BACKGROUND

Construction of the Valley’s new light rail line is scheduled to begin by summer 2004. The 20 mile light rail line will extend from north central Phoenix near Spectrum Mall, through uptown and midtown Phoenix, Copper Square, East Phoenix and downtown Tempe, and end about a mile into Mesa at Sycamore and Main Streets.

As with any major public works project, construction will cause some temporary challenges, such as reduced traffic lanes, sidewalk limitations, noise and dust. While it is impossible to entirely eliminate all construction disruptions, the light rail project team is committed to minimizing impacts whenever possible and working with residents and business owners along the route to keep them informed about how they will be affected. Public Involvement Area Coordinators and project engineers are assigned to areas throughout the light rail alignment to keep residents and business owners informed of upcoming construction activities and to address their issues and concerns throughout the construction process.

While light rail construction will create a short term inconvenience, the light rail system, when it is up and running, will be a tremendous asset to the community particularly for many of those along the route. The light rail system is a valuable investment in the Valley’s future by providing the infrastructure needed to help us meet future transportation needs in our growing community. In addition to convenient access to the light rail system for residents and employees, light rail can enhance property values and increase retail activity.
STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION

The graphics on the following page demonstrate the typical construction sequence for light rail. The route is divided into five construction line sections, each of which will have its own construction contractor. Construction of each line section should take approximately 20 to 36 months. Construction phasing will be further refined as the project design is completed. Below is a description of the construction activities in each of the four stages of light rail construction.

STAGE I – Utility Relocation and Street Work

Duration
Nine 15 months estimated duration for each line section

Work Performed
Overhead and underground utilities and signage relocated
Traffic lanes, curb, gutter, sidewalk, streetscape and lighting constructed, including:
- Demolition of existing street
- Grading
- Drainage
- New curbs
- Duct banks
- Manholes
- New pavement

New traffic signals installed

Work Zone and Traffic Impacts
Work zone extends from property lines to back of sidewalk where curb lines are being modified and will also include traffic lanes where utility relocation is necessary. Work zone extended from property lines to existing traffic lanes where street widening is required.

Streets will be open, with partial lane closures as necessary to relocate the utilities and construct curbs, turn lanes and other items
Temporary pedestrian walkways and crossings will be installed during construction.

On street parking and loading zones eliminated along light rail route

STAGE II – Station Platform and Track Installation

Duration
Five nine months estimated duration for each line section

Work Performed
Station platforms installed
Track installed

Work Zone and Traffic Impacts
Traffic shifted to new outside travel lanes
Existing inside traffic lanes and left turn lanes will be open
Lane closures outside work zone limited to non peak hours
Left turns restricted to intersections with traffic signals. U turns will be permitted at these intersections.

STAGE III – System Installations

Duration
Four six months estimated duration for each line section

Work Performed
Light rail systems elements installed (e.g., overhead contact system, train signals and communications systems)

Work Zone and Traffic Impacts
Work zone within light rail area only
Minimal partial lane closures limited to non peak hours
**STAGE IV – Station Finishes and Landscaping**

**Duration**
Four six months estimated duration for each line section

**Work Performed**
Station amenities and finishes installed, including:

- Canopies
- Windscreens/benches
- Ticket vending machines
- Lighting
- Landscaping

**Work Zone and Traffic Impacts**
Work zone within station area

Minimal partial lane closures limited to non-peak hours

**POTENTIAL IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION**

**IMPACTS ON TRAFFIC**

Since the Valley’s light rail system will operate primarily in the street in its own dedicated lane, most light rail construction will also be within street areas. Exceptions include station parking facilities, the Operations and Maintenance Center, bridges and electrical substations.

The first two construction phases during which utilities are relocated, light rail station platforms and track are constructed and road work is completed will create the most traffic inconvenience, due to temporary lane closures. These phases are estimated to take a total of 14-24 months for each line section.

At times, one or more travel lanes may be closed temporarily during construction. However, at least one traffic lane will be maintained in each direction at all times. During rush hours, a minimum of two lanes in each direction will be maintained on arterial streets.

During these first two phases, streets will also be widened in some areas to replace traffic lanes used for the light rail trackway and to accommodate station platforms and turn lanes. On Camelback Road, an additional through traffic lane will be added eastbound between 17th Avenue and Central Avenue. Additionally, existing traffic control signals will be upgraded and reprogrammed to work efficiently with the light rail system. Once roadways, station platforms and track are installed, the remainder of the work can typically be completed with minimal inconvenience to automobile traffic.

The construction traffic control plan will conform to both local and federal policies, which dictate the hours and extent of lane closures.
IMPACTS TO RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

The duration of significant construction impacts to a particular property is expected to be approximately 14-24 months. There will be other minor construction activity that occurs after this time to install the traction electrification system and station finishes, but this work will occur within the light rail station and track areas and the impacts to neighboring properties from these activities should be minor.

The first construction phase during which utilities are relocated and roadwork is completed will create the most inconvenience for businesses and residents, due to temporary relocation of access drives and sidewalks. This phase is expected to take nine 15 months for each line section. We are committed to maintaining access to homes and businesses at all times during construction; however, there may be instances where this is unavoidable. Should access need to be blocked for a short time, Project staff will notify the affected residents or businesses to inform them in advance and try to minimize the inconvenience as much as possible. Also, METRO will ensure that temporary side walks and other access points conform with Americans Disability Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines.

It is important to note that construction will not be continuously occurring in front of a particular property during those months. Due to scheduling coordination with contractors, subcontractors and suppliers, there may be several weeks or months at a time in which no construction activity occurs in front of a particular location. However, every effort will be made to ensure that work areas are well maintained in the interim.

Nighttime construction will be avoided in residential areas whenever possible and will not occur in residential areas where nighttime construction is prohibited. A plan will be developed that will address construction hours in specific sections of the alignment. During certain special events construction contractors will be required to avoid unnecessary lane restrictions. In addition, there will be designated no construction periods on major holidays in some areas.

Utility relocation may result in the temporary disruption of utility service. Some utilities, such as electric, gas, telephone, cable television and fiber optic lines, will require relocation prior to construction of the light rail line. Other utilities will be left in place and protected during construction or relocated temporarily until light rail construction is completed. METRO will work closely with the municipalities and individual utility companies along the Project corridor to minimize disruption to utility service.
CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

The light rail route will be divided into five construction line sections, each of which will have a construction contractor. Plans call for Line Section 4, located from 26th Street and Washington Street in Phoenix to the north side of Tempe Town Lake, to be the first section under construction. This section needs to be constructed first because it is adjacent to the light rail Operations and Maintenance Center where the vehicles will be delivered, stored and tested prior to the start of light rail passenger operations.

The line section construction contractors will construct the station platforms, tracks and adjacent roadways. After these items are in place, the station finishes including shade structures, benches, lighting, signage, landscaping and art will be installed. Other items that need to be constructed include the overhead contact system, electrical substations, park and ride lots, the light rail bridge over the Tempe Town Lake, the Operations and Maintenance Center, parking facilities and other miscellaneous items.

Detailed construction schedules, which identify all work to occur in each block along the route and a schedule of when that work is estimated to occur, will be created by the light rail construction contractors once they are hired. These schedules will be shared with the community at construction kick off meetings to be held in each line section immediately prior to construction. The schedule will look similar to the example from Portland’s MAX light rail construction, shown here. In addition to receiving a more detailed construction schedule, attendees at the kick off meetings will have the opportunity to have any questions or concerns about light rail construction addressed by the project’s construction management team and the construction contractor.

MINIMIZING CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Valley Metro Rail has developed a Construction Outreach Plan to minimize as much as possible the construction impacts to nearby property owners and residents and also to give business owners the tools they need to get through the construction phase as smoothly as possible.

To develop the plan, METRO Public Involvement staff visited other cities during construction of their light rail systems and spoke in person with business owners and transit agencies about what to expect and what they learned that we could apply in our community.

The plan includes good construction management practices that hold the contractor accountable for ensuring that access is maintained to businesses and residences, the appropriate traffic and access signs are posted, and dust and noise are controlled to the extent possible.
One of the ways we will hold the contractors accountable to the community is to establish a Community Advisory Board (CAB) for each construction line section. These boards, composed of business and civic leaders from that line section, will provide input to the light rail Project team on how well the contractor is performing construction mitigation tasks. The CAB evaluations will be used as one of the factors in measuring the contractors' performance and how much they are paid for meeting these mitigation provisions.

In addition, project staff will be using a variety of methods to inform the public about construction activities, including construction updates on our website and through e-mails and flyers, as well as periodic construction update meetings in each line section with the contractor and METRO staff. The Public Involvement Area Coordinators serve as primary contact person at METRO for residents and business owners along the route, and their contact information is being provided to residents and business owners along the light rail route in preparation for construction. Furthermore, because we know it's important for people to have good information and access to someone who can address their concerns and issues that may arise at any time of the day or night, we will be providing a 24 hour hotline during construction with a live operator who can quickly reach the appropriate person to address any immediate construction issue or emergency.

We understand that construction of the light rail project will personally affect many people, and we will be doing everything we can to help those most affected. With effective communication and coordination between the public, participating cities and light rail project staff and contractors, we are confident that we can achieve the successful and timely completion of the Valley's first regional light rail transit line, with the minimum disruption possible to communities along the project corridor.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns regarding construction or any aspect of the light rail Project, or to be added to the mailing list, please call the METRO Light Rail hotline at 602-254-RAIL (7245), e-mail us at Info@MetroLightRail.org or visit the METRO office at 101 N. 1st Avenue, Suite 1300, in Phoenix. You can also obtain information from our web site at MetroLightRail.org.

This information can be provided in an alternative format upon request. V/602-254-RAIL or TTY/602-322-4499.