Block by Block by Rail
A look at Metro light rail’s impact

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Cover photo of Central Station platform by Jim Paulin.

Light rail construction workers take if at Central Avenue and Virginia Street in this photo taken April 2. The Metro light rail is set to begin operating in December and is expected to carry 4,000 to 5,000 passengers an hour. Trains are scheduled to arrive at stations every 10 minutes during work days, and every 20 minutes during off-peak hours.

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**Light rail talk**

‘There is a lot of promise with the light rail, but it’s important not to get overly enthusiastic about it. People love their cars, and that’s not going to change. It’s going to take awhile for people to take the rail, learn to use it and have it make sense for business or commuting.’

Neil Caffee
City of Tempe

‘The light rail is changing the face of Phoenix. We can’t predict exact results, of course, but we’ve seen good things happen in communities like Dallas and Portland (Ore.), so we believe it can happen here.’

Eric Johnson
City of Phoenix

‘Prior to light rail, land was selling for $30 to $70 a square foot, depending on location. Now it’s going for $100 to $150 a square foot. Since the downturn of the residential market, however, pieces of land are sitting longer. But when the light rail comes online, I believe demand will jump back up.’

Andrew Fosberg
City of Phoenix

‘We believe rail transit is going to spur economic development. Light rail is a fixed, high-value asset, and developers can invest with confidence knowing the rail will be going there for years down the road.’

Bill Jozilinski
City of Mesa
The TOD question

Can light rail reduce traffic congestion, help create livelier neighborhoods?

BY JAN BUCHHEIM

A new kind of development is on the Phoenix horizon. It's called transit-oriented development — TOD for short. Though TOD is well-known among urban planners, city politicians and savvy real estate professionals, it most often means nothing.

That likely will change Dec. 31 when the 29-mile light rail starter line makes it debut in the Valley of the Sun. Slickly designed rail cars will cruise along a route that starts in Mesa, pushes west into downtown Tempe and north of Sky Harbor International Airport. Passengers can ride the rail into downtown Phoenix, where the tracks turn north up Central Avenue all the way to Central Avenue and Royal Road. From there, the journey pushes west again to 19th Avenue and north to Bethany Home Road. Of course, the train loop back to the light rail station in Mesa.

Along the way, new developments are cropping up all along the light rail lines. Most are apartments and condominiums, as compared with TODs, which are self-sustaining neighborhoods within a city. All true TODs, however, promote public transportation, whether it be bus service, heavy commuter rail or light rail.

DEVELOPMENT EQUALS TRANSIT TAKERS

"TOD is a development style that increases transit usage," said Sandy Zwick, a principal planner with the city of Phoenix, who is overseeing TOD development along the Phoenix light rail line. "It's about increasing the number of rides through complementary land use.

That's the foundation for whatever happens next. TOD is meant to motivate more people to use public transportation. As such, it should be located within a quarter-mile of a transit station. TODs cater to the pedestrian, so that there is walkability to and from the nearby light rail stations." Zwick said.

"Walkability is a greater issue in Phoenix, where a 10-minute walk in 113-degree temperatures might be unbearable. Thus, the best TOD practices are likely to take into account the sunshine and heat. We'll be incorporating a lot more shade," Zwick said.

But what else is TOD? It's a comprehensive mix of uses. The best examples of TODs around the world and the U.S. include high-density housing, particularly affordable housing, employment centers, retail and support services for residents; 24-hour medical care; cultural and entertainment venues; open space and recreation; boutique hotels; and bike and walking paths. Sometimes, single-family detached homes can be incorporated into TODs. That particular model usually is built in suburbs that are connected by rail, as in Chicago, suburban Washington and New York. Suburban TODs often incorporate park and ride facilities to complete that mix.

It all sounds great. TODs could be a solution for the widespread addiction of driving dozens of miles every day to work, to shop and to play. After all, some experts are predicting the days of paying $1 a gallon for gas are just around the corner.

NO QUICK FIX

Creating TODs, however, won't be a quick fix. They're often difficult to assemble, design, finance and build. Though TODs are talked about and analyzed and praised at planning conferences and meetings of organizations such as the Urban Land Institute, not that many have come to fruition, even in cities where public transportation has been a way of life for years.

Though many private developers envision TODs on the order of a Disneyland, the reality has been that most are impossible without public participation, including public financing of infrastructure and other incentives.

According to a study last year by the National Academy of Sciences, only 100 TOD developments across the U.S. are public/private partnerships. Most of those are near the nation's capital. Some cities are pushing aggressively for more public/private partnerships on TODs, including San Diego, Los Angeles, Dallas, Salt Lake City and Denver.

Though many developments near the Phoenix starter line have been in the works since voters approved the sizable transportation financing package in 2000, only a handful have come to fruition, even though the light rail completion is a mere eight months away.

Cities along the light rail line have never done TODs before, and streamlining the zoning process and design approvals have not been smooth. Funding always is a challenge.

"Any mixed use can be difficult to get financed. TOD or not. To a bank, it is not much different. The key is to have a well-

thought-out plan for design, uses, compatibility, absorption, pricing, separate stand-alone maintenance budgets and reasonable FFA targets," said Eric Brown, a local pioneer in urban infill housing. He built the various Artisan communities near downtown and is the West Coast managing director for RCLCO, a real estate consulting firm.

Former Phoenix Mayor Paul Johnson, who has completed several infill multi-family projects through his company, Old World Homes, agreed that infill, mixed-use and TOD present a challenge in Phoenix. Few developers in the Southwest are familiar with development along transit, he said.

"That's compounded by the fact that the city is not familiar with the needs of the development on small vacant sites in the city core. He also acclimates the city for holding land that could be transformed into successful TODs.

"The city has to do a better job of managing its excess land. They don't see themselves selling property, but they need to if they want to make transit-oriented development work," Johnson said.

That leads to another difficult issue for developers: True TODs require sizable chunks of land within the urban core.

"The tough part is they need to be assembled," said Matt Seaman, a former planner who is now a partner with Metro West Development.

Land prices have skyrocketed across the Valley during the past several years, and despite the economic downturn, they are still prohibitively high. Seaman said it took him a couple of years to assemble the land MetroWest will develop near the light rail line at Central Avenue and Roosevelt Street. Though the challenge of negotiating with multiple bidders, some out of state, resulted in some brain damage, MetroWest has put down roots.

"We had the focus of what our product will be and where it fits best. We picked the..."
The Happening and the Hip
For years the Downtown Phoenix Partnership has worked hard to create a core that offers spectacular venues, soaring office towers, a vibrant hospitality industry, and a growing education and research base. There has been tremendous success during the last decade and now as light rail prepares to come online at the end of this year we are beginning to see all of these efforts coming together to create a downtown which represents the true urban core of the region. In other words, Downtown Phoenix is happening. But great urban centers are more than just big buildings. Great urban centers have a heartbeat unlike any other town or suburb. That beat is created when hundreds of smaller uses and interesting places bring people together on the sidewalks, in the restaurants and the parks. After all it is the people that give a downtown its energy and vibrance. Now that is too happening. Light rail is popping up all around downtown be it clusters of fun restaurants and bars, modern residential buildings or great spots to hang out at night or on the weekends. Downtown Phoenix is becoming the kind of place we envisioned twenty years ago. The dream is still evolving as is downtown and there is much more to be done, but I invite you to come to Downtown and experience the transformation and all it has to offer.

Sincerely,

David Roderique
President & CEO
Downtown Phoenix Partnership

FROM PAGE 29
Roosevelt Historic District next to light rail. That’s what we’ve picked as our sandbox,” Seamon said.

MetroWest also has decided to build more affordable priced housing beginning in the $200,000s and topping out in the $400,000s.

Many of the completed or nearly completed residential projects along the light rail line are high-rise luxury condominiums, which have been a hard sell during the past year. Some of the luxury projects that are completed or near completion include Hayden Ferry Lakeside, the Summit at Copper Square, 44 Monroe and the Chateau on Central. Like many housing projects across the Valley, sales have slipped. It didn’t bode well for the immediate future of TOD, said Brown.

“I think many developers got ahead of the curve with too much high-priced product and not enough experience before taking on such complex projects,” Brown said.

While many of those projects were announced and promoted aggressively, those that did not begin construction in the past few months probably are on hold for the foreseeable future. Some may be dead, with too many developers spending too much money on up-front costs.

“Most ate up their seed money just on pre-marketing. Buyers got skeptical unless it was under construction,” Brown said.

Now, with the national economy teetering precariously as many financial firms are near collapse, the prospects for significant TOD developments in Phoenix are dim, at least for the time being.

“I think that, like the rest of the market, TOD development will have to wait a couple of years. Once the units currently being built are absorbed and the ASU and downtown commercial projects are built, we will see a second wave of interest,” Brown said. “We are actually lucky more projects did not get off the ground, or we could have had a tremendous free-fall of pricing and stalled projects.”

Johnson said this time affords a perfect opportunity for the city to move into a comprehensive planning mode and to be more proactive in the realm of private/public partnerships.

“A lot of planning will be the key to make development happen in a significant way,” Johnson said.

Ultimately the success of TODs in Phoenix will be depend on expanding light rail and creating better bus routes to other established hubs of activity, Brown said.

“In my bigger vision, I would like to see constant bus service down Camelback to Scottsdale Road and a connection from Tempe light rail north through Scottsdale — whether it be rail or urban bus,” Brown said. "We would see more TOD development along those routes. Now, that would make a big dent in future sprawl.”

GET CONNECTED
Reconnecting America: www.reconnectingamerica.org
Planetizen: The Planning and Development Network: www.planetizen.com
Transit Oriented Development Advocate: www.todaadvocate.com
Rail-Valle: www.rail-valle.com

A History of Phoenix public transit
- 1887: First railroad connecting transportation. The freight train pulls the Phoenix Street Railway Co. operates horse-drawn cars along 10th Street from Seventh Avenue to Seven Street.
- 1889: The company expands central service along 8 miles of track. It has 47 cars and 22 stands and stops.
- 1889: Electric streetcar line introduced to Phoenix.
- 1899: Electric streetcars replace all horse-drawn cars.
- 1899: The Phoenix Street Railway Co. builds two interurban electric lines. A line to the west of the city. The company builds a narrow-gauge line called the Overton and Glendale line, which runs from Phoenix to Glendale.
- 1910: There now are nearly 100 miles of track in the city, and the rail company owns 300 track miles.
- 1916: Railroads claim poor working conditions and give strikes, creating more difficulties for the transit company.
- 1920s: Streetcars win victories over streetcars.
- 1926: The Phoenix Street Railway Co. is in dire financial straits. The assets are sold to the city of Phoenix for $2 million, with the municipality becoming the provider of public transportation.
- 1927: Phoenix residents approve a bond issue for $500,000 to purchase two new streetcars.
- 1928: On Christmas Day, the first new streetcar begins regular service.
- 1829: Public transportation, both automobiles and buses, enjoys a bumper year.
- 1930: The Great Depression creates several challenges for the public transportation system, though it prevails for several years.
- 1938: The streetcar company, with 1.2 million passengers over 1 million total miles.
- 1940: Residential complaints about the noise of the streetcars and ask the city replace them with buses.
- 1945: Although city officials decide to remove the streetcars, the service World War II and war transportation needs cause the rail service for several years.
- 1946: Light rail service ends.
- 1955: Sunnyside streetcars and buses serve 7.2 million passengers over 7 million total miles.
- 1956: Streetcar service ends.
- 1963: The regional public transit system is named Valley Metro.
- 2006: Valley Metro appeals “Coast 2020,” which provides mass transit system services, and offers of light rail within the city of Phoenix. The city of Phoenix approves funding of light rail within city limits.
- 2009: The Maricopa Association of Governments approves a regional transportation plan that provides additional funding for light rail.
- 2010: Valley Metro adopts Metro as the name for the light rail system. A 20-mile starter route is picked to connect Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.
- 2011: Groundbreaking begins in February or March.
- 2013: The 23.9-mile light rail terminal station is scheduled to begin service Dec. 27.

Source: Arizona Rail Passenger Association, Phoenix
Service expected to unite Phoenix, Tempe campuses

BY RICHARD GRAY
Contributing Writer

The futures of Arizona State University and the Metro light rail are on the same track. A recent Arizona State University study predicts that a quarter of the riders — between 4,900 to 5,000 trips a day — will be ASU-related, providing the light rail with a dependable customer base.

Benefits to the university, its students, faculty and staff, and the light rail are expected to be numerous. ‘‘It’s going to be a boon for ASU, for both the Tempe and downtown campuses,’’ said Aaron Golub, an assistant professor in ASU’s School of Planning and School of Sustainability. ‘‘It will make the two campuses more one.’’

ASU’s significant ridership is giving the university bargaining power as it negotiates a discounted rate for its riders. ‘‘We have put our cards on the table. We believe we can help settle the issue and have a decision by now. We believe the ASU drivers are crucial to the development of light rail,’’ said Theresa Fletcher, who oversees ASU’s public transit programs.

‘‘We are looking at the ASU drivers and ASU students as being the core of the downtown campus. The students and faculty are excited about being a part of the downtown campus,’’ said Fletcher, quoting an ASU study that looked at ridership trends.

There are 48,000 ASU students on campus. There are 20,000 ASU students in the downtown campus. There are 1,000 ASU students on the downtown campus. There are 1,000 ASU students on the downtown campus. There are 1,000 ASU students on the downtown campus.

ASU is a big believer in light rail, said Hillary House, Metro light rail’s public information officer. ‘‘We want to encourage student riders.‘‘ House said a fare policy panel is looking at discounted rates.

The light rail even moved its track alignment to accommodate ASU. The original route was too close to the biology building, which houses delicate instruments and experiments, Golub said.

CAMPUS PARKING TIGHT

The light rail could ease tight parking at ASU, particularly at the expanding downtown campus.

‘‘As the university continued to grow, we have lost parking spaces,’’ Fletcher said.

There are eight parking facilities on the Tempe campus, and the three that are the highest-priced are preferred because they are closest to campus. Those have waiting lists.

Parking fees are charged by academic year, from August to August. The rate ranges from $180 per academic year at the remote lots, which the students call Area A, to $400 per academic year for the more convenient facilities.

‘‘All of our wait-list areas are the higher-priced parking areas. I don’t have anyone waiting to get into the $180 lot,’’ Fletcher said.

Free parking along the light rail line will give students more choices on where to live and still have ready access to the two campuses.

The light rail is ‘‘going to serve as a major anchor for housing along the line. It’s going to help ASU expand housing areas,’’ Golub said.

He said the Apache Boulevard corridor, an area in decline, also stands to benefit from new and refurbished residential development. More and easier bike rides traffic will result from less motorized traffic, he added.

The light rail also will offer developers more density for their projects, Golub said.

NIGHTLIFE, OTHER BENEFITS

There are also spin-off benefits, Golub said. Streets that are torn up during light rail construction will have new and better pavement.

‘‘The light rail, with commute times of 15 to 20 minutes from ASU to downtown, will offer more freedom for students and a greater employee work force for businesses along the light rail line, he said.

‘‘I see the opportunity for growing businesses to tap into a bigger opportunity for hiring staff,’’ said Denise Bismore, owner of the Silver Spoon Café and the Daily Grind coffee bar and bakery downtown.

‘‘I hope it will give me better exposure and increase my business,’’ she added. ‘‘The Daily Grind is located across from one of the stops.’’

Students also will have more options for nightlife, both in Tempe and downtown Phoenix, and easy access to sporting events.

‘‘If students want to take in a Diamondbacks game in the middle of the afternoon, we give them a light rail pass and he’s downtown in 15 or 20 minutes,’’ Fletcher said.

‘‘We have people who use the light rail as an easy way to branch out and experience new things,’’ House said. ‘‘It’s a good selling point for our city for businesses considering our area.’’

Downtown Tempe also could become more densely populated with the addition of retail, increased business experimentation and small boutiques.

‘‘You’re bound to have more interesting things happen,’’ Golub said, ‘‘with businesses that are better suited to foot traffic. That can’t happen with automobiles and (limited) parking. Tempe can take advantage of being the midpoint in the entire light rail line.’’

Golub, who has planned and engineered public transit lines, said light rail is more of an urban system than commuter rail. He predicts that light rail will increase ridership by 150% over the next 10 to 20 years.

‘‘As an urban planner, I go downtown all the time,’’ he said. ‘‘I normally jump on the Red Line or drive. I will never do downtown again. There will be no reason.‘‘

GET CONNECTED
Arizona State University School of Planning: www.asu.edu/planning
Valleymetro: www.valleymetro.org
Silver Spoon Café: www.thesilverspooncafe.com
The Daily Grind: www.dailysgrindphoenix.com
Science community hopes system lures students, researchers

By Angela Sorelius
angela.sorelius@phoenixbusinessjournal.com

Valley scientists look forward to the completion of light rail, which will make it easier for them to travel as they collaborate on projects.

One is Robert Geweke, the Ira A. Fulton chair in the Biomedical Informatics Department at Arizona State University. The department is part of the School of Computing and Informatics at ASU's Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering. Geweke's office is downtown Phoenix Biomedical Campus, and he collaborates on several projects with professors and researchers at ASU's Tempe campus.

"We have to get to the right places on campus," he said. "And that's going to be a great boon to the collaboration we want to build.

GOING GREEN

Tara Cunningham, director of academic services at the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix, in partnership with ASU, said faculty members are looking forward to hopping onto the light rail.

"A lot of people are saying it's going to open up the campus and make it more accessible," she said.

Some say the light rail could help recruit out-of-state scientists who value public transit.

"We're connecting eight faculty searches right now," she said. "Some are from San Diego, San Francisco and other cities that have a good public transit system.

Phoenix Biomedical Campus parking fees are high, she said, at more than $90 a year.

The university has 90 employees at the Phoenix campus at Seventh and Van Buren streets. Cunningham expects that total to surpass 100 by next year.

Some faculty will have joint appointments at ASU and UA, and will be traveling between the Tempe campus and the medical school campus in downtown Phoenix. Cunningham said she hopes travel time between the two campuses via light rail will be about the same as walking across the Tempe campus.

BISCIENCE HIGH ADDS STUDENTS

Near the medical school is the Phoenix Union High School District's Bioscience High School, which employs 10 people and has 116 students enrolled. Plans call for adding more staff next year.

Craig Petri, spokesman for the school district, said most Phoenix Union schools are equipped with passes for Valley Metro buses. Once light rail service begins, the bus passes will convert to light rail passes, he said.

Students also can use their passes for night and weekend trips.

"It's great because you're getting a new generation of public transportation users," he said. "The light rail could become a way of life for getting folks to that part of town, with jobs and residences coming downtown.

The Phoenix Union High School District's Bioscience High School has 116 students, who all will get free passes to ride the light rail.

Developers pin hopes on light rail being ticket to vibrant downtown

By Richard Gray
Contributing Writer

I don't know if we really understand the potential," said Dean Brennan, a principal planner with the city of Phoenix Planning Department who oversees development along the light rail line. "I think some people are underestimating light rail.

Developers are among them.

Developers have embraced the light rail system, and the long list of planned residential and commercial projects along its route is tangible evidence of their optimism.

"I'm confident (the light rail) will be a great success," said Richard Hubbard, CEO of Valley Partnership, an advocate organization for responsible development.

Still, the murky real estate market is stalling some projects.

Development, said Brennan, is "definitely going to slow down. We're not seeing any new projects coming to the city right now. Some won't get built this year—maybe next year.

He added, "Everything is circular. Developers plan ahead. The market will return.

Perhaps the market will rebound in time for Phoenix to catch up with other cities that have embraced public transit systems.

"The Valley was one of the last cities of our size to not have public transit," said Hilary Ford, spokeswoman for the Valley Metro light rail. "In the past year, light rail has been successfully implemented in many major cities and Western cities, Dallas, Denver, Salt Lake City and San Diego.

"Light rail ridership is projected at 30,000 a day in its first year. That means our regional travel forecasting models were based on the Phoenix area.

DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

Here's a sampling of major downtown projects, according to the Phoenix Development Services Department:

CityScape's 30-story office tower is going up at Central Avenue and Washington Street. It will include retail and 1,200 residential units. A's Fine Foods and P.F. Chang's China Bistro will be among the tenants.

CityScape's 30-story office tower is going up at Central Avenue and Washington Street. It will include retail and 1,200 residential units. A's Fine Foods and P.F. Chang's China Bistro will be among the tenants.

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The Phoenix Union High School District's Bioscience High School has 116 students, who all will get free passes to ride the light rail.
Business owners along rail line are hopeful, ‘surviving’

BY KENNY DUFF
Contributing Writer

Small businesses along the Phoenix light rail alignment are moving out of survival mode and creating strategies to attract customers and increase business once the trains start running in November.

The Silver Spoon Café at the San Carlos Hotel on Central Avenue plans to extend its hours. The café serves breakfast and lunch from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. Once the light rail starts running with a stop at the nearby Central Station, the 80-seat café will extend its hours and offer light dinner fare and grab-and-go meals.

“Light rail construction doesn’t help business, but it’s not crippling us, either.”

Tim Smith
Training 4 You Ltd.

Silver Spoon owner Denise Bismore also has expanded her business over the past eight months. In January, she opened Silver Spoon Express No. 2 at the Maricopa County Courthouse on Jackson Street. A month later, she opened The Daily Grind, a coffee and bakery emporium in the Phelps Dodge Tower at One North Central. The Daily Grind is open from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“The main reason I selected the Phelps Dodge location is because it’s directly across from a train station stop,” Bismore said. “Once the light rail starts running, I believe the value of my business will increase and my morning business will pick up considerably.”

Bismore opened Silver Spoon Express No. 1 last July at 223 N. Central Ave. Business was slow, so she closed it in January. “But I might consider re-opening after the light rail starts running and more students and condominium dwellers living nearby support it,” she said.

Tim Weidlake plans to lease a Segway scooter for $200 a month to make deliveries and help advertise The Light Rail Café at 3888 N. Central Ave.

“By and large, light rail construction has affected my business a little bit, but I have a good following, so I’m surviving,” Bismore said. “I believe the light rail will have a positive impact on the city especially with the rising cost of gas. It’s going to provide businesses along the rail more visibility and create more foot traffic.”

The Light Rail Café opened in November at 3888 N. Central Ave. amid light rail construction. Despite obstacles to reach the restaurant, business has been good, says owner Tim Weidlake.

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Light rail will change the way many think about downtown

With increasing transportation costs associated with personal vehicles, the timing for light rail has never been better. This is an exciting time to be developing in Phoenix. The metro area's investment in light rail creates the perfect opportunity to change the pattern, style and mentality of development along the light rail corridor from the traditional single land-use projects to transit-oriented development, or TOD.

TOD is generally characterized by a mix of uses and an increase in density surrounding a transit station. This development is focused within a half-mile of the stations and is designed to be pedestrian-friendly. In addition to promoting and enhancing ridership, TOD helps to create destinations, improve quality of life and maximize investment in infrastructure.

The city of Phoenix is working to encourage TOD on many fronts, including amending ordinances and creating the Downtown Phoenix Urban Form Project, which will create a form-based code.

There are many examples of TOD in Phoenix, but the developers had to overcome many regulatory hurdles to construct those projects. We are working with the development community, neighborhood groups, the business community and our sister departments to streamline processes and improve regulations to facilitate TOD.

The direct impact of TOD in downtown Phoenix is that this new pattern of development will foster the 3/4 T live/work/play lifestyle. New projects downtown are taking TOD principles to heart. There is a mix of uses, as well as a redesign of streets to connect blocks and buildings. We are seeing architecture and design that provide a mix of compatible and complementary land uses that facilitate transit ridership and walking.

As with other communities that have light rail systems, we have seen property values increase along the light rail corridor. We expect development will adjust to mixed-use projects with pedestrian-friendly designs that will meet the needs of the increasing numbers of transit riders and urban dwellers.

Eric Johnson is redevelopment program manager with the city of Phoenix.

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Rail & renovations

Light rail isn’t only bringing new buildings and business to central Phoenix — it’s also enticing public and private developers to take a look at the value of historic buildings. From the Luhrs Building, which has been part of the Phoenix skyline since 1924, to the city’s first synagogue, several historic structures near the light rail line will be renovated, not razed.

Luhrs Building

ADDRESS: 45 N. First St.
BUILT: 1927
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: Fall 2008
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Bar and restaurant, with two floors of office space
DEVELOPER: Karl Keppler
COST: $5 million

A.E. Englund Motor Co.

ADDRESS: 424 N. Central Ave.
BUILT: 1926
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: First phase in spring 2009
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Restaurants on first floor, restrooms for park and a shared community and educational space for Arizona State University on main floor
DEVELOPER: City of Phoenix
COST: $2.9 million for first phase

Hotel Monroe

ADDRESS: 15 E. Monroe St.
BUILT: 1920, as Valley National Bank
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: October 2008
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: 150-room boutique hotel, rooftop lounge, Gazebo’s bar and restaurant, gourmet chocolate and champagne shop
DEVELOPER: Grace Communities, Jonathon Vento, Dan and Ryan Zaleznak
MANAGEMENT COMPANY: Tri-Star Hotel Management Co.
COST: $100 million

1936 Federal Building and U.S. Post Office

ADDRESS: 122 N. Central Ave.
BUILT: 1936
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: Plans are ongoing
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Student union space
DEVELOPER: Arizona State University and City of Phoenix
COST: Not yet known

Winship House

ADDRESS: 27 W. Portland St.
BUILT: 1914
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: First phase in early 2009
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Lead and asbestos removal, exterior rehabilitation, offices of Parks Department and Japanese Friendship Garden
DEVELOPER: City of Phoenix
COST: $250,000 for first phase

Roosevelt Historic District houses

ADDRESS: 816 and 822 N. Second Ave.
BUILT: 1904 and 1907
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: Late 2009
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Exterior and interior restoration, additions for residential or office use
DEVELOPER: Sherry Ransby, broker with Realty Executives; Michael Barker of BCM Development; and Bryan Jungwirth of Prestige Construction
COST: $2.5 million

Security Building

ADDRESS: 234 N. Central Ave.
BUILT: 1928
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: 2009
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Repaired floors, restored wall paintings, renovated ballroom, historic elevators, lobby area, removed stucco on exterior and restored concrete finish, ninth-floor penthouse
DEVELOPER: Maricopa County
COST: $350,000-$450,000

Carder Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center

ADDRESS: 122 E. Culver St.
BUILT: 1921, as Temple Beth Israel, first synagogue in Phoenix
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: December 2009
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Adding 6,000 square feet for a museum of Jewish history, education center, archival space, offices and event venue
DEVELOPER: Arizona Jewish Historical Society
COST: $2.5 million

Hanny’s Department Store

ADDRESS: 40 N. First St.
BUILT: 1934
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: Not yet
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Retail and office space
DEVELOPER: Karl Keppler
COST: $5 million

Leighton G. Knipe House

ADDRESS: 1025 N. Second St.
BUILT: 1909
RENOVATIONS TO BE COMPLETED: Plans are ongoing
RENOVATIONS INCLUDE: Restaurant space
DEVELOPER: City of Phoenix
COST: Not yet known
Matt Seaman relished the downtown Phoenix lifestyle long before many other people gave it a second thought.

The native of Carsons City, Nev., moved to Tempe in 1983 to study urban planning at Arizona State University. After graduation, he joined the architecture firm known at the time as Corcoran-Hedrick (now Davis). Then he started his own consulting firm, MPS Consulting LLC.

Through his work consulting on behalf of numerous developers, he met up with MetroWest Development, a Chicago-based firm with a track record of successful residential and commercial developments around the Windy City.

The Phoenix Business Journal talked with Seaman about the growing interest in urban living and the challenges of creating mixed-use developments near light rail lines.

You were an urban dweller before it was popular, right? “Yes, I lived downtown at Renaissance Park.”

Where do you live now with your wife and two young daughters? “We live in the Roosevelt Historic District. I restored a 1912 bungalow from the bones up. It’s just down the street from the (sales office for MetroWest, near First Avenue and Portland Street).”

Where do you get your inspiration for urban infill development? “Just look at any of the European cities. Put those theory books away and go visit them.”

Any cities in the U.S. that you particularly admire for urban development, particularly transit-oriented development? “Portland (Ore.). Denver and San Diego. TODs have been successful there, even though they’re car-driven towns.”

What’s your prognosis for TOD success in Phoenix? “It’s going to be limited by how many lines are expanded. We’re much further behind other cities. We’re playing catch-up.”

But you’re still hopeful? “Oh, yeah. We’ll see more infill in the city center. It will be fun to watch.”

But it’s risky? “Financing high density development is always a challenge, and the cost of land in urban centers is always much higher. Land is also difficult to assemble.”

What will make MetroWest’s two TOD projects successful? “My partner, Doug Gannett, built a similar project in Chicago. We believe it will work in Phoenix. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel.”

What’s the riskiest thing you’ve ever done? “Going out on my own in 2001. I represented a lot of out-of-state developers, helping them with zoning and entitlements. Those companies were primarily focusing on conventional development. It wasn’t until 2006 that I started finding myself working more on downtown and light rail developments. Now that I’m downtown, I believe in what’s happening here. I want to be a part of it.”

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Despite disruptions caused by construction, businesses ‘surviving’

"Light rail construction doesn’t help business, but it’s not crippling us, either," he said. "I think the light rail is great, and the potential upside will be enormous for all businesses along the rail line."

Wells is working on a marketing plan to advertise the restaurant and increase deliveries. His plan includes leasing a Segway Personal Transporter for $80 a month to make deliveries to businesses and committees at the Indian School railroad stop.

Training To You Inc., a computer training company on Central Avenue, is in the thick of light rail construction. President Tim Smith says he has lost business as a result, and some clients have told him they will not return until construction is completed.

"Light rail construction has been very inconvenient, but it’s helped us think outside the box," says Smith. "We are now looking to expand with live distance learning so people can learn from home or the office."
Rail could give Phoenix arts district a boost

**BY LAURA NEVPOFF**
Contributing Writer

Jim Ballinger thinks he’s the perfect example of someone who will use the new Metro light rail line to make the most of the local arts and cultural scene. The director of the Phoenix Art Museum, 1258 N. Central Ave., lives just a few blocks from work, in the historic Willow District. Ballinger will be able to walk two blocks, jump on board the Metro light rail, and dart eastward to Arizona State University. Once there, he’ll have access to ASU’s museum and Gammage Auditorium. He also plans to take advantage of visiting guest lectures and the university’s ceramics research center.

The rail line will make the visits more appealing, he said, mostly because he won’t have to worry about parking at the massive Tempe institution.

“The rail line now makes ASU more accessible to city folks like me,” Ballinger said. “This gets you over the parking hurdle.”

The rail system, he said, could become the light rail system in the Valley what the Utah Transit Authority’s light rail line has become for Salt Lake City.

Utah’s Trax light rail, according to its Web site, averages more than 46,000 riders a day along its 18-mile Salt Lake City Line and 4-mile university line. The latter connects the city’s downtown area to the University of Utah, opening up parking and creating a vital link between the two areas.

“I was in Salt Lake and talked to the director of the museum there, and he said the rail line has become a real problem—only because everyone there is clamoring for more,” Ballinger said.

So, with Phoenix’s rail route extending from the city’s core to ASU, interaction between those two areas should grow. And with a front row seat along Central Avenue, Ballinger expects more museum visits from college students as well as downtown workers and out-of-towners attending events at the newly expanded Phoenix Convention Center.

**EXPANSIONS READY, ONGOING**

The new rail route will do more than just link ASU with downtown Phoenix. It also should bring visitors from other places into the city’s core and, many hope, improve the vitality of Copper Square’s arts and culture.

As the rail route has been under construction, so have expansion projects near it, such as the Herberger Theater, Phoenix Symphony Hall and the Arizona Science Center. And if those venues get more traffic via the light rail, they’ll be ready.

The Phoenix Art Museum underwent a massive $41.2 million overhaul that was unveiled in late 2008. The project added 40,000 square feet of museum space, including a new glass-enclosed lobby, a museum store, a 1-acre sculpture garden and a four-level gallery for contemporary art. But Ballinger isn’t done yet. He said he’s working on a café/wine bar/coffee shop attached to a patio.

“With the light rail, people on it will be riding directly by the museum, and there’s a stop in front of us,” he said. “There is nothing but an upside to this.”

**GET CONNECTED**
Phoenix Art Museum: www.phxart.org

**ARTISTIC SPACES**
Megan Miller, president and CEO of the Maricopa Partnership for the Arts and Culture, said the rail line presents an opportunity to build energy among all the arts groups and institutions along its path. Beyond the facility expansions, she said, momentum is swelling as the city works to support clusters of art galleries similar to what’s happening in the area dubbed Roosevelt Row.

“The city wants to encourage more artists to move in and maintain creative space,” Miller said. “We have a lot of competition from places like Austin and Seattle. But we are seeing growth nodes of creative pods, which is if all the city is to attract and retain visitors and residents.”

The Roosevelt Row Community Development Corp. is working to further the character of Roosevelt Street from 1st Street west to Grand Avenue, which has artists shops, cafes and live-work spaces. The rail line will pass directly through the district.

“Building an arts district is an essential part of any city,” she said. “There is so much opportunity for more product in addition to what we already have.”

—Laura Nevpooff

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**PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL**
phoenixbusinessjournal.com
Tempe’s blighted Apache Boulevard gets spark from new line

BY JONATHAN J. COOPER
Contributing Writer

Light rail construction is all but finished in front of Bob and Barbara Stafford’s Tempe mobile home park, but the hum of bulldozers and the thump of jackhammers is intensifying.

Across the street from the Staffords’ Apache Palms RV Park, 1036 E. Apache Blvd., crews are surging to build a park-and-ride behind more than 400 housing units and 18,000 square feet of retail space.

Nearing, the city of Tempe just opened a new police station to house its northern patrol bureau. A few feet away, crews have razed older buildings and are laying the foundation for nearly 1,000 student housing units, plus office and retail space.

Once blighted and crime-ridden, Apache Boulevard is in the midst of rapid development as the light rail line breathes life into an abandoned highway corridor.

“I’ve been here since 1983, and I’ve seen a complete turnaround of Apache Boulevard,” Bob Stafford said. “We’re excited, very excited. I think it’s good for Tempe, and it’s also good for Apache Boulevard. And it’s all because of light rail.”

For their part, the Staffords are holding on to their 5 acres near Apache and McClintock Drive, the heart of Tempe’s redevelopment area.

“We know that the highest and best use for our ground will be a developer, but the best price we will get, I think, will be once the trains start running,” he said.

Redevelopment on Apache has eluded city planners for decades. As the original route for U.S. 60, the road was a bustling hub. But when the freeway was moved south, the RV parks and tiny motels became breeding grounds for crime.

Perhaps more than anywhere else on the light rail’s 20-mile starter segment, Apache Boulevard’s landscape has seen the most dramatic changes.

A PERMANENT INVESTMENT

Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman said light rail’s permanence inspires better development.

“It is driving investment by people who know that the $1.4 billion investment from the public is not going to be moved,” he said.

So far, developers have invested in five housing projects on Apache alone, said Neil Calbre, the city of Tempe’s deputy community development manager. A handful of small townhouse developments dot the local neighborhoods.

City officials worked out a complex deal with one developer to turn a 300-space park-and-ride lot into an expansive mixed-use complex.

Equinox, a project by Gray Development Group, is taking shape at Apache and McClintock. It will include the 300 parking spaces required under the federal earmark that helped fund the light rail system, but also will add hundreds more to support retail and residential units that will flank the garage.

The area also has drawn private student-housing developments to support nearby Arizona State University. Three of those projects are planned or under construction.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41

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Networking and discussing ways to offset costs in business

Women’s Roundtable
Tuesday, June 3
11:00-12:00
Chamber Boardroom
Networking and discussing ways to offset costs in business

Public Affairs
Tuesday, June 13 & Wednesday, June 25
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Chamber Boardroom
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Light rail will change some bus schedules

Valley Metro bus schedules will change when Metro light rail service begins Dec. 28. Valley Metro is hosting public meetings regarding route schedules. If you are accepting written comments.

These bus routes will be altered:
- Red Line — most of this route will be taken over by light rail.
- Blue Line — will be shortened and rerouted.
- Route 9-Central Avenue — bus service frequency will be reduced on portion of route served by light rail.
- Route 13-15th Avenue — will be extended north to serve Meteor Transit Center and south to serve Sky Harbor International Airport.
- Route 13-Buckeye and Route 90-Bethany Home — routes will change to connect to light rail stations.

There will be a bus service open house from 5:30 to 8:30 a.m. and from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. May 21 at the Aviation Department office at Sky Harbor’s Terminal 3 on the west mezzanine level.

A bus service public hearing will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 4 at the Phoenix Public Transit Department, 302 N. First Ave.


Comments will be accepted until June 6 via e-mail at ptransit@phoenix.gov or by mail at Phoenix Bus Service Changes, P.O. Box 360, Phoenix 85003.

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Condominium Property Group: www.centrepointereurope.com
Campos Edge Lobbies: www.camposedgeloffs.com
Gray Development Group: www.graydevelopment.com

The light rail will run adjacent to Centerpoint Condominiums in Tempe.
Metro light rail frequently asked questions

Where did it all start?
ValleymetroRail Inc. was formed to design, build, and run the light rail system in September 2002 after years of talks. The nonprofit corporation was formed by the cities of Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, and Glendale. It operates under a joint powers agreement under state law.

Is this the Valley's first commuter rail system?
No. The Phoenix Street Railway system used horse-drawn cars when it began as a private company in 1887. Later it converted to electric power. "Ride a Mile and Smile the While" was the system's logo. At the beginning, the cost to ride was 5 cents. The major line traveled along Washington Street to the Capitol. Another line ran north on Second and Fifth avenues to Encanto Boulevard. The city of Phoenix took over the line in 1923 and ran it for more than 20 years. After a 1947 fire destroyed the barn at 13th and Washington streets where the cars were kept, street car service came to an end.

How often will trains run?
Trains are scheduled to run every 10 minutes during the day, and every 20 minutes during off-peak hours.

How fast will it travel?
Trains will travel at posted speed limits on city streets and can reach 55 miles per hour in freeway corridors.

How much will it cost to ride?
The light rail will be funded by Valley Metro bus system, and the two carriers will share the same fare structure. An all-day pass will be good for both bus and rail service.

Regular Fares:
$1.25: one ride
$2.50: all-day pass
$7.50: three-day pass
$15.75: seven-day pass
$45: 31-day pass

Seniors, students, and the disabled:
60 cents: one ride
$1.26: all-day pass
$3.75: three-day pass
$8.75: seven-day pass
$22.50: 31-day pass

How long will trips take?
The entire 20-mile route will take 57 minutes:

Some other trips:
10 minutes: Phoenix Convention Center to downtown Phoenix
20 minutes: Phoenix Convention Center to Tempe
20 minutes: Phoenix Convention Center to Mesa
23 minutes: Phoenix to downtown Tempe
30 minutes: Phoenix to downtown Mesa
30 minutes: Tempe to downtown Mesa

Who built the trains?
Japanese manufacturer Kawasaki and the Mitsui Co. produced 50 vehicle shells for the light rail. The contract, is worth $115 million. Interior components came from manufacturers throughout the U.S. and the world.

Metro light rail will make its debut run in December. It will serve the highest-traveled corridor in the Valley and the region's largest employment centers, including Chase Field, US Airways Center and Arizona State University venues.

What does the first 20-mile segment cost?
The construction and startup costs total $1.4 billion. That includes $587 million from the federal government; $546 million from municipal transportation taxes and general funds from the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa; $199 million for bridges, vehicles and Park-N-Ride lots generated by Maricopa County's Proposition 400 half-cent sales tax, and $59 million through a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant.

How many stations will dot the route?
There are 28 stations on the line. Each is 300 feet long and 16 feet wide, with benches, drinking fountains, electronic display boards, security cameras, phones, fare machines and bike racks. Each station costs about $2.2 million to build — $1 million for the foundation, civil work and $1.2 million for the structure.

Will the train be noisy?
The noise generated by a train is quieter than street traffic. The train bell is 50 decibels, about the volume of a telephone ring. The horn is loud, but will be used only when needed to prevent accidents.

How are the trains powered?
An overhead wiring system provides electrical power to the train. The 750-volt lines are typically 16 feet above the ground.

How many private businesses are along the route?
There are 3,800 businesses along the route, 3,290 in Phoenix; 500 in Tempe, and 100 in Mesa.

The Phoenix Street Railway system used horse-drawn cars when it began as a private company in 1887. Later, it converted to electric power. The initial cost to ride was 5 cents.

Who is hiring for light rail posts?
The 68 train operator positions likely will be filled by Valley Metro bus drivers. Hiring will be done through contractor (Alternate Concepts Inc.). Openings are posted at metrorailtrains.com.

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Light rail connection: What will Phoenix look like in 2028?

Valley policy and business leaders have some thoughts on how Phoenix will look in 20 years. Fewer cars on the road, more mass transportation and an eclectic mix of retail, restaurants, sports and cultural venues are all part of what they predict 2028 might look like.

The Phoenix business journal's annual luncheon asked five local professionals from a variety of industries to reflect on Phoenix's history and describe their visions for downtown.

Kimber Lanning
Director, Local First Arizona
Owner, Stinkweeds and Modified Arts

Describe what downtown Phoenix looked like when you founded your businesses there. How has the scene around them changed since? When Modified Arts opened in 1999, there were only two functioning businesses on our stretch of Roosevelt between Third and Seventh streets: the 307 Club, which was a very rough transvestite bar, and a liquor store called Luminations Unlimited. The rest of the building was primarily vacant, abandoned or boarded up. Across the street was a large dirt lot with several small palm trees in the middle that served as a make-shift homeless shelter. Standing in my doorway late at night, I could hear them telling stories and laughing, but we had no streetlights, so I could never see a thing. Today, there...
Local professionals share their thoughts on downtown's future

How does light rail play into this vision for Phoenix's future? Light rail will be most effective for the kids who are in second grade right now. They will get it. If you don't get the rail today, remind yourself that it doesn't matter. Your kids will get it, and that's what counts. In 2038, people of all backgrounds will ride the rail because it just makes sense to use $4 a gallon on gas and pollute the air. In fact, people will frown on the plea car drivers. The city of Surprise will be a ghost town, and the central Phoenix area will be packed with people coming and going. People will lose weight as they learn to walk again, and the air will become cleaner.

Michael Johnson  
Phoenix City Councilman, District 8

What does downtown Phoenix look like during your childhood? I was born here in Phoenix, so I remember downtown being a vibrant area. I remember coming downtown to go to the movie theater. When you went to central Phoenix, you were really going somewhere. Phoenix Union High School had its big stadium, and I remember going downtown for big Christmas parties. I also remember stories from my parents, talking about the downtown area in the early 1950s and 1960s, when much of the area was owned by African Americans. They owned hotels, restaurants, service stations, stores, and at that time, it was one of the only locations where African Americans could live in Phoenix. That was prior to the baseball arena and basketball arena being built. As the city continued to grow, you see that the basketball arena brought more development into central Phoenix. The city grew.

How does light rail play into this vision for Phoenix's future? Light rail will be expanding and will be the connectivity point for the entire Valley. You're going to see it ease the transportation burden for the downtown area. It also will expand the number of business opportunities in the downtown area, because it will provide another transportation corridor.

Hope Levin  
President, Arizona market  
US Bank

What does downtown Phoenix look like from your office window? Cranes grace the skyline as the view from my office is being narrowed to the north. That's just fine by me, as it represents progress and the density needed to make downtown Phoenix the urban environment that this city deserves. As I peer north, I see the mulehead, paying signaling the completion of light rail construction.

How does light rail play into this vision for Phoenix's future? By 2028, light rail might just convince a city of car owners that mass transportation is convenient, safe, and an economical way to travel. This will happen when a homeowner in Anthem can catch the train to a spring training game in Mesa.
What will be the biggest difference looking out my office window (downtown)? People walking.

Rick Welts
Phoenix Suns

and Tempe rather than as a worker commute option. But if it supports 100,000 residents along its path and connects them to services, then that is a monstrous benefit to all of us. That’s thousands of cars off the road and a few hundred miles of roadway we don’t have to build elsewhere.

Rick Welts
President and chief operating officer
Phoenix Suns

Describe what downtown Phoenix looked like when you first came here. How has the scene changed since? My first memory of Phoenix was when I accompanied the Seattle SuperSonics here during the Western Conference finals in 1979. Our team was staying at the Hyatt Regina downtown, and I was the team’s media relations director. I remember going out for a run one morning and looking at the Phoenix “skyline,” which was dominated by that one downtown Hyatt—and thinking what a small town this is. Today, we have an emerging skyline reflective of one of the nation’s metropolitan areas in the country. What hasn’t changed nearly 30 years later is the passion the fans of Phoenix have for their original sports franchise, and having Al McCoy behind the microphone calling every Suns game.

Describe downtown Phoenix 20 years from now. How might the sports scene be different? The sports scene will look much the same, with teams in all major sports leagues competing here. The only noticeable changes will be new championship banners hanging in the rafters of our arenas and stadiums. We will see a major transformation of the sports facilities at ASU that will enable the school to continue to field championship-caliber teams in its athletic program. A full-fledged entertainment district will be thriving in the area around US Airways Center and Chase Field. A pre-event stroll through downtown will include shopping at any major retailer from Tiffany to Gap, or a stop in the park adjacent to the ASU downtown campus as thousands of students finish their classes for the day. Many people will not need transportation at all, just shopping at a downtown market and picking up their dry cleaning on their way home from work to their downtown apartment or condominium. What will be the biggest difference looking out my office window? People walking! Downtown will have made the transformation from an area built for cars to an area built for people, commerce and entertainment.

How does light rail play into this vision for Phoenix’s future? Every night of the year, sporting and musical events will bring tens of thousands of people downtown. Many, many of those people, from Glendale to North Scottsdale, will arrive downtown by light rail. In fact, light rail will be the biggest single factor in driving the economic development of downtown Phoenix. Freeway congestion and parking concerns will be replaced by light rail riders’ minds by excitement and anticipation of a night of great entertainment. A third or more of the Suns fans attending games will enjoy the fun of riding to the game on light rail, with cars packed with fans excited about that night’s game. Light rail gives Phoenix and the entire region the opportunity to build a truly great, world-class city.
HAPPENING AND HIP – WELCOME TO THE NEW DOWNTOWN.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

If someone invited you to build a new downtown using vision and inspiration to craft its infrastructure, chances are you'd get pretty creative with the endeavor. And that's exactly what's happening in Downtown Phoenix.

Downtown Phoenix is currently undergoing tremendous growth. And the veil is being lifted on an entirely new urban experience. This dynamic reinvention of Arizona's most urban center is perhaps the most significant community development story going on in the U.S. today.

There's no doubt that the excitement is building, and we owe it to the collective effort of all the organizations, businesses, agencies, groups and individuals who've invested time, effort and money in building a new Downtown Phoenix.

Between 2006-2010, more than $4 billion is being spent on projects that will create the framework for a fresh 'live-work-play' environment with a big city outlook.

There's the new Phoenix Convention Center - three times the size of the old one. It will be supported by a new 31-story, 1,000-guest-room Sheraton Hotel, plus four new boutique hotels.

In commercial real estate, 'power towers' like One Central Park East and CityScape will provide over 1.3 million square feet of new retail and office space.

If that doesn't make Downtown Phoenix 'Best in Class,' these two schools surely will: Arizona State University's new downtown campus with 15,000 students and a new University of Arizona Medical School with a student enrollment that is expected to grow larger than Tucson's.

As the demand for advanced healthcare products continues to increase, it's fueling the expansion of biomedical research. Renowned organizations like TGen and ICR have forged a strong presence here.

Combine this with the new 20-mile light rail transportation system that makes six stops in Downtown Phoenix alone, and you've got the start of an organic, eminently walkable and livable urban community that's unlike anything else in the Valley of the Sun.

Okay, so what does all this really mean? There's a lot happening, but there's still more to be done to make the renewal complete. Reaching the big leagues doesn't just happen by chance. Being part of a unique vision requires more than just interest – it requires active participation on the team. But it's an opportunity that will result in several homes – in business, in profits and in a legacy for the future.

If you'd like to be part of this history-making transformation, contact Dan Klocke at the Downtown Phoenix Partnership, 602-744-8407. Or email dtklocke@downtownphoenix.org

WHAT'S HIP?

Bricks and mortar are only half of the new Downtown Phoenix story. The other half is about the creation of a fundamentally more livable, playful and vibrant urban lifestyle.

For those in the know, Downtown Phoenix is happening. There are more entertainment opportunities than ever before: Exciting nightclubs, eclectic shops, European-style cafes. This cosmopolitan setting offers multiple cultural environments: lots of sidewalk activity. And places to see and be seen.

Young hipsters are congregating at Bar Smith, a two-story restaurant/nightclub featuring DJ's, dancing and a variety of libations. Sky Lounge, the club with the retractable roof, hosts hip-hop and Latin dance crowds.

Downtown's music scene has just as much play. There's the Brickhouse Theatre – a rockin' warehouse starting local and national touring bands. Or Seamus McAffrey's – downtown's original Irish Pub. And don't forget about Majette's P Lounge, where the back room hosts R&B nights, poetry slams and other funky stuff.

Jocks meet Rock at Alice Cooperstown, a great place to dine before or after a game, and hear live rock music. Into jazz? The historic Teaer House offers it live on weekends. Top performers headline at The Dude Theatre and US Airways Center. And for powder, there's The Phoenix Symphony and the Arizona Opera Company.

Theatre and dance also take center stage in Downtown Phoenix: Actor's Theatre, Valley Youth Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company and Ballet Arizona perform everything from classics to cutting-edge works.

Hungry for more? Head for the Downtown Phoenix Public Market, where you can buy superb fresh produce and artisan breads. For a really special treat, sample the award-winning pies at Pizzeria Bianco in Heritage Square.

Downtown Phoenix started its rebirth with sporting events, and it's still the place to get your game on. The Phoenix Suns, Phoenix Mercury, Arizona Diamondbacks, Arizona Rattlers and Phoenix Roadrunners all play to packed houses here.

If this isn't enough to make your head spin, downtown also is host to fun-filled events and festivals like the Phoenix Annual Parade of the Arts.