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Austin Strategic Mobility Plan Urban Rail Studies

*Delivering
An integrated mobility
network for all of Austin;
providing safe, efficient and
diverse choices for people to
travel*

March 2011

Strategic Mobility Plan

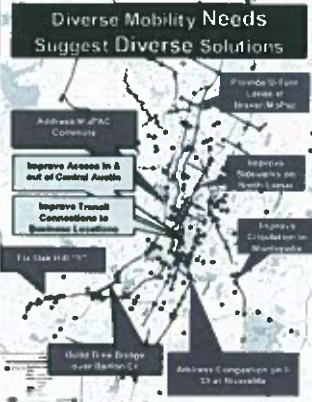
- Oct 09 Council funds Strategic Mobility Plan
 - Directs staff to generate Nov 2010 bond proposal
 - roads, pedestrian, trail, bicycle
 - approved by voters
 - Directs staff to study Urban Rail as part of integrated transportation program
- Milestones Achieved:
 - MoPac @ US 71 IC under construction
 - IH 35 @ US 71 IC under construction
 - 100% change out of antiquated parking meter system completed
 - \$90 Million Transportation Bond passed by voters (Nov 2010)
 - 51st Street at IH-35 IC
 - Oak Hill Y Interim Improvements
 - IH 35 Corridor Program initiated
 - Sidewalk & accessibility projects



Austinites Identify Mobility Gaps


- Informed by:
 - Citizen comments
 - Public agencies & regional partners
 - City Staff
 - Existing city plans
- Over 3,000 gaps identified:
 - Roads and bridges
 - Bicycle facilities
 - Sidewalks
 - Transit facilities
 - Access to key employment centers
 - Transit connectivity

Diverse Mobility Needs Suggest Diverse Solutions



Central Austin Mobility Needs

- Automobile access to the central city is gridlocked at key intersections at peak travel hours
- Space to add more roadway capacity at key intersections limited without affecting neighborhoods and surrounding land uses



Central Austin Mobility Needs


- Expected growth of 1M to region in 25 years
- Downtown can absorb more dense development (25-30,000 workers) but lacks infrastructure to get them through constraints

“Austin area population increases by nearly half million, 2010 census data show”

Feb. 17, 2011
Austin American-Statesman

Central Austin Mobility Needs

- Connect activity centers like UT, Capital Complex, CBD, entertainment districts to Airport, other centers
- Need connections between transit systems, ie. Red Line, Bus Rapid, LoneStar Rail



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Project Purpose

- Improve mobility in Central City
- Provide backbone for economic redevelopment
 - Central Austin produces jobs and tax revenue that benefit entire city
- Support existing planning initiatives
 - Downtown Austin Plan
 - Waller Creek Master Plan
 - State Capitol Complex Expansion
 - Seaholm & Green Water District Master Plan
 - East Riverside Plan
 - Mueller Redevelopment Plan
 - Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan

Project Purpose

- Preserve the character of our inner city neighborhoods
- Encourage commuters to use transit, provide connectivity
- Link transportation and land use strategies by connecting "activity centers" in the city
- Reduce greenhouse gas and CO2 emissions
- Meet current and future mobility needs

Why Study Urban Rail?

- Long community history of studies that support rail as preferred travel mode
- Rail's permanent infrastructure attracts and sustains development
- Land use strategies, desire to densify specific corridors dependent on very high person moving capacity

Why Study Urban Rail?

- Greater people carrying capacity



Single Occupancy Vehicles

Typical LRT Streetcar

What is Urban Rail?

- Mixes with auto traffic or on dedicated right-of-way
- Similar to Light Rail and modern streetcar
- Typically overhead-electric powered vehicle
- Generally has two sets of tracks, one in each direction
- Operates at comparable traffic speeds based on:
 - Signal characteristics
 - Number of stop locations
 - Condition of right-of-way
- Part of a regional rail network




Proposed Urban Rail System

- Mueller to ABIA
 - Congress, San Jacinto
 - Guadalupe, Lavaca
 - 4th Street
 - 17th/18th Street
 - Riverside
- Connection with regional rail transit network
- Maintenance facility
- River crossing to be determined as part of NEPA



Adopted Regional Rail Network

- **MetroRail**
 - Red Line to Leander
 - Green Line to Manor/Elgin
 - Georgetown Spur
- **Lone Star Rail**
 - Georgetown
 - Buda
 - San Marcos
 - New Braunfels
 - San Antonio
- **Urban Rail**
 - Mueller
 - UT
 - Capitol Complex
 - Downtown (CBD)
 - Riverside
 - ABIA



Summary of Urban Rail Studies

Central Austin Transit Study
Final Draft July 15, 2010


- Defines need and purpose, investment objectives, and route/model investment alternatives.
- Recommends Urban Rail as Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).
- Defines System Plan.

Conceptual Engineering
Final Draft July 26, 2010

- Vol 1: Defines the Basis of Design, includes capital cost estimates, main tenance facility site selection, utility identification summary, etc.
- Vol 2: Design drawings to 5-15% and approximate utility conflict identification.

Pre-NEPA Study
Final Draft September 15, 2010


- Environmental study of baseline conditions and assessment of potential environmental issues and constraints
- Fatal flaw analysis - none identified, new Lady Bird Lake crossing alternatives recognized as most significant environmental issue.



NEPA Environmental Studies


Federal Transit Administration NEPA examines impacts:

- Land use
- Socioeconomic
- Visual resources
- Water resources
- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Air resources
 - Environmental justice
 - Noise and Vibration
 - Geological resources
- Hazardous materials
- Coordination with Regional Partners



www.AustinUrbanRail.com

NEPA Public Involvement

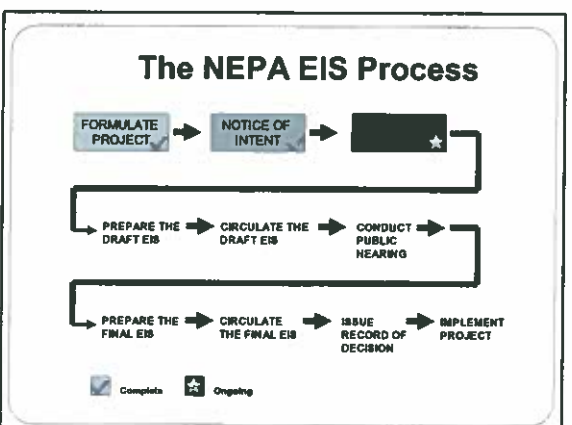


The Environmental Study process asks citizens and agencies to comment about the Urban Rail proposal and/or alternatives that should be studied.

Upcoming NEPA Public Involvement

Public Involvement:

- 2 FTA Public Scoping Meetings (April 4 and 6)
 - Numerous additional City outreach meetings
 - Written comments due 30 days after meetings
 - Briefings to Elected Officials & Organizations
 - Newsletters, Emails
- Website: www.AustinUrbanRail.com
Newsletters, Presentations, Documents
- Fall 2011 Community Meetings



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More Information...

Web sites:

www.austinstrategicmobility.com

www.AustinUrbanRail.com