



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Through:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Mike Rogers, Assistant City Manager 

**From:** Richard Mendoza, P.E., M.P.A., Director   
Austin Transportation and Public Works

**Date:** July 31, 2026

**Subject:** Fare-Free Voting Days - Staff Response (Resolution 20260528-062)

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a response to [Resolution 20260528-062](#) directing the City Manager to coordinate with CapMetro and Travis County to explore the cost and feasibility of continuing fare-free voting on Election Day during the 2026 general election, as well as the opportunity to expand fare-free voting to additional days during the early voting period. The resolution also directs the City Manager to recommend during the Fiscal Year 2027 budget process how the City of Austin can support fare-free voting during the 2026 election cycle, including on Election Day and during high-turnout days during the early voting period.

### Current Fare-Free Voting Day

In September 2018, the CapMetro Board of Directors passed Resolution AI-2018-857, approving free service systemwide on National General Election Day in November of even-numbered years. CapMetro indicates that they plan to continue to waive fares on Election Day in November 2026, with no additional support required from the City.

### Cost Analysis

CapMetro indicates that additional days of waived or suspended fare collections would negatively impact revenue and service, and would require reimbursement. CapMetro generates roughly \$50,000-\$75,000 in passenger fare revenue on an average service day. Preliminary discussions with Travis County staff indicate support for sponsoring one additional fare-free day, though further action would be required at the Travis County Commissioner's Court.

Based on CapMetro estimates, the cost-sharing options between the City of Austin and Travis County to subsidize one or more *additional* days of fare-free transit service during the 2026 election season include:

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- 1<sup>st</sup> day of early voting: \$75,000 from City of Austin; or
- 1<sup>st</sup> day and last days of early voting (or two highest turnout days of early voting): \$150,000 (\$75,000 from City and \$75,000 from Travis County)

If you have any questions, please contact Anna Martin, Assistant Director, at (512) 974-7105.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Erika Brady, City Clerk  
Jason Hadavi, City Auditor  
Mary Jane Grubb, Municipal Court Clerk  
Judge Sherry Statman, Municipal Court  
CMO Executive Team  
Department Directors