

AGENDA



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	33504	Agenda Number	64.
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Meeting Date:	6/26/2014	Department:	Transportation
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Subject

Approve the 2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, which includes the identification of roadways of regional significance, and a locally preferred alternative for urban rail on a route from the East Riverside corridor through Downtown, the Capitol Complex, and the University of Texas to Highland/ACC.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding requirements for the Strategic Mobility Plan and potential sources will be determined via a future funding plan. Fiscal impacts will be determined via a final funding plan.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
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Prior Council Action:	April 25, 2013 – Item 55 - Authorized execution of an interlocal agreement between the City, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Lone Star Rail District. Resolution No. 20130829-065 Resolution No. 20131212-067 Resolution No. 20140515-032
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For More Information:	Robert Goode, 512-974-2411; Robert Spillar, 512-974-2488; Scott Gross, 512-974-5621; Gilda Powers, 512-974-7092.
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Boards and Commission Action:	June 13, 2014 - Recommended by the Central Corridor Advisory Group on a 13-1 vote with Ms. Montgomery voting against; June 9, 2014 - Reviewed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee of the Planning Commission; June 9, 2014 - Reviewed by the Waterfront Advisory Board; June 10, 2014 - Staff recommendation approved by the Urban Transportation Commission on a vote of 4-2-0-1 with Commissioners Gilbert and Deloney voting against and Commissioner Highsmith absent (Recommendation No. 20140610-04A-1). Recommendation for additional consideration for bus rapid transit as a mode in the final alternative approved by Urban Transportation Commission on a vote of 4-2-0-1 with Commissioners MacKinnon and Truxillo voting against and Commissioner Highsmith absent (Recommendation No. 20140610-04A-2); June 18, 2014- Recommended by the Downtown Commission on a 10-1-0-3 vote with Commissioner Whatley voting against, Commissioner Mothon off the dais, and Commissioners MacKinnon and Galligan absent.
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MBE / WBE:	
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Related Items:	
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Additional Backup Information

2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan

City staff have prepared and recommended for Council consideration a 2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan consisting of both transit and roadway projects of regional significance. The plan builds upon the mobility efforts previously endorsed by Council and presented to voters as part of the 2010 and 2012 Mobility Bond Programs. The 2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan includes staff recommendation on the Project Connect Locally Preferred Alternative; major roadway improvements on the I-35 and other state highway networks within Austin; and a series of multi-modal corridor development programs to address significant points of congestion and safety within the regional network and also to define future High Capacity Transit (HCT) investment opportunities.

Project Connect Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA):

Project Connect is both a partnership between Central Texas transportation agencies – Capital Metro, City of Austin, and Lone Star Rail – and a regional, long-range high-capacity transit system plan for Central Texas. Working with the CAMPO Transit Working Group (TWG), the partnership developed a vision for regional transit that connects 25 centers throughout four counties and 13 cities. The Project Connect system planning process also prioritized regional corridors for next step studies, with the Central and North Corridors identified as the highest regional priorities.

Phase 1 of the Project Connect: Central Corridor High-Capacity Study began in June 2013 and concluded in December 2013. Phase 1 advanced the East Riverside, Core and Highland sub-corridors as the top prospects for the region's next investment in high-capacity transit. This action was endorsed by the Central Corridor Advisory Group on December 6, 2013; the City Council on December 12, 2013; the Capital Metro Board of Directors on January 29, 2014; and the Lone Star Rail District on February 7, 2014.

Phase 2 of the study began in January 2014 and concludes in June 2014. This phase has focused on project definition - service, mode, and alignment, along with costs, and approaches to funding and governance – in preparation for formal selection of a draft Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), a project, for the purposes of an anticipated application for federal funding.

The Project Connect and Joint Executive Teams' recommendation for a draft LPA consists of an urban rail transit mode on a route from the East Riverside Corridor through the Downtown, Capitol Complex, and University of Texas core to Highland.

The year-long study process included significant public outreach and input from the community and the Central Corridor Advisory Group. The project has been conducted with a high level of transparency and public interactivity, with data, methodologies and resource documents all published online during the study. The project team has also made considerable efforts to be available to the advisory group and to the public.

This project is sponsored by the Austin Transportation Department and managed by the Public Works Department.

Projects of Regional Significance on the State Highway Network:

In 2010, Austin voters approved bond funding to initiate a corridor development program on I-35. In 2010 and again in 2012, Austin voters approved construction funding for projects within the corridor, including improvements at the I-35 at 51st Street Interchange. In cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) and other regional partners, City of Austin staff has identified an implementation plan for addressing congestion in the I-35 Corridor within Travis County, including a series of interchange improvements and the addition of collector-distributor roadway systems that would ultimately allow for additional capacity to be added to the corridor and for the reconstruction of the downtown portion of the I-35 corridor to include possible full main-lane depression. Depression of the main-lanes through downtown could facilitate possible future lidding of the main-lanes. As part of the project development process, a series of "keystone" projects are identified that must be constructed in advance of any new capacity being added to the corridor or reconstruction of the downtown portion of I-35. These projects are included in the 2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan. The I-35 Corridor Plan has been widely vetted through a robust public involvement process, including a regional committee known as the "Rider 42 Committee" and a "Downtown Working Group", both facilitated by TXDOT and the City of Austin and hosted by Senator Watson.

In addition to projects on I-35, staff was directed on May 15, 2014, through Council Resolution 20140515-032 to provide a list of regionally significant roadway projects to council that might be considered for possible inclusion in a

future funding plan. Working with TXDOT, staff has identified additional projects beyond those on the I-35 corridor that enhance mobility within regionally significant corridors and ones that plan for future corridor development programs.

Corridor Development Program:

In both the 2010 and 2012 Mobility Programs endorsed by Austin voters, the City incorporated corridor development programs that allowed the development of preliminary engineering, concept designs and funding strategies for both roadway and transit projects. Many of these corridor programs have led to the projects now recommended to Council for construction funding in the 2014 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan. In keeping with this approach (e.g., completing the preliminary engineering and feasibility studies in one strategic mobility cycle for construction funding in the next mobility funding cycle), staff presents a collection of projects for Council consideration as corridor development projects. These projects represent a multi-modal, complete streets approach to preparing the necessary concepts and preliminary engineering to promulgate projects for future construction funding. These projects include corridors of interest for future extensions of High Capacity Transit (HCT) such as Urban Rail, as well as corridors where traffic congestion and traffic safety are of concern. These projects encourage an on-going partnership between the City of Austin and its regional transportation partners.