

PROJECT CONNECT STATUS REPORT

ATP BOARD BRIEF | OCTOBER 2023



In November 2020, 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.

PROGRAM UPDATES

› LIGHT RAIL IMPLEMENTATION

ATP continues developing the Austin Light Rail design and environmental analysis while advancing federal process requirements. This month, design efforts focused on defining the project footprint (i.e., the light rail transitway, stations, streetscape, and required utility relocation elements) and reviewing critical user experience aspects (i.e. multimodal access for bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as street trees provisions to provide shade).

ATP is coordinating with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to publish an updated Notice of Intent (NOI) in early 2024, a key milestone in the NEPA process. This notice will describe the project under federal environmental review and reflect the June 2023 Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan. ATP anticipates publishing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in Fall of 2024 and will engage the community in multiple steps throughout the process.

Following extensive peer and industry engagement, ATP developed a contracting framework that spans all phases of the project. Staff identified near-term procurements including On-Call Planning and Engineering support services and a Delivery Partner to support project management, construction management, and more. ATP will share contracting opportunities and procurement next steps through a range of engagement opportunities, including events to support Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program, and local and small businesses. See the updated project delivery framework, vendor registration opportunities, and next steps on ATP's [Industry Partners webpage](#).



Project Delivery Framework | October 2023

› USER EXPERIENCE & DESIGN

In September, ATP described upcoming community outreach plans focused on user needs and experiences. This fall, ATP will share research on how people use transit in Austin and design challenges related to safety, predictability, and comfort of the future light rail and the larger public transit system. Data collected through this engagement will inform the design process and help build a transit system that prioritizes people and their experiences, and ultimately encourages more people to ride and create

community connection. See upcoming engagement dates below, with location information to be published on ATP's website:

- Wednesday, November 15
- Thursday, November 16
- Tuesday, December 5
- Wednesday, December 6
- Wednesday, December 13 (Virtual)

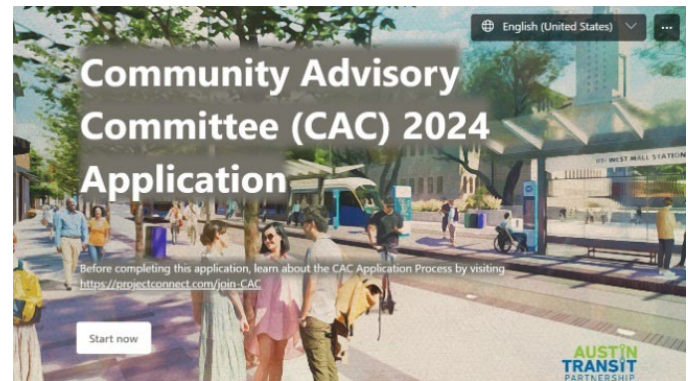
› OCTOBER 2023 WORKFORCE SUMMIT



In partnership with ATP and CapMetro, Workforce Solutions hosted the first Moving Forward: Mobility + Infrastructure Workforce Summit from October 12-13, 2023. The Summit brought leaders from across public and private organizations together to advance the shared goal of increasing local mobility and infrastructure job opportunities that could lead to long-term careers for people in Central Texas.

A 20-year forecast was unveiled, providing supply and demand data on the Austin region's construction occupations, skilled workers, and related industries. Major findings showed the development of Austin Light Rail and other Project Connect programs, I-35, the airport expansion, and more capital projects. The Mobility + Infrastructure partnership continues to develop actionable strategies to address the labor gap, including evaluating capacity around current training programs, skills gaps, the need for wraparound services, and creating more ease of access for people to these opportunities. The future of infrastructure development in Austin is booming, and we are seeking to ensure that everyone will benefit from this unprecedented number of economic opportunities.

› COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPLICATIONS OPEN



The City of Austin, CapMetro, and ATP invited community members in the Austin area and CapMetro service area to apply to join the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC advises all three partners on anti-displacement and equity matters related to Project Connect.

The goal is for the CAC to be representative of Austin's diverse community and a variety of interests and experiences. Candidates will be selected by the nominating committee based on their use of transit and how their personal, professional, or lived experience has contributed to meeting the needs of people experiencing homelessness, mobility justice, the advancement of criminal justice reform, housing, and land-use policy, workforce/labor policy, connection to community organizations, and increasing economic and other opportunities for underserved transit users.

Applications open Monday, October 16th and close Friday, November 17th. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria and submit an application (available in English and Spanish). [Visit the CAC webpage](#) to learn more about the application process.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Partnership content is contributed directly from partnering organizations.

› CAPMETRO PROJECT CONNECT UPDATE

CapMetro continues to make on-time progress for the CapMetro Expo Center and Pleasant Valley Rapid Lines, as well as McKalla Station. To facilitate construction of the rail station, a rail shutdown has been scheduled for October 21 through October 23, 2023, during which time CapMetro will construct drainage improvements, relocate water lines, improve traffic and pedestrian signals, advance the quiet zones, and complete final paving on Braker Lane. CapMetro has shared the planned shutdown with customers and community members via social media, CapMetro alerts, at-stop signage, construction signage, and more, and will continue to provide additional and up-to-the-minute information for customers.

Additionally, the CapMetro Board will consider approving the proposed January 2024 Service Change during the Board meeting on October 23. Included in the proposed service change is the new Dove Springs Pickup Zone, to be funded by CapMetro-committed revenue for Project Connect. CapMetro has been engaging with the community over the last several months to define the proposed Dove Springs Pickup Zone, which will launch in 2024 if approved by the CapMetro Board. More details on the proposed Pickup Zone can be found on the [CapMetro January 2024 Proposed Service Changes website](#).

› CITY OF AUSTIN ADVANCES HOUSING EFFORTS, SUPPORTS RAPID CONSTRUCTION

This month, the City of Austin Housing and Planning Departments initiated the fall community engagement:

- On Saturday, October 14th, the Housing Department’s Anti-Displacement team hosted a celebration of the Project Connect Community Initiated Solutions program. The event introduced the 12 organizations receiving Project Connect funding and highlighted the work that has already begun.
- This week, the City Planning Department and CapMetro’s ETOD Planning team are hosting neighborhood workshops that will feature presented station area vision plan scenarios for the North Lamar and South Congress Transit Centers.

City and CapMetro Planning teams will present the ETOD Implementation Plan later this fall. The ETOD Implementation Plan outlines major deliverables planned for the next several years as well as related transit-supportive work (including citywide code amendments and the comprehensive plan update).

City of Austin Project Connect Office staff are also supporting coordination with CapMetro on the Pleasant Valley and Expo Center Rapid lines, bringing together City staff from a number of departments to support the projects. That work has completed the installation of 16 station platforms, with another 19 under construction. The first shelters are also scheduled to be installed soon.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

› APTA TRANSFORM CONFERENCE & EXPO

ATP staff recently attended the [APTA TRANSform Conference & Expo](#) in Orlando, Florida. Staff connected with other transit agencies and FTA staff to learn about the latest policy updates and funding opportunities, see light rail vehicles and technologies and learn from similar projects across the country. ATP Engineering SVP Alvin Livingstone and CapMetro COO Andy Skabowski presented the two agencies' planning and joint partnership collaboration leading up to the recent adoption of the Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan.

› ATP BOARD CHAIR NOMINATED FOR WOMAN OF THE YEAR

ATP's Board Chair Veronica Castro de Barrera was nominated for Woman of the Year by the Luna Awards, which celebrate the achievements of women in the architecture, construction, and engineering industry. The ATP acknowledges her commitment to the mission of Austin Light Rail. Congratulations, Chair Castro de Barrera, on this recognition!



Hispanic Contractors Association Luna Awards | October 2023

› 2023 MOVABILITY SUMMIT

On September 28, Movability hosted the 2023 Movability Summit. ATP's Senior Vice President of Delivery and Construction, Manan Garg, was among the panelists discussing the new Construction Partnership Program (CPP). CPP is a joint agency effort underway to prepare for the unprecedented infrastructure improvements scheduled throughout Central Texas over the next ten years.

