

UPDATE ON LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT PLANS

Regional Project Development

- Two transportation plans have been passed in recent years by voters in Glendale and in Maricopa County that deal with light rail transit in our city. The first was the passage of a local ½ cent transportation tax by Glendale voters in 2001 that identified a large planning corridor of light rail into downtown Glendale. The second vote was the continuation of a regional ½ cent transportation tax (Prop. 400) in 2004 that identified a light rail corridor into downtown Glendale in 2017. Over the last few years that has changed due to economic conditions.
 - The first change occurred two years ago that pushed the timeframe for completion from 2017 to 2019.
 - During the last years regional budget adjustment it was pushed from 2019 to 2026.
- Phoenix is in the final planning stages of connecting light rail from downtown Phoenix and the State Capitol area to 83rd Avenue and I-10. Most of this connection will be along I-10 and provides a commuter option for West Valley residents to get into downtown Phoenix. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2021 and would have to be completed before a light rail line out to Westgate City Center via the Loop 101 is to become a reality.
- The Northwest Extension (Metrocenter) Phase I (to Dunlap) LRT project has been pushed back from 2012 to 2023 with Phase II (to near Metrocenter Mall) of this project being pushed back from 2018 to 2026 primarily due to lack of Phoenix local transportation revenue. Currently this project is nearly all locally funded with Phoenix transit tax dollars with a federal match. This first phase of this project would have to be complete before an extension to downtown Glendale would ever be realized.
- The Central Mesa and Tempe South corridors have completion dates of 2016. The Mesa extension will add two miles to the end of their line and terminate near the Mesa Temple. The Tempe extension is leaning toward a modern-day streetcar system along Mill Avenue. Both corridors are around 2 miles long.
- The Glendale and both phases of the Northwest corridors are heavily dependent on Phoenix and Glendale local transportation funding as they require local funds for match and federal funds. Other corridors use regional Prop. 400 funds for a local matching source along with federal funds.

Glendale Corridor Study

- The Glendale Alternative Analysis – Phase I project is currently underway. This 15-month project started at the beginning of this calendar year.
- This study is part of Glendale City Council direction given to staff to re-evaluate light rail alternatives in Glendale since significant development along the Loop 101 has occurred from when the original corridor to downtown Glendale was adopted by voters in 2001.
- This new corridor study will look at the possibility of a light rail line out to Westgate along with the current corridor to downtown Glendale to make sure that we have done our due diligence to the community in exploring all light rail opportunities.

- The study will address federal funding prospects for alternative corridors and will identify a preferred corridor to move forward to a phase II study. Federal funding for light rail is extremely competitive as they provide 50% of the funding and we must put forth the best project if we hope to get any funding for light rail.
- Any Glendale light rail project is expected to take at least 10 years to complete from planning through construction and is public-involvement intensive during every step of the process.
- The Glendale Alternative Analysis Study is evaluating five options to Glendale.
 - Three alignments from 79th Avenue and I-10 to Westgate are being evaluated. One alignment is completely freeway-based; the second is completely street-based with a third being a freeway and street hybrid alignment out to Westgate City Center.
 - Two alignments are being evaluated to downtown Glendale using Glendale Avenue. The first alignment takes light rail to downtown Glendale with a second alignment is a continuation of the first along Glendale Avenue out to Westgate City Center.
- This project will help initiate necessary City Councils and MAG actions that will need to take place if the preferred corridor is different from the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). If the preferred alternative is not in the regional plan a series of local and regional meetings will have to be held to change the RTP.
- Any preferred Glendale corridor is dependent upon some sort of funding from the City of Phoenix. Phoenix staff is saying that the existing Phoenix Transit 2000 tax needs to be extended in 2020 before any funds are available for an LRT connection of any type to Glendale due to a downturn in the economy.
- The total cost of the 5-mile LRT corridor from 19th Avenue to downtown Glendale is \$449 million. Phoenix share of these funds is now estimated at around \$26 million. Glendale's local share is around \$63 million. 3 miles of this corridor resides in Phoenix and 2 miles reside in Glendale with a regional funding assumption that Glendale would provide local funding for 3.5 miles and Phoenix would provide 1.5 miles for construction. This is a Phoenix and Glendale project so both cities have to work together to provide local funding for this project to be successful.
- A light rail corridor to Westgate City Center from the end of the Phoenix West LRT corridor is approximately 7 miles long. 5 miles of this corridor is located in Phoenix while the other 2 miles reside in Glendale. The cost to build this particular option is currently under study.