Public Works
Transportation

DATE: October 23, 2015

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

THROUGH: Richard A. Bowers, Acting City Manager

FROM: Jack Friedline, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Response to Council Item of Special Interest on the Light Rail

This memorandum is in response to a Council Item of Special Interest raised by Councilmember Tolmachoff at the October 6, 2015 Council Workshop regarding extending the role of the Downtown Glendale Community Working Group (CWG) to evaluate a "no-build" alternative for light rail transit.

This study commenced as a result of a light rail project in the downtown Glendale corridor being included on two voter-approved ballot initiatives (Proposition 402 – Glendale Transportation Sales Tax, and Proposition 400 – Maricopa County Transportation Sales Tax). In early 2013, Valley Metro initiated an analysis of alternatives for the West Phoenix/Central Glendale Transit Corridor Study, which would link downtown Glendale to the existing light rail transit system.

Over the past two and one-half years, there have been significant opportunities for the public to continue to comment on the overall project. In May of this year, the project team, at the direction of City Council, convened a Downtown Glendale CWG. The purpose of this group, as presented at the March 17, 2015 City Council Workshop, was to create stakeholder engagement opportunities and to seek a variety of viewpoints related to the downtown route options currently being studied. The specific roles and responsibilities of the CWG were further refined to include:

- Meet regularly from June through October 2015, as a representative, community-based advisory committee to consider transit options for the downtown Glendale area.
- Review progress to date of the West Phoenix/Central Glendale Transit Corridor Study as background for evaluating the range of downtown area transit alternatives.
- Consider other ongoing municipal planning, economic/community development and infrastructure improvement activities and how they relate to the range of downtown area transit alternatives under consideration.
- Review, critique and potentially modify the range of downtown area transit alternatives under consideration.
- Conduct a comprehensive, community-based evaluation of the downtown area transit alternatives under consideration.

- Develop an advisory recommendation to the Glendale City Council and Valley Metro for a downtown area transit alignment to advance to the next phase of evaluation.

Consideration of a "no-build" alternative for the downtown section would have an impact on the overall West Phoenix/Central Glendale high-capacity transit project—from 19th Avenue to Downtown Glendale—as ridership and economic development opportunities along the entire corridor play into the project's competitiveness for limited federal funds. As such, a decision considering a "no-build" scenario would impact both the cities of Glendale and Phoenix and a group with a more holistic or wider focus may be more appropriate.

The Downtown Glendale CWG was formed for the purpose of taking an in-depth look at a specific section of the project in a constrained environment. Therefore, staff does not recommend extending the purview of this group to provide an advisory recommendation on the whole project. Should City Council wish to have a "no-build" option considered by an advisory group, staff would be happy to propose options for discussion.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (623) 930-2610.