

# CENTRAL CORRIDOR HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STUDY

Phase 1 Summary & FTA Capital Investment Program  
Briefing

January 14, 2014

City of Austin Community Development  
Commission



*project***connect**  
central corridor

# 1

## Briefing Topics

- 1) Project Connect
- 2) Work Plan & Schedule
- 3) Evaluation Summary
- 4) Next Steps
- 5) FTA Capital Investment Program



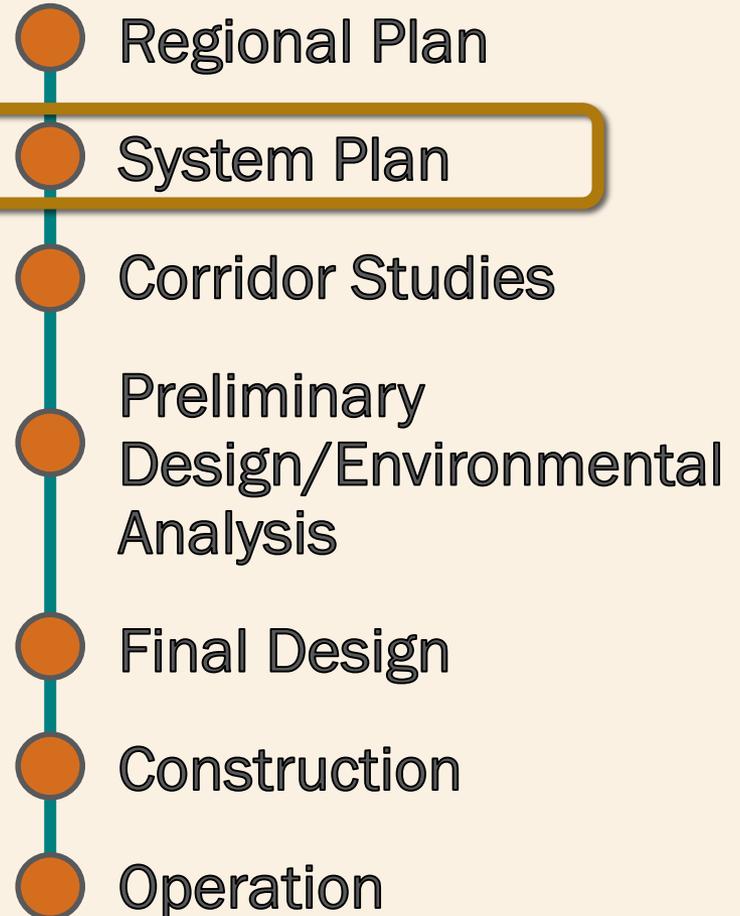
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# Project Connect

# 1

## Project Connect

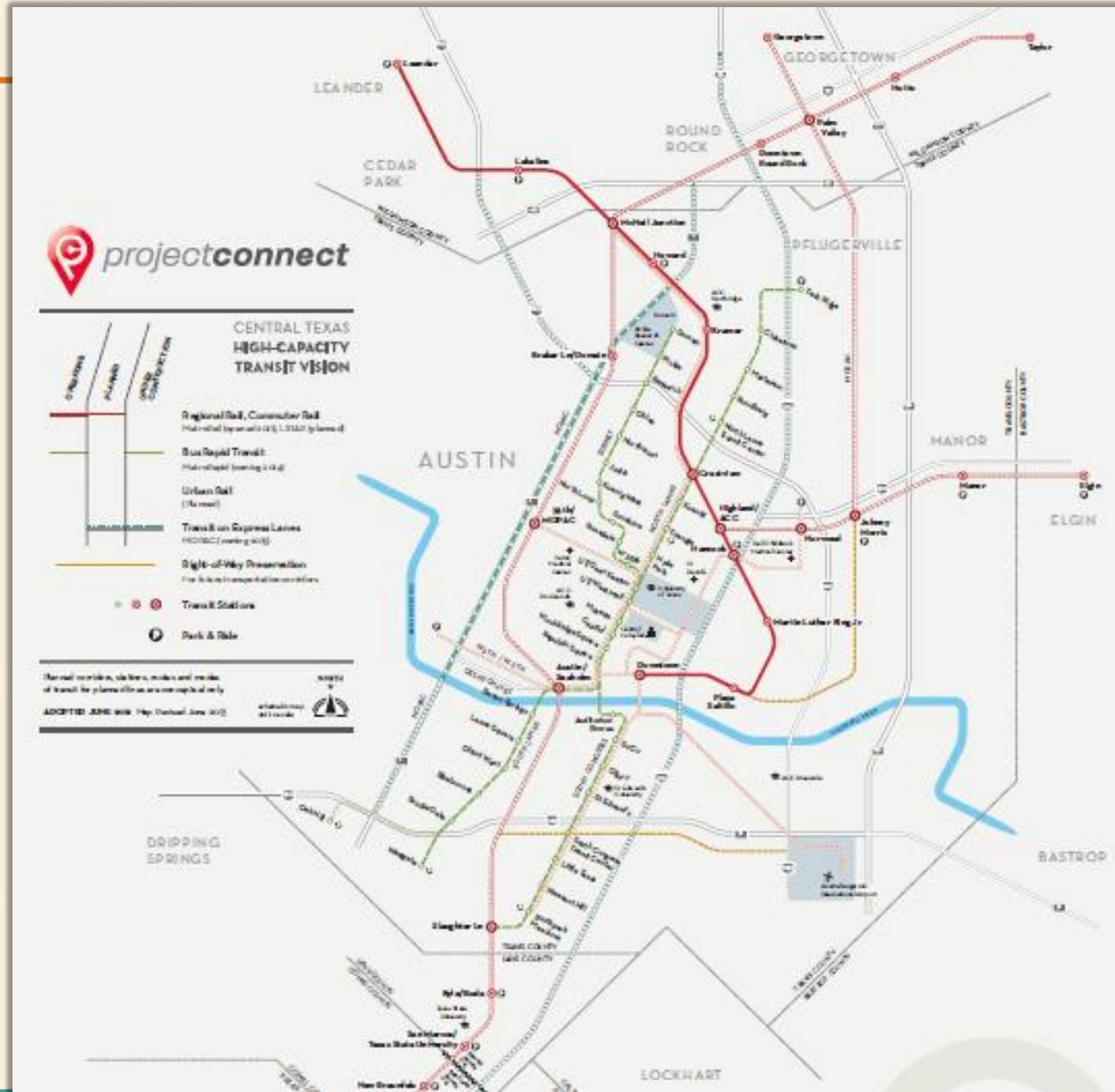
- A **partnership** between Central Texas transportation agencies
- A regional, long-range high-capacity transit **system plan** for Central Texas



# 1

# Project Connect Vision

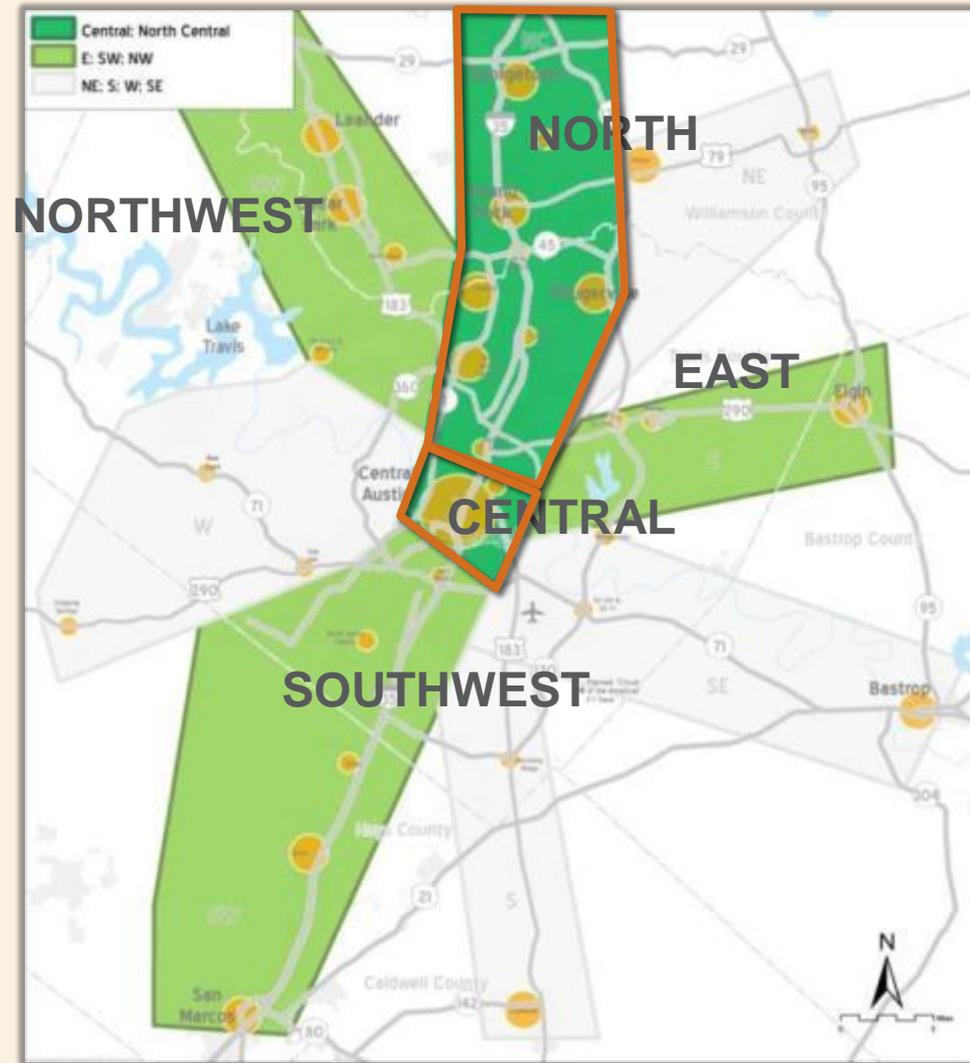
- System
  - 25 Centers & ABIA
  - 4 Counties/13 Cities
- Funding
  - \$4B Total Capital
  - Can Fund:
    - \$1.9B (49%) Capital
    - \$82M O&M
- Organization
  - ILA for Early Project Development
  - Framework for Regional Organization and 'Single System' Integration



# 1

## Project Connect Corridors

- 9 Project Connect Corridors
- 5 High Priority:
  - North
  - East
  - Southwest
  - Northwest
  - Central



2

# Work Plan & Schedule

# 2

## Central Corridor Work Plan Phases

### Decision-Making Process

- Phase 1: Select Priority Sub-Corridor
  - ‘Where are we going...next?’
- Phase 2: Select Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
  - ‘How will we get there?’



# 2

## Central Corridor Work Plan & Schedule

### Decision-Making Process

- Phase 1: Select Priority Sub-Corridor

				2013					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
				Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Phase 1 Select Priority Sub-Corridor	Step 1: Kick-Off/Process	Task 1	Work Plan/Decision-Making Process						
		Step 2: Define Sub-Corridors	Task 2	Framework/History					
	Task 3		G&O/Problem Statement						
	Task 4		Methodology/Criteria						
	Task 5		Identify Sub-Corridors						
	Task 6		Define Sub-Corridors						
	Step 3: Select Priority Sub-Corridor	Task 7	Evaluate Sub-Corridors						
		Task 8	Select Priority Sub-Corridor						
		<b>Decision</b>							

- Project Team Activities

- Public Involvement Activities

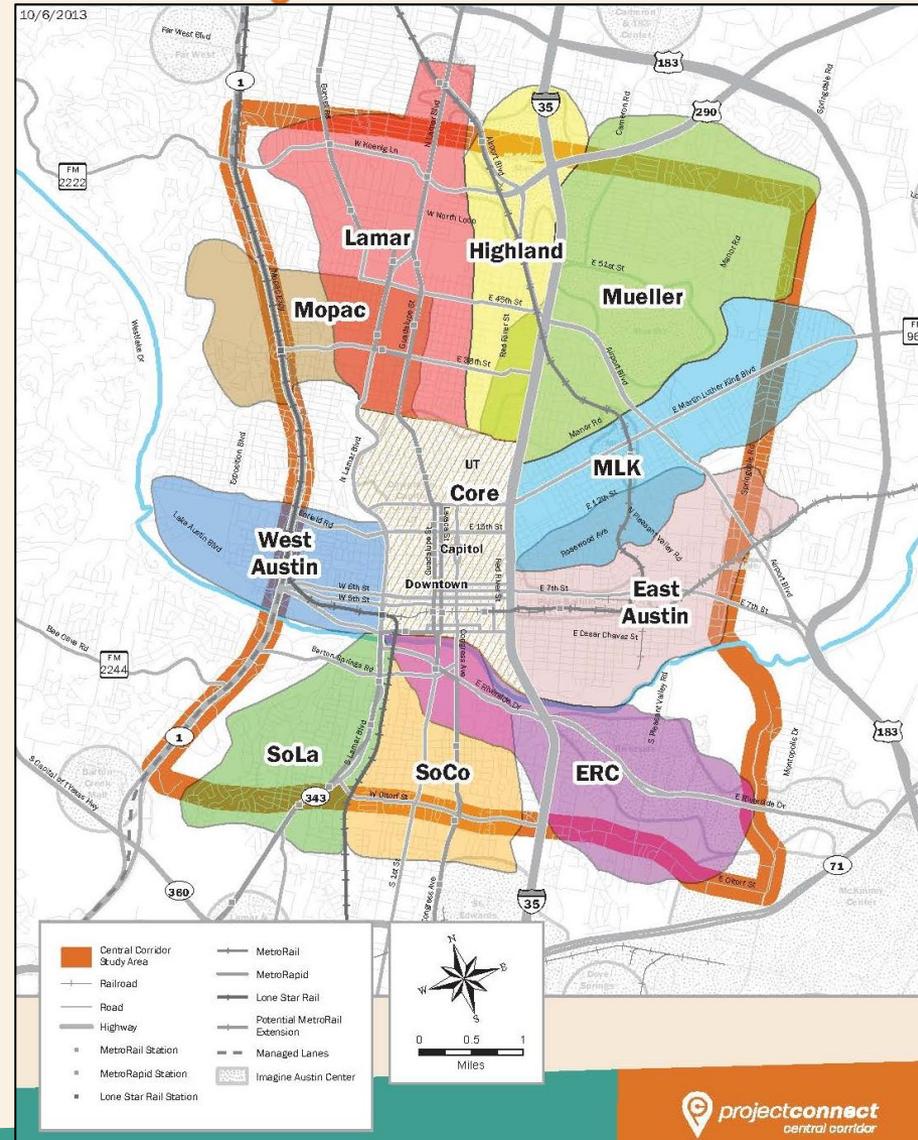
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# Evaluation Summary

# 3

## Evaluation Approach

- 10 sub-corridors identified + Core
- Comparison of sub-corridors for high-capacity transit (HCT) suitability
- No single factor tells the whole story



# 3

## Evaluation Results

Project Team		CCAG		Public*		Equal Weight		Current Focus		Future Focus	
Project Team		CCAG		Public*		Equal Weight		Serving Criteria Only		Shaping Criteria Only	
ERC	70	ERC	58	ERC	72	ERC	60	ERC	55	ERC	57
Highland	61	Highland	58	Highland	65	Highland	57	East Austin	53	Highland	52
Lamar	53	Mueller	51	Mueller	56	Mueller	51	Lamar	53	Mueller	44
Mueller	52	Lamar	48	Lamar	51	Lamar	50	West Austin	52	Lamar	42
East Austin	50	East Austin	45	East Austin	49	East Austin	47	Highland	47	SoCo	38
SoCo	44	SoCo	41	SoCo	46	SoCo	43	Mueller	45	East Austin	34
West Austin	33	West Austin	32	West Austin	42	West Austin	32	SoCo	37	West Austin	28
MLK	27	SoLa	22	MLK	30	MLK	25	Mopac	36	SoLa	21
Mopac	27	MLK	22	Mopac	29	SoLa	22	MLK	31	MLK	18
SoLa	24	Mopac	18	SoLa	28	Mopac	21	SoLa	16	Mopac	11

### Key Findings

- ERC & Highland are top performers
  - From various perspectives
- Weightings do not change the overall results
- All sub-corridors could support HCT

**Evaluation scores can only be compared within each column.**

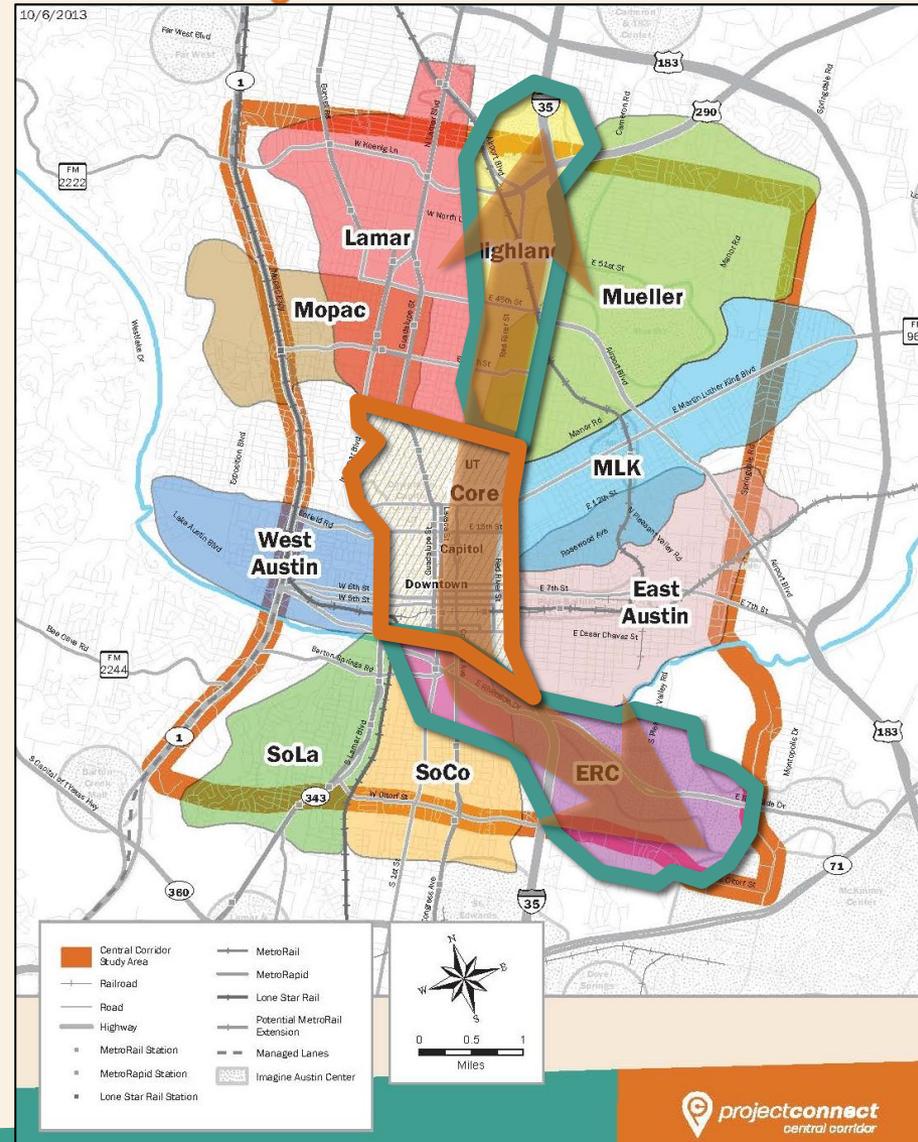
**\*Three public workshops input.**

# 3

## Selected Priority Sub-Corridor

### East Riverside & Highland

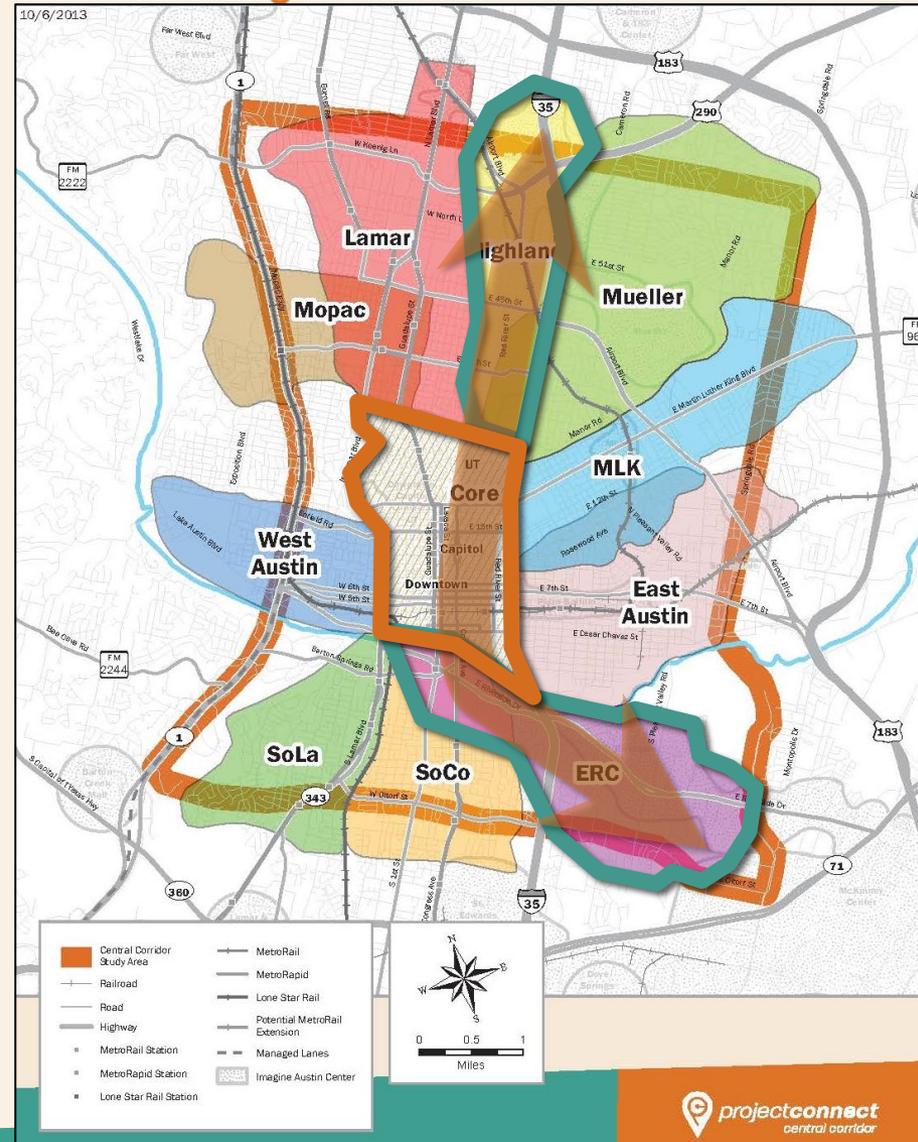
- East Riverside (ERC) and Highland are consistently in the top two
- Advance both into Phase 2
  - Develop best project
- Balanced recommendation
  - System Development
  - Shaping Characteristics
  - Serving Characteristics



# 3

## East Riverside & Highland Opportunities

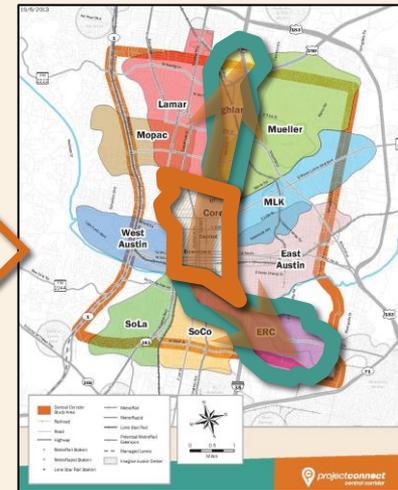
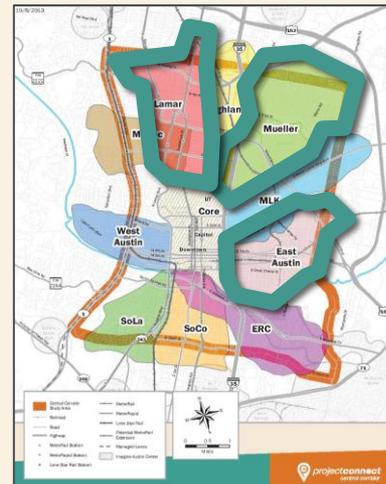
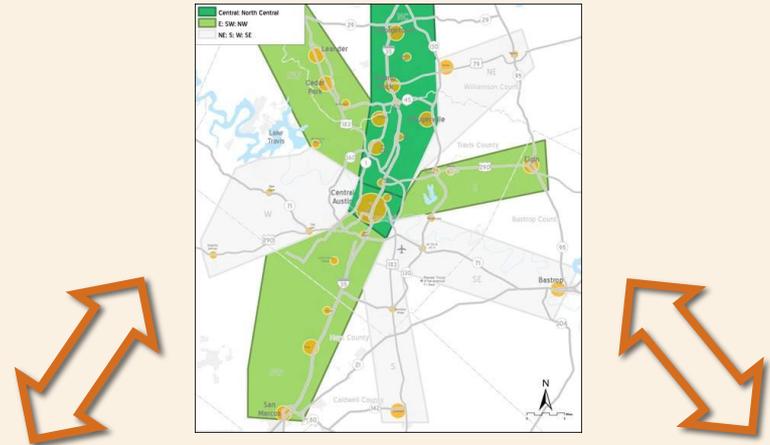
- Link East Riverside and Central Austin residential densities to:
  - Downtown employment destinations
  - New Dell Medical School and Innovation District
  - New ‘heart’ of UT Austin campus
  - New ACC Highland flagship campus and 80 acre TOD with UT co-enrollment program and workforce training
- Provide alternative to IH-35 congestion thru Central Austin
- Provide additional capacity across Lady Bird Lake
- Build HCT system, linking Red Line, MetroRapid, Express Bus, North Corridor Connectors, LSTAR, etc.



# 3

## Central Corridor System Planning

- Continuing system level planning during project development is critical
  - All sub-corridors could support high-capacity transit
  - Central Corridor phasing must be integrated with all system planning efforts
- Project definition is needed for Lamar, Mueller, East Austin
  - Similar to Phase 2 efforts for East Riverside & Highland
  - Leverage future funding opportunities
  - Create project pipeline - “shovel-ready”



- **Central Corridor Advisory Group (CCAG) Action on December 6, 2013**
  - Endorsed (14-1) project team recommendation for East Riverside and Highland Sub-Corridors
  - Recommended the project team continue critical Central Corridor system level planning and project development, with special consideration of the next tier of sub-corridors, including East Austin, Lamar, and Mueller

# 3

## Austin City Council Action

- Action on December 12, 2013
  - Endorsed (7-0) project team recommendation for East Riverside and Highland Sub-Corridors
  - Identify funding needs and sources to continue Central Corridor project definition and development activities in the next tier of sub-corridors
  - Continue cultivating a relationship with FTA to prepare for any future high-capacity transit investments in the Lamar sub-corridor

4

# Central Corridor Next Steps

# 4

## Phase 2 Objectives

- Project Definition (CCAG)
  - Alignment, stops, mode, service
- Funding Plan (TWG)
  - Capital and O&M costs, funding sources
  - *Within* overall Project Connect Plan
- Governance Structure (TWG)



# 4

## Central Corridor Phase 2 Work Plan & Schedule

### Decision-Making Process

- Phase 2: Select Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

**Current Progress**

				2013		2014							
				6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
				Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Phase 2 Select Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)	Step 4: Identify Preliminary Alternatives	Task 9	Project P&N/Problem Statement	█	█								
		Task 10	Methodology/Criteria	█	█								
		Task 11	Identify Preliminary Alternatives – Alignment & Mode	█	█								
	Step 5: Define Final Alternatives	Task 12	Define Final Alternatives – Alignment & Mode		█	█	█						
	Step 6: Evaluate Alternatives	Task 13	Evaluate Alternatives		█	█	█	█	█				
	Step 7: Select LPA	Task 14	Select Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)					█	█	█	█	█	█
			<i>Decision</i>								█*		

# 4

## Phase 2 Initial Activities

- Project Purpose
- Methodology and Criteria
- Identify Preliminary Alignments and Mode Alternatives
- CCAG #8 January 17th



5

# FTA Capital Investment Program

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS. NEW & SMALL STARTS. CORE CAPACITY



<http://www.fta.dot.gov/12304.html>

# 5

## FTA Capital Investment Program

- The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) primary grant program for funding major transit capital investments.

### Capital Investment Program (Section 5309)

#### New Starts

- $\geq$  \$250M Total Project Cost
- $>$  \$75M FTA share
- New or Extended Fixed Guideway

#### Small Starts

- $<$  \$250M Total Project Cost
- $<$  \$75M FTA share
- New or Extended Fixed Guideway
- Corridor -Based Bus (like MetroRapid)

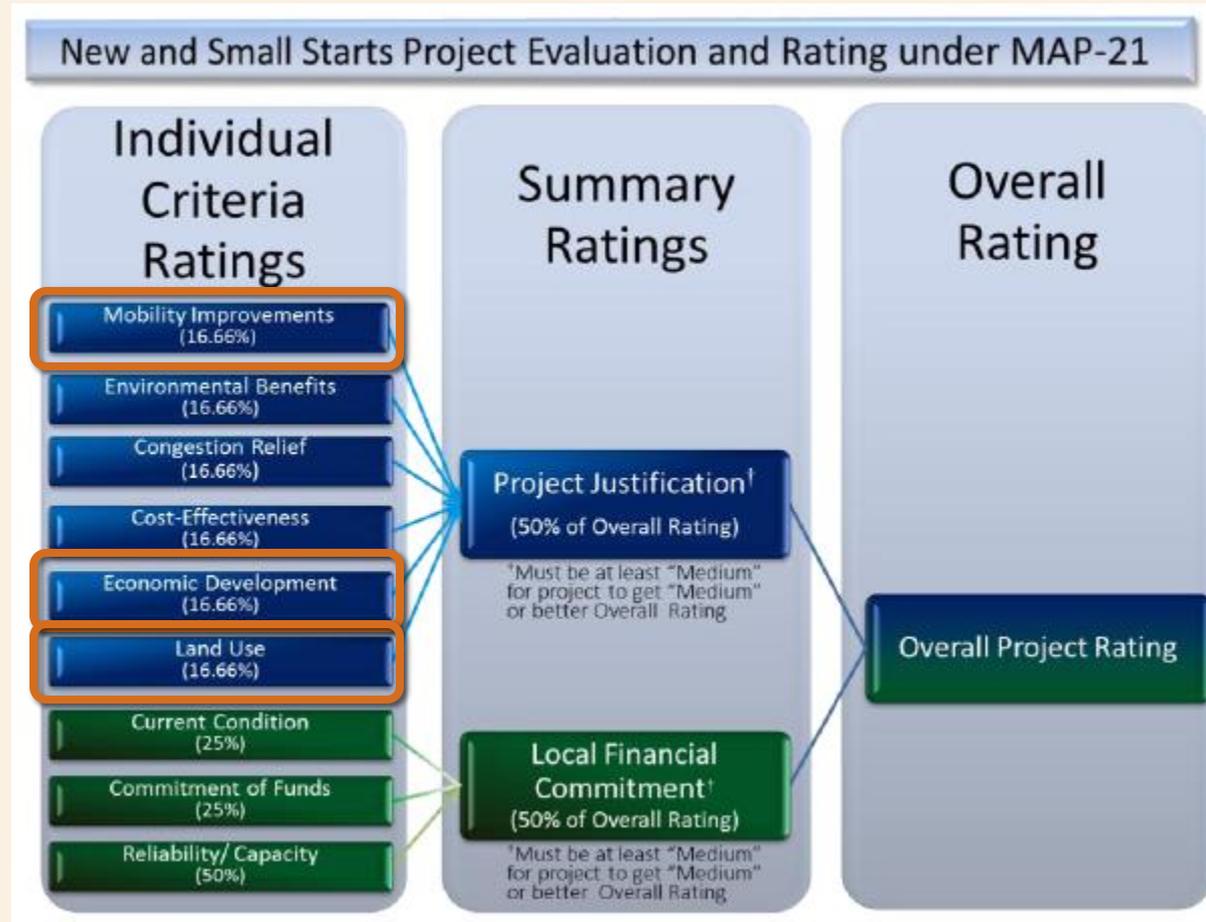
#### Core Capacity

- Existing Fixed Guideway
- At or Over Capacity in 5 years
- Increases Capacity by  $\geq$  10%

# 5

## New and Small Starts Evaluation

- 3 Separate Project Justification Criteria cover Affordability
  - Mobility
  - Economic Development
  - Land Use



# 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Mobility Improvements

- Mobility Improvements (Ridership)
  - Double ridership credit for transit dependent persons
- Transit Dependent Persons
  - Zero car households
  - From households in the lowest income bracket as defined locally



# 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Affordable Housing

- Housing affordable over the long-term to renters or owners with incomes below 60 percent of the area median income
- Affordable Rental Housing
  - Owned by an organization dedicated to providing affordable housing
  - Governed by a legally binding use restriction (or other legal protection) requiring the housing (or the land upon which it operates) to be used to provide affordable housing



## 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Economic Development

Policies and tools to maintain or increase the amount of affordable housing in the project corridor:

- Evaluation of Corridor-Specific Affordable Housing Needs and Supply
- Plans and Policies to support affordable housing such as:
  - Inclusionary zoning and/or density bonuses for affordable housing
  - Employer assisted housing policies
  - Voluntary or mandatory inclusionary housing policies
  - Rent controls or condominium conversion controls
  - Zoning to promote housing diversity
  - Affordability covenants



## 5

# FTA NS/SS Ratings

## Economic Development

- Adopted Financing Tools and Strategies to Preserve and Increase Affordable Housing such as:
  - Target property acquisition, rehabilitation, and development funding for low-income housing within the corridor, including:
    - Low Income Housing Tax Credits
    - Ongoing affordable housing operating subsidies
    - Weatherization and utilities support program
    - Local tax abatements for low-income or senior housing
    - Local or State programs that provide mortgage or other home ownership assistance for lower income and senior households
  - Established land banking programs or transfer tax programs
  - Local or regional affordable housing trust funds
  - Targeted tax increment financing or other value-capture strategies for low-income housing
- Developer Activity to Preserve and Increase Affordable Housing



# 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Economic Development

### • Ratings Breakpoints

<b>HIGH</b>	<p>Plans and policies are in place in most of the jurisdictions covered by the project corridor that identify and address the current and prospective housing affordability needs along the corridor. The plans outline a strategy to preserve existing affordable housing (both legally binding affordability restricted housing and market-rate affordable housing.) The plans also explicitly address the housing affordability and quality needs of very- and extremely-low income households.</p> <p>Financing commitments and/or sources of funding and robust financial incentives are identified and secured to support affordable housing acquisition (including acquisition of land and/or properties intended to be converted to affordable housing), development and/or preservation consistent with adopted plans and policies. These commitments may include early phase or acquisition financing as well as permanent financing.</p> <p>A strategy is in place to encourage jurisdictions to adopt local policies and zoning codes that support and encourage affordable housing development in transit corridors.</p> <p>Developers are actively working in the corridor to secure priority development sites and/or maintain affordability levels in existing housing units.</p>
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<b>MEDIUM</b>	<p>Affordable housing plans are being prepared in most of the jurisdictions covered by the project corridor that identify and address the current and prospective housing affordability needs along the corridor. The plans outline a strategy to preserve existing affordable housing (both legally binding affordability restricted housing and market-rate affordable housing). The plans also explicitly address the housing affordability and quality needs of very- and extremely-low income households.</p> <p>Some financing commitments and/or sources of funding and have been identified and secured to support affordable housing acquisition (including acquisition of land and/or properties intended to be converted to affordable housing), development and/or preservation. These commitments may include early phase or acquisition financing as well as permanent financing.</p> <p>A strategy is in place to encourage jurisdictions to adopt local policies and zoning codes that support and encourage affordable housing development in transit corridors.</p> <p>Developers are starting to work in the corridor to secure priority development sites and/or maintain affordability levels in existing housing units.</p>
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<b>LOW</b>	<p>Plans and policies are not in place or being prepared that identify and address the specific housing affordability needs along the corridor.</p> <p>Financing commitments and/or sources of funding have not been identified and secured to preserve and/or build new affordable housing consistent with adopted plans.</p> <p>There is no strategy to encourage jurisdictions to adopt local policies and zoning codes that support and encourage affordable housing development in transit corridors.</p> <p>There is little or no affordable housing development/preservation activity in the corridor</p>
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<p>Ratings based on assessment of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of corridor-specific affordable housing needs and supply;</li> <li>• Plans and policies to preserve and increase affordable housing in region and/or corridor;</li> <li>• Adopted financing tools and strategies targeted to preserving and increasing affordable housing in the region and/or corridor;</li> <li>• Evidence of developer activity to preserve and increase affordable housing in the corridor; and</li> <li>• The extent to which the plans and policies account for long-term affordability and the needs of very- and extremely-low income households in the corridor.</li> </ul>
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# 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Land Use

- The proportion of existing “legally binding affordability restricted” housing within ½ mile of station areas to the proportion of “legally binding affordability restricted” housing in the counties through which the project travels



## 5

## FTA NS/SS Ratings Land Use

- “One reason FTA chose to include affordable housing in the land use criterion was to ensure that neighborhoods surrounding proposed transit stations have the fundamentals in place to ensure that as service is improved over time there is a mix of housing options for existing and future residents.”
- “One measure of the readiness of a community to accept a new transit investment and avoid significant gentrification that can occur over time is the presence of “legally binding affordability restricted” units. These units have protections in place to ensure that they will continue to be available to low and moderate income households as changes in the corridor occur.”



## 5

# FTA NS/SS Ratings Land Use

- Calculation
  - FTA is seeking legally binding affordability restricted units to renters with incomes below 60 percent of the area median income and/or owners with incomes below the area median.
- Ratings Breakpoints

Rating	Proportion of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the counties through which the project travels
High	$\geq 2.50$
Medium-High	2.25 - 2.49
Medium	1.50 - 2.24
Medium-Low	1.10 - 1.49
Low	$< 1.10$



# 5

# More Information on FTA



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

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## Capital Investment Program: New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity Improvements

Sign up for email updates on this topic.

This is FTA's primary grant program for funding major transit capital investments, including rapid rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, and ferries. In July 2012, a new authorization was enacted entitled the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) that changed several aspects of the program. Prior to MAP-21, from 2005 through mid-2012, the authorizing legislation guiding FTA's programs was entitled the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Below is a table providing information on the program under both laws. Check back here often for additional information, as FTA updates materials related to MAP-21 implementation.

Sponsors of capital investment grant projects should also become familiar with the transportation planning and environmental review process requirements that apply to projects funded by FTA. Information on the transportation planning process can be found [here](#) and information on the environmental review process can be found [here](#).

General information about MAP-21 is available at [www.fta.dot.gov/map21](http://www.fta.dot.gov/map21).



Project Development Process Changes: New Starts (click to enlarge)



Project Development Process Changes: Small Starts (click to enlarge)

	New Starts and Small Starts under SAFETEA-LU (Section 5309)	New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity Improvement Projects under MAP-21 (Section 5309)
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Introduction</a></li> <li><a href="#">Eligibility</a></li> <li><a href="#">Fact Sheets</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Overview</a></li> <li><a href="#">Fact Sheet</a></li> <li><a href="#">FAQs</a></li> </ul>
RECENT ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Final Policy Guidance</a></li> <li><a href="#">Response to Comments on Proposed Policy Guidance</a></li> <li><a href="#">Notice of Availability of Final Policy Guidance</a></li> <li> <a href="#">Travel Forecasts</a></li> </ul>	



## NEW AND SMALL STARTS EVALUATION AND RATING PROCESS FINAL POLICY GUIDANCE AUGUST 2013



United States Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration

## Guidelines for Land Use and Economic Development Effects for New Starts and Small Starts Projects



Federal Transit Administration  
Office of Planning

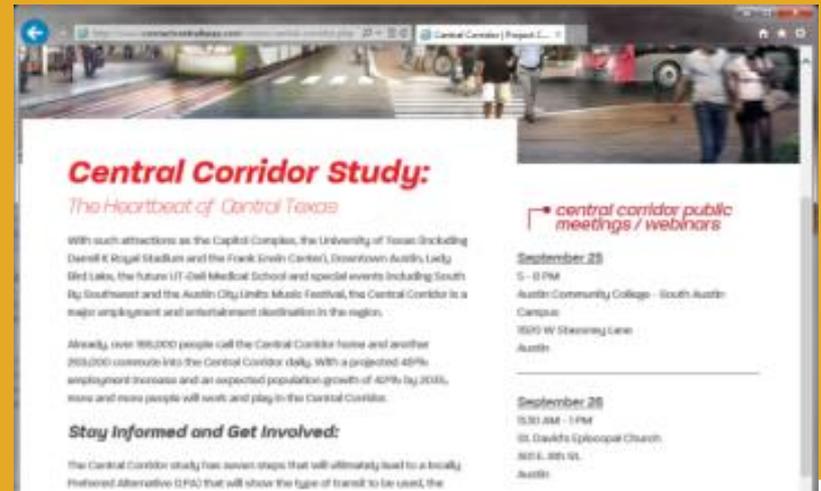
August 2013

# THANK YOU

More Information:

Project Connect &  
Central Corridor HCT Study

[projectconnect.com](http://projectconnect.com)



**projectconnect**  
central corridor