

DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of Valley Metro



Light Rail Project Updates

City Partners Form Valley Metro Rail

The four cities currently participating in the light rail system—Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, and Glendale—have formed a governance board called Valley Metro Rail Inc. to oversee light rail design, construction, and operation.

The partner cities identified the need to create a separate entity to oversee the system to ensure it is built on time and on budget, and to ensure that the Light Rail Project is directly accountable to the citizens of those cities providing local funding. Valley Metro Rail Inc. is a non-profit, public corporation.

The Valley Metro Rail Board of Directors, which is composed of the mayors of participating cities, will provide oversight and direction for the Light Rail Project. Staff support will continue to be provided through a contract with the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). Previously, the RPTA was also the contracting agency for all design consultant contracts.



Rail Board Approves Official Schedule

At its first official meeting on October 30, the Valley Metro Rail Board of Directors adopted an official Light Rail Project schedule, which includes a three-phased opening beginning in late 2006 and ending in summer 2007.

The first phase, from Phoenix Central Station (Central Avenue and Van Buren Street) to the proposed Tempe Transit Center (5th Street and College Avenue), is scheduled to open before the end of 2006. The second phase, from Central Station to 19th Avenue and Montebello Avenue, is scheduled to open in April 2007. The final phase, from the proposed Tempe Transit Center to the end-of-the-line station at the East Valley Institute of Technology in Mesa, is scheduled to open in August 2007.

Project and city officials are committed to a light rail opening in 2006. A phased opening is required to resolve outstanding alignment and other issues. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2003.

In other actions, the board appointed Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza as chairperson, Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker as vice-chairperson, and Gina Frackiewicz, a staff member on the Project, as secretary. The board also appointed Wulf Grote as the acting executive director of Valley Metro Rail Inc. Grote was previously project director for the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project, the initial 20-mile starter line of the light rail system.

— More rail updates on page 2



This photo simulation shows the planned light rail station at 3rd Street and Jefferson Street, which will serve Bank One Ballpark, Phoenix Civic Plaza, the Collier Center, and other Copper Square venues.

Valley Metro is a political subdivision of the state of Arizona overseen by an 11-member board of elected officials and was created by voters in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300.

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

Rail Board Gives OK to Award Design Contract

At its meeting on November 1, the Valley Metro Rail Board of Directors gave the green light to award a contract for final design and construction design services for the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project. The approval gives Project staff the ability to sign a contract of up to \$66.65 million with a team led by Parsons Brinckerhoff, pending final contract negotiations.

The six-year contract is for engineering and architectural design of the light rail starter segment, including stations, track, the light rail bridge over Tempe Town Lake, parking facilities, transit centers, street reconstruction, the maintenance and storage facility, and other system elements, as well as technical assistance with purchasing



Left to right: Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker, Tempe Councilman Len Copple, Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs, and Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza at a meeting of the Valley Metro Rail Board of Directors.

and testing light rail vehicles and other required equipment.

Currently, 90 percent of the firms on the proposed design team are locally owned or operated, and nearly half of the 58 subconsultants on the team are Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.

Parsons Brinckerhoff provides planning, program management, engineering, and construction management services for transportation, power, buildings, and telecommunications projects and employs over 9,000 professionals and support staff in more than 250 offices worldwide, including 125 local employees. The firm has been providing services in Arizona for more than 20 years.

Legislative Action Needed in 2003

Advocates of the Valley's public transit system will be working together in the 2003 legislative session to receive what is formally called "enabling legislation" from the Arizona State Legislature. The purpose of the legislation is to continue the existing countywide half-cent sales tax for transportation.

Transit advocates at the city and regional levels support the tax extension as a means of funding needed transit services requested by Valley citizens.

These advocates include Valley Metro, its member agencies, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the Arizona Department of Transportation, and the Valley business community. "Receipt of the enabling legislation will be our number one goal," said Ken Driggs, executive director of Valley Metro/RPTA.

Previous enabling legislation, which provided for a 50-50 split of the tax proceeds between freeways and public transit, was rescinded by the Arizona Legislature in 1999. Local market research conducted by Valley Metro and MAG in January 2002 found citizen support for transit is as strong or stronger than that for freeways.

New Rail Route Near ASU

To address concerns raised by Arizona State University (ASU) about the potential impacts of light rail to highly sensitive research equipment that ASU hopes to install near McAllister Road, the planned light rail route near the campus has been moved.

The new route shifts the alignment east to Terrace Road between University Drive and Apache Boulevard. In August, the Tempe City Council formally adopted the modified alignment.

Light Rail Project staff held several meetings with ASU and the community in June and July to receive input on potential alternative alignments. The Terrace Road alignment was selected from seven initial alternatives presented to the community. Based on that feedback, and on environmental assessments of all the alternatives, Terrace Road was selected as the preferred alternative.

City by City

Transit updates from across the Valley Metro service area

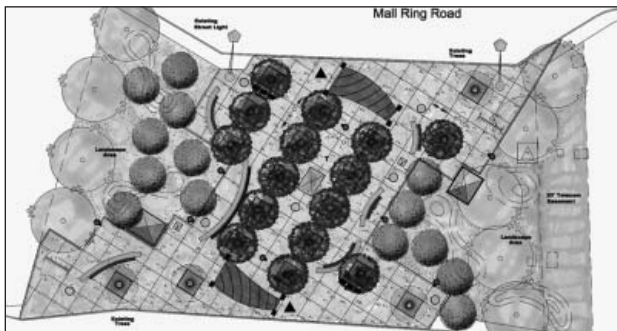


Chandler

New Transit Center To Be Built

The city of Chandler is designing a new transit center to be located at Chandler Fashion Center mall. The new facility, which will be a hub for transit in Chandler, will accommodate up to four buses at one time. It will feature a landscaped plaza with passenger shelters, bench seating, drinking fountains, bike racks, and space for a vendor cart or kiosk.

Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2003. While the center is under construction, temporary passenger shelters will be installed to accommodate passengers on Routes 72–Scottsdale/Rural and 156–Chandler Boulevard, both of which currently serve the mall. Connections to other city and regional routes are planned for the future.



An architect's drawing of the new facility

High-Capacity Transit Study Nears Completion

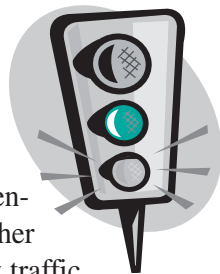
The city of Chandler is about to complete a Major Investment Study on the feasibility of implementing a high-capacity transit system. High-capacity transit systems may include light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit. The potential transit corridors selected for evaluation in the study were the Union Pacific Tempe Branch Rail Road, Chandler Boulevard, Arizona Avenue, the Union Pacific Chandler Branch Rail Road, and the Loop 101. The study will be completed in December 2002, and findings will be made available on the city Web site at www.chandleraz.org.

Scottsdale

City Installs New Intelligent Transportation System

Bus riders, dial-a-riders, vanpoolers, and carpoolers may have noticed that traffic is flowing more smoothly in parts of Scottsdale. The city recently installed the first phase of its new Intelligent Transportation System along Indian School Road.

The high-tech system consists of a network of computers, video cameras, traffic sensors, roadside traffic-condition signs, and other equipment. Collectively, these devices allow traffic engineers—working in a single control room—to detect congestion, make signal timing adjustments to minimize resulting delays, and alert drivers of current travel conditions. Though the system is still only partially operational, it has already been used to ease traffic congestion caused by accidents and construction projects.



Region

New Valley Metro Bus Book

The January 2003 Bus Book will be available in early January on Valley Metro buses and at 1,800 locations Valleywide. Service changes introduced in the new Bus Book, including new schedules and maps for some routes, will take effect on January 13.

The new Ed Pastor Transit Center will open on the same day. Located at Central Avenue and Broadway Road in Phoenix, the transit center will be served by the Blue Line and Routes 0–Central, 7–7th Street, 8–7th Avenue, 45–Broadway, 52–Roeser, and 61–Southern.

For transit information, visit www.ValleyMetro.org or call (602) 253-5000. For TTY text telephone service, dial (602) 261-8208.



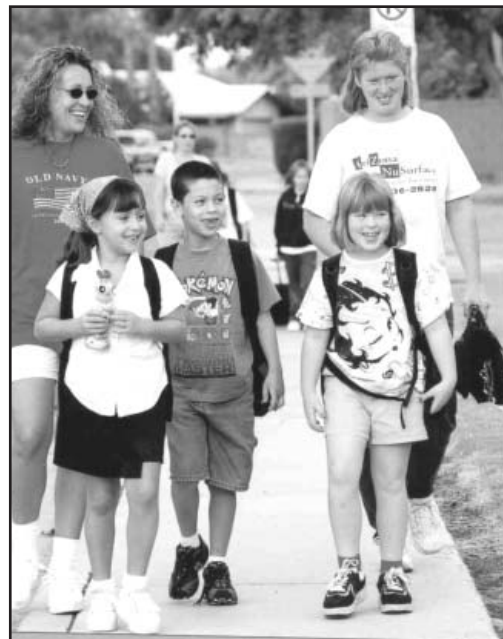
Tour de Tempe

The city of Tempe held its annual Tour de Tempe bike ride on October 27. More than 1,200 people joined in this leisurely 12-mile ride along the finest bikeways in the city. The route traveled through historical neighborhoods, downtown Tempe, and the scenic Tempe Town Lake area. Participants received free commemorative T-shirts, as well as breakfast snacks and other refreshments.



Walk to School Day

Fourteen Tempe schools participated in Walk to School Day 2002, held on October 2. More than 7,500 students and parents took part in the event, which included tree-planting ceremonies and a free breakfast. The purpose of Walk to School Day is to encourage walking as a fun and environmentally friendly means of transportation. City staff from a variety of departments—including Transportation, Neighborhoods, and Police—helped with the event, as did members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee and Transportation Commission, and representatives from Maricopa County Health Services.



Destinations is the official newsletter of Valley Metro. It is published with a circulation of approximately 6,000 copies. We welcome your letters, comments, and suggestions.

Destinations is also available on audiotape. If you know of anyone who might be interested in receiving Destinations in that format, please call Valley Metro's Pat Dillon at (602) 534-1806.

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