



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20200805-02A: Project Connect funding and governance

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's rapid population growth has strained our transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the City has allocated relatively few dedicated pathways for transit that allow citizens to choose a congestion-free transportation option; and

WHEREAS, our current climate crisis calls for us to make changes to the way we live and plan our cities, and our pattern of continued sprawl and road construction is neither safe nor sustainable; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Capital Metro Transit Authority was experiencing sustained increases in ridership at a time when most transit systems in the country were losing ridership; and

WHEREAS; the COVID-19 pandemic makes it even more crucial that we fund and build resilient infrastructure throughout our city, which is accessible and equitable for all; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metro has been engaged in the current Project Connect long range transit system plan, gathering extensive public input, since October 2016; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2019, Austin City Council unanimously adopted the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), which calls for Austin to make a watershed change in mode share, that is, to reach a goal of 50% of Austinites commuting by walking, biking, transit, or any other non-drive-alone mode by 2039, from today's current 24% of Austinites using non-drive-alone modes; and

WHEREAS, the ASMP also established that the policy of the City is to proactively assess displacement impacts of transportation project; and

WHEREAS, the Capital Metro Board of Directors unanimously adopted the Project Connect System Plan that includes the Locally Preferred Alternatives for the Orange, Blue, Gold, Green, and MetroRapid Lines on June 10, 2020; and

WHEREAS, it is proposed that the Locally Preferred Alternatives will be funded by a tax rollback election (TRE), to be held in November 2020, which will provide sustained funding for the Project Connect System Plan over many years; and

WHEREAS; a proposed interlocal agreement (ILA) between the City of Austin and Capital Metro Transit Authority will create the Austin Transit Partnership, a board of governors to oversee the TRE spending, and an additional Community Advisory Committee to engage the community and advise on all aspects of Project Connect, and

WHEREAS, throughout the Project Connect planning process the Orange Line corridor has been consistently described by Capital Metro as the necessary spine of our transit system, and currently is the location of our highest ridership bus line, the 801; and

WHEREAS; the citizens of Austin deserve ongoing input and feedback in the implementation of the Project Connect Locally Preferred Alternatives that is informed by the daily lived experience of transit riders, especially transit dependent individuals and families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The Urban Transportation Commission urges Austin City Council to:

- Adopt at least a 8.75% tax rollback election for the November ballot, which will serve to fund the Project Connect Locally Preferred Alternatives and \$300 million for anti-displacement efforts such as land acquisition or transit-oriented affordable housing along the transit corridors;
- Adopt clear language in the Contract with the Voters requiring the Republic Square to North Lamar Transit Center segment as part of the initial rail line(s);
- Exclude any funding for roadway expansion.
- Ensure there is broad community input on anti-displacement funding allocation and development of strategies to mitigate any potential negative effects of this project on existing communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Urban Transportation Commission urges Austin City Council and Capital Metro Transit Authority to:

- Ensure the Austin Transit Partnership board has diverse representation and deep knowledge of the Austin transit rider experience by:
 - Require at least five years of experience for the professional members of the board
 - Expand the board with two community members to be chosen by a Community Advisory Committee
 - Require that the two community based board members collectively have the following expertise or experience: rides transit; interacts with and understands the needs of transit dependent individuals and families (including those experiencing disabilities); displacement mitigation; experience with labor and worker rights; and experience serving on advisory groups such as the City of Austin Urban Transportation Commission, Capital Metro Customer Satisfaction Advisory Committee, or Capital Metro Access Advisory Committee
 - Require the board to vote on recommendations made by its Community Advisory Committee

Date of Approval: August 5, 2020

Record of the vote: 8-0 with Commissioners Champion, Weatherby and Wilfley absent

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Smith".

Emily Smith, staff liaison