

Austin Transit Partnership

Project Connect Status Report

**ATP Board Brief
September 2026**



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Austin Light Rail Implementation

Procurement Update

ATP awarded the last of its major contracts this summer to round out the full team of contracting partners now onboard to build Austin Light Rail Phase 1. ATP continues its collaboration with partners for the Civils, Rail, Stations and Systems elements of the Light Rail System (LRT) and the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) and the recently selected vehicle manufacturer.

On July 15, the ATP Board awarded a contract to rail vehicle manufacturer, Stadler US, Inc., for design services, manufacture, testing and delivery of light rail vehicles for Austin Light Rail. The initial contract authorizes preliminary design work, with funding for additional work under the contract subject to future authorization by the Austin Transit Partnership Board of Directors. Having the vehicle designer under contract now will allow for timely coordination with the teams that are currently designing the overall light rail system and Operations and Maintenance Facility.

Completing these major procurements over the course of 18 months solidly positions ATP to transition into the next phase of project delivery as the project steadily progresses to construction in 2027.

Learn more about ATP's contract award by visiting [ATP's website](#).



ATP and Stadler teams



Light Rail Vehicle exterior visualization



Light Rail Vehicle interior visualization

Civils/Rail/Stations/Systems

- ✓ RFI: February 2025
- ✓ Connect and Build Event: February 2025
- ✓ RFQ: June 2025
- ✓ RFP: August 2025
- ✓ Contract Awarded: February 2026

Operations & Maintenance Facility

- ✓ RFI: April 2025
- ✓ Connect & Build Event: May 2025
- ✓ RFQ: August 2025
- ✓ RFP: October 2025
- ✓ Contract Awarded: April 2026

Light Rail Vehicles

- ✓ RFI: May 2025
- ✓ RFP: Fall 2025
- ✓ Contract Awarded: July 2026

Checkmarks indicate completed procurement activities.

FY27 Budget

On September 21, the ATP Board of Directors will consider approval of the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget which presents a spend plan totaling almost \$400 million for the light rail, with a staffing plan that funds 64 full-time equivalent positions and an additional appropriation of \$20 million for the Anti-Displacement Fund administered by the City of Austin.

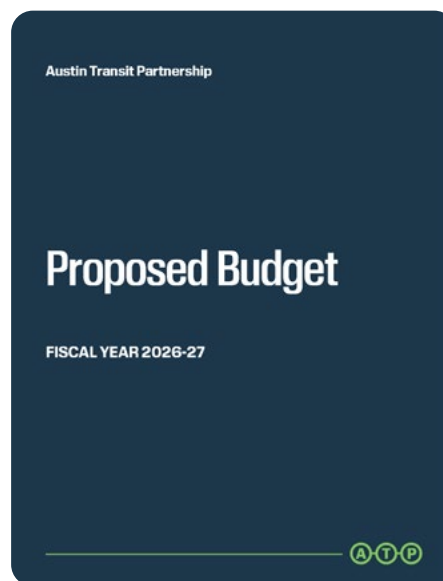
The FY27 Budget will support design advancement, utility relocation planning, right-of-way acquisition, integration of the design/preconstruction readiness activities between ATP's Civils, Rail & Stations contractor, the Operations & Maintenance Facility contractor, and the Light Rail Vehicle manufacturer and readying early work construction packages.

Following the completion of the Project Development phase of this federal process, ATP expects to move into the Engineering phase—one of the final steps before executing a Full Funding Grant Agreement. This steady and undeterred progress is due to the collective expertise and unrelenting commitment from our ATP team and partners.

ATP's Budget is grounded in three priority outcomes: protecting affordability & securing the corridor, effective contract management & implementation, progressing & advancing through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) New Starts program.

ATP presented the proposed budget in July providing time to engage key stakeholders throughout August, specifically presenting the budget to the Project Connect Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Austin Light Rail Advisory Group at their respective August meetings.

Learn more about ATP's Budget at [ATP's website](#).



*Cover of Proposed Budget
Fiscal Year 2026-27*

Sharing & Learning

2026 High School Internship Program

ATP welcomed local high school students participating in the ATP internship program offering hands-on experience and direct work with professionals building Austin Light Rail. The annual program selects students through an application process with a pool of applicants representing high schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). The interns were able to work directly with engineers, architects, program administrators, and communications and community engagement professionals, along with leaders in the Austin community. A key opportunity to engage with community leaders included a session with Mayor Kirk Watson as the interns heard from multiple perspectives about how transit infrastructure mega-projects are built.

The internship program builds avenues for meaningful connections and mentorship with dozens of transit professionals and serves as a key workforce development initiative by ATP, AECOM and other Austin Light Rail contracting partners.



Back to School Supply Drive – Allison Elementary School

ATP partnered with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to provide school supplies for students and teachers at Allison Elementary, a school along the alignment in the Montopolis neighborhood. The Austin Light Rail team, through personal contributions, distributed backpacks filled with supplies as well as made monetary donations to help kick off a successful school year. The community service opportunity was one of several the Austin Light Rail team has conducted to support partnerships and community initiatives along the alignment.



ATP continues to share progress about Austin Light Rail and provides insights with local stakeholders and organizations. Additional highlights include:

- Participation at The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2026 Rail Conference, to share progress about Austin Light Rail in Baltimore, MD
- Participation in The Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) National Meeting & Training Conference in Washington, D.C.
- 2026 Diversity Ethnic Chamber Alliance (DECA) Small Business Summit
- UT Austin Fariborz Maseeh Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering (CAEE) Faculty Meeting
- Austin Light Rail Advisory Group



Y'all Aboard Campaign

We want Austinites to love light rail. But before they can love it, they need to understand it. Y'all Aboard is ATP's public awareness campaign to educate Austinites about light rail and celebrate the people, places, and culture along the line. Follow ATP on social media to learn more.



yallaboard.org

City of Austin Update

Project Connect – Displacement Prevention Strategies

Protecting Residents

Through **Community Initiated Solutions**, the City of Austin is continuing its commitment to protect vulnerable residents who are housing insecure. To ensure that all residents get to benefit from the new transit investments, CIS was designed with community input to address a range of housing stability challenges, and local organizations are continuing to meet the challenge by offering support to tenants and homeowners within the Project Connect corridor.



City of Austin staff facilitate a cohort meeting with Community Initiated Solutions partner organizations

Meeting Relevant Needs

Providing a range of services through Community Initiated Solutions was the responsive approach to addressing a wide range of relevant community needs. The services include financial education, estate planning, rent assistance, tenant education, workforce development as well as support for seniors and youth. The investments have served as a social safety net to thousands of households within displacement risk neighborhoods.



City of Austin staff facilitate a cohort meeting with Community Initiated Solutions partner organizations

Strengthening Collaboration for Impact

Most importantly, staff have continued to work with community partners to strengthen the collaboration between organizations to maximize the impact of the funding. Regular convenings with partners focused on continued collaboration, clear communication about funding and outreach opportunities, and shared peer learning. Staff used the August meeting to gather important feedback on the upcoming program evaluation that aims to identify and close service gaps, ensure continuity of services, and inform future programming.

CapMetro Update

During the summer, CapMetro operated the newly established 10-minute frequency during peak hours on the Rapid 800 and Rapid 837. Since starting the 10-minute frequency, the monthly ridership on the Rapid 800 increased by 26% and overall ridership has increased 111% since it started service in March 2025. Rapid 837 has experienced increasing ridership as well, increasing by 57% in monthly ridership since the 10-minute frequencies began and an overall 161% increase in monthly ridership since the service was introduced in March 2025.

CapMetro staff are working to close out the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Starts Grant and are working closely with the FTA to complete remaining punch-list items.



The newly launched Rapid 837 CapMetro bus