



CENTRAL MESA UPDATE

LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION

DECEMBER 2010

BACKGROUND

The Mesa City Council, METRO Board of Directors and the Maricopa Association of Governments approved a locally preferred alternative (LPA) in 2009 to extend light rail into downtown Mesa. The 3.1-mile route will extend light rail on Main Street from Sycamore to Mesa Drive. The project is scheduled to be operational in 2016.

Since the adoption of the LPA, METRO and the city of Mesa have worked with the community to further define the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension. Four station locations, at Alma School Road, Country Club Drive, Center Street, and Mesa Drive, were approved by the Mesa City Council in mid-2010. The City Council also approved the configuration of Main Street. In the downtown area, this includes one through automobile traffic lane in each direction with turn lanes and on-street parking. West of Country Club Drive, two traffic lanes will exist in each direction with turn lanes and bike lanes, but no on-street parking.



PROJECT STATUS

In August 2010, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension into Project Development which marks the first step in receiving federal project approval and ultimately federal funds to build the 3.1-mile extension on Main Street from Sycamore to Mesa Drive. With this approval, METRO was able to begin the project design phase.

Also underway is the federally-required Environmental Assessment (EA) that evaluates the potential environmental impacts to the community along the corridor from this project. Critical environmental categories evaluated include noise and vibration, traffic and parking, and historical and archaeological resources. The EA is scheduled to be completed in spring 2011.

DESIGN

Design will be conducted and publicly reviewed over the next 20 months at the 30, 60, and 90 percent completion milestones, and include the following activities:



Roadway design – The design team will further refine the conceptual design approved by the Mesa City Council in mid-2010, including the traffic and track configuration.



Architectural design – Utilizing the Mesa Specific Urban Design Guidelines, the architect team will design the stations, landscaping, and traction power substations to reflect the uniqueness of the corridor.



Art – A public art program is an integral part of a light rail project. Art elements will be incorporated at stations and at a downtown traction power substation site and reflect the neighboring community. Artists' work will be presented to the public for comment during periodic design milestones.



Utility engineering – As part of the design process, the underground utilities will be investigated by potholing and surveying to determine their exact locations. Geotechnical investigations will also be conducted and involve collecting samples of underground soil for laboratory testing.



Real estate acquisition – As the design progresses, impacts to property will be defined. Federal and State regulations will be followed to ensure that all affected property owners undergo a fair and equitable purchase process. Real estate acquisition is anticipated to begin in summer 2011.

BUSINESS & CONSTRUCTION OUTREACH

It is a priority for METRO and the city of Mesa to support existing businesses during construction. Business assistance programs will be developed, coordinated, administered and promoted by METRO Public Involvement staff and the city of Mesa Office of Economic Development. The business outreach program will encourage economic activity and help sustain and enhance a quality community for Mesa businesses and residents.

Construction activities are anticipated to begin in 2013. A detailed construction schedule will be developed following design.



NEXT STEPS

Design is anticipated to take 20 months to complete. Input will be solicited throughout the design process, and specifically at the following milestones:

- 30 percent – spring 2011
- 60 percent – fall 2011
- 90 percent – winter 2012

After design, the following activities will occur:

- Pre-construction 2011 - 2013
- Construction 2013 - 2015
- Completion/Start-up 2016

Central Mesa Light Rail Extension



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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You can also visit metrolightrail.org/centralmesa to view past presentations, maps and other documents.

The Central Mesa Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, and its implementing regulations.