

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has encouraged transit-oriented development (TOD) since 2005, to create attractive, walkable, and sustainable development patterns around high-capacity transit that maximizes Capital Metro's system ridership and offers Austin residents abundant housing choices and convenient access to jobs, services, and diverse amenities; and

WHEREAS, the 2012 Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan envisions a compact and connected city that encapsulates household affordability, environmental protection, and complete communities, with easier, greener, healthier transportation options linking residents to jobs, arts and culture, parks, schools, health care, shopping, and other destinations; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint established a goal of building 135,000 new housing units over a ten-year period, and recommends allowing affordable options in all parts of town as well as helping Austinites reduce household costs by encouraging housing developments that connect with diverse transportation options; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan sets a goal to have 50 percent of commuters utilize modes other than single-occupant vehicles by 2039, including 25 percent of commuters taking transit, biking, or walking to work; and

WHEREAS, transportation in the form of cars, buses, and trucks accounts for more than a third of the region's carbon footprint, and the 2014 Austin Community Climate Action Plan calls for the city to reach net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

25 **WHEREAS**, encouraging development around Austin’s transit network
26 promotes safer, more environmentally sustainable transportation options that
27 reduce household costs associated with car ownership; and

28 **WHEREAS**, a study commissioned by the US Department of
29 Transportation determined that by 2025, 14.6 million households will demand
30 homes within walking distance to public transit and rail systems; and

31 **WHEREAS**, the City’s currently adopted station area plans for TOD
32 districts exist along the commuter rail line; and

33 **WHEREAS**, in 2020, Austin voters approved the implementation of Project
34 Connect, a citywide investment in high-capacity transit that includes two new light
35 rail lines, a new commuter rail line, a bus rapid transit (BRT) line, additional
36 MetroRapid BRT-lite lines, the full electrification of Capital Metro’s fleet, and a
37 historic \$300,000,000 investment in transit-supportive anti-displacement strategies,
38 including the preservation and creation of affordable housing along transit
39 corridors; and

40 **WHEREAS**, through Project Connect, certain corridors will have bus
41 service frequencies and ridership comparable to rail lines in many cities; and

42 **WHEREAS**, a 2010 study published by the University of California
43 Transportation Center, determined that frequent all day bus service requires
44 approximately 17 residents and jobs per gross acre, and light-rail systems need 56
45 residents and jobs per gross acre to achieve and sustain the high ridership and
46 productivity needed for a cost effective transit system; and

47 **WHEREAS**, Capital Metro was awarded a \$600,000 grant from the Federal
48 Transit Administration to complete TOD study along the Green Line between

Austin and Manor in 2018, and the city has provided coordination and support to that effort which resulted in a Green Line TOD Study in 2020;

WHEREAS, Capital Metro’s Green Line TOD Study was accompanied by a review of existing regulations to determine if they support and advance the goals of the Green Line TOD Study and the review identified opportunities to improve the production of meaningful, equitable, transit-oriented development and anti-displacement strategies; and

WHEREAS Capital Metro was awarded a \$900,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to complete an Equitable Transit Oriented Development (eTOD) study along portions of the Project Connect Orange and Blue Lines (“eTOD Study”) in order to support transit-oriented development and anti-displacement efforts for Project Connect; and

WHEREAS, the eTOD Study will yield data- and community-informed, context-sensitive policy and land-use recommendations, and will be used by Capital Metro to update the agency’s TOD Tool Kit used for both rail and bus services; and

WHEREAS, the City is a key participating agency and partner, supporting the Green Line TOD Study and the eTOD Study; and

WHEREAS, City policies related to TOD may need to be updated to accommodate Project Connect investments, the recommendations from the studies, and reflect population growth to meet housing demands and maintain an accessible housing market; and

WHEREAS, the City policies related to TOD may be further improved to promote affordability in communities for both residents and small businesses; and

73 **WHEREAS**, equitable transportation practices integrate transit into
74 walkable, accessible, livable, and affordable land use practices to enhance healthy
75 living within low-income communities and communities of color; and

76 **WHEREAS**, Capital Metro’s Project Connect presents the opportunity to
77 create thoughtful, equitable transit-oriented development; and

78 **WHEREAS**, eTOD is development that enables all people regardless of
79 income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status or ability to experience the
80 benefits of dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development near transit hubs;
81 and

82 **WHEREAS**, eTOD elevates and prioritizes investments and policies that
83 close socioeconomic gaps; and

84 **WHEREAS**, when centered on racial inclusion and community wealth
85 building, eTOD can be a driver of positive transformation for more vibrant,
86 prosperous, and resilient neighborhoods connected to opportunities throughout the
87 city; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

88 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

89 The City Council directs the City Manager to contribute actively to the
90 ongoing studies, in partnership with Capital Metro, to help ensure the study
91 outcomes serve as a guide for revising the City’s existing TOD process and station
92 area plans, as well as providing recommendations to initiate relevant land use
93 amendments.

95 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

96 The results of the studies and additional analysis shall inform the creation of
97 a citywide eTOD Policy Plan, which shall be presented to Council for adoption.

98 The eTOD Policy Plan should be an action-oriented policy document, reconciling
99 and updating the City's various TOD-related policies, action items, and plans. The
100 eTOD Policy Plan shall serve to both measure the success of the City's policies to
101 encourage development near transit corridors and to explore opportunities to
102 further support transit, affordable housing, and equitable development through
103 transit-oriented development and other incentives.

104 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

105 The eTOD Policy Plan should provide recommendations on how to achieve
106 the following goals:

- 107 a. Identify methods to address potential displacement of residents, small
108 businesses, cultural institutions, and community organizations from
109 transit-induced pressures, advance transit opportunities to existing
110 communities, and ensure that housing near transit remains available to as
111 many people as possible;
- 112 b. Encourage the creation of diverse housing options near transit that is
113 accessible at every income level and prioritizes affordable housing;
- 114 c. Incentivize housing options for families of many sizes and various
115 income levels around station areas and high-capacity transit, provides
116 social and economic opportunity for current and future residents, and
117 increases access to employment, health and educational centers;

- d. Provide entitlements that increase housing capacity and maximize affordable housing opportunities to further the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint Goals;
- e. Explore additional opportunities for funding affordable housing such as tax increment financing;
- f. Encourage and incentivize the development of flexible, affordable commercial space to ensure local businesses and nonprofits can remain in their communities;
- g. Promote sustainable economic activity that supports the immediate area and the city as a whole;
- h. Promote equitable planning efforts, centering racial and economic equity, in all aspects of the policy, including surveying opportunities for future equity assessments;
- i. Provide opportunities for enacting right to stay and right to return policies;
- j. Explore the possibility of creating different development typologies that respond to local market and community conditions;
- k. Disincentivize the use of single-occupancy vehicles through travel demand management and responsible land use practices that support the multimodal transportation context, such as unbundled parking, eliminating parking requirements, and/or establishing parking maximums;
- l. Support future expansion plans of the existing street network and Project Connect while providing enhanced walkable connections to and within surrounding neighborhoods;
- m. Identify methods to support Project Connect investments through development;

- n. Align policies with the Project Connect equity, anti-displacement, and Community Advisory Committee efforts;
- o. Provide a process to work with Capital Metro during land acquisition to consider how potential excess or surplus property after construction may be used for eTODs, as well as the dedication of proceeds from the disposition of identified excess right-of-way to provide affordable housing;
- p. Provide recommendations to streamline and simplify City Code to incentivize eTOD projects;
- q. Facilitates effective coordination of City plans and programs between Capital Metro, City departments, and community stakeholders; and
- r. Additional measures that may further the objectives of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to participate in and support the eTOD Study's community engagement efforts, and create additional opportunities for citywide community engagement, as necessary and in partnership with Capital Metro, including a sufficient public comment period, to ensure impacted people and stakeholder groups are included and further inform the study recommendations and eventual eTOD Policy Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager shall develop and publish the eTOD Policy Plan within 14 months of the passage of this resolution, with an update on progress and preliminary recommendations for early adoption presented to Council at 7 months.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to bring forward an FY 2022 baseline budget that includes resources necessary to support both the ongoing study and the creation of the eTOD Policy Plan. This may include hiring additional staff, a consultant to assist in the creation of the eTOD Policy Plan, or other elements of this resolution.

ADOPTED: _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk