

DESTINATIONS

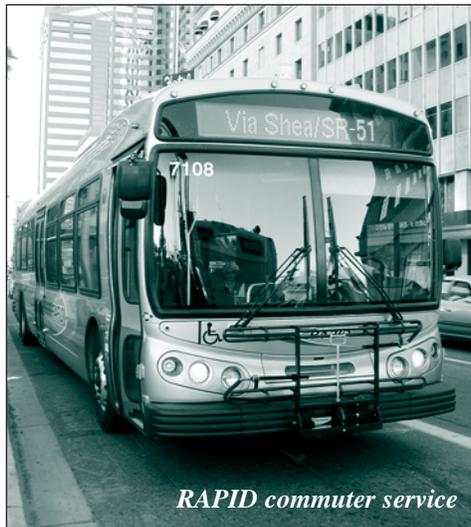
Destinations is the official newsletter of Valley Metro



The Phoenix Transit Plan—Four Years of Progress

A little over four years ago, in March 2000, Phoenix voters overwhelmingly approved a comprehensive plan to improve public transportation in the city, as well as the city sales tax increase required to fund it. With implementation of the Phoenix Transit Plan now well underway, the city's public transit department has published a report to update Phoenix residents on the progress achieved to date. You can view the report online at www.phoenix.gov/PUBLICTRANSIT.

Since its enactment, the 0.4 percent sales tax has been used to fund new and extended bus routes, longer transit service hours, additional dial-a-ride service, and new and upgraded transit facilities. Some improvements, like the new RAPID commuter service, with its distinctive vehicles and bus stops, have been



RAPID commuter service

highly visible. Other improvements, such as online trip planning and enhanced security, have been made "behind the scenes." All are vital to the success of the integrated, multi-modal public transit system requested by Phoenix voters.

As a result of all these improvements, annual ridership on Phoenix buses has increased by nearly 20 percent, from 32 million to 38.3

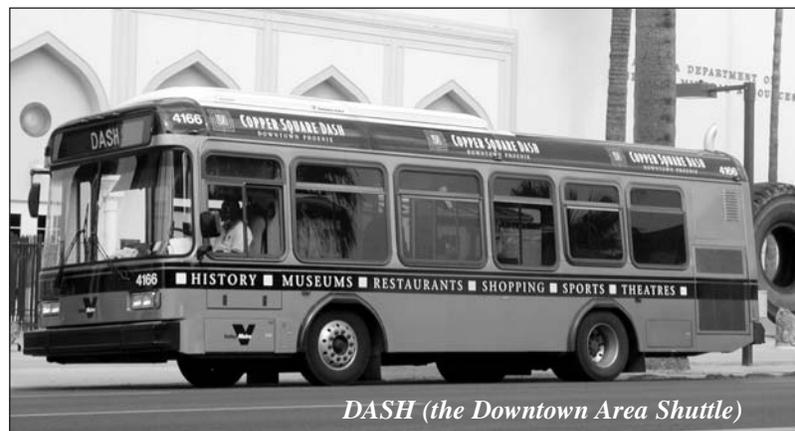
million, since the plan was put into effect. Phoenix now ranks among the top five cities in the nation for growth in transit ridership. Moreover, last year *Metro Magazine*, a leading journal in the public transit industry, recognized Phoenix for having one of the top 10 most improved transit systems in the nation.

Coming improvements include a state-of-the-art communications system that will not only make automated on-board announcements possible but will also allow buses to be tracked for more efficient operations and scheduling.

Other plans on the horizon include a new RAPID route, new light rail service, and continued improvements to existing services and facilities. These new and expanded services will benefit Phoenix citizens and all Valley residents who use the regional public transit system.



The Ed Pastor Transit Center



DASH (the Downtown Area Shuttle)

Valley Metro is a political subdivision of the state of Arizona overseen by a 12-member board of 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.

Light Rail Schedule Updated to Reflect Project Changes

In late March, Valley Metro Rail announced plans to open the METRO light rail system by the end of 2008, rather than in a three-phased opening beginning in December 2006 and ending in August 2007.

The revised schedule reflects the many changes that were made to the project as a result of unprecedented community interest and involvement. These changes included the addition of five stations, 1,000 parking spaces, 50 traffic signals, and more landscaping and shade at station locations. Moreover, opening

the entire system at one time will ensure maximum ridership from day one by providing a comprehensive system that connects the three cities participating in the project.

Since final design is nearly complete, major changes to the project are no longer anticipated, and Valley Metro Rail officials are confident that the new schedule is realistic. However, the schedule is dependent on timely completion of several critical steps, including right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and successful negotiation of a federal funding commitment.

The starting date for construction in each of the project's five line sections is also being adjusted to allow



Light rail construction began in November 2003 with the reconstruction of this bridge leading to the planned light rail maintenance facility near 48th and Washington Streets.

time to complete the above steps and to receive the requisite federal approvals. But while the scheduled completion date for construction is being revised by up to two years in some areas of the route, the estimated time that it will take for construction in front of any one property will not change. In fact, the revised schedule will allow Valley Metro Rail to sequence construction activities more efficiently, and in so doing minimize the impact of construction to the community.

For additional information about the light rail construction schedule and budget, contact Valley Metro Rail at (602) 534-1807 or visit us online at www.ValleyMetro.org/rail.

Phoenix, Tempe to Use Paved Track for Rail System

Phoenix and Tempe officials recently decided to change the light rail track surface treatment through their cities by switching from ballasted to paved track. Both city councils approved the change to paved (or embedded) track, in which the rails are flush with the street and concrete is poured between the rails, from ballasted track, which looks similar to traditional railroad track. As with ballasted track, a curb will still separate the light rail track from automobile traffic.

In Phoenix, the decision eliminated plans for a Central Avenue Improvement District, which would have assessed property owners for part of the cost of

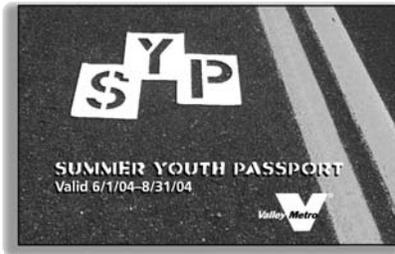
paving the track on Central. The decision also established paved track as the standard for any future light rail extensions on city streets in Phoenix.

"I think this shows that the city does care, and that we are being responsive, and that we do listen," said Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon. The estimated additional cost for the cities to use paved track is \$27 million in Phoenix and \$10.1 million in Tempe. "We can't afford to not do it right," said Tempe Mayor Neil Giuliano. "It's going to be there forever."

In late May, the Mesa City Council affirmed its decision to use ballasted track through Mesa's one-mile section of the light rail route.

Summer Youth Passport Now Available

Valley Metro's Summer Youth Passport provides a convenient and inexpensive way for young people to get around the Valley this summer. Students 18 and under are eligible for the pass, which can be used on all local bus routes between June 1 and August 31. The pass costs only \$46—a ten percent savings over regular monthly youth passes. But that's not all. The pass is also good for discounts at a number of popular summertime destinations throughout the Valley.



With the pass, students can receive discounts at the following participating businesses between now and August 31, 2004: AMF Bowling, Arizona Mills Mall, the Arizona Science Center, Brunswick Recreation Centers, Desert Schools Coyotes Center, F1 Race Factory, GameWorks, the Heard Museum, the Phoenix Mercury, the Phoenix Zoo, Pueblo Grande Museum, Stratum Laser Tag, and the YMCA.

To find out where you can buy a Summer Youth Passport, please call Valley Metro Transit Information at (602) 253-5000 or visit www.ValleyMetro.org.

Light Rail Kiosks to be Installed

The winners of a competition to design light rail informational kiosks were announced on May 7. Six designs were selected and will be installed at locations along the route this summer, including Phoenix Spectrum Mall, Phoenix Plaza, the Burton Barr Central Library, the Tempe Main Library, the Escalante Community Center in Tempe, and the Mesa Public Library.

The freestanding structures will contain construction information and schedules, light rail brochures, cards for discounts at participating businesses along the route, and other light rail information.

The winners were Smith Craft (first place), Gould Evans (second place), Circle West Architects (third place), Leo A. Daly (honorable mention), Baker Engineering & Energy/All Signs System (honorable mention), and s.e.a.d. architecture + construction (honorable mention).

July 04 Bus Book

The July 2004 Bus Book will soon be available 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 July 26. These changes will include the extension of both the Green Line—Thomas Road and Route 131—START to the new Avondale Civic Center, which is located on 115th Avenue just south of Van Buren Street.

In addition to the Bus Book, transit information is available online at www.ValleyMetro.org or by calling (602) 253-5000. For TTY text telephone service, call (602) 261-8208.

“Design a Bus Wrap” Student Art Contest

The winning entry in Valley Metro's annual “Design a Bus Wrap” student art contest was unveiled at McClintock High School in Tempe on April 30. Amber Myers, a junior at McClintock, created the design, which features the slogan “Valley Metro: The Pollution Solution.”

Attending the event were Tempe Mayor Neil Giuliano, Tempe City Councilman Ben Arredondo, and Valley Metro/RPTA Executive Director Ken Driggs. They were joined by students, faculty, and school district and city officials.

Valley Metro started the contest in 2000 to help educate local youths about the benefits of public transit. High school students in the Phoenix, Glendale, Tempe, and Mesa districts were eligible for this year's competition.

For information on Valley Metro's school outreach program, call (602) 262-4001 or visit www.ValleyMetro.org.



City by City

Transit updates from across the Valley Metro service area



New Transit Center Opens in Chandler

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the new Chandler Fashion Center Transit Plaza on June 7. The half-acre facility features two passenger shelters and bus bays that can accommodate up to six buses at one time. Passenger amenities

include landscaped and shaded seating areas, bicycle racks, and drinking fountains.

The total cost of construction for the project was \$564,000. Financing was provided in part by the State of Arizona Local Transportation Assistance Fund.

The new facility is currently served by Routes 72–Scottsdale/Rural and 156–Chandler Boulevard. The Chandler Fashion Center Transit Plaza is expected to be an important hub for transit services in the city, and connections to other local and regional routes are planned for the future.

For bus route and schedule information, please visit www.ValleyMetro.org or call (602) 253-5000. For TTY text telephone service, dial (602) 261-8208.



The Chandler Fashion Center Transit Plaza while under construction

Tempe Receives National Transit-Advertising Award

The Transportation Marketing and Communications Association recently awarded the city of Tempe transit program, Tempe in Motion, the TMCA Tranny Award of Merit for its 2003 advertising campaign. The winning campaign was judged against 200 of the best transportation marketing and communications programs in North America.

The campaign employed a wide variety of advertising, public relations, and public involvement activities to encourage Tempe residents to ride the bus, bike, and walk. It included advertisements in local newspapers and movie theater slide shows and on cable television and street banners.

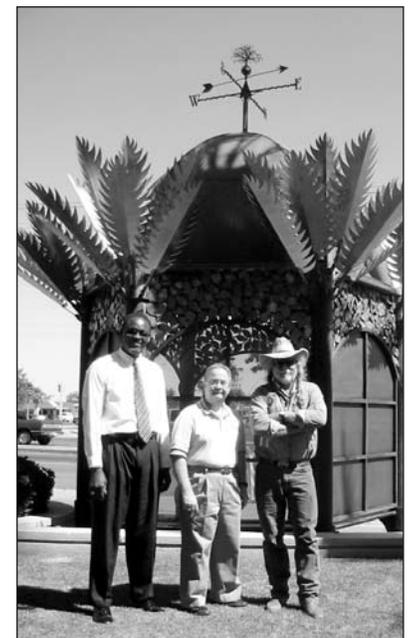
The Tranny Awards recognize the best practices in marketing and communications in the transportation and passenger transit industries. The TMCA serves marketing and communications professionals in all modes and market segments of transportation.

For more information about Tempe's transit-advertising campaign, call (480) 350-2775 or visit www.tempe.gov/tim.

New Mesa Bus Shelter

On June 5, the city of Mesa dedicated a new artist-designed bus shelter located on the southeast corner of Alma School Road and Southern Avenue. Presiding over the event was outgoing Vice Mayor Dennis Kavanaugh, who also chairs the Arizona Commission for the Arts. The shelter is the fourth in a series of seven public art projects for the city.

At the dedication (from the left), Randy Robinson of the Mesa Museum and Cultural Advisory Board; outgoing Mesa Vice Mayor Dennis Kavanaugh; and artist Joe Tyler, who designed the shelter.



Transportation Plan Offers Choices, Supports Growth

A plan to keep Maricopa County moving for the next 20 years has been drafted and refined extensively by representatives of local communities, businesses, city and town leaders, and government agencies. These representatives comprise a 22-member group, the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), which is overseen by the Maricopa Association of Governments. The TPC was charged with developing a transportation plan that would accommodate growth, as well as offer improved mobility options that would benefit both county residents and businesses.

The task was especially daunting because different areas of the Valley face different transportation challenges. A variety of long-term solutions had to be found to meet the needs of individual communities. The TPC incorporated years of research and public input to create a plan that will improve mobility at the community level and throughout the region as a whole.

The 20-year, half-cent sales tax that currently supports the Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) for Maricopa County will expire in 2005, leaving the county with no primary funding source for transportation. The new transportation plan being presented to voters in November will be enacted if the RARF tax is extended for another 20 years.

The table to the right summarizes the main elements of the plan and how funding would be distributed among the various projects. More than half of the \$16 billion funding for the plan would come from the extension of the RARF tax, if approved by voters.

The economic benefits derived from enacting the plan would be significant. An average of 10,600 new jobs would be created each year over the 20-year life of the plan. In addition, the plan is expected to generate a total of more than \$15 billion in new personal income for residents of Maricopa County.

Safeguards to monitor the plan and ensure accountability would include a Citizens' Transportation Oversight Committee, regular independent audits, and separate funding accounts.

For additional information about the Regional Transportation Plan, call the Maricopa Association of Governments at (602) 254-6300 or visit www.LetsKeepMoving.com.

FREeways AND HIGHWAYS (57% of total funding for the plan)

- ▶ Additional lanes for major freeways
- ▶ New freeways, including Loop 303, the I-10 reliever, Williams Gateway, and the South Mountain Loop.
- ▶ New carpool (HOV) lanes
- ▶ New or improved traffic interchanges
- ▶ Grand Avenue improvements
- ▶ Rubberized asphalt
- ▶ Freeway Management System
- ▶ Maintenance

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT (32% of total funding for the plan)

- ▶ 10 new bus routes and expanded service on 30 routes
- ▶ Improvements to express bus and bus rapid transit service, including 14 new routes.
- ▶ 27.7 miles of new light rail extensions
- ▶ Tripling of dial-a-ride services
- ▶ Tripling of vanpool services
- ▶ 32 new passenger facilities
- ▶ More than 2,100 new buses and 1,000 new dial-a-ride vehicles

STREET IMPROVEMENTS (9% of total funding for the plan)

- ▶ Improvements to the Northern Avenue Parkway, Rio Salado Parkway, and Sonoran Parkway.
- ▶ Major street and intersection improvements across the Valley
- ▶ Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as "smart" signals that sense traffic conditions.

OTHER PROGRAMS (2% of total funding for the plan)

- ▶ Safety planning
- ▶ Bicycle projects
- ▶ Pedestrian facilities
- ▶ Regional planning programs
- ▶ Rideshare and other programs to reduce travel and improve air quality

Summer Heat + Emissions = Ozone

Each time we start up a gas-powered engine, we contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, which is unhealthy to breathe and causes respiratory problems for many Valley residents.

Due to these health concerns, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) issues Ozone Health Watches when ozone levels will be high enough to cause problems for certain groups of individuals, including children and senior citizens. When ozone concentrations are expected to exceed the standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency, ADEQ issues a High Pollution Advisory.



The poster for Valley Metro's summer 2004 ozone campaign.

Watches and advisories are issued at noon the day before the expected elevation in ozone and are announced on local evening newscasts. You can also access air quality information online at www.adeq.state.az.us.

There are some simple things you can do to help reduce ozone emissions this summer. These include cutting back on your driving, refueling your car after dark, and using electric-powered lawn equipment.

One of the best ways to help is to join a carpool or vanpool. You can do so by calling Valley Metro Rideshare at (602) 262-RIDE (7433) or visiting www.SharetheRide.com.

To find out how you can enter this summer's ozone contest, please visit Valley Metro's Web site, www.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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www.ValleyMetro.org.**

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