



**Austin Urban  
Rail System**

**Federal Transit Administration and  
City of Austin**

# **SCOPING**

**for an Environmental Impact Statement  
for a Proposed Urban Rail system  
in Austin, Texas**

April 12, 2011



**Austin Urban  
Rail System**

## **Public Meetings**

### **FTA and City of Austin Public Scoping Meetings**

**April 4, 2011 • 2–5 pm • Austin Convention Center** 500 E. Cesar Chavez

**April 6, 2011 • 5–8 pm • SEDL @ Mueller** 4700 Mueller Boulevard

### **City of Austin Urban Rail Open House Meetings**

**April 7, 2011 • 11am–2 pm • AT&T Center @ UT** 1900 University Avenue

**April 7, 2011 • 5–8 pm • Carver Museum** 1165 Angelina Street

**April 9, 2011 • 11am–2 pm • Ruiz Branch Library** 1600 Grove Boulevard



# What is Scoping?

- Identifies concerns of the affected public and other agencies.
- Facilitates an efficient environmental impact statement (EIS) process.
- Identifies the significant issues associated with alternatives to be examined in the EIS.
- Ensures the draft EIS adequately addresses relevant issues



# What is an EIS?

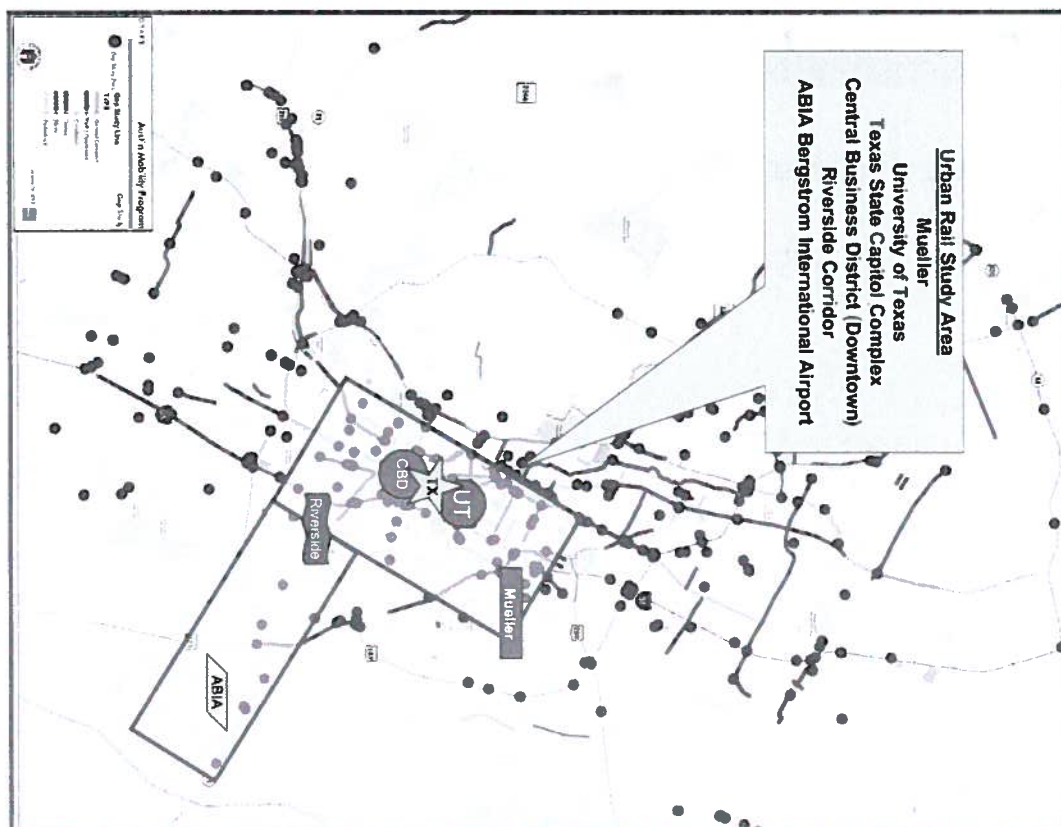
An **Environmental Impact Statement** (EIS) is a document that:

- Identifies potentially significant effects of implementing the proposed action and alternatives on the physical, human, and natural environment.
- Describes in reasonable and comprehensible terms the proposed project's purpose and need, alternatives considered, and potential environmental impacts.
- Details measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any significant adverse impacts identified.



## **An EIS evaluates significant impacts to natural, human, and built environments, including but not limited to:**

- Neighborhoods and Communities
- Land Use, Zoning, and Economic Development
- Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources
- Visual and Aesthetic Qualities
- Parklands and Recreation Areas
- Energy Use
- Noise and Vibration
- Biological Resources (including vegetation, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species)
- Natural Resources (including air quality, water resources, geology/soils, and hazardous materials)
- Indirect and Cumulative Effects
- Environmental Justice
- Safety and Security
- Transportation Systems



**What Area Will Be Studied**



## **What is the project purpose?**

To improve the **mobility, connectivity, and sustainability** of Central Austin – the Study Area – by:

- Providing greater mobility options
- Improving person-moving capacity
- Improving access and linkages to major activity centers and commuter and regional rail
- Supporting the City's environmental, public health, planning, and economic development goals
- Encouraging investment



## **What needs would the project meet? (1 of 2)**

### **Needs identified within the Study Area:**

- Providing direct connections between

Mueller

Downtown Austin

The University of Texas

East Riverside Corridor

State Capitol Complex

Airport (ABIA)

- Expanding connectivity to the emerging regional rail system  
(Red Line, Green Line, LSTAR)
- Increasing transportation network capacity in constrained rights-of-way





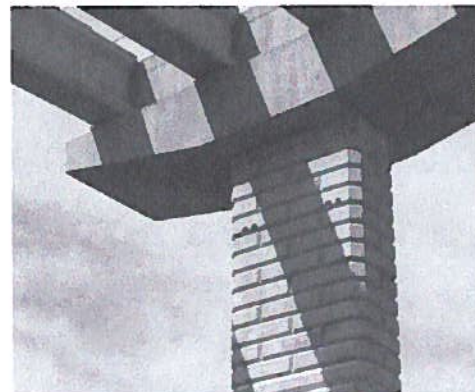
### **Needs identified within the Study Area:**

- Providing alternatives to automobiles
- Attracting and sustaining development within the region's core
- Improving air quality
- Supporting the City's environmental, public health, planning, and economic development goals



### **Austin Strategic Mobility Plan delivers a multi-modal approach**

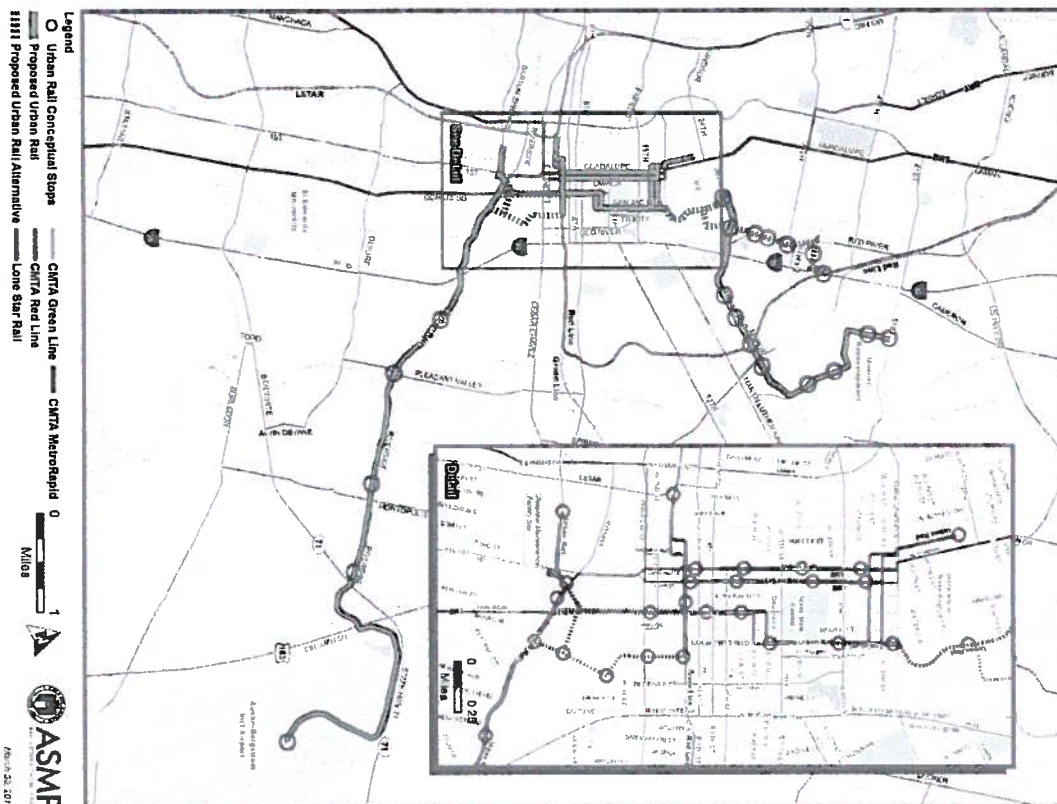
- MoPac/Ben White Interchange completion project
- Downtown Signal Retiming
- MoPac Managed Lanes
- I-35 Corridor Project
- "Y" at Oak Hill Improvements
- Airport, MLK, East Riverside, and North Burnet/Lamar Corridor Plans
- **Proposed Urban Rail System**





## Austin Urban Rail System What's the Proposal?

### CITY OF AUSTIN PROPOSED URBAN RAIL SYSTEM

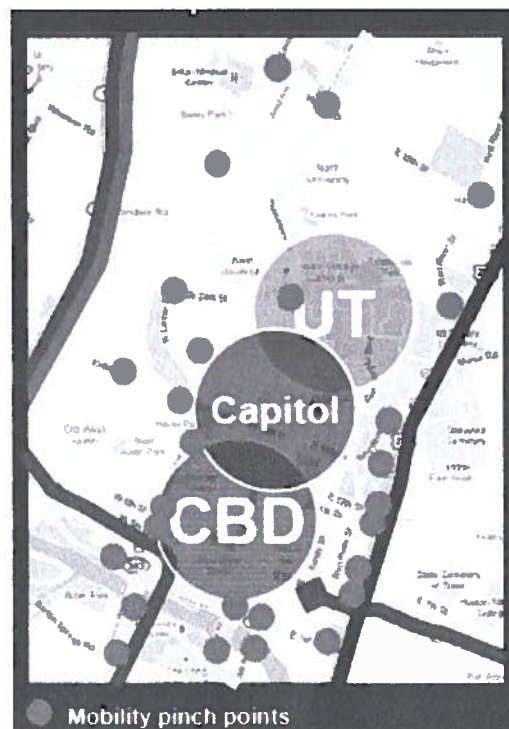


## Austin Urban Rail System

## Why Consider Transit?

### Access to Central Austin

- Auto access to region's core is **gridlocked now** at key intersections during rush hours
- Key intersections and roads **cannot be widened** without impacting existing neighborhoods or businesses









**Austin Urban  
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## **Mode Alternatives Considered**



**No-Build**



**Better Bus**



**Urban Rail**



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## **What We've Heard From Community Leaders**

- **Address Growth**
- **Encourage Investment**
- **Preserve Housing and Affordability**
- **Be Sustainable**
- **Preserve Neighborhoods and Communities**
- **Protect Parklands and Natural Resources**
- **Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources**





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# EIS Timeline

Draft Timeline

**March 8, 2011**

Notice of Intent  
(NOI)

**NOW!**

Scoping

Environmental Studies

**2012 Q1/Q2**

Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
(DEIS)

**2012 Q2**

Public Comment / Hearings

**2012 Q4**

Final EIS  
(FEIS)

**2013 Q1**

Record of Decision  
(ROD)

Special issue  
workshops  
& periodic public  
progress mtgs.



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# Next Steps

- Begin fieldwork and technical studies
- Consider and address comments
- Conduct stakeholder meetings:
  - » Lady Bird Lake crossing alternatives
  - » Alignment alternatives
  - » Economic development
  - » Design and aesthetic issues
- Continue outreach and education



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## **What do you think?**

**Written comments from the public are a critical component of the EIS process. You may submit your comments:**

- At **Public Scoping Meetings**
- Using the **comment form** in the Scoping Booklet (either in person or by mail)
- By mail to: **Urban Rail Project, Austin Transportation Department, P.O. Box 1088, Austin 78767-1088**
- Online by visiting **[www.AustinUrbanRail.com](http://www.AustinUrbanRail.com)**

**Comments must be received or postmarked on or before April 29, 2011 to be included in the public record.**



**Austin Urban  
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## **Project Information and**

## **Studies available at:**

## **Austin Public Libraries**

## **[www.AustinUrbanRail.com](http://www.AustinUrbanRail.com)**