

FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT(S): Planning Department

CBQ NO.: 176

REQUESTED BY: Ellis

DATE REQUESTED: 07/31/2023

DATE POSTED: 08/10/2023

REQUEST: How much funding would be required to add the 4 needed eTOD Planning FTEs to this year's budget? Could they be added mid-year, once the Planning Dept has filled some vacancies, and what would that funding requirement be?

RESPONSE:

The Planning Department has received a FY 2022-23 funding commitment from the Project Connect Office (PCO) for 1 Planner Senior Position. Therefore, the existing unmet need for ETOD planning is 1 Planner Principal and 2 Planner Seniors, at an approximate cost of \$282,064 for the typical annualized nine months of funding. If the positions were added mid-year of FY 2023-24, the approximate cost would be \$219,604.

Background

In July 2023, the Planning Department submitted a memo to City Council including updates to the ETOD Implementation Plan. Highlighted in the memo, were staffing resources and the need for an additional four (4) FTEs necessary to advance the additional work to improve competitiveness for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant which is slated to be a substantial funding source (approximately half) for the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 program.

In recent months, the Planning Department and PCO have increased its coordination efforts. And after gaining clarification on the FTA process, we learned that a mid-2024 deadline is a critical prerequisite to demonstrate grant readiness. Given this process, the Planning Department and PCO agree that elevating the start of ETOD implementation work and increasing staff capacity are a priority.