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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 as a valued and significant component of the transportation network.

DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority. Vol. IV, Issue II Spring 2001

Transportation Expenses Add Up in Phoenix Area

Our New Look...

Destinations' style and appearance have been revised in an effort to better provide readers with quick, easy-to-read updates regarding public transportation in Maricopa County. We welcome your comments on these changes by calling Susan Tierney at (602) 262-4668 or via e-mail at stierney@vm.maricopa.gov

Living on the outskirts of town may end up costing more than expected. According to a new report, *Driven to Spend*, recently released by the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), the Phoenix metropolitan region is ranked seventh in the nation when it comes to transportation spending. In fact, we spend more on getting around town (18.2 percent) than any other household expense, except shelter (19.9 percent). The average family in the Phoenix area spends nearly \$7,000 a year on transportation.



While the spending seems lopsided towards personal vehicle ownership, this breakdown is not unusual across the U.S. Remarkably, in some metro areas, households are spending more on transportation than shelter. The vast majority of that spending—98 percent—is for the purchase, operation, and maintenance of automobiles.

The spread-out development pattern, commonly called sprawl, makes the biggest impact according to how much is spent on transportation, according to Gloria Ohland, campaign manager for STPP. Less sprawling areas, with more efficient land use, tend to cost people less because public transportation is more feasible and accessible. Thus, sprawl makes automobile travel a necessity. Distance makes the most inexpensive forms of transportation, such as walking and biking, nearly impossible.

Transportation costs to household budgets rose by an average of 8 percent between 1990 and 1998. Spending on vehicles can erode wealth, whereas spending on housing can build wealth. Automobile loans are the largest category of household debt outside of home mortgages.

This study looked at household spending in 28 metropolitan areas across the U.S. Cities that spent the most on transportation were Houston, Atlanta, and Dallas-Fort Worth, with the Los Angeles area ranked 15th.

For more information, call the STPP at (213) 629-2043 or download the report at www.transact.org.

Transportation Expenses per Phoenix Household

	Annual Costs	% of Total Transportation
Vehicle Purchases	\$3,277	48.0%
Other Vehicle Expenses	\$2,405	35.2%
Gasoline & Motor Oil	\$1,025	15.0%
Public Transportation	\$ 118	1.7%

Transportation Facts for Phoenix Metro Area

Annual miles traveled by car per household: 17,221

Percentage of trips taken by:

Car	92.9%
Foot	2.7%
Transit	2.2%
Bicycle	1.4%

More Service with Latest **Bus Book**

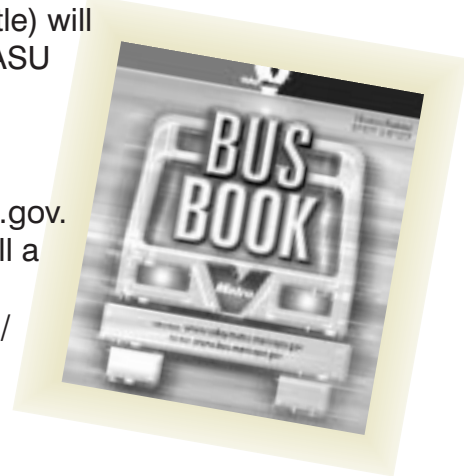
March 2001

Changes for local bus service can be found in the March 2001 **Valley Metro Bus Book**.

Major improvements include:

- All local Phoenix routes operate until 10 p.m. on weekdays (some routes run later).
- Mall-to-mall service offered as Routes 108 and 109 (Elliot Rd.) combine to operate between Arizona Mills and Superstition Springs Center.
- The new Professor GUS (Glendale Urban Shuttle) will travel between Glendale Community College, ASU West, and the American Graduate School of International Management.

The Bus Book is also available at www.bus.maricopa.gov. For more information on Valley Metro bus service, call a Valley Metro customer service representative at (602) 253-5000; TTY service for persons with hearing/speech impairments is available at (602) 261-8208.



Valley Telework Project 2001—Update

The 10 pilot project companies either have launched or are getting ready to launch their telework programs, while seven other local organizations are receiving assistance to implement or improve existing programs. Free telework consultant assistance was awarded to these organizations thanks to a specially funded program via the Maricopa Association of Governments. Case studies will be developed this fall after thorough tracking and evaluation. Call (602) 262-7433 for information.

Legislator of the Year



U.S. Congressman Ed Pastor (AZ) was honored with being named the South West Transit Association's (SWTA) Legislator of the Year at a special legislative breakfast held March 13 in Washington, D.C. The award pays tribute to the congressman for his efforts in promoting public transportation in Arizona and the nation. Pastor has supported many vital transportation projects in both the Phoenix and Tucson areas and has been instrumental in bringing more than \$65 million in discretionary transit funds to Arizona over the past few years.

Left to Right: **Jim Dickey** (Deputy Director of Operations and Planning for the RPTA), **Councilwoman Carol West** (City of Tucson), **Congressman Ed Pastor** (Arizona), **Eugene Eddy** (SWTA President & Resident Manager of Sportran—Shreveport, LA), and **Councilman Cody Williams** (City of Phoenix)

The **RPTA** is a political subdivision of Arizona overseen by an 11-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.

For the hearing and speech impaired, Rideshare and ADA information is available on TTY by calling (602) 495-0936.

SmogChokes.com

Visit www.smogchokes.com to get the latest on how teens feel about pollution in the Phoenix metro area. This RPTA-sponsored site helps youth become more aware of what THEY can do to prevent pollution.

Bike Maps Hot Off the



The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has just updated and released the regional map for bicycle paths and facilities. Two new categories have been added: popular undesignated routes and transportation trails. For FREE bike maps, call (602) 262-RIDE (7433).

The Scottsdale Downtown RoundUp provides free shuttle service around the city's popular arts and shopping districts.

City By City

Mesa *2025–A Shared Vision*

Last fall, the city of Mesa embarked on an ambitious effort to define its future. “Mesa 2025–A Shared Vision” is a community-planning project that will guide how the city is shaped over the next 25 years. To ensure that the city adopts a consistent growth management policy, four plans are being developed simultaneously: a General Plan, a Transportation Plan, a Parks and Recreation Plan, and an Economic Development Plan. Under the City Council’s guidance, a 32-member Joint Master Planning Committee (JMPC) is steering the overall process.

A subcommittee of the JMPC is responsible for development of the Transportation Plan. This plan will set forth priorities and strategies for improving public transit, managing congestion, and creating a more accessible environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Strategies to enhance existing Commute Trip Reduction programs will also be identified to help ease the pressure to expand roadway capacity for automobiles.

Upcoming activities include a series of community and business surveys, an evaluation of alternatives to meet defined community goals, and a second round of public workshops in June.

Draft plans will be completed by the end of 2001. For more information about Mesa 2025–A Shared Vision, please visit the project website at: <http://www.mesa2025.org>.

Glendale *Transportation System in Review*

As part of the process of updating Glendale’s 10-year-old Transportation System Plan, the city council recently appointed more than 50 residents to serve on the Citizen’s Advisory Committee for Transportation Issues (CACTI). Working with consultants from BRW Associates, the committee will assess the need for improvements to the city’s transportation system, including bus and dial-a-ride service, city streets, and bicycle trails. CACTI will also examine the feasibility of a bus rapid transit system and whether Glendale should join the efforts of Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa in building a light rail system.

To determine what citizens think about the need for transportation improvements, Glendale has conducted an extensive public outreach campaign, which included a citywide transportation survey. Findings from the survey were presented to the city council last year and are also being evaluated by CACTI members.

CACTI’s recommendations should be finalized by the end of April. If they include transportation improvements that require new funding sources, and the city council agrees with the recommendations, a ballot proposition could be put before voters as early as November 2001.

For more information about Glendale’s Transportation System Plan and public meetings related to it, call Allan Grover at (623) 930-2940. You can also send comments to: TRANPLAN@ci.glendale.az.us.

Scottsdale *Saddle Up for the Scottsdale Downtown RoundUp*

There’s a roundup going on in downtown Scottsdale, but not the kind you would expect in the “West’s Most Western Town.” The Scottsdale Downtown RoundUp is a free shuttle bus service that provides convenient transportation in the city’s arts and shopping districts, including Scottsdale Fashion Square mall and the internationally renowned Fifth Avenue Shops.

Just look for the brightly colored, old-fashioned, bell-ringing trolleys, which run about every 10 minutes and stop at designated areas. The Downtown RoundUp operates Monday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., from November through May. There is no service on Sundays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, or New Year’s Day.

So, when you’re in the mood to mosey around some of Scottsdale’s premiere art galleries, enjoy the areas wonderful restaurants, or just want to “shop ’til you drop,” why not rope a free ride on the Scottsdale Downtown RoundUp!

For more information about this service, please contact the Scottsdale Transportation Department at (480) 312-7696.

Light Rail Stations

Station Location Process

The alignment for the light rail route was decided last fall by the Phoenix and Tempe City Councils, as reported in the Winter 2001 issue of *Destinations*.

Now that the light rail route has been determined, it's time to identify station locations. Approximately 24 stations are being considered for the 20.3-mile light rail segment. They are generally located about a mile apart, but closer in high-density activity areas such as downtowns. The more stations, the more convenient it is to access the system. On the other hand, with fewer stations there is faster travel time.

Residents, business and property owners, and commuters were able to give input about where the stations should go and how they should appear at public meetings held in February and March. These considerations will be factored into recommendations that will be presented to city councils.

How Should They Look

The urban design process is a critical step for the light rail project. Urban design, simply put, is the art of making places for people. An Urban Design Task Force has been formed to help give input to address guidelines that reflect the community's character, values, and priorities. This process will include the review of things such as system identity, light rail vehicles, landscaping, security, and art. Input for these elements has been gathered from the representatives of those communities that the light rail serves.

A final draft of the Urban Design Guidelines will be presented in a second round of open houses this spring.

For details about the many projects associated with the light rail system, please visit the website at www.valleyconnections.com or call the project hot line at (602) 534-1807.



Light Rail Community Office Opens

The Valley Connections Community Office, located at 411 N. Central Ave., Suite 195, is open for business and ready to welcome citizens wanting more information about the light rail system. Visit the office between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, to pick up literature about the light rail system or maps of the future route. For more information, call (602) 534-1807.

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 the RPTA's Lillian Duarte at (602) 534-1937. *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.

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