

# PROJECT CONNECT STATUS REPORT

## ATP BOARD BRIEF | JULY 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

Following the June adoption of the [Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan](#), ATP staff are moving forward with the implementation of Austin’s first light rail project. Engineering efforts are being developed and advanced for the on-street, two-line light rail system extending north, south and east of downtown. This work will form the basis of the project definition that will be used for environmental analysis and community engagement. Additionally, station area visioning efforts will identify key station design criteria that impact transit user experience. These efforts include research and benchmarking to explore transit rider experiences at existing transit stations across Austin and other example cities to observe trends in design characteristics that influence whether a passenger has a positive or negative reaction to their trip. This work will support future community engagement opportunities crucial to informing station area design criteria.

Forthcoming engineering efforts will define the project basis for community engagement and analysis of potential Austin Light Rail environmental impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This analysis will be compiled into a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to be issued for public review next year. Staff continues working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to meet requirements for the Capital Investment Grant Program, an anticipated major funding source for Austin Light Rail Phase 1.

ATP also continues to advance industry engagement and is evaluating responses to the Request for Industry Feedback (RFIF) issued this spring to inform the consideration of different delivery models for future phases of Austin Light Rail. Industry engagement will continue to inform ATP’s contracting opportunities and inform industry outreach next steps such as trainings and education on requirements for federally funded projects and registration assistance for DBE and M/WBE firms.



### LOOK AHEAD – DELIVERY NEEDS

INDUSTRY OUTREACH NEXT STEPS	PROPOSED / POTENTIAL CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration assistance program for DBE and M/WBE firms</li> <li>Additional peer agency review and input</li> <li>Workforce training programs for local partners</li> <li>Industry engagement for continuous feedback opportunities</li> <li>Education on requirements for federally funded projects</li> <li>Updates on contracting opportunities and schedule</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <b>Owner's Engineer: Maintenance Facility and Utilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance utility relocation final design</li> <li>Maintenance facility design (option for Rail design)</li> <li>Advanced surveying and utility investigations</li> <li>Permitting for utilities and maintenance facility</li> <li>Support development of construction bid documents for advanced utilities and maintenance facility</li> </ul> </td> <td> <b>Advanced Utility Relocation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitting</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <b>Delivery Partner: Project Management / Construction Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff augmentation</li> <li>Advisory services</li> <li>Procurement support</li> <li>Interface and configuration management</li> <li>Project controls</li> <li>Technical criteria and requirements</li> <li>Design and construction submittal reviews</li> <li>FTA readiness planning and documentation</li> <li>Construction management</li> <li>Quality and safety management</li> <li>Contract management and admin support</li> <li>Communications and community engagement</li> </ul> </td> <td> <b>Collaborative Contracting: Civil / Rail / Stations (+ Systems)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design (preliminary engineering through final design)</li> <li>Interface reconciliation support</li> <li>Permitting</li> <li>Construction</li> <li>Systems integration and testing</li> <li>Safety certification</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <b>Additional On-Call Support Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental support: Transit planning and traffic analysis; sustainability/resiliency</li> </ul> </td> <td> <b>Maintenance Facility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential design and constructability support</li> <li>Potential interface reconciliation support</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td> <b>Light Rail Vehicles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design, manufacturing and testing</li> <li>Vehicle delivery and safety certification</li> <li>Interface and configuration management support</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<b>Owner's Engineer: Maintenance Facility and Utilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance utility relocation final design</li> <li>Maintenance facility design (option for Rail design)</li> <li>Advanced surveying and utility investigations</li> <li>Permitting for utilities and maintenance facility</li> <li>Support development of construction bid documents for advanced utilities and maintenance facility</li> </ul>	<b>Advanced Utility Relocation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitting</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul>	<b>Delivery Partner: Project Management / Construction Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff augmentation</li> <li>Advisory services</li> <li>Procurement support</li> <li>Interface and configuration management</li> <li>Project controls</li> <li>Technical criteria and requirements</li> <li>Design and construction submittal reviews</li> <li>FTA readiness planning and documentation</li> <li>Construction management</li> <li>Quality and safety management</li> <li>Contract management and admin support</li> <li>Communications and community engagement</li> </ul>	<b>Collaborative Contracting: Civil / Rail / Stations (+ Systems)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design (preliminary engineering through final design)</li> <li>Interface reconciliation support</li> <li>Permitting</li> <li>Construction</li> <li>Systems integration and testing</li> <li>Safety certification</li> </ul>	<b>Additional On-Call Support Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental support: Transit planning and traffic analysis; sustainability/resiliency</li> </ul>	<b>Maintenance Facility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential design and constructability support</li> <li>Potential interface reconciliation support</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul>		<b>Light Rail Vehicles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design, manufacturing and testing</li> <li>Vehicle delivery and safety certification</li> <li>Interface and configuration management support</li> </ul>
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## › CAPMETRO COMMUTER RAIL UPGRADES

CapMetro Rail upgrades were completed July 5-16 with the following objectives:

- Double-tracking to eventually allow for increased train frequency
- Drainage improvements to reduce area flooding
- Relocate water lines
- Improve traffic and pedestrian signals
- Develop quiet zones

Before upgrades began, communications and outreach included two rounds of postcards mailed to approximately 14,000 businesses and residents. Efforts also included blockwalking, social media, press releases, at-stop signage, and customer alert emails and texts.

In the final days of work, a short delay required the agency to be nimble and institute a bus bridge while customers were using the service to attend an Austin FC match.

CapMetro extends its thanks to contractors and partners for their hard work and extends its thanks to Transit Forward for day-of coordination.



## › ETOD POLICY PLAN ADOPTION

On July 6, City staff shared an [update on progress towards the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development \(ETOD\) Policy Plan](#) with the Mayor and City Council. Current activities include the delivery of station area vision plans, transit-supportive regulations, and a holistic suite of policies and programs to encourage equitable outcomes around Project Connect. By managing development near stations, the ETOD Policy Plan will support ridership goals, ensure sustained transit use, and lead to a successful Austin Light Rail system.

Developed in partnership between the City of Austin, ATP and CapMetro, the ETOD Policy Plan was approved by Council on March 9, 2023. It provides a comprehensive framework to help ensure that future development around Austin Light Rail supports residents of all incomes and backgrounds, especially those who have been disproportionately burdened by past transportation and land use decisions.

## › ATP ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE: DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



ATP recently hired Bruce Hermes as the organization's first Director of Information Technology (IT). Bruce comes to ATP with more than 20 years' IT experience garnered across multiple agencies that has provided a diverse range of expertise including IT project management, innovative data

management and solutions, well-curated industry connections and personnel management that embraces supervision expertise across the IT industry.

Prior to joining ATP, Bruce served as the Chief Information Officer with the Texas Department of Agriculture. He has spent most of his career supporting and leading IT departments in multiple public sector agencies. Bruce's early years in IT were as a software developer at the [then] Texas Department of Health. By the time he left the agency, he oversaw roughly eighty team members. Additional prior roles include serving as the IT Director for the Office of Court Administration and as a general manager of the city/county 911 center and as the Deputy Chief Information Officer for the City of Austin. ATP welcomes Bruce to his new role, which he began June 26.

## › UPDATE ON ATP RECRUITMENTS

ATP continues its organizational readiness initiatives to lead the [Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan](#). Recruiting key expertise to lead and support the Plan supports the pathway to advance organizational readiness.

ATP is currently recruiting positions in areas such as finance, procurement and contract management, architecture and urban design, planning, program controls, and quality assurance.

More information about these ATP positions and employment opportunities is available on ATP's website at [atptx.org](http://atptx.org).