Glendale Seeks to Improve Transportation

The city of Glendale will hold a special election on proposed transportation improvements on Tuesday, November 6, 2001. Glendale’s “Transportation Election Package” consists of transportation projects and services designed to meet the city’s growing transportation needs. It seeks to relieve traffic congestion and improve traffic flow, increase transportation choices, help reduce air pollution, promote economic viability, and provide better regional transit connections.

The Transportation Election Package proposes specific projects for all modes of transportation (transit, streets, bicycles, pedestrian, telework, and aviation) and identifies the costs and funding sources for implementing these projects in the years 2002 through 2025. Estimates allocate 65 percent of expenditures for transit, 31 percent for streets, and four percent for other modes of transportation.

Citizen Input Shaped Transportation Plan

The process of updating Glendale’s transportation plan has been underway since mid-November of last year and has included an extensive public-involvement process coordinated by the Citizens’ Advisory Committee for Transportation Issues (CACTI). CACTI prepared the Transportation Election Package based on input received from citizens, city transportation staff, guest speakers from various transportation agencies, and a project consultant. The Glendale City Council, at a meeting on June 26, endorsed the package and called for the special election.

With voter approval of the package, street improvements designed to reduce traffic congestion would be implemented within the first five years. This would include increasing capacity at intersections by providing additional turn lanes, left-turn arrows, medians, and through lanes where they are most needed and installing a smart traffic-signal system that responds faster to changes in traffic demand. Additional roadway improvements to expedite traffic flow would include realigning access to Grand Avenue in response to new overpass and underpass construction by the Arizona Department of Transportation, the elimination of lane drops (lanes that suddenly end and merge into other lanes), and undertaking street and landscaping improvements along sections of Grand and 59th Avenues. Also, bus pullouts would be provided at major intersections on all bus routes.

New Bus and Rail Services Designed to Ease Traffic Woes

Transit improvements in the Transportation Election Package include expanding local and express bus service and launching new neighborhood circulators and light rail service. Increased bus service levels would allow Glendale buses to match the increased frequency of service now available in the city of Phoenix as a result of its voter-approved transit tax. A minimum of 30-minute service would be provided on all existing bus routes within the first five years, and new and extended bus routes would be phased in beginning in the
sixth year. Within five years, expanded dial-a-ride service would also be provided, including later weekend and evening hours and better response times during peak periods of use. By 2020, the level of dial-a-ride service would be doubled.

The Regional Public Transportation Authority is working with the cities of Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa to develop a 20-mile light rail starter system. Glendale is identified in the Maricopa Association of Government’s Regional Transportation Plan as having a planned connection to this system from the Chris-Town Mall area. A connection to the Phoenix portion of the light rail system would benefit Glendale residents by offering access to downtown Phoenix and destinations throughout the Valley for employment opportunities and general travel convenience. By providing another transportation choice for citizens, light rail would also decrease dependence on the automobile and help reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.

**Mayor Scruggs Invites Transit Expansion**

Speaking to the importance of both furthering and keeping apace of regional transit expansion, Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs said, “Glendale is very excited about the opportunity to link up with the expanded and enhanced transit network Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa are building. A successful Glendale transportation election will, hopefully, accelerate similar efforts in neighboring cities.”

Projects in the Transportation Election Package involving other alternative modes of transportation include closing gaps in the bicycle path system, providing additional support for bicycle safety programs, enhancing pedestrian facilities in activity centers, and establishing a work-at-home program to help reduce commuter trips. Funds would also be reserved to promote the Glendale Airport as an economic development tool, including providing seed money to match federally funded projects.

**Voters Get Maps on November 6 Ballots**

To ensure that Glendale voters receive the transportation services they approve in a fair and timely manner, maps of the transportation projects to be funded with new revenue have been placed on the ballot as a contract with the voters, all new transportation sales tax revenue would be deposited in a dedicated Transportation Fund that can only be used for transportation purposes, and a Citizens’ Oversight Commission would be established to ensure that voter-approved projects are completed in a timely and cost-effective manner. For more information about Glendale’s Transportation Election Package, call (623) 930-2940 or visit the Glendale Transportation Plan website at [www.ci.glendale.az.us/transportation/planupdate.html](http://www.ci.glendale.az.us/transportation/planupdate.html).

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**Transportation Package Funding Sources**

If Glendale voters approve the Transportation Election Package, a new half-cent sales tax will be dedicated to transportation improvements. Over half (58 percent) of the funding for the package is projected to come from the new sales tax; 32 percent from federal matching funds as well as state and/or regional sources; and ten percent from other sources, including transit user fees and city general funds. City of Glendale bonding would also be used to expedite the completion of some projects. The new sales tax would have no termination date because it would be used for future transit operating costs that are ongoing.
It all began a little more than a year ago on Express Route 501. Doug Banfelder had decided to leave work early that day, so he headed to the bus stop to catch an earlier bus than he normally takes. After getting on, he went directly to his favorite row of seats in the back of the bus and sat down. A few stops down the street, Brigida boarded the same bus. She made her way to favorite row of seats only to find someone already sitting there. On a whim, she decided to sit down next to Doug. From the start, they were attracted to each other. He thought she was cute, and she thought he was such a gentleman—and handsome, too. By the end of the trip, Doug had asked Brigida for a date and she accepted.

To say the least, it went well. Four months later, Brigida boarded the 501 for the last time. She had accepted a new job and would no longer be traveling to downtown Phoenix. Hoping to ensure he’d have a seat next to her for life, Doug proposed. Brigida said yes. One month later, they were married.

Guidelines Make Light Rail More User-Friendly

After an intensive six-month process, the Urban Design Task Force for the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project recently released its Urban Design Guidelines. The guidelines were published as a way to help the light rail system develop as a regional transportation system that efficiently links communities to jobs, as well as cultural and sporting events. The Urban Design Task Force is comprised of representatives from neighborhoods along the light rail corridor, business and civic groups, advocates for persons with disabilities, and the arts and architectural communities.

After reviewing the major elements of the planned light rail system, the task force concluded that the top five considerations concerning urban design should be:

- Keeping passengers cool while they’re waiting for the train
- Creating stations and pedestrian areas that are passenger-friendly
- Providing security for passengers
- The design of vehicles and the wire power system
- Establishing connections from light rail to bus.

While the guidelines provide an overall framework to guide system design, they are not intended to replace ongoing community input. Project staff will hold public meetings to obtain feedback regarding station and vehicle design, landscaping, artwork, and other elements. Information about these meetings will be posted on the project website at www.valleyconnections.com.

To receive or review a copy of the guidelines, call (602) 534-1807 or visit the Light Rail Community Office in Phoenix at 411 N. Central Ave., Suite 195.
Doug and Brigida Banfelder both agree that riding the bus could just be the trip of a lifetime.

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Rideshare Week to Promote Carpooling

Each year thousands of Valley commuters participate in the “Rideshare experience” by using an alternative form of transportation to get to work during Rideshare Week. This year’s event, held October 29 through November 2, will likely take on a somewhat spooky theme since Halloween is in the middle of the week.

“Carpooling is not as ghoulish as most people think … in fact, reports show that employees are happier, more productive, and less stressed when they are not driving alone and sitting alone in traffic each day,” says Randi Alcott, manager of Transportation Demand Management for the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA).

To avoid the “monster” commute during Rideshare Week, or anytime, call (602) 262-RIDE (7433). We’ll send you a free match list that can help you find carpool partners in your area. We can also assist you in planning your bus trip to the office. For more information about Rideshare Week 2001, visit the RPTA Rideshare website at www.valleymetro.mariqopa.gov.

Next Bus Book Postponed until January 2002

New Ahwatukee shuttle and expanded DASH service to begin this November

Due to an unforeseeable delay in the delivery of new buses, the service improvements that Valley Metro had planned to introduce this November will now take place in January 2002. The current Bus Book will remain in effect through January 13, and Valley Metro asks that you please hold on to your copy since supplies are limited.

Despite the postponement of the Bus Book, some exciting new services will still be introduced in November. Phoenix’s first neighborhood circulator service will begin operating in the Ahwatukee and Desert Foothills area. Mini-buses will circulate throughout the area, shuttling passengers to and from local destinations, as well as major streets and connecting bus routes serving those streets. Also, DASH (Phoenix’s free Downtown Area SHuttle) will now run on Saturdays and Sundays and will provide service to the State Capitol throughout the day on weekdays. (Currently, DASH serves the Capitol from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. only.)

For current transit information, or trip-planning assistance, call Valley Metro at (602) 253-5000, or visit Valley Metro’s website at www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov.

Report Reveals Valley Travel Habits

Valley residents more likely to use transit, telework

The Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) recently released its 2001 State of the Commute report. It indicates that Valley residents are more likely to use transit and telework to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution than they have been in previous years. According to a survey taken for the report, the most popular solution for reducing traffic congestion was encouraging employers to allow teleworking. The next most popular options were increasing bus service, adding more freeway lanes, and building a new light rail system. For more information about the report, call (602) 262-RIDE (7433). You can also view the report on the RPTA website at www.valleymetro.maricopa.gov.
Station Location Process Nearly Complete

With 24 station locations approved and only four more under consideration, the first phase of the light rail station-area planning process is nearly complete. The Mesa, Phoenix, and Tempe city councils are expected to give final approval to all remaining light rail stations by early fall.

Council approval of station locations is a critical milestone in the planning effort. It allows the light rail project to move forward to the engineering stage, which will occur over the next 18 months. Once cost estimates have been determined from the engineering phase, a review process will be conducted by the participating cities. Over the next three years, numerous public meetings will be held to ensure that stations are designed to reflect the character of their surrounding communities.

For more information, visit the Light Rail Community Office in Phoenix at 411 N. Central Ave., Suite 195. You can also call the project hotline at (602) 534-1807 or visit the Valley Connections website at www.valleyconnections.com.

Tempe Council Approves Light Rail

After several years of gathering public input, the Tempe City Council has approved the following light rail station locations:

- Third St. and Mill Ave.
- Fifth St. and College Ave.
- Orange St. and McAllister Ave.
- Dorsey Ln. and Apache Blvd.
- McClintock Dr. and Apache Blvd.
- Smith Rd./Martin Ln. and Apache Blvd.
- Price Frwy. and Apache Blvd.

Proposed stations north of Tempe Town Lake have not yet been approved by the council. The length of the Tempe portion of the initial light rail line is approximately six miles.

An example of what a light rail station looks like. This station is in Dallas, Texas.