

RESOLUTION NO. 20221208-036

WHEREAS, Since 2005, the City of Austin encouraged transit-oriented development (TOD) 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, City policies, processes, and City Code sections related to TODs 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 2012 Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan envisions a compact and connected city that promotes 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 and preserving 10,000 affordable 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 and the preservation of affordable housing 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, encouraging development around Austin's transit network promotes safer, more environmentally sustainable transportation options that reduce household costs associated with car ownership and as the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint states, "when developing in transit corridors and nodes, every attempt should be made to ensure that development does not reduce transit ridership;" and

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint states further that "a common pattern is that as transit is added, housing becomes more expensive. Wealthier residents move into the neighborhood, often pricing out existing core transit riders, while vehicle ownership becomes more common and transit ridership is actually reduced despite increases in density. Policies should encourage the preservation of affordable housing near transit corridors"; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Austin voters approved the initial investment in Project Connect, a citywide high-capacity transit plan that includes two new light rail lines (Orange and Blue Lines), a new commuter rail line (Green Line), expanded regional rail (Red Line), four new MetroRapid routes (Gold Line, Expo Center, Pleasant Valley, Burnet/Oak Hill/Menchaca), three new MetroExpress regional routes (Four Points, Oak Hill, South MoPac) depicted on Exhibit A attached to Resolution No. 20200807-003 (*Project Connect Contract with the Voters*), the full electrification of Capital Metro's fleet, and a historic \$300,000,000 investment in financing tools and other anti-displacement strategies related to the implementation of Project Connect; and the acquisition of real property related to the Project Connect anti-displacement strategies; and

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

WHEREAS, Capital Metro was awarded a \$600,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to complete a 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; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metro was awarded a \$900,000 grant from the FTA to complete an Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) study along the entire Blue Line and the northern segment of the Orange Line ("ETOD Study") in order to support transit-oriented development and anti-displacement efforts for Project Connect; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metro was awarded a \$750,000 grant from the FTA to expand the ETOD Study to eight additional stations along the southern Orange Line in order to support transit-oriented development and anti-displacement efforts for Project Connect; and

WHEREAS, Capital Metro intends to apply for additional grant opportunities from the FTA to complete ETOD studies for other sections of Project Connect rail, commuter, and MetroRapid corridors; and

WHEREAS, the current and potential future ETOD studies 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 Toolkit 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, the City policies, processes, and code sections related to TOD may be further improved to promote affordability in communities for both residents and small businesses; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, ETOD elevates and prioritizes investments and policies that close socioeconomic gaps; and

WHEREAS, when centered on racial inclusion and community wealth building, ETOD can be a driver of positive transformation for more vibrant, prosperous, and resilient neighborhoods connected to opportunities throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 20210610-093 directed the City Manager to undertake ETOD planning in Austin by 1) partnering with CapMetro on ETOD by actively participating in its study, 2) creating a citywide ETOD Policy Plan to update the City's existing ordinances and processes and present it to Council for consideration and adoption, 3) proposing tiers for ETOD designation and an implementation timeline, and 4) providing recommendations via the Policy Plan to achieve 30 goals related to ETOD; and

WHEREAS, the City, CapMetro, and Austin Transit Partnership staff and consultants have engaged community members, especially people of color, low-income earners, people with disabilities, non-English speakers, transit users, small business owners, and older adults, to understand current challenges and their reactions to various tools to address those challenges and reach more equitable outcomes; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Manager is directed, in coordination with Capital Metro, to begin detailed station area planning processes in the North Lamar Transit Center and South Congress Transit Center station areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to place a resolution for Council consideration on the Council's February 23, 2023 meeting agenda that accomplishes the following:

- (1) accepts the ETOD Policy Plan;
- (2) directs the City Manager to coordinate with Capital Metro to incorporate the ETOD Policy Plan tools for the Green Line and Metro Rapid Stations within the boundaries of the ongoing Northeast Austin District Planning Process; and
- (3) initiates necessary amendments to the Land Development Code to implement an ETOD Policy; and
- (4) initiates amendments the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the ETOD Typologies.

ADOPTED: December 8, 2022 **ATTEST:**



Myrta Rios
City Clerk