



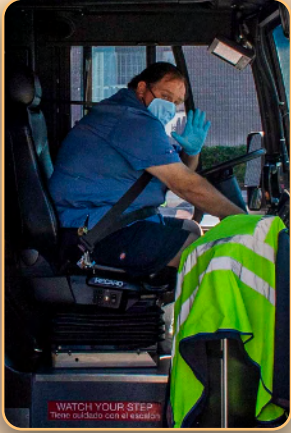
# EN ROUTE

A PHOENIX PUBLIC TRANSIT  
DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

*SPRING 2021*



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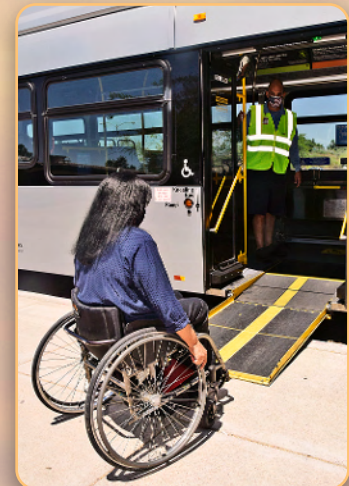
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# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome to the inaugural issue of *En Route: A Phoenix Public Transit Department Newsletter*, formerly 'Eye on Transit'. Same great content – new name. As we enter a new season, we are eager to share some of the events and accomplishments that have taken place over the past few months.

The Public Transit Department has remained steady in the measures we have taken to provide a safe and reliable ride during the pandemic this past year. We are proud to continue providing consistent service, as we know how essential public transit is for our residents and businesses throughout the city (and the region) who rely on this system. We have made changes including added safety measures such as rear door boarding, enhanced cleaning protocols, and have recently undertaken the installation of permanent operator barriers across our heavy-duty bus fleet.

We also want to make sure to let you know that we've hit a milestone with the Transportation 2050 (T2050) program. This year marks the five-year anniversary of the T2050 program, which has funded and facilitated many street and transit improvement projects including significant bus service improvements.

We will continue focusing on providing a safe and reliable service while recognizing the great work that all our teams do – even in the middle of a pandemic. Each accomplishment in this newsletter is thanks to our customers who participate, engage and ride together with us.

If you are on public transit and you see something worth sharing, please let us know. Whether it's a candid moment, an act of kindness, or just a reason to appreciate public transit, we truly appreciate your help in capturing those moments. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @PhoenixMetroBus to catch all our announcements and rider alerts.

My personal message to transit personnel across the region, and especially to those in the Phoenix Public Transit Department, is a HUGE 'Thank You!' for everything each team member continues doing. Having been involved in transit for approximately 15 years now, this past year has truly shown me the level of commitment and partnerships that can take place in the face of adversity. While we heard stories of some transit agencies drastically reducing service, and even a few small ones closing altogether, transit staff across the Phoenix region stepped up in numerous ways and kept things moving forward, all with one primary goal in mind – to get our passengers where they need to go. Each team member should be proud of their role!

Thank you for taking the time to read our latest issue as you embark on your next journey, en route to your desired destination. We look forward to sharing future milestones and as always, invite you to share yours too.

Jesús Sapien, Phoenix Public Transit Director



# HEALTH UPDATE

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Phoenix Public Transit Department has reacted quickly and, together with Valley Metro and multiple regional transit providers, implemented changes to assist in combating the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to provide an essential service to get customers where they need to go.




Phoenix Public Transit collaborated regionally on messaging for the riding public to take only essential trips - to work, to buy groceries, or to a health appointment.

Phoenix Public Transit also worked closely with its service providers and Valley Metro on updating protocols and passenger messaging to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of transit personnel and the riding public. Many of these tasks required close coordination with private sector transit service providers. Below is a list of some of the region's transit-related efforts:


- Enhanced cleaning protocols beyond regularly scheduled cleaning processes, which include the use of EPA-approved cleaning solutions and disinfectants in response to COVID-19, fogging vehicle interiors, and wiping down high-touch areas such as stanchions, handrails, seat backs, door handles, and the operator's area.
- Transitioned to rear door passenger boardings
- Hand sanitizing dispensers placed on-board transit vehicles
- Face coverings required on transit
- Free face masks handed out at various public transit centers and select Phoenix libraries
- A regional public messaging campaign to plan ahead and 'mask up' while riding transit
  - Note: Face coverings are still required on all public transit services including bus, light rail, paratransit (Dial-a-Ride) and vanpools


(Continued)



**HELP US PROTECT YOU**  
Practice social distancing while on board. Stay 6 feet away from your operator and fellow passengers.  
More information at [cdc.gov/COVID19](https://cdc.gov/COVID19)

**¡AYÚDENOS A PROTEGERLO!**  
Practique el distanciamiento social mientras se encuentre a bordo. Manténgase a 6 pies de distancia de su conductor y de sus compañeros de viaje.  
Más información en [cdc.gov/COVID19](https://cdc.gov/COVID19)






**Per Federal Law  
FACE MASKS  
REQUIRED**

Wearing a mask is required by local and federal mandates. Keep mask on inside the vehicle and at bus and rail facilities at all times. More info at [valleymetro.org/COVID-19](https://valleymetro.org/COVID-19).


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**Conforme a la Ley Federal  
SE REQUIEREN  
MASCARILLAS**

Los mandatos locales y federales requieren el uso de una mascarilla. Use su mascarilla en todo momento mientras está adentro del vehículo y en las instalaciones de autobuses y del tren ligero. Más información en [valleymetro.org/COVID-19](https://valleymetro.org/COVID-19).



Stay Healthy. Stay Secure.  
Manténgase saludable y seguro.  
[tsa.gov/coronavirus](https://tsa.gov/coronavirus)





- Seating on all bus and light rail routes being limited in order to support social distancing measures
- Designated seats marked as 'unavailable' to facilitate social distancing
- Temporary bus operator shields installed on all transit vehicles
- Protective equipment distributed to contractors including face masks and gloves
- All changes that have been implemented were communicated to the riding public using various methods, including the Valley Metro website, multiple social media channels, on-board signage and bus audio messages, videos, news media stories, various newsletters, and by the regional customer service center which receives transit-related calls from passengers
- The installation of permanent bus operator barriers has also begun; the barrier will serve as an on-board health and safety solution, minimizing exposure to COVID-19
- Under Mayor Gallego's leadership, Public Transit staff worked with its contractors to coordinate a vaccination event for public transit workers (pictured).
  - A vaccination event took place March 12-14 specifically for public transit (as well as postal) personnel
  - The event was a collaboration between Phoenix, Valley Metro, Phoenix Union High School District, and Maricopa County Health Department
- More information on regional efforts in response to COVID-19 can be found at [valleymetro.org/covid-19](https://valleymetro.org/covid-19)



Internally, the city of Phoenix has released its "Return to the Workplace" plan, whereby employees will begin returning to work in phases. The first phase, beginning March 29, is optional to employees and must not exceed a 25 percent maximum workplace capacity. Dates for additional phases are to be determined, with an eventual return to full capacity in phase 3 later this year.



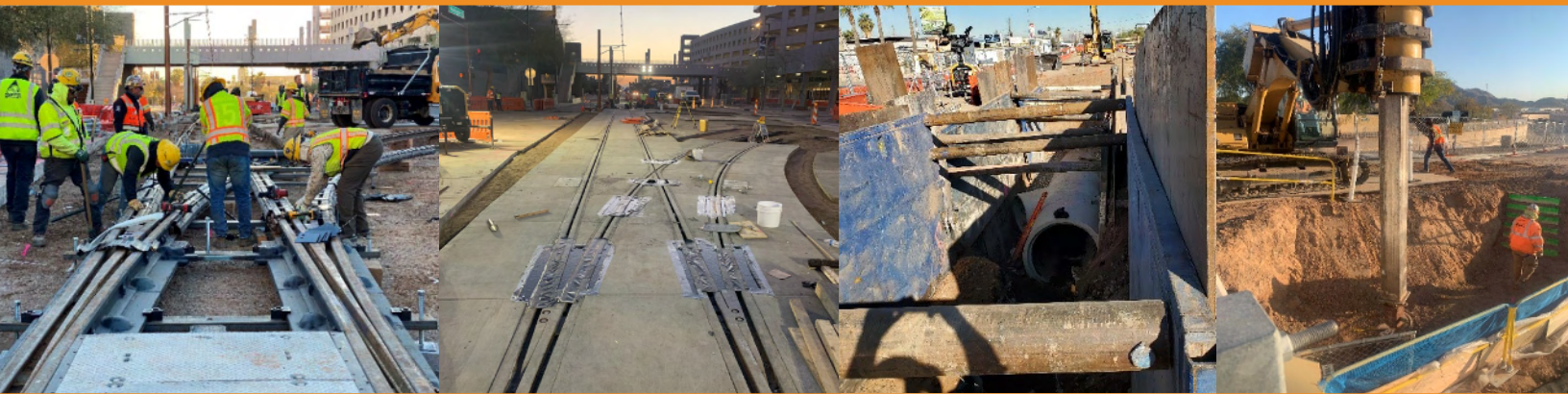


# PROJECT UPDATES

Pardon our Progress

## Light rail

Light Rail construction continues on both the Northwest Extension Phase II and the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub projects. Construction has led to temporary street and facility closures in some areas. Rail line track construction has required temporary single-tracking adjustments, while new track connections are installed for the Downtown Hub light rail project. The Ed Pastor Transit Center is currently closed to buses due to the South Central Extension construction work. We appreciate the public's patience in anticipation of the progress being made. Visit [valleymetro.org/POP](http://valleymetro.org/POP) for continued updates and timelines regarding various ongoing regional projects, including Phoenix's.

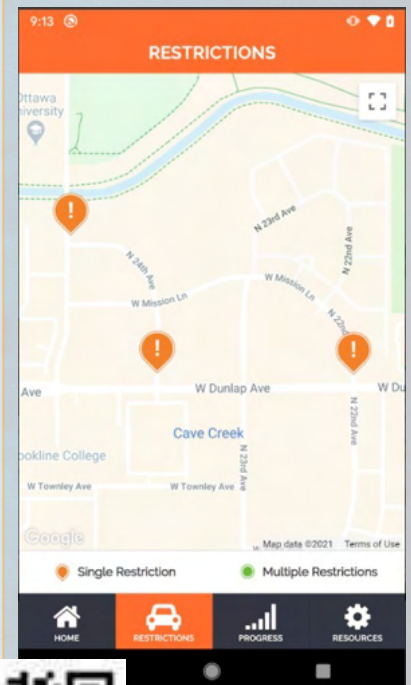


## Northwest Extension Phase II Project app

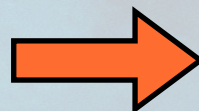
There's a free new app to bring you the latest construction updates on the Northwest Extension Phase II project. Download "Construct VM-Northwest 2" from the Apple or Android store today for more work zone information, including:

- Push notifications by locations, to receive updates on construction work on some or all segments of the project
- Photo and video library of construction progress
- Links to FAQs, Valley Metro's social media, and transit rider alerts
- Information on local businesses near the project area (coming soon)
- Contact form where users can submit questions or comments

Visit [valleymetro.org/northwest2](http://valleymetro.org/northwest2) for all project information, or email Michael Book at [mbook@valleymetro.org](mailto:mbook@valleymetro.org) to sign up for weekly email updates.



Find the app here





## Grant funding

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced a \$529.8 million federal grant agreement for the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub project on Jan. 6, 2021. The FTA also announced the second allocation of grant funding for the Northwest Extension Phase II rail project, totaling \$100 million in federal Capital Investment Grant (CIG) funds thus far for the project.



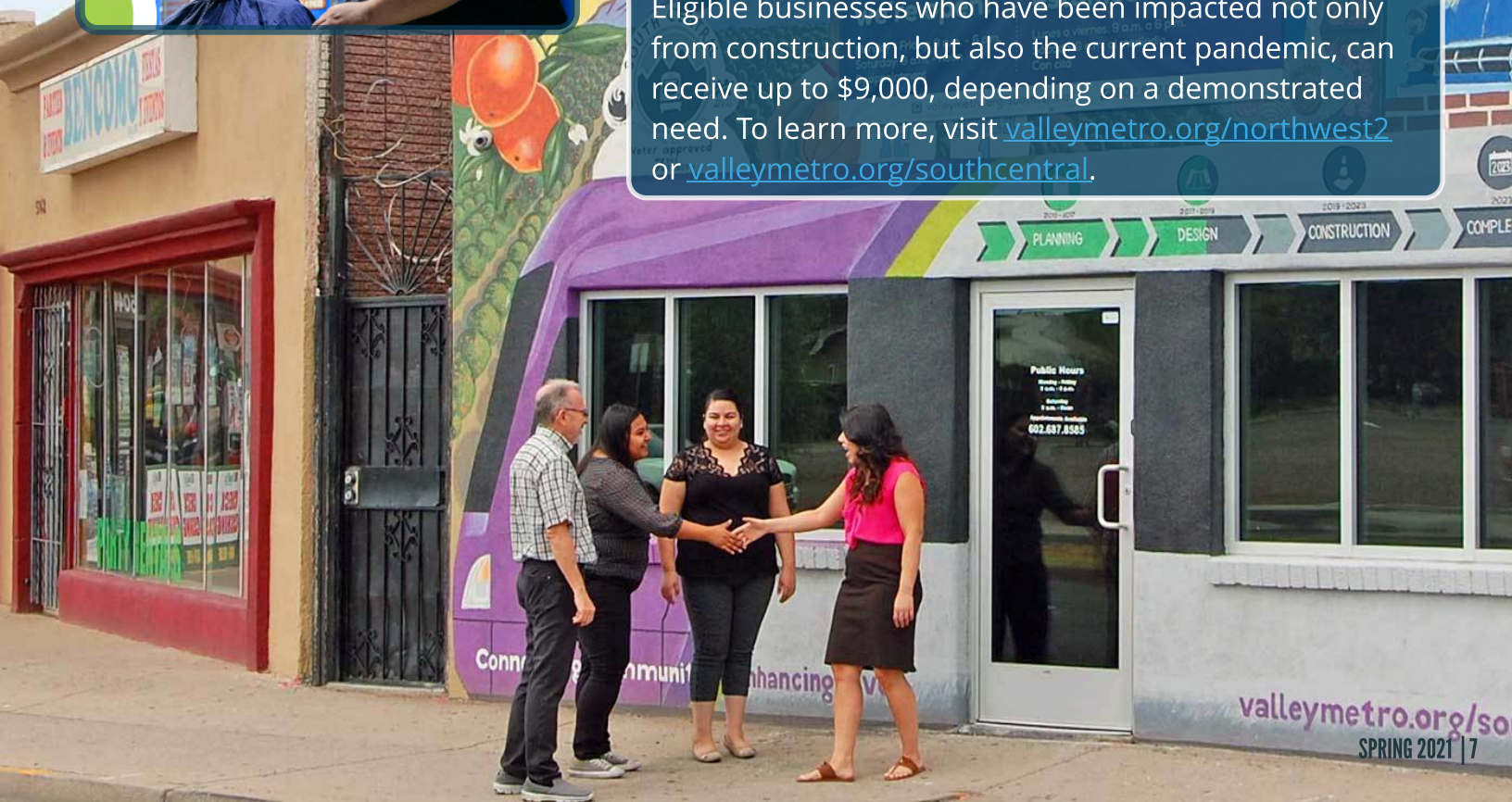
 **OUR COMMUNITY**

## Keeping it in the Neighborhood



## Assistance for small businesses

The Small Business Financial Assistance Program (SBFAP) is here! Valley Metro and the city of Phoenix are launching a one-year pilot program to provide direct financial assistance to locally-owned small businesses adjacent to the Northwest Extension Phase II and South Central Extension/Downtown Hub light rail projects. Eligible businesses who have been impacted not only from construction, but also the current pandemic, can receive up to \$9,000, depending on a demonstrated need. To learn more, visit [valleymetro.org/northwest2](http://valleymetro.org/northwest2) or [valleymetro.org/southcentral](http://valleymetro.org/southcentral).





# TRANSPORTATION 2050

Transportation 2050 (T2050), the city of Phoenix voter-approved multimodal transportation plan, is celebrating its 5-year anniversary. In August 2015 voters voted to expand investment in bus service, light rail construction, overall mobility, and street improvements across Phoenix through 2050. To see some of the accomplishments, visit the T2050 [annual progress reports page](#). Pay attention to our social media for a press release celebrating the 5 years of accomplishments under T2050.

## Street paving

City of Phoenix is paving more than ever before. As temperatures warm up, so does the City's pavement maintenance program. Thanks to Transportation 2050, the City is accelerating its paving plans through 2023. Check out the interactive dashboard at [phoenix.gov/pavement](http://phoenix.gov/pavement) to see which streets will be treated next!

## Phoenix Bus Rapid Transit

Beginning in February 2020 the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program launched a public education and engagement campaign. The campaign ran through December 2020 and provided multiple opportunities for the community to learn about the program and provide input on the six potential BRT corridors. The next step will include analyzing the results from the community input and the technical analysis, identify corridor recommendations, and present them to Phoenix's Citizens Transportation Commission and City Council for consideration. Below are the 6 potential BRT corridors. [See MAP \(PDF\)](#).

- Camelback Road and 24th Street
- Indian School Road and 24th Street
- Thomas Road and 44th Street
- McDowell Road and 44th Street
- 19th Avenue and Van Buren Street
- 35th Avenue and Van Buren Street

If you haven't had the chance, we invite you to check out the BRT program webpage at [Phoenix.gov/BRT](http://Phoenix.gov/BRT) to learn about this new future public transit service and how you can provide input.

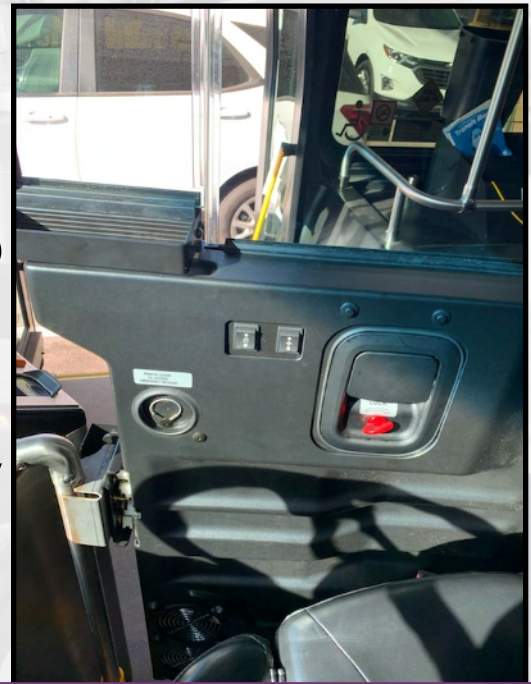




# RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED

## Bus Operator Permanent Protective Barriers

If you've ridden a bus recently, you may have seen one of the newly installed bus operator permanent protective barriers. Public Transit has started implementing this new equipment in late 2020. More than 800 vehicles across the region will be retrofitted to include this new protective barrier by summer of 2021. These barriers have been implemented to replace the temporary operator shields and serve as a permanent safety measure against COVID-19 in preparation of the return to front-door passenger boarding.



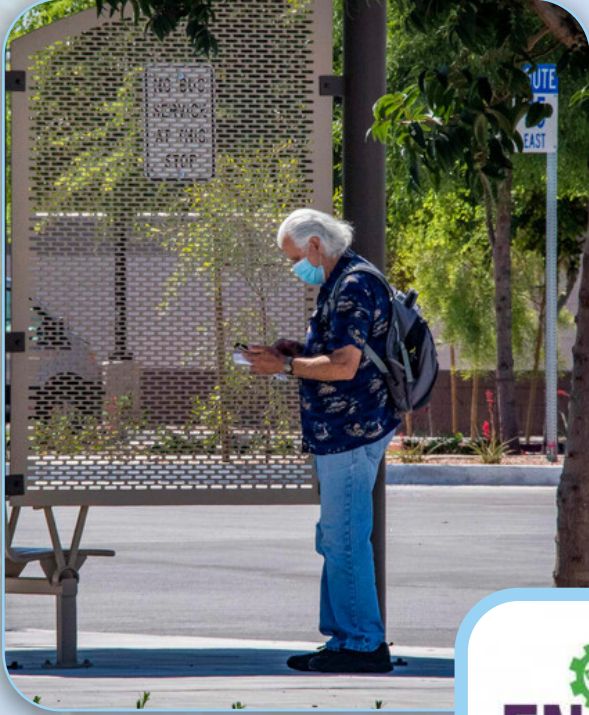
## New express buses

Valley Metro has introduced 30 new Express buses to replace existing, retiring vehicles. These new vehicles are part of the motorcoach fleet and are designed specifically for long distance travel. What does that mean for passengers aboard this bus? It means you can expect a very smooth ride with an improved suspension system and extra amenities such as elevated seating, USB chargers, overhead lights, air vents, and convenient stop signal buttons. [See more here.](#)





# OTHER NEWS



## Service changes ahead for Valley Metro

Valley Metro service changes go into effect Monday, April 26, 2021. These service changes include route modifications and frequency reductions. Check routes at [valleymetro.org/service-changes](http://valleymetro.org/service-changes).

Coming up: Riders can participate in the survey for the proposed October service changes. These proposed changes include route modifications, frequency reductions and new routes. If approved, these changes would go into effect on October 26, 2021. Check [valleymetro.org](http://valleymetro.org) for the latest on all service changes.



## Engineer week

National Engineers Week was Feb. 21-27. Valley Metro partnered with PGH Wong Engineering, Inc. to launch a free virtual Engineers of the Future program. This virtual program teaches middle-school students the importance of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), as well as providing building exercises and online field trips. The 12 online lessons are taught and mentored by actual engineers and include free curriculum materials. The program is available as part of the South Central Extension/Downtown Hub and Northwest Extension Phase II light rail project's Workforce Development Program. Check out the [video piece](#) PHXTV created on the program



The city of Phoenix hosted "Can You Stump an Engineer," a Jeopardy-like game show featuring engineers from various departments within the city. Questions were submitted by Phoenix employees in an attempt to stump the expert contestants. As we bid our good friend Alex Trebek a fond farewell, we invite you to [check out the video here](#).



# AROUND TOWN

## 7th street bridge fire

A fire on February 28 involving a gas line caused significant damage to the 7th Street Bridge over the Salt River, which led to the closure of 7th Street north and south of the Salt River. It was determined that approximately 35 percent of the bridge needed to be removed or rebuilt. On March 15, construction started to repair the bridge and is expected to last approximately 6 months.



Thank you to city of Phoenix staff and on-site workers for the continued efforts in proceeding with caution and ensuring the public's safety. Phoenix Bus Route 7 (7th Street) is on detour between I-17 and Broadway Road. Stay on top of detour details at [valleymetro.org/rider-alerts](http://valleymetro.org/rider-alerts).

## Phoenix airports receive prestigious accreditation

The city of Phoenix Aviation Department has been recognized in the Global Biorisk Advisory Council's GBAC STAR™ facility accreditation program. The program, which is an outbreak prevention, response and recovery accreditation for facilities, is one of the industry's top honors. Phoenix Sky Harbor, Phoenix Deer Valley and Phoenix Goodyear airports all received this accolade. Phoenix Deer Valley and Phoenix Goodyear are the first general aviation airports in the country to receive this accreditation.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the airports have employed a number of initiatives to ensure a safe, welcoming and healthy environment. This includes a robust cleaning program, the installation of plexiglass and UV-C LED sanitizing lights on escalator handrails and more. To learn more, visit [skyharbor.com](http://skyharbor.com).





# EN ROUTE

A PHOENIX PUBLIC TRANSIT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

[Phoenix.gov/publictransit](https://phoenix.gov/publictransit)

[Phoenix.gov/T2050](https://phoenix.gov/T2050)

Twitter: @PhoenixMetroBus

Eye on Transit Newsletter

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