



Memorandum

Public Works

DATE: April 2, 2009

TO: Mayor & Council

FROM: Jyme Sue McLaren, Deputy Public Works Manager – Light Rail (350-8803)

THRU: Glenn Kephart, Public Works Manager (350-8205)

SUBJECT: **Tempe South Corridor Study – IRS 4/9/09**

Summary

Tempe and Chandler are working with METRO on a 24-month study to analyze potential high capacity transit improvements for the Tempe South Corridor. Staff will provide Mayor and Council with an update on the analysis completed to date for this study area and seek input to the recommended alternatives being advanced for further consideration. Based upon the analysis, the two highest performing options are the Mill Avenue Modern Streetcar and Rural Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Staff is seeking direction on the following recommendation:

- Advance Mill Avenue Modern Streetcar using regional funding for a future high capacity transit investment.
- Advance Rural Road BRT using regional funding for future BRT Lite improvements on Rural/Scottsdale.
- Dismiss Rural Road Light Rail Transit.

Project Evaluation Process

The Tempe South Corridor study is evaluating a range of high capacity transit technologies, including bus rapid transit, commuter rail, light rail transit and modern streetcar, as well as potential north-south alignments (e.g., Mill Avenue/Kyrene Road, Rural Road and McClintock Drive). The Tempe South Corridor Study (see **Attachment A, Project Fact Sheet**) is funded by the Proposition 400 half-cent transportation sales tax extension approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004 and is contained in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The Tempe South Corridor study is a two tiered evaluation approach. Tier 1 is a qualitative evaluation that analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of each transit technology and alignment alternative in relation to the project's goals. The most feasible alternatives are then carried forward and infeasible alignments and technologies are eliminated. The Tier 2 analysis provides detailed information on capital and operating costs, ridership potential, destinations served, right-of-way and environmental impacts, traffic analysis and economic development potential.

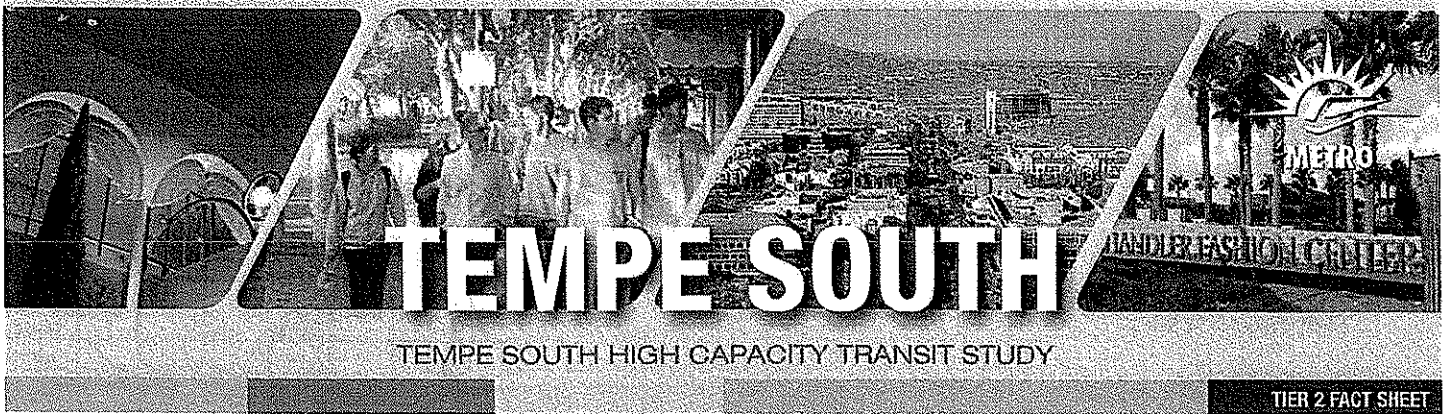
Tier 2 Public Input and Next Steps

The Tier 2 analysis has been completed and the results were shared with approximately 100 attendees at public meetings in December 2008. In addition, a survey was distributed at the public meeting and is also posted on the project web site (www.metrolightrail.org/tempesouth). Findings of the survey include:

- Unanimous lack of support for the UPRR BRT option because the option would not support economic development, would conflict with adjacent neighborhoods, and would not support transit demand in the area.
- The Rural Road BRT option is widely seen as the most beneficial option in terms of cost-effectiveness and faster implementation but was less desirable overall than the light rail or modern streetcar options given traffic congestion, high ridership demand, and lack of economic development potential.
- The Rural Road LRT generally received the most support from those who commented though major criticisms of this option were the high cost and short distance of the alignment.
- The Mill Avenue Modern Streetcar option also received support and was widely seen as beneficial to economic development and downtown redevelopment.

Presentations have also been provided to stakeholder groups, including neighborhood associations meetings, various city board and commissions, the Tempe Chamber Transportation Committee and the Downtown Tempe Community Board of Directors. The DTC took an action supporting advancement of the Mill Modern Streetcar alternative. Additional presentations are being scheduled through early 2009.

After further technical analysis and additional public feedback, a recommendation for a locally preferred alternative will be advanced to Council for final consideration in late Spring or early Summer 2009.



INTRODUCTION



METRO, in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is studying high capacity improvements in the cities of Tempe and Chandler.

The Tempe South High Capacity Transit project will provide a connection to the 20-mile METRO Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Starter Line currently planned to open in late December 2008.

The Tempe South project study area is bounded by the Tempe Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) to the west, Loop 101 to the east, Loop 202 (Red Mountain Freeway) to the north and Loop 202 (Santan Freeway) to the south.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In keeping with the Federal process to define both routes of service and modes or types of transit, an initial public scoping meeting was held in January 2008 to discuss transit options and seek initial public input into the project. METRO is currently conducting a two-tiered alternatives analysis. Tier 1, or the initial evaluation, included a qualitative analysis of a broad range of alternatives.

The Tier 1 evaluation eliminated options that had fatal flaws, clearly did not meet project goals, or lacked community support. Public meetings on Tier 1 were held in June 2008. As a result of the study and input received, the original 11 alternative options and 4 corridors considered in Tier 1 have been narrowed to 5 alternative options in 3 corridors. METRO is currently conducting the second tier of the analysis. Tier 2 provides a more detailed evaluation of these remaining alternatives.

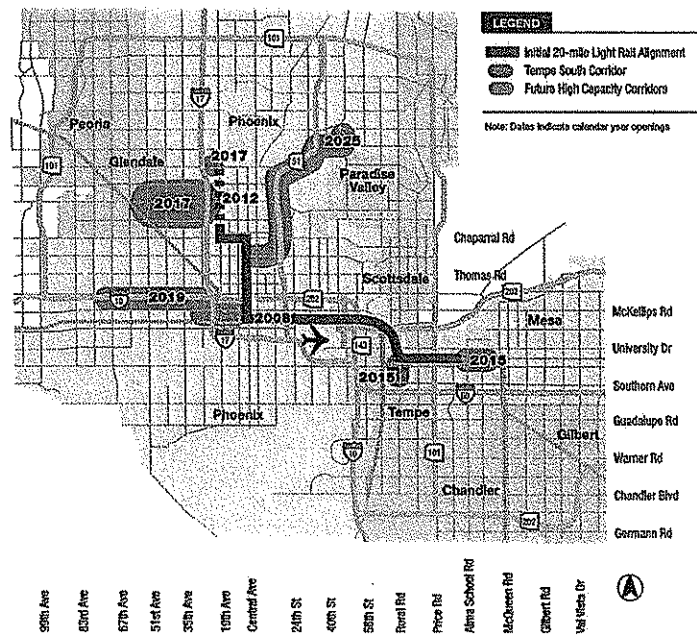
THE TIER 2 STUDY PHASE

Public meetings to report the findings to date of the Tier 2 alternatives analysis and solicit input will be held:

Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2008
6-8pm
Desert Breeze Substation
251 N. Desert Breeze Blvd.
Chandler, AZ

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2008
6-8pm
Tempe Public Library
3500 S. Rural Road
Tempe, AZ

Regional Transportation Plan Transit Corridors



The Tempe South project is funded by the Proposition 400 half-cent transportation sales tax extension approved by Maricopa County voters in 2004, and is contained in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan as a component of the 57-mile High Capacity Transit/Light Rail Network to be implemented by 2026.



At the Tier 2 public meetings, detail on the transit types or modes and alignments studied for the 5 alternatives in 3 corridors will be presented. Study elements include:

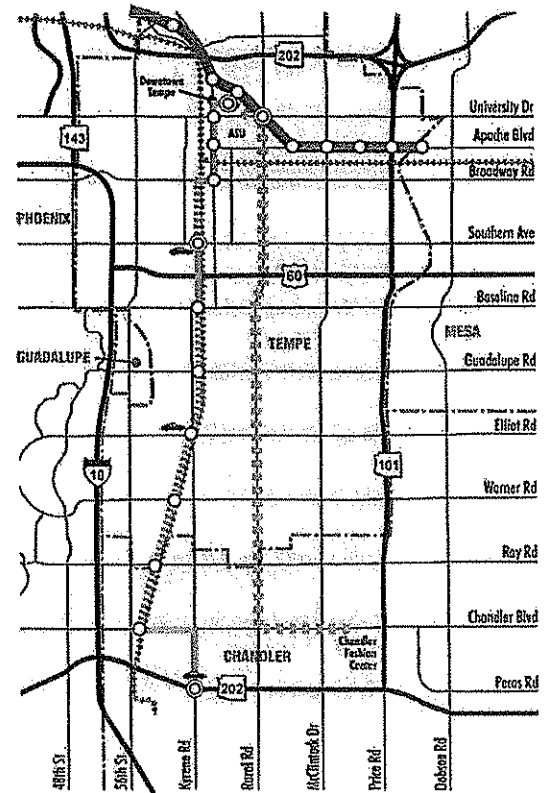
- evaluation of cost
- travel demand and travel markets
- connectivity to the regional transit network
- potential economic development opportunities
- major environmental issues
- potential impact to historic properties

The information gathered at the Tier 2 public meetings will help to further identify which transit options best meet the needs of the community and which option(s) should move forward.

Alternative transit modes being presented at the Tier 2 public meetings will include:

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- Modern Streetcar (MS)

BRT - UPRR

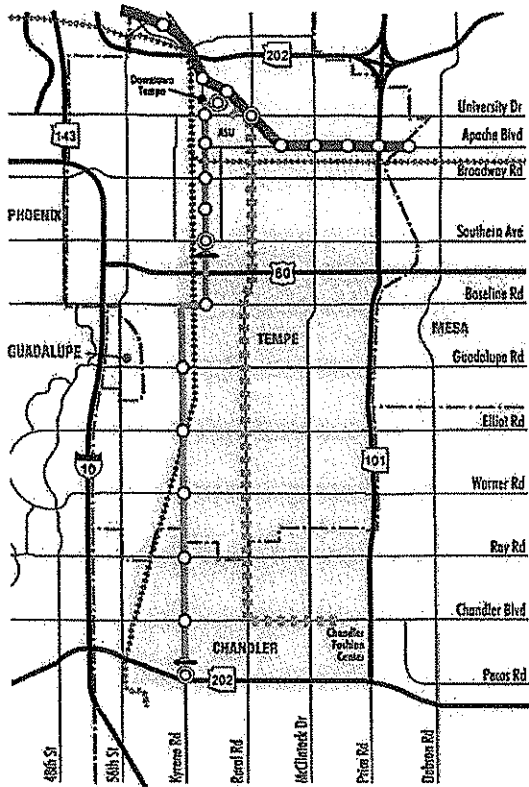


LEGEND

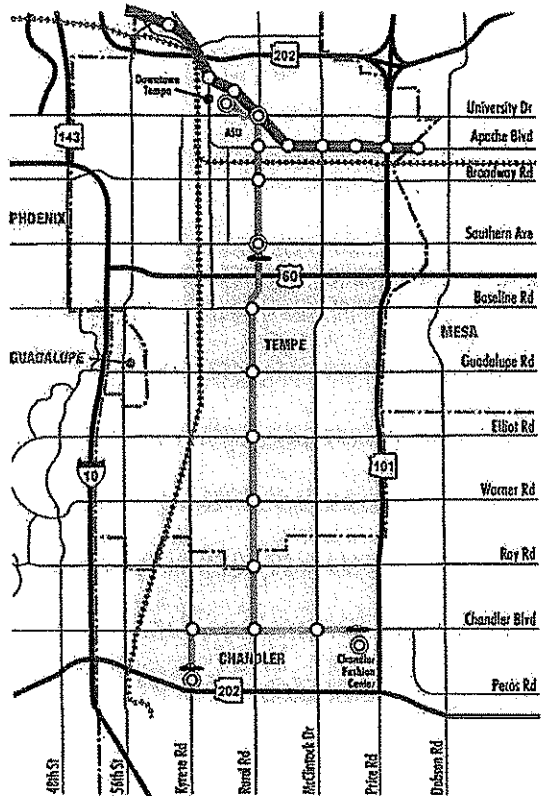
	Light Rail Starter Line		Bus Rapid Transit-BRT
	Station		Light Rail Transit-LRT
	Transit Center		Modern Streetcar-MS
	Park-n-Ride		Possible Future Transit Connector
	Study Area		
	Union Pacific Railroad(UPRR)		
	BRT Defined by Regional Plan		
	BRT in Exclusive Guideway		

Tempe South Tier 2 Alternative Recommendations

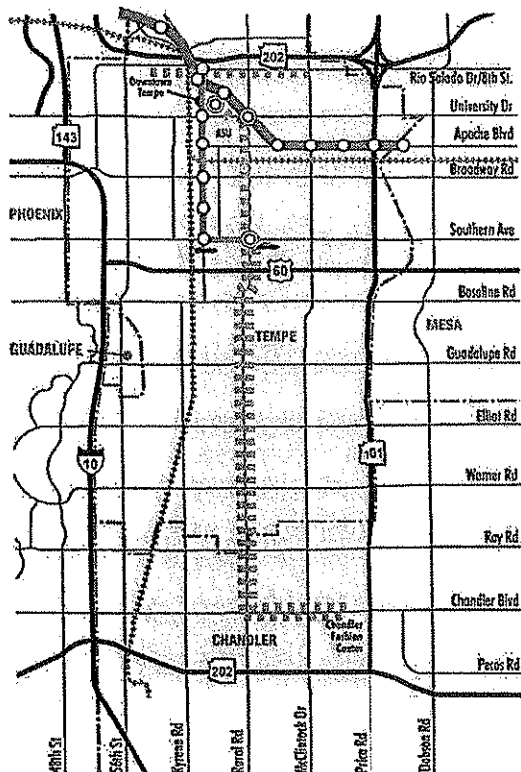
BRT - Mill/Kyrene



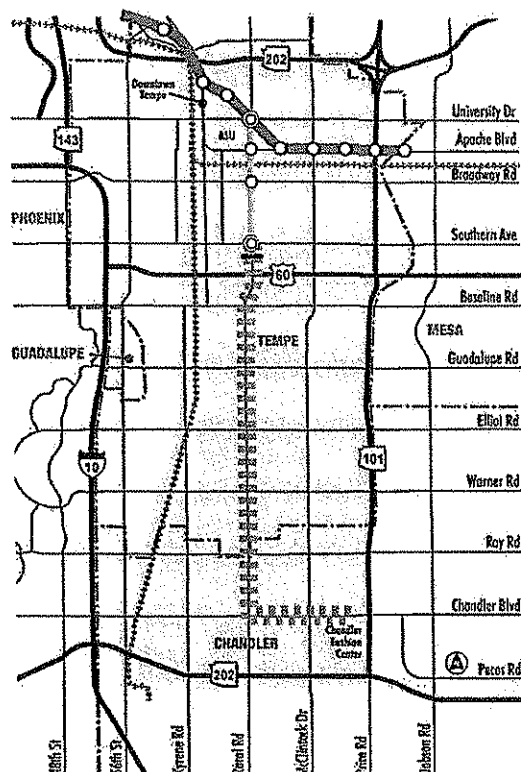
BRT - Rural



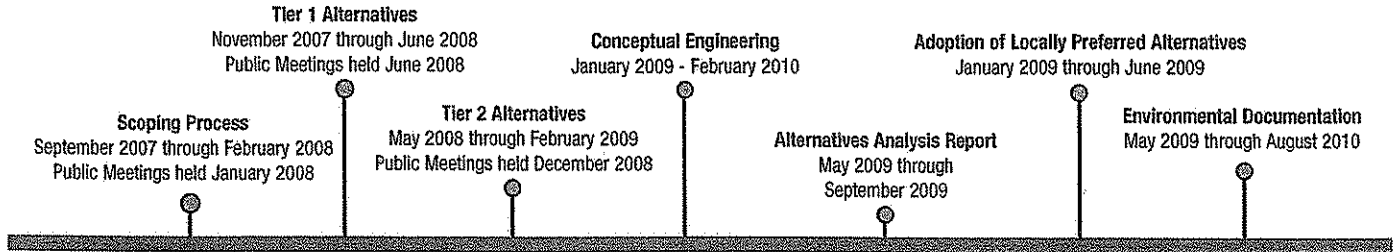
MS - Mill



LRT - Rural



PROJECT MILESTONES*



*Dates are approximate.

Tier 2 Alternatives Highest Performers

Characteristic	UPRR BRT	Mill/Kyrene BRT	Mill Modern Streetcar	Rural LRT	Rural BRT
RIDERS/COSTS					
People-Carrying Capacity-Highest				✓	
Total Boardings (Study Area)-Highest		✓			✓
Boardings / Mile (Study Area)-Highest			✓	✓	✓
System Ridership Attraction-Highest			✓	✓	✓
Capital Costs-Lowest		✓			✓
PROPERTIES/UTILITIES/TRAFFIC					
Property Acquisitions / ROW Impacts-Fewest or Lowest Cost		✓	✓		✓
Utility Relocations-Fewest		✓	✓		✓
Traffic-No or Low Impact	✓	✓	✓		
Traffic-Least Impact on Congestion	✓	✓	✓		
URBAN/ENVIRONMENT					
Curb/Walkway Impacts-Fewest	✓		✓	✓	
Bicyclist-No or Low Impact	✓		✓	✓	
Historic Properties (Eligible or on NRHP)-Least or No Adverse Effect	✓			✓	✓
Historic Properties (Potentially Eligible for NRHP)-Least or No Adverse Effect	✓		✓		✓
Archaeological Sites-Least or No Adverse Effect		✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic Development Potential-Highest			✓	✓	

NRHP - National Register of Historic Places

NEXT STEPS

The next stage in the study process will be compiling public comments received, taking a closer look at the alternatives presented, and selecting the Locally Preferred Alternative to be advanced for design and construction. The project team will then present the Locally Preferred Alternative to the public for review in the Spring of 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Citizens, agencies, and community organizations are encouraged to comment throughout the process in order to help guide the direction of the study, define project goals and objectives, and identify issues and impacts. To learn more about the Tempe South High Capacity Transit Project, use the following:

Project Hotline
602-254-RAIL(7245)
Web Site
MetroLightRail.org/tempesouth
E-mail
pccere@metrolightrail.org

To receive information in alternative formats call 602-254-7245/TTY 602-322-4499

Para recibir esta información en formatos alternativos favor de llamar al 602-254-7245/TTY 602-322-4499.