

RESOLUTION NO. 20190808-081

WHEREAS, the Greater Austin region faces increasing traffic congestion and transportation problems that have monetary, health and environmental impacts on the community; and,

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2018 the Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority (CMTA) Board approved 6-0 the Project Connect vision plan for the area under its jurisdiction; and,

WHEREAS, the CMTA's plan includes a strategy to increase the efficiency, attractiveness, and use of high-capacity transit into, out of, and around Central Texas; and,

WHEREAS, Chapter 451 of the Texas Transportation Code authorizes CMTA to operate a high-capacity transit system and continue to collect the maximum 1% sales and use tax; and,

WHEREAS, § 451.060 of the Texas Transportation Code allows a metropolitan transit authority to partner with any other public or private utility, communication system, common carrier, or transportation system for the joint use of the property of the agreeing entities in the authority or the establishment of through routes, joint fares, or transfers of passengers; and,

WHEREAS, the Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority and other affected entities like the City of Austin will need to create ways to leverage resources to successfully create a high-capacity transit infrastructure system; and,

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2019 the Council unanimously passed Ordinance No. 20190411-033 adopting the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) as the transportation

element of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan to guide future growth of the city's transportation network; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a 2039 target of 16% of residents taking transit to work and decreasing transit travel time to work by 10%; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a policy of investing in, and supporting, the creation of a high-capacity transit system in Austin including a variety of commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, bus rapid transit, and other emerging technologies; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP states that the City must also continue to strengthen its partnership with the CMTA to improve public transportation services operated on City right of way and, even more importantly, to ensure high-capacity transit can be implemented; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a policy for the City to collaborate with internal departments, regional partners, and outside agencies by identifying and pursuing opportunities to strengthen local and regional policies, programs, and projects through partnerships; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a policy for the City to synchronize transportation infrastructure projects with other public capital investments by coordinating with other infrastructure projects in the same locations early in the planning process to increase cost-effectiveness and minimize disruptions in the community; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a policy for the City to improve the transportation network through private development by seeking opportunities to coordinate with and harness private capital investments to rehabilitate, expand, and connect transportation infrastructure; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a policy for the City to balance mobility needs with utility needs by optimizing mobility and utility needs when planning for street design and allocation of space in the right of way and when operating the transportation network; and,

WHEREAS, the ASMP establishes a number of targets and indicators for each of its policies regarding coordination, including:

- 1) Increase the number of transportation projects, programs, and initiatives that are coordinated across City of Austin departments;
- 2) Increase the number of transportation projects, programs, and initiatives that are coordinated with partner agencies;
- 3) Increase the number of transportation projects that are coordinated through multi-departmental construction planning activities; and
- 4) Increase the number of partnerships with private development to contribute to transportation improvements; and,

WHEREAS, accomplishing these coordination and collaboration goals align with other City of Austin goals such as affordable housing; and,

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2017 the Council passed Ordinance No. 20170413-010 adopting the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint (ASHB) that recommends approaches to address the interconnected issues of affordable housing, land use, and high-capacity transit in a comprehensive manner; and,

WHEREAS, the ASHB establishes a goal for the construction of 60,000 housing units affordable to households at 80% median family income (MFI) and below, and another 75,000 units for households earning greater than 80% MFI; and,

WHEREAS, the ASHB establishes a number of policies to link affordable housing with high-capacity and high-frequency transit, including:

- 1) Make strategic investments in economic development, transit, and education to minimize displacement;
- 2) Maximize public property to build or include affordable housing near transit and job centers;
- 3) Implement consistent density bonus programs for centers and transit corridors;
- 4) Strengthen scoring criteria and develop policies to prioritize affordable housing near current and future transit service;
- 5) Minimize the displacement of core transit riders;
- 6) Link housing choices with transportation choices by strengthening policies to direct subsidies for the preservation and creation of income-restricted affordable housing within ¼ mile of a transit stop and prioritize infrastructure investments in activity centers and along activity corridors; and,

WHEREAS, coordinating between the CMTA and the City's ASMP and ASHB can accomplish goals at lower total cost to both entities; and,

WHEREAS, the creation of a high-capacity transit system within the jurisdiction of the City of Austin will involve numerous City departments and utilities including but not limited to: Austin Energy, Austin Water, Austin Transportation, the Economic Development Department, the Fleet Services Department, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Planning and Zoning Department, and the Public Works Department; and,

WHEREAS, utilities operating within the right of way for a high-capacity transit system typically include drinking water, reclaimed water, wastewater, gas, and electric transmission infrastructure, along with communications infrastructure provided by private entities; and,

WHEREAS, utilities may need to relocate or expand infrastructure for public and private systems operating within the right of way depending on transit development; and,

WHEREAS, as the provider of electric and water utilities within its jurisdiction, the City of Austin can leverage its assets and abilities to create a high-capacity transit system at lower cost than cities with private utilities; and,

WHEREAS, infrastructure investments such as those for a high-capacity transit system can create new opportunities to leverage existing bond dollars for affordable housing, creative spaces, parkland, or others; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The Council directs the City Manager to analyze and report on:

- 1) Options for the City of Austin and other related or interested public or private entities to leverage resources to support the creation, operation, and maintenance of a high-capacity transit system in order to achieve established outcomes and goals including but not limited to:
 - a. Opportunities for the City of Austin to leverage its varied and diverse economic and financial assets and abilities;
 - b. Opportunities to maximize and diversify the revenue generated from investment in high-capacity transit system infrastructure.
- 2) Options for coordination including, but not limited to, the targets and policies set by the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint;
- 3) Means by which to achieve the goals set by the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint in the most cost-efficient way;
- 4) Possibilities for public-private partnerships to include adjacent real estate opportunities to help achieve the goals of the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to provide this report and its recommendations by the first council meeting of 2020.

ADOPTED: August 8, 2019

ATTEST: Jannette S. Goodall
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk