

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 7, 2019

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 7, 2019 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

John Giles
David Luna
Jennifer Duff
Mark Freeman
Francisco Heredia
Kevin Thompson
Jeremy Whittaker

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Dee Ann Mickelsen
Jim Smith

1. Approval of minutes from an executive session held on December 10, 2018.

It was moved by Councilmember Luna, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, that the executive session held on December 10, 2018 be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Freeman-Duff-Heredia-Luna-Thompson-Whittaker
NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

2-a. Hear a presentation and discuss Valley Metro regional transit services, including bus, rail, and paratransit in Mesa.

Valley Metro CEO Scott Smith introduced Director of Communications Hillary Foose and Safety and Security Director Adrian Ruiz and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(Attachment 1)** He commented the purpose of Valley Metro is to connect communities and enhance lives.

Mr. Smith provided background information regarding Valley Metro and explained Valley Metro's core values. He reported Valley Metro is comprised of two entities, with the first being the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). He advised the RPTA is a state public entity that operates the bus system, Paratransit program, and vanpool for areas outside of the City of Phoenix. He added the second entity is the Valley Metro Rail Inc. that owns and operates the light rail. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith highlighted the light rail. He commented that the light rail is the most discussed and controversial form of transportation in the valley. He noted over 45,000 passengers ride the light

rail every day. He reported before the light rail was in operation a bus route operated along the same route and in 2007 that bus route carried 2.8 million passengers annually; the light rail now carries 16.5 million passengers over the same route. He added, overall, 35,000 jobs have been created within one-half mile of the light rail, over 2,200 housing units have been constructed since the light rail opened, and in the last 10 years the light rail has exceeded any and all projections and expectations. (See Pages 6 through 10 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith identified the housing developments that have been constructed near the light rail. (See Pages 11 through 13 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith displayed a map that detailed the Regional Rail System. He advised the map highlights the light rail extensions that are anticipated in the future. He pointed out the Gilbert Road Extension will open on May 18, 2019. (See Page 14 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith noted the Tempe Streetcar vehicle. He advised the streetcar is a hybrid propulsion unit that operates on batteries. He stated the streetcar will be used on a 3.1-mile route in Tempe. He reported a study is being completed to see if it is practical for the streetcar to travel and operate in the Rio Salado Parkway area. (See Page 21 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith reviewed maps that outlines the difference of the light rail system from 2019 to 2023. He pointed out the light rail will change from a single-line system to a two-line system. (See Pages 25 and 26 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith highlighted transit ridership from 2014 to 2018. He advised overall ridership has decreased slightly in the last five years, however, other cities in the Country have experienced 20 to 30 percent declines. He explained Mesa has not seen much of a decrease in ridership and pointed out in 2014 when the light rail ended at Sycamore there were 946,000 boardings and in 2017 there were 2,290,000 boardings. (See Page 31 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith discussed ridership impacts. He advised the most consistent explanation regarding ridership numbers is associated with how well the economy is doing. He explained ridership “spiked” in 2009 and 2010 during the recession and when gas prices decrease, and jobs improve, ridership declines. (See Page 32 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith presented the future of transit. He advised autonomous vehicles are expected in the future, however, there are certain technological obstacles yet to overcome. He stated Valley Metro is embracing the idea of autonomous vehicles and a pilot program is being conducted with Waymo. He explained several Valley Metro employees in the Chandler area are using Waymo to learn how it can improve and change transportation. (See Pages 34 through 36 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith commented on the security of light rail. He advised statistics show someone is safer to ride the light rail to work every day than driving a vehicle. He acknowledged the community's perception as to the security of the light rail, but advised criminal activity is very low on the light rail. He advised Valley Metro has implemented the “Respect the Ride – Building Awareness with Right + Rong” program to educate passengers on how to properly ride on the light rail. He noted Valley Metro has doubled the security budget from 5% to 11%. (See Pages 38 through 41 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Smith detailed the citizen driven anti-light rail initiative occurring in Phoenix. He advised the initiative is to no longer fund and ultimately terminate the light rail program. He added if approved

any light rail development in the City of Phoenix would stop and funds from the City of Phoenix for regional transportation could be eliminated. (See Page 42 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Thompson, Mr. Smith advised an express rail from Mesa to Downtown Phoenix is a future idea, however, isn't a possibility right now because the light rail is currently a single-line system. He added an express rail is likely to happen when the two-line system is in place and additional cars have been purchased.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Luna, Mr. Smith stated there are individuals in the community that are opposed to public transportation in general and the light rail due to the expense it creates for a City. He stated the opinion some community members consider public transportation "yesterday's technology" and believe public transportation will be irrelevant in the future. He explained these factors are what is driving the anti-light rail initiative.

In response to a question posed by Vice Mayor Freeman, Mr. Smith reported in 2018, 815,000 passengers boarded at Mesa Drive, 157,000 boarded at Center Street, 405,000 boarded at Country Club Drive, 397,000 boarded at Alma School Road, and 464,000 at Sycamore.

In response to a question posed by Vice Mayor Freeman, Mr. Smith advised 50% of the light rail is funded federally through the Capital Investment Grant Program. He explained the grant program is very competitive and projects across the Country are scored to determine funding amounts. He added Valley Metro also receives funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program through Maricopa County and those funds are dedicated to light rail construction projects. He noted Federal highway funds were repurposed to support the Gilbert Road extension.

Discussion ensued relating to the added development and investments in Mesa since the light rail has been in operation.

In response to questions posed by Mayor Giles, Mr. Smith remarked one-third of the funds from Prop 400 are used for the transit system. He advised in order for the transit system to succeed cities in the valley will need to invest in multiple modes of transportation and determine what works best for each city. He added technology will evolve and have an impact on transportation options. He stated the opinion that community members should embrace all transportation options, such as motorized scooters and autonomous vehicles.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Smith advised discussions have occurred to make the light rail autonomous, however, Federal regulations currently restrict this due to the light rail maneuvering through intersections. He added it is also unlikely for the light rail to become autonomous due to the number of passengers on it at one time and the need for a conductor/operator.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Smith remarked the government has a program in place that encourages the use of electric buses in cities. He stated a bus that is rated to operate for 220 miles only operated for 70 miles in Mesa due to Arizona's environment. He noted Valley Metro recently purchased 450 buses for the valley that will last 10 to 12 years. He advised Valley Metro plans to revisit the idea of electric buses when technology improves.

In response to a question posed by Councilmember Whittaker, Mr. Smith replied that autonomous vehicles might not be an option right now for the highways, however local autonomous vehicles could be used in the near future in Mesa neighborhoods for grocery delivery.

Mayor Giles thanked Mr. Smith for his presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

3-a. Housing and Community Development Advisory Board meeting held on February 7, 2019.

3-b. Human Relations Advisory Board meeting held on January 23, 2019.

Councilmember Thompson addressed the meeting minutes from the Human Relations Advisory Board meeting held on January 23, 2019. He referenced House Bill 2586 and requested additional information from staff.

City Manager Christopher Brady advised staff would follow-up with Councilmember Thompson.

It was moved by Vice Mayor Freeman, seconded by Councilmember Luna, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Freeman-Duff-Heredia-Luna-Thompson-Whittaker

NAYS – None

Carried unanimously.

4. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

There were no reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the schedule of meetings is as follows:

Thursday, March 14, 2019, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:54 a.m.



JOHN GILES, MAYOR

ATTEST:



DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK



I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 7th day of March, 2019. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

mh
(Attachments – 1)

Valley Metro: Driving the Future

Mesa City Council

March 7, 2019

Connect Communities | Enhance Lives

- **Core values**
 - Whatever it takes
 - Team player
 - Positive customer care
- **What we do**
 - We plan, build, operate & maintain a safe, regional multi-modal transportation system.
- **How we succeed**
 - Great customer service
 - Fiscally responsible
 - Community focus





Celebrated 10 Years of Valley Metro Rail

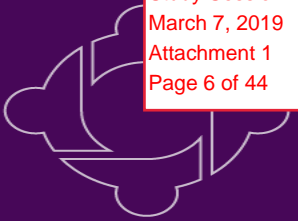




Building Communities + Enhancing Lives

A QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT





A DECADE OF

Bringing people together through a seamless transportation system.

RIDERSHIP

16.5 million riders

in 2017 on Valley Metro Rail

vs. **2.8 million** riders in 2007 on prior route (Red Line bus)



Learn more about light rail's impact since opening in 2008 at www.valleymetro.life.

A DECADE OF

Providing customers with a safe, comfortable and reliable travel experience.

MOVING PEOPLE RELIABLY

Light rail can carry almost

twice as many people

per hour on Central Avenue compared to autos.



Learn more about light rail's impact since opening in 2008 at www.valleymetro.life.



A DECADE OF

Providing customers with a safe, comfortable and reliable travel experience.

EMPLOYMENT

35,000+ jobs

have been created within one-half mile
of light rail **since 2008**



Learn more about light rail's impact since opening in 2008 at www.valleymetro.life.

ADECADE OF Improving individual health while supporting community prosperity and upward mobility.

HOUSING & AFFORDABILITY 2,200+ new workforce and affordable housing units

in the corridor **since light rail** construction began



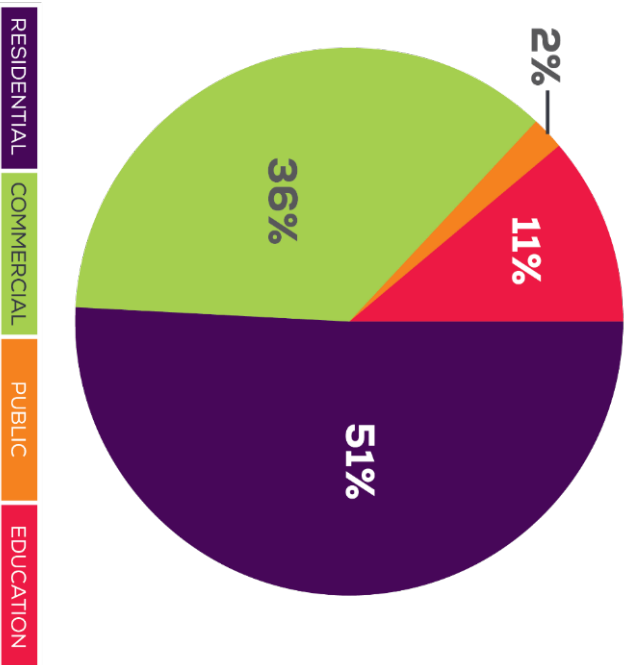
Learn more about light rail's impact since opening in 2008 at www.valleymetro.life.

Economic Investment

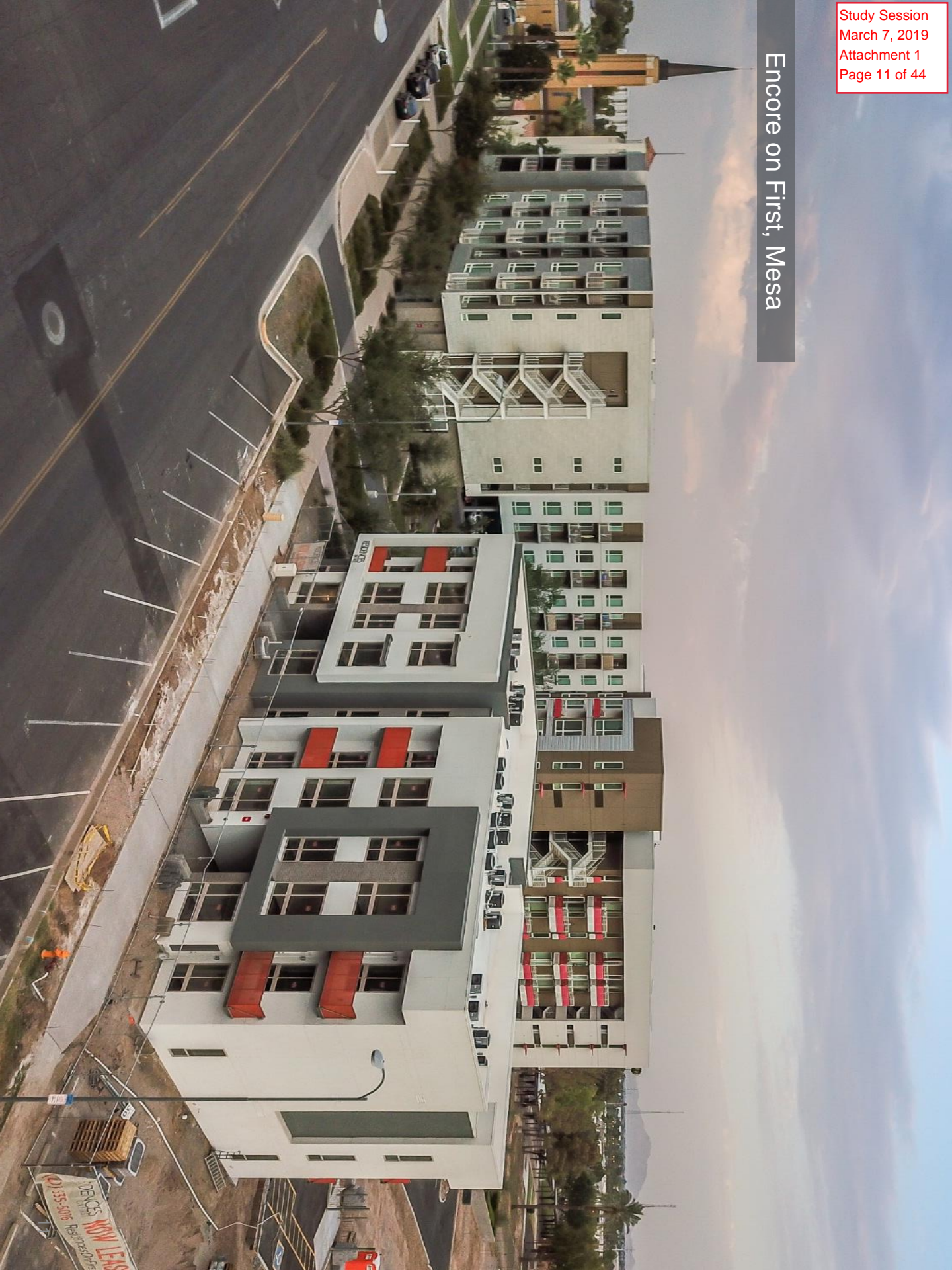
Capital Investment [billions]



Development Breakdown



Encore on First, Mesa



El Rancho del Arte, Mesa



La Mesita Apartments, Mesa





Regional Rail System



50th Street Station – Opening April 2019



Gilbert Road Extension – Opening May 2019



Gilbert Road Extension – Train Testing



Gilbert Road Extension – Train Testing



Gilbert Road Extension – Train Testing



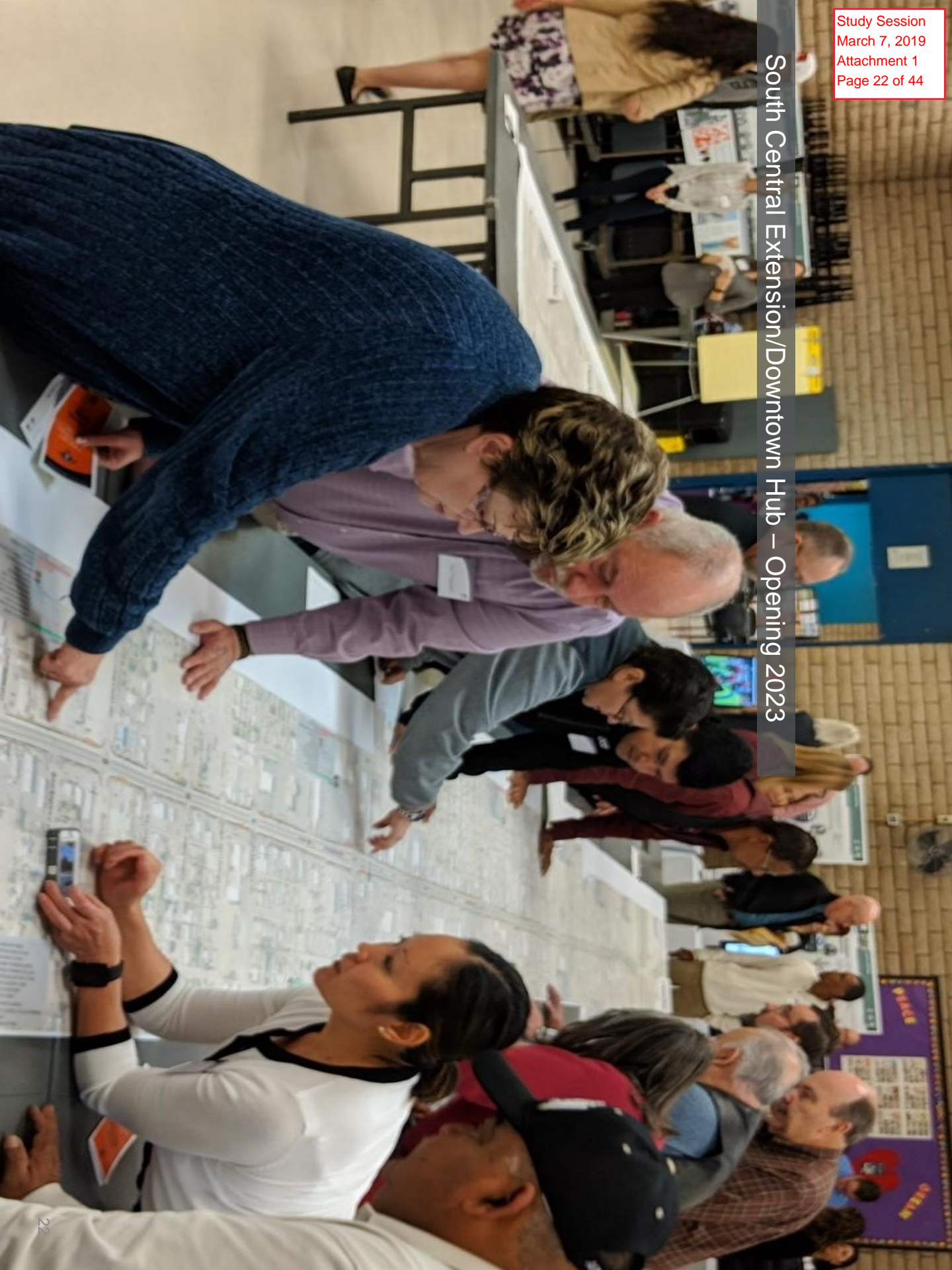
Tempe Streetcar – Opening 2021



Tempe Streetcar Vehicle



South Central Extension/Downtown Hub – Opening 2023



Northwest Extension Phase II – Opening 2023

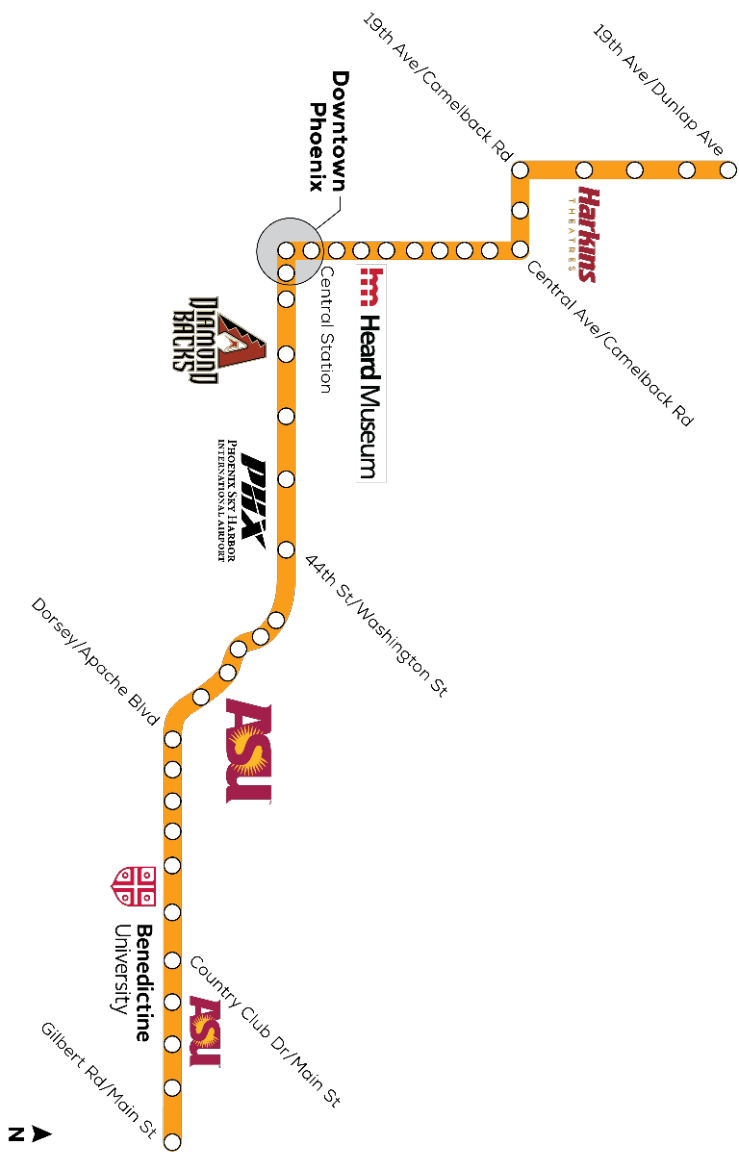
METRO CENTER



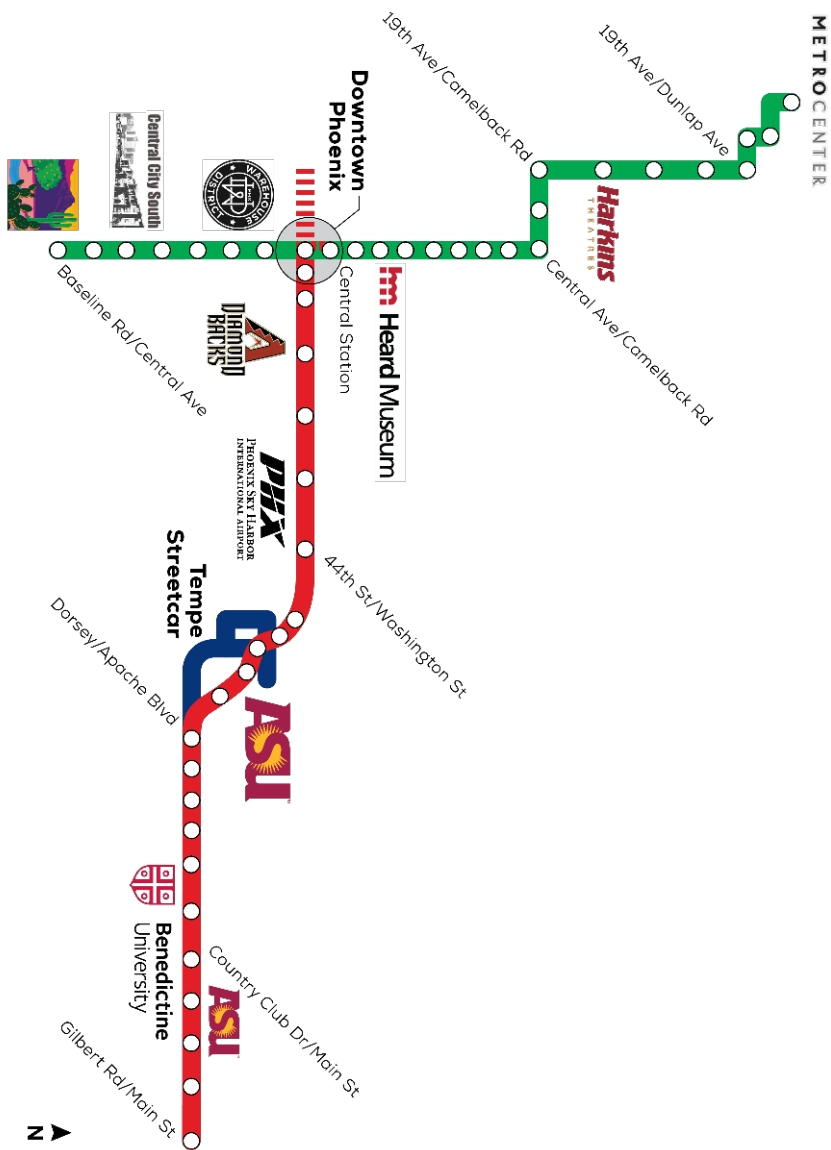
Capitol/I-10 West Extension – Opening 2023 & 2030



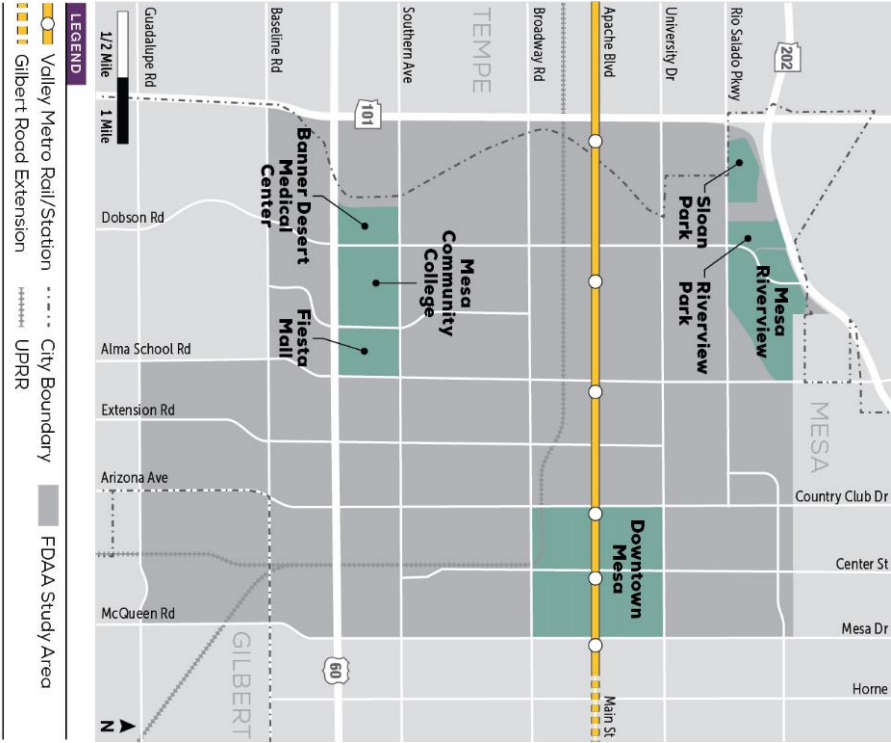
Light Rail System – 2019



Light Rail System – 2023



Fiesta District Alternatives Analysis





Tempe/Mesa Streetcar Feasibility Study



New Regional Paint Scheme

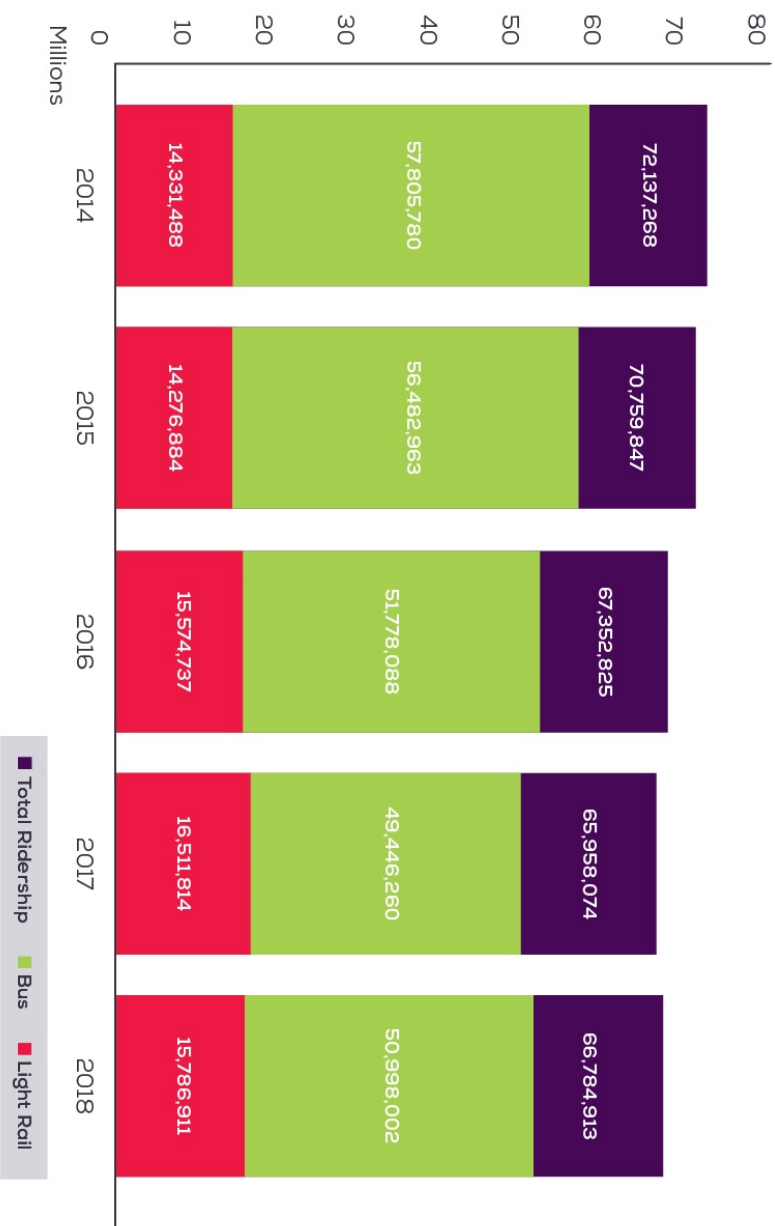


Paratransit – One Regional System



Transit Ridership

Fiscal Years 2014-2018 Annual Ridership



Ridership Impacts

- National trend related to:
 - Job growth
 - Inexpensive gas
 - Ride-hailing, bike/scooter-share, carpooling
 - Suburban sprawl
 - Increase in car ownership

Southern California:
From 1990 – 2000, the region added:
456,000 vehicles =
.25 vehicle per new resident

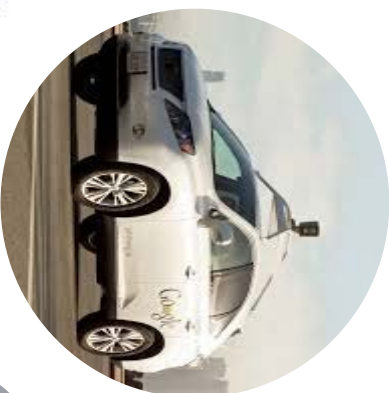
2001 – 2018:
2.1M vehicles =
1.0 vehicle per new resident

--UCLA study, Jan. 2018

Future of Transit

EMBRACE CHANGE + MOBILIZE

Autonomous Technology



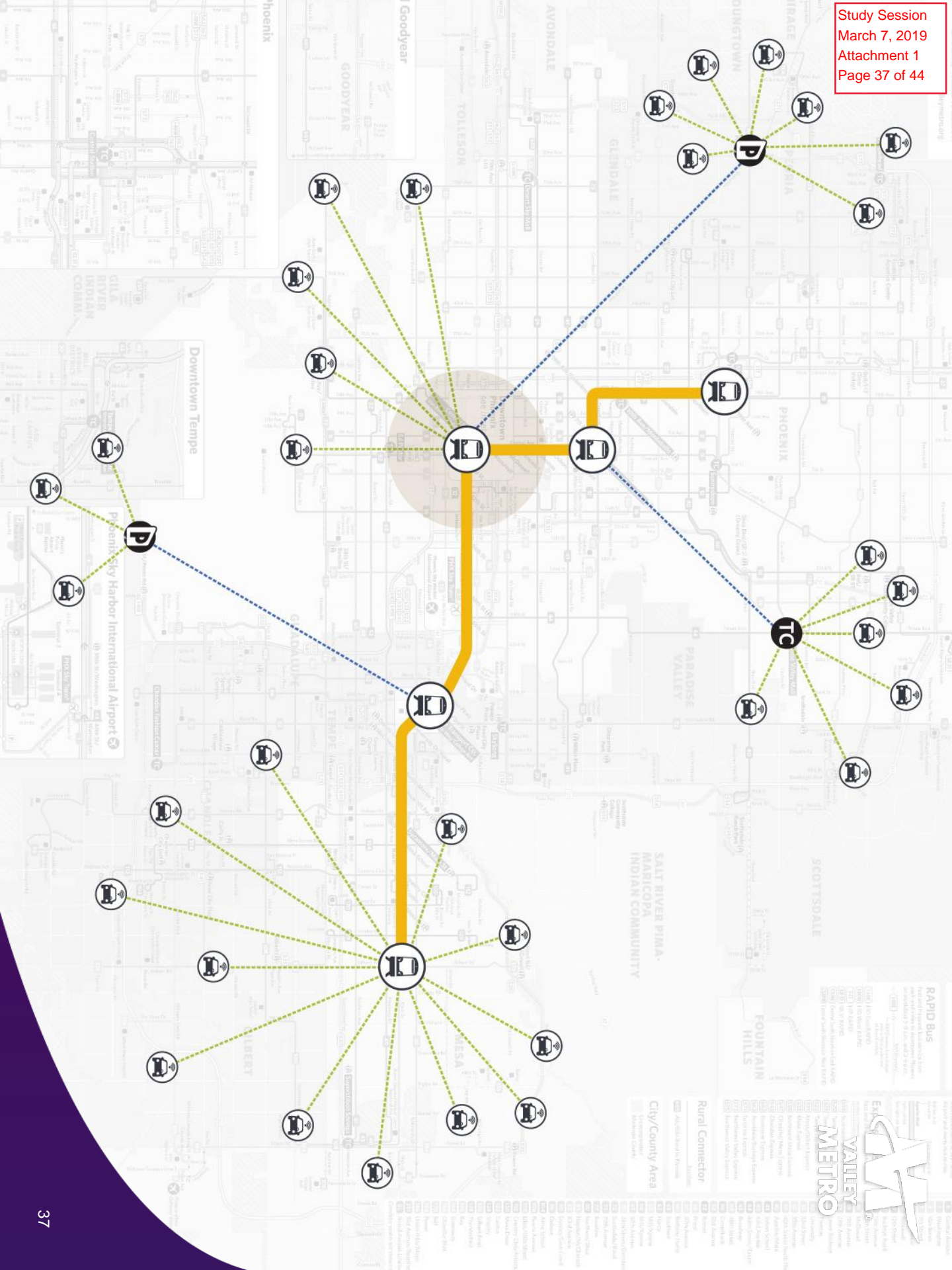
Driving the Future with Waymo



The Future of Mobility

Ultimately, individual car ownership will give way to having a mobility app on your phone, where an automobile is but one mode available. A wealthy commuter might order a driverless Uber Black to take her to the office in solitude. A regular Joe could hail a robo-shuttle that gets him to the subway just before his train departs for the city center, where he'll hop a pre-booked e-scooter to carry him the last mile to work. This is the ideal future of mobility for a city.

Kersten Heineke, McKinsey & Co. Transportation Specialist



Respect the Ride – Building Awareness with Right + Rong



Respect the Ride – Paid Fare Zones



Respect the Ride – Greater Security Presence





32%
increase in
security
personnel

With Respect the Ride, Valley Metro contract security services staffing increased to 16 two-person teams, for a total of 32 officers, on the system during peak



30%
decrease in
security
incidents

With Respect the Ride, Code of Conduct violations are down, across the system, between fall 2017 and fall 2018

Anti-Light Rail Initiative

- City of Phoenix – not regional:
 - Terminates funding for light rail/fixed rail
 - Election on Aug. 27, 2019
- Directs Phoenix to pursue regional funds
 - Could limit Phoenix's role in regional planning
- Rejects federal and regional funding for rail
 - ~\$3.5B could be re-directed to other cities
- Puts future transportation plans at risk



Questions?