



# Transportation on the Ballot

*Strategies for success in Austin*

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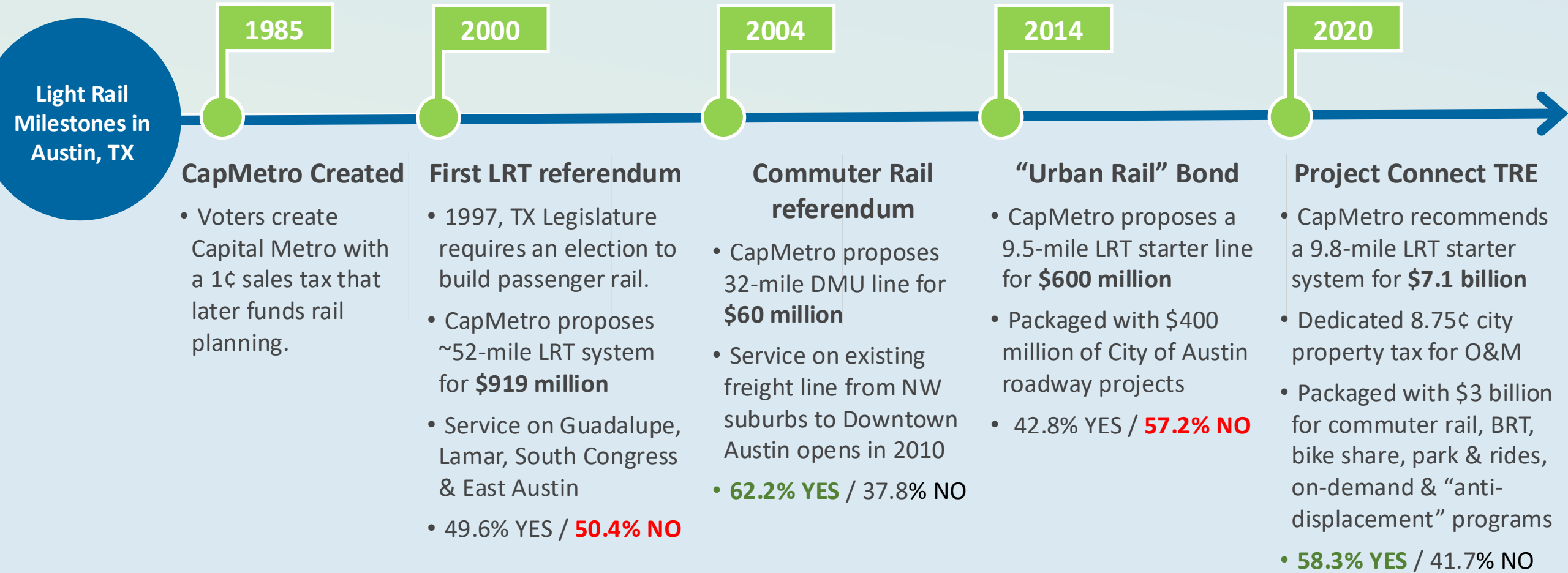
# AGENDA

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1. Austin LRT Timeline
2. Snapshots: 2000 / 2004 / 2014 / 2020
3. Engagement Methods
  - Virtual
  - In-person
4. Project Update
  - Project Connect Program of Projects
  - LRT Overview
  - Organizational Model



# AUSTIN'S PATH TO LIGHT RAIL



## Light Rail Milestones in Austin, TX

1985

### CapMetro Created

- Voters create Capital Metro with a 1¢ sales tax that later funds rail planning.

2000

### First LRT referendum

- 1997, TX Legislature requires an election to build passenger rail.
- CapMetro proposes ~52-mile LRT system for **\$919 million**
- Service on Guadalupe, Lamar, South Congress & East Austin
- 49.6% YES / **50.4% NO**

2004

### Commuter Rail referendum

- CapMetro proposes 32-mile DMU line for **\$60 million**
- Service on existing freight line from NW suburbs to Downtown Austin opens in 2010
- **62.2% YES** / 37.8% NO

2014

### "Urban Rail" Bond

- CapMetro proposes a 9.5-mile LRT starter line for **\$600 million**
- Packaged with \$400 million of City of Austin roadway projects
- 42.8% YES / **57.2% NO**

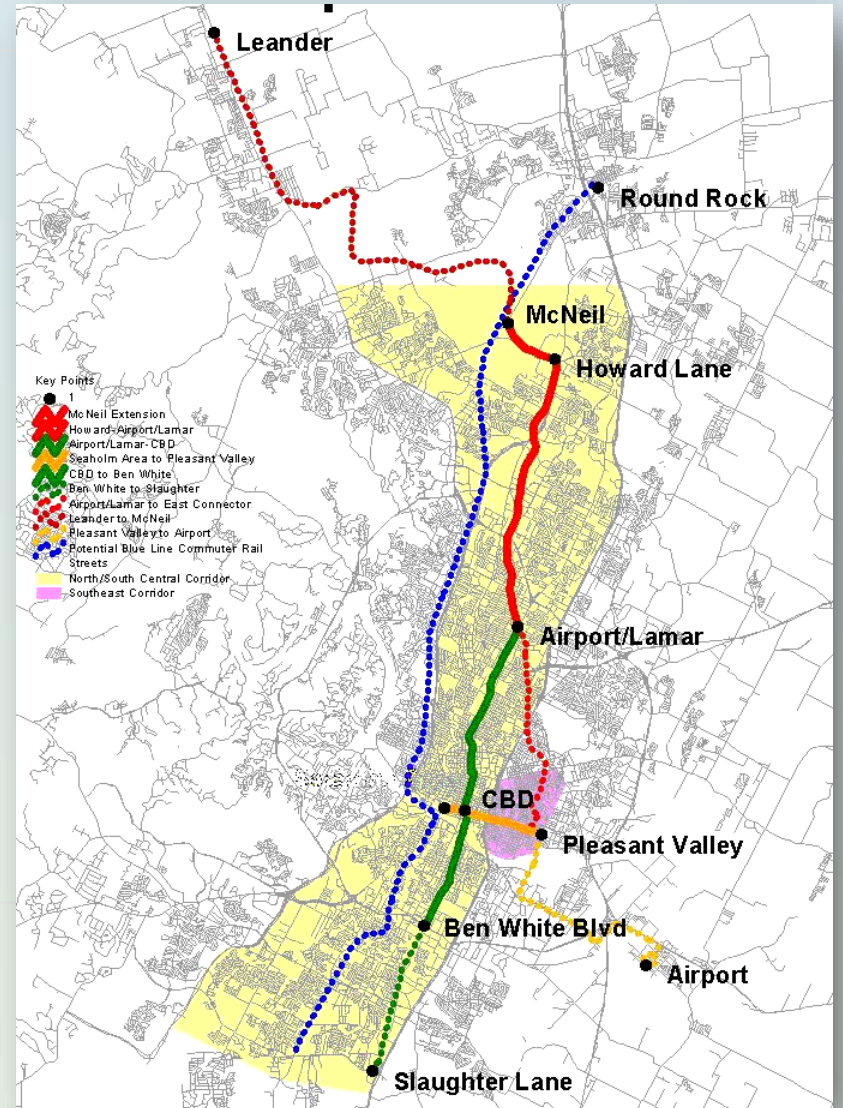
2020

### Project Connect TRE

- CapMetro recommends a 9.8-mile LRT starter system for **\$7.1 billion**
- Dedicated 8.75¢ city property tax for O&M
- Packaged with \$3 billion for commuter rail, BRT, bike share, park & rides, on-demand & "anti-displacement" programs
- **58.3% YES** / 41.7% NO

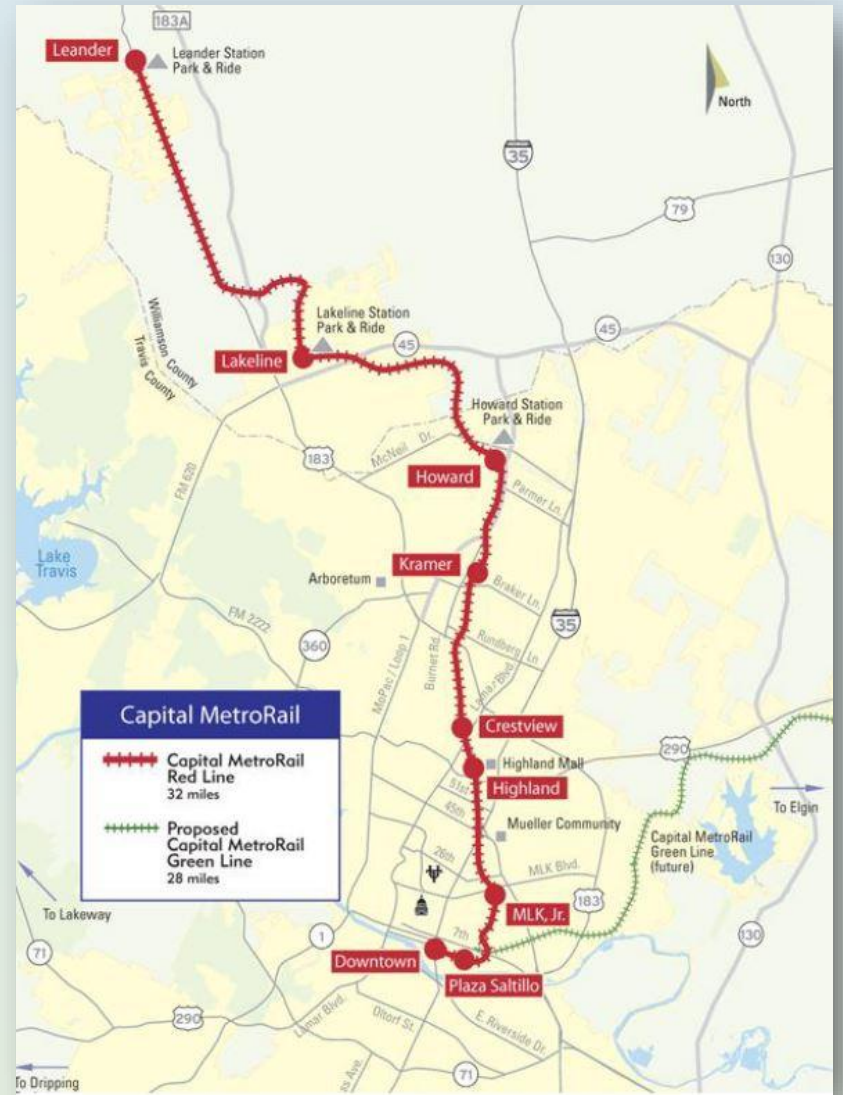
# 2000 – AUSTIN'S FIRST LRT ELECTION

- **1997**: Texas Legislature **requires** transit authorities to host an election before they can build passenger rail
  - State of Texas does **not** fund transit!
- **2000**: CapMetro proposes ~52-mile LRT system for **\$919 million**
  - Service on Guadalupe, Lamar, South Congress & East Austin
  - City has **no mixed-use or TOD zoning** outside downtown
- **49.6% YES / 50.4% NO**
  - ~2,000 vote margin
  - Vote hosted **across the entire CapMetro service area**
  - Referendum does poorly in suburban districts
  - Bush\* (R) / Gore **presidential** election



# 2004 – COMMUTER RAIL REFERENDUM

- **2004:** CapMetro proposes 32-mile DMU line for **\$60 million**
  - Service operates on **existing freight line** from NW suburbs to Downtown Austin
- **2005:** City of Austin introduces Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning for rail station areas
- **2010:** “Red Line” Commuter Rail opens
- **62.2% YES / 37.8% NO**
  - Requires **no federal funding**
  - Provides rail option for suburban voters that said NO in 2000
  - Bush (R) **mid-term** election



# 2014 – “URBAN RAIL” BOND

- **2014:** CapMetro proposes a **\$600 million**, 9.5-mile LRT starter line
  - Part of a \$1 billion **bond** package that **included \$400 million** in City of Austin **roadway projects**
- 42.8% YES / **57.2% NO**
  - Road projects appeal to suburban, not urban voters
  - Alignment splits urbanist voters – preferred alignment had received federal funding for BRT, which opened in 2014
  - Obama (D) **mid-term** election



# 2020 – PROJECT CONNECT TAX RATE ELECTION

- **2020:** CapMetro & the City of Austin propose a 20.2-mile LRT system with a 1.6-mile tunnel downtown for **\$5.8 billion**
  - City of Austin dedicates 8.75¢ property tax for O&M, City and CapMetro create Austin Transit Partnership (ATP), using a JPA, to deliver LRT
- **2022:** ATP recommends the 9.8-mile LRT starter system for **\$7.1 billion**
  - Costs increased to \$10.3 billion for the overall program
  - Shortened north, south and eastern extensions for phase 1
- **2021-2023:** CapMetro and City of Austin drive Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) using FTA TOD Planning grants to focus on land use
- **2024:** City of Austin approves Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) Overlay within ½ mile of Phase 1 LRT stops
- **58.3% YES / 41.7% NO**
  - Includes \$1 billion for commuter rail, BRT, bikeshare, park & rides, and on-demand services
  - Includes \$300 million for “anti-displacement” programs
  - Biden\* (D) / Trump **presidential** election

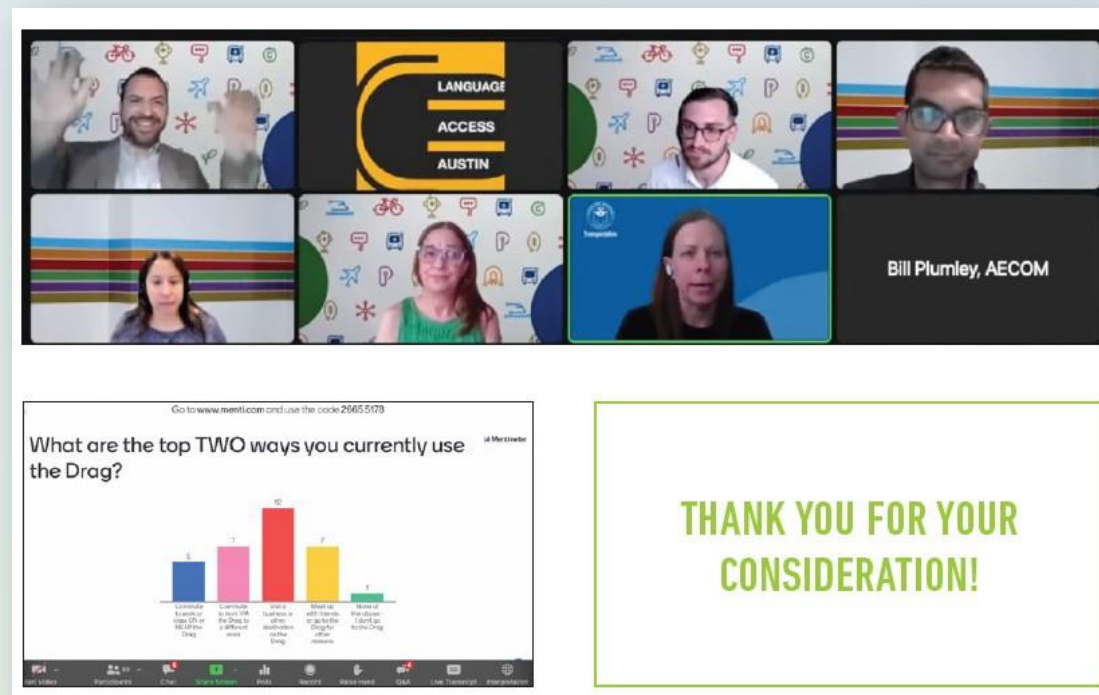


# ENGAGEMENT METHODS



# VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

- **Neighborhood-Level Working Groups**
  - Community Registry
  - 10 geographic areas
- **Community Design Workshops / Open Houses**
  - English / Spanish / sign language
  - Talk-show format with live Q&A
  - Real-time Mentimeter Surveys
- **Closing the Feedback Loop**
  - Online Engagement Library
  - Post-design decision meetings
  - Online form and email feedback options



# IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

- **At-stop outreach**
  - Major bus & rail hubs
  - Park & Rides
- **Outdoor Outreach**
  - Every business on construction corridors
  - Neighborhoods within ½ mile of station area
  - Bus & Walking tours
  - Door hangers
- **Community Celebrations**
  - Poster board explainers
  - Tent & cupcake / ice cream engagement
  - Non-profit event sponsorships



# OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT REGOGNIZED BY IAP2 IN 2022



VO: In November of 2020, Austin voters overwhelmingly approved a multi-billion dollar transit expansion

# PROJECT UPDATE



# ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL- LRT PROGRAM

- Long-Awaited High-Capacity Expansion for Austin
- Project Connect Program of Projects in Successful 2020 Ballot Measure
- Austin Transit Partnership (ATP), a Local Government Corporation (LGC) created to deliver the Light Rail portion of the Program.
- City of Austin and CapMetro are founding partners
- Governed by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)

## Austin Transit Partnership (ATP)

- Project Sponsor/Direct Grant Recipient
- LRT Design and Construction
- LRT Delivery

## CapMetro

- Founding partner
- Designated Regional Transit Authority
- Responsible for BRT, Pickup and other non-LRT components
- Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

## City of Austin

- Founding Partner
- Property Tax Contributor
- Right-of-Way Owner/Eminent Domain
- Anti-Displacement Funds

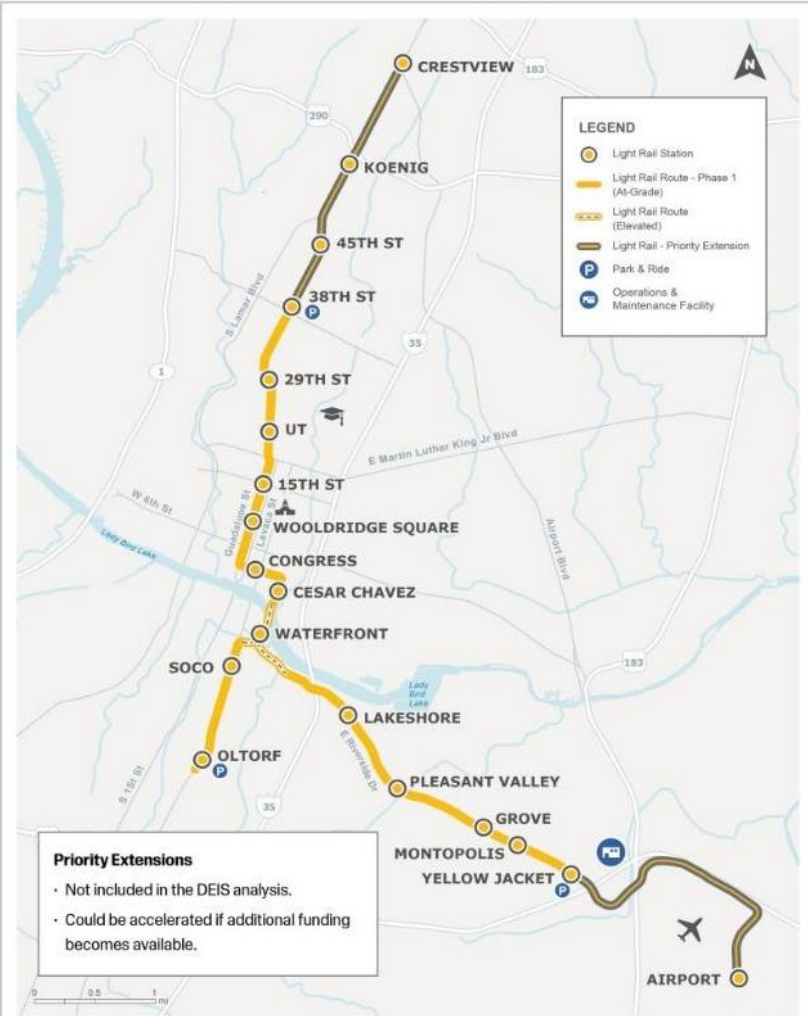
## A New Era with Project Connect (2020-Today)

- **November 2020** – Voters approve Project Connect, transforming Austin’s transit future.
- **October 2020** – New Downtown Station opens.
- **January 2024** – Pickup Dove Springs Zone opens for service.
- **February 2024** – McKalla Station Opens (near Q2 Stadium).
- **Fall 2024** - MetroBike rebranded and upgraded to CapMetro Bikeshare.
- **January 2025** – Pickup Decker Zone opens for service.
- **February 2025** – Pleasant Valley & Expo Rapid Lines begin service.



# LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

## Austin Light Rail Phase 1 and Priority Extensions



JANUARY 2025



# KEEP IN TOUCH!

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