

To: CapMetro Board of Directors  
From: Sharmila Mukherjee, EVP, Chief Strategic Planning and Development Officer  
Date: August 5, 2025  
Re: Proposed January 2026 Service Changes

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Service changes provide CapMetro with the opportunity to adjust services to meet the needs of customers and efficiently use our resources. Service changes occur up to three times a year typically in January, June, and August to coincide with local school and university calendars. In the interim months, between service change implementations, CapMetro continuously seeks and invites year-round feedback from the community.

The service change process is guided by the Board-approved [Service Standards and Guidelines](#). Additional information about how service changes are developed, evaluated, approved and ultimately implemented is available on our website at [capmetro.org/servicechange](http://capmetro.org/servicechange).

### Summary of Proposed Changes & Process

The following is a high-level summary of the proposed service changes for January 2026. Future service changes could include more substantial adjustments as we progress the development of our long-range plan update, [Transit Plan 2035](#), and the full vision of [Rapid 800 Pleasant Valley](#) and [837 Expo Center](#).

- **Realignment of Route 485 Night Owl Cameron** – The proposed realignment would enable late-night connections to the dense active nightlife on East 6th, transfers to Greyhound Bus service (at Eastside Bus Plaza) that occur before dawn, and improved connectivity within Mueller. These areas show high propensity for late-night ridership, and community feedback has demonstrated strong interest in late-night service near the eastside entertainment district and additional portions of Airport Boulevard. Additionally, the stops that would no longer be served have minimal ridership (0-1 average daily customers).
- **Realignment of Route 935 Tech Ridge Express** – The proposed realignment would shift non-stop service from IH-35 to MoPac to proactively respond to ongoing construction and traffic impacts, as well as remove an unproductive segment along Riverside Drive. Previously, this segment served the TxDOT Riverside campus; however, these offices have closed with staff relocating to other locations. The travel-time savings aim to assist with transportation demand management and reduce emissions and congestion associated with IH-35 construction. This proposed change was developed in collaboration with the City of Austin and other key stakeholders as part of an implementation item under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG).
- **Pickup Zone Adjustments** – In coordination with regional member cities, proposed expansions in Lago Vista and Manor Pickup zones will expand boundaries minimally to expand access and improve customer experience without impacting resources. Due to the operational flexibility with Pickup, this adjustment would be implemented in a timely manner

(subsequently after Board approval, as described below). These proposed adjustments were developed in collaboration with member city stakeholders and informed by community and customer feedback.

- **Minor Bus and Rail Schedule Adjustments** – To improve on-time performance, reliability and better serve customers, select routes may receive minor adjustments to their schedules and/or bus stop locations. Specific schedule adjustments are determined further in the service changes process to more accurately respond to evolving traffic conditions and construction in the region. This timing makes sure the schedule best serves customers and more closely reflects available resources. Once available, additional details on the proposed minor schedule adjustments will be available on our webpage and in the subsequent memo.

Under CapMetro's policy, which aligns with the FTA circular, these changes are not a major service change and thus do not require a Title VI analysis. However, CapMetro acknowledges that the changes on Route 935 Tech Ridge Express and Route 485 Night Owl Cameron involve a shift from one corridor to another, and staff evaluated the impacts and benefits to vulnerable populations associated with these changes. The change resulted in no significant impact on minority or low-income populations.

A detailed overview of the proposed changes is provided in *Appendix A*. If approved, these changes would start on Sunday, January 11, 2026, with Night Owl adjustments starting on Monday, January 12, 2026. Due to operational flexibility, the minor Pickup zone adjustments would be implemented in advance in October 2025 (which would be after approval by the Board and earlier than the implementation date for the overall January 2026 Service Changes). The proposed changes outlined are in accordance with CapMetro's proposed FY 2026 budget.

## Engagement

The proposed January 2026 Service Changes process includes a public involvement plan to notify key stakeholders and communities and solicit input from potentially impacted riders. Community engagement will kick off on Sunday, August 10, 2025, and will partially coincide with the engagement for [Transit Plan 2035](#). Input will also be solicited from CapMetro's Advisory Committees, customers, school communities, operators, among others. As part of our commitment to public involvement, the community will have an additional opportunity to engage by providing a formal comment opportunity on the proposed service changes during a scheduled public hearing on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, before the board considers action on this item. Engagement efforts will be summarized, and community feedback will be reviewed prior to bringing the service change proposal to the board for approval on Monday, September 22, 2025. Once the proposed changes are finalized after board review, we will promote final decisions on service through communications and marketing materials.

## Regional Coordination

CapMetro's Strategic Plan 2030 identifies Regional Significance as a critical result to guide CapMetro for the next five years and beyond. Collaborating with regional partners, member cities, and non-member municipalities alike is essential to achieving CapMetro's vision; together, we are endeavoring to address mobility gaps, assess service access and effectiveness, and work toward shaping a prosperous transit landscape for our region. The proposed January 2026 Service Changes aim to improve day-to-day service throughout our system, ensuring the service reflects regional feedback and conditions.

The CapMetro Government Affairs and Regional Planning teams, in close coordination with Planning and Development and Operations staff, continue to facilitate engagement opportunities and ongoing communication with all cities within CapMetro's service area. Staff recently engaged with our member cities and regional partners to discuss scheduling and service planning needs in the near-term and the longer-term through Transit Plan 2035. Staff will continue proactively engaging with each member city to discuss potential concepts for future service changes, review current service performance, and facilitate any emerging feedback or suggestions within respective communities. These member city efforts are in alignment with staff's ongoing administration of CapMetro's Build Central Texas program by providing either service or dollars for transit-supportive projects equal to the value of member city annual sales tax contributions, so they are made whole.

CapMetro staff is informing the Board about minor but important proposed changes to Pickup service in Lago Vista and Manor, scheduled to take effect starting in October 2025 to swiftly respond to member city feedback for service adjustments. After engaging with City of Lago Vista leadership about potential future adjustments to service, CapMetro staff recommends a 0.3-square-mile zone boundary expansion in the southern portion of the existing Pickup Lago Vista zone (as shown in *Figure 4*). The proposed expansion would provide Pickup service to a section of the city with higher residential density that is well suited for sustainable Pickup zone expansion. In addition, staff propose a 0.03 square-mile zone expansion to Pickup Manor to provide service to multiple individuals with mobility needs at the Darby Apartment complex (as shown in *Figure 5*). The expanded portion of both proposed zone adjustments are entirely within the CapMetro service area and would be cost neutral to effectuate. Upon receiving requests for expanded service, CapMetro staff evaluated the feasibility of expansion, and through technical analysis and customer feedback, found that the zones can be expanded with minimal impact to existing wait times or resources.

Figure 4: Zone Adjustment in Pickup Lago Vista

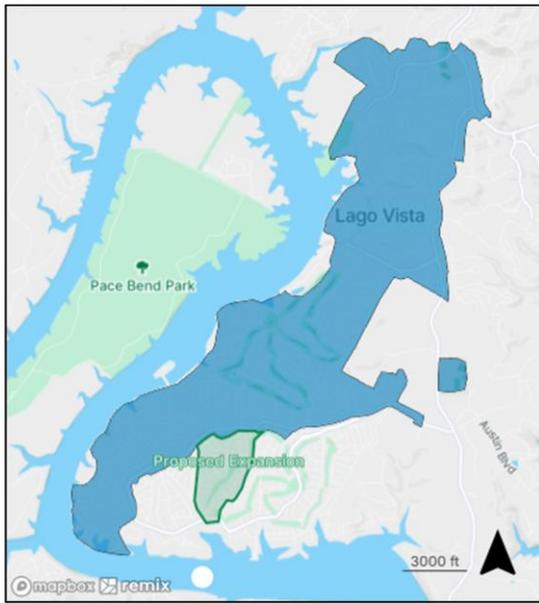


Figure 5: Zone Adjustment in Pickup Manor



Should Board Members have any questions regarding the proposed changes, they should contact [Ed.Easton@capmetro.org](mailto:Ed.Easton@capmetro.org).

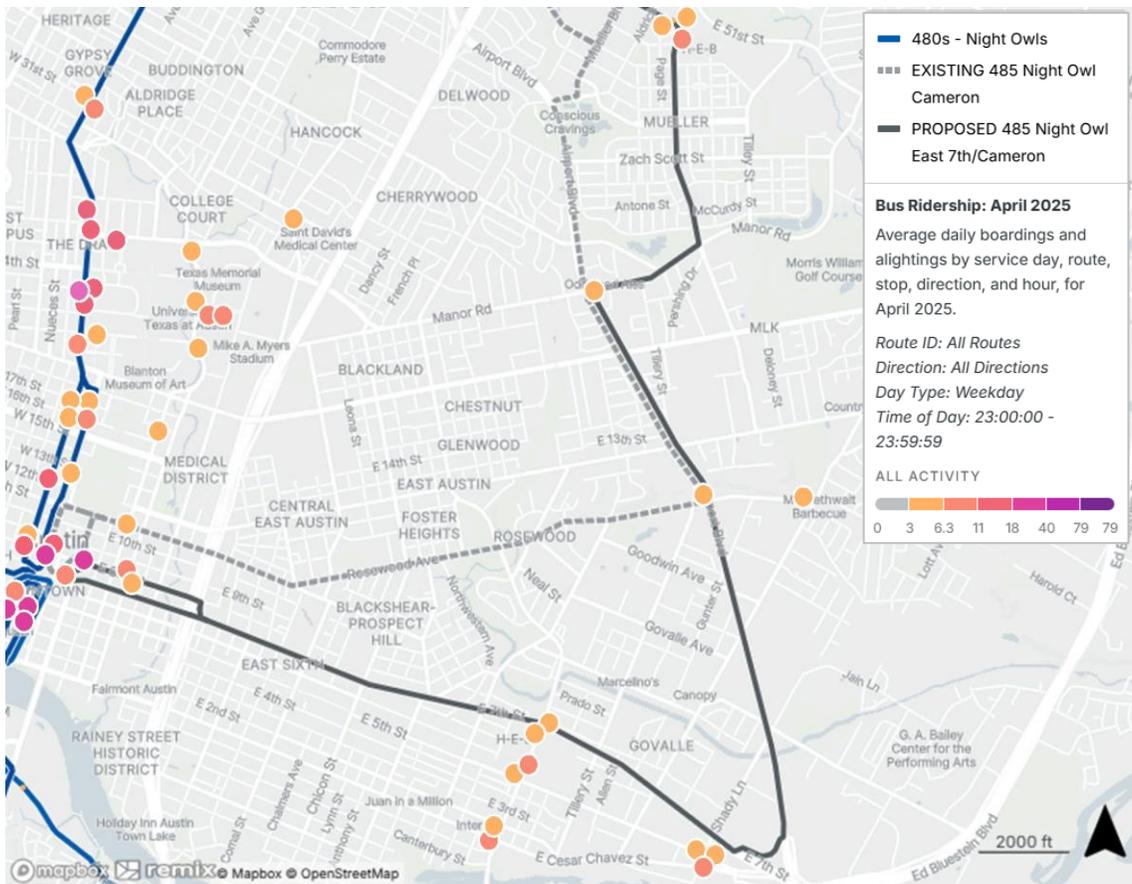
## Appendix A: Detailed Overview of Proposed Changes

### Realignment of Route 485 Night Owl Cameron

As part of the service change process, CapMetro staff reviewed the [Night Owl system](#) to identify potential near-term improvements for customers. Staff reviewed late-night ridership throughout the system between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. as an indicator of potential Night Owl ridership in areas that it currently does not serve (*Figure 1 displays average weekday ridership during these hours*).

The East Sixth, East Cesar Chavez and Govalle neighborhoods demonstrated higher-than-average late-night usage via portions of [Route 4 \(7th Street\)](#), [Route 2 \(Rosewood/Cesar Chavez\)](#) and [Route 350 \(Airport Blvd\)](#). These high propensity segments are not currently covered by Night Owl services. The current Route 485 Night Owl Cameron alignment covers Central East Austin and Rosewood neighborhoods, which demonstrated minimal late-night usage (0-1 average daily customers).

Figure 1: Late-Night Ridership on Weekdays (11:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.)



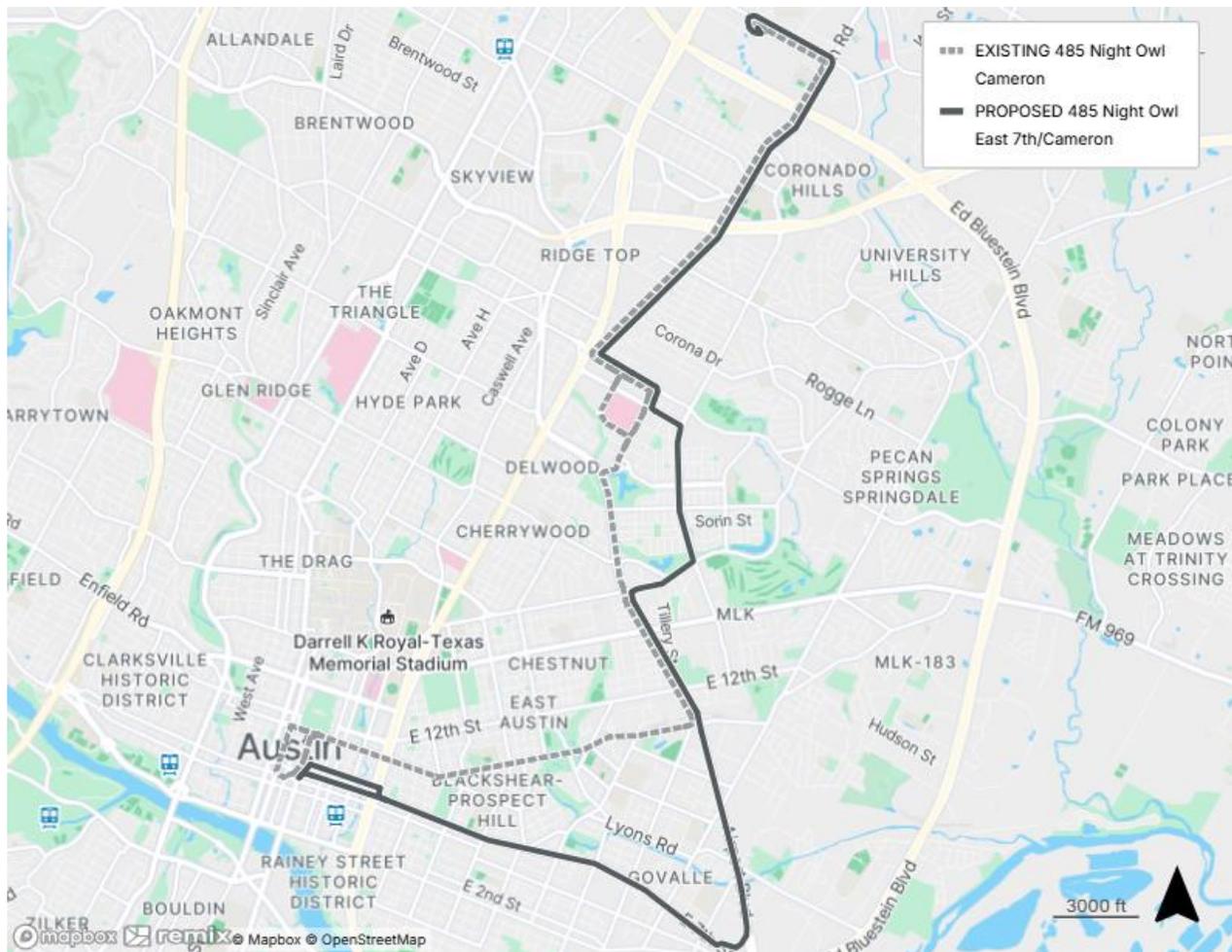
CapMetro staff also reviewed community feedback and requests for late-night service. The feedback demonstrated strong interest in providing late-night connections to the eastside entertainment district. Below are some comments we received from the public:

- “Would love to see more services on East 7th or Plaza Saltillo, especially on weekends, late-nights, and during SXSW.”
- “There needs to be a Night Owl that services more of Airport Boulevard.”

- “Route 4 (7th Street) serves the world-renowned entertainment districts of our city. I wish we had service during the peak entertainment hours after midnight. It could be one of the highest performing lines in the system.”

Based on community feedback and ridership data, CapMetro staff propose realigning [Route 485 \(Night Owl Cameron\)](#) from Rosewood Avenue (East 11th) to East 7th, which enables late-night connections to the active entertainment district near Plaza Saltillo Station. The alignment on East 7th also provides transfer opportunities to Greyhound Bus service, which operates out of Eastside Bus Plaza with trips starting at 3:05 a.m. A minor realignment through the Mueller area is proposed to provide connectivity near the Berkman/Barbara Jordan intersection, a key location for transit usage. The realigned Route 485 Night Owl Cameron, shown in *Figure 2*, would continue to operate between approximately 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m., Monday through Saturday.

*Figure 2: Proposed Realignment of Route 485 Night Owl Cameron*

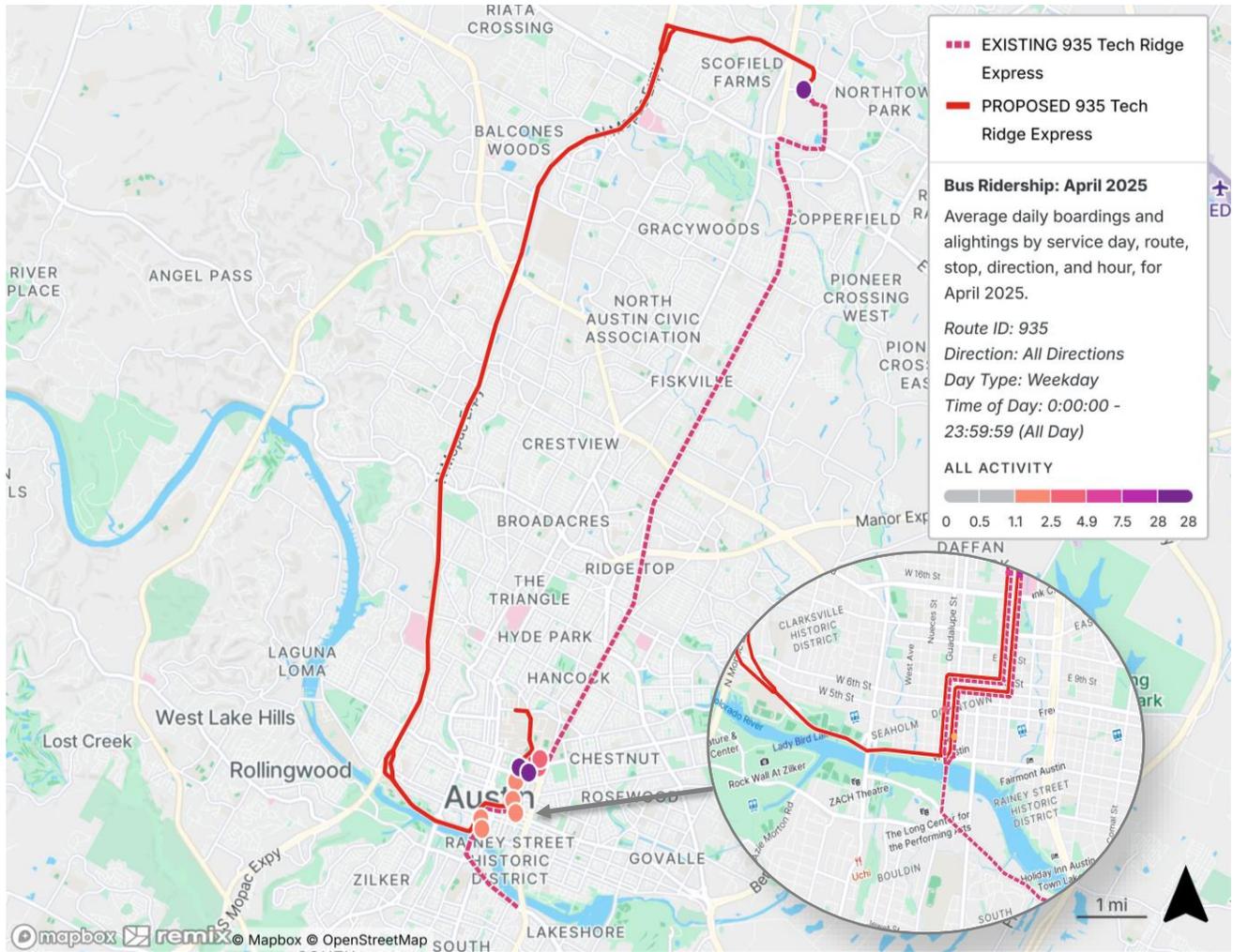


### *Realignment of Route 935 Tech Ridge Express*

Central Texas is entering a multi-year phase of major infrastructure projects. In response, CapMetro has been managing daily operations with agility and strategic monitoring, while closely coordinating with regional partners to align timelines and reduce disruptions. To proactively address the expected traffic

impacts, CapMetro evaluated potential service adjustments and identified an opportunity to realign Route 935 Tech Ridge Express as shown in *Figure 3*.

*Figure 3: Proposed Realignment of Route 935 Tech Ridge Express*



The proposed change would shift non-stop service from IH-35 to MoPac and remove an unproductive segment along Riverside Drive (providing travel-time savings and operational efficiencies). The Riverside segment was originally designed to connect the Tech Ridge Park & Ride with the TxDOT Riverside campus. With the closure of the Riverside offices and relocation of staff to other sites, Route 935 ridership along Riverside has dropped to 0-1 average daily customers.

The travel-time savings aim to assist with transportation demand management and reduce emissions and congestion associated with IH-35 construction. This change was developed in collaboration with the City of Austin and other key stakeholders as part of an implementation item under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG). Additionally, CapMetro is evaluating minor schedule adjustments for this service change that would respond to potential congestion or capacity needs due to construction impacts.