

Numerous transportation and community development projects for the Valley would receive funding under a bill that was approved today in House Appropriations Committee, announced U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz. Pastor was a key figure in securing funding support for the local projects including \$90 million for the ongoing Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Project.

"These transportation projects are critical to easing our traffic congestion and air pollution," Pastor said. "We face an enormous challenge in ensuring that our Valley's infrastructure remains current with rapidly increasing population to avoid transportation, cultural, housing and economic gridlock in the near future. I will continue working with my colleagues in support of these projects and I am confident they will receive full House and Senate approval."

The light rail project, currently under construction, is a 20-mile line that will link activity centers in central Phoenix, downtown Tempe and Mesa. The project is designated to receive \$90 million in the bill -- the Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

Other local transportation projects in the bill include:

- \$1.25 million for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to continue its efforts to convert the airfield surface from asphalt to concrete.
- \$1 million for an analysis to be coordinated with the Arizona Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of constructing the next phase of the light rail along an Interstate-10 West corridor.
- \$500,000 for a West Valley Bus Maintenance Facility. This site would greatly improve the transit managers' abilities to keep vehicles functional, and the system would be better able to serve more areas and connect riders with more opportunities. It will address the needs of alternatively-fueled buses in a state-of-the-art fashion and its location would assist in expanding the region's bus service from the current 484 square miles closer to the nearly 800 square miles identified as being needed.
- \$500,000 for a Regional Heavy Bus Maintenance Facility. This facility is required to address the more complicated repairs and overhauls necessary to keep a healthy fleet on the road. Completion of this project would substantially reduce the current contract costs and promote more consistent upkeep of buses.

- \$250,000 towards bus acquisition to operate on an express bus route that connects the rapidly expanding population in Glendale and neighboring Avondale with metropolitan downtown Phoenix.

Projects under Housing and Urban Development include:

- \$400,000 for a small business incubator sponsored by the nonprofit Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., based in Phoenix. The facility would be located in Phoenix's federally designated Enterprise Community. The incubator would help small businesses utilize shared resources to help create new job opportunities and promote economic growth. As those businesses graduate to their own facilities, new ones can move into their vacated slots at the facility. CPLC has a proven track record in community development and in turning around economically-distressed areas.

- \$100,000 for a Laveen Community Center. Laveen once was a rural area at the edge of Phoenix. But now it finds itself undergoing rapid change as the number of residents are expected to triple within the next six years. With home buyers rapidly moving into housing developments sitting on property that were once small farms, these residents are seeking to maintain a community-based environment. The establishment of a community center is intended to ground this diverse country-meets-city population by providing a healthy environment with recreational and social interaction activities for all ages.

- \$100,000 for the Maryvale Revitalization Corporation. This organization in west Phoenix is working with city planners to invest in residential and commercial improvements to help transform blighted neighborhoods to a thriving community that provides a safe environment for the area's many two-working parents and single-parent families, as well as the numerous small "mom and pop" businesses. Every federal dollar will be matched by two local dollars.