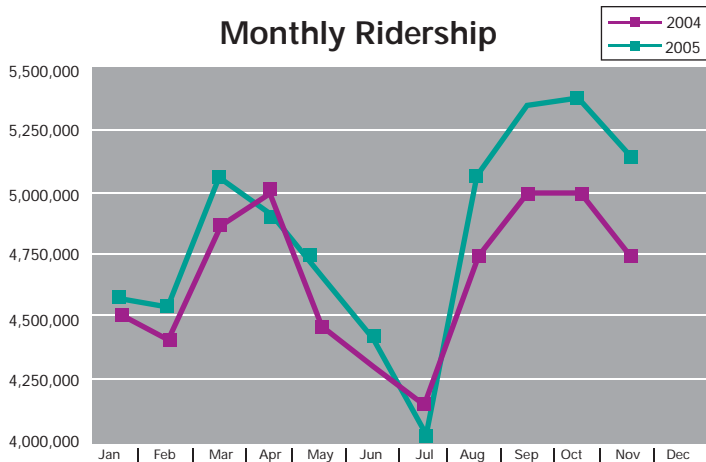


# DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of Valley Metro

## Buses, Park-and-Rides Continue to Fill Up

Valley Metro ridership numbers reached an all-time monthly high in October 2005 with 5.4 million boardings (a boarding is counted each time a person steps on a bus to ride). That is seven percent higher than October 2004.



Park-and-ride locations across the Valley have also experienced high usage since gas prices made their dramatic climb more than six months ago. More than 10 park-and-rides in Mesa, Phoenix, and Scottsdale are at or well above capacity.

“We are on tap for another record-breaking year,” says Valley Metro Executive Director Dave Boggs.

Many Valley Metro bus riders have made the switch from driving their cars to riding the bus. For 58 percent of riders, taking the bus is a necessity going to work or shopping. For others, riding the bus is the choice they prefer.

Liz Andrade, a police communications 911 operator for the city of Phoenix, is one of those who won't go back to driving her own vehicle to work or anywhere else.

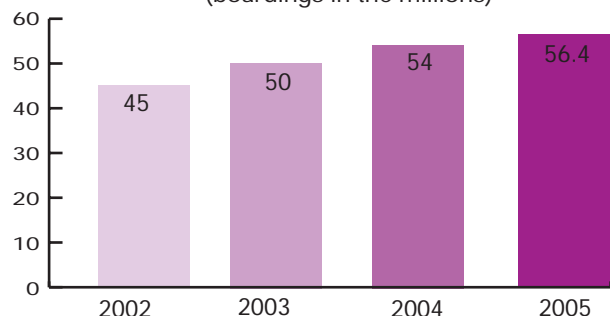
That's because she sold it. She's not only saving \$800 a month, she's making new friends. “Riding the bus has opened up my world,” said Andrade.

“The people I've met...it surprises me.” Andrade says they share touching stories about each other's families. One fellow rider brings her treats from the bakery to go with her morning coffee at work. Andrade rides the RAPID I-10 West to downtown and then transfers to the Blue Line to complete her trip.



Liz Andrade boarding the I-10 West RAPID.

### Annual Ridership (boardings in the millions)



Annual ridership has increased by 40 percent since 2000, when the city of Phoenix voters approved Transit 2000.

# Q&A with Dave Boggs

Destinations' staff approached Executive Director Dave Boggs about his views and activities regarding progress at Valley Metro/RPTA. This column will be featured in each issue.

**Q: You've been with Valley Metro/RPTA for nine months. What have you focused on during this time?**

**A:** The focus so far has been to prepare for the next 20 years. Voters in Maricopa County saw transit opportunities here and they sent us a message after the passage of Proposition 400 that they like what's been done and want us to improve on that. We are held accountable to the public and the riders of our system.

**Q: How do you plan for the next 20 years?**

**A:** Staff has been working non-stop on several plans that will assist the entire agency and our members with strategizing our future as a successful transit provider. A Transit Life Cycle Program has been an enormous focus over the past few months. We must have a financial plan in place, with appropriate policies and procedures that balance revenues and expenditures from Proposition 400 and the Regional Transportation Plan over the next 20 years.



David A. Boggs, Valley Metro Executive Director

There is also a study taking place to review job classifications and compensation of RPTA employees. A study on our current compensation package will help us become more competitive. Our success is greatly dependent on our ability to attract and retain a quality workforce.

**Q: Have the unfortunate bombings in London last summer provided insight on how Valley Metro can improve its overall operations?**

**A:** Yes, absolutely. We know that wherever we go, we can't take our personal safety for granted. Every passenger is important to Valley Metro and we will continue to do our best to provide a safe, reliable transportation system for our customers. We can provide this through constant oversight and due diligence of our performance and safety planning. At this time, we are developing detailed safety and security plans to address any operations and physical vulnerabilities of the bus and light rail systems.

**Q: As a Valley Metro customer I'd like to know what changes might affect me in the near future.**

**A:** I am glad you mentioned this because there is a lot for our passengers to look forward to. Up to 20 1997 Nova buses from Golden Gate Transit in San Francisco will be ready for service in January 2006 and used on routes immediately. New buses will begin to arrive from the manufacturers by April 2006. In addition, a new express route kicks off in January and a "Supergrid" route will be in service on Rural/Scottsdale Roads by mid-year.

Valley Metro is a political subdivision of the state of Arizona overseen by a 12-member board of local elected officials. It was created by voters in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300.

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

# City by City

Transit updates from across the Valley Metro service area



## Surprise Receives Express Service in January

For anyone who has visited Surprise lately, it will come as no surprise that there is an increased demand for transportation options in this emergent community. Transit has become a number one priority for this city that has grown more than 300 percent since the 2000 census, says Dan Lundberg, community initiatives director with the city of Surprise and one of the key people involved in getting new transit service on the streets.



Surprise has been working to address transportation issues since it developed its transit plan in 2001, which includes designs for a Park-and-Ride lot, expanded Dial-a-Ride service, a circulator route and fixed-route local bus service.

The city, along with the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), has been looking for solutions due to increased citizen demand for transit service.

Enter Express Route 571 from Surprise along Grand Avenue to downtown Phoenix.

“The 571 is something citizens want,” said Lundberg. “It’s one step closer to full bus service in Surprise.” The route includes one inbound trip at 6:25 a.m. from the Surprise Aquatic Center on Tierra Buena Lane in Surprise to 18th Avenue and Jefferson Street near the State Capitol in downtown Phoenix. The evening trip departs from the Capitol at 5:05 p.m.

Surprise is also funding an additional evening trip at 5:35 p.m. on the Grand Avenue Limited into Surprise from Central Station. The extended trip serves as a safety net should commuters miss the outbound trip on the 571. The new route and trip extension are effective Jan. 23, 2006.

Surprise Council Member Cliff Elkins serves as a strong supporter of improving city transportation, and is ecstatic with the start of new transit service, which he notes is only the beginning.

“It is further evidence that Surprise is coming of age,” said Elkins. “We’re diversifying our transportation needs in order to better serve our residents.”

For more information about this new service, pick up a new Valley Metro bus book by Jan. 23, 2006.

## Tempe Receives National Recognition

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) awarded the city of Tempe’s transit program, Tempe in Motion, the 2005 AdWheel Award Grand Prize in the electronic media category for its “Monthly Costs” television spot. Tempe was judged against the best transportation organizations in North America.

The “Monthly Costs” TV spot compares the cost of owning a car to riding the bus. APTA is a nonprofit

international association of more than 1,500 member organizations and serves the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical public transportation services and products.

For information, call (480) 350-2775 or visit [www.tempe.gov/tim](http://www.tempe.gov/tim). For information about APTA, visit [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).



# Tempe Named Bicycle-Friendly Community

The League of American Bicyclists designated Tempe a Silver-Level Bicycle-Friendly Community Award winner. The League of American Bicyclists examined traffic engineering facilities and policies and bicycling promotion efforts of the communities.

The city of Tempe has more than 165 miles of dedicated bikeways and 3.4 percent of Tempe residents are bicycle commuters. Tempe recently completed several facilities, including the Country Club Way Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge and the Rio Salado multi-use path. Within the next year, Tempe plans to design the state's first bike station, a full-service bicycle commuter center, and add six miles of bike paths.

The League's Bicycle Friendly Community Campaign is a national grassroots effort to increase the number of trips made by bike, promote physical fitness and help make communities more livable. The League represents the interests of America's 50 million bicyclists, including 300,000 members and affiliates.

For information about Tempe's bicycle program, call the Tempe Transit Office at (480) 350-2775 or visit [www.tempe.gov/bikeprogram](http://www.tempe.gov/bikeprogram).

For information on the League of American Bicyclists, visit [www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org](http://www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org)

# New Bus Facility Breaks Ground on March 3

The cities of Tempe and Scottsdale along with Valley Metro will hold a ground breaking ceremony for the East Valley Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility. It will be held at 3 p.m. on March 3 near Priest Drive and Rio Salado Parkway in Tempe.

Tempe and Scottsdale are actively supporting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified buildings in their communities. The Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility administration office will be submitted for LEED Gold certification and the remainder of the project will be submitted for LEED Silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Green building is a whole-systems approach using design and building techniques to minimize environmental impact and reduce energy consumption of buildings while contributing to the health of the occupants.

The public is welcome to attend the event held at 2050 W. Rio Salado Parkway. For a map of the area, go to [www.tempe.gov/greenbuildings](http://www.tempe.gov/greenbuildings).



The 250-bus maintenance facility will be completed by spring 2007.

## Special Off-Peak Promotions Focus on Sports and Shopping

What more could you ask for? Free rides to the game and the mall! That's likely to spark interest in just about everyone.

Valley Metro's Marketing Department teamed up with Arizona State University's (ASU) men's basketball program to encourage off-peak bus ridership to special activities and events around the Valley. More than 500 family packs of four basketball game tickets and eight one-way bus tickets were given away. Bus tickets are good until May 31, 2006. The purpose of the contest

was to attract new riders and give sports lovers an alternative to driving and parking hassles.

Also in December, a holiday shopping season promotion was mailed to homes within a three-to-five mile radius of shopping malls. The direct mail piece included four free one-way bus coupons good until May 31, 2006. Shoppers not only avoided the hassles before the holidays, but the stress of driving and parking when they made post-holiday gift returns and exchanges.

## Online Commuter Cost Calculator Wins Award

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has recognized Valley Metro/RPTA for its innovative, Web-based Commuter Calculator.

The FTA singled out Valley Metro/RPTA with an award in the multi-modal and inter-jurisdictional information category. Leslie Rogers, Region IX Administrator for the FTA, presented the award to Pat Dennis, Vice Mayor of Peoria and Chairwoman of the Valley Metro Board, during a METRO Light Rail board meeting in November.

The Commuter Calculator has been online since 2003 and can be found at [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org).



Leslie T. Rogers, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, presents Valley Metro Board Chair Pat Dennis with an award for Valley Metro's Web-based Commuter Calculator.

## Brown Cloud Arrives in Full Force

It's evident that the Valley continues to have issues with "the brown cloud." Despite increases in bus ridership and carpooling, it's going to take more action to reduce the fine particles that are suspended in the air during the winter. The brown cloud is made up of small solid and liquid particles—particulate matter—that are more evident in the winter due to the angle of the sun and the upper layer of warm air that traps in the cold air and dust particles beneath it.

Particulate matter (PM-10) is stirred up by vehicles, construction sites, wood-burning fireplaces, and lawn equipment. PM-10 stands for particulate matter measuring 10 microns or less (a human hair measures at 70 microns) and is calculated by state

and county agencies for air quality attainment. Although these particles are extremely small, they are dangerous to people with respiratory illnesses or compromised immune systems.

In November and December, there were thirteen particulate matter High Pollution Advisory days. Residents are asked to reduce trips and restrict burning in wood stoves or fireplaces.

To help reduce particulates and the brown cloud, Valley Metro encourages commuters to try to carpool, ride the bus, vanpool, telecommute, bicycle or walk to work. For more information about ride-share alternatives, go to [www.ValleyMetro.org](http://www.ValleyMetro.org).

# Rider Insider Inaugural Newsletter to Fill Niche

Valley Metro is kicking off 2006 with a new publication intended to fill a niche empty until now. Rider Insider is a quarterly newsletter published for all Valley Metro bus riders to tell them about new and existing bus services, agency policies, the Regional Transportation Plan and news pertinent to them.

Unique among Valley Metro/RPTA publications, Rider Insider is informal and inviting, offering small stories that are easily readable during a short bus trip to or from work. The newsletter will be published in English and Spanish.

Look for Rider Insider in January, April, July and October.

# METRO Light Rail Vehicle Makes Public Debut



On Nov. 10, 2005 the streamers were flying at a light rail car unveiling event that kicked off a 10-week METRO Expo vehicle tour through Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa. During the tour the public boarded the 50-foot prototype. The tour ends Jan. 21.

*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.*

## **Valley Metro Board of Directors-New in '06**

*Avondale Councilmember Marie Lopez Rogers (Treasurer)  
Chandler Mayor Boyd Dunn  
El Mirage Mayor Fred Waterman  
Gilbert Councilmember Les Presmyk (Chair)  
Glendale Mayor Elaine M. Scruggs  
Maricopa County Supervisor Andy Kunasek  
Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker  
Peoria Vice Mayor Pat Dennis  
Phoenix Councilmember Peggy Bilsten (Vice Chair)  
Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross  
Surprise Councilmember Cliff Elkins  
Tempe Councilmember Len Copple*

Valley Metro/RPTA Executive Director David Boggs

## **Production Team**

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