Austin Light Rail

Progress Update

February 20, 2025

Austin Transit Partnership

Benefits of Light Rail

New Options to Get Places

The line will integrate with cars, buses, trains and other modes — giving people more choices when navigating between the core and the larger metro area.

Easy, Reliable & Frequent

Light rail will have its own dedicated railway, intuitive directions, and run every 5-10 minutes — making it highly dependable and easy to use.

Reduced Travel Times

The line will allow riders to zip through the heart of Austin without having to sit in traffic — significantly reducing travel times to key destinations.

Nature-forward Design

Shade trees, Texas plants and new walk and bike paths will be integrated throughout the design of the line, creating more people-friendly spaces.

An Engine for Jobs

Light rail will create 10,000 jobs as a key part of city mobility improvements. It will also create access to 200K+ jobs when operational.

Keeps Austin Livable

The line will help keep our city accessible for working people by connecting to affordable housing and reducing commuting costs.

Light Rail in Other Cities

Paris, France

Seattle, Washington

Phoenix, Arizona

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Austin Light Rail Phase 1

Light rail is an expandable electric train system designed for metropolitan areas, serving as an integral part of the transit network by connecting people to essential destinations where they live, work and play.

Facts

15 STATIONS
connecting points north, south and east of downtown Austin

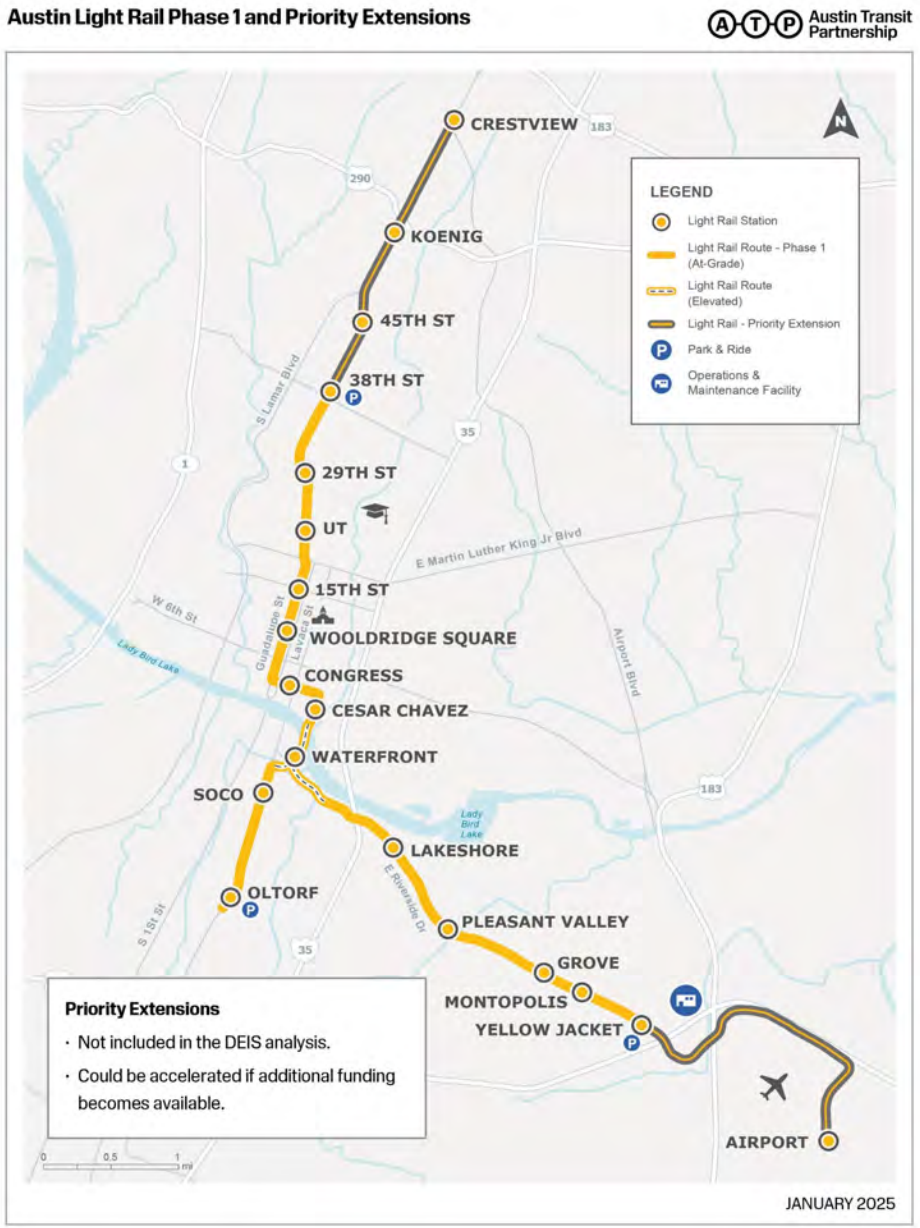
9.8 MILES
of light rail transit

~28,000 DAILY TRIPS
on an average weekday

Access to:

136K
current jobs

200K+
future jobs



A new shaded walk and bike path along the line on East Riverside, designed to improve walkability.

Artist conceptual visualization

LIGHT RAIL ON EAST RIVERSIDE

Aerial view near Pleasant Valley station, showing a new shaded walk and bike path and how the line extends from the city center to East Riverside.

Artist conceptual visualization

The station at UT on a typical game day with a redesigned and pedestrian-centric Guadalupe Street.

Artist conceptual visualization

OLTORF AT H-E-B

The station at Congress and Oltorf near H-E-B, showing a new public plaza with shade trees and native plants.

Artist conceptual visualization

Proposed Light Rail Timeline

2020–21

1. Approved & Established

Project was approved by Austin voters. ATP was formed to implement the light rail and assembled a team of transit experts.

2022–23

2. Defining Scope & Goals

Conducted a community-driven process to determine the project goals and formalize the Light Rail Implementation Plan.

2023–26

3. Planning, Design & Project Development

ATP is currently working on preliminary design and engineering, environmental review, delivery planning, and completing key steps to fulfill federal funding requirements.

2026–27

4. Engineering & Permitting

Detailed designs and technical specifications will be finalized, and all necessary permits and land will be secured.

2027–33

5. Construction & Testing

The ground will be prepped and excavated. Light rail tracks, stations, and pedestrian and cyclist paths will be built. Trains will be manufactured, delivered and tested.

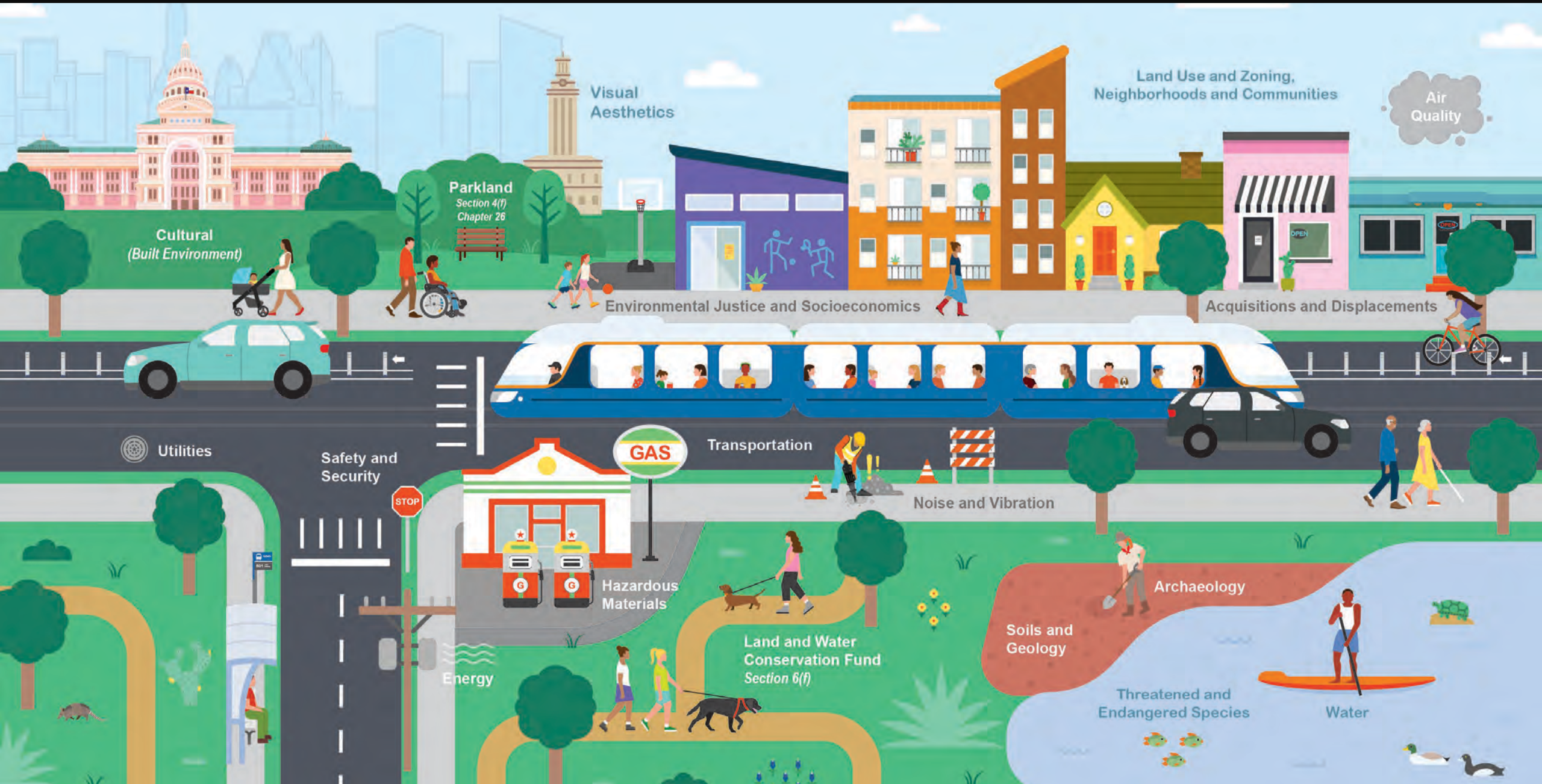
2033

6. Open for Service

Austin's light rail will officially open with 9.8 miles of track, stretching from 38th to Oltorf to East Riverside.

Completed Step **Current Step** **Upcoming Step**

Environmental Analysis Topics



What's Next

All comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that are received by March 11, 2025, will be responded to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

How can you comment?

Call Us | (512) 389-7590

Email Us | *input@atptx.org*

Send Mail | 203 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701

Visit Our Virtual Open House

austinlightrail.org/austinlightrailinput

Ask for a presentation at input@atptx.org

ATP

Thank You.

Austin Transit Partnership

Design Option:

Wooldridge Square Station

Recommend adding a center platform station near Wooldridge Square on Guadalupe Street between 9th Street and 11th Street.

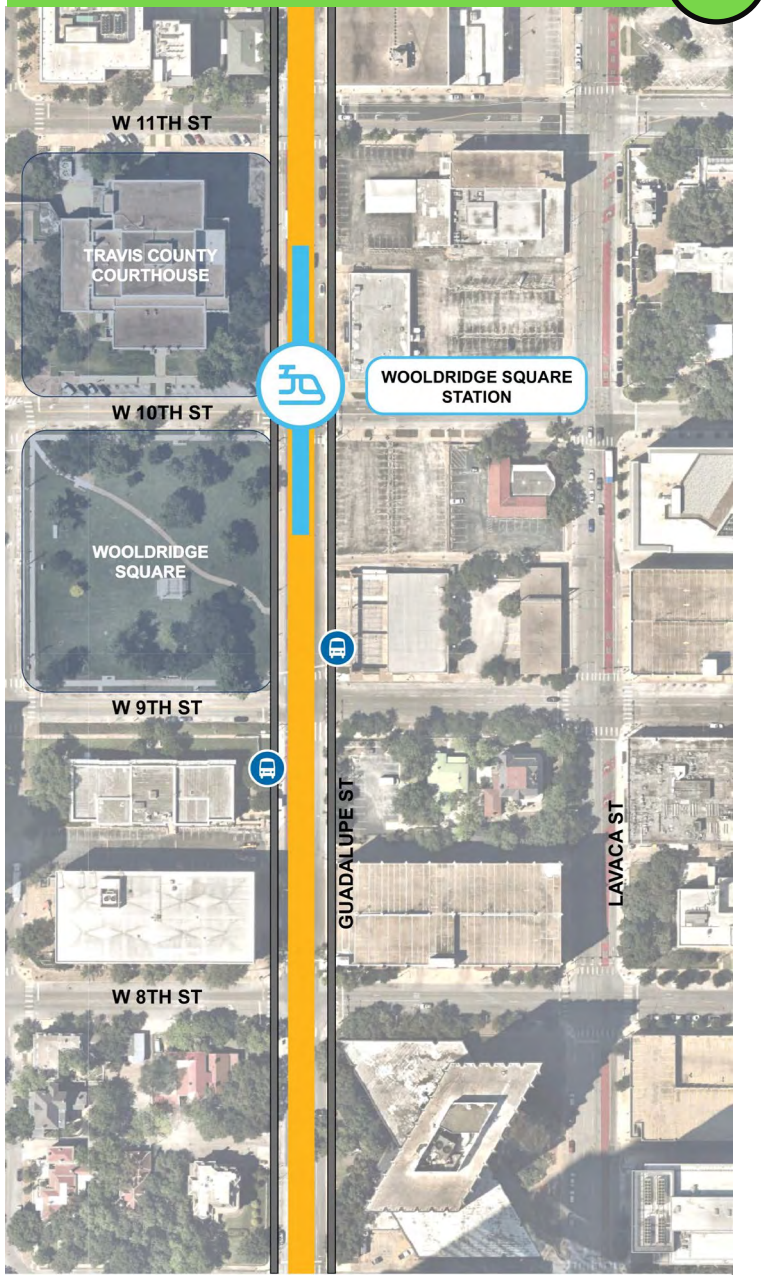
Why it's recommended

- Improves light rail access in the downtown area.
- Previous public input to have more stations downtown.
- Serves employment area.

Light Rail Station
Proposed CapMetro Bus Stops
Light Rail Alignment
Shared-Use Path (Bike/Ped)

June 2023 Project Definition

Design Option



Design Option:

Cesar Chavez Station

Recommend retaining the original Cesar Chavez Station location.

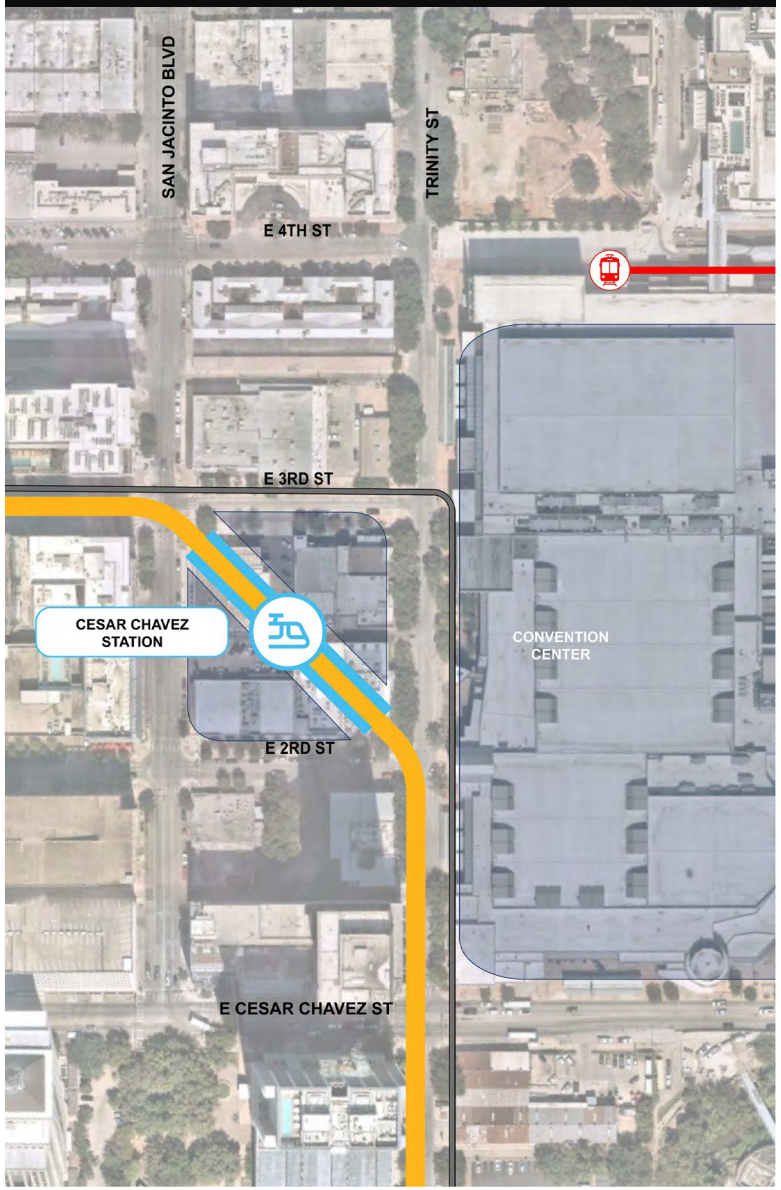
Why it's recommended

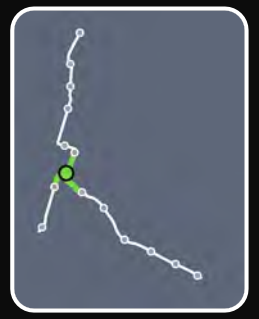
- An agreement would need to be in place with developer to enable use of the space off-street.
- Although this option is not recommended at this time, there would be operational benefits if it can be integrated into future developments.

Light Rail Station
CapMetro Red Line Station
Light Rail Alignment
Shared-Use Path (Bike/ Ped)
N

June 2023 Project Definition

Design Option





Design Option

Lady Bird Lake Bridge Extension

Recommend extending bridge and elevate Waterfront Station.

Why it's recommended

- Reduces impacts on floodplain and trees.
- Improves light rail reliability and traffic operations.
- Reduces property needs and avoids some utility work.
- Creates opportunity for an urban plaza that provides community benefits.

June 2023 Project Definition:

Design Option

Light Rail Station | Light Rail Station Elevated | Proposed CapMetro Bus Stops | Light Rail Alignment Elevated | Light Rail Alignment On-Street | Shared-Use Path Elevated | Shared-Use Path On-Street (Bike/Ped)

Design Option:

Omit Travis Heights Station

Why it's recommended

- Reduces Project footprint and eliminates several design and construction challenges due to the topography.
- Avoids partial acquisition of Norwood Park.
- Not expected to affect overall ridership.

June 2023 Project Definition

Design Option

Light Rail Station

Proposed CapMetro Bus Stops

Light Rail Alignment

Shared-Use Path (Bike/Ped)

Design Option:

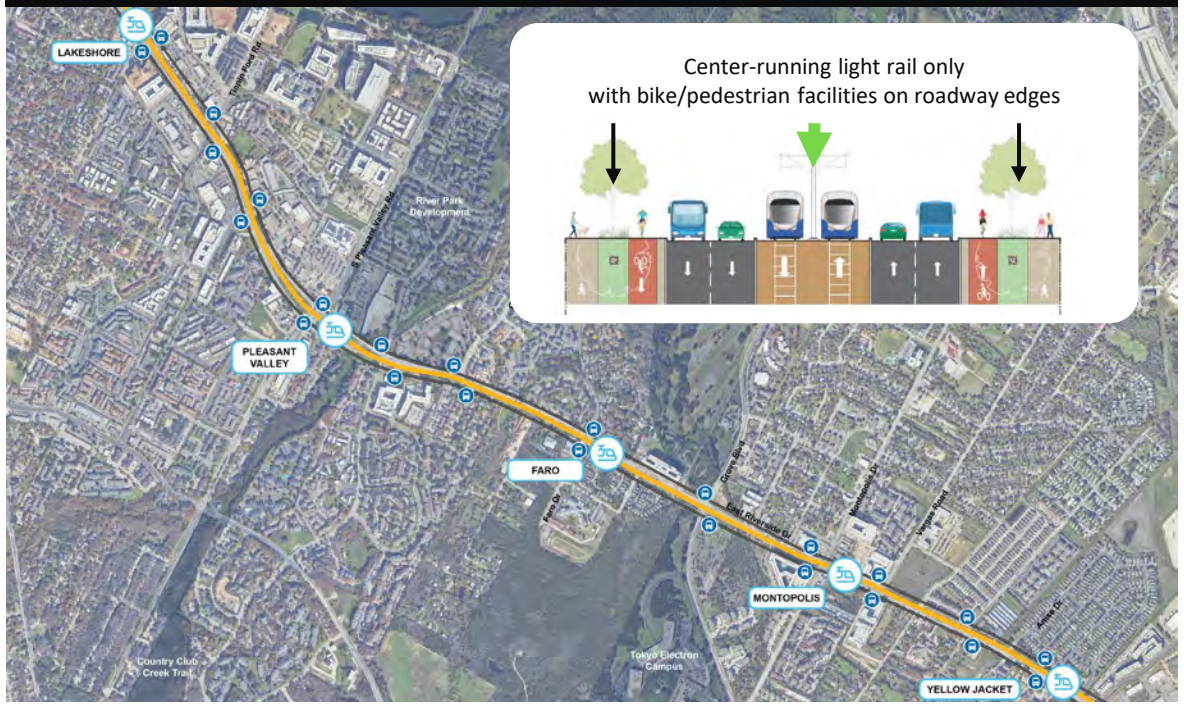
Center-Running Bike/Pedestrian/Shade Tree Facilities on East Riverside

Recommend incorporating the center-running bike/pedestrian/shade tree facilities next to light rail along East Riverside Dr. between Lakeshore Station and Yellow Jacket Station.

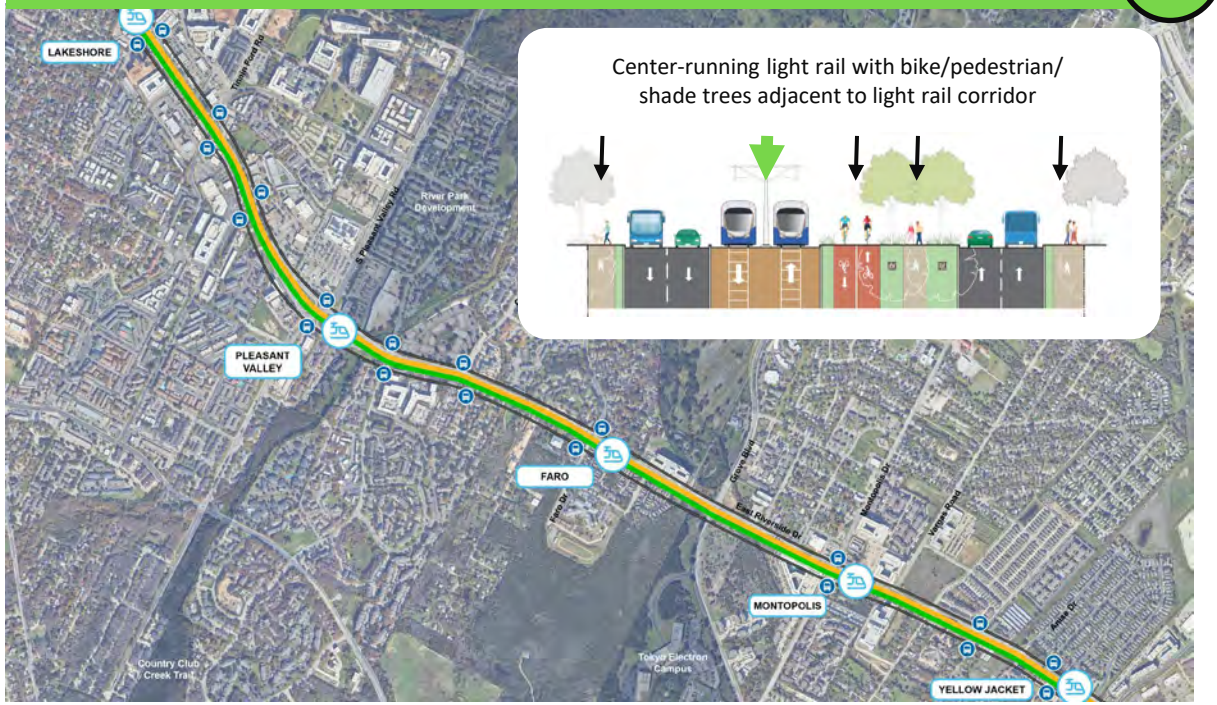
View of current state on East Riverside

View of future Light Rail on East Riverside

June 2023 Project Definition



Design Option



Light Rail Station | Proposed CapMetro Bus Stops | Light Rail Alignment | Shared-Use Path (Bike/Ped) | Shared-Use Path with Shade (Bike/Ped) | N

Why it's recommended

- Provides tree canopy and shade for riders and along more continuous bicycle and pedestrian facilities on East Riverside.
- More neighborhood scale feel along East Riverside without reducing traffic capacity.

Design Option:

Refine Stations on East Riverside

Recommend stations at Grove Boulevard and Montopolis Drive

Why it's recommended

- Serves both existing neighborhoods and planned developments, including proposed affordable housing development at Grove.
- Public feedback indicated both station areas are important.

Light Rail Station
Proposed CapMetro Bus Stops
Light Rail Alignment
Shared-Use Path (Bike/Ped)

June 2023 Project Definition: Faro and Montopolis Stations

Design Option: Grove Station

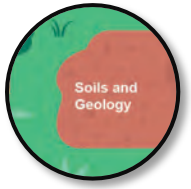
Design Option: Grove and Montopolis Stations

Environmental Analysis Topics

Physical and Natural Environment

Air Quality
Emissions, pollutants, greenhouse gases.

Energy and Electromagnetic Fields
Energy considerations and requirements.



Soils and Geologic Resources
Geologic conditions, risk for erosion, and seismic hazards.

Hazardous Materials
Presence of hazardous materials.

Water Resources
Surface waters, water quality, stormwater, safe drinking water, groundwater, and floodplains.

Noise and Vibration
Change in levels of noise or vibration.

Wildlife and Habitat
With particular attention to threatened and endangered species and local protection of heritage trees.

Human Environment

Environmental Justice
The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Property Acquisitions
Property needs that would require either temporary and permanent acquisitions.

Safety and Security
Safety and security measures for construction and operation of the new service.

Transportation
Roadway, transit, parking, sidewalk, and bicycle lane conditions.

Land Use and Zoning
Land use patterns and compatibility with local land use plans and policies.

Socioeconomics
Job creation and economic activity.

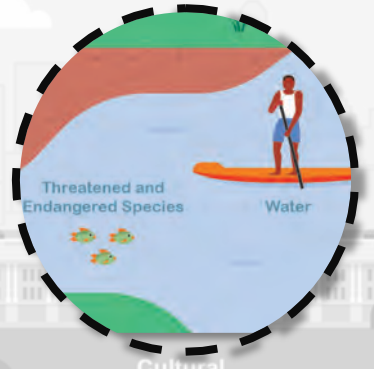
Utilities
Demand on utilities for electricity and coordination with utility companies.

Cultural Environment

Historic and Archeological Resources
Historically significant buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts.

Chapter 26, Section 4(f) and 6(f)
Consideration of publicly owned facilities and parkland, as required by federal and state law.

Neighborhoods and Community Resources
Neighborhood cohesion and character, and community facilities.



Wildlife and Water Resources

What are the potential impacts on water and local wildlife?

STUDY OUTCOMES

- Current drainage patterns will be maintained and will bridge or culvert over water features to limit disturbance.
- No threatened or endangered species or habitat will be impacted by the Project.
- Less than 2% overall change to impervious coverage because the Project is largely within existing right-of-way.
- Lighting during construction and operations could affect the bat colony and the new light rail bridge across Lady Bird Lake is in the bat flight path.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- Manage lighting to avoid or minimize impacts on bats and birds during construction and operations.
- Ensure compliance with Clean Water Act by continuing coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Continuing bridge design will seek to reduce impacts to water quality, plants and animals.

Air Quality

How would the construction and operation of light rail affect air quality?

STUDY OUTCOMES

Reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled
Annually, over 20 million fewer vehicle miles will be traveled, as more people transition to the newly available transit options.

No Air Emissions During Operation
Light rail vehicles are electric.

Austin Prioritizes Clean Air
The Austin area complies with all federal air quality standards designed to protect public health.

During construction:

- Increase in dust from construction activities.
- Increase in emissions from machinery used during construction.
- Temporary emissions from cars due to traffic conditions.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

ATP will require contractors to implement best management practices to minimize dust and emissions that might be caused by construction.

Trees

What will happen to trees along the light rail?

STUDY OUTCOMES

- A tree task force conducted an inventory of trees to determine the potential for preservation in the Project area.
- Three-tiered strategy will be applied to trees within the limits of construction, which includes:

245 Protected Trees

211 Heritage Trees

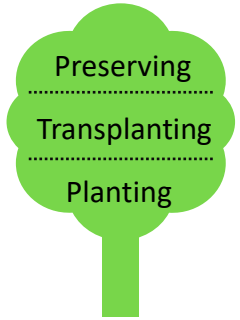
It is anticipated that most of these trees can be preserved.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- Continuing objective is to avoid tree removals or impacts through design.
- Removed trees would be replaced per City Tree Ordinance and in consultation with City Arborist.

Three-tiered strategy for trees:

- Preserving all of the protected and heritage trees we can through the Project's design.
- Transplanting protected and heritage trees that must be removed when feasible.
- Planting more new trees than we remove along and near the alignment.



Transportation

How would the construction and operation of light rail affect transportation in the area?

STUDY OUTCOMES

- Improved travel times and reliability for transit users.
- Added bike and pedestrian pathways.
- Traffic analysis shows that many intersections are congested in the future regardless of whether light rail is built.
- Temporary delays and/or detours to traffic (cars and buses) during construction.

Areas along light rail where space is limited may result in:

- Street network traffic pattern changes.
- Bikeway relocations.
- Reduced on-street parking.
- Delay and congestion at certain intersections.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Coordination between ATP and the City is critical to:

- Manage traffic signals for safe and regulated integration of light rail vehicles with pedestrians, bikes and cars.
- Plan for the overall transportation network through efforts like Austin Core Transportation (ACT) Plan.

ATP will manage and proactively communicate temporary traffic changes during construction in partnership with other major projects.

Environmental Justice

How will the Project benefit and support all neighboring communities around the light rail?

Following the public comment period, FTA will make an Environmental Justice determination that considers the potential for disproportionate adverse impacts, offsetting benefits, and proposed mitigation.

STUDY OUTCOMES

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Community Benefits

- New affordable and reliable transportation options that connect existing and planned affordable housing to jobs, healthcare, shopping, and cultural centers.
- Accessible stations and trains.
- Create new job opportunities and career pathways in the infrastructure industry.
- New and improved sidewalks and protected bike lanes associated with the Project.

Potential for Adverse Impacts on EJ Communities

- The indirect and cumulative effect of new development around the Project could accelerate gentrification trends.
- Acquisitions and displacements required for the Project would occur in EJ areas as defined by Executive Order 12898.

Plan for the equitable integration of light rail into Austin:

- Displacement Prevention Program administered by City.
- Business Assistance Program.
- Land Use Polices supporting affordable housing.

Socioeconomics

Are there local and regional economic opportunities and challenges?

STUDY OUTCOMES

During construction, an estimated:

+7,250 JOBS

from construction activities each year

$589 MILLION

annually in labor income

Once light rail in in operation:

+1,150 JOBS

will be created each year in Travis County*

**New and permanent jobs in operations, supply chain, and consumer spending*

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

ATP is working in regional partnerships to develop workforce development programs for local and regional residents to be trained and ready for job opportunities and career pathways resulting from the Project.

Property Acquisition

Will properties need to be acquired?

- Much of the Project is in the public right-of-way.
- Some properties or a portion of a property will need to be acquired for temporary and permanent use.
- The Draft EIS assesses property needs based on the design plans from May 2024.

Types of acquisitions/easements along the corridor:

- **Full:** An entire parcel would be purchased.
- **Partial:** Only the portion of a parcel falling within the proposed Project right-of-way footprint would be acquired.
- **Temporary:** Includes temporary construction easements used for construction activities.

PREFERED ALTERNATIVE STUDY OUTCOMES

567	28	280
Total Parcels along the corridor	**Full acquisitions**	**Partial acquisitions**

Less than 3% of the land adjacent to the light rail corridor would be needed, and most property impacts would be thin strips of land to expand sidewalks and streets.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- Work is ongoing to optimize design and reduce property impacts.
- Compensation including relocation assistance, moving costs, and other fees will be paid in accordance with the Uniform Act.

Temporary Construction Effects

Impacts during construction were identified as a concern during scoping. This analysis summarizes the key impact topics across all the resource areas that were studied.

STUDY OUTCOMES

Primary impacts generated during construction include:

- Dust and light pollution.
- Vehicle Emissions.
- Noise and vibration.
- Detours to traffic, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- Proactive communication to regularly broadcast and maintain road, lane, and trail detours.
- Limit nighttime construction in residential areas.
- Follow best management practices in reducing dust and maintaining healthy floodplains.
- Follow all local, state, and federal environmental laws and permit conditions.
- Implement Business Assistance Program development in coordination with the affected communities to plan for and minimize impacts during construction.
- Construction Partnership Program.

Noise and Vibration

What will the light rail sound like and will you notice any movement if you are close by?

STUDY OUTCOMES

Light rail noise characteristics:

- Electric light rail is quiet, similar to electric cars.
- Vehicles in operation would be barely noticeable over existing conditions along most of the Project.

Noise will result from:

Warning Bells and Crossover Tracks*

**specific locations where trains can switch tracks*

Other sources of noise:

Operation and Maintenance Facility

- Noise and vibration impacts could occur where trains would enter and operate in the OMF.
- Most nearby residential areas would not experience additional noise or vibration given distance to facility and existing conditions.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Potential opportunities to further reduce noise and vibration impacts:

- Relocating crossover tracks to less sensitive areas.
- Minimizing wheel/rail interaction at crossovers.
- Installing noise barriers or sound insulation where appropriate.

During construction:

ATP or its contractors would prepare a Noise Control Plan to minimize temporary impacts during construction.

Historic Architectural and Archeological Resources

This analysis was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). An inventory of existing resources eligible for protection under NHPA was conducted, and others were considered for eligible status in coordination with the Texas Historical Commission.

STUDY OUTCOMES

No Impact on Historic Properties

None of the 220 eligible historic properties will be adversely impacted that are located along the Project.

No Significant Archeological Resources Have Been Encountered

ATP has conducted archeological surveys in accessible areas where buried artifacts may be present and to date, nothing has been found.

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- ATP will continue to consult with local historians and architects to determine whether all historic properties have been identified, and whether current plans sufficiently avoid adverse impacts.
- Additional surveys will be conducted as design progresses. In addition, for areas with potential cultural resources, an archaeologist would monitor excavation activities during construction to identify and protect any artifacts that may be present.

Chapter 26, Section 4(f) and 6(f):

Impacts to Parks, Trails, Recreation and Historic Resources

Chapter 26 of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code was established to protect public parks, recreational and scientific areas, wildlife refuges, and historic sites from being used or taken by the local or state public agencies for public projects. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act is a federal law that establishes special requirements when parkland and historic resources are proposed to be used by a transportation project. Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act protects recreational lands purchased with Land and Water Conservation program funds.

STUDY OUTCOMES

- FTA has made preliminary Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact determinations for these types of uses. A *de minimis* impact is one where the partial use of a resource is needed but the use would not negatively affect the features, activities, or attributes of the property.
- Portions of parks and trails would be acquired or used for construction and operation of the Project.
- Partial acquisitions and easements would be needed to support underground utility relocations or new sidewalks that are part of the Project.
- ATP would acquire approximately one acre of Waller Beach for construction and maintenance of the new Lady Bird Lake Bridge. The trail would be restored after project completion.

Section 4(f) Parks and Trails Located within the Limits of Project Construction

KEY ATP PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- Waller Beach is also protected under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act, which requires the development of replacement parkland of equivalent value and use for the conversion area shown in the drawing.
- Plans are underway to identify the replacement parkland and relocate the Waller Creek Boathouse.

Project Design at Waller Beach