



# Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan

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Transforming Transit Together

MAY 2023

**AUSTIN**  
**TRANSIT**  
PARTNERSHIP



## AUSTIN TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP

Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) is a local government corporation created as a requirement of the City of Austin November 2020 Proposition A tax rate election. ATP is the independent entity responsible for implementing Project Connect.



*The CAC wishes to thank the Austin Transit Partnership for their commendable community engagement efforts, supporting the CAC through this decision-making process, and providing us with all necessary information to make these recommendations.*

-Community Advisory Committee



*We appreciate the process and effort undertaken by the staff [...] in advancing us to this critical decision point. The team was responsive, active and engaged with our organization and members of the downtown community.*

-Downtown Austin Alliance



*We understand that all plans have to be equally grounded in fiscal reality and aspirational ambition to actually transform our city and we appreciate the straightforward way in which the options have been presented to the community.*

-CNU-CTX

ATP is committed to:



Delivering Austin's first light rail project



Evaluating your feedback & incorporating it into the light rail program



Prioritizing equity, sustainability & transparency



Meeting voters' goals and honoring Austin's values



ATP Community Outreach Event

# LIGHT RAIL

Light rail is an electric train system used in metropolitan areas. Light rail is part of the overall transit network, connecting people to key destinations where they live, work and play to improve mobility, connectivity, affordability, and sustainability.

## Precedents



Paris, France



Portland, Oregon



Sydney, Australia



Seattle, Washington



Ontario, Canada

## Artist Representations



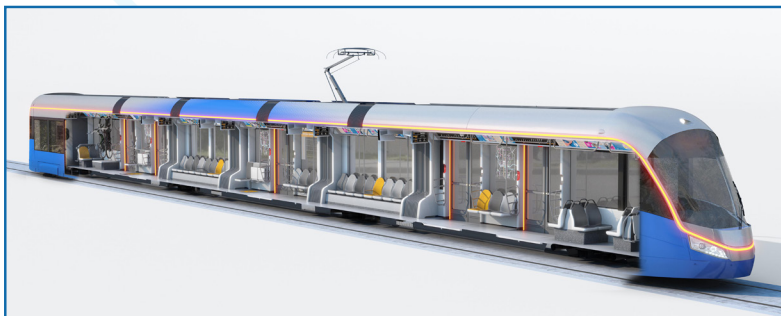
Guadalupe St. at UT Austin, 'The Drag'



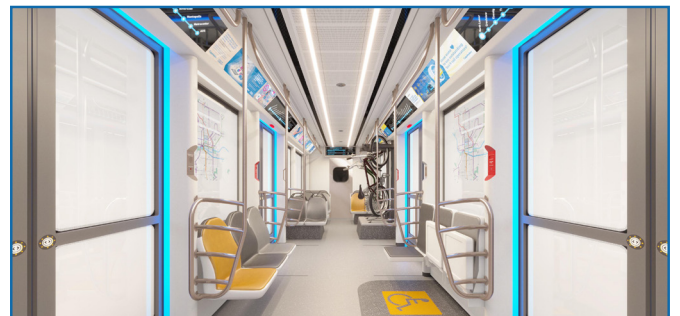
Station View at Oltorf



Station View at Pleasant Valley

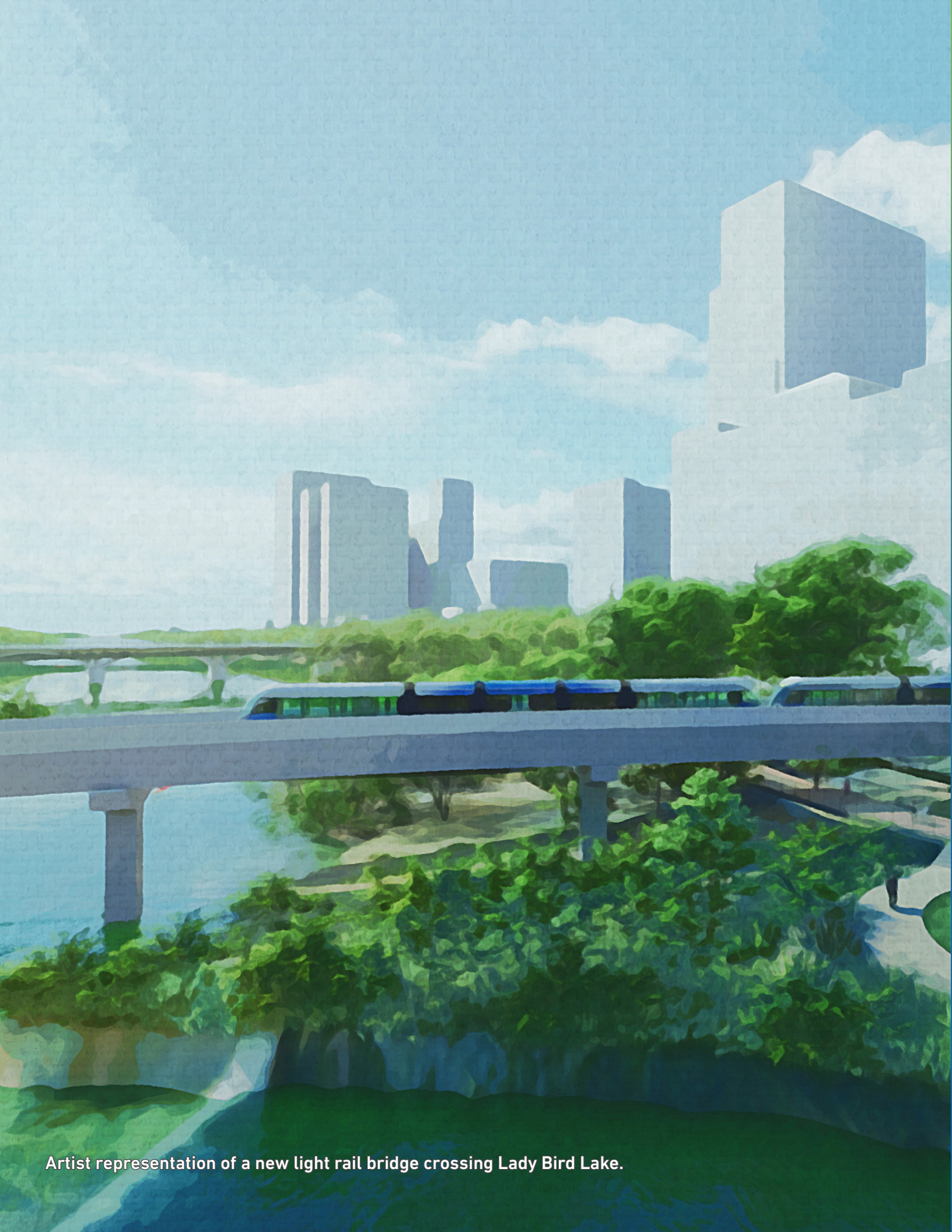


Light Rail Vehicle



Light Rail Vehicle Interior





Artist representation of a new light rail bridge crossing Lady Bird Lake.



# THE RECOMMENDATION

*Austin Transit Partnership staff is proud to recommend the 38th Street to Oltorf to Yellow Jacket alignment as the first phase of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan.*

*This on-street, two-line Austin Light Rail project—crossing Lady Bird Lake at Trinity Street—will connect the community to key destinations, jobs and, most importantly, to each other. Looking to Austin's future, it will also connect with the existing and future transit network to ensure light rail will serve Austinites now and as our city grows.*

*This recommendation is based on the professional expertise of the ATP team and our partners at the City of Austin and CapMetro. At its core and most importantly, this recommendation reflects the input of our community.*

*In 2020, Austin citizens resoundingly approved a transformative investment in Austin's future—a future that is more equitable and sustainable. The community has made it clear that they want reliable mobility options that offer connectivity, affordability, and expandability—we believe our staff recommendation meets these values.*



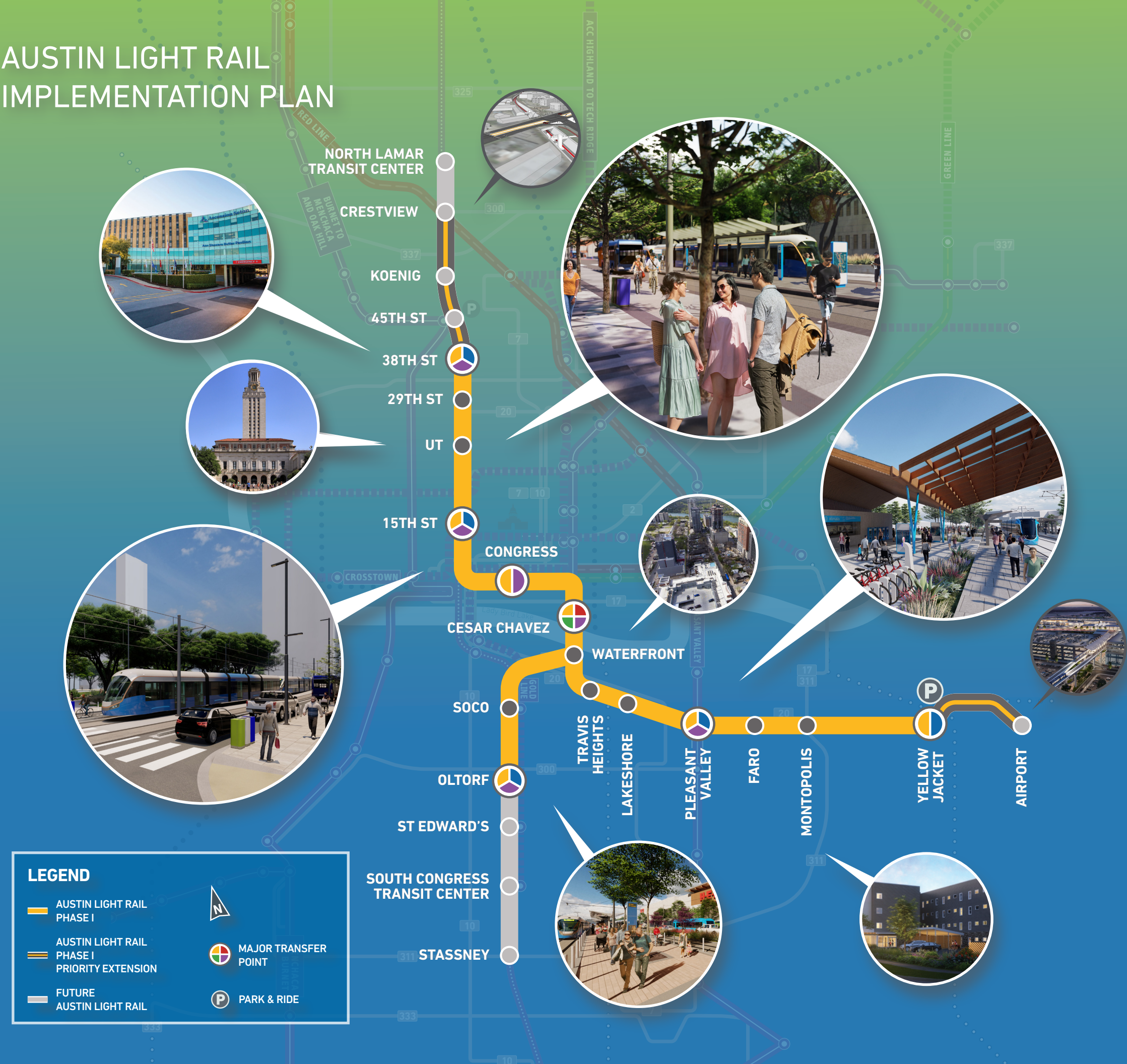
Greg Canally

Executive Director, Austin Transit Partnership





# AUSTIN LIGHT RAIL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN





 **9.8**  
MILES OF NEW  
LIGHT RAIL

 **15**  
LIGHT RAIL  
STATIONS

## TRANSIT CONNECTIONS



 METRORAPID  
 HIGH FREQUENCY  
BUS

 RED LINE  
 PROPOSED  
GREEN LINE

## ESTIMATED TRAVEL TIME



**23 MINS** 38TH - OLTORF

**31 MINS** 38TH - YELLOW JACKET

ESTIMATED AVG. # OF DAILY RIDERS SERVED  
(2040)

 **28,500**

**20,000+**  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS SERVED  
(SUBSIDIZED)



## ACCESS TO

 **136,000+** CURRENT JOBS  
**200,000+** FUTURE JOBS

ANTICIPATED CAPITAL COST (CURRENT DOLLARS)

 **\$4.5-\$4.8B**  
LOCAL AND FEDERAL DOLLARS

MAY 2023

AUSTIN  
TRANSIT  
PARTNERSHIP



# AUSTIN LIGHT RAIL

On-street from 38th St. on Guadalupe St. to Oltorf St. on S. Congress Ave. and to Yellow Jacket Ln. on E. Riverside Dr.

- » Sustainably support Austin's population and economic growth
- » Increase transportation network capacity to meet increasing travel demand
- » Improve transit access between affordable housing and jobs
- » Support growth of and connectivity to regional activity centers

## Transit Connections



## Provide an expandable interconnected regional transit network

- » Connects with existing Red Line and future Green Line commuter rail at Downtown Station
- » Connects with current and future MetroRapid service including Pleasant Valley and downtown
- » Links with key high ridership and high frequency bus routes
- » Supports the pursuit of 50/50 mode share goal in the ASMP by providing more high frequency transit options to more places
- » Supports transit network expansion to the north, south, east and west

ATP's program principles for Austin Light Rail includes community criteria that aligns with the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), Austin's first comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan, and guides our short- and long-term transportation projects, programs, initiatives, and investments.

### Austin Strategic Mobility Plan





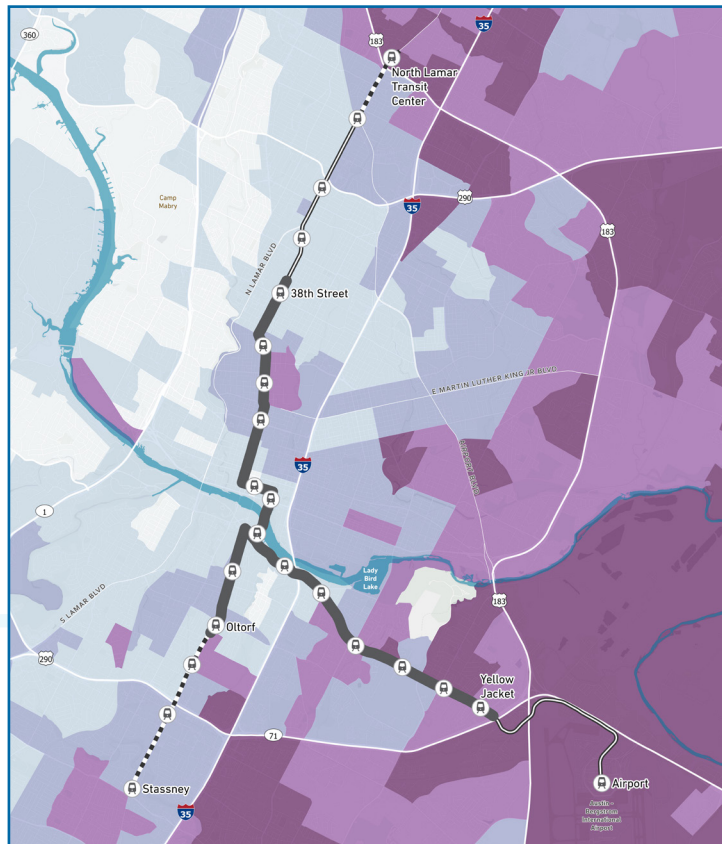


Artist representation of a new light rail station at Pleasant Valley Rd.











## Prioritize mobility solutions for historically underserved communities

- » Builds new infrastructure to serve historically underinvested areas
- » Serves Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) communities, affordable housing units, lower income areas, and households that are more dependent on public transportation
- » Connects communities with job centers and destinations throughout Austin

### BIPOC Share of Population

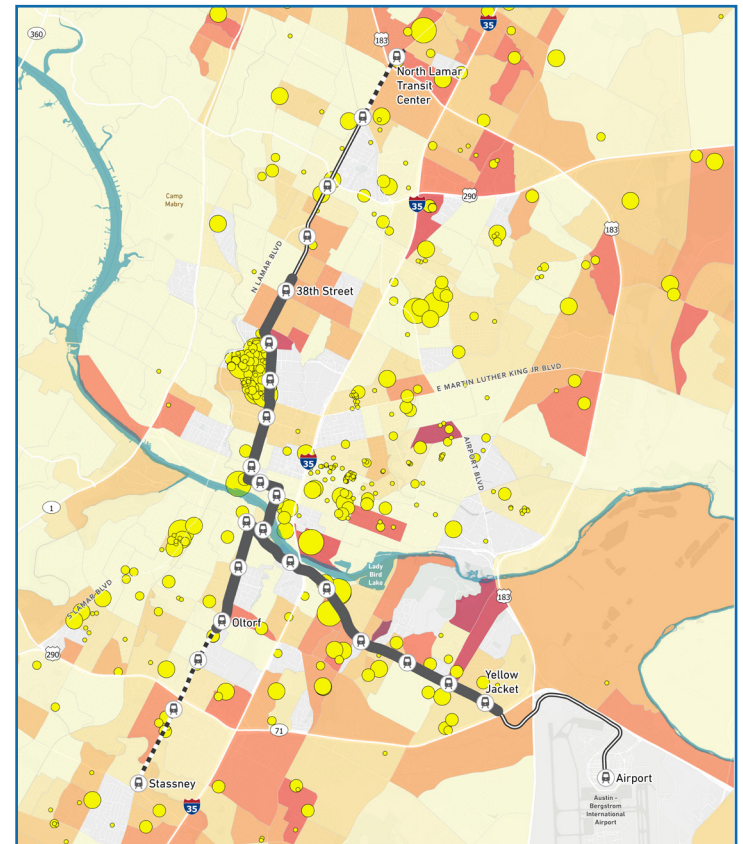


#### LEGEND:













- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Station                                      | BIPOC Share   |  61-80%  |
|  Austin Light Rail Phase I                    |  20% or less |  81-100% |
|  Austin Light Rail Phase I Priority Extension |  21-40%      |   |
|  Future Austin Light Rail                     |  41-60%      |   |
|  Colorado River                               |   |   |



### Affordable Housing & Income



#### LEGEND:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  Station                                      | Median Household Income  | Current Affordable Housing Units  |
|  Austin Light Rail Phase I                    | Low to Moderate  |  1-50    |
|  Austin Light Rail Phase I Priority Extension |  \$2,500  |  51-150  |
|  Future Austin Light Rail                     |  \$88,000 |  151-250 |
|  Colorado River                               |  |  251-400 |
|  |  |  401+    |

NOTE: NULL AREAS INDICATE DATA IS NOT AVAILABLE OR THE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS ABOVE \$88,000 ANNUALLY.







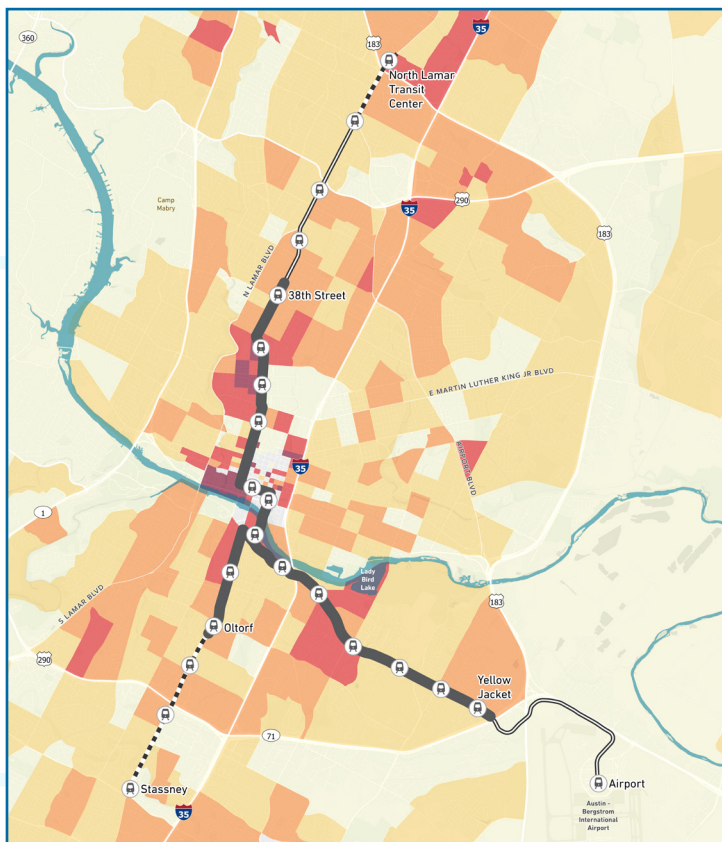
Artist representation of a new light rail station on Guadalupe St.



## Connecting people to where they need and want to go

- » Connects to job centers, education, medical centers, and downtown
- » Provides access extending north, east, and south
- » Generates strong ridership, and includes high ridership stations at UT, downtown, and Pleasant Valley/Riverside

### 2045 Population Density

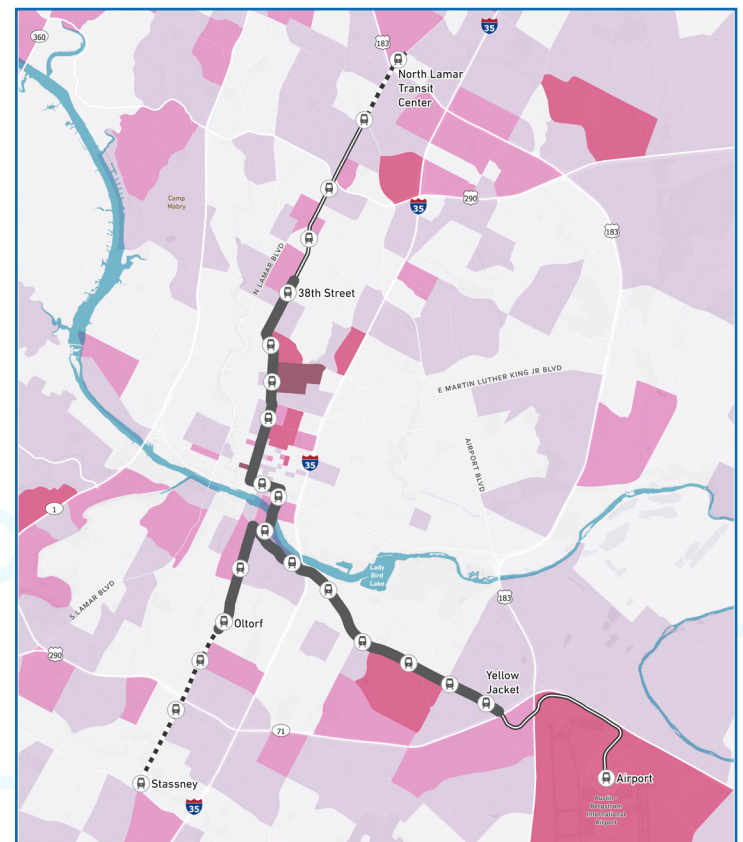


#### LEGEND:

- |  |  |               |
|--|--|---------------|
| Station                                      | Population Density<br>People per square mile |               |
| Austin Light Rail Phase I                    | 3,800 or less                                | 18,001-41,000 |
| Austin Light Rail Phase I Priority Extension | 3,801-8,800                                  | 41,001+       |
| Future Austin Light Rail                     | 8,801-18,000                                 |               |
| Colorado River                               |  |               |



### 2045 Total Jobs



#### LEGEND:

- |  |             |              |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| Station                                      | Total Jobs  |              |
| Austin Light Rail Phase I                    | 0-1,000     | 5,001-12,000 |
| Austin Light Rail Phase I Priority Extension | 1,001-2,500 | 12,001+      |
| Future Austin Light Rail                     | 2,501-5,000 |              |
| Colorado River                               |             |              |

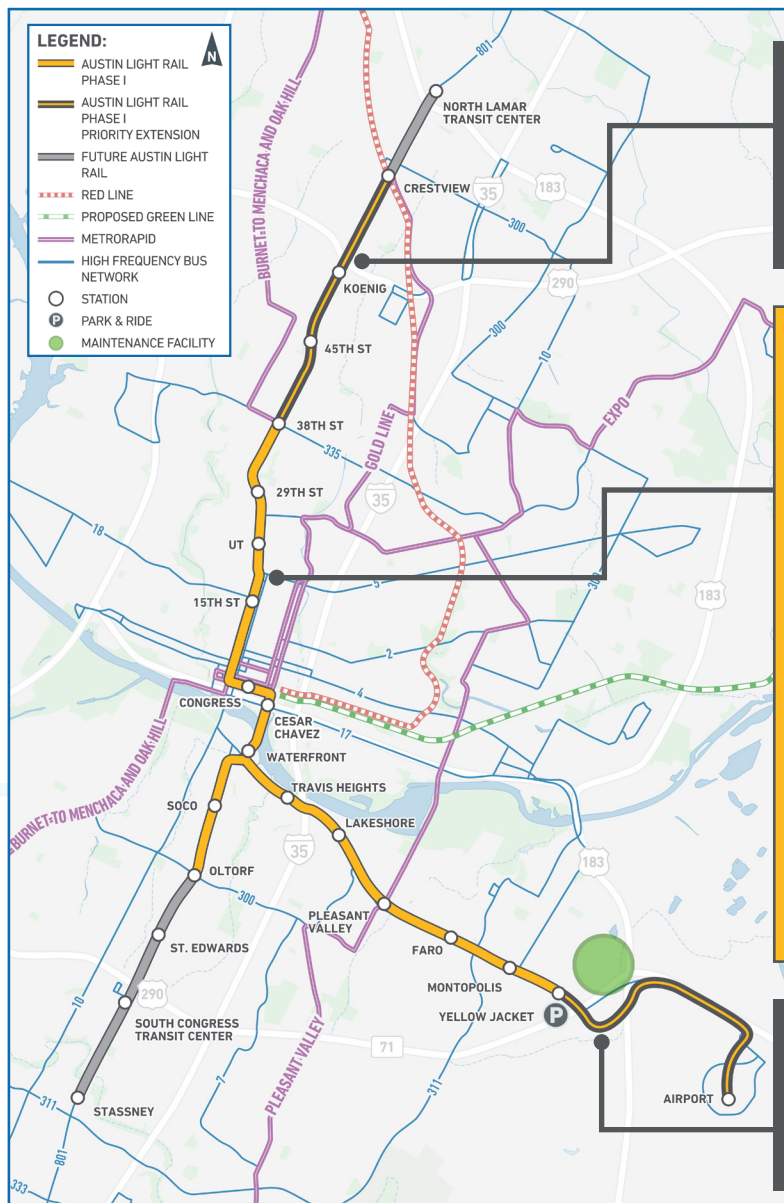


# AUSTIN LIGHT RAIL PHASE 1 AND PRIORITY EXTENSIONS

The first phase of Austin Light Rail provides coverage to the north, east, and south, access to opportunities, and connections to key destinations and the transit network. A top theme from across the community was access to the Airport. As such, Yellow Jacket to the Airport was identified as a Priority Extension, along with 38th Street to Crestview. These extensions could be accelerated if additional funding becomes available.

## Criteria for Accelerating Priority Extensions

- » Identifying new local funding
- » Leveraging other funding opportunities
- » Integration opportunities with other regional projects



### Priority Extension: 38th to Crestview

- » Opportunity to partner with CapMetro to grade separate the Red Line, to improve conditions at the nearby traffic intersection for all users and enable an on-street light rail service

### Phase 1: 38th to Oltorf to Yellow Jacket

- » Provides north, south and east coverage that best lays foundation for future expansions/extensions
- » Builds new infrastructure to serve historically underinvested areas
- » Reaches BIPOC communities and lower income households
- » High number of possible transit connections
- » Includes high ridership stations
- » Connects people to jobs and education
- » Creates jobs with new maintenance facility
- » Close to airport to facilitate connection
- » Advances ASMP goals for mode shift
- » Connects to east side of downtown via Trinity St. river crossing

### Priority Extension: Yellow Jacket to Airport

- » Coordination with Airport Expansion and Development Program on light rail connection and station at the airport; Opportunity to leverage other funding sources



## WHAT WE HEARD

Community dialogue is central to the success of Austin Light Rail. Themes that emerged from the Spring 2023 engagement period supported the advancement of a light rail project that moves Austinites where they need and want to go, and prioritizes accessible light rail connectivity to destinations and opportunities.



*[...] Affirms that surface-running light rail is a good option to address the cost estimates for the Project Connect light rail plan.*

-Urban Transportation Commission



*RECA recommends ATP staff to choose the 38th to Oltorf to Yellow Jacket option.*

-Real Estate Council of Austin (RECA)



*TTC encourages ATP to have the light rail line cross Lady Bird Lake at the Trinity Street location.*

-The Trail Conservancy



*While all options are undoubtedly better than the current lack of any light rail, the working group has recommended the 38th to Oltorf to Yellow Jacket option because it lays the best foundation for the city overall.*

-AURA - Austin for Everyone

### Top Community Feedback Themes

- » Supported the advancement of a light rail project that moves Austinites where they need and want to go
- » Prioritized Mobility, Customer Service, and Access to Opportunities
- » Focused on greater coverage, seamless integration with other transportation options, expandability of the system and affordably reaching key destinations including schools, medical centers, job centers, as well as areas around Austin including the airport, downtown, and the University of Texas
- » Explored endpoint alternatives, expressed sentiments related to environmental impacts and benefits, and land use and housing



Light Rail...



### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan is consistent with the CAC recommendation based on community feedback, conversations with stakeholders and staff, data analysis, and alignment with System-Wide Design Principles.

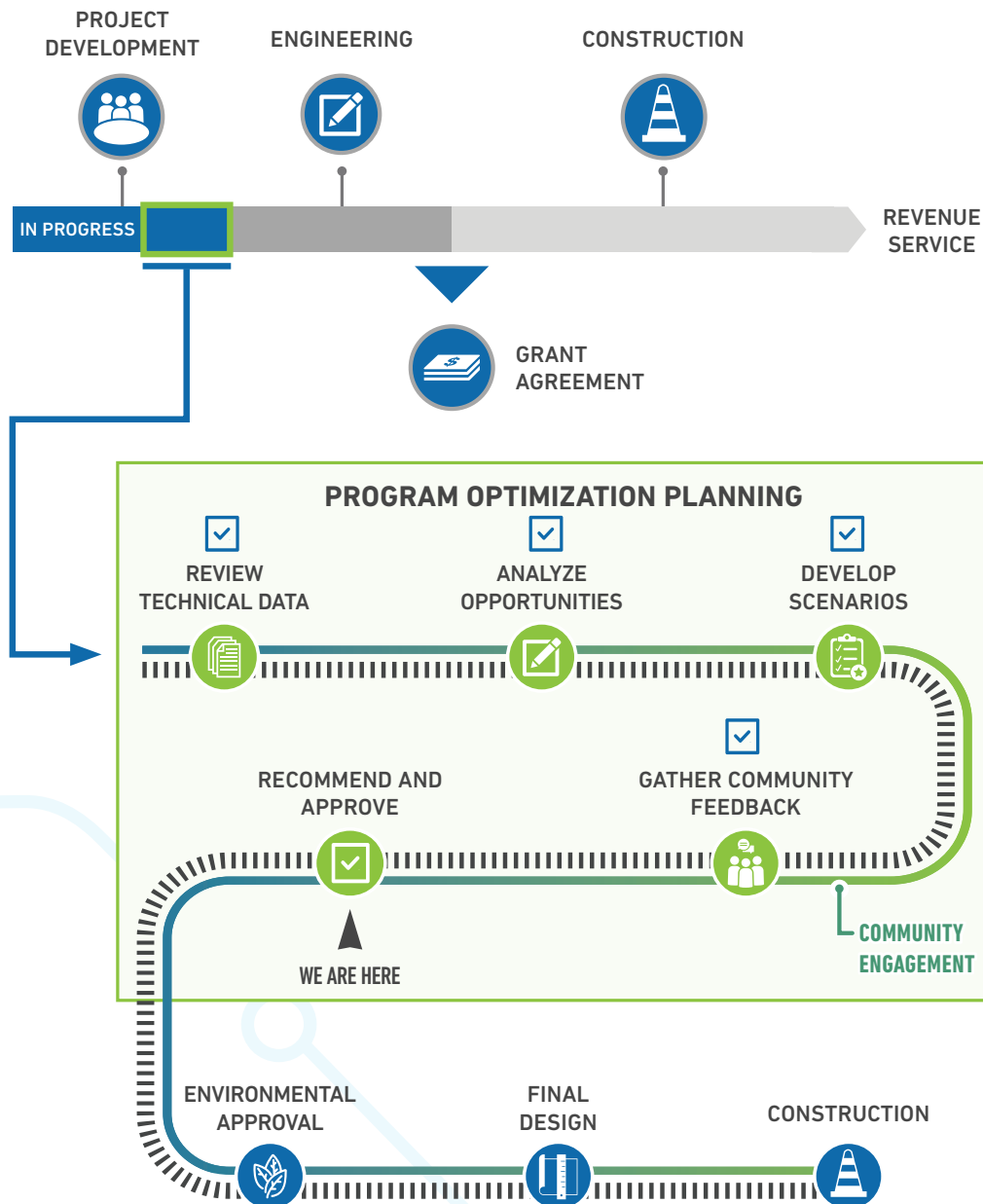
### Online Resources

- » View the Light Rail FAQs at [atptx.org/FAQs](https://atptx.org/FAQs)
- » View the Community Engagement Report at [atptx.org](https://atptx.org)
- » Learn more about light rail and view the Data Portal at [atptx.org/about/light-rail](https://atptx.org/about/light-rail)

# FEDERAL PROCESS

Federal funding is necessary to construct Austin Light Rail. The project will be evaluated by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for funding under FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program.

## Federal Capital Investment Grant Process



» The CIG program will constitute the majority of federal assistance to construct the light rail project.

» ATP is seeking approximately 50% of project capital costs from the federal government through the CIG program.

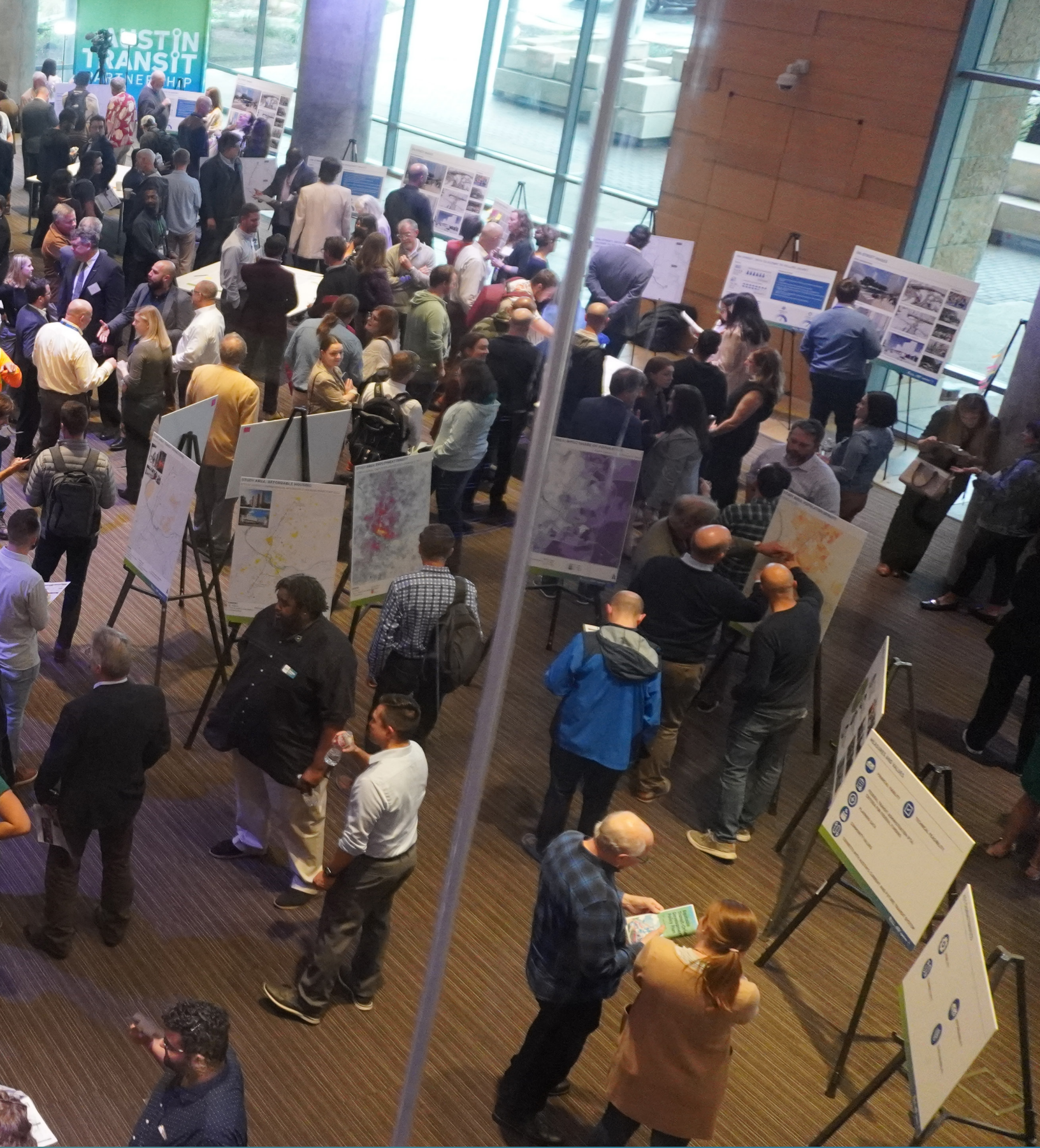
» Upon adoption of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan, ATP will progress through a multi-year process of continuing project development, environmental review, and coordination with FTA on federal grant funding.



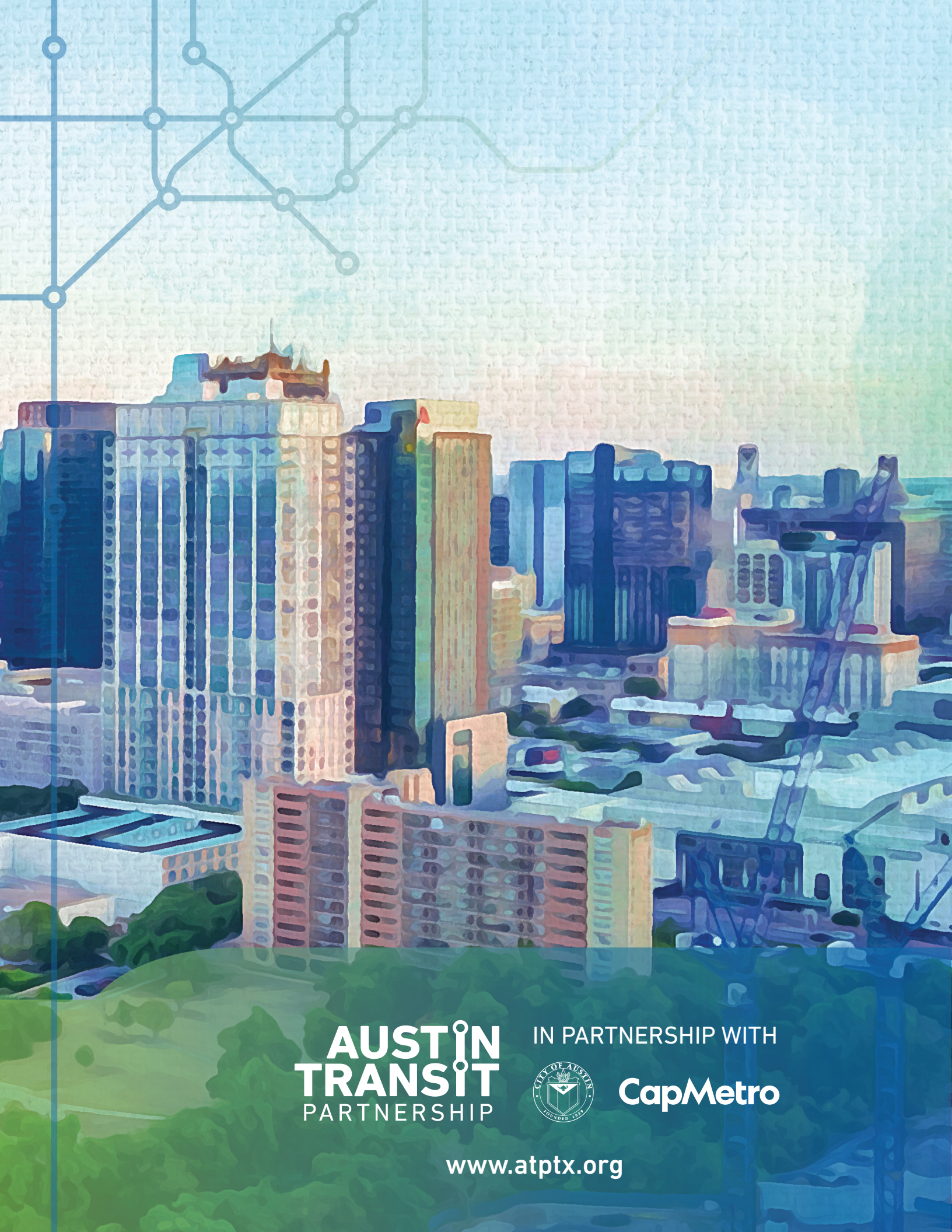


People attending the Mar. 21, 2023 Light Rail Open House.









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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**CapMetro**

[www.atptx.org](http://www.atptx.org)