduce PM-10

- 6 MAG cities and towns have adopted a model fire-place standard that will reduce air pollution.
- 6 The MAG Regional Council has allocated approximately \$8 million for paving roads and about \$4 million to purchase street sweepers to reduce dust.
- 6 Funding by MAG is provided to support special clean air efforts via the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program, the RPTA Regional Rideshare Program, the Ozone Alert Campaign, the Clean Air Campaign, and related transit activities.

For more information, call the Maricopa Association

Using assistive devices, Donna is able to perform her daily job functions at the Community Forum.



“My personal goal is to encourage others to expand their boundaries by using the bus.”

Donna Powers



(“Making a Difference,” continued from page 1) The Community Forum’s Transportation Project “seeks to improve mobility for older adults and people with disabilities so they can participate more fully in community life.” We do this in a number of ways, including identifying and addressing unmet needs, researching and advising on transportation adaptations that can enhance bus travel for people with disabilities, and monitoring public transit systems. In all of these projects, we incorporate the talents of people with disabilities and pay a stipend to

honor their contributions. The experiences and knowledge that people with disabilities share with others is very valuable.

My personal goal is to encourage others to expand their boundaries by using the bus. Public transit provides more than a way to simply reach a destination—it provides a way to find freedom and independence. +

You can contact the Community Forum at (602) 223-4100.

Special Telework Assistance

Last fall, the RPTA announced the selection of ten organizations to participate in its new telework pilot project. The Valley Telework Project is designed to help Valley businesses start or expand successful telework programs. In addition, they will receive technical assistance to effectively integrate telework concepts into their workforce.

Funded by the Maricopa Association of Governments, this special project has an overall goal of increasing the number of local teleworkers from the current 67,000 to more than 87,000 in the next few years. In 1995, there were 44,000 daily teleworkers in the Valley.



Michael Grant, KAET-TV, and Randi Alcott, RPTA, discuss the Valley Telework Project on

“We are extremely pleased with the businesses who volunteered to participate in our pilot project,” said Rideshare Manager Randi Alcott. “We have a very diverse mix of companies, and their efforts at developing telework programs will serve as a model to other companies throughout the Valley.”

A consortium of national telework consultants is providing the technical assistance. Leading the effort is T Manage, Inc., a national firm specializing in telework management. T Manage provides comprehensive solutions for managing remote access and teleworker programs. Joining T Manage are Elham Shirazi and Peter Valk, telework consultants who have worked around the country developing new programs for businesses and government agencies.

The Valley Telework Project includes two separate elements:

- 6 Free technical assistance to ten organizations to develop pilot programs that will result in case studies and mentoring.
- 6 A la carte assistance to seven organizations requesting specific help to start or expand their telework programs.

For more information about the Valley Telework Project, call (602) 262-7433. +

Valley Telework Project Pilot Programs will be developed at the following organizations:

- AAA Arizona
- Carollo Engineers
- CIGNA Healthcare
- City of Avondale
- City of Mesa
- City of Scottsdale
- Community Church of Joy
- Information Network Corporation
- Mountain Park Health Center
- Roosevelt School District

RPTA Wins National Telework Award

Last September, the RPTA received the Outstanding Innovation in Telework Award from the International Telework Association & Council. This prestigious award recognized the agency’s telework materials and services that have been developed during the past year.

RPTA Vanpool Fleet Adds Up

The RPTA recently purchased 42 new vans to add to its Valley Metro vanpool program. This recent purchase was made with special funding through the Federal Highway Administration’s CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program) funds. The new vans are part of a five-year plan to increase the number of RPTA-owned vanpool vans. The goal is to have 250 RPTA-owned and 50 vendor-owned vans in operation by 2005. Currently, 149 of the 183 vans operating in the Phoenix metropolitan area are owned by VPSI, Inc. The RPTA believes that by purchasing vans it can help keep costs down for vanpool riders.



Vanpools hold 7–15 people and operate specifically as a commute option for those who live and work near each other. The cost of the van and the gasoline are shared among the vanpool riders. *Over the next five years, the RPTA vanpool fleet is planned to increase by more than 60 percent.* To find out more about vanpools, call (602) 262-RIDE. +



Clean Air Efforts Awarded

The 2000 Clean Air Campaign Awards Luncheon honored organizations, individuals, and leaders who through their creativity, dedication, and hard work have made a significant contribution to improving the Valley's air quality. The luncheon was held on October 26 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix, where more than 300 people gave recognition to individuals, leaders, and organizations for going the "extra mile" to care for our air. On hand to honor these outstanding award winners were Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza, chairman of the Maricopa Association of Governments; Gilbert Mayor Cynthia Dunham; Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley; and Ted Simons from MIX 96.9 FM.

Innovative programs that were honored include:

Leadership Award-Public Leader

6 Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza

6 Phoenix City Councilwoman Peggy Bilsten

Leadership Award-Private Leader

6 George McNeil, Vice President and General Manager of Bill Information Systems

Leadership Award-Transportation Coordinator

6 Terry Solis

6 Friendship Village of Tempe

Blue Sky-Beyond TRP

6 Sunset Ford

Blue Sky-Telecommuting

6 State of Arizona Telecommuting Program

Blue Sky-Compressed Work Week

6 Central Arizona Project

Creative Excellence Award-Private

6 Bill Information Systems

Creative Excellence Award-Public

6 Capitol Rideshare

Golden Spoke Award-Public

6 City of Chandler

Golden Spoke Award-Private

6 Honeywell

MAG Livable Communities Award

6 City of Tempe

Vanpool Award

6 Salt River Project

Governor's Ozone 2000 Award

6 California Casualty

Outstanding Clean Air Program-Private

6 Intel

Outstanding Clean Air Program-Public

6 State of Arizona Travel Reduction Programs Office (TRPO)

Special Recognition Award

6 Governor's Office of Highway Safety

Special Recognition Award

6 Arizona Diamondbacks

Special Recognition Award

6 Wal-Mart/Sam's Club

Special Recognition Award

6 John Boyd

Special Recognition Award

6 St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

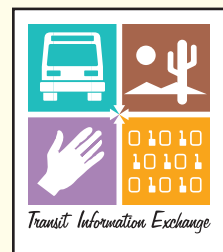
Summer 2000 Another Clean Ozone Season

The Valley pitched a shutout against ozone this summer. Due in part to the outstanding efforts of the business community and the public, we did not exceed an ozone violation during the 2000 summer season. This is the fourth year in a row that there have been no ozone violations. +

Transit Websites Launched to Attract Teens

Valley Metro has hopped on the dot.com bus and launched its own website geared toward teens. You'll find it at www.smogchokes.com. The site features sound bites of Valley kids expressing their thoughts on pollution and the impact it has on their lives, their family, and the world. It is designed to give the fight against pollution a personality, while at the same time engaging kids and encouraging them to think about air pollution and what a serious issue it is in the Valley.

The city of Tempe invites teens to stop by their "phat" new site at www.busamove.com. Check it out and follow the adventures of Jimmy and Bobo, two young cats doing things their own way, as they set out to prove that "Cars are for suckas" and to "Bus a move" is a way cool thing. This site features movie clips of the two Tempe teens and also features a link to Tempe in Motion (TIM), Tempe's Alternative Transportation



National Transit Conference Held in Phoenix

Last fall, transit agencies in the Phoenix metropolitan area hosted the 20th Annual Transit Information Exchange (T.I.E.) Conference, which was held October 23-25 at the Phoenix Airport Hilton. Over 100 transit professionals from 12 states and 30 agencies gathered at the conference to share their knowledge and exchange ideas on marketing, planning, and customer service issues. The conference featured a wide variety of workshop sessions, including Website Design: Linking Up with the Transit Rider, Marketing Transit Services for Passengers with Disabilities, and On the Campaign Trail: Alternative Modes and More, which provided an in-depth look at how agencies are promoting vanpool, carpool, and other alternative modes of transportation. What makes T.I.E. unique is that it is not affiliated with any association, participation is voluntary, and the event is hosted each year by transit staff in a different city. The 2000 T.I.E. conference was sponsored by BRW, the city of Scottsdale, the city of Tempe, Copyfast

Credits

Destinations is available on audio tape and in Braille. If you know of anyone who might be interested in receiving Destinations in either format, please call Lillian Duarte at the RPTA at (602) 262-7433. Destinations is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). It is published with a circulation of approximately 6,000 copies. We welcome your letters, comments, and suggestions.

The RPTA is a political subdivision of Arizona overseen by a ten-member board of elected officials, and was created by voters in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300. Membership is open to all municipalities in Maricopa County and to the county government.

The mission of the RPTA is to promote the social and economic well-being of the community through an efficient and effective regional transit system that is a valued and significant component of the transportation network.

To receive future copies of Destinations, please write or call:

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City by City



City of Tempe representatives and project artists at the dedication of the McClintock High School bus shelter, which garnered Tempe the Clean Air Campaign's MAG Livable Communities Award.

Tempe

Banner Year for City Transit Office

The city of Tempe transit office, Tempe in Motion, has been honored with numerous awards over the past year, many of them for its successful marketing campaigns. These campaigns were developed to promote public awareness of extensive improvements to the city's transit system resulting from the establishment of a dedicated sales tax for transit in 1996. Among the awards that Tempe received last year for its transit programs are the following:

- 6 On April 5, Tempe in Motion was named Outstanding Transit Organization 2000 by the Arizona Transit Association.
- 6 On September 9, the City, County, Communications Marketing Association awarded Tempe in Motion its Silver Circle Award for Best Marketing Campaign. The transit office received the award for its overall marketing program, which included print and television advertising, brochures, door hangers, mall kiosks, cinema slides, public relations efforts and various community outreach events.
- 6 On September 27, the American Public Transportation Association awarded Tempe in Motion an AdWheel Award in the promotional campaign category. Tempe won for its youth campaign, which demonstrated the city's commitment to educating teens and encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation.
- 6 At the Clean Air Campaign Awards Luncheon on October 26, Tempe received the MAG Livable Communities Award for the McClintock High School bus shelter, which was designed by local artists Scott Classon, Niki Glen, Helen Helwig, and Joe Tyler, with the assistance of McClintock students. The city also received a Golden Spoke Award Honorable Mention for its bicycle program.
- 6 At the governor's Arizona Clean & Beautiful Awards on November 17, Tempe in Motion won an Environmental Education Award for its youth campaign. The main goal of the campaign is to educate teens about the city's bus system and its bicycle and pedestrian programs. A secondary goal of the campaign is to create a positive image of transit among young people in Tempe well before they

become drivers so that, as adults, they will be more likely to consider riding the bus, bicycling, or walking as alternative modes of transportation. The campaign is targeted at young people through programs in local elementary schools, high schools, and city libraries, as well as through the general media.

Separately and collectively, these awards speak to the commitment that Tempe in Motion has made to encourage its citizens to use alternative modes of transportation, to advocate the livable community concept and ensure that Tempe remains such a community, and to promote personal ownership of the public transit system. +

Glendale

Professor Gus Now Serving West Valley Students

Professor Gus is a new fixed-route bus service that provides transportation between Glendale Community College; Arizona State University West; and Thunderbird, the American Graduate School of International Management. The route also provides service along 51st Avenue from Olive Avenue to Thunderbird Road, with transfer connections to Valley Metro Routes 59, 90, 106, 122, and 138.

The service was inaugurated as a one-year pilot program in August 2000 and is being funded through a joint agreement between the city of Glendale and the three schools. It was introduced because Glendale transportation officials had learned that hundreds of students are enrolled at two or more of the schools at the same time. Moreover, Professor Gus brings bus service to a segment of 51st Avenue that previously did not have fixed-route service.

Professor Gus is the third small-scale transit service implemented by the Glendale City Council in the past two years. The Professor Gus name is a takeoff on GUS the Bus, the downtown shuttle service launched in October 1998. (GUS stands for Glendale Urban Shuttle.) The Luke Link-Route 70, which travels between Luke Air Force Base and downtown Glendale, began service to the general public in August 1999.

Professor Gus runs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fares are \$1.25 one-way with discounts for seniors, youths, and students. Valley Metro transfer slips are issued and accepted. For more information, please call the Glendale transit office at (623) 930-3501. +



Professor Gus offers convenient transportation for students at Glendale Community College, ASU West, and the American Graduate School of International Management, as well as the general public.



The Airpark Express provides service between northwest Phoenix and the Scottsdale Airpark.

Scottsdale

"Express Yourself" on the Airpark Express
Are you looking for a new way to "express" yourself? If you're heading to the Scottsdale Airpark from northwest Phoenix, you may want to try the Airpark Express. This new commuter express service, inaugurated on November 1, takes passengers from the Deer Valley Park-and-Ride on the southwest corner of I-17 and Bell Road to Butherus Drive and 73rd Street on the west side of the Airpark. The service is provided by the city of Scottsdale through private bus charter company All Aboard America.

The Airpark Express operates Monday through Friday with three morning departure times from the Deer Valley Park-and-Ride (6:05, 7:15, and 8:25 a.m.) and three evening return times from the Scottsdale Airpark (4:05, 5:15, and 6:25 p.m.) One-way fare is \$3, and a monthly pass is available for \$90. Since the coaches are not equipped with fareboxes, fare passes must be purchased from All Aboard America or participating employers.

The Airpark Express emphasizes comfort as well as convenience. Service is provided on new, fully equipped highway motorcoaches with reclining high-backed seats and individual "airplane-style" reading lights and air conditioning controls. The coaches offer a smooth, comfortable ride and a relaxing alternative to the stress and strain of driving in rush hour traffic.

Once commuters reach the Scottsdale Airpark, they can hop on FAST (the Free Airpark Shuttle Transfer) for a quick ride to their places of business. FAST shuttles run approximately every ten minutes Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Shuttles travel in both directions on a loop through the Airpark business corridor.

For more information on the Airpark Express, please call Scott Duran at All Aboard America, (480) 962-6202. For more information about FAST, contact Debra Astin, city of Scottsdale, at (480) 312-7696. +

City Councils Choose Final Alignments for Light Rail Line

In the Fall 2000 issue of *Destinations*, we reported that the team of planners and engineers working on the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit (LRT) project was making progress in developing alignment recommendations for the 20.3-mile starter segment of the Valley's new regional light rail transit line. We are happy to report that alignment recommendations were made by project staff in October, decisions were made subsequently by both the Phoenix and Tempe City Councils, and preliminary engineering for the starter segment is now fully underway. (There were no outstanding alignment issues for the Mesa portion of the starter segment.)

Tempe

On November 16, 2000, the Tempe City Council adopted the "Creamery Branch" alignment for light rail to travel through downtown Tempe. Light rail will cross Tempe Town Lake on a new LRT bridge, to be located just east of the existing freight railroad bridge. It will then enter the downtown area near the intersection of 3rd Street and Mill Avenue, running eastbound along an abandoned Union Pacific Railroad (Creamery Branch) spur to McAllister Avenue. The alignment will continue through Arizona State University on McAllister Avenue, and then turn eastward along Apache Boulevard into Mesa.

Phoenix

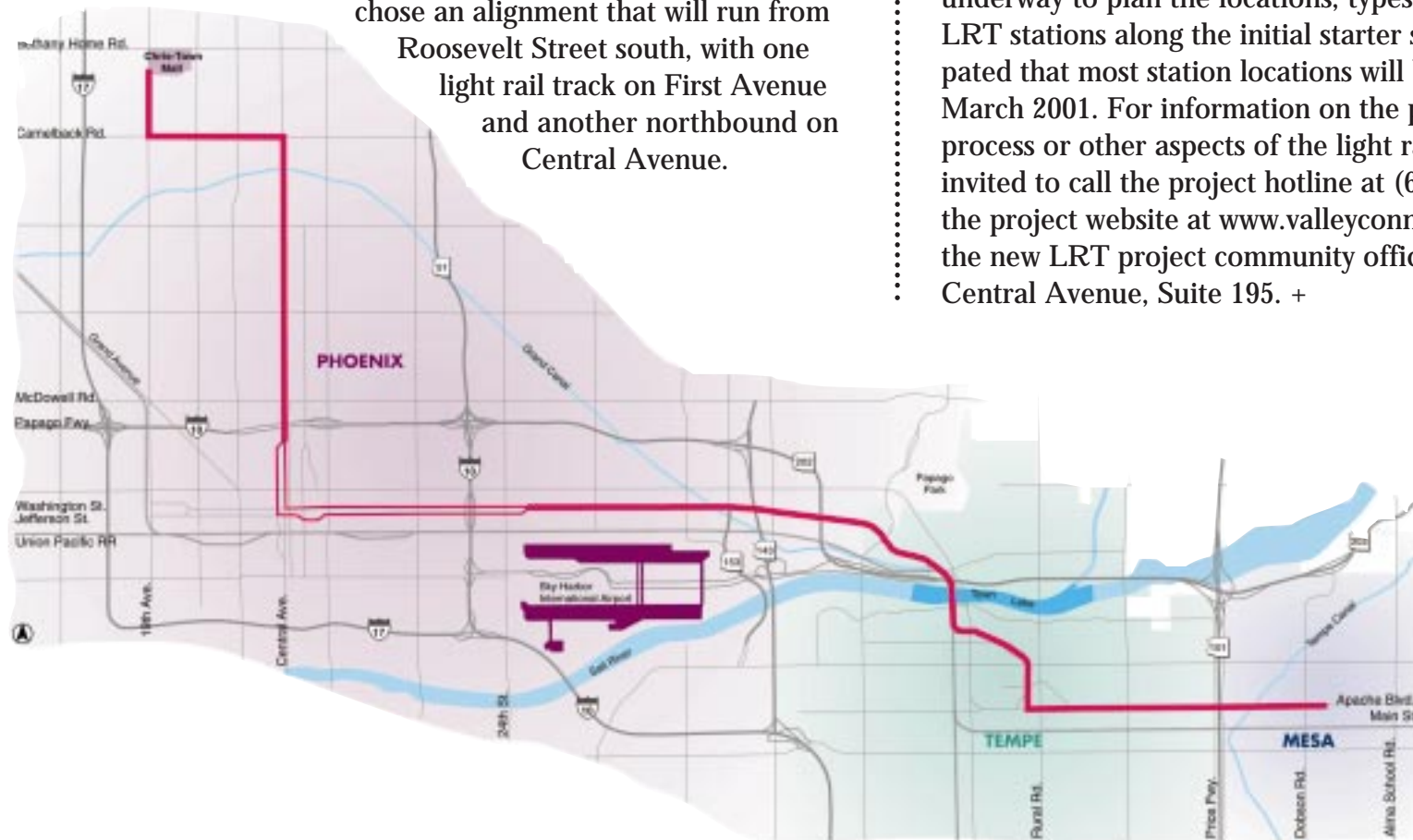
On October 31, 2000, the Phoenix City Council made its decision on the portion of the LRT alignment that will extend from Roosevelt Street and Central Avenue south to downtown and east to the Phoenix/Tempe border, at approximately 56th Street and Priest Drive. After a comprehensive evaluation of eight different alternatives for the downtown north/south segment, the council chose an alignment that will run from Roosevelt Street south, with one light rail track on First Avenue and another northbound on Central Avenue.

Four alignment alternatives were studied for the LRT segment from downtown Phoenix eastbound to the Tempe border. The council chose an alignment utilizing Jefferson Street eastbound and Washington Street westbound, following the current one-way traffic pattern of those streets and maintaining three through lanes on each street. At 26th Street, the tracks will merge together. East of 26th Street, the tracks will be in the median of Washington Street to the Tempe border.

On November 14, 2000, the Phoenix City Council adopted the LRT alignment running from Central Avenue and Roosevelt Street to the Chris-Town Mall area. Light rail will be located in the median of Central Avenue, between Roosevelt Street and Camelback Road, with two lanes of through-traffic capacity for automobiles in each direction. On Camelback Road, between Central Avenue and 19th Avenue, Council decided upon a double-track, in-street LRT alignment that retains the current through-traffic capacity on Camelback Road (three lanes westbound and two lanes eastbound). For the segment heading north from Camelback Road, Council chose an in-street alignment along 19th Avenue to Montebello Avenue, maintaining all existing through-traffic capacity on 19th Avenue. The Phoenix City Council agreed with project staff to postpone the decision on the segment of LRT alignment on 19th Avenue between Montebello Avenue and Bethany Home Road pending additional analysis and discussion with the owners of Chris-Town Mall about an LRT station and park-and-ride facility in the mall area.

Next Steps

A comprehensive public outreach program is currently underway to plan the locations, types, and features of LRT stations along the initial starter segment. It is anticipated that most station locations will be decided by March 2001. For information on the public involvement process or other aspects of the light rail project, you are invited to call the project hotline at (602) 534-1807, visit the project website at www.valleyconnections.com, or visit the new LRT project community office at 411 North Central Avenue, Suite 195. +



Map shows final alignment of the light rail transit project.



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