



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the construction timeline?

Construction activities began October 2019 starting in the downtown area. In early 2020, utility relocation will begin along Central Avenue. The detailed construction timeline is being developed and communication will continue as the project progresses, including details about where and when construction work will occur.

When will the project be complete?

The project is expected to be operational in 2024.

What should I expect during construction?

- Access maintained to businesses and residences
- Notifications of construction activities
- Some modifications to traffic lanes and sidewalks
- Temporary bus stop relocations
- Daytime and nighttime work
- Notification and coordination of temporary utility interruptions

How will businesses be supported during construction?

South Central Extension/Downtown Hub is the fourth major light rail project to be built in the Valley. Valley Metro and the city of Phoenix have learned from each of these projects and continue to evolve extensive business assistance programming, which includes business assessments, special events, customized signage, marketing/social media assistance and accounting/financial planning.

South Central Extension/Downtown Hub has the largest budget for business assistance needs to date.

Valley Metro and construction contractor, Kiewit, have "courteous" construction plan that entails maintaining business access at all times, designating safe routes for pedestrians and schools, and localized hiring and spending.

What are the benefits of light rail?

Light rail connects thousands of people to education, entertainment and employment by providing an affordable and convenient transportation alternative.

The benefits go beyond providing effective and efficient transportation. Over 35,000 jobs have been created within 1/2-mile of light rail since 2008. In the 10 years since light rail was introduced in the Valley, there has been:

- A substantial increase in riders being able to reach their destination in a single trip
- Improved access to education and over 5.5 million square feet of new educational facilities along light rail
- A 50% decrease in bicycle and pedestrian collisions in the light rail corridor
- Greater affordability within the light rail corridor as compared to Maricopa County overall

In addition, many of the economic benefits of the project will remain in the South Phoenix community. Area residents will be given priority position for jobs associated with the project, and at times, careers that extend beyond the life of construction.

Why is light rail being built in South Phoenix?

Families and individuals along the South Central corridor need and deserve infrastructure improvements and additional public transportation options for convenient access to work, school and more. Voters approved the extension in 2000, 2004 and in 2015. Prop 104, known as Transportation 2050 plan, received 75% approval from voters who live along the South Central line. The Phoenix City Council approved the route in 2013, acceleration of the project in 2016 and roadway design in 2014 and again in 2018.

Light rail has proven to generate economic prosperity for historically underserved communities in metro Phoenix, and it makes the unique offerings of South Phoenix more accessible to others, attracting new customers, businesses and jobs to the area.

Why the two-lane roadway design?

Light rail expands roadway capacity by carrying passengers each day to/from the area and attracting additional customers. Dedicated left/right turn lanes and bus pullouts help to maintain traffic flow. The two-lane design achieves the community's desire for a pedestrian-friendly environment that includes sidewalks, shade, and dedicated bike lanes, while also limiting property takes.

The two-lane design also avoids removing nearly 80 local businesses that would have been impacted by the property acquisition needed to accommodate light rail and four lanes of auto traffic. These kinds of property impacts would have dramatically altered the character of south Central Avenue.

This design improves public safety in this corridor by providing emergency vehicles with easier access to travel along Central Avenue. The two-lane design was reviewed and approved by Phoenix Fire and is safer for all than a four-lane configuration.

The Phoenix City Council approved, for the third time, the two-lane design in September 2018.

What is the "Downtown Hub" part of the project?

The Downtown Hub portion of the project includes improvements in the downtown area to enhance connections between the South Central extension, the current light rail system and the future Capitol/I-10 West extension. As part of the enhancements, three new station platforms will be installed and Central Avenue between Washington and Jefferson will become a transit-only area, closed to auto traffic

How has the design changed based on community input?

Community input has been and continues to be an important element in the design of the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub. The design team has incorporated the following elements, based on feedback, into the final design of the project:

- Increased number of bus pullouts (over 80% of bus stops now have pullouts)
- Added more and increased the size of landscape areas
- Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- 23 additional signalized crosswalks
- Over 10 miles of continuous and wider bike lanes
- Modified one park-and-ride location to relocate parking closer to the station and identified an alternate location for another park-and-ride to avoid impacts to nearby businesses
- Placed Broadway Road station south of intersection to reduce the amount of right-of-way needed
- Removed frontage road from the Lincoln Station location to minimize property impacts and maintain local street access
- Identified new power substation locations to avoid impacts to property owners
- Modified design of roundabouts to reduce impacts and better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians
- Added Downtown Hub for easy, convenient transfers between light rail, bus and other modes

What is the Public Art Program?

Valley Metro policy directs up to 1% of the construction budget to be allocated to public art on light rail projects. The artwork is developed by professional artists in coordination with local area community members.

Of the 18 artists working on art elements for the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub 12 are local.

Will the City up-zone or down-zone my property once light rail is built?

The City has no plans to rezone property along the corridor without the consent of the property owner. Rather, the process to rezone property is initiated by the property owner.

Will there be a tax increase to maintain operations for the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub?

No. In August 2015, Phoenix voters approved the Transportation 2050 plan that provides a dedicated revenue source for bus service, light rail service and street improvements through 2050.

What is included in the project's cost estimate?

More than half of the construction budget of a light rail system is spent on street and utility improvements.

In the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub project, the result will be completely rebuilding Central Avenue and adjacent areas.

This rebuild will include new street pavement, curb, gutters sidewalks, traffic signals, streetlights, and landscaping, while also replacing most of the underground utilities including water, sewer, power and fiber and gas lines.

The improvements prior to rail installation is a well-deserved and necessary investment for current and future residents of South Phoenix.

Who can I contact for updates on the project?

Valley Metro has staff available to inform and answer questions as well as address any emergencies that may arise from construction. Please contact one of the coordinators below:

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- Visit valleymetro.org/southcentral
- Call the 24/7 construction hotline: 602-254-RAIL
- Follow us on social media
 - Twitter/Instagram: @valleymetro.
 - Facebook: /valleymetroconstruction
- Visit us at the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub/Downtown Hub Community Office

5040 S. Central Ave., Phoenix

Monday-Wednesday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Thursday, Noon-7 p.m.

First and Third Saturday, 9 a.m.–Noon

By appointment Phone: (602) 687-8585