

# PROJECT CONNECT STATUS REPORT

## ATP BOARD BRIEF | AUGUST 2023

In November 2020, the Austin voters approved Proposition A to dedicate new revenue to the implementation of Project Connect—a program of transit projects designed to provide transportation alternatives for our community. Voters simultaneously created the Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) and tasked its Board of Directors with overseeing the program. This Project Connect ATP Board Brief serves as an update to the ATP Board about the progress of the projects that make up the Project Connect Program.

### › LIGHT RAIL IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

The team continues to develop advanced conceptual engineering plans to form the basis for the necessary environmental review process. ATP is developing an integrated work plan to advance the project development activities for Austin Light Rail. As ATP advances engineering and design efforts, the team has an approach to incorporate human-centered design and plan with the customer experience in focus. ATP also continues to advance its delivery planning process plan for future phases of design and construction by evaluating delivery models, risk management strategies, and contracting needs. This process has included robust market sounding and industry engagement. Following the updates to the [Joint Powers Agreement](#) in June, ATP has also engaged with FTA regarding federal participation and partnership in the project. An initial focus is to prepare for being a grant recipient, which requires ATP to demonstrate the appropriate legal, financial, and technical capacity to manage and deliver the work.

On August 1, ATP met with FTA Region 6 Administrator Gail Lyssy and her team to move forward with this process to establish ATP as a direct grant recipient. Key topics include demonstrating federally compliant procurement policies and civil rights program plans, policies to guide financial management, and the technical capacity to deliver light rail.

The necessary components of this process are consistent with and fundamental to ATP's overall goal of organizational readiness to deliver the work that is needed for the initial light rail investment.

### › FY2023-2024 PROPOSED BUDGET

ATP presented the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Proposed Budget Report to the Board of Directors on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, providing an investment framework to support ATP's work over the next year. The Budget Report overall is an important opportunity to highlight how ATP will advance the implementation of Austin Light Rail and other elements of the Project Connect program.



ATP Partnership Visit with FTA, Region 6 | August 2023



Executive Director, Greg Canally, highlights in his message the collaboration among community members and agency partners that resulted in the adoption of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan this past June. A key component of the budget is the prioritization of resources for planning and community participation and involvement, as ATP looks ahead to initiate the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process, in which the community plays a vital role. The FY24 Budget also allows ATP to advance the planning, engineering, and architectural and urban design work required for NEPA, as well as the Federal Transit Administration’s Capital Improvement Grant (CIG) program. Learn more about the Budget at [www.atptx.org/about/finance](http://www.atptx.org/about/finance).



## › CITY STAFF COLLABORATING FOR SMOOTH PROGRAM DELIVERY

Following the adoption of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan, City of Austin staff continue to support the Project Connect program.

The City is also focused on supporting the federal NEPA process and policy work that will improve the program’s competitiveness for a substantial funding grant from the FTA.

The City is working in close coordination with ATP in its work. This work includes:

- Coordination between the Planning Department and City of Austin Project Connect Office (PCO) on forwarding Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy Plan implementation.
- Coordination between the Planning Department and PCO on progressing currently initiated citywide code amendments that would support transit service.
- Coordination of several City departments to review draft NEPA environmental documents and early light rail designs.

The Project Connect Office has collaborated closely with other City departments including Transportation and Public Works, Watershed Protection, and Development Services Departments to support the construction of the new CapMetro Rapid routes, related charging stations, and Park & Rides.

Additionally, the charging station and Park & Ride site plans are using a new Public Projects team and process set up by the Development Services Department; piloting this new team and process with the Rapid projects will help improve processes for when light rail work begins.



## › CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS: MCKALLA STATION AND RED LINE DOUBLE-TRACKING

CapMetro advances construction progress on the Red Line double-tracking and continues expedient work on the construction of McKalla Station to be located along the east side of the Q2 Major League Soccer Stadium.

This project is a new regional transit station being constructed as a part of Project Connect to increase mobility and transit options for the North Burnet area. Construction progress includes work necessary to complete the double-tracking on the Red Line with drainage improvements to reduce flooding, water line relocation, traffic and pedestrian signals improvement, and quiet zone development.

› **LANGMORE TO SERVE AS ATP'S SECOND COMMUNITY EXPERT DIRECTOR IN FINANCE**



John Langmore was appointed to the ATP Board of Directors in July, a process approved by both the Austin City Council and CapMetro Board of Directors. Langmore is one of three community experts who serve on the ATP Board.

Langmore will serve as Board Liaison to the Finance and Risk Advisory Committee, a committee that helps advise ATP staff and Board Members on matters regarding capital management, risk management, budgets, insurance, treasury management, internal audit, procurement, grants management, and real estate.

He brings a wealth of experience in the transportation industry—including more than a decade of experience as a transportation and land use consultant assisting in financing roadway projects and advising some of the country's largest infrastructure projects. In addition to his professional experience, Langmore has served on the CapMetro Board and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority Board and served as the 2017 Vice Chair and 2023 Chair of the Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committees.

ATP welcomes Langmore to the Board of Directors and extends gratitude for his service.

› **CROSS-AGENCY LEADERSHIP OFFERS ANNUAL PROJECT CONNECT UPDATE**

Transit Forward hosted its yearly Project Connect Update on August 21<sup>st</sup>, offering an opportunity for cross-agency leadership to provide perspective and updates related to Project Connect. Event speakers included Mayor Kirk Watson, Juan Garza, and Commissioner Jeff Travillion – each of whom serves on the ATP Board of Directors.



ATP, CapMetro, and City of Austin Leadership spoke at Transit Forward's Annual Meeting | August 21, 2023

Also participating in the dialogue was ATP Executive Director Greg Canally, Interim Assistant City Manager Robert Goode, and CEO and President of CapMetro Dottie Watkins. The event offered an opportunity to hear how the three partnering agencies are working together, specifically following the approval of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan this past June. Bill McCamley, Executive Director of Transit Forward, positioned opportunities for the audience to ask questions and further educate the public about the important investments in Austin transportation choices and infrastructure.