

PROJECT CONNECT STATUS REPORT

ATP BOARD BRIEF | FEBRUARY 2024



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.

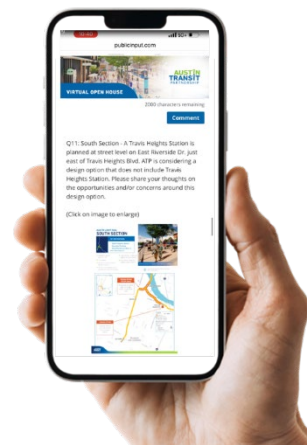
PROGRAM UPDATES

› LIGHT RAIL IMPLEMENTATION

During the month of February, ATP is hosting six Open House events to collect public input on the range of study topics and issues associated with the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 project that was approved in June 2023. ATP is also presenting a set of design options that are being studied as part of the proposed project, including station location refinements and strategies to incorporate various transportation modes.

The Open House events are a part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Scoping phase scheduled to conclude March 4. Public input received during this phase will further inform the analysis that will be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which will be available for public review and comment later this year.

ATP is coordinating with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on the development of the DEIS, and recently awarded a contract to Pinyon Environmental Services, Inc. to support FTA in environmental review, compliance, and documentation associated with Austin Light Rail – Phase 1. This expertise provides FTA with dedicated resources to support a timely and quality review process for Austin Light Rail.



Interactive online survey (“Virtual Open House”) open 2/1/24 through 3/4/24



Community engages with ATP staff at February Open Houses

› ADDITIONAL OPEN HOUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- February 22, 2024 @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm – [Virtual Event](#)
- February 27, 2024 @ 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm – [Twin Oaks Branch Library: Rooms 1 & 2](#)
- February 29, 2024 @ 7:30 am - 9:00 am – [St. David's Episcopal Church: Sumners Hall](#)

Additional information regarding upcoming open house events can be found at <https://www.atptx.org/events/>. Community members can also share input through the online survey available on the Virtual Open House at <https://www.publicinput.com/austinlightrailopenhouse>.

PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

Partnership content is contributed directly from partnering organizations.

› CITY MOVES FORWARD WITH TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE CODE AMENDMENTS

The Austin City Council initiated a process to amend City code earlier this month. [That action](#) kicked off work across a number of departments including Planning, Transportation & Public Works, Development Services Departments, along with the Project Connect Office to pursue code amendments responsive to Council’s directive. City Council is scheduled to take action on the proposed amendments in mid-May, in coordination with ATP’s work to advance the federal grant process.

The code amendments will improve the City’s ability to deliver increased housing and transit-supportive development throughout Austin. There are multiple interconnected goals for these code amendments:

- Increased housing options for all Austinites and especially affordable housing
- Decreased housing costs overall
- Support for transit in general and especially along the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 alignment

The increased housing options will serve Austinites across all income levels and throughout the city. In addition to the profound good that could do, the City’s focus on adding housing units along the light rail corridor will support ridership and improved access to the proposed light rail services.

› NEW SOUTH CENTRAL WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO BE RELEASED

The South Central Waterfront team is preparing to release a new plan to guide development within the district. Structured as a combining district and density bonus program, the plan represents an opportunity to provide hundreds of new homes and a destination for all of Austin.

Austin Light Rail will travel through the district, which will be home to the planned Waterfront Station. In addition to easy access by great public transit, the district will provide connections to the Hike & Bike Trail, Lady Bird Lake, and new public open space.

There will be a community meeting for residents to learn more about the South Central Waterfront District coming soon.



Renderings of South Central Waterfront District

› CAPMETRO RAIL MCKALLA STATION GRAND OPENING

The highly anticipated opening of CapMetro Red Line’s McKalla Station at Q2 Stadium is ready for its grand opening on February 24, 2024, coinciding with Austin FC’s season opener. The on-time and on-budget delivery of this project is part of CapMetro’s commitment to voter-approved transit investments and expansion through Project Connect. The new station’s high capacity platforms are ready to move fans to and from the stadium quickly and efficiently, and community members to and from the North Burnet area.

In preparation for opening day, CapMetro’s Public Safety and Emergency Management team held a full-scale training exercise with more than 150 participants to simulate various operational scenarios. The exercise helps our teams prepare for boarding and deboarding, platform usage, simulating crowd flows, and wayfinding. Lastly, an exercise coordinated with EMS, the Austin Police Department, and the Austin Fire Department helped us prepare a coordinated response related to public health and well-being.

CapMetro continues to engage with the community to provide information to nearby residents on schedules and to help with wayfinding once the station opens.

