

AGENDA



Thursday, August 7, 2008

**Neighborhood Planning & Zoning
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**

Item No. 16

Subject: Authorize payment of the City's annual membership fee in the Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District, in an amount not to exceed \$49,500.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Operating Budget of the Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Department.

For More Information: Greg Guernsey, 974-2387; Lisa Nickle, 974-1417; Sylvia Arzola, 974-6448.

The Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail District was created in 2002 by the 77th Legislature with the focus on linking the Austin-San Antonio corridor via passenger rail. The District was initially comprised of four local governments: Austin, Travis County, San Antonio and Bexar County, but since its creation, other cities and counties along the corridor have joined the District. The District works with communities along the corridor to determine the feasibility of commuter rail passenger service within the existing Union-Pacific rail corridor that parallels IH-35 between Georgetown and San Antonio. Member organizations are required to pay annual dues.

The Rail District is currently examining the costs and economic benefits of developing regional passenger rail in the Austin-San Antonio Corridor.

To determine the feasibility of regional passenger rail, the District is conducting several essential tasks:

1. Adopting strategies to ensure regular and ongoing public outreach and involvement
2. Initiating alternatives analysis, preliminary engineering, and environmental clearance
3. Developing multi-year funding strategies with federal, state, regional and local partners
4. Launching a detailed economic development analysis
5. Clarifying the Union Pacific relocation situation and developing alternatives

Once the Rail District determines that regional passenger rail is technically and financially feasible, the District would proceed with right-of-way acquisition and construction. If all tasks continue on schedule, passenger rail service could begin as early as 2012.

The District's board of directors is currently made up of private sector and elected officials from the City of Austin, Travis County, Hays County, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Williamson County, City of Georgetown, City of San Marcos, City of Schertz, City of New Braunfels, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Bexar County MPO, Alamo Regional Transit and San-Antonio-Bexar County MPO.

The Board of Directors has one City Council member that represents the City of Austin on the Board of Directors. This action is related to an appointment on this agenda to replace former Council Member Jennifer Kim on the Board of Directors.