Austin Light Rail Phase 1

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Executive Summary

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
ATP	Austin Transit Partnership
BMP	best management practice
CAMPO	Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
CapMetro	Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
City	City of Austin
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EMF	electric and magnetic fields
EMI	electromagnetic interference
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
I-35	Interstate 35
MLK	Martin Luther King Jr.
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
OMF	operations and maintenance facility
Project	Austin Light Rail Phase 1 Project
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	right-of-way
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
Uniform Act	Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
UT	University of Texas at Austin
WOTUS	Waters of the United States

Executive Summary

Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) proposes to construct the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 Project (the Project). The proposed Project is a 9.8-mile light rail transit branched line from points north, south, and east of Downtown Austin, as well as an operations and maintenance facility (OMF), maintenance of way shops, and associated light rail equipment storage functions (see **Figure ES-1**). The Project is one of multiple planned high-capacity transit projects that implements the Project Connect System Plan (Project Connect) and includes a voter-approved dedicated local funding source for light rail.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the federal lead agency, and ATP, as the local Project sponsor and joint lead agency, have prepared this combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. It includes a final evaluation prepared in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and a final evaluation prepared in accordance with Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. FTA and ATP have coordinated with the Project cooperating agencies throughout the NEPA review process. Cooperating agencies include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protect Agency, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

This FEIS/ROD has been prepared in accordance with FTA's regulations implementing NEPA, in addition to other federal requirements. The FEIS/ROD follows the January 2025 publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Project. Since the DEIS was published, changes to federal requirements for NEPA documents were made. For example, the Council on Environmental Quality removed its regulations implementing NEPA in response to Executive Order 14154, *Unleashing American Energy*. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado*. These changes and others mean that some subject matter and analysis included in the DEIS are no longer required and therefore not included in this FEIS/ROD. Sections where subject matter and analysis have been updated or removed are noted for the reader.

This Executive Summary summarizes the major conclusions of social, economic, and environmental analyses conducted for the Preferred Alternative. The evaluation of the Preferred Alternative is based on the analysis of the Build Alternative and Design Options included in the DEIS, with updated analysis prepared in response to public and agency comments and further Project design refinement.

Figure ES-1: Preferred Alternative

ES.1 Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the Project is to address growing corridor travel demand with a reliable, safe, affordable, and time-competitive light rail system that operates in a dedicated guideway.

The lack of transportation options and limited roadway capacity to accommodate growth in central Texas may hinder the continued vitality and economic health of Austin and surrounding areas in the future. Inadequate transit access coupled with rising travel demand has resulted in longer travel times, decreased mobility, and additional travel costs for residents and businesses.

The Project is needed to:

- increase the transportation network capacity in response to existing travel demand;
- increase transportation choices and capacity to support Austin's population and employment growth;
- improve transit access between housing and jobs; and
- support growth of, and connectivity to, regional activity centers.

With growth in the region expected to more than double to nearly 4.7 million residents and 2.4 million jobs by 2045 (Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization [CAMPO] 2024) and limited land available for roadway expansion in Austin, more efficient use of existing transportation infrastructure is needed. A key City of Austin (City) goal is achieving a 50/50 mode share for commuting to manage congestion in Austin as the region continues to grow (City of Austin 2023). The Project is integral to the region's transportation plans to increase capacity and improve mobility.

The Purpose and Need Statement has been refined to reflect changes in federal policy that occurred after publication of the DEIS. The refinements broaden the focus from specific demographic groups to transit-dependent populations generally and emphasize comprehensive social, economic, and environmental performance goals. These refinements maintain consistency with the Project's core transportation mission and purpose and need, and do not alter the results of the alternatives analysis.

While employment options in Downtown Austin continue to grow, the cost of living in Austin has increased substantially. Over the last 10 years, jobs in high-tech industries rose nearly 62 percent in the Austin Metro Area and account for 17 percent of all jobs according to the Austin Chamber of Commerce (2021). While these high-paying jobs have accelerated the area's economy, more than one-third of local households remain cost-burdened. Home prices, rents, and property taxes pose challenges for vulnerable populations living in the community. The City is working to implement plans and policies to increase density along with preserving and creating housing opportunities. The

Project is integral to the City's affordability goals and land use plans, which rely on a major transportation investment to connect housing to viable employment opportunities.

Planned economic growth centers in Austin include Downtown Austin, the University of Texas at Austin (UT) West Campus, South Central Waterfront, and East Austin. The Project is a key component in the community-driven local land use plans in these areas. The Project supports the City's strategic growth objectives by linking key activity centers with a fast and efficient mode of transportation.

ES.2 Summary of Alternatives

The DEIS evaluated the No Build Alternative, the Build Alternative, and six Design Options. The alternatives development and analysis process encompassed extensive community planning and stakeholder engagement, as well as comprehensive planning and data-driven analysis that began in 2018. A range of build alternatives was examined, from modest investments in shared-use roadways in a Transportation System Management Alternative to major investments in dedicated bus rapid transit and light rail. Throughout the public engagement process, light rail has been identified as the most appropriate mode of transportation for the Project because it responds to growth pressures and identified transit capacity needs.

Austin voters approved a ballot measure in November 2020 that increased the City's property tax rate to provide a dedicated local funding source for the Project Connect program, including a new light rail system. Following extensive public participation and coordination with Project stakeholders, in June 2023, the proposed Project was defined and adopted by ATP, the City, and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro).

ES.2.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative assumes that light rail would not be implemented in Austin but that other transportation projects, CapMetro services, highway networks, traffic volumes, and forecasted 2045 population and employment growth identified in the region's long-range plan would be realized (CAMPO 2024).

ES.2.2 Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative includes a 9.8-mile dedicated light rail guideway, 15 stations, 3 park and rides, and an OMF, as shown in **Figure ES-1** above. The components of the Preferred Alternative are described for the North, Downtown, South, and East Sections of the alignment. The Preferred Alternative includes a new light rail bridge and bicycle and pedestrian lanes crossing Lady Bird Lake to connect the neighborhoods in East Austin and South Austin to the central business district and points north. Bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and/or shared use paths with connections to existing and planned parks and trails would be provided throughout the light rail corridor.

ES.2.2.1 North Section

The North Section of the alignment extends from 38th Street to Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Boulevard and serves the UT campus, medical facilities, and the Museum District among other key destinations. Beginning at the intersection of Guadalupe Street and 38th Street, the center-running at-grade alignment would extend south to UT. Due to a high level of pedestrian activity on Guadalupe Street, a transit/active transportation corridor would be established between 29th and 27th Streets, and a transit-only corridor would be established between 27th Street and 22nd Street (southbound) / 21st Street (northbound). Cars traveling through the area would disperse to surrounding roadways and thoroughfares, which would include San Antonio Street, North Lamar Boulevard, and Nueces Street.

Three stations would be located in the North Section:

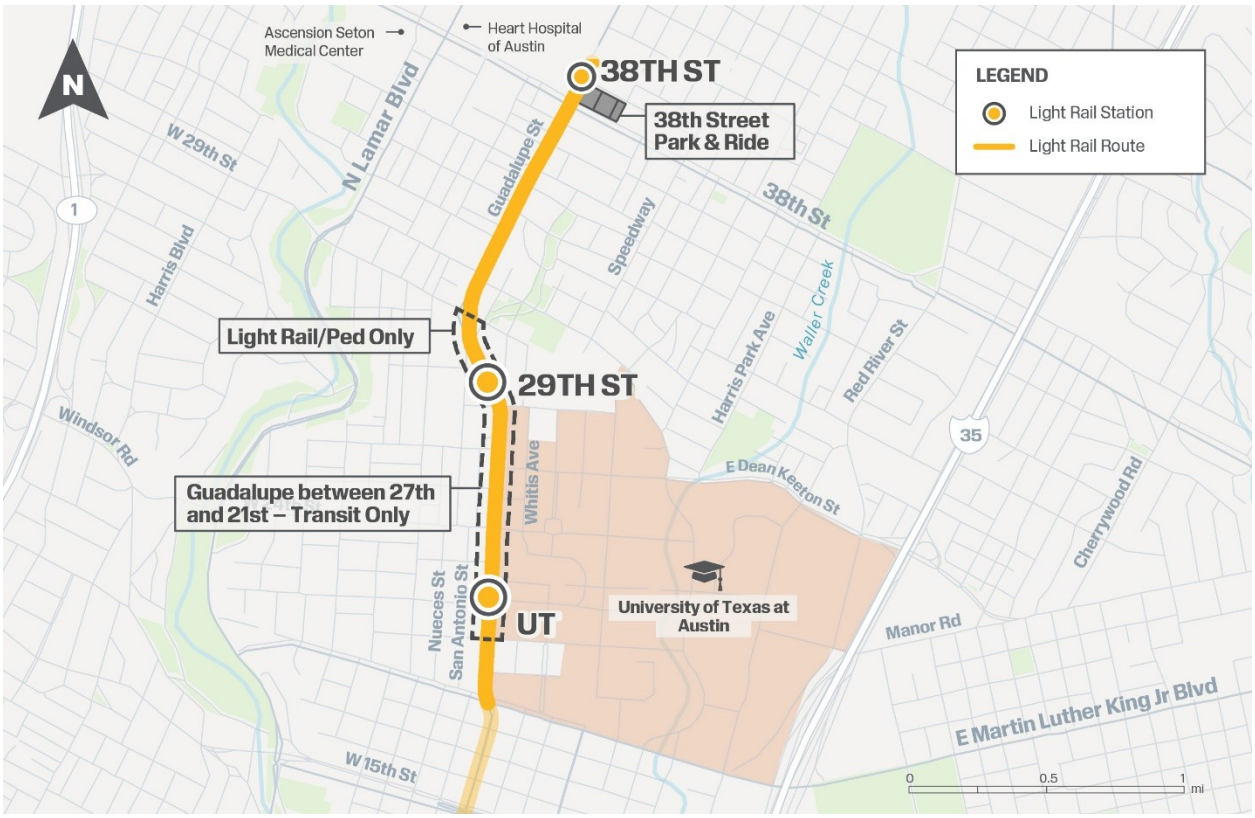
- **38th Street Station.** A center platform station on Guadalupe Street between West 39th Street and West 38th Street accessed via crosswalks at adjacent intersections.

- **29th Street Station.** A side platform station in a transit/pedestrian-focused corridor on Guadalupe Street between West 27th Street and Fruth Street accessed via adjacent sidewalks.

- **UT Station.** A center platform station on Guadalupe Street, in a transit-only corridor, between West 23rd Street and West 22nd Street at the West Mall entrance to the UT campus accessed via signalized pedestrian crosswalks.

As shown in **Figure ES-2,** a park-and-ride surface lot would be located near the 38th Street Station. ATP would design the facility to accommodate 50 to 60 parking spaces to meet the estimated Project demand. The park-and-ride was originally proposed as a multi-story structure to accommodate 300 parking spaces. Based on DEIS public comments, ATP has modified the 38th Street Station design to include a surface parking lot versus structured parking. To balance the needs of the community with the potential demand for parking at 38th Street, ATP will monitor traffic conditions and park-and-ride use after light rail service begins to ascertain capacity constraints. ATP will seek opportunities to lease unused parking spaces at nearby lots in the event that spillover traffic would occur and result in adverse neighborhood effects.

Figure ES-2: Project Components in the North Section



ES.2.2.2 Downtown Section

The Downtown Section extends from MLK Boulevard to Lady Bird Lake and serves key employment centers, government facilities, the Convention Center, Town Lake Metro Parks, and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail. The center-running at-grade alignment would extend south on Guadalupe Street from MLK Boulevard to 3rd Street. At the intersection of Guadalupe Street and 3rd Street, the alignment would extend east on 3rd Street, cross Congress Avenue, and connect to Trinity Street. The light rail alignment would turn south on Trinity Street and cross Lady Bird Lake on a new light rail bridge. Since publication of the DEIS, the conceptual design on Trinity Street was refined to reflect coordination with the Austin Convention Center, adjacent property owners with loading docks, and City utilities. The alignment of the light rail, bikeway, and trail connection in this area was shifted to facilitate access to loading docks and utilities, and to support the redevelopment plans for the Austin Convention Center.

Guadalupe Street would have center-running light rail with one traffic lane in each direction on either side of the guideway between MLK Boulevard and 3rd Street for buses, emergency vehicles, and local delivery and garage access. General traffic would be relocated to Lavaca Street, which would be converted to bidirectional flow between MLK Boulevard and 2nd Street. The existing southbound bicycle lane on Guadalupe Street and the existing northbound bicycle lane on Lavaca Street north of 4th Street would be removed to accommodate the new street configurations. ATP would

coordinate with the City to mitigate removal of downtown bicycle lanes along Guadalupe and Lavaca Streets by adding active transportation lanes (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes, shared use paths) to Nueces Street between the limits of West Cesar Chavez Street and West MLK Boulevard. Between Colorado Street and Congress Avenue on 3rd Street, vehicular traffic would be redirected to surrounding roadways, and the existing protected bikeway along 3rd Street would be relocated to 4th Street to accommodate the Congress Station. South of 4th Street, ATP would provide for continuous bidirectional bicycle lanes on the west side of Trinity Street, and dedicated active transportation lanes would be part of the new bridge crossing of Lady Bird Lake, with connections to the Trinity Street facilities and the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail.

Under the Preferred Alternative, four stations would be located in the Downtown Section, as shown in **Figure ES-3**:

- **15th Street Station.** A split center platform station on Guadalupe Street between West 16th Street and West 14th Street accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections.
- **Wooldridge Square Station.** A center platform station on Guadalupe Street between West 10th Street and West 9th Street near Wooldridge Square.
- **Congress Station.** A side platform station on 3rd Street between Colorado Street and Congress Avenue accessed via adjacent sidewalks.
- **Cesar Chavez Station.** A side platform station on Trinity Street between East Cesar Chavez Street and 2nd Street accessed via adjacent crosswalks.

Figure ES-3: Project Components in the Downtown Section

ES.2.2.3 South Section

The South Section extends from Lady Bird Lake south to Oltorf Street and from South Congress Avenue east to Interstate 35 (I-35). On the south shore of Lady Bird Lake, the alignment would connect to East Riverside Drive, where it would split into two branches, crossing over East Bouldin Creek in both directions. Under the Preferred Alternative, the center-running elevated alignment would extend southward on South Congress Avenue, terminating at an at-grade station at the intersection of South Congress Avenue and Oltorf Street. This area on South Congress Avenue hosts a high activity mixed-use district and education facilities including Lively Middle School and the Texas School for the Deaf.

The center-running elevated eastern portion of the alignment crosses the northeastern border of the Travis Heights neighborhood and parkland on the south shore of Lady Bird Lake and touches down at Travis Heights Boulevard. Active transportation facilities would be provided throughout the corridor and would include variations of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and/or shared use paths with connections to existing and planned facilities. The Preferred Alternative would include an elevated Waterfront Station and extension of the elevated structure south of the station toward South Congress Avenue and in the median of East Riverside Drive to Travis Heights Boulevard. The design would address the surrounding topography challenges and the difficult traffic operations resulting from

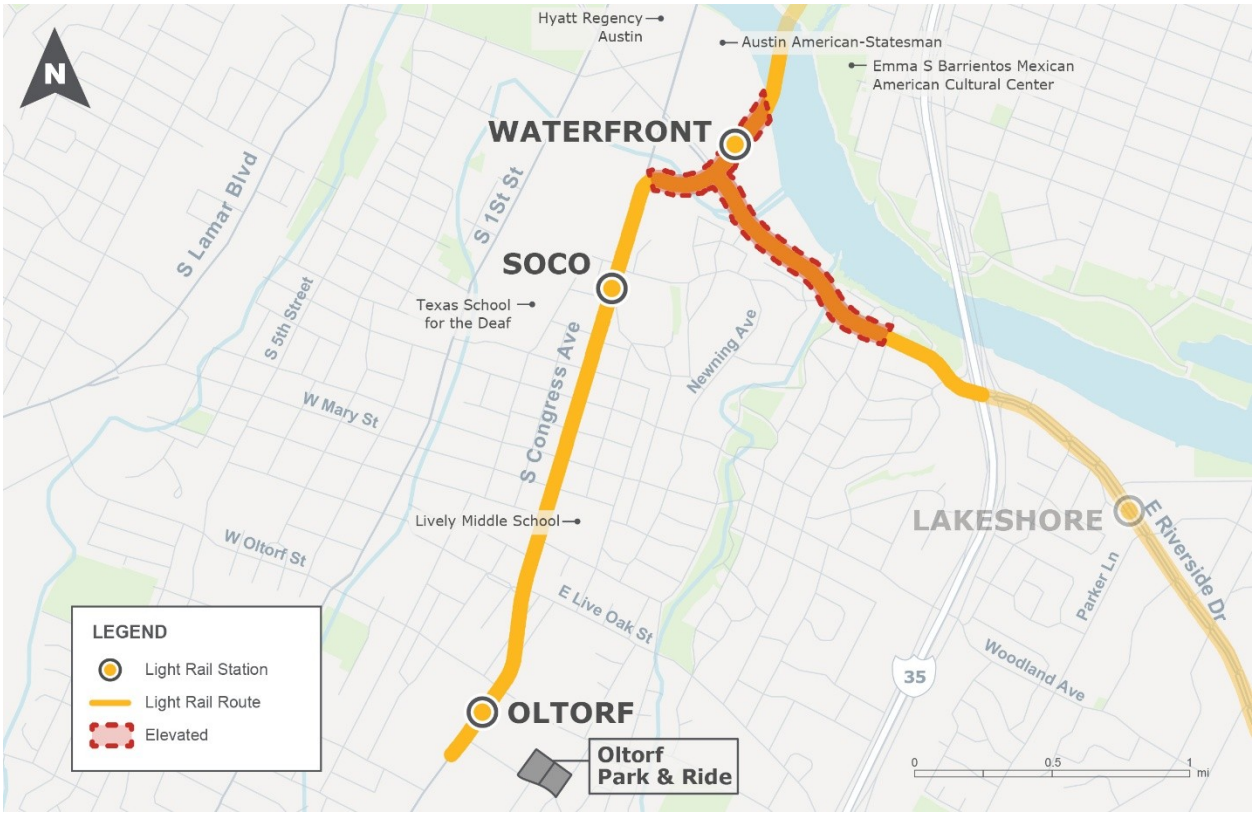
an at-grade alignment of the junction (connection point) of all three light rail branches at East Riverside Drive.

Under the Preferred Alternative, three stations would be located in the South Section along the southern branch, as shown in **Figure ES-4**:

- **Waterfront Station.** A center platform elevated station on East Riverside Drive at the Barton Springs Road extension accessed via adjacent sidewalks.
- **South Congress (SoCo) Station.** A center platform station on South Congress Avenue between Academy Drive and James Street accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections.
- **Oltorf Station.** A center platform station on South Congress Avenue between Oltorf Street and Long Bow Lane accessed via crosswalks at adjacent intersections.

As shown in **Figure ES-4**, a park-and-ride surface lot would be located near Oltorf Station. A parking facility is currently operated at the site, and ATP would seek to lease approximately 100 parking spaces to meet the estimated demand at this location.

Figure ES-4: Project Components in the South Section



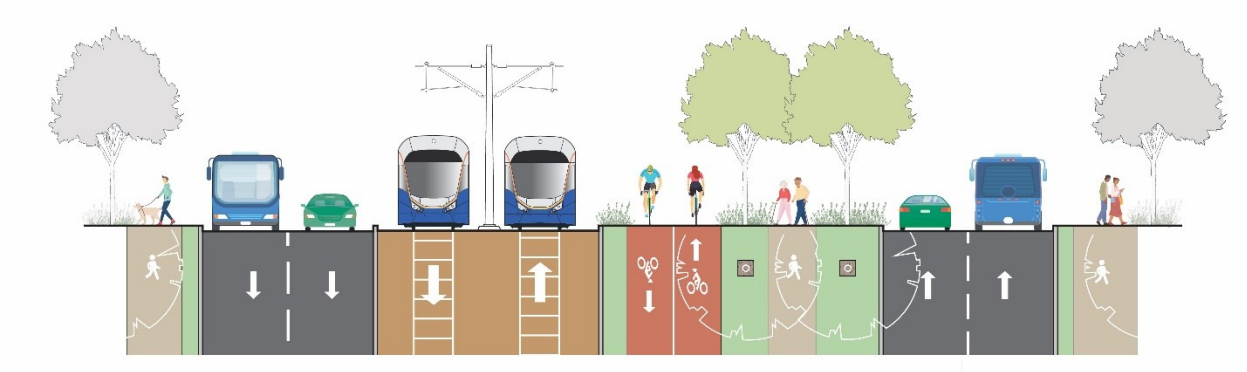
ES.2.2.4 East Section

The East Section extends along East Riverside Drive from I-35 to Yellow Jacket Lane along a commercial corridor. The center-running at-grade alignment would extend southeastward, terminating just west of State Highway 71 at the Yellow Jacket Station, as shown in **Figure ES-5**. Active transportation facilities would be provided throughout the corridor and would include variations of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and/or shared use paths with connections to existing and planned facilities.

Figure ES-5: Project Components in the East Section

The Preferred Alternative would include center-running bicycle and pedestrian lanes next to the light rail east of I-35 on East Riverside Drive. In this part of the Project corridor, the roadway right-of-way (ROW) is relatively wide, and there is a lack of shade and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure serving the adjacent communities. The Preferred Alternative design recognizes an opportunity to improve mobility options and user experience across all modes of travel in the corridor by providing continuous bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that minimizes conflict points with driveways. This design would improve shade cover and include planting taller trees along the corridor. The separated traffic in this configuration could contribute to better speed management and safer conditions for all users, as shown in **Figure ES-6**.

Figure ES-6: Center-Running Bicycle and Pedestrian Lanes



The design would provide shade trees and bicycle and pedestrian lanes near the middle of the ROW next to the light rail.

Under the Preferred Alternative, five stations would be located in the East Section:

- **Lakeshore Station.** A side platform station on East Riverside Drive between South Lakeshore Boulevard and Shore District Drive accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections.
- **Pleasant Valley Station.** A side platform station on East Riverside Drive southeast of South Pleasant Valley Road accessed via an adjacent transit plaza in the median of East Riverside Drive.
- **Grove Station.** A side platform station on East Riverside Drive between Penick Drive and Grove Boulevard accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections.
- **Montopolis Station.** A side platform station on East Riverside Drive between Brassie Street and Montopolis Drive accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections. Subsequent to publication of the DEIS, ATP eliminated the need to displace four residences by shifting the Montopolis Station to the west side of the intersection of Montopolis Drive and East Riverside Drive.
- **Yellow Jacket Station.** A center platform station on East Riverside Drive between Yellow Jacket Lane and Coriander Drive accessed via crosswalks at the adjacent intersections, with a connection to the proposed park-and-ride.

As shown in **Figure ES-5**, a park-and-ride surface lot would be located near the Yellow Jacket Station, and ATP would provide approximately 150 parking spaces to meet the estimated demand at this station.

The Preferred Alternative would include an OMF to store and maintain the light rail vehicles and for materials and equipment needed to maintain the guideway and associated amenities. The OMF is proposed near the U.S. Highway 183 / State Highway 71 interchange near Airport Commerce Drive in an area developed with

commercial and light industrial uses, with residential use restrictions due to its proximity to the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. The proposed site would include space for administration, operations and maintenance staff, a light rail control center, light rail vehicle storage tracks, and maintenance of way shops. Light rail vehicle access to the OMF is shown in the conceptual engineering drawings in **Appendix C**.

ES.2.2.5 Light Rail Equipment

The Preferred Alternative would include traction power substations that provide electrical power to the trains via the overhead wire or catenary; a signal system including train control and communications bungalows and cabinets; and crossing gates similar to traditional railroad crossing gates at select locations. Traction power substations would be adjacent to the alignment spaced approximately 1 mile apart. Train control and communication cabinets would be approximately 0.5 mile apart along the alignment.

ES.2.2.6 Operating Characteristics

Frequent service would be provided on the light rail system. In the North and Downtown Sections, between the 38th Street Station and Waterfront Station, trains would operate approximately every 5 minutes most of the day and up to every 7.5 minutes during off-peak hours. In the South and East Sections, peak-period service would operate every 10 minutes, with an off-peak service frequency of up to 15 minutes. Train speed would adhere to posted arterial automobile speed limits. The service would operate Monday through Friday 5:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., Saturday 5:50 a.m. to 12:30 a.m., and Sunday 6:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

ES.3 Transportation Effects

The light rail would connect to CapMetro bus and rail service and enhance regional connectivity. Ongoing design coordination between ATP and CapMetro will address any changes to transit services identified through CapMetro's Transit Plan 2035 planning effort. Based on 2045 ridership forecasts, nearly 29,000 trips would be made on the light rail each weekday, with more than 40 percent of the trips new to transit. Most riders would bike or walk to stations, with less than 10 percent accessing stations by automobile. The Preferred Alternative would reduce 62,000 vehicle miles traveled by private automobiles in the region per day.

The Preferred Alternative would provide faster travel times compared to current bus service because it would provide direct routes in a dedicated guideway free from traffic congestion, allowing for greater efficiency and reliability. End-to-end travel by light rail would be about 21 minutes between 38th Street and Oltorf Street, 12 minutes faster than current bus service. End-to-end travel by light rail would be about 27 minutes between 38th Street and Yellow Jacket, resulting in an 18-minute travel time savings from current bus service, which requires a transfer.

Mobility benefits would be enhanced by protected bike lanes, new sidewalks, and shared used paths including in the East Austin neighborhoods that currently lack continuous bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

ES.3.1 Traffic

With or without the Project, existing traffic congestion within 0.5 mile of the Project alignment is expected to worsen considerably by 2045, with a majority of intersections operating at unacceptable levels of service. With the Project, traffic patterns would change because of roadway reconfigurations near the light rail stations and the one-way traffic operation on Guadalupe Street with traffic redirected to Lavaca Street. Traffic signal prioritization for the light rail could speed up the trip for those traveling in the same direction but delay the trip for those who need to cross the tracks.

ATP continues to coordinate with the Austin Transportation and Public Works Department to incorporate measures in the Project's design that will optimize traffic flow and minimize delay at study area intersections.

ES.3.2 Parking

The Project would affect the corridor's roadway design configurations, affecting the amount of on-street parking in certain areas. The Preferred Alternative would remove up to 607 on-street parking spaces, most of which are on Guadalupe Street, Lavaca Street, and South Congress Avenue. There is a substantial amount of off-street parking that would absorb the loss of parking on Guadalupe Street (from 38th Street to 15th Street) and in Downtown Austin. While increased population and employment along with the City's recently adopted parking policies would increase the demand on the existing parking supply, the Project would reduce the demand for parking and result in a net benefit in the region.

ES.4 Summary of Environmental Findings

The potential beneficial and adverse effects of the Preferred Alternative are reviewed below in comparison to the conditions that would occur under the No Build Alternative. This evaluation provides a basis for decision-makers and the public to assess the benefits and consequences of implementing the Preferred Alternative. **Table ES-1** summarizes the effects of the Preferred Alternative on transportation and the natural and built environment. The table includes the mitigation measures that ATP would implement to mitigate the adverse effects identified for the Preferred Alternative, which include noise and vibration impacts and adverse effects on visual quality as a result of the elevated alignment on East Riverside Drive. The commitments that ATP would implement to minimize effects of the Preferred Alternative, such as adhering to best management practices (BMPs) and compliance with environmental laws and regulations, are also included in the table. Compliance with environmental laws and regulations includes obtaining regulatory permits and satisfying the permit conditions that protect environmental resources. The compliance measures that ATP would implement to satisfy regulatory requirements are identified in **Appendix M, Mitigation Monitoring Plan**.

Table ES-1: Effects of the Preferred Alternative and ATP Proposed Mitigation Measures and Commitments

Impact Category	Preferred Alternative	ATP Mitigation Measures and Commitments
Transportation (Chapter 3)	• Modified roadway configurations, traffic patterns, and intersection operations. • Conversion of Guadalupe Street between 29th and 27th Streets to a transit/active transportation corridor. • Conversion of Guadalupe Street between 27th Street and 22nd Street (southbound) / 21st Street (northbound) to a transit-only corridor. • Conversion of 3rd Street between Colorado Street and Congress Avenue to a light rail/pedestrian-only corridor and relocation of 3rd Street bicycle lane to 4th Street. • Localized level of service impacts and delays at intersections. • Loss of up to 607 on-street parking spaces along Guadalupe Street, in Downtown Austin, and on South Congress Avenue. • Potential increase in travel time for emergency response due to increased delay at light rail crossings; emergency access would be accommodated through design.	To optimize traffic flow and minimize traffic delay and congestion once the light rail system is operational, ATP will implement the following mitigation measures during final design: • continue to work with stakeholders along the alignment to understand loading/unloading schedules and to access needs (including trucks) across the guideway; • optimize queue storage lengths to reflect left-turn and right-turn queue needs, where feasible; • continue coordination with CapMetro to accommodate bikeshare stations and optimize connectivity with future bus operations as Transit Plan 2035 is completed; • develop an opening day traffic model and optimize signal timing in the corridor in coordination with the Austin Transportation and Public Works Department; • provide direct access to arterial roadways from park-and-rides and include appropriate signage and traffic controls to direct users away from residential streets and minimize cut-through traffic impacts; and • monitor traffic conditions and park-and-ride use after the light rail service begins to ascertain capacity constraints; seek to lease parking spaces at nearby lots if spillover traffic would result and cause adverse neighborhood effects. To minimize construction-related traffic effects, ATP will: • coordinate construction activities, detours, and closures with the Construction Partnership Program and the CapMetro Service Impacts Team; • coordinate with CapMetro to identify temporary bus stops; • require contractors to develop traffic control plans and monitor contractor compliance with approved plans; and • require contractors to maintain reasonable access to and from residences and businesses and coordinate with affected occupants regarding temporary access modifications. To mitigate the removal of downtown bicycle lanes along Guadalupe and Lavaca Streets, ATP will coordinate with the City and provide active transportation lanes to an alternative north-south street between the limits of West Cesar Chavez Street and West MLK Boulevard. ATP will coordinate with CapMetro and the City to support future downtown bus operations during light rail revenue service, including accommodating space requirements for regular and abnormal operations, in accordance with TransitPlan 2035 and subsequent adopted service plans, to enable connectivity among modes.
Acquisitions and Displacements (Chapter 4, Section 4.1)	• Permanent acquisition of approximately 85 acres, which includes the 62-acre OMF site. • 27 full parcels, and 261 partial parcels, resulting in 71 business displacements. • Loss of off-street parking spaces as a result of partial acquisitions at some locations.	ATP will: • prepare a Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan and a Relocation Plan outlining the acquisition and relocation processes for affected property owners and tenants; • provide financial compensation and advisory services in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) for all acquisitions and relocations (including short-term construction-related relocations and loss of off-street parking);
Land Use and Zoning (Chapter 4, Section 4.2)	• Consistent with local and regional land use plans and zoning. • Supports the City's mobility clean air, and affordability goals. • OMF operations permitted under the City's zoning code.	In coordination with the City, ATP will develop a permitting manual that addresses compliance with City permitting/code requirements.
Neighborhoods and Community Resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.3)	• Consistent with neighborhood character and fosters neighborhood cohesion. • Relocation of one community facility, the Waller Creek Boathouse. • Vehicular and pedestrian access affected by changes in circulation patterns.	ATP will: • prepare detailed phasing and maintenance of traffic plans in coordination with the Construction Partnership Program; • require contractor site-specific traffic control and environmental compliance plans addressing noise, vibration, dust, air quality emissions, lighting, visual quality, traffic disruption, property access, and temporary parking loss; • review and approve contractor traffic control and environmental compliance plans and monitor contractor compliance with those plans; and • comply with the Uniform Act and City requirements for the relocation of the concessionaires in the Waller Creek Boathouse.

Impact Category	Preferred Alternative	ATP Mitigation Measures and Commitments
Socioeconomics (Chapter 4, Section 4.4)	• Supports economic growth in the region. • Creates jobs and supports increased economic activity during construction and operation; over 7,200 jobs each year during construction are estimated and over 1,100 new permanent jobs each year during operations. • Loss of tax revenue from property acquired and converted to transportation use, which would be offset by the increased land value of higher density development near stations. • Potential short-term loss of business revenue due to reduction of on-street parking supply offset by station area activity and growth in population.	ATP will: • develop a Business Assistance Program to reduce the burden on businesses prior to and during construction; and • work with regional partnerships across government, non-profit, and private industry to support workforce development programs for residents to be trained and ready for job opportunities and career pathways resulting from the Project, as well as other major infrastructure projects in the region.
Visual Quality and Aesthetics (Chapter 4, Section 4.5)	• Adverse visual effects for some residents on East Riverside Drive whose views would be affected by elevated structure. • Neutral visual effects as a result of other Project elements. • No impacts on Capitol View Corridors because Project elements would be below the height restrictions.	ATP will: • develop Architecture and Urban Design Guidelines and include bridge and station design features that are compatible with the surrounding environment; • develop a Public Involvement Plan and work collaboratively with the community, including people with disabilities, to develop architectural treatments, visual screening, landscape, and other features designed to enhance visual quality and aesthetics within the urban realm; • minimize the height and bulk of the elevated structure along East Riverside Drive to the extent feasible and explore additional strategies to address visual impacts of the elevated structure along East Riverside Drive; • implement visual screening treatments at construction sites in residential areas near facilities such as the OMF and park-and-rides; and • use lighting (for construction and operation) in accordance with the Texas Health and Safety Code and City lighting code ordinances.
Cultural Resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.6)	• No adverse effects identified. • Partial acquisitions of historic properties, which would not result in adverse effects on their qualifying characteristics or the activities, features, or attributes qualifying the property for protection under Section 106. • Disturbance of areas with moderate or high probability of containing archaeological deposits.	ATP will: • comply with the stipulations of the Programmatic Agreement between FTA, ATP, and the Texas Historical Commission, which outlines the process for continuing design reviews as architectural details are developed in final design, archaeological monitoring of areas accessible only during construction, unanticipated discoveries, and measures to protect historic built properties during construction; and • work closely with the City and the Progressive Design-Build Teams to facilitate local historic review processes for buildings over 45 years of age that are (1) locally historically designated or eligible for local designation, and (2) identified for demolition, alternation, or potentially impacted by easements for Project elements.
Hazardous Materials (Chapter 4, Section 4.7)	• Handling, disturbing, removing, and transporting hazardous materials.	ATP will comply with all local, state, and federal laws governing the handling, storage, transporting, and disposal of hazardous materials. This will include preparation of site-specific Hazardous Materials Management Plans, Waste Management Plans, Resource Conservation Recovery Act Contingency Plans, Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, and Remediation Plans, whenever necessary.
Utilities (Chapter 4, Section 4.8)	• Relocation of utilities in advance of construction.	ATP will: • comply with the Utility Rules of Practice (see **Appendix E-9**) to maintain access to relocated utilities for maintenance and repair; • develop a Master Utilities Agreement(s) in coordination with franchise utility companies to track utility conflicts and agreements with public and private utility owners and third parties; • perform belowground utility exploration to verify exact locations and depths of known subsurface utilities; • resolve conflicts with each major utility provider (water, wastewater, oil and gas, electric transmission, etc.), and where utilities must be relocated, coordinate with the utility providers to combine multiple relocations of the same type and comply with regulatory requirements including the Utility Rules of Practice and Texas Public Utility Commission rules; • develop High-Performance Infrastructure Guidelines to implement efficiency practices, report on their effectiveness, and align with City goals; and • develop and implement standard control measures in consultation with utility owners to avoid the potential of stray currents that can damage or corrode utility systems.

Impact Category	Preferred Alternative	ATP Mitigation Measures and Commitments
Safety and Security (Chapter 4, Section 4.9)	• Introduction of new transit mode designed for safety in accordance with FTA design criteria. • Improved safety for bicyclists and pedestrians from new protected lanes and the traffic calming effect of light rail. • Effects on emergency response times during construction and operation.	ATP will: • incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the design of public areas associated with stations, park-and-rides, and ancillary support facilities (traction power substations, OMF); • incorporate Austin Fire Department design requirements for safety, access, and operations into final design; • develop and implement a Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan and prepare annual safety assessments in accordance with FTA requirements and in coordination with TxDOT as the State Oversight Agency; • prepare a construction safety and security management plan and perform pre-construction assessments of the construction sites to identify and mitigate potential hazards; • develop an Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance Program that specifies minimum standards and schedules for inspection, testing, and maintenance of vehicles, track, and other critical infrastructure to maintain a state of good repair, reduce waste, reduce costs, and alleviate safety risks of failure; • work with emergency response agencies to establish an Emergency Response Plan and communication protocols to support coordinated response during construction and operations; and • provide emergency responders with the contractor traffic control plans to evaluate effects on emergency access and develop alternative routing, as needed.
Noise and Vibration (Chapter 4, Section 4.10)	• Moderate impacts at 17 buildings (867 dwelling units), with increase in ambient outdoor noise levels of less than 3 dB. • Severe impacts at 2 buildings (344 dwelling units), with increase in ambient outdoor noise levels of up to 5 dB. • Vibration impacts at a hotel along East Riverside Drive and a multi-family building as a result of the lead track to the OMF.	ATP will: • incorporate special trackwork in the final design where it would effectively mitigate noise and vibration impacts; • conduct a detailed noise mitigation analysis for locations where noise impacts would not be effectively mitigated by special trackwork. This includes a cost-effectiveness analysis for (1) a noise barrier on the Lady Bird Lake bridge, and (2) sound insulation for the buildings where moderate noise impacts are expected to occur; • monitor noise and vibration levels during the operations testing phase of the Project. Should additional operational impacts be identified, hold a community noise workshop (specific to affected property owners) to identify appropriate mitigation; and • comply with the Project Connect noise ordinance, which requires preparation of contractor site-specific Noise Control Plans and a Programmatic Project Communications Plan.

Air Quality (Chapter 4, Section 4.11)	• Electrically powered light rail with no direct operational emissions.
	• Reduction in air pollutant emissions due to mode shift from automobile.
	• Temporary and localized increase in dust and air emissions during construction.
		ATP will:
		• include the following BMPs in construction contract documents:
		  ○ treat disturbed areas with dust suppression techniques (e.g., watering, soil binders, chemical stabilizers). Apply water or other methods during clearing, excavation, grading, and demolition to control fugitive dust;
		  ○ cover or wet materials transported offsite to limit dust emissions; limit construction vehicle speeds and remove tracked-out soil from roads when it extends more than 50 feet or at end of each workday;
		  ○ limit idling of inactive equipment and maintain equipment per manufacturer specifications. Encourage use of electric-powered and low volatile organic compound equipment, where feasible;
		  ○ phase ground-disturbing activities to minimize the extent of exposed surfaces at any one time; and
		  ○ Implement proper traffic control to minimize congestion and localized emissions. Encourage routing to less congested streets and avoid peak-hour disruptions.
		• monitor contractor compliance with the Texas Low Emission Diesel Fuel Program and the BMPs.

Energy and Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) / Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) (Chapter 4, Section 4.12)	• Net annual reduction in regional energy use due to reduced vehicle miles traveled. • Potential for EMF/EMI.	ATP will: • integrate efficient operating practices at the new OMF and other facilities to reduce energy and water demand and to recycle water; • mitigate the potential for EMI on sensitive equipment (if identified in the study area) through modeling, relocation of equipment, or design and implementation of EMI shielding; • implement standard design control measures in consultation with utility owners to mitigate the potential of stray currents; and • comply with Federal Communications Commission regulations and NEPA guidelines for Project equipment regarding EMFs.
Soils and Geologic Resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.13)	• Effects would be minor and manageable through typical design efforts.	ATP will: • prepare a void mitigation plan in coordination with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the City to include void discovery protocols, protection and mitigation measures for features within or near regulated zones, and provisions for daily trench inspections, if warranted; • incorporate stabilization techniques and BMPs, such as matting and revegetation, into the design to improve unstable and settlement-prone soils and minimize the hazards of soil conditions (erodibility, shrink-swell potential, settlement, and slope failures); • Assess ground conditions along the ROW and conduct site geotechnical inspections and slope monitoring to determine whether unstable locations need improvement (including at the south side of East Riverside Drive); and • identify and protect geologic features as required by the City's Land Development Code and Environmental Criteria Manual.

Impact Category	Preferred Alternative	ATP Mitigation Measures and Commitments
Water Resources (Chapter 4, Section 4.14)	• Effects minimized and mitigated through regulatory Section 404/401 and floodplain development permitting processes. • 100-year floodplain impacts in 15.9 acres and 500-year floodplain impacts in 15.5 acres. • Potential impacts on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional Waters of the United States (WOTUS), which includes wetlands, stream features, and other waterbodies, include a total of 1.07 acres of WOTUS and 1.23 acres of potential WOTUS.	ATP will: • continue coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and obtain Section 404 permit (anticipated under a series of Nationwide Permits) during final design, and provide compensatory wetlands mitigation as required; • concurrent with the Section 404 process, complete a Tier II Certification Questionnaire and Alternatives Analysis Checklist for review by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to obtain Section 401 Water Quality Certification; • obtain and comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit Program and continue coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; • obtain floodplain development permits from the local floodplain administrator and the City's Watershed Protection Department, and comply with local floodplain regulations; • incorporate swales, vegetative strips, soil stabilization measures, and detention ponds to offset effects on flooding upstream and downstream in compliance with floodplain regulations; • design hydraulic structures, outfalls, intakes, bridges, rail crossings of roads regulated by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT, and rail crossings over waterbodies in compliance with the latest Federal Highway Administration Hydrologic Engineering Center 20, Hydrologic Engineering Center 18 procedures, and the TxDOT Hydraulic Design Manual (2019); • conduct an intensive critical environmental features survey to identify critical environmental features within 150 feet of the Preferred Alternative, as required by the City's Land Development Code and Environmental Criteria Manual; • produce an Environmental Resource Inventory to be field verified by the City's Watershed Protection Department staff, and propose mitigation, if required, for impacts on identified critical environmental features; • incorporate compliance measures with the City's Land Development Code pertaining to watershed protection and stormwater control measures into contract documents; and • implement stabilization measures to reduce total suspended solids, soil erosion, and sedimentation to protect adjacent waterbodies.
Threatened and Endangered Species Chapter 4, Section 4.15)	• No adverse effect on threatened or endangered species habitat. • Potential effects on Mexican free-tailed bats, tricolored bats, monarch butterfly, and Texas map turtle to be minimized via BMPs. • 245 protected trees and 211 heritage trees are within the limits of Project construction and require protection or removal.	ATP will: • consult with an Austin bat advocacy group on minimizing construction impacts on the roosting Mexican free-tailed bats at the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge; • consider lighting mitigation as recommended by the International Dark-Sky Association (2024) to protect the bat roosting area; • conduct an updated tree survey to identify all trees with a diameter at breast height of 8 inches or greater, and coordinate with the City Arborist to identify avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for tree removal, informing the Site Development Permit, as required; • follow guidance from the Austin Light Rail Comprehensive Tree Manual to avoid or preserve protected and heritage trees wherever practical; • coordinate the design with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to identify the potential to affect aquatic organisms and need for a Marl, Sand, Gravel, Shell or Mudshell Permit; • monitor contractor compliance with BMPs to protect special features and natural communities, including those that are not listed as threatened or endangered species; • monitor contractor compliance with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's recommendations for the protection of the tricolored bat, monarch butterfly, and Texas map turtle; and • if karst features are encountered during construction, evaluate for karst invertebrate habitat and minimize the influence of diurnal variations in surface temperature, implementing appropriate BMPs to prevent surface runoff from entering the feature.
Parkland (Appendices G and H)	• Section 4(f) use and Section 6(f) conversion of approximately 45,371 square feet (3.6% of 28.8-acre park) of Waller Beach at Town Lake Metro Park to transportation use, requiring relocation of Waller Creek Boathouse concessionaires. • Improved access to parkland through light rail service, and bicycle and pedestrian lanes on new bridge and throughout corridor. • Improvements to the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail for Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility.	ATP will: • continue to coordinate with the City Parks and Recreation Department and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on design refinements to minimize the Project's footprint at Waller Beach; • provide support for the City's Chapter 26 public hearing process and follow Chapter 26 / City of Austin transfer of use procedures for financial compensation for the loss and change of use of parkland; • provide relocation benefits to the Waller Creek Boathouse tenants in compliance with the Uniform Act; • comply with Section 6(f) conversion requirements including appraisal of Waller Beach and appraisal of replacement property(ies); • coordinate with the City Parks and Recreation Department and The Trail Conservancy to maintain functionality and avoid disconnecting the trail network along the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail at both the north and south shores of Lady Bird Lake; • for better connectivity, improve a portion of the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail located just west of the new light rail bridge that is not currently in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; • re-establish the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail beneath the bridge and provide connections to the active transportation facilities on the bridge; • coordinate with the City Parks and Recreation Department and The Trail Conservancy to maintain access and functionality of all affected parkland and avoid park closures during construction whenever possible; and • address measures for temporary park closures, temporary trail closures, and/or temporary relocation of portions of trails in the Construction Management Plan.

ES.4.1 Effects on the Human and Built Environment

The Project would be located primarily within the existing transportation ROW. Full or partial acquisition is required to build some facilities, widen the ROW to accommodate active transportation facilities, and relocate utilities. The Preferred Alternative would require 27 full acquisitions and 261 partial acquisitions, resulting in 71 business displacements. There would be no residential displacements. The partial acquisitions would not interfere with the use or enjoyment of the property once construction is complete.

The proposed OMF near the US 183 and SH 71 interchange near Airport Commerce Drive would require the largest land acquisition under the Preferred Alternative, requiring approximately 62 acres of property and the displacement of 22 businesses in a light industrial use area. The OMF is a permitted use under City zoning, and its context-sensitive design would not result in visual quality or aesthetic effects on the residential communities north and west of the site. The site is largely buffered from surrounding uses, and the OMF would be similar in appearance to the industrial buildings currently on site in terms of both height and mass. Noise levels at the nearest residential cluster to the OMF site would not result in a noticeable change as a result of light rail operations or maintenance. Special trackwork installed on the OMF lead track would effectively mitigate the potential for vibration impacts at adjacent properties.

The level of land use change resulting from property acquisitions would not be expected to result in adverse effects on land use patterns, community cohesion, or socioeconomic conditions in the Study Area. The Project is a key component in the local land use plans that seek to direct future growth into activity centers in Downtown Austin, South Austin, and East Austin. The Project would improve publicly accessible spaces and would support community cohesion by providing additional locations where people naturally interact, such as along bicycle lanes and sidewalks and at light rail station areas. Overall, the Project is expected to have beneficial effects on neighborhoods and socioeconomic conditions in the Study Area.

Increasing housing costs in Austin have affected low-income residents in Austin. An indirect effect of the Project is accelerating development in station areas, which could lead to gentrification (i.e., when low-income households are displaced by higher-income households to the extent of transforming a neighborhood). This is a concern, especially in the lower-income neighborhoods located in Downtown and East Austin. To address this concern, the City has incentivized the development of housing in the Project's station areas through zoning and is actively developing housing on several sites near light rail stations.

ATP would mitigate potential impacts on property owners, business tenants, and communities through efforts in partnership with the City and through direct administration of programs that support the community. ATP would support regional workforce programs to provide community members with access to jobs and career growth opportunities in the infrastructure industry. ATP would create a Business

Assistance Program to support businesses along the alignment, with direct focus on small and local businesses, as they navigate challenges before and during construction.

The new transit/bike/pedestrian bridge over Lady Bird Lake would require the displacement of one community facility, the Waller Creek Boathouse—and permanent acquisition of a portion of the historic parkland at Waller Beach at Town Lake Metro Park. Parkland effects would be mitigated by ATP through compliance with the applicable laws and regulations presented in **Appendix G, Section 4(f) and Chapter 26 Evaluations**; and **Appendix H, Section 6(f) Evaluation**.

The elevated alignment in the median of East Riverside Drive would adversely affect visual quality for residents with direct views of the guideway. Most residences are located on heavily wooded bluffs above East Riverside Drive, and views of the elevated guideway would be attenuated by existing trees and foliage. However, some historic properties (contributing resources to the Travis Heights-Fairview Park Historic District) would have views obstructed by the elevated guideway. The adverse visual effects, however, do not constitute an adverse effect under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The district would retain sufficient integrity to communicate its historic significance despite the new visual element. ATP will develop architectural treatments, visual screening, and landscaping, and will explore additional strategies in coordination with the affected community, to enhance visual quality and aesthetics in the corridor. The assessments of effect on visual quality and historic resources are presented in **Appendix E-5, Visuals and Aesthetics Technical Report** and **Appendix E-6, Draft Built Environment Survey Report**.

Noise impacts would result from the wheel/rail interaction of light rail vehicles, particularly at interlocking locations (where trains cross from one track to another), and at station locations where warning bells would ring as trains approach a station. ATP will implement special trackwork at interlockings to mitigate noise and vibration impacts and, for other locations where noise impacts remain, will evaluate the cost-effectiveness of sound insulation in residential buildings and a noise barrier on the Lady Bird Lake Bridge. Measures to mitigate noise and vibration are more fully described in **Appendix I, Noise and Vibration**.

Given the amount of private development and large public projects planned for the area, overlapping construction periods would likely occur. To mitigate potential construction effects, ATP would participate in a Construction Partnership Program to coordinate construction schedules, road closures, and detours and would implement BMPs to minimize the Project's construction effects.

ES.4.2 Effects on the Natural Environment

The Project is expected to result in decreased air emissions due to the reduction in vehicle miles traveled. Noise and vibration levels would increase as a result of light rail operations and construction activities, and the Project's indirect effects of accelerating development near proposed stations would contribute to noise levels that are typical of higher-density urban environments.

Most of the Project alignment would be built in previously disturbed areas with existing impervious cover and stormwater infrastructure. However, the Preferred Alternative would affect wetlands and floodplains and would require the removal of heritage and protected trees. ATP would comply with regulatory requirements and would continue to develop the Project design with the goal of minimizing effects. Conservation and compliance measures that would protect natural resources in the Study Area are outlined in **Appendix F, Natural Environment**.

ES.4.3 Alternatives Considered

FTA and ATP evaluated the challenges, benefits, and adverse effects of the Build Alternative and six Design Options in the DEIS by considering:

- Technical feasibility:
  - Design and constructability;
  - Real estate and adjacent property availability; and
  - Contextual considerations of architecture and urban design;
- Operations, ridership, and user experience;
- Environmental (social and natural) considerations;
- Demographics; and
- Community feedback.

As a result of the DEIS evaluation and community feedback, five Design Options are included in the Preferred Alternative, shown in **Figure ES-7**:

- **Wooldridge Square Station Design Option.** This Design Option is included in the Preferred Alternative to improve access in the downtown area.

- **Lady Bird Lake Bridge Extension Design Option.** This Design Option is included in the Preferred Alternative due to benefits related to light rail reliability, traffic operations, and adjacent property access. This Design Option would minimize the Project's footprint in the floodplain, would create an opportunity for an urban plaza that would provide real estate and community benefits, and would remove fewer trees.

- **Travis Heights Station Design Option.** A Travis Heights Station would not attract many riders and would require Section 4(f) use of parkland. As a result, this Design Option, which would eliminate the Travis Heights Station, is included in the Preferred Alternative.

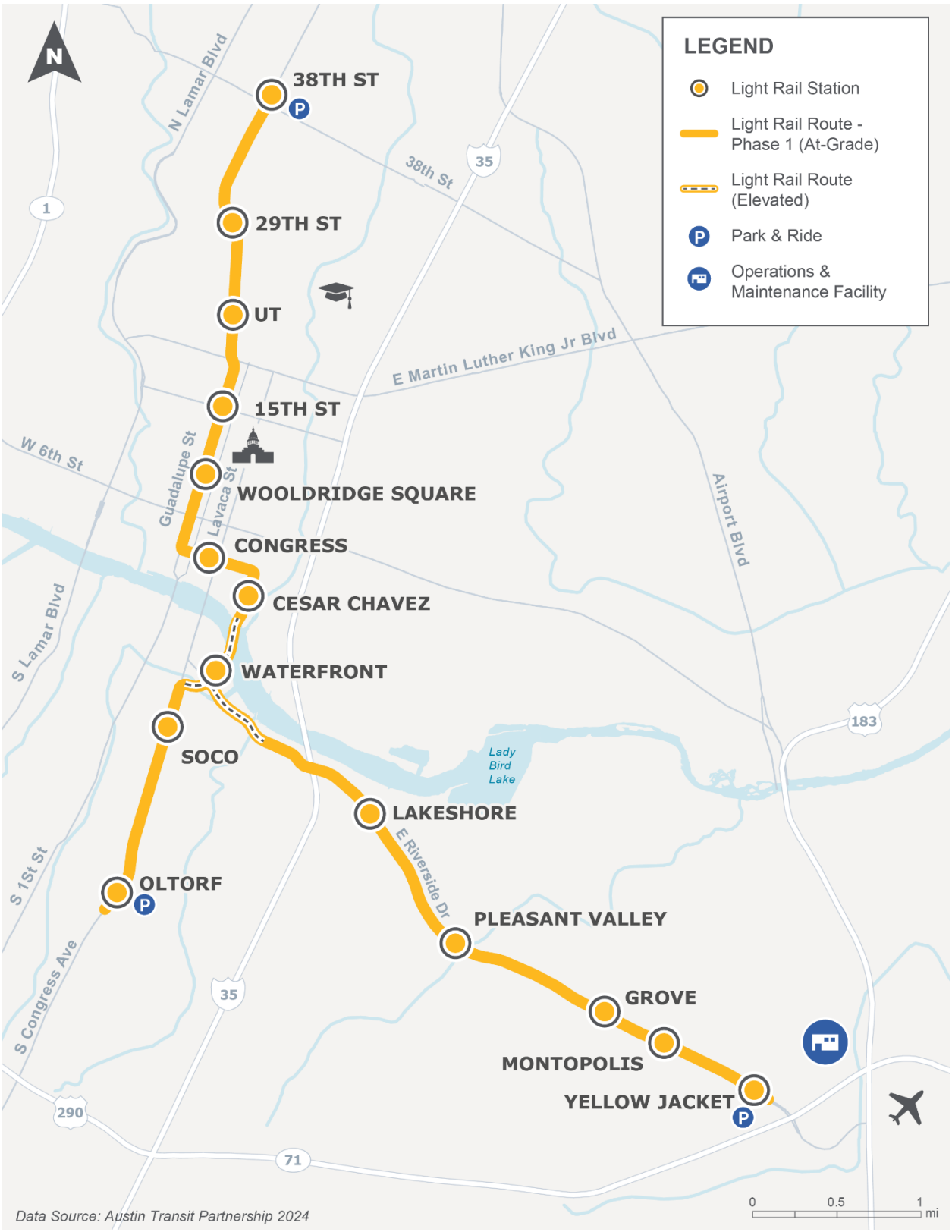
- **Center-Running Bike/Pedestrian and Shade Tree Facilities on East Riverside Design Option.** This Design Option is included in the Preferred Alternative because it would provide an enhanced experience for pedestrians and bicyclists through shaded and protected lanes buffered from vehicular traffic.

- **Grove Station Design Option.** This Design Option, which includes a station at Grove Boulevard between the Montopolis and Pleasant Valley Stations, would

directly serve existing riders in the Montopolis area while also supporting future service to planned housing developments and is included in the Preferred Alternative.

The Cesar Chavez Station Design Option is not included in the Preferred Alternative. If developer agreements progress, this Design Option may be considered in the future.

Figure ES-7: Preferred Alternative



ES.4.4 Public Involvement and Agency Outreach

Since the initiation of the Project's NEPA process, FTA and ATP have undertaken a robust public involvement and agency outreach program, holding over 80 public events, including numerous pre-scoping and scoping meetings; briefings at agencies, boards, and community and tabling events; and DEIS public hearing open houses.

The DEIS was available to stakeholders, agencies, and the public for review and comment during a 60-day public comment period between January 10, 2025, and March 11, 2025. ATP held four public meetings during this comment period to encourage feedback on the Project and the analyses presented in the DEIS. FTA and ATP received 14 letters from agencies and approximately 2,400 comments on the DEIS submitted by email, electronic comment form, form letter, voicemail, survey form, public meeting comment cards, agency letter, and oral testimony recorded at the public hearings. Frequently received comments are generally summarized as follows:

- Most commenters agreed with the selection of the Design Options included in the Preferred Alternative. Broad support for the Project was received, noting that the Project would provide an affordable transportation option and make the city more livable.
- Commenters from the Travis Heights neighborhood expressed opposition to the elevated alignment along East Riverside Drive, citing concerns related to safety, property values, privacy, noise and vibration, air quality, and visual quality.
- Some commenters also expressed concerns about a range of neighborhood impacts resulting from the 38th Street parking garage, the Oltorf park-and-ride, and the Project's design for South Congress Avenue, which would require removal of parking spaces serving local businesses.
- Commenters expressed a desire for the alignment to reach the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.
- Some commenters recommended alternative modes of transportation, including bus rapid transit and micro transit, and recommended different vertical and horizontal alignments for the Project.
- Some commenters opposed the Project, questioning the need for the Project or citing that it would take too long to build and cost too much.

The FEIS/ROD provides details on the public involvement and outreach activities and responses to all substantive comments received on the DEIS (see **Appendix L, Responses to Comments on DEIS**). The FEIS/ROD also documents the design refinements and decisions made since publication of the DEIS, including those made to address public comments.

ES.5 Balancing Benefits and Impacts

FTA and ATP have carefully weighed the benefits and impacts of the Project and considered all substantive comments received during the DEIS public comment period. FTA and ATP find that the Preferred Alternative, with the design refinements and mitigation commitments identified in **Table ES-1**, would best achieve the Project's purpose and need because it would address growing travel demand by accommodating approximately 29,000 trips per day in a highly constrained transportation ROW with a reliable, safe, affordable, and time-competitive mode of transportation. FTA and ATP weighed the adverse visual effects of the elevated alignment along East Riverside Drive against the transportation benefits of elevating light rail operations above the congested streets. Elevating this section would prevent significant disruption to traffic in an area where there are several driveways and intersecting streets, and the three branches of the light rail merge. A street-level alignment would require a bigger footprint and would impact more properties and floodplains because the existing transportation ROW is fairly narrow in this area. The Waterfront Station is in an area of future development, and an elevated alignment would provide opportunities for shaded public plazas beneath the structure.

ES.6 References

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