

# DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of Valley Metro



## Phoenix Makes Transit Publication's Top 10 List

New buses, renewed Sunday service, upgraded park-and-rides, a new neighborhood circulator, and upcoming commuter buses and light rail service make Phoenix, a Valley Metro partner, one of the nation's "Top 10 Most Improved Transit Systems," according to *Metro Magazine*.

The transit trade journal cited the strong support of Phoenix voters and the city government as a key reason for the system-wide improvements. Writer Albert Neal noted that the Phoenix transit referendum in March of 2000 "opened a funding stream to help increase transit ridership and hours of operation and to plan, improve, and launch new transit services."

The article praised Phoenix's purchase of 96 new buses that run



on liquefied natural gas (LNG), as well as the ongoing conversion of its bus fleet to run on the cleaner burning fuel. It also mentioned RAPID, Phoenix's new freeway commuter bus service set to begin operations this summer, and the city's partnership in Valley Metro Rail, the light rail service that will link Glendale, Tempe, Mesa, and Phoenix. The magazine noted that

there has been a 10 percent annual increase in ridership since passage of the Phoenix Transit Plan.

"I think it's awesome that we were named one of America's 10 most improved transit systems," said Phoenix Councilwoman Peggy Bilsten, chair of the Transportation, Aviation, Transit

and Technology Subcommittee. "This is reflective of community opinion of our transit service; people have said they would use an improved system. And we are able to do this thanks to input and funding support from Phoenix voters that allow us to continue building a full array of transportation options."

Factors in the magazine's selection process included improved communication in the form of better route maps and schedules, more personal customer service, and additional routes and services. The Top 10 were, in alphabetical order: Bridgeport, Connecticut; Fairfax, Virginia; Kankakee, Illinois; Nashville; Phoenix; San Francisco; Seattle; Washington, Indiana; West Palm Beach, Florida; and Worcester, Massachusetts.

To read the entire article in the May issue of *Metro Magazine* online, go to [http://www.metro-magazine.com/Top10\\_MI\\_2003.pdf](http://www.metro-magazine.com/Top10_MI_2003.pdf).



**JUNE 1993 ...**  
Ten years ago this month, the RPTA adopted Valley Metro as the identity for the regional transit system.

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

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

# RAPID Routes to Roll Out in July

New point-to-point bus service for commuters will travel along the SR-51 and I-10 East corridors beginning July 14. Called RAPID, the service is based on the Bus Rapid Transit concept, which has been utilized in other metropolitan areas to help speed up commute times. This is accomplished by using centralized pick-up points, freeway HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes, and electronic bus schedule signs.

RAPID buses will be on the road weekdays from about 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. They will pick up passengers at designated transit facilities only, including RAPID stations along the routes.

Three additional RAPID routes will be introduced later this year, serving the I-17 and I-10 West corridors, and the Central-South part of Phoenix from Baseline Road.

RAPID was approved by Phoenix voters as part of the Phoenix Transit Plan in March 2000. For additional information, call Valley Metro at (602) 253-5000, or



for TTY call (602) 261-8208. All bus routes and schedules can be accessed at [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org).

## Stations Give New Service a New Look

The gray masts anchored along the sidewalks of Jefferson and Washington Streets from Copper Square to the State Capitol are the new stations for the RAPID commuter bus service. Matching the energetic and contemporary look of the new RAPID buses, the stations feature fiberglass canopies that will maximize shade during summer. Each station will also have an artist-designed bench and a steel route map. Electronic signboards to announce arrivals and departures will be added by year's end.



## Light Rail Name Finalists Approved

In a few years, will Valley residents hop on the A-Train to get to work, or will they be whisked to a Diamondbacks game on the MAX? These are just two of the names selected by the Valley Metro Rail Board as finalists in the agency's "Name the Train" campaign to select a name for the Valley's future light rail system, scheduled to open in 2006. The other

approved names are: Link, MARC (Metro Area Rail Connection), Railrunner, Silverlink, Sol Rail, Via, and V-Train.

A committee composed of 21 citizens and staff recommended the names after reviewing more than 7,100 names submitted by the public.

Popular name themes included the sun, the desert and its inhabitants, and acronyms using the words Arizona, Phoenix, or

Valley. Each of the four mayors serving on the board—Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza, Tempe Mayor Neil Guiliano, Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker, and Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs—also have the opportunity to add one additional name to the list, if they wish.

Market research will be conducted on the names this summer. The board is expected to approve the final name in the fall.

# City by City

Transit updates from across the Valley Metro service area



## Region

### Student Artists Promote Public Transit

The winning entry in the third annual “Design a Bus Wrap Student Art Contest” was unveiled at Greenway High School on May 1. Natalie Speerschneider, a sophomore at Greenway, created the design with the theme “Blast from the Past.”

Students from the Glendale Union, Phoenix Union, and Tempe Union High School Districts were asked to design a bus wrap—an advertisement that covers the entire bus—illustrating a short, one-sentence slogan that promotes public transit. Speerschneider’s design will remain on the bus for about a year.

The contest was sponsored by Valley Metro, Cerreta Team Realty, Ad Graphics, Transit Advertising Group, and Castles ’n Coasters. Prizes were donated by the Phoenix Art Museum, the city of Glendale, and the Arizona Diamondbacks.



The winning bus wrap design, “Blast from the Past.”

### New Service on Route 41

On July 14, Valley Metro will extend Route 41—Indian School from the Desert Sky Transit Center in Phoenix to Estrella Mountain Community College and the West Valley Skill Center, both of which are located in Avondale.

The extended service will operate hourly from approximately 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

The city of Avondale has been designated by the Federal Transit Administration as eligible for federal transit funds as a new urbanized area.

The extension of Route 41 will improve the city’s transit connections to the regional transit network, as well as offer new transportation options for passengers traveling from Phoenix to Avondale and the Southwest Valley. It will be jointly funded by the cities of Avondale and Phoenix.

For bus route and schedule information, or trip-planning assistance, call Valley Metro Transit Information at (602) 253-5000. For TTY service, call (602) 261-8208. Transit information is also available online at [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org).

## Tempe

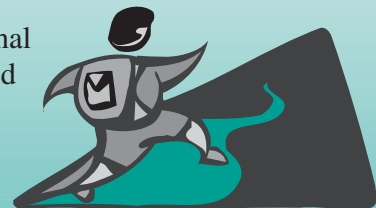
### City Celebrates National Trails Day

The city of Tempe hosted a family-friendly hike on National Trails Day, June 7, to encourage hiking activities and publicize nearby hiking areas. The free, one-mile hike took place on the Loma del Rio Trail.

Along the trail, guest speakers provided information about the history of the Loma del Rio Archeological Site and about other interesting hikes in the vicinity. After the event, participants were encouraged to cool down and relax at the Splash Playground in Tempe Beach Park.

Tempe offers Valley residents a variety of hiking areas, including the Hayden Butte Preserve, also known as “A” Mountain, located at Fifth Street and College Avenue.

Sponsors of Tempe’s National Trails Day celebration included the Tempe Transit Office and the Tempe Parks and Recreation Department.



### Changes to Yellow Line Bus Route

The cities of Phoenix, Glendale, and Peoria will host public meetings in late summer to inform passengers of the elimination of Valley Metro's Yellow Line and the reallocation of its resources to create three new bus routes and restructure one existing route. These changes are being made due to the construction of roadway overpasses at major intersections on Grand Avenue, and because a majority of the bus stops along the railroad right-of-way on Grand are being removed.

Currently, the Yellow Line runs on Grand Avenue from Peoria to the State Capitol and on Washington and Jefferson Streets into downtown Tempe and ASU. The following changes will take effect on October 13, 2003.

#### Three New Routes

Route 1–Washington will provide service from the State Capitol into downtown Tempe, following the

eastern section of the former Yellow Line.

Route 51–51st Avenue will provide continuous service from Roosevelt Road to Thunderbird Road and into ASU West.

Express Route 575–Peoria Express will begin in Peoria, make stops in Glendale, and provide service to the State Capitol area and downtown Phoenix.

#### Restructured Route

The 51st Avenue branch of Route 17 to McDowell Road will be eliminated and the resources will be used to improve the frequency along McDowell between 51st Avenue and Desert Sky Mall.

For more information, call Valley Metro at (602) 253-5000. For TTY service, call (602) 261-8208. Information is also available online at [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org).

### Survey Findings Released

Two annual surveys on transit and transportation issues were recently completed. Findings from the 2003 Valley Metro Regional Services Market Survey and the 2003 Transportation Demand Management Survey include the following:

- ▶ Residents see education, the economy, and growth management as the top three issues facing the Valley.
- ▶ Bus riders, carpoolers, and telecommuters saved close to 6 million vehicle miles each day in 2003 by sharing the ride or working from home. This reduced the amount of pollution emitted into the air daily by 77 tons.



- ▶ The top two reasons cited for using an alternate mode of transportation are that it is convenient and saves money.
- ▶ 40% of us are driving less or combining trips to combat the high price of gasoline.
- ▶ Carpooling is the most popular option when an HPA (High Pollution Advisory) is issued.
- ▶ 79% of Valley residents have a computer in their homes and 92% of those have Internet access. (This number suggests that telecommuting could be a viable option for many residents.)
- ▶ The average commute to work is 13 miles one way and takes 22 minutes.

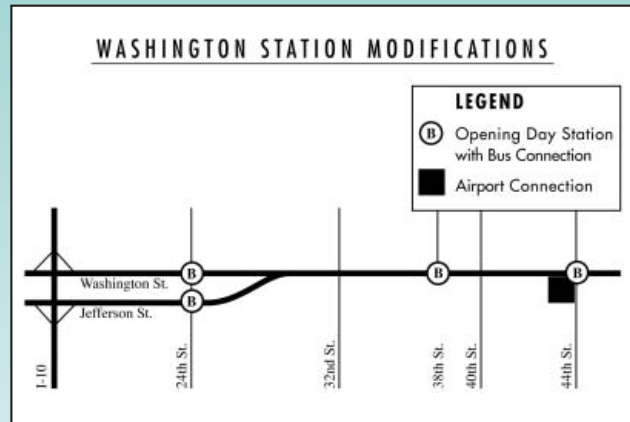
# Changes to East Phoenix Rail Stations Considered

Revised plans for the connection between Sky Harbor Airport's proposed people mover system and the light rail system recently prompted several proposed changes to station locations in east Phoenix.

Airport officials have proposed moving the people mover connection from the west side of the airport at 22nd Street to the east side at 44th Street to save the airport \$80 million in construction costs, improve the people mover's operational efficiency, and allow the connection to be completed years earlier than originally planned.

Valley Metro Rail staff held community meetings to receive public input on proposed alternate locations for light rail stations impacted by this change. As a result of those meetings, staff recommended a new station at 44th and Washington Streets to serve the airport, deferring the station at 40th and Washington Streets, moving the station at 22nd and Washington Streets to 24th Street, and combining the 32nd and 40th Street stations into one station at 38th and Washington Streets.

In mid-May, the Phoenix Citizens Transit Commission approved staff's recommendation. The Phoenix



City Council Transportation, Aviation, Transit and Technology Subcommittee is scheduled to review the recommendation in late May, with City Council and Valley Metro Rail Board consideration in June.

## Mesa Keeps Its Station Options Open

City of Mesa officials are keeping their options open for the location of the city's light rail station. In April, the city announced it is considering two possible light rail station locations: in front of the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), located at Main Street and Longmore Road, and at the former Tri-City Mall located at Main Street and Dobson Road. Both locations under consideration include a park-and-ride lot.

Mesa officials have emphasized that both locations are contenders and that each has strong merits with the potential to provide optimal access to the light rail line. The EVIT site would establish a strong tie with the education community, while the Tri-City site offers great potential for community revitalization. The Mesa City Council has not chosen a station location, but is expected to do so within the next few months. Mesa's station will serve as the end of the line for the 20-mile starter segment.

## Transportation Bill Signed

The Arizona State Legislature has approved and Governor Napolitano has signed into law House Bill 2292. The bill provides a mechanism to extend the existing half-cent Regional Transportation Tax beyond its sunset date of December 31, 2005, and to allow the proceeds to be used for multi-modal transportation projects. Funds from any tax extension will likely fund new and enhanced freeways, transit improvements including light rail and Bus Rapid Transit, and arterial roadway and intersection improvements.

HB 2292 provides that the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Transportation Policy Committee shall develop a new Regional Transportation Plan for the tax extension. Once this plan is completed and air quality conformity on the plan has been assured, the

plan will be presented to the Arizona Legislature for approval or disapproval early in the 2004 legislative session. A regional tax referendum to consider extending the existing tax for another 20 years would then be held in 2004.

Valley Metro is working with MAG, local governments, and the business community to prepare a new Regional Transit Plan that will be an important component of the new Regional Transportation Plan. We are also working to ensure that Maricopa County voters have the opportunity to vote for a balanced, multi-modal regional transportation plan that provides options to traveling by automobile. Valley Metro, local governments, and the business community stand firmly behind HB 2292 as it provides needed regional funding for transit and transportation improvements, as well as spurs economic development.

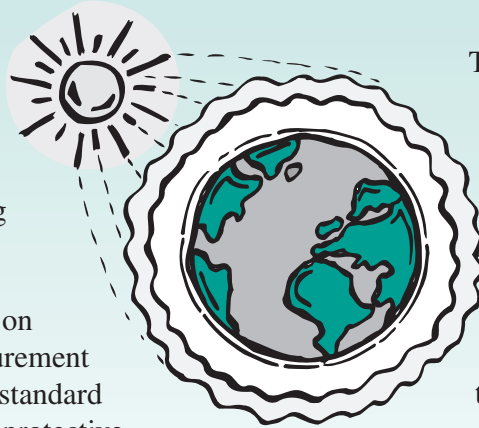
# Ozone Standards Stricter in 2003



The Arizona Department of Environmental

Quality (ADEQ) began taking its summer measurements for ozone at air quality monitors throughout Maricopa County on April 1. A new, stricter measurement for ozone includes an 8-hour standard for the region, which is more protective of public health. The 8-hour standard measures ozone over a longer period of time and better reflects the health effects of longer exposure to ozone, especially for outdoor workers, the elderly, children, and people with respiratory problems. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deemed the former, one-hour standard inadequate to protect the public from adverse health effects.

The EPA is in the process of revising the national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. The ambient air quality standard is a national target for an acceptable concentration of a specific pollutant in the air.



This summer, 575 employers in the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program have signed up to be part of the Ozone Advisory Program. That's up from 217 employers in 2002. These organizations are taking special steps to encourage their employees to reduce trips resulting in ozone-forming emissions, especially on Ozone Health Warning Days, when ozone levels are close to exceeding the 8-hour standard.

## How you can help

Things you can do to reduce unhealthy ozone levels include:

1. Finding a carpool partner at [www.ShareTheRide.com](http://www.ShareTheRide.com)
2. Riding the bus [for route information, visit [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org) or call (602) 253-5000]
3. Working from home instead of driving to the office
4. Filling your gas tank after dark
5. Keeping your car tires inflated properly and aligned
6. Using electric lawn equipment or a good old-fashioned broom

*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 audio-tape. 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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