



# SOUTH CENTRAL EXTENSION/ DOWNTOWN HUB

TITLE

LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

TYPE



JUNE 2021

## Frequently Asked Questions

### COVID-19

#### How is COVID-19 impacting construction of the SCE/DH light rail?

As an 'essential' industry, construction continues and the project team and construction crews are adhering to current health and safety guidelines.

With decreased activity in many public places and on city streets, construction contractor Kiewit continues to look for ways to optimize construction work. Kiewit will continue to evaluate any additional opportunities to optimize work during this time, maintaining as a priority the health and safety of community members, the traveling public and construction workers.

As always, Valley Metro will notify stakeholders in advance of any additional construction near businesses or residences.

#### Will the construction schedule change?

Construction is continuing as planned, with no COVID-related impacts anticipated at this time. Valley Metro will notify all stakeholders of changes to the schedule, should there be any.

#### How can I find resources to help my business through COVID-19?

As a transit agency, Valley Metro is not an authoritative resource for COVID-19-related relief programs. However, we have been collecting and posting links to government and other organizations that might be helpful and, in many cases, can assist with the application process.

Visit the project webpage at [valleymetro.org/southcentral](http://valleymetro.org/southcentral).

### BUSINESSES

#### When should I connect with Valley Metro to learn about assistance for my business during light rail construction?

It's never too early to connect with your Business Assistance Coordinator:

##### Victoria Bray

Downtown - I-17 Bridge

O: 602.495.8284

vbray@valleymetro.org

##### Jose Galindo

I-17 Bridge - Baseline Road

O: 602.523.6032

jgalindo@valleymetro.org

#### How will businesses be supported during construction?

South Central Extension/Downtown Hub is the fourth major light rail project to be built in the region. Valley Metro and the city of Phoenix have learned from each of these projects and continue to evolve extensive business assistance programming, which includes business assessments, special events, customized signage, marketing/social media assistance and accounting/financial planning.

Valley Metro and construction contractor, Kiewit, have a "courteous" construction plan that entails maintaining business access at all times, designating safe routes for pedestrians and schools, and localized hiring and spending.

## CONSTRUCTION

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### What is the construction timeline?

Construction activity began in late 2019 and will continue in the project corridor to 2024. For the latest information on construction activity, visit the project web page or download the Construct VM mobile app from Apple or Google Play stores.

### When will the project be complete?

The project is expected to be operational in 2024.

### What should I expect during construction?

- Access maintained to businesses and residences
- Advance notifications of construction activities
- Some modifications to traffic lanes and sidewalks
- Temporary bus stop relocations
- Daytime and nighttime work

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

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### What are the benefits of light rail?

Light rail connects thousands of people to education, entertainment and employment by providing an affordable and convenient transportation alternative.

The benefits go beyond providing effective and efficient transportation. Over 35,000 jobs have been created within 1/2-mile of light rail since 2008. In the 10 years since light rail was introduced in the region, there has been:

- A substantial increase in riders being able to reach their destination in a single trip
- Improved access to education and over 5.5 million square feet of new educational facilities along light rail
- A 50% decrease in bicycle and pedestrian collisions in the light rail corridor
- Greater affordability within the light rail corridor as compared to Maricopa County overall

In addition, many of the economic benefits of the project will remain in the South Phoenix community. Area residents will be given priority position for jobs associated with the project, and at times, careers that extend beyond the life of construction. [To find out more information, please visit the Quality of Life Report.](#)

### Why is light rail being built in South Phoenix?

Families and individuals along the South Central corridor will benefit from infrastructure improvements and additional public transportation options for convenient access to work, school and more. Voters approved the extension in 2000, 2004 and in 2015. Prop 104, known as Transportation 2050 plan, received 75% approval from voters who live along the South Central line. The Phoenix City Council approved the route in 2013, acceleration of the project in 2016 and roadway design in 2014 and again in 2018.

### Why the two-lane roadway design?

Light rail expands roadway capacity by carrying passengers each day to/from the area and attracting additional customers. Dedicated left/right turn lanes and bus pullouts help to maintain traffic flow. The two-lane design achieves the community's desire for a pedestrian-friendly environment that includes sidewalks, shade, and dedicated bike lanes, while also limiting property takes.

The two-lane design also avoids removing nearly 80 local businesses that would have been impacted by the property acquisition needed to accommodate light rail and four lanes of auto traffic. These kinds of property impacts would have dramatically altered the character of South Central Avenue.

The two-lane design improves public safety in this corridor by providing emergency vehicles with easier access to travel along Central Avenue. The design was reviewed and approved by Phoenix public safety personnel and is safer for all than a four-lane configuration.

The Phoenix City Council approved, for the third time, the two-lane design in September 2018.

### **What is the "Downtown Hub" part of the project?**

The Downtown Hub includes improvements in the downtown area to enhance connections between the South Central extension, the current light rail system and the future Capitol/I-10 West extension. As part of the enhancements, three new station platforms will be installed and Central Avenue between Washington and Jefferson streets will be closed to auto traffic.

### **What is a "Special Use Platform"?**

A special use platform is not open to riders for regular service, but is used if needed for special event service or as an emergency boarding area. A special use station is being constructed at 3rd Avenue and Jefferson Street.

### **How has the design changed based on community input?**

Community input has been and continues to be an important element in the design of the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub. The design team has incorporated the following elements, based on feedback, into the final design of the project:

- Increased number of bus pullouts (over 80% of bus stops now have pullouts)
- Added more and increased the size of landscape areas
- Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- 23 additional signalized crosswalks
- Over 10 miles of continuous and wider bike lanes
- Modified one park-and-ride location to relocate parking closer to the station and identified an alternate location for another park-and-ride to avoid impacts to nearby businesses
- Placed Broadway Road station south of intersection to reduce the amount of right-of-way needed
- Removed frontage road from the Lincoln Station location to minimize property impacts and maintain local street access
- Modified design of roundabouts to reduce impacts and better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians

### **What is the Public Art Program?**

Valley Metro policy directs up to 1% of the construction budget to be allocated to public art on light rail projects. The artwork is developed by professional artists in coordination with local area community members.

Of the 18 artists working on art elements for the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub 12 are local.

### **Will the City rezone my property once light rail is built?**

The City has no plans to rezone property along the corridor without the consent of the property owner. Rather, the process to rezone property is initiated by the property owner.

### **Will there be a tax increase to maintain operations for the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub?**

No. In August 2015, Phoenix voters approved the Transportation 2050 plan that provides a dedicated revenue source for bus service, light rail service and street improvements through 2050.

### **What is included in the project's cost estimate?**

More than half of the construction budget of a light rail system is used for street and utility improvements in the project area.

The South Central Extension/Downtown Hub project will include new street pavement, curb, gutters, sidewalks, traffic signals, streetlights, and landscaping, while also replacing most of the underground utilities including water, sewer, power and fiber and gas lines.

## STAY CONNECTED

### Who can I contact for questions or more information on the project?

Valley Metro has staff available to inform and answer questions as well as address any issues that may arise from construction. Please contact one of the coordinators below:

#### Community Outreach Coordinators

**Marcela Valdez**

Community Outreach Coordinator  
Downtown - Cocopah  
O: 602.256.5815  
msvaldez@valleymetro.org

**Julie Smith**

Community Outreach Coordinator  
Cocopah - Broadway  
O: 602.744.5563  
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**Omar Alvarez Perez**

Community Outreach Coordinator  
Broadway - Baseline  
O: 602.523.6039  
oaperez@valleymetro.org

#### Business Assistance Coordinators

**Victoria Bray**

Business Assistance Coordinator  
Downtown - I-17 Bridge  
O: 602.495.8284  
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**Jose Galindo**

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Follow us on social media



Download the Construct VM App



In Apple and Google Play stores for real-time construction information



Visit

[valleymetro.org/southcentral](http://valleymetro.org/southcentral)



Call the 24/7 construction hotline: 602-254-RAIL



Visit us at the South Central Extension / Downtown Hub Community Office

5040 S. Central Ave., Phoenix  
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Evenings and weekends by appointment: **602.687.8585**