

**South Central Light Rail Extension/Downtown Hub
Phoenix, Arizona
New Starts Engineering
(Rating Assigned November 2019)**

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Light Rail Transit 5.5 Miles, 9 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$1,345.17 Million (Includes \$84.5 million in finance charges)
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$529.86 Million (39.4%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2023):	\$22.21 Million
Current Year Ridership Forecast (2018):	9,600 Daily Linked Trips 3,173,900 Annual Linked Trips
Horizon Year Ridership Forecast (2040):	13,300 Daily Linked Trips 4,389,300 Annual Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium-High

Project Description: Valley Metro plans to extend its light rail system from downtown Phoenix to the South Mountain Village Core via Central Avenue and 1st Avenue. The project includes track improvements along McKinley Street, 5th Street and 3rd Avenue in downtown Phoenix, expansion of the existing Operations and Maintenance Center, purchase of 17 light rail vehicles, and construction of two park and ride lots with a total of 376 parking spaces. The service is planned to operate every 12 minutes for most of the weekday, every 20 minutes during late night and early morning hours, and every 15 to 20 minutes on the weekends.

Project Purpose: The project provides a seamless connection between the South Mountain Village Core and Downtown Phoenix. It is intended to improve mobility and satisfy existing and projected travel demand in this highly transit-dependent corridor. Approximately 38 percent of the population in the corridor lives below the poverty level and 27 percent of the households own no cars. The project connects the corridor to regional activity centers including the Arizona State University (downtown and main campuses), downtown Phoenix, and the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The extension is expected to also support existing and planned economic and transit-oriented development opportunities throughout the South Central Avenue corridor.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: In November 2013, Valley Metro completed an alternatives analysis and with the City of Phoenix selected light rail as the locally preferred alternative (LPA). In June 2015, the LPA was included in the region's fiscally-constrained long range transportation plan. The project entered New Starts Project Development in November 2015. An Environmental Assessment was published in November 2016, and the project received a Finding of No Significant Impact from FTA in January 2017. In October 2018, FTA determined that adjustments to the project scope would not cause significant environmental impacts that were not previously evaluated. In April 2019, FTA approved the project into New Starts Engineering. Valley Metro anticipates receipt of a Full Funding Grant Agreement in late 2020, and the start of revenue service in late 2023.

Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2018): The amount of CIG funding requested decreased from \$665.86 million to \$529.86 million, and the CIG share decreased from 49.5 percent to 39.4 percent.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 New Starts	\$529.86	39.4%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$108.00	8.0%
Local:		
City of Phoenix Proposition 104 Sales Tax Revenues and Bond Proceeds	\$427.31	31.8%
Maricopa County Proposition 400 Public Transportation Fund Excise Tax Revenues	\$280.00	20.8%
Total:	\$1,345.17	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

**AZ, Phoenix, South Central Light Rail Extension/Downtown Hub
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Factor	Rating	Comments
Local Financial Commitment Rating	Medium-High	
Non-Section 5309 CIG Share	+1 level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CIG share of the project is 39.4 percent.
Project Financial Plan	Medium	
Current Capital and Operating Condition (25% of local financial commitment rating)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average age of Valley Metro’s bus fleet is 6.81 years • The most recent bond rating for Valley Metro, issued in May 2019, are as follows: Fitch Ratings, Inc. AA and S&P Global Ratings AA+. • Valley Metro’s current ratio of assets to liabilities as reported in its most recent audited financial statement is 1.1 (FY2018). • There have been no service cutbacks or cash flow shortfalls in recent years.
Commitment of Capital and Operating Funds (25% of local financial commitment rating)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the non-Section 5309 CIG capital funds are committed or budgeted. Sources of funds include, FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds, Maricopa County Proposition 400 Public Transportation Fund (PTF) excise tax revenues, and City of Phoenix Proposition 104 sales tax revenues and bond proceeds. • Approximately 78.5 percent of the operating funds needed to operate and maintain the transit system in the first full year of operation are committed or budgeted, and the rest are considered planned. Sources of funds include FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula funds, Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities funds, farebox revenue, contributions from the cities of Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa, Glendale, and Chandler, and Maricopa County Proposition 400 PTF excise tax revenues.
Reasonableness of Capital and Operating Cost Estimates and Planning Assumptions/Capital Funding Capacity (50% of local financial commitment rating)	Medium-Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumed growth in capital revenue assumptions is optimistic compared to recent historical experience. • The capital cost estimate is reasonable. • Regarding growth in operating revenue assumptions, farebox collections are optimistic and contributions from member cities are conservative compared to recent historical experience. • Operating cost estimates are reasonable compared to recent historical experience.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valley Metro has access to funds via additional debt capacity, cash reserves, and other committed funds to cover unexpected cost increases or funding shortfalls equal to at least 4.7 percent of the total CIG capital cost and 27.6 percent of annual system wide operating expenses.
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**South Central Light Rail Extension/Downtown Hub
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LAND USE RATING: Medium

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The station areas have an average population density of 4,800 persons per square mile, which rates Medium-Low by FTA benchmarks. The project would serve a total of 134,600 employees, which rates Medium. The average daily parking cost in the Phoenix central business district (CBD) is \$17, which corresponds to a High rating. The ratio of station area to county LBAR housing is 8.78, corresponding to a High rating.
- Development in the Central Avenue corridor is of varying character, with the northern few station areas in and near Downtown being more transit-supportive, while development south of Interstate 17 is less dense. The project mostly serves an automobile-oriented area south of the Phoenix Central Business District.
- The arterial roads along South Central Avenue create a well-connected street grid. The corridor contains continuous sidewalks. There are crosswalks at most signalized intersections, but many of the non-signalized intersections do not have crosswalks.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium

- *Growth Management:* Arizona requires municipalities to identify targeted growth areas tied to infrastructure improvements as part of their comprehensive plans and requires them to have policies and implementation strategies for promoting a regional system of open space. Phoenix is engaged in an ongoing planning effort to concentrate growth in identified cores and corridors, including the project corridor.
- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Phoenix has adopted transit-oriented development (TOD) policies and typologies for each of the proposed stations in the project corridor. These range from high-density place types downtown to mid- and lower-density place types at the southern end of the corridor.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Density and land use character controls are varied in the corridor. Zoning in the northernmost station areas including and adjacent to downtown allows high densities and supports transit-friendly development. The remainder of the corridor is zoned general commercial and residential which allows low to high density residential development and medium density commercial development. Current zoning in most of the corridor is not transit supportive but the City intends to amend the zoning code as this project is developed.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Phoenix gives developers points toward density bonuses for features such as sustainability elements. The City's Adaptive Reuse Program streamlines development for the adaptation of old buildings, many of which are in the corridor. To date, the City has programmed a few capital improvements to make the corridor more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. The City has been conducting a fair amount of outreach to property owners along the corridor.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-High

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* 344 projects, valued at \$11 billion, have been completed or are under construction along the region's existing LRT line. The developments contain a total of over 25,000 residential units and over 18 million square feet of commercial/office space. This development is high-density in the downtown areas and medium- to high-density in the station areas outside of downtown. The developments typically have transit-friendly characteristics.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* The corridor has not been intensely developed and has many opportunity sites for redevelopment. There are 277 acres of vacant land within one half mile of the proposed alignment plus many existing surface parking lots. Phoenix is

one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States with a robust real estate market, which indicates that significant transit-oriented development is possible. However, the corridor has been lagging behind the region in development.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-Low

- Phoenix's general plan includes goals and objectives to increase the supply of affordable housing near existing and proposed light rail stations. The City provides density bonuses for affordable housing and increased development entitlements for projects that provide long-term affordable units. The City has carried out two recent public housing rehabilitation projects in the corridor.



SOUTH CENTRAL LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION/DOWNTOWN HUB

Phoenix, Arizona

- South Central Stations
- Existing Light Rail Stations
- South Central Extension
- Existing Valley Metro Light Rail
- Ⓟ Park-and-Ride
- Operations and Maintenance Center Expansion

