

Sustainable and Resilient NLTC

The vision for the NLTC is also formed around a sustainable and resilient design for the site. There is an opportunity to generate renewable energy, capture and re-use water on site, treat stormwater in bioswales (landscaping that captures and filters stormwater runoff), and provide shade and comfort to transit riders and visitors. The adjacent diagrams show a conceptual vision for some of these sustainable strategies that the project champions.

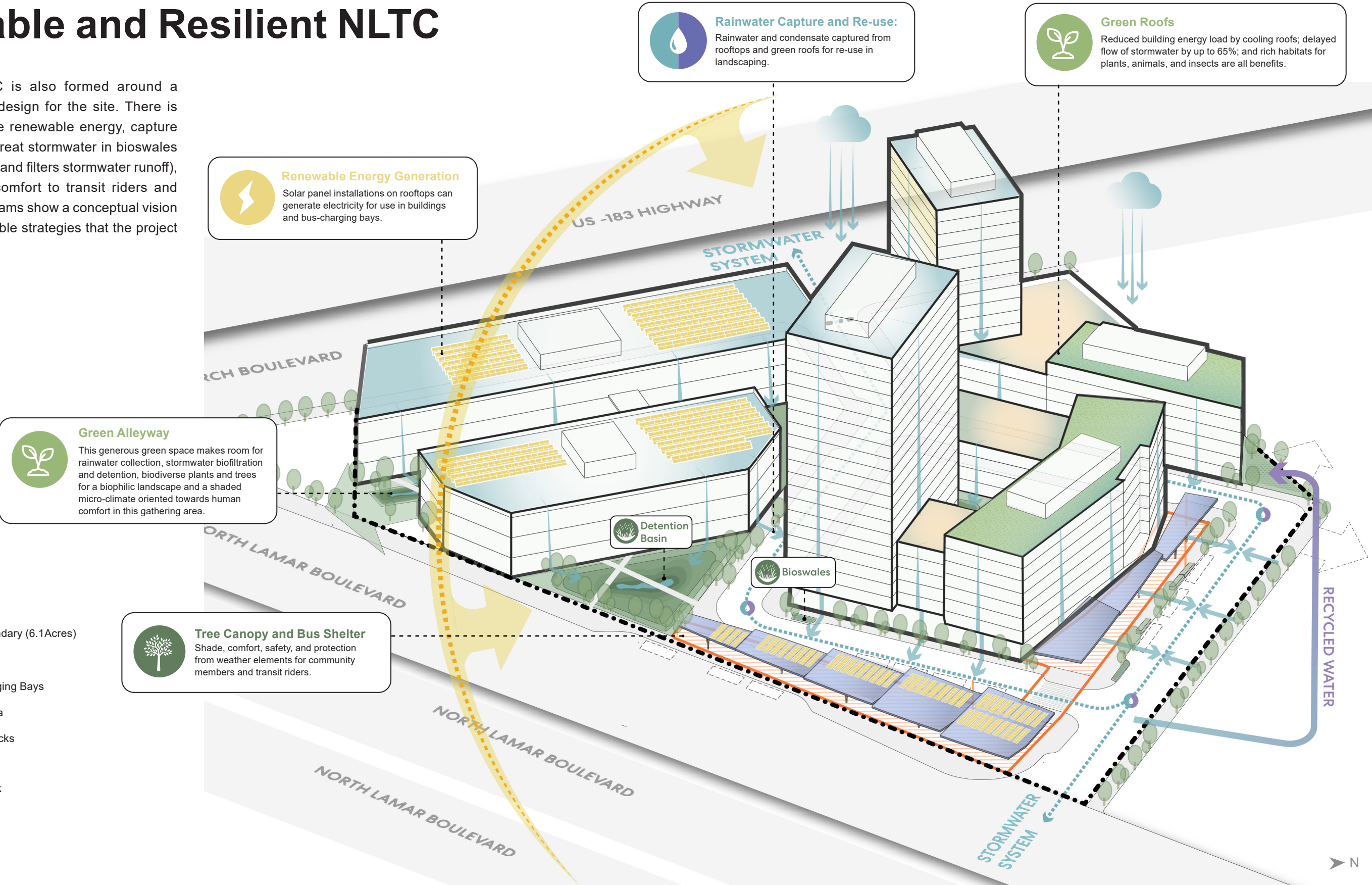


Figure 18: A sustainable and resilient community at North Lamar Transit Center

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Implementation: ETOD Policy Tools

This section identifies the ETOD Policy Tools that should be implemented within the NLTC Station Area as it evolves. These policy tools are each described in more detail in the Policy Toolkit that is included in the ETOD Policy Plan. The tools are intended to align with land use regulations and investments, and to support the six ETOD Goals within the NLTC Station Area. Based on its characteristics, the station area has been identified as “Enhance” on the ETOD Typology, and implementation of these tools is intended to respond to that typology by aligning with land use regulations and investments, to minimize displacement of existing community members and businesses, and to achieve other goals of the [ETOD Policy Plan](#) within the station area.

Recommended ETOD Policy Tools

This section includes a list of the policy tools that should be implemented to move toward the desired outcomes identified in this vision plan. The recommended tools for this plan have been identified through the planning process and organized by implementation priority to support equitable outcomes across five broad categories: small business and workforce, housing, mobility, land use and urban design, and real estate and finance strategies.

While many of these tools are already moving forward as part of various ongoing city initiatives, they will remain priorities until full implementation in the area is achieved. In many cases, these tools would be implemented citywide or across the full Project Connect system. Please refer to the city’s [ETOD Policy Plan](#) for a detailed description of each policy tool.

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT4	Support affordable ground floor space for local businesses & nonprofits	ATP +COA EDD
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT6	Promote skills-based and industry-specific job training and hiring	Workforce Development Providers + COA EDD + ATP + CapMetro
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT7	Support the Transit Line Construction Apprenticeship Program to enable local worker participation	Workforce Development Providers + COA EDD + ATP + CapMetro
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT8	Build capacity for small business participation in Project Connect construction and investments	ATP + CapMetro + CoA SMBR
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT9	Establish childcare grants	Workforce Development Providers + CoA APH + CapMetro + CoA FSD + CoA EDD
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT10	Develop and augment housing funds for preservation and creation of affordable housing	CoA Housing + CapMetro + ATP +AHFC + Texas Housing Conservancy

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT11	Promote land acquisition for affordable housing	CoA Housing + AHFC + AAHC + Texas Housing Conservancy + Non-profit fund managers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT12	Support community land trusts and other shared equity homeownership models	CoA Housing + AHFC + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT13	Seek abatement-financed housing acquisitions and joint ventures	CoA Housing + AHFC +HACA + Travis Co. + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT15	Establish an inclusive ETOD Overlay	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CapMetro + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT16	Reimagine ETOD requirements for accessory dwelling units	Workforce Development Providers + CoA APH + CapMetro + CoA FSD + CoA EDD
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT17	Support soft density by right	CoA DSD + CapMetro + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT18	Support tenants’ right to counsel	CoA Housing + Legal non-profits
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT21	Expand home repair programs	CoA Housing + AHFC + CoA DSD
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT22	Expand the Emergency Direct Rental Assistance	CoA Housing + AHF + For-profit and non-profit developers

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Mobility	NLTC_PT25	Enhance first/last mile service to stations	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	NLTC_PT31	Create shared parking requirements/public participation program	CoA Transportation
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT36	Reimagine compatibility requirements	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT39	Incentivize public amenities that improve community health and well-being	CapMetro + ATP + CoA Housing + CoA Planning
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT40	Encourage provision of civic space around transit stations	CapMetro + ATP + CoA PLD + CoA PARD + Community
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT41	Engage community voices in the public space design process	CapMetro + ATP + CoA PLD + CoA PARD + Community + Artists
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT42	Incorporate context-specific bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure design framework	CoA Transportation + AHFC +HACA + Travis Co. + For-profit and non-profit developers
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	NLTC_PT44	Identify strategies to utilize public land in the station area in concert with citywide efforts	CapMetro + CoA EDD + CoA Planning + AEDC
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	NLTC_PT45	Establish a land acquisition plan	CapMetro + CoA Housing + CoA FSD+ AHFC + COA EDD + AEDC

1-5 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT1	Provide access to small business construction interruption fund	ATP + CoA EDD
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT3	Provide access to a small business assistance fund	CoA EDD + ATP
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT14	Create capacity building for community benefits	CoA Housing + CapMetro + Financial Institutions + Philanthropic foundations
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT19	Expand the Existing Preference Policy	CoA Housing + AHF + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	NLTC_PT20	Expand the Down-Payment Assistance Fund	CoA Housing
Mobility	NLTC_PT29	Mode Split Goal for Each Station	CoA FSD + ATP
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	NLTC_PT43	Support developer solicitation and procurement framework	CoA FSD + ATP

5-10 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT2	Promote the creation of a small business relocation plan	ATP + CapMetro + CoA EDD
Mobility	NLTC_PT24	Support legacy mobility benefits program (for existing people & businesses within station areas)	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	NLTC_PT23	Establish an ETOD Mobility Program	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	NLTC_PT27	Promote a community car program	CoA Transportation + Carsharing Companies
Mobility	NLTC_PT28	Create an equitable station access strategy	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + ATP
Mobility	NLTC_PT31	Improve shared parking requirements/ public participation program	CoA Transportation + CapMetro
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT33	Establish minimum land use intensity of transit-supportive uses	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CapMetro
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT34	Allow more flexibility in permitted ground floor building uses	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CoA EDD, For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT35	Establish high affordable housing goals for publicly owned land in ETOD areas	CapMetro + ATP + CoA FSD + CoA Housing + CoA Planning + Public agencies and Municipalities + Educational institutions

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT37	Provide public amenities that improve community health and wellbeing	CapMetro + ATP + CoA Housing + Coa Planning + For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	NLTC_PT38	Create an equity scorecard for ETOD projects	Coa Planning + CapMetro + Neighborhood and community organizations
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	NLTC_PT46	Create a city-led innovative and gap financing	CoA Housing + CoA FSD+ AEDC + CapMetro + Community

10-20 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	NLTC_PT5	Provide Business District Merchant Association support	CoA EDD
Mobility	NLTC_PT26	Create a universal basic mobility pilot	CapMetro + Movability + CoA Transportation
Mobility	NLTC_PT32	Improve park and ride parking management	CapMetro + CoA Transportation

The tools and strategies outlined in this section are intended to provide a framework for implementation; however, successful execution of these equity tools may require coordination and collaboration with additional partners over time.

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Next Steps

Equitable transit-oriented development is a process that requires regulatory, planning, design, engineering, financial, and legal coordination. CapMetro, the City of Austin, and Austin Transit Partnership each have critical roles in taking all aspects of ETOD forward and must partner and coordinate on its implementation.

Transit Center Implementation

The NLTC Station Area Vision Plan is one element in a larger coordinated initiative to support equitable transit-oriented development in Austin. This work is guided by the systemwide [ETOD Policy Plan](#) that was approved by Council on March 9, 2023.

Station area vision plans are intended to serve as geographically specific guides for how ETOD could be made a reality in a particular station area. The NLTC Station Area was selected as a focus for this planning because it is currently experiencing rapid change, includes a major CapMetro-owned transit center site, and could be served by light rail in the future under the ultimate Project Connect Long Term Vision Plan.

Moving forward, the City will work to support implementation of this vision plan through future regulatory changes and implementation of the investments and policy tools described in the plan. This plan will also serve as a model for future station area vision plans developed in other areas.

For CapMetro, the station area vision plan is a necessary milestone for future equitable transit-oriented development at its transit center. It not only gives a hopeful vision for what ETOD could look like here, but its guidance is grounded in community preferences for both the transit center site and the overall neighborhood character.

To realize this vision, CapMetro must now prepare for joint development by setting a financial strategy and determining organizational priorities for the property it owns. CapMetro will pursue a joint development partner who is prepared to deliver an innovative ETOD community that is environmentally sustainable, produces significant affordable housing, and is a catalyst for safe, dense, walkable future development in the station area.

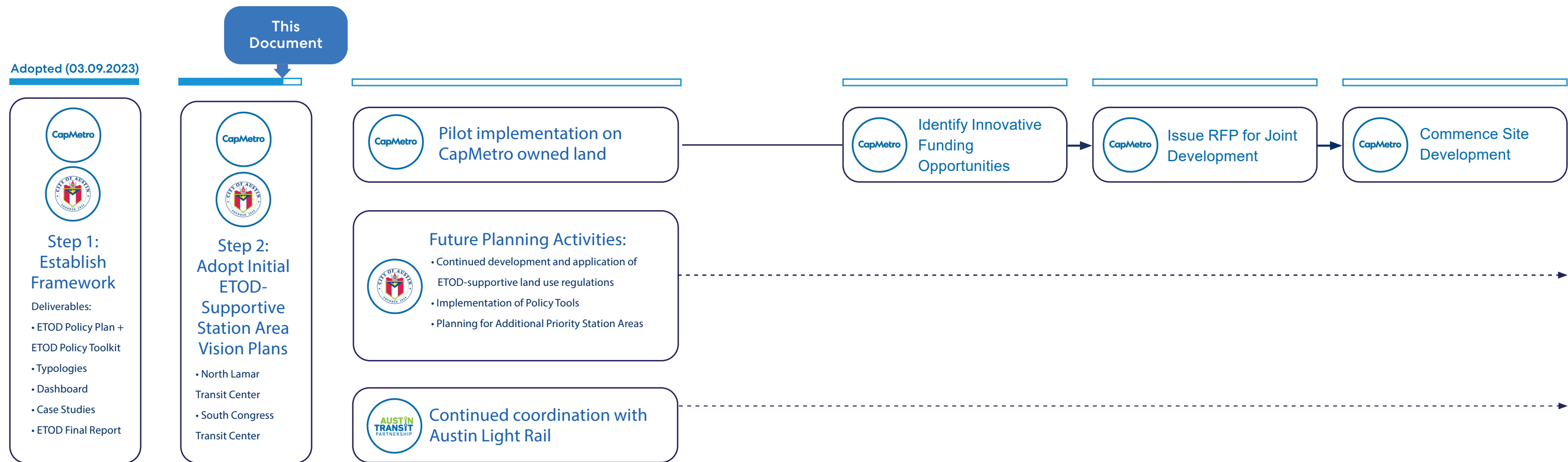


Figure 20: Next steps for the vision plan

Station Area Implementation

Bringing this vision plan to life will also require many City of Austin departments, CapMetro, Austin Transit Partnership, developers, and the community to implement a combination of investments, regulations, and programs. The following near-term next steps are recommended:

• **Develop the design for the transit center:** Work with the community to develop more specific designs and a strategy for transforming the single-function transit center that exists today into an urban transit-integrated community.
Lead: CapMetro

• **Apply the ETOD Overlay to properties within the station area:** Pending development of phase 2 ETOD Overlay regulations, engage the community, and initiate rezoning of properties within the station area to add the ETOD Overlay as appropriate.
Lead: COA Planning Department

• **Amend the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP):** Integrate transportation connections and improvements identified in this vision plan to enhance accessibility and support growth in the station area.
Lead: COA TPW

• **Amend the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and related neighborhood plans, and review future rezoning requests against the Future Land Use Map:** Adopt the station area vision plan as an attachment to Imagine Austin, amend neighborhood plan FLUMs for consistency, and ensure any proposed rezoning requests align with the vision as outlined in the Future Land Use Map.
Lead: COA Planning Department

• **Develop and implement displacement prevention strategies:** Continue collaborating with the City’s Displacement Prevention Division to identify opportunities to support plan goals through citywide displacement prevention programs.
Lead(s): COA Housing + COA Planning Department

• **Implement infrastructure improvements:** Identify funding and opportunities to support infrastructure projects that advance station area plan initiatives.
Lead(s): COA TPW + COA Planning Department

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Appendix

The role of the Austin community was critical in ensuring the North Lamar Transit Center Station Area Vision Plan reflects the aspirations and challenges of its community members. The following community engagement summary details the different phases of engagement, outreach methods used, and feedback collected, highlighting our commitment to an equitable planning process.

Community Engagement Summary

The following section is a summary of the three phases of community engagement that took place during the planning process for the station area vision plans. Each phase of engagement was used as a building block to advance the next phase of engagement and produce a comprehensive draft vision plan. Station area-specific details related to transit, housing, and pedestrian safety are a direct result of the community’s active participation to ensure the vision plans respond to the needs of existing community members. The three phases took place at different time periods over the last two years: Phase 1 in Spring 2023, Phase 2 in Fall 2023, and Phase 3 in Fall 2024.

The summaries below include the purpose for each phase and an overview of the different forms of communication and outreach used to boost community involvement and gather feedback from the public. This is followed by a breakdown of the individual outreach methods used to track engagement and provides data on the public’s interactions with those methods. Those methods include public workshops, surveys, tabling events, online engagement, and emails. Each summary concludes with a table that categorizes feedback received via surveys and public workshops by the ETOD Goals outlined in the [ETOD Policy Plan](#).

Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 1:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 1 Engagement Purpose

The project team implemented the first round of engagement for the ETOD station area plans to set the priorities for land uses based on neighborhood-level policy recommendations within a half-mile radius of the station areas. Staff engaged the community regarding the

future of these station areas and meeting the community’s needs. The engagement period took place from January to March 2023. The community feedback collected during this phase directly influenced the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans and design concepts, the next step in the planning process.

Engagement Overview

One of the primary objectives of the community engagement effort for all phases of ETOD planning is to create opportunities and methods to engage community members and transit users who have been historically underrepresented while compensating them for their time and knowledge. Accomplishing this required targeted methods for reaching those key communities that may be outside of the traditional methods.

In this round of engagement, the channels implemented to hear these voices included small, compensated focus groups, an online survey, and four public virtual workshops. CapMetro also hired Community Connectors, a diverse, engaged, and compensated group of grassroots community members that helped us reach their networks. These channels are further explained below.

Focus Groups

From February 2023 to March 2023, the project team sought community input through a series of virtual focus groups. Community engagement through these virtual focus groups helped inform the project team on the community’s needs and priorities for both the NLTC and SCTC Station Areas. The purpose of the focus groups was to:

1.Connect with and receive feedback from priority populations (including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Spanish-speaking, and low-income community

members), transit center users, neighborhood community groups and organizations, and local businesses.

2.Share CapMetro’s ETOD study goals, station evaluation criteria, best practices, and existing conditions with focus group members.

3.Build trust and demonstrate transparency around the ETOD study.

In total, there were six virtual focus groups held, four in English and two in Spanish, and each focus group lasted one hour. The focus groups were hosted as virtual Zoom meetings. The interactive presentations were displayed on Google Jamboard slides where the assigned notetaker would live capture participants’ feedback by applying virtual “sticky notes” throughout the discussion. Each participant received a \$50 HEB e-gift card within 24 hours of the focus group concluding. All text and content used in the presentations for the Spanish-speaking focus groups was translated into Spanish.

Survey

An online survey tool was used to engage station area communities and transit users to help define the vision and set priorities for the future of each station area. The survey was open from February 13, 2023, to March 23, 2023, and offered two different ways for area community members and transit users to give their input. The first was station area surveys that were offered for both NLTC and SCTC, where respondents could provide input on station-specific questions. Secondly, an interactive map of NLTC and SCTC Station Areas allowed users to drop comment pins on specific points within each station area to highlight existing community assets, areas for improvement, and community needs.

Open Survey Period

- 120 Unique Users
- 50 Surveys for NLTC
- 60 Surveys for the SCTC
- 244 Station area mapping comments
- 156 Comments for NLTC
- 88 Comments for SCTC
- 77 Responses to other comments placed on the map

Virtual Public Workshops

Virtual Public Workshops were held to extend the project engagement reach by providing an additional forum for community members to learn about the ETOD station area planning and provide their feedback in an interactive discussion. Four total virtual workshops were held between February 28, 2023 and March 1, 2023. The project team provided an overview of ETOD planning to date, explained the purpose of the station area plans, and shared the current context specific to the station areas. American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation were provided at all workshops.

• Two NLTC workshops were held – one in the afternoon and the other in the evening.

• Two SCTC workshops were held – one in the afternoon and the other in the evening.

Community Connectors

To expand community participation and increase engagement from priority populations, Cultural Strategies worked with Capital Metro and its consultant team to expand CapMetro’s Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Community Connector Program, a public

engagement effort that has been successful in reaching historically underserved communities and community members. The primary objective was to support a community-led public input and planning process for first phase of engagement for the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans. Collectively, Community Connectors represented daily transit riders, connections to cultural organizations, college-aged student governance/ leadership, differing abilities/disabilities, and housing and affordability advocates. Each Connector was equipped with accurate information about the project and active support to effectively engage their personal networks and local community.

Connectors participated in regularly scheduled meetings and one-to-one calls, attended the February 28, 2023 and March 1, 2023 Virtual Workshops, supported the business walk activities, shared survey and workshop links, explored opportunities to reach and engage their networks, and provided key-insights reports. The Community Connectors program provided community members and small businesses adjacent to the station areas with an opportunity to learn about ETOD. Overall, their engagement in the process helped amplify the community’s priorities, challenges, and visions for the two station area plans.

Engagement Feedback Phase I

Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation









- [NLTC] More improvements to pedestrian and bike infrastructure, with emphasis on better sidewalks, protected crosswalks, protected bike lanes, and overall greater pedestrian connectivity. Streetscapes should be safe and accommodating for all.
- [SCTC] More walkability and greater safety considerations, including more pedestrian or bike trails, bike storage, and safer South Congress crossings.
- [NLTC] Currently there are many unsafe crossings in the area: there is a need for safer crossings.
- [SCTC] An important section of the station area is north of Ben White/Highway 290. However, it is very unsafe to cross this section. There is a clear need for safer pedestrian/bike crossings in this section.
- Green space and beautification efforts are needed.
- [SCTC] It would be great to capitalize on the Bergstrom trail.
- Lack of shade makes it difficult to move around, especially in the hot season.
- Individuals are concerned with the safety in the area.
- Need for graphic wayfinding, including in a variety of languages.
- Late night services are needed.
- Free and affordable bus and transit passes.
- Shuttle parking to increase use of public transportation.
- Bike/scooter rental stations and charging stations for electric cars.
- Concerns with long wait times, transfers, and transit delays were shared.

Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable



- Having affordable housing will bring a sense of community and people.
- People are struggling with housing and need more affordable options.
- More dense housing is needed.

<p>Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing tends to be more accepted when it isn't concentrated: spread it around instead of being concentrated. • There is potential to utilize existing buildings to create more affordable housing. • [SCTC] St. Elmo area is growing. However, there is nervousness about new developments. Housing costs are increasing exponentially, and there are concerns related to displacement with new developments. 	
<p>Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use housing, a variety of home types and apartments. • Increasing housing stock could help displacement for the working class. • Keep cultural diversity despite gentrification. • Investors should not buy all the housing – people, not just businesses. • Keeping families and kids safe. • Misconception that new is always better. There are established businesses currently being driven out: newer development pushing out others. • Prioritize people who are already here and trying to make a better living for themselves. 	
<p>Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more apartments/affordable housing. • Safety and security, accessibility, and walkability. • There is a need to increase density. Also, car dependency makes it difficult to have strong community centers. • Mixed-use development often misses basic needs: need more complete neighborhood businesses. • There is a need for more grocery options, healthy/affordable food. • [SCTC] More green space and outdoor play space is needed. Parks and recreation features, including dog parks, exercise facilities, shade trees. 	

<p>Support Healthy Neighborhoods That Meet Daily Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need for more community amenities, including high-quality health care, libraries and childcare. Grocery options are needed. • More grocery stores/local food vendors, corner markets, and farmers markets, with a focus on healthy food and local ownership. 	
<p>Expand Austin’s Diverse Cultural Heritage and Small, BIPOC-Owned, and Legacy Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help small businesses and renters. • [NLTC] There is a current lack of community feel/integration. However, the area does have notable places beloved by the community, including a variety of restaurants and local businesses. • [SCTC] The area has many notable businesses and restaurants that people like to visit. • [NLTC] This area has a large international community/confluence of different cultures. • [NLTC] There is no real connection for the people who live in the area to the things to do there. • Need to make area friendly to non-English speakers. • [SCTC] Lacking Southeast Asian cultural presence. • Access to small businesses during construction is important. • Concerns that established businesses are being pushed out. • Security and safety are important. 	
<p>Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail component is important: means to activate the space and attract people. • Variety of business/service options easily reached via transit. • Need more employment opportunities; people are travelling far for work. • Job training/business incubators located in the station area. • Need more stores that meet daily needs, restaurants, pet stores, grocery stores. • More cultural arts and music venues, such as performance theaters, art vendors, music venues, and art galleries. 	

Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities

- Language training (ESL).
- More education and high-quality employment opportunities.
- A mix of large and small businesses.
- Avoid chains, more support for local businesses.
- Would like to see redevelopment: make it easier to make changes to improve the area.



Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 2:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 2 Engagement Purpose

The second phase of engagement for the station area vision plans took place in October and November 2023. Engagement applied the feedback received from round 1 on preliminary planning efforts for the station areas and identified community needs to accommodate the improvements necessary for the station areas’ street connectivity, pedestrian safety, and open spaces network. These conversations prompted discussions for planning scenarios on what future development would look like for the station areas and the transit centers.

Engagement Overview

The engagement window was open from October 11, 2023 to November 9, 2023. The project team engaged with over 370 people through several methods of communication and outreach. Those methods included business walks, conducting surveys, public workshops, presentations, focus groups, sending emails, distributing flyers, mailing postcards, social media posts, and hosting tabling events. The feedback collected during this engagement period was analyzed by the project team to draft the first version of the station area vision plans which would be shared with the community for comments and questions in the next phase of engagement. The methods used for round two are included below.

Emails

Emails were sent to over 16,500+ ETOD and CapMetro subscribers inviting them to participate in various engagement efforts to get involved and provide comments on planning for the station areas. Email outreach was

broken down to focus on leveraging the different forms of communication in which community members could provide their comments. The methods of communication were as follows:

- Focus Groups: emailed 450+ community members.
- Public Workshops: emailed 500+ community members.
- Survey: emailed 15,000+ community members.

Business Walks

The project team sent emails and posted flyers inviting local small business owners in the station areas to provide feedback on future planning. Their feedback was collected via surveys, focus groups, and public workshops.

- NLTC: Staff spoke with ~ 70 small businesses.
- SCTC: Staff spoke with ~ 60 small businesses.

Postcards

Postcards promoting the public workshops were mailed to addresses located within a half-mile of the station area. The postcard included a scannable QR code that redirected users to the main ETOD SpeakUp Austin webpage.

- NLTC: 3,889 postcards mailed.
- SCTC: 3,205 postcards mailed.

Social Media

Social media outlets were used to promote participation in the public workshops and surveys. The primary outlets used were Facebook, Twitter “X”, and Instagram posts on the City of Austin and CapMetro social media pages.

Additionally, CapMetro paid the following promotion social media post that was accessible in English and Spanish:

- Facebook: 5000+ views
- Twitter: 10,700+ views
- Instagram: 3000+ views
- Paid Promotion: 20,300+ views

Presentations

A formal presentation was given to the Thurmond Heights Residential Council Meeting on November 16, 2023. The project team presented to the Thurmond Heights Neighborhood Association on ongoing engagement efforts and future plans for the NLTC Station Area. Surveys were accessible in English and Spanish.

Tabling

Tabling events are other City or community organizational events where the staff would have a table setup to invite community members to learn more about the project and participate in the comment period. Tabling was not originally included as one of the methods of outreach for this specific round of engagement, however, due to low turnout at the public workshops, staff added the following tabling events to engage more community members:

- Two mornings and two afternoons each at NLTC and SCTC (November 1, 2023 through November 3, 2023)
 - Foundation Communities Sierra Vista Family Night (October 25, 2023)
 - Todos Juntos Mi Familia y Me Pumpkin Party (October 26, 2023)
 - Waterloo Greenway Día De Los Muertos (November 1, 2023)
 - Thurmond Heights Apartments (November 8, 2023)
- *Surveys in English and Spanish were accessible at all tabling events.

Focus Groups

Focus groups began on October 11, 2023 and concluded on October 18, 2023. There were seven one-hour virtual focus groups held throughout that week with sessions offered in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. The project team was able to locate participants by emailing community-based organizations and having their staff forward the focus group information to their members and clients. An existing CapMetro Community Connector with strong ties to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community was able to leverage outreach for ASL participants. Over all seven focus groups, 19 people participated and each was compensated with a \$50 H-E-B gift card.

Virtual focus groups for NLTC:

- Session 1: Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m.
- Session 2 (English + ASL): Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 3 (Spanish only): Thursday, October 12, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m.
- Session 4 (Spanish only): Thursday, October 12, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Virtual focus groups for SCTC:

- Session 1: Monday, October 16, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 2 (English + ASL): Tuesday, October 17, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 3 (Spanish only): Wednesday, October 18, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Engagement Feedback Phase 2

Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation



- Feeling like the traffic and crossings in the area are not meant for pedestrians walking to the transit center.
- Children who go to schools nearby must be protected from cars when crossing. Cars do not respect pedestrians.
- [SCTC] For pedestrian safety, crossing under 290 is most important.
- [NLTC] Prioritize crossing closest to transit center through Powell Ln.
- [SCTC] Blind people work near St. Elmo at TAB. Some take the bus but more would do so if roads were improved.
- [NLTC] Improving Georgian Drive and NE Blvd is important for access to northeast Austin.
- [NLTC] Street lighting in the area should accompany improvements to Anderson Square Road and Morrow Street options.
- Need better sidewalks. At the moment you have to step on grass and mud.
- It is very difficult to bike at the moment, need a bike/scooter parking area.
- [NLTC] I like that there are connections to income restricted housing. Looks like not a lot of opportunities to cross 183.
- [SCTC] If there are night buses at SCTC, make sure it is well lit.
- More interested in trains over buses. Trains are more efficient; buses get stuck in traffic.

Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable



- Improve connections to affordable housing.
- Concern that although there are apartments with affordable rents for families [...] rents are still expensive and not accessible.
- Would like to live in the transit center.
- A mixed-use transit center would be incredible, there will always be a need for housing in Austin. Something like what they did in Mueller to provide affordable housing would be great.
- Affordable housing is so needed in Austin and the more the better.

Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gaps



- Support for pharmacy and clinics nearby, especially if you get sick at night.
- I go to a clinic nearby on Rundberg, but at night when there is no bus, it is good to have something close to go to. It's good for an emergency.
- Like having jobs close by, source of work.
- Many people supported mixed-use buildings in the Spanish sessions. Emphasis on providing amenities, but making sure it is accessible and equitable to lower-income folks and businesses.
- What I would love the most is to live in the transit center. It is the city's responsibility to provide the resources community members need. Hopefully CapMetro can give folks a better quality of life.
- Instead of just development, say how to help people stay.
- There's only a few [units of] student housing left that are affordable.
- Important for BIPOC population, especially people who want to stay central instead of being pushed out.
- Entire location should not cater fully to businesses, the site should have recreation and residential.
- Already financially stable businesses around, site should benefit people instead.
- I work with a non-profit. Other nonprofits have talked about renting one building together. But the entire location should not cater fully to businesses, should have recreation and residential.

Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs



- Preference for shaded tree groves, anything that casts shadows, native planting, community gardens, local art installations, dog parks, more sport areas, active recreation for kids play areas (including splash pads for hot weather).
- Preference for parks with big bike lanes, large space for people to exercise, something that is multipurpose beyond just a trail.
- More options to go to different parks, allows children to discover new places and encourage them to go outside.
- Accessible to people in wheelchairs, videos for sign languages in open spaces and along each stop.
- Deaf community likes to meet by soccer stadium, bookstores in area, and at transit stops.

- HEB Riverside is a good example: kids have fun, people can exercise, east access.
- Enjoys grabbing drinks and using restroom after getting off transport.
- Need for comfortable benches, greenery/overhang that provides shadows.
- I think it is a good idea to have parks and trails around. I think it is good for the environment and for us citizens.
- Prioritize community gardens.
- Smaller, incremental improvements, focusing on amenities such as water fountains.
- Design parks with benches, places to meet people and hang out.
- Have more security.
- Baseball recreation space.
- Means more greenery. Everyone wants to see the beauty of nature, not cars.
- More trees, benches, and street lighting to make area truly accessible.



Expand Austin's Diverse Cultural Heritage and Small, BIPOC-Owned, and Legacy Businesses



- Opportunity to mix priorities (through new and existing people) for new local and unique businesses.
- Improvements dependent on density types, i.e. moderate should have more small businesses, bike/ped friendly streets, and neighborhood services. If employment, more shops and restaurants.
- More accessible business connections with less crossing.
- I think it would be good because it would help to have more business connections and I wouldn't have to cross. There would be more access to small businesses like small stores so you don't have to go to the HEB.
- Opportunity to mix priorities (through new and existing people) for new local and unique businesses.
- SCTC can host more stores and businesses, will encourage more riders if this is a destination with things to do.
- Would love to trail and visit all the shops and businesses. Feels many people in Austin would agree.

Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities

- I feel like this blend of residential and commercial is a draw to bring people in to use the transit system, rather than just it being residential. Make it more of a destination.
- We need versatile community spaces.
- We need to work to be able to pay for housing.
- Be at close proximity between employment and housing.



Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 3:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 3 Engagement Purpose

The third phase of engagement for the NLTC and SCTC was completed in Fall 2024. The feedback collected from the first two rounds of engagement in 2023 was compiled to create the first draft of the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans. These plans were presented to the community through a series of open houses and media communications, providing the opportunity for community members to learn, ask questions, and comment on the station area vision plans. Staff incorporated resident feedback collected from the third phase of engagement into the final proposed vision plans.

Engagement Overview

The primary focus for the third round of engagement was to introduce the community to the draft station area vision plans and gather feedback on the content to ensure staff’s alignment with the feedback gathered from the first two rounds of engagement. The vision plans include data highlighting areas to spark economic growth while still supporting local small businesses and mixed-income housing, and showcase maps promoting safer street and pedestrian connectivity. Both station areas have an associated future land use map, or “FLUM” that would designate development character districts to complement existing and future development within the transit center and the surrounding neighborhoods.

To inform the community on the first draft of the vision plans, staff provided a webpage and survey, mailed out postcards, put up yard signs, distributed posters around various community buildings, sent out two email blasts, notified City Council offices (an announcement

was included in a district office newsletter), attended community tabling events, and hosted three public open houses. The City of Austin Planning Department spearheaded the third round of engagement but incorporated several other departments in the various engagement efforts. Those entities included: the City of Austin Economic Development Department, Transportation and Public Works Department, Housing Department, Public Information Office, Project Connect Office, and the Capital Metro Transit Authority.

SpeakUp Austin Webpage

SpeakUp Austin houses all online community engagement outreach for public meetings and projects in the City of Austin. For the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans, the associated SpeakUp Austin page went live on October 31, 2023, two weeks prior to the scheduled public workshops. The webpage is reachable through the following link: speakupaustin.org/etodstationareas. The webpage included an overview of what station area planning means in Austin and what is expected for each transit center and the station area, with both draft vision plans available for download.

There was also information to direct the public to boost engagement through other forms of public participation during the adoption process. Finally, there was a survey and comments section to collect information on the community members’ relationship to the transit center and to provide any questions or comments related to the draft vision plans. The webpage was accessible for translation in seven different languages and with further translation services available through iSpeakAustin.

Courtesy Postcards

Courtesy postcards were sent to over 8,000 addresses in proximity to the NLTC and SCTC. The postcards were mailed to community members within 500’ of the station area on the same day the SpeakUp site went live on October 31, 2023. The postcards had information on the scheduled open house public workshops and a scannable QR code to direct individuals to the SpeakUp Austin page. The postcard included Spanish translation.

- 3600+ postcards were sent to addresses in the NLTC Station Area.
- 4300+ postcards were sent to addresses in the SCTC Station Area.

Posters

Posters announcing the public workshops were posted at various community buildings and organizations in the station areas. Similar to the postcards, the posters communicated the meeting date and time for the public workshop, a QR code, and a Spanish translation.

- NLTC Poster Locations: Austin Humane Society, La Reunion Co-Op, Oaks on North Lamar Apartments (City-owned income-restricted housing), Navarro Early College High School, Redeemer Lutheran School, T.A. Brown Elementary School.
- SCTC Poster Locations: CommunityCare Clinic, Galindo Elementary School, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Lifeworks, Salvation Army Family Store, St. Elmo Elementary School, St. John’s Lutheran Church/ Todos Juntos Learning Center.

Yard Signs

Yard signs were placed at various street intersections in proximity to the transit centers. The yard signs included an announcement of the public workshop and a QR code to direct users to more information via SpeakUp Austin.

- NLTC Yard Signs Locations: NLTC site, corner of Powell Lane and Georgian Acres Drive, corner of Powell Lane and N Lamar Blvd, corner of Jamestown Drive and Research Boulevard.
- SCTC Yard Signs Locations: SCTC site, corner of W St. Elmo and South First Street, corner of W St. Elmo and South Congress, and the corner of E St. Elmo and South Congress.

Email Blasts

Two email blasts were sent to over 2000+ ETOD email subscribers. The first was sent one week prior to the first workshop on November 13, 2023. The second email blast was sent on November 12, 2023, the day before the first workshop. The email blasts boosted engagement with the SpeakUp Austin webpage from 73 views to over 800 views.

Public Open Houses

Three public open houses were open to the community to learn about the draft station area vision plans. Two of the open houses were in-person — one for each transit center — and focused solely on the individual draft plan for the respective station. The third open house was a joint virtual meeting discussing both NLTC and SCTC. The meeting was recorded and posted on the SpeakUp Austin webpage and is available in English and Spanish.

The in-person open houses were setup in a casual environment. Poster boards highlighted major themes from the vision plans showcasing maps, graphics, and station area-specific information. This provided a relaxed environment allowing for open communication for the

public to speak directly with staff to ask questions and learn more about the plans. Staff representation at all three workshops included the City of Austin Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Transportation and Public Works Department, Housing Department, Public Information Office, Project Connect Office, and CapMetro.

North Lamar Transit Center Open House

Date: November 13, 2024
Location: T.A. Brown Elementary School
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Attendees: 17





South Congress Transit Center Open House

Date: November 14, 2024
Location: Galindo Elementary School
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Attendees: 7

North Lamar and South Congress Joint Virtual Meeting

Date: November 16, 2024
Location: Zoom
Time: 11 a.m. to noon
Attendees: 5

Engagement Feedback Phase 3

<div><div>Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation</div><div><div><div><div>• [NLTC] Love the open space network! Pedestrian safety and access improvements on Anderson Square! Possibility of a real grocery store in a walkable area!.</div><div>• [NLTC] Need 'low-hanging fruit' renderings of light rail transit – future connections if approved w/ funding between Crestview Station and Research Blvd/NLTC Station Area.</div><div>• [NLTC] Big wants: Connect Dale Dr. and Wooten Dr. to Anderson Sq. to improve ped + bike access. Better traffic control on Anderson Sq and Anderson Ln intersection. All in all, looks very promising – Gault St. resident.</div><div>• [NLTC] I like the addition of more pedestrian/cyclist connectivity. Connecting Wooten and Dale to Anderson Square is a good idea. Would like better traffic flow at Anderson Ln. and Anderson Sq. intersection. Currently awful to turn left off of Gault.</div><div>• The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan has a goal to increase transit ridership 4x and the only way to accomplish that is dense development. The plan should refer to this adopted goal and council direction.</div></div></div><div></div></div></div>
<div><div>Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable</div><div><div><div><div>• This plan addresses many of my concerns as a resident within the zone. I appreciate the intention to actively AVOID gentrification.</div><div>• [NLTC] I like the higher density and mixed use zoning. We would really love a grocery store. -Gault St. resident.</div></div></div><div></div></div></div>
<div><div>Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gaps</div><div><div><div><div>• [Regarding the NLTC station area snapshot board] This is highly important to me, the percentage of BIPOC folks in my area should be higher.</div></div></div><div></div></div></div>
<div><div>Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs</div><div><div><div><div>• [NLTC] The plan looks very promising!</div><div>• More green spaces & rooftops on the transit center (include plants & trees).</div><div>• More density & canopy areas! Add protected bike lanes.</div></div></div><div></div></div></div>

