

DESTINATIONS



DESTINATIONS IS THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF VALLEY METRO

Summer 2010

BUS SERVICE IMPACTED BY LOSS OF TRANSIT FUNDS

The year 2010 may go down in history as the year of extreme funding challenges for transit in Maricopa County and the entire State. It's a far cry from the state of transit just four years ago when sales tax collections were providing additional revenue to advance a regional transit plan in Maricopa County. After two years of solid declines in local and regional sales tax revenues, the rug was pulled out from under cities and towns in Arizona with the elimination of Local Transportation Assistance Funds (State Lottery).

"What we've worked so hard to build over the past few years is changing before our eyes," said Dave Boggs, executive director. "I believe our passengers were beginning to experience a true regional transit system in the Valley. Now we are taking a step back."

According to the Wall Street Journal, public transportation will be more crowded and expensive this year as big-city transit systems across the country respond to severe budget pressures. While ridership responded well to the

recessionary period year of 2008, the shift came in the third quarter when ridership began to dip and has continued that descent. At the same time, the cost of riding public transportation rose nationally at a 17.8% annual rate.

The Shrinking Regional Funding Plan

The Transit Life Cycle Program (TLCP), which is funded by the half-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2004, is a long range financial plan for the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) and guides future regional transit investments. A working group began meeting in 2009 to develop a plan that better meets the needs of the Valley Metro member agencies due to an anticipated \$1.3 billion shortfall in the remaining 16 years of the Program.

A project list was developed by the working group that ensured a financially balanced program that would preserve the highest priority existing and planned transit services and capital facility investments. The group met as sub areas representing the east, west



and central geographical areas of the Valley and were able to achieve a balance of TLCP funded transit elements. Work on changes to the guidelines, policies and practices that guide the group in making recommendations will continue by the Valley Metro member agencies in 2010.

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Sweep of Lottery Funds Presents New Challenge

Cities and towns across Arizona have been counting on Lottery funds for the past 30 years to assist with transit operations. As a budget balancing measure, the State permanently repealed the \$34 million in annual transit funds taking effect immediately. Valley Metro members began planning next steps with more rounds of cuts and public hearings and community outreach events to get the public's input on what could be pared further.

"The work accomplished with balancing the TLCP now shifts its focus on what we can now keep in the plan and what will transition to cover the routes that the cities and towns can no longer afford," said Boggs.

Upon hearing that the LTAF was in jeopardy, the Valley Metro members began to review their routes and assess them based on performance measurements such as ridership and costs to operate service.

Bus Service Impacted by Loss of Transit Funds

"We are looking at what we can do to affect the fewest number of people possible," said Dale Hardy, Valley Metro planner. "Cities and towns are doing the right thing by looking at it from both a community service and an operational point of view." Hardy, a Valley transit planner since 1982, admits that he has never seen such drastic cuts to transit.

Other Funding Solutions

Valley Metro RPTA is partnering with the Arizona Transit Association and the Arizona Department of Transportation to look at optional funding sources for transit in the state. Arizona now joins the ranks of only four other states that don't fund transit at the state level. Concerns over lack of stable funding could harm future job creation, company relocations and job attraction, mobility, health, air quality and access to education.

According to the American Public Transportation Association, every \$1 billion investment in public transportation supports 36,000 jobs and generates \$4 billion in business activity. On top of that, public transportation enhances rural, suburban and urban quality of life by saving 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline and 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.



Events in Five Days for Route 685

Celebrating

five years of service on a bus route could be an ordinary event, but Valley Metro's Route 685 is no ordinary bus route. Resurrected after losing funding about ten years ago, the service is considered a rural lifeline for more than 50 passengers each day. Riders board in Ajo and Gila Bend for travel to dialysis appointments, school, shopping, or jobs. Route 685 follows Arizona Highway 85, which travels north and south from the I-10.

The first of five northbound trips departs Ajo each weekday making the 95-mile trip ten times daily and four times each Saturday.

"When the route was revived in March 2005 it was the demand of the residents in these rural areas, along with federal and local funding, that made it possible," said David Boggs, Valley Metro executive director.

The route, which is the longest in the Valley Metro system, is the result of a partnership between the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Pima County Transportation Department and Valley Metro.

"Bringing the route back to life took an incredible amount of effort, and recognizing five years of success with five days of celebrations was an appropriate tribute,"

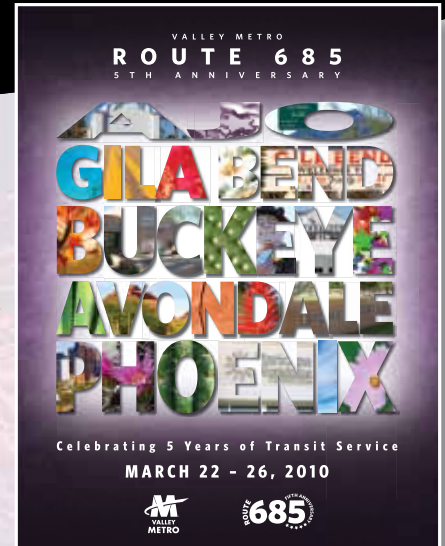
said Sam Chavez, ADOT Program Manager.

Five traveling road show events were conducted March 22-26, and featured free rides all week, local dignitaries, giveaways, cupcakes, entertainment and a hands-on display of a new Route 685 bus.

"Having a presence in these rural communities was extremely valuable for staff, as well as the residents who live in these remote areas of the state," said Boggs, who attended all five events that crossed two counties.

The celebrations, held in Ajo, Gila Bend, Buckeye, Avondale and Phoenix at major destinations along Route 685, brought focus to local communities and included a tree planting ceremony to commemorate the route's growth during five years of service.

Responding to a recent survey, many passengers would have no other means of transportation or would prefer not to drive if they didn't have Route 685. About one-third of the riders are 60 years of age or older or have a disability.



VALLEY METRO PHOTO GALLERY

January 14, 2010

LINK Station Groundbreaking at Elliot Road and Arizona Avenue, Chandler Arizona Avenue/Country Club Drive LINK service

Pictured from left to right:

Gilbert Councilmember and Valley Metro Board Member **Les Presmyk**,
Tempe Vice Mayor and Valley Metro Board Member **Shana Ellis**,
Chandler Councilmember and Valley Metro Board Member **Trinity Donovan**,
Scottsdale Councilmember and Valley Metro Board Member **Wayne Ecton**,
Mesa Mayor **Scott Smith**, Chandler Mayor **Boyd Dunn**,
Gilbert Mayor **John Lewis**, Chandler Councilmember **Jack Sellers**,
D.L. Withers President **Dan Withers**,
and Valley Metro RPTA Executive Director **David Boggs**.



February 16, 2010

Scottsdale Healthcare, Henkel and Discount Tire Celebrate Route 72

With new transit service, local CEOs asked their employees to throw their worries "under the bus."

April 8, 2010

Installation of Arizona Avenue/ Country Club Drive LINK Shelter

Broadway and Southern, Mesa



April 20, 2010

Design a Bus Wrap Contest Winning Artwork

Pictured from left to right:
 Phoenix Councilmember and Valley Metro Board Chairman **Michael Johnson**, Student, **Juan Marzeleno**,
 Trevor G. Browne High School and Valley Metro RPTA Executive Director **David Boggs**.



April 25, 2010

Valley Bike Month and Great Bike Chase

May 7, 2010

Goodyear Groundbreaking

Pictured from left to right:
 Nesbitt Construction President/CEO **Jim Nesbitt**,
 Avondale Mayor **Marie Lopez-Rogers**,
 Goodyear Councilmember and
 Valley Metro Board Member **Frank Cavaliere**,
 Maricopa County Supervisor **Max Wilson**,
 Goodyear Mayor **Jim Cavanaugh**,
 Jacobs Engineering Architect **Dan Richardson**,
 Valley Metro RPTA Deputy Executive Director
 of Planning **Carol Ketcherside**,
 Goodyear Deputy City Manager **Mark Gaillard**,
 Goodyear Engineering Director **David Ramirez**



City by City

TRANSIT UPDATES FROM
ACROSS THE VALLEY
METRO SERVICE AREA



Trolleys Add Bike Racks

All fifteen trolleys on the Scottsdale Neighborhood and Downtown routes are now equipped with bike racks similar to those on Valley Metro buses. The racks are installed on the front of each trolley and can secure up to two bicycles at a time. The racks have slots for both front and rear tires and an extendable metal arm helps secure the front tire to the rack. When not in use, the bike rack is stowed vertically. Both the Downtown and Neighborhood trolleys run seven days a week and connect to all Valley Metro fixed bus routes and Tempe's Orbit system. For more information visit www.scottsdaleaz.gov/trolley.asp

Route 66 extension offers service to Lone Butte Casino

On April 26, Route 66 was extended from Frye Road to serve the Gila River Indian Community.

This is the first time in Arizona history that a partnership has been created between a tribal government and Valley Metro. The route that operates on Mill Avenue and Kyrene Road, includes stops at the Lone Butte Casino. This allows commuters from the Gila River Indian Community, employees of the Lone Butte Industrial Park and employees as well as patrons of Lone Butte Casino to utilize the public transit option and help promote a green lifestyle.

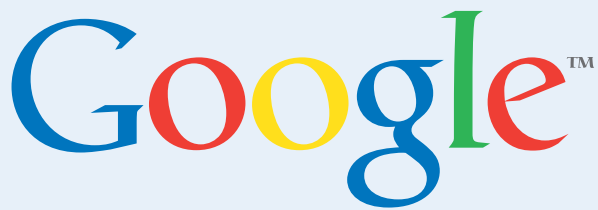
Tempe Conducts 19th Annual Bike Month

On April 22 hundreds of bicyclists received free breakfast snacks and free artist-designed T-shirts. Vice Mayor Shana Ellis and the Tempe Bicycle Action Group lead community rides from each breakfast site location to the Transportation Center. In conjunction with Bike to Work Day, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Bicycle Cellar, the Valley's first indoor, secure bicycle facility. In honor of Bike Month, the Bicycle Cellar offered discounted tune-ups for the month of April.

In addition, the Bicycle Cellar won the 2010 Bike Hero Award presented by Mayor Hugh Hallman. Their



innovative business model has allowed members of the community to rely on a service that allows people to leave their cars at home and create a long-term positive impact on the environment. For more information, visit www.tempe.gov/tim.



The Phoenix area joins hundreds of cities in the U.S. who are providing transit, bicycle and walking routes with Google maps.

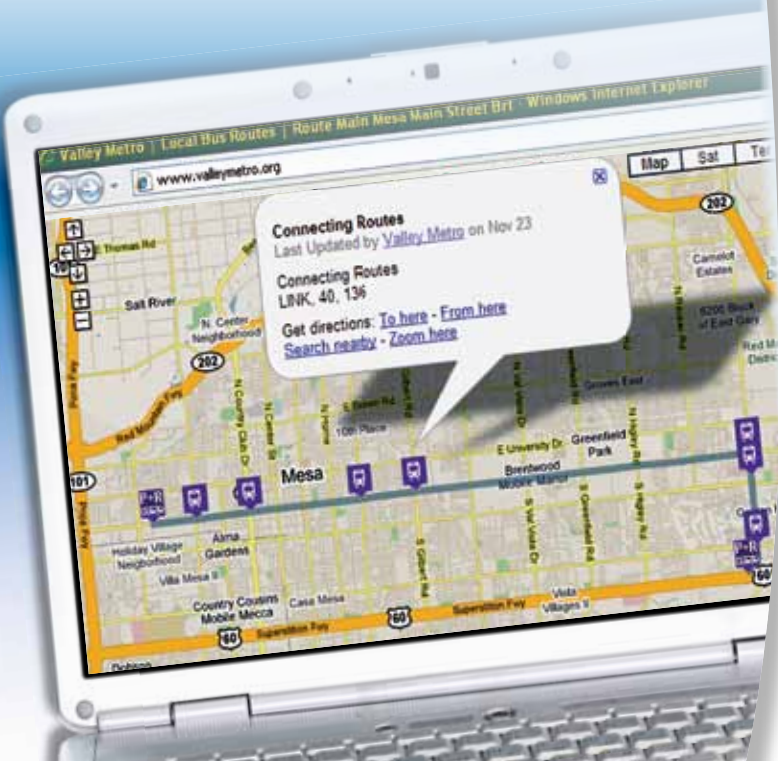
For those who are not regular bus or light rail passengers, and may need to find a way to work or to school, they can now go to the popular site and view their transit trip on a map.

Google Maps features a “zoom-in” satellite view, a 3-D Earth view, and a street view of bus stops and the surrounding area for those passengers that may be unfamiliar with their destination. Other features include an easy-to-read itinerary that includes transfers, trip time and distance.

To plan a bike or transit trip, go to maps.google.com and click on “Get Directions.” A dropdown menu provides options including public transit and bicycling.

“People already familiar with Google maps will be very comfortable with this technology,” said web developer Mike Brady. Google is well-known for providing accurate and turn-key applications.

While ValleyMetro.org already offers a free trip planner on their website, the planner is being upgraded with new technology and eventually will offer options different from Google’s.



This issue of *Destinations* is dedicated to Mary O'Connor. A vessel of transportation history and knowledge, Mary will be missed as a friend, mentor and industry leader.

Mary O'Connor
August 4, 1956 — January 22, 2010

Bill to Clarify Vanpool Status Becomes Law



Without a formal exemption from a state rental car tax, vanpools could have been subject to the same fee paid by tourists who visit the Valley and rent a car. House Bill 2434, sponsored by Representative Adam Driggs (R-Dist.11), now protects the employers and their commuters who are utilizing the vans in the Valley Metro program.

“It is always easier to clarify the application of the tax before an agency attempts to levy the tax on a specific activity,” said Bryan Jungwirth, RTPA Chief of Staff. “With high gas prices and an increased focus on carbon emissions, there was strong support for keeping vanpools free of the rental car tax.”

There are currently 334 Valley Metro vanpools operating across the Valley saving an average of 152,000 gallons of fuel and an average of 132,000 pounds of pollution each month.



METRO

METRO Light Rail

ON JULY 26, METRO light rail will undergo changes to service due to a substantial decrease in sales tax collections, which provides the funds necessary to operate service.

Customer priorities were identified and considered after conducting March public meetings in Phoenix and Tempe. Although many options were presented, the Valley Metro Rail Board of Directors approved a decision to operate weekday service every 12 minutes, instead of every 10 minutes, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. All other hours will operate 20 minute service and there are no changes to weekend service.

Another change to service will be the addition of more holidays running on a Sunday schedule. Now added to the list are: Christmas Eve; the day after Thanksgiving; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Presidents' Day; and Veterans Day.

While METRO ridership continues to climb, riders' fares cannot keep up with the sharp drop in the major sources of revenue that fund service.

Up-to-date METRO information is available at ValleyMetro.org.

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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- Valley Metro/RPTA Executive Director David A. Boggs

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For more information, visit our Web site at ValleyMetro.org.



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