

**West Phoenix Alternatives Analysis Public Meetings  
September 21 & 27, 2023 and October 12, 2023**

## Questions & Answers

*As public meeting participants submit questions, we will post them here, along with responses from the project team.*

---

**1. Question:** How would this potential light rail extension fit in with the current system? Would it just be running back and forth on a singular line, or will it then be used to go north and south on the current central line?

**Answer:** That will be determined in a future step of the process. We could run it in either capacity, depending on how the route integrates into the larger system.

---

**2. Question** When will we know how and if it will affect homes in neighboring streets off Indian school?

**Answer:** That would take place later in the process. We are currently in the conceptual phase to determine a recommended route. Future phases of the project will identify details of that route and if there would be any impacts to the surrounding properties. The project is programmed in Phase IV of the region's Momentum Plan, scheduled for implementation in 2041 to 2045. This project is further out in the horizon, however, in terms of those timings, the City of Phoenix Council may choose to reevaluate that timeline if there is the desire to do so.

---

**3. Question:** Why was the center of the road selected over the side of the road for the light rail?

**Answer:** The main reasons for that would be operational efficiencies. With rail in the center of the roadway, properties on both sides of the street maintain their access to Indian School Road. With rail on one side or another, that direct access is impacted. Safety was another consideration. Rail in the center can act as a barrier to prevent some behaviors such as making illegal U- turns in the middle of the road.

---

**4. Question:** Who is the public that gave line feedback and how was this presented?

**Answer:** Valley Metro has facilitated a series of public outreach campaigns within the study boundaries. This is now our third time of coming to the public with our findings. The first time Valley Metro went to the public, there were three public meetings that took place in the spring, with a second group of meetings in June. Valley Metro advertised via our social media platforms, print advertisement, radio station commercials, paid and earned media and delivering flyers to locations where the community gathers. Valley Metro accepted comments both during these meetings, as well as through larger public comment period that lasted for about a month each time. As the route was refined, Valley Metro used door hangers and direct mailers to notify all addresses within a quarter mile of the proposed routes.

---

5. **Question:** How did the study evaluate the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Interstate 17 and Indian School Road improvement project? How does this impact the proposed project?

**Answer:** This study evaluated the best way to accommodate the ADOT plans. This project is much farther out than the ADOT project. So the ADOT project would continue as it is, and Valley Metro would build around their infrastructure to ensure that we are able to get this alignment going and in a way that's not disruptive to their project. This project also has been in close coordination with the ADOT study at 35th Avenue, Indian School and Grand Avenue as that project would be directly impacted by what our proposal is. Valley Metro is in continual communication with that team to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

---

6. **Question:** When could we expect to see construction on this begin?

**Answer:** The project is programmed in Phase IV of the region's Momentum Plan, scheduled for implementation in 2041 to 2045. This project is further out in the horizon, however, in terms of those timings, the City of Phoenix Council may choose to reevaluate that timeline if there is the desire to do so.

---

7. **Question:** The original light rail anticipated significant ridership to justify the build in the first place. Ridership has never met expectations and thus cost per rider has been very high. Why should we believe the new light rail ridership will be any different?

**Answer:** When the original system opened, Valley Metro saw very high numbers as compared to what our ridership forecast modeling showed. With the COVID-19 pandemic and other aspects, ridership declined. We are now seeing ridership go back up. For example, the new streetcar in Tempe exponentially exceeded ridership expectations in its first 18 months of service.

It's important to note that ridership for this current study is based on the current condition, not the conditions prior to the pandemic, for example. Light rail in this corridor would be particularly transformative as the Maryville section in the city of Phoenix, which already has some of the highest transit ridership across our entire region. The bus routes on Thomas, Indian School, McDowell and Camelback roads are four of the highest ridership routes, not just in the city of Phoenix, but in the entire metro area. This project provides a faster transit alternative for all those existing transit riders as well as s new riders that would be excited to try out a new form of transportation.

---

8. **Question:** Is the I-10 extension already approved? Will the line on Indian School, if approved, be a line for the West Valley?

**Answer:** The I-10 West extension is in Phase II of the Momentum Plan, so that would put it ahead of this project in terms of when construction would happen. The route has been approved by Phoenix City Council and the project is entering into the preliminary engineering phase. That project right now has an endpoint at 79th Avenue and Thomas Road at the Desert Sky Mall. Our proposal is to bring light rail from Central Avenue and Indian School out through the center of the Maryvale community, and then once it gets out to that western portion, there's potential to extend it further.

---

**9. Question:** I was wondering what other metrics that you guys were looking at as far as congestion, which already exists on Indian School Road, especially between 35th Avenue and Central. Did you look at that and did you ever consider extending the existing light rail on Camelback Road to 75th then south?

**Answer:** Congestion is a concern, and this project would provide a different alternative – an additional choice for travel. Members of the community could choose to use transit instead of driving. The area that was mentioned, 35th Avenue to Central and Indian School, is not yet at a point where we can determine exactly how the light rail would operate within the roadway, but we do see that it is one of the wider arterials in the area. We did evaluate Camelback Road, however, when we looked at the different aspects of ridership and where population centers, Indian School rose to the top in terms of having the greatest number of people within walking distance and biking distance. A large portion of Camelback, especially off 35th Avenue, is more industrial and there wouldn't be much of a transit riding population there.

---

**10. Question:** What are the planned stops along the route? How long will it take to complete the project? What structures, homes and businesses will have to be torn down or removed to allow room for the project or does it fit within the current size of Indian School?

**Answer:** At this point of the study, those specifics have not been determined.

---

**11. Question:** Has the study specifically evaluated the area that will be sandwiched by light rail on Camelback, and this proposed Indian School expansion? This area is from Central Ave to 19th Ave. Can you provide any specific findings?

**Answer:** This section of Phoenix, from Central Avenue west to the 19th Avenue corridor, is where we see some of our highest transit ridership. So having light rail on both of those arterials provides the ability for residents and visitors to have choices.

---

**12. Question:** If a light rail is put in the middle lane down Indian School, could it affect homes still? Seems wide enough to not affect any homes or businesses. Also, if so, are there homes and businesses that could be affected?

**Answer:** Indian School Road is one of the wider arterials in the metro Phoenix area and so that did factor into our analysis. In terms of what specific impacts would be, that is something that will be determined in a later stage of the project.

---

**13. Question:** Is this an alternative route to avoid the Capitol area as was agreed for the legislator to pass the Prop. 400E language?

**Answer:** This project is separate from the Capitol Extension effort. This project is really meant to serve the west portion of Phoenix and the Maryvale community.

---

**14. Question:** Why not extend light rail south on 19th Avenue and then turn the route onto Indian School?

**Answer:** We did study that, however, the ridership potential of taking it down Indian School from Central Avenue was high and helped that option rise to the top. Also, having an alignment that has less turns improves efficiency and speed. However, due to community input, we are re-opening the evaluation of starting the project out at 19th Avenue and Camelback.

---

**15. Question:** I am a homeowner directly off Indian School. Although I am excited for the light rail expansion; I am in fear of the future of my home. How will I know if I need to live in fear of eminent domain?

**Answer:** At this point in time, we do not have a sense of what construction impacts would be on the project. That is something that would take place much closer to that 2041 to 2045 date.

---

**16. Question:** Is this route going to be multimodal and connect with bus?

**Answer:** The four bus routes that run on Camelback, Indian School, Thomas and McDowell roads are four of the busiest bus routes in the entire Valley. There is significant ridership, and we'll work with our service planning team to make sure that these bus routes can connect to any new light rail service.

---

**17. Question:** What about bus routes on 15th Avenue? There's no connectivity listed to CAPEX or to this project. Will they connect to a light rail station?

**Answer:** On this project map, only the major roads and arterials are shown. The half-mile streets aren't depicted. We will work with our service planning team to make sure that these bus routes can connect to any new light rail service. We haven't determined exact placement of the stations for this route yet.

---

**18. Question:** What about travel across the Valley? What's your plan to increase the overall speed of the train so people can get across town faster?

**Answer:** We are looking at the speed of our system overall and evaluating run times from end to end. The I-10 West project is running along the highway corridor and will decrease the amount of time it will take from someone going from the West Valley into the downtown or East Valley overall, accounting for traffic times. This West Phoenix project gives additional coverage to the Maryvale area and is a high-capacity, high-speed rail service that can help transfer to the rest of the Valley Metro system.

---

---

**19. Question:** How did you come up with the recommended options? What about Camelback Road, McDowell Road and Thomas Road? Thomas Road is one of the biggest spots we should be thinking about since there's lots of high schools to be served on that road.

**Answer:** We have studied all major roads in this area. There were certain issues on McDowell, including its proximity to the planned I-10 West Extension. The same is true for Thomas Road. Camelback Road will eventually run through the city of Glendale, and city of Phoenix wants to ensure its city tax dollars serve Phoenix residents. The Phoenix Bus Rapid Transit project is planned to provide access to Grand Canyon University.

---

**20. Question:** I'm concerned about increased traffic if the train goes through this area. What about drivers and people who own cars?

**Answer:** City of Phoenix and Valley Metro are seeking to improve the multimodal transportation system. Traffic is high during peak times in this area. Likewise, the busiest bus routes in this area are through here. Buses can take longer than cars because of the stops. This project and a dedicated travel lane allow better travel for transit users and helps alleviate increased cars and traffic.

---

**21. Question:** What do you have in mind for the number of stations for this project?

**Answer:** We're in the early stages of the process. Valley Metro will typically space stops a mile apart or every half-mile in more dense areas. This will be determined as the project progresses. We will do multiple examples for modeling and community feedback when we reach that stage of the process.

---

**22. Question:** Are you going to put the train on an elevated platform?

**Answer:** There is a project right now at Grand Avenue and 35th Avenue for bus rapid transit. Phoenix Bus Rapid Transit is planned to run on an elevated structure and this system will be elevated above 35th Avenue. We are working with ADOT and City of Phoenix to ensure that as they plan their project, they take our recommendations into account so we can share resources and planning.

---

**23. Question:** Is there a finalized plan for people and businesses along this route to minimize the negative impacts?

**Answer:** Typically, a light rail project will have a business and community assistance program. City of Phoenix funded a unique small business financial assistance grant program with the Northwest Extension II and South Central Extension. These projects give direct financial assistance to micro- and small businesses. The city lobbied to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) to have an eligible expenditure for projects like this in the future, to use more federal dollars for small businesses. We work hard with residents during construction and want to be responsible as we look at city-owned parcels and identify how we can increase low-income, affordable and workforce housing projects.

---

---

**24. Question:** How many park-and-rides are dedicated for this project? Will they be policed? I know we have a lot of people who work downtown who would like to utilize park-and-rides to go downtown.

**Answer:** We aren't far enough along in the process for that right now. There is a park-and-ride location at the Desert Sky Mall Transit Center, and it will be expanded. We'll look at what the community is telling us and what land is available to have a park-and-ride versus other transit-oriented development.

---

**25. Question:** I am excited to see light rail go past my house. When you go through the grading for the different options, rail ranks first for the green line but lowest for the red line. Why is that?

**Answer:** The biggest difference is potential impacts. Rail is a large-scale infrastructure project. The red option impacts were more significant and outweighed the overall benefit.

---

**26. Question:** Do you view bus rapid transit as having different riders from light rail? Do they use transit for different purposes?

**Answer:** We place stops every mile to half-mile for light rail, like bus rapid transit. We don't have a functional bus rapid transit line yet, so we don't have a set standard, but they tend to be similar across the nation for other systems.

---

**27. Question:** Is this recommendation pretty certain? Would the red option be up for debate still?

**Answer:** This is the recommended option at this stage of the project. The community feedback at our last outreach period indicated this was the preferred option, and it's also the preferred option for our technical team via our technical analysis.

---

**28. Question:** What about our community and potential gentrification?

**Answer:** City of Phoenix is pursuing transit-oriented development grants to work with communities and maintain/keep their character. It's important to the mayor, council and city to put investment into these areas to serve the people that live, work and worship there. This helps us identify a project alignment that will help us pursue additional FTA grants to get that community vision, design and built environment. It's important to stay engaged.

---

**29. Question:** You mentioned that you did community outreach to gain some ideas where this line would be. Who was doing the outreach? Where and what was that process like?

**Answer:** The community outreach was done in coordination with the city of Phoenix, Valley Metro and local representatives. We did advertisement through local advertisers, radio, canvassing and flyers at local locations such as the Maryvale Community Center, Desert West Community Center and other organizations. We also had press releases, email lists and our website. We canvassed with doorhangers and most recently did a direct mailer to all addresses one-quarter mile on either side of the recommended route for this meeting. As we move through the study, we're

---

expanding our relationships with the community members. We recently expanded our social media campaigns in coordination with City of Phoenix, and included NextDoor, Instagram and digital advertising. We presented at several village planning committee meetings and with the council offices of District 4 and 5. We are always learning how to better our process, so please connect with us to let us know what other areas we can reach.

---

**30. Question:** Is the outreach to get us to this meeting, or to discuss this line?

**Answer:** The outreach is to get the community to the meetings to present the materials and then discuss the lines. We also provide details on where people can view the materials and submit their comments online on our website.

---

**31. Question:** I live on Indian School Road and traffic is really bad. If there's light rail, will you remove lanes? How do you expect to expand the road to make traffic better?

**Answer:** Traffic congestion in the West Valley is high. Bus ridership is also high. This project would offer an additional alternative to both. When light rail opened on the initial corridor, transit ridership on that route rose over 400%. The additional capacity of light rail was used by both people who used the buses before, and completely new riders to transit. We have to assume those people are cutting back on driving and taking transit options instead. In terms of the road design, we need you to stay connected for upcoming phases of the project. We'll look at the movement of traffic and see what we can do to mitigate traffic and make it multimodal. We want this project to fit within the vision of the community.

---

**32. Question:** Who will build this? If we're going to do this, it should be built by people from Phoenix.

**Answer:** We've heard similar feedback from our other light rail construction projects. We've added contract language to prioritize hiring from the area, especially within a half-mile of the proposed alignment and in any zip codes that intersect with the project. Our workforce development programs help give training as well as hiring. We're training people in this area to give them the skills to build light rail not only for this project but for a career.

---

**33. Question:** How can transit efforts end historical segregation in Maryvale?

**Answer:** It's about providing opportunity of Maryvale. We know that people in Maryvale have food deserts, issues with accessing health care and other necessities. We want to have open access to those things by providing reliable transit.

---

**34. Question:** Concerned about safety on the system and the extension. Have you studied crime rates? Maryvale is a high crime area. How are you addressing assaults on transit?

**Answer:** Valley Metro is committed to passenger safety and has been adding security staff to the system, addressing staffing shortages experienced during and after the pandemic.

---

- 
- 35. Question:** What does the process look like? Is this decided?
- Answer:** The current stage we're in is to identify a recommended transit type and route for Phoenix City Council consideration and possible action in early 2024. If the City Council decides to approve this recommendation, future phases will include looking at how light rail would fit within the street, where stations could be located, and detailed traffic and environmental analyses – all of this would include continued public engagement and input.
- 
- 36. Question:** How will property and parking impacts be addressed and remedied?
- Answer:** If this route and transit type move forward, future phases will include detailed evaluation of impacts, including impact to property and parking. The project team will work with property owners to identify any potential impacts and understand the public's and property owners' priorities. As in past projects, a primary goal of the project's ultimate design is to eliminate or minimize any impacts.
- 
- 37. Question:** Who is going to provide the bond for the light rail?
- Answer:** Funding for this project will likely be a mix of local and federal funding. As the project progresses, funding sources will be identified to ensure completion of the project.
- 
- 38. Question:** How much will the project cost and how is it funded?
- Answer:** Proposition 400 regional funding, city of Phoenix Transportation 2050 tax and federal dollars are funding the planning phases of the project. Funding for construction is not currently identified. The city is committed to moving forward with the project, but the timing is uncertain given the funding uncertainties.
- 
- 39. Question:** Why not do BRT first?
- Answer:** The City of Phoenix's BRT program is scheduled for construction prior to this project. That route will run along Van Buren St from downtown Phoenix to 35th Avenue, then up 35th Avenue to Metro Parkway.
- 
- 40. Question:** What happened to this extension serving Grand Canyon University on Camelback?
- Answer:** The original project had light rail from 19th Avenue on Camelback to 43rd Avenue then north to Glendale Avenue and west into downtown Glendale. About half of that route travels within the city of Glendale. The Glendale City Council in 2017 voted to discontinue its participation in the Valley Metro Rail system.
- 
- 41. Question:** Why did Glendale back out?
- Answer:** It appeared that the Glendale City Council's priorities changed.
-

---

**42. Question:** What will the frequency be, and will this project affect the frequency of the system overall? Frequency already decreased to 15 minutes.

**Answer:** The drop in ridership from the pandemic caused frequency to decrease. As ridership continues to increase so will the re-assessment of the train frequency.

---

**43. Question:** I'm concerned about trains stuck in traffic – reliability of the system. Could this be built above street level?

**Answer:** The primary consideration is cost; it's much more expensive to build an elevated system.

---

**44. Question:** When would the project start, and expected completion?

**Answer:** This project is programmed in Phase IV of the Proposition 400 Extension, which would put it in the timeframe of 2041-2045.

---

### Non-Project-Related Questions

---

**1. Question:** How will the stations on I-10 look?

**Answer:** The city of Phoenix and Valley Metro will be looking into that within the next couple of years, and there certainly will be a lot of different ways that information will be disseminated out to the community.

---

**2. Question:** I am confused about the recent legislature decision regarding light rail and the Capitol Extension. Isn't funding only going to be available for maintenance for that project and this project?

**Answer:** The West Phoenix High-Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis is a separate project from the Capitol Extension. The Capitol Extension (CAPEX) is located south of this project and is currently being reviewed for a new locally-preferred alternative route by Valley Metro and City of Phoenix, per the confines set by the Proposition 400 Extension as passed by the state legislature. The Capitol Extension project is currently funded through the current Proposition 400 bill and is fully funded. The I-10 West Extension and the West Phoenix High Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis will be funded under Proposition 400 Extension. Proposition 400 Extension funding is available for light rail maintenance and state of good repair. However, City of Phoenix will work with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Valley Metro, as well as other cities, to find opportunities for freeing up additional funding to go to light rail.

---

**3. Question:** In Maryvale, most people are Latino. A lot of them drive and do not rely on the Valley Metro system. I'm also concerned about the homeless population that hang out near transit locations

**Answer:** We appreciate your concerns and your feedback. Adding high-capacity transit into an area brings opportunity for everyone. You will see a substantial amount of people have consistent travel and rides. Are there challenges that come along with the system? Yes, but we are constantly working on it. We're also trying to plan for the future of Maryvale with offering options that will help lower-income families. We know that the decisions we make today will have an impact for people living here, but we are hoping to help the future community and how they can connect with the Valley.

---

**4. Question:** What role will the police play in protecting the West Valley extension? Will there be more police in our community?

**Answer:** City of Phoenix has a transit unit that's part of the police department that's specifically used for public transit. With an extension like this, Valley Metro will also review its contract with Allied Universal to provide transit security to increase what we need for the extension. The focus is not to criminalize anyone but provide a safe and comfortable resource for the community we're serving.

---

**5. Question:** What considerations were taken in expanding the Grand Canal? Could that be used for transportation?

**Answer:** There's been a concentrated effort from City of Phoenix and other canal cities to make canals safe travel areas for pedestrians and cyclists. We'll continue to invest in this area to promote multimodality.

---

## Comments

**1. Comment:** I don't want this expansion; I think you should work on safety first. I'm dealing with crime.

---

**2. Comment:** I don't deal with crime, I deal with bad, unsafe traffic. I'm also concerned about increased police presence as well as gentrification.

---

**3. Comment:** Poor people in this area really need this transportation. If we don't do anything, they will become homeless. This will help the community. We need better stops. I have children that work that if the bus had more frequency. Councilwoman Pastor and the City council needs to put a stop to crime.

---