

EN ROUTE

A PHOENIX PUBLIC TRANSIT
DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

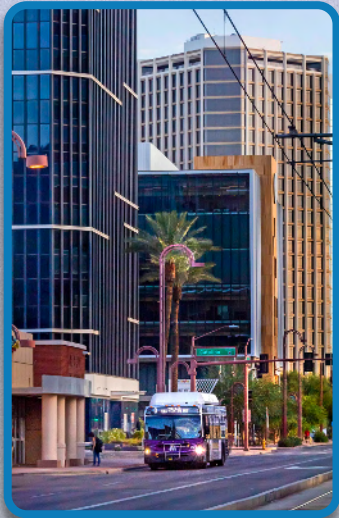
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SUMMER 2021 ISSUE 02

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome to a new issue of *En Route* and to another busy season in public transit and in our city. This past summer, we witnessed the hottest June in our city's history, followed by a very active monsoon and celebrated our Phoenix Suns going to the NBA finals. What a ride! As we transition through the latter half of the year, we look forward to continuing to serve our communities with a ride to their next destination. Here are a few bird's eye view Public Transit updates:

Our fifth Transportation 2050 (T2050) annual progress report is in the final stages of completion. The report reflects the major milestones achieved in streets, bus, Dial-a-Ride, and high capacity transit over the last fiscal year and over the last five years. Technology improvements have been steadily progressing with new on-board bus equipment, and the launch of a new app with real-time bus and light rail vehicle tracking. I cannot emphasize enough how much this new technology will empower the region's transit users, providing them with real-time vehicle locations to help them plan their trips and estimate their travel times.

With the upcoming completion of installing permanent operator barriers across our bus fleet, the plan to return to front-door bus boarding is set to commence in mid-October. In the light rail world, construction continues to progress with multiple capital projects in various phases. And finally, our team's focus remains providing a safe and reliable service to connect our communities to jobs, education, and many other critical places. As we still say in the department – public transit: it's how you get there!

We hope you have had an enjoyable summer with many accomplishments. Until the next issue, stay safe en route to your next destination.

Jesús Sapien, Phoenix Public Transit Director





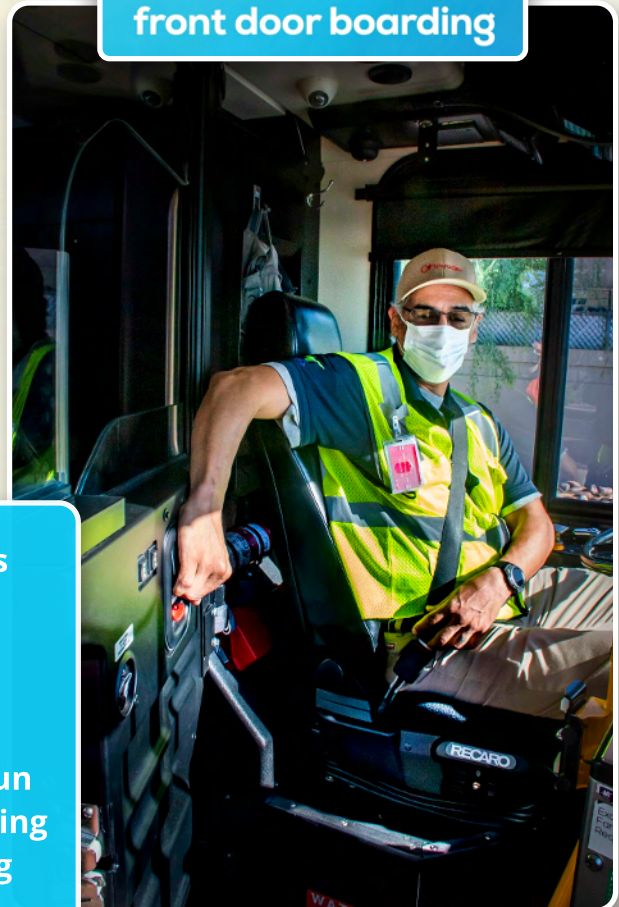
HEALTH UPDATE



The Public Transit Department continues the thorough cleaning and safety measures implemented throughout all phases of the pandemic. The latest updates relative to transit services can be found [here](#).



Coming this fall
front door boarding



As of this writing, Phoenix Public Transit has completed 97 percent of the installation of permanent bus operator barriers. This provides an added measure of safety and security while on board for both riders and drivers. A public awareness campaign will run throughout September and October reminding riders to board through the front door, bring their fare, and mask up for their ride for front-door bus boardings in mid-October.

PROJECT UPDATES

Transportation 2050

Annual Progress Report

The city of Phoenix celebrated the five-year anniversary milestone of Transportation 2050 (T2050) by hosting a virtual experience featuring video updates, comments from Mayor Gallego, and a scavenger hunt which included community involvement and prizes. The T2050 annual progress report is scheduled to be released in the coming months and will highlight transportation accomplishments in greater detail. Visit [T2050 \(phoenix.gov\)](https://www.phoenix.gov/t2050) for more information.

Bus Rapid Transit

On May 27, 2021, the Citizens Transportation Commission unanimously recommended City Council approval of the initial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor of 35th Avenue/Van Buren Street. BRT was identified as a key component of Transportation 2050 to continue expanding our city's high capacity transit network. BRT is a high-capacity bus service that focuses on improved speed, reliability and convenience. There are common recurring elements found in successful BRT systems including advanced fare collection, enhanced stations, dedicated lanes, custom buses, transit spot improvements and unique branding.

The Phoenix BRT program will present to the Transportation, Infrastructure and Planning Subcommittee and City Council for approval of the recommended corridor of 35th Avenue/ Van Buren Street in Fall 2021.



Light Rail

Northwest Extension (Phase II)

Kiewit McCarthy Joint Venture (KMJV) continues work on public and third-party utilities project-wide. Roadway widening on Dunlap Ave continues, along with efforts at the Arizona Canal Bridge, and Metrocenter/I-17 bridge structure. Public utilities (storm drain, sewer, and water) work also continues at Dunlap Avenue, 25th Avenue, and within Rose Mofford Park. Roadway widening activities for the paving of the north side of Dunlap Avenue between C-Street and 25th Avenue continues in preparation of moving traffic to the south side of Dunlap Avenue. Visit [Northwest Extension Phase II | Valley Metro](#) for more info.



South Central Extension/Downtown Hub

Kiewit utility relocation work continues project-wide and stands at about 30% complete. The initial project track work at 5th Street has been completed. Staff is working through the plan review process for permitting of traction power substation buildings for all project sites. Work around the Salt River Bridge is being scheduled to begin October 2021. Kiewit crews continue work on the McKinley Loop and the first station at Cityscape, Downtown Hub East. The Cityscape pedestrian bridge was scheduled for removal the week of August 30, 2021. Archaeological exploration and data recovery of features in the Pueblo Viejo zone continues. Visit [South Central Extension/Downtown Hub | Valley Metro](#) for more info.



Capitol Extension

Valley Metro has developed a revised locally preferred alternative (LPA) map identifying 19th Avenue as the loop option between Adams Street and Jefferson Street. The LPA has been presented to Valley Metro Leadership and city of Phoenix Leadership. Valley Metro's engineering consultant is also preparing materials for presenting the revised LPA for approval through the City Council process. Preliminary engineering is ongoing. Visit [Capitol Extension | Valley Metro](#) for the latest updates.

Valley Metro App

In July, Valley Metro in partnership with the city of Phoenix and Vix Technology, launched the new Valley Metro: Plan & Track app that features real time bus and light rail tracking and trip planning. Riders have the ability to see where and when their bus or train will arrive.

App features:

- Plan trips with step-by-step navigation
- Track buses and trains in real time
- View a trip's travel time
- Save favorite stops
- Get service alerts and updates
- Contact customer service

The new Plan & Track app will be replacing the Ridekick app, which will no longer receive updates after Oct. 2021.

This app is the first enhancement as part of a multi-year program that will also include mobile ticketing, reloadable smart cards and new, more modern fare collection equipment.

The new fare collection system will utilize the new Valley Metro application and will allow riders to pay fares, check balances, and manage account values, all from their smartphone, in a later update.

The project will add a suite of devices including validators and ticket vending machines to support the new system. The system will be complemented with a robust retail network where cash-reliant customers can load their accounts at many locations alongside a call center to provide customer support.



NEW FACES

We welcomed two new transit planners in the Phoenix Public Transit Operations, Technology, and Planning division. These positions will work with Valley Metro and the region on various planning projects.



Meliza Orellana has worked in transportation since 2015, beginning as a bus operator nearly six years ago. From there, Meliza moved into many different roles. She took on scheduling tasks for local transit companies and worked closely with the Phoenix Public Transit team. Previous roles include being a road supervisor, dispatcher, financial data analyst, and an operations scheduling/payroll manager. Meliza says her previous experience has prepared her for this role and she is looking forward to contributing new ideas.

Michael Pierce has been a Planner I with the Planning and Development Department since 2018. He has previous experience with land entitlement process and site plan review with the city. Michael is an ASU urban planning graduate, former MAG planner and AmeriCorps service member. Previous positions include a building inspector, solar sales consultant and working for a non-profit in California that advocated for sustainable transportation options.



Welcome, new team members!

Newly Appointed Phoenix Transportation Board Members

Phoenix's Citizen Transportation Commission (CTC) added six new members as it reconvened in August.

The CTC is a 15-member commission and was created as part of the voter-approved Phoenix Transportation 2050 (T2050) plan to provide public voice for the community, transparency, and oversight. The Mayor and Council appoint the commissioners, one from each council district, and seven mayoral appointees who represent various fields within the Phoenix community. This is the largest number of new commissioners appointed at one time since the commission was created in late 2015.

CTC's last meeting was held virtually on Wednesday, Sep. 15. For more information about the CTC, visit the [T2050 website](#).



On July 26, City Manager Ed Zuercher announced his upcoming plans for retirement effective Oct. 8. Zuercher began his career with the city in 1993 as a management intern and would later take on larger roles, including here in our very own Public Transit Department. On Sept. 8, the city announced Jeff Barton as the next Phoenix city manager. Barton began his career with the city in 1999 in the Audit Department. More information can be found [here](#).

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Heat Relief Cooling Bus

In support of the Phoenix City Council's heat relief efforts, Phoenix Public Transit has allocated up to three air-conditioned buses for people to seek refuge from the heat near the Human Services Campus on 12th Ave and Madison Street. Staff is assisting the city's Human Services Department by providing the buses throughout the summer, with some days registering several hundred visits from individuals seeking relief from the heat.

Valley Metro Service Changes

To develop an effective regional transit system that supports communities, businesses, and residents, regional transit service changes take place twice a year. The new service changes start Monday, October 25.

Check out your route [here](#).

AROUND TOWN

I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project

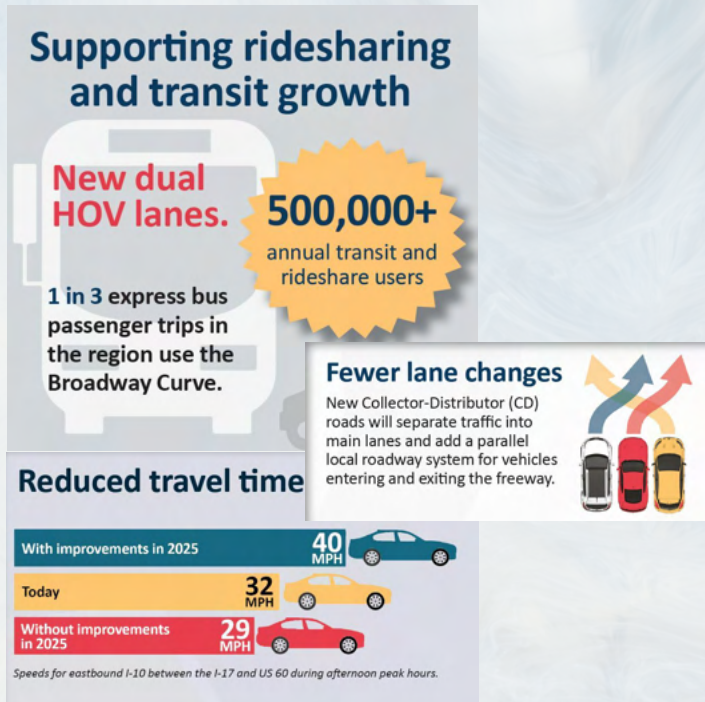
The Arizona Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and the Maricopa Association of Governments, is improving 11 miles of the I-10 surrounding the Broadway Curve area. This is the largest urban freeway reconstruction project in Maricopa County. Improvements include:

- Adding general purpose and HOV lanes
- Adding Collector-Distributor roads
- Reconstructing connections between roads
- Adding two bridges for pedestrians and bicyclists
- and improving previous trail crossings
- Installing 7 additional overhead signs
- Building sound and retaining walls
- Improving freeway drainage

This project will improve safety, reliability, and travel. Construction work is expected to continue through 2024.

For more information, visit

[I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project](#)



Phoenix is Built for Drought

City of Phoenix water customers understand the importance of water conservation in our desert city. Using water wisely increases our resiliency during a drought and water shortages. We have been preparing for shortages on the Colorado River for decades. As the city continues to plan, invest and conserve to ensure sustainable growth, rest assured we will continue to provide safe, clean and reliable water to our customers without interruptions. For more information: Phoenix.gov/Drought



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[Phoenix.gov/publictransit](https://phoenix.gov/publictransit)

[Phoenix.gov/T2050](https://phoenix.gov/T2050)

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