The initial planning phase of the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project is nearly complete, and the project will soon move into the Final Design Phase, in which detailed engineering and design plans will be developed for the entire system. In March and April respectively, the city councils of Tempe and Phoenix made final decisions about the station locations, type of track, and other elements that will be included in the final design plans for their portions of the project. The Phoenix City Council still needs to approve the precise location of the station platform and accompanying park-and-ride near Spectrum Mall, however.

The Mesa City Council is expected to vote in late June or early July on its level of participation in the initial 20.3-mile project. If the council votes to continue to participate, it will finalize elements for its one-mile stretch of the light rail system shortly afterward.

Twenty-seven stations (26 opening-day and one deferred station) and seven park-and-ride lots were approved by the Phoenix and Tempe city councils.

The Phoenix City Council approved 18 stations for its 13-mile stretch of the route, including three stations along Central Avenue that were not originally included in the opening-day project budget. The council also approved paved track in the Copper Square area from Polk Street and Central to 7th Street and Washington Street, with ballasted track along the remainder of the route.

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The approved light rail stations include:
- 19th Ave. and Bethany Home Rd.
- 19th Ave. and Camelback Rd.
- 7th Ave. and Camelback Rd.
- Central Ave. and Campbell Ave.
- Central Ave. and Indian School Rd.
- Central Ave. and Osborn Rd.
- Central Ave. and Thomas Rd.
- Central Ave. and Encanto Blvd.
- Central Ave. and McDowell Rd.
- Central Ave. and Roosevelt St.
- Central Ave. and Van Buren St. (Central Station)
- 1st Ave. between Washington St. and Jefferson St. (southbound)/Central Ave. between Adams St. and Washington St. (northbound)
- Jefferson St. and 3rd St. (eastbound)/Washington St. between 2nd St. and 3rd St. (westbound)
- 12th St. and Washington St.
- 24th St. and Washington St.
- 32nd St. and Washington St.
- 40th St. and Washington St.
- Priest Dr. and Washington St.
- Center Pkwy. and Washington St. (deferred)
- 3rd St./Mill Ave.
- 5th St./College Ave.
- McAllister Ave./Orange St.
- Apache Blvd./Dorsey Ln.
- Apache Blvd./McClintock Dr.
- Apache Blvd./Smith-Martin Rd.
- Apache Blvd./Loop 101

(See Light Rail Stations, p. 6)
The customer service department at Valley Metro receives about 5,000 calls a day for trip-planning assistance and other transit information. On an average weekday, each customer service representative answers between 200 and 300 calls. To manage that high call volume, and to serve our customers as quickly and efficiently as possible, customer service representatives have to be able to access a lot of information about the bus system in a very short amount of time.

An average call, which involves planning a trip that may require changing buses two or three times, takes approximately one minute and 45 seconds to complete. That’s not bad, considering the customer service representative currently has to access all of that information on microfiche or in other printed materials.

With the new ATIS (Automated Travel Information System) software now being installed and tested by the department, however, planning the same trip will take less than ten seconds. And that means more customers can be helped in a much shorter time frame.

“Our new scheduling and trip-planning package incorporates data that will make trip planning more consistent, more accurate, and more timely,” says Scott Wisner, Customer Services Director.

According to Wisner, the GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) locations of approximately 7,000 bus stops were entered into a database, then converted into a usable format for trip planning. The customer service representative enters the passenger’s starting point and destination and in a matter of seconds receives up to six different options for the trip. Ultimately, the new trip-planning software will also be available online at www.ValleyMetro.org, allowing Internet users to easily access the same information themselves.

“We can also give walking directions to and from a specific bus stop—as well as return-trip directions—with the click of a mouse,” said Wisner.

Within the next 18 to 24 months, the department hopes to tie into Valley Metro’s Vehicle Management System, which provides real-time information on the location of every bus in the fleet. That will allow customer service representatives to know immediately when a bus has been delayed or is on a temporary detour.

Wisner says the trip-planning system will also have a module for tracking lost-and-found items, saving both time and manpower and making it easier for staff to determine the whereabouts of a particular item. In addition, representatives will be able to enter and track customer complaints, suggestions, and compliments electronically. And the various contractors who provide bus service in different parts of the Valley Metro service area will be able to view those comments instantaneously via secure Internet access.

Most components of the new software system are expected to become fully operational between October 2002 and January 2003.
The city of Glendale has introduced a new logo and identity for its Transportation Program. That program was overwhelmingly approved by city voters last November, resulting in a new, dedicated sales tax that is being used to improve local transportation.

In selecting the logo, the city sought a design that would reflect the wide variety of components in the Transportation Program. While the initial focus of the program is on public transit improvements, the plan also includes improvements to city streets, traffic signals, and bicycle and pedestrian paths.

New Logo Promotes City’s Transportation Program

Go!

The design also had to emphasize that the program is citizen-driven and supported. The new logo features the word *GO!*, which stands for “Glendale Onboard.” The slogan not only calls to mind public transit but also speaks to the fact that residents are behind or “on board” the program. The swoosh through the letters represents a roadway, indicating that the program will also benefit motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Katie Sinks, a junior at Trevor Browne High School, designed the winning entry in Valley Metro’s second annual “Design a Bus Wrap” student art contest. The contest was open to students in the Phoenix Union High School District. Sinks’ design was selected from among 185 entries submitted by students representing ten schools.

Sinks’ winning design will be featured on this bus for one year.

The purpose of the contest is to help foster positive feelings toward public transit, as well as a sense of ownership and pride in public property. Contest participants were asked to design a bus wrap—an advertisement that covers the entire bus—illustrating a short, one-sentence slogan that promotes public transit. Sinks’ slogan spotlights Valley Metro’s new, expanded bus service hours with the slogan “Valley Metro: Into the Night, Into the Light.” Her artwork features a nighttime scene on one side of the bus and a daytime scene on the other.

On July 8, Valley Metro will introduce a variety of significant improvements to regional bus service. The following is a partial list of those improvements:

- In Glendale, Sunday and holiday service will be introduced on 11 local routes, with buses running until approximately 8 p.m.; Saturday service will be introduced on four routes; Saturday service hours will be extended on seven routes and weekday hours will be extended on 11 routes; and buses will run more frequently on six routes on Saturdays and four routes on weekdays.
- In Phoenix, weekday service hours will be extended until approximately midnight on four more local routes.
- Route 40–Apache will be combined with the Red Line to provide more frequent weekday service between Tempe and Central Station in downtown Phoenix.
- Route 30–University will be extended south and then west from 32nd Street and Broadway Road to South Mountain Community College.
- Route 59–59th Avenue will be extended north from Bell Road to Union Hills Drive.

The July 2002 Bus Book will be available in late June on Valley Metro buses and at 1,800 locations Valleywide. For transit information, call (602) 253-5000 or visit www.ValleyMetro.org.

Glendale

New Logo Promotes City’s Transportation Program

Go!

Valley Metro’s July Bus Book

On July 8, Valley Metro will introduce a variety of significant improvements to regional bus service.
Transit Plan Update

City residents, business owners, and employees have had the opportunity to help shape the future of public transit in Scottsdale at a series of open house meetings during the last three months. The primary purpose of the meetings was to unveil the draft Transit Plan developed by a citizens’ advisory committee during the last year and to receive public input on the plan.

The Transit Plan will serve as the foundation for improving public transit in Scottsdale. It will cover transit operations, capital projects, land use, and funding strategies. The plan will incorporate the findings of the Scottsdale/Tempe Rapid Transit Study, which is assessing the potential for a mass transit corridor in Scottsdale. It will also incorporate information gathered from the open house meetings, annual surveys, transit-user comments, and mail-in surveys. The Transit Plan, along with the public input the city has received, will be presented to the city council in late summer or early fall. The council will then consider its adoption.

For more information, or to comment on the Transit Plan, please call (480) 312-7696.

Downtown Service Options Explored

Scottsdale is in the process of redesigning its Downtown RoundUp trolley service. Work on the project began at an April 11 public meeting held to outline the potential changes. A follow-up meeting took place on May 1.

The city is redesigning the Downtown RoundUp in response to requests for additional service in the downtown area and to benefit from an opportunity to purchase vehicles with federal matching funds that would cover 80 percent of the cost. Options currently being discussed include changing the routing of the trolley, possibly supplementing the trolley with another downtown shuttle service, adding a route to serve the Scottsdale resort corridor, and changing the design of the vehicles and bus stops. The city is also re-evaluating how the downtown service is marketed.

After receiving public input and formulating its recommendations, the city will announce a public hearing allowing an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. The hearing is expected to take place in late summer or early fall.

For more information about the Downtown RoundUp, call (480) 312-7696.

Tempe

New Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities Opened

Two important bicycle/pedestrian facilities opened in Tempe in April: the new and improved College Avenue Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge and the new Spence Avenue Multi-Use Path.

As part of the U.S. 60 Freeway renovation project, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) replaced the 30-year-old College Avenue bridge with a new bridge designed to be more accessible for users, including people with wheelchairs, bicycles, and strollers. City of Tempe and ADOT staff worked with neighbors and a local artist to help plan specific elements of the bridge, including art features that will be installed at a later date. College Avenue is the most highly traveled bikeway in the state and a crucial link in the city’s bikeway plan. Also in April, the city and Arizona State University celebrated the opening of the Spence Avenue Multi-Use Path, which connects neighborhoods east of Rural Road and south of Apache Boulevard with the ASU campus. The path is one-eighth of a mile long.

“The path provides cyclists and pedestrians with a dedicated, non-motorized corridor to ASU and allows them to circumvent Apache and Rural, which is one of our highest traffic volume intersections and highest bicycle/vehicle accident areas,” said Eric Iversen, City Capital Projects Planner. The path is expected to significantly reduce bicycle–vehicle accidents and alleviate frequent instances of wrong-way riding. The path runs on ASU property along the Spence Road alignment west of Rural Road to McAllister Avenue, where it connects with existing bicycle facilities on McAllister.
Summer Heat Means More Ozone in the Valley

What can you do to ward off the creation of ozone, that nasty pollutant that causes Valley residents to wheeze, cough, and be short of breath? Driving less is the obvious answer, since ozone—the primary component of smog—is formed when tailpipe emissions combine with temperatures in excess of 100 degrees.

With our ever-growing population, however, reducing those emissions is a real challenge. Maricopa County is one of the nation’s fastest growing counties, with 5,600 new residents arriving each month. Day by day, the number of cars on the road keeps increasing. And for that reason, every year from June to September, Valley residents are asked to do their part in helping to keep our summer skies clean and blue.

Thanks to the conscientious efforts of Valley residents in recent summers, Phoenix has achieved the standard for ozone air quality over a one-hour period mandated by the federal government. But it’s important to remember that we’re not “in the clear” yet. According to Patrick Gibbons, spokesperson for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Maricopa County will still have to achieve an eight-hour standard once the federal government has determined how that standard should be implemented.

“Now it’s more important than ever to remain faithful to our commitment to keep our skies clean by using alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle,” said Randi Alcott, Valley Metro Rideshare Manager.

If you’d like to show your commitment to cleaner air, try carpooling this summer or riding the bus. You can find a carpool partner online at www.ShareTheRide.com. Bus route and schedule information is available at www.ValleyMetro.org or by calling (602) 253-5000. You can also help cut down on ozone by reducing the use of gas-powered lawn equipment, refueling your car after sunset, and working from home instead of driving into the office—especially on High Pollution Advisory days.

Governor Honors Telework Companies

In May, 42 companies across Arizona were recognized by Governor Jane Dee Hull for offering telework as a trip reduction and work-life balance tool for their employees. At an event held at the state capitol to kickoff a new program called the Governor’s Telework Partnership, the governor honored companies that have been accepted as statewide telework partners.

Companies that have been accepted into the Governor’s Telework Partnership must currently have teleworkers and meet at least one of several criteria required for a telework program. Those companies are listed to the right.

Governor Hull speaks about telework goals at May 21 event.

Governor Hull speaks about telework goals at May 21 event.
On April 8, the Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the General Engineering Consultant (GEC) for the upcoming Final Design Phase of the project. At press time, more than 240 RFQs had been picked up from the project office. Approximately 250 people attended a Pre-Proposal Conference for the GEC contract on April 22. At the conference, attendees had the opportunity to hear an overview of the project and to ask questions about the RFQ.

The deadline for submitting Statements of Qualifications was May 22. The contract is scheduled to be awarded in August.

Light Rail Project Releases “Request for Qualifications”

Light Rail Stations (Continued from p. 1)

Phoenix route. Approved park-and-ride locations include 19th Avenue and Camelback Road, Central and Camelback, and 40th Street and Washington.

The Tempe City Council approved nine station locations in Tempe, including one deferred station to the north of Tempe Town Lake at Center Parkway and Washington Street, as well as ballasted track throughout Tempe. Park-and-ride locations were approved at Apache Boulevard and Dorsey Lane, Apache and McClintock Drive, and Apache and the Price Freeway (Loop 101). Late last year, the council also approved a concept for the new light rail bridge over Tempe Town Lake.

The decisions were the culmination of an intensive public process, which included more than 400 meetings with the community about the station locations and other light rail system elements.

Construction on the 20.3-mile starter segment of the light rail line is scheduled to begin in late 2003, with operations scheduled to start in late 2006. The initial route begins in Phoenix near 19th Avenue and Bethany Home Road and travels through downtown Phoenix and Tempe and about a mile into Mesa, ending at Longmore Street and Main Street.