

To: CapMetro Board of Directors
From: Sharmila Mukherjee, EVP, Chief Strategic Planning and Development Officer
Date: March 18, 2026
Re: Proposed August 2026 Service Changes

The proposed August 2026 Service Changes focus on strengthening connectivity and better matching service levels to current demand. The recommendations were developed in collaboration with frontline staff, community members, and school and regional partners as part of the Board-approved [Transit Plan 2035](#) and are in partnership with the City of Austin, in its delivery of the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant](#) (CPRG).

The realignments of Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez and Route 217 Montopolis Feeder would provide East Austin neighborhoods with new transit options, improve transfers, and further strengthen the Eastside Bus Plaza as a key regional hub. Additionally, proposed weekday frequency reductions on UT Shuttle Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside would better align service with long-standing declines in demand and shifting student housing patterns, while allowing for improved reliability and service delivery. Lastly, CapMetro, CARTS, and our regional partners are exploring near-term opportunities within the CPRG program to better serve regional commuters in our service area who will be impacted by construction on I-35. Any additional efforts to contribute to regional transportation demand management will be communicated to the Board prior to Board approval of the service change, and following additional conversations with our partners.

Overall, the service changes represent a community-driven step towards improving connectivity and gaining efficiency throughout the system. This memo provides Board Members with an overview of the proposed changes, the associated community engagement plan, the Title VI analysis, and more. The proposed changes will be considered by the CapMetro Board during the April 2026 Board Meeting.

Background

Service changes provide CapMetro an opportunity to adjust its 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/service-change.

Proposed Changes

The following is a summary of the proposed service changes for August 2026. Future service changes will include additional components from our Board-approved [Transit Plan 2035](#).

- **Realignment of Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez (Frequent)** – The proposed realignment would transform the route into a bidirectional circulator by closing a long-standing gap in service on Springdale Road. By extending farther along Springdale Road, Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez offers a more direct and easier-to-use connection linking Eastside Bus Plaza, Downtown, and several East Austin neighborhoods. This proposed change was developed in multiple iterations, initially in collaboration with frontline staff, operators, and community members as part of Transit Plan 2035, and subsequently in partnership with the City of Austin as part of the delivery of the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant \(CPRG\)](#).
- **Realignment of Route 217 Montopolis Feeder (Local)** – During Transit Plan 2035, community members and school partners requested that Route 217 Montopolis Feeder operate on Vargas Road to better serve neighborhood schools and housing. As such, the proposed realignment would shift service from Montopolis Drive to Vargas Road, directly connecting residents to Allison Elementary School, IDEA Montopolis Academy, the Austin Public Library, among others. Route 217 Montopolis Feeder would still maintain service to the Esperanza Crossing Community and key regional connections to the Eastside Bus Plaza and Riverside Drive. Although the route would no longer serve ACC Riverside, the campus will continue to be directly served by Routes 310, 311, and 350.
- **Frequency Adjustment on Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside (UT Shuttles)** – In coordination with our university partners, CapMetro proposes reducing frequencies on these two UT Shuttle routes from every 8-10-minutes to every 15-20-minutes on weekdays. This adjustment better aligns service levels with long-standing declines in ridership, residential enrollment, and student housing in the Far West and Riverside areas. This change allows for potential savings and resources to improve reliability and service delivery and preserves multiple underlying alternatives for students in these corridors.
- **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.

A detailed overview of the proposed changes is provided in *Appendix A*. If approved, these changes would start on Sunday, August 18, 2026. The proposed changes outlined are in accordance with CapMetro's proposed FY2026 budget.

Service Equity Analysis and Community Engagement

Under CapMetro's policy, which aligns with FTA circular 4702.1B, the recommendation for a frequency adjustment on Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside constitute a major service change, as the changes to the routes affect more than 25% of the annual revenue hours or miles.

Accordingly, service equity analyses for the proposed changes were completed and showed a Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden for the UT Shuttle frequency changes. While the adjustments on

UT Shuttles Route 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside result in a frequency reduction for customers, these routes will still maintain quality and frequent service (every 15–20-minutes on weekdays) and preserve underlying alternative routes. These changes are being proposed in coordination with our university partners due to the reduction in ridership and the declining student population around East Riverside and Far West. The full analysis and findings of the service equity analyses for the proposed changes are detailed in *Appendix C*.

The proposed August 2026 Service Changes process includes a community engagement plan that involves notifying key stakeholders and communities at-large and soliciting input from potentially impacted interests. Community engagement will kick off on March 20, 2026, and input will also be solicited from CapMetro’s Advisory Committees, customers, member city and 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, April 8, 2026.

CapMetro will share information about its proposed August 2026 Service Changes, review community feedback, and summarize its community engagement efforts prior to bringing the proposed service change to the Board for approval on Monday, April 20, 2026. Once the proposed changes are finalized after board review, we will promote final decisions on service through communications and marketing materials. Further details of engagement efforts can be found in *Appendix B*.

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 and connectivity challenges as well as opportunities for collaboration in shaping a prosperous transit landscape for our region. These efforts include assessing service effectiveness and potential, comparing data sets where appropriate, and ensuring we’re capitalizing on any transit propensity within our existing network and beyond.

The proposed August 2026 Service Changes focus on enhancing regional connectivity and improving day-to-day service throughout Central Texas. The service changes would strengthen the ability for customers to transfer between CapMetro, CARTS, and Greyhound Bus services at Eastside Bus Plaza, travel more flexibly, and better access key employment, recreational, and essential destinations. Additionally, CapMetro is evaluating minor schedule adjustments for this service change to assist with potential congestion or capacity needs and respond to regional feedback and conditions. Specific schedule adjustments are determined further in the service changes process to more accurately respond to evolving traffic conditions and construction in the region. Once available, additional details on the proposed minor schedule adjustments will be available in our subsequent memo and on our webpage.

The CapMetro Government Affairs and Regional Planning team, in close coordination with Planning and Development staff, continues to facilitate engagement opportunities and ongoing communication about network performance and the service change process with all municipalities within CapMetro’s service area.

Should Board Members have any questions regarding the proposed changes, they should contact Ed.Easton@capmetro.org.

Appendix A: Detailed Overview of Proposed Changes

Realignment of Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez

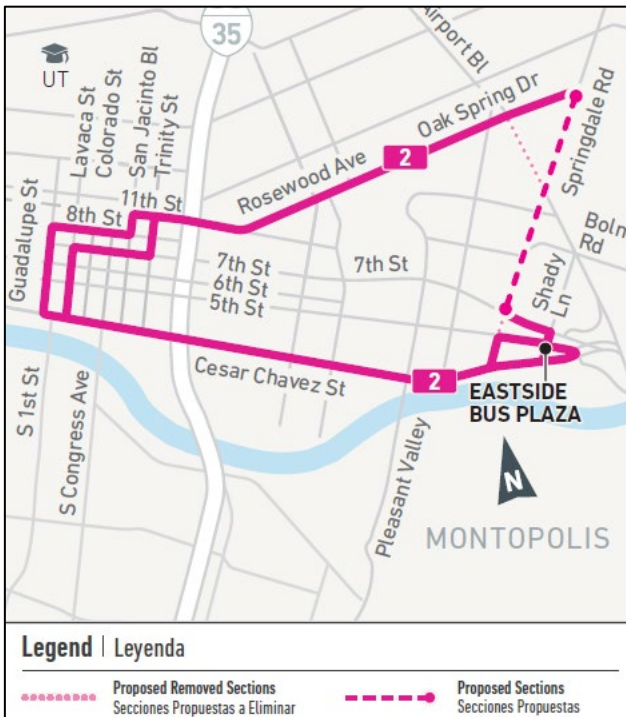
Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez currently starts at Eastside Bus Plaza, travels west along East Cesar Chavez into Downtown, then heads north to serve Rosewood Avenue, Oak Springs Drive, a short segment of Springdale Road north of Airport Boulevard before turning around and reversing direction. During Transit Plan 2035, frontline staff and operators recommended closing the loop by continuing south on Springdale Road past Airport Boulevard to reconnect with Eastside Bus Plaza.

Feedback received during Transit Plan 2035 engagement showed strong support for this recommendation. Public comments included:

- “Having Route 2 go here makes it a lot more useful! I think it really helps connectivity on the eastside and connecting to downtown.”
- “Completing the loop is a GREAT idea, especially for increasing access to Eastside Bus Plaza to get students to intercity bus services.”
- “Praise for the Route 2 concept, this makes travel easier and helps me get around faster. Can the layover be at Eastside Bus Plaza? Getting rid of the current layover at Oak Springs and Springdale would be awesome.”

The realigned Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez, shown in *Figure 1*, would fill a long-standing gap on Springdale Road that currently has no transit service and has seen substantial recent development and growth. To close the gap, it would remove service from one stop at Airport Boulevard and Goodwin Avenue, which is located only a block from another existing stop. This change allows more riders to make crosstown and downtown trips without getting onto I-35 and makes it practical for people to

Figure 1: Proposed Realignment of Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez



utilize transit in lieu of driving. The CPRG program proposes contributing to constructing new bus stops along the gap and supporting the operational cost difference.

Realignment of Route 217 Montopolis Feeder

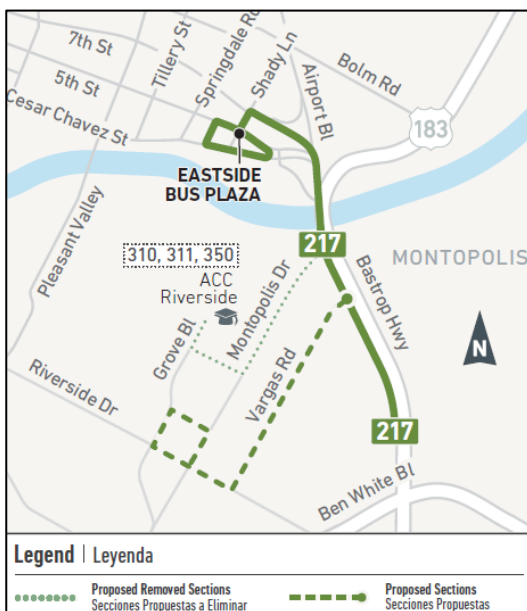
Route 217 is currently a neighborhood feeder connecting residential areas along Montopolis Drive, East Riverside Drive, and the Esperanza Crossing Community to Eastside Bus Plaza and other major transit hubs. The existing route departs from Eastside Bus Plaza, travels south on Montopolis Drive to Hogan Avenue to serve ACC Riverside, then returns north on Montopolis and loops around the US-183 frontage road to serve the Esperanza Crossing community before heading back to the Eastside Bus Plaza. During the fall and spring, the route also provides select school trips to Allison Elementary on Vargas Road (pick-up and drop-off times).

Through Transit Plan 2035 engagement and subsequent outreach, CapMetro staff heard strong interest in more consistent north-south service on Vargas Road to improve access to elementary schools and nearby housing. Community members shared the following feedback:

- *“It’s difficult to travel to the school. It’s a priority to provide better service for younger customers for school access on Vargas and low-income residents from new housing in the neighborhood that’s expected to open soon.”*
- *“Can Route 217 travel along the full length of Vargas Road instead? That would better serve the school for children and parents that may need to visit during different hours.”*
- *“Adjusting this route in 5-10-years is too far.”*

In response, the revised Route 217, as shown in *Figure 2*, would be realigned to operate along Vargas Road and directly serve Allison Elementary School while maintaining service to the Esperanza Crossing community. The southern endpoint would shift from ACC Riverside to the Grove/Riverside stop, where the route would loop via Grove Boulevard, Fairway Street, and Montopolis Drive before using East Riverside Drive to operate in the opposite direction.

Figure 2: Proposed Realignment of Route 217 Montopolis Feeder



This recommendation was originally identified in the 5-10-year phase of Transit Plan 2035 but was advanced into the 0-5-year phase based on community input and the ability to implement the change in a resource-neutral manner. To support the longer alignment while maintaining existing resources, the extended route is proposed to operate every 40 minutes instead of every 30 minutes.

Frequency Adjustment on Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside (UT Shuttles)

As part of the service change process, CapMetro staff reviewed the [UT Shuttle system](#) to match service with student housing trends and enhance reliability. Staff reviewed ridership trends, community feedback, student address distribution data and other criteria. UT Shuttle [Routes 661 Far West](#) and [670 North Riverside](#) emerged as an area of focus due to continued declines in ridership, resource efficiencies, and number of students living within the area. Below summarizes the findings from our analysis.

Changing Ridership Levels and Resource Needs

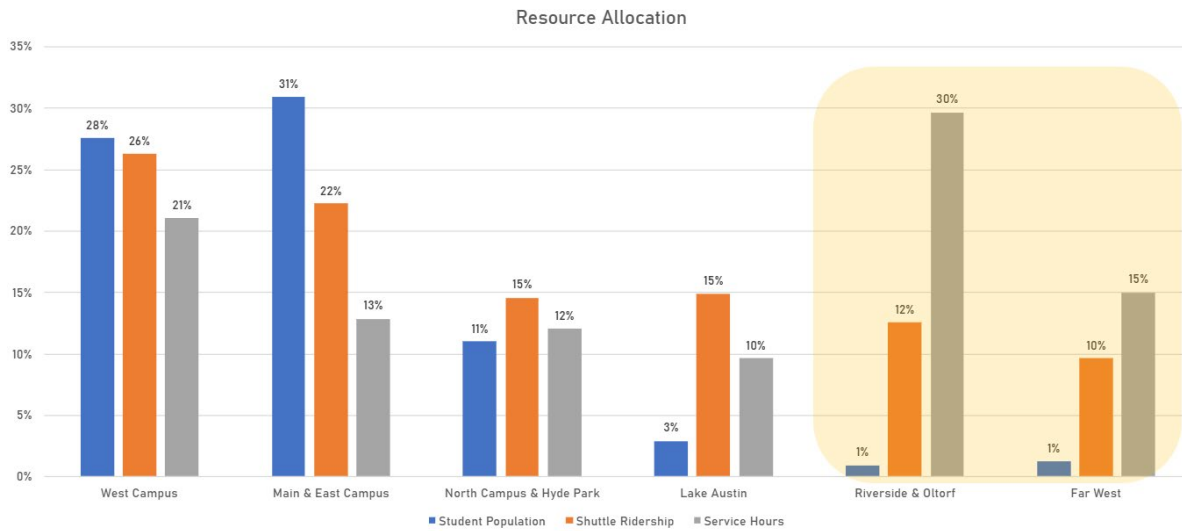
UT Shuttle Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside continue to experience declines in ridership and resource efficiency. Among the UT Shuttle system, these routes require the most service hours to gain each rider, as represented in *Figure 3*. They operate with 8-10-minute peak frequencies and averaged less than 800 weekday riders in Fall 2025. Historically, this level of service was warranted due to ridership trends and the high number of students living within the area. However, ridership for Route 661 and 670 have significantly declined in recent years; since Fall 2019, ridership for Route 661 and 670 has declined by 59% and 80%, respectively.

Changing Student Population in the Riverside Area

Continued trends show high migration of UT students from the Far West and Riverside area, with an estimated 44% and 81% decrease over the last five years, respectively.¹ These trends are expected to continue due to the closure or turnover of student housing complexes in the area and continued concentration of students in the direct periphery of campus. Combined, these two UT Shuttle routes comprise 45% of the UT Shuttle's service hours but only 2% of the estimated student population and 22% of the UT Shuttle's ridership, representing a mismatch of resources.

¹ In connection with the performance of the UT Shuttle system and the ILA between the University of Texas and CapMetro, UT provides access to anonymized student distribution data. The information is protected under the federal laws known as FERPA and is only used in the performance of the UT Shuttle services and for no other purposes whatsoever. In 2025, approximately 70% of students provided an address, of which 67% were within the Austin area. The local addresses are geocoded and projected to the enrollment level. Since some students do not provide an address and some report their family's home address, this process is not a perfect science but provides insight into student residential trends.

Figure 3: UT Shuttle Resource Allocation



Recommendation

Based on the analysis, and in coordination with our university partners, CapMetro proposes reducing frequencies on these two UT Shuttle routes from every 8-10-minutes to every 15-20-minutes on weekdays. This adjustment better aligns service levels with long-standing declines in ridership, residential enrollment, and student housing in the Far West and Riverside areas. This change allows for potential savings and resources to improve reliability and service delivery and preserves multiple underlying alternatives for students in these corridors.

Appendix B: Community Engagement for the Proposed Service Changes

Upcoming engagement efforts for the proposed August 2026 Service Changes build upon extensive outreach and feedback gathered during the development of the Board-approved Transit Plan 2035. Below is a summary of key upcoming engagement activities for the proposed service change, which includes tailored outreach to ensure customers are informed and able to provide feedback. All print and online materials will be available in Spanish and other languages upon request.

- **Regional Conversations with our Member Cities and Regional Partners:**
 - Collaborating with our member cities and regional partners to proactively discuss service change concepts and feedback.
- **Communication and Meetings with Stakeholders and the Community:**
 - CapMetro will email and provide presentations for stakeholders, neighborhood groups, and community-based organizations.
 - Flyers will be provided at tabling opportunities and relevant community events.
- **Advisory Committees:**
 - CapMetro will present at the Access Committee Meeting on April 1, 2026, and at the Customer Satisfaction Advisory Committee (CSAC) Meeting on April 8, 2026.
- **Operator Communications:**
 - All operators with Keolis will receive notice through posters in breakrooms, direct email, and TimePoint TV.
 - CapMetro will also discuss the proposed changes with operators during at-stop outreach.
- **Service Change Webpage with Comment Box:**
 - The CapMetro [webpage](#) will provide details of the proposed service changes and include an opportunity to provide comments (via Public Input open comment box) and sign-up to speak at the scheduled public hearing.
- **Public Hearing Notice and Public Hearing:**
 - Legal Notices will be posted promoting the Public Hearing on April 8, 2026.
- **At-Stop Outreach with Flyers:**
 - CapMetro will conduct at-stop outreach for proposed route changes.
- **At-Stop Signage:**
 - Signage will be posted at key locations along the corridor.
- **Blockwalking:**
 - Discussing the proposed August 2026 Service Changes with residents.
- **Message Centers:**
 - Signage will be placed onboard directly behind operator's seats.
- **Brochures:**
 - Brochures will be available onboard at the front of the bus.
- **CapMetro Alerts Text Messages:**
 - Email and text will go out to associated subscribers.
- **Email to CapMetro's Contact List and Listserv**
 - Email updates provided to 10,000+ customers, stakeholders, and interested members via our contact list and listserv.
- **Social Media Posts:**
 - General and targeted social media posts to inform the community, riders and non-riders, about the future potential changes.

Appendix C: Title VI Service Equity Analyses for the Proposed August 2026 Service Changes

Project Overview

Under CapMetro's policy, which aligns with FTA circular 4702.1B, a major service change constitutes a change that affects more than 25% of the annual revenue hours or miles of the affected route(s). Of the changes proposed for August 2026, the recommendation for a frequency adjustment on Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside met the major service change threshold. Specifically, these major service changes entail:

- **Frequency Adjustment on Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside (UT Shuttles)** – In coordination with our university partners, CapMetro proposes reducing frequencies on these two UT Shuttle routes from every 8-10-minutes to every 15-20-minutes on weekdays. This adjustment better aligns service levels with long-standing declines in ridership, residential enrollment, and student housing in the Far West and Riverside areas. This change allows for potential savings and resources to improve reliability and service delivery and preserves multiple underlying alternatives for students in these corridors.

The other proposed service adjustments, such as the realignment of Route 2 Rosewood/Cesar Chavez and Route 217 Montopolis Feeder, did not meet the threshold for a major service change. For all service adjustments, CapMetro staff consistently consider the potential impacts to vulnerable populations throughout the planning process.

Guidance for Title VI Compliance

In accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and FTA Title VI Circular 4702.1B (2012), CapMetro, as a recipient of federal funds, must ensure that services provided are conducted in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. To this end, FTA Title VI Circular 4702.1B requires CapMetro to evaluate proposed service and fare changes to determine whether the planned change will have a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, or national origin, or whether low-income populations will bear a disproportionate burden of the changes.

Title VI Service Equity Analyses Methodology

CapMetro's Title VI goal is for minority and low-income populations to receive at least their share of the benefits in the case of a net service increase, and no more than their share of the adverse effects, in the case of net service reductions. For Service Equity Analyses, a Disparate Impact threshold of 2% will be used to determine if minority riders are more adversely affected or less positively affected by the proposed change.

Service changes are determined to have a Disparate Impact on minority populations if the adverse impacts experienced by minority riders is greater than 2% when compared to the adverse impacts experienced by non-minority populations. Additionally, if benefits associated with service or fare changes accrue to non-minority populations greater than 2% when compared to minority populations, then this change will be determined to have a Disparate Impact.

For example, assume CapMetro’s overall ridership is 68 percent minority and that CapMetro proposed a major service increase. Minority populations would be expected to consume 68 percent of the new service, measured in revenue miles. Deviations from this goal exceeding the disparate impact threshold of 2% (see below) would be considered statistically significant. Therefore, if minority populations received less than 66% of the benefits, this would constitute a potential disparate impact. If a disparate impact or disproportionate burden were to occur, CapMetro would work with the community to identify what actions would best mitigate negative impacts.

Analysis

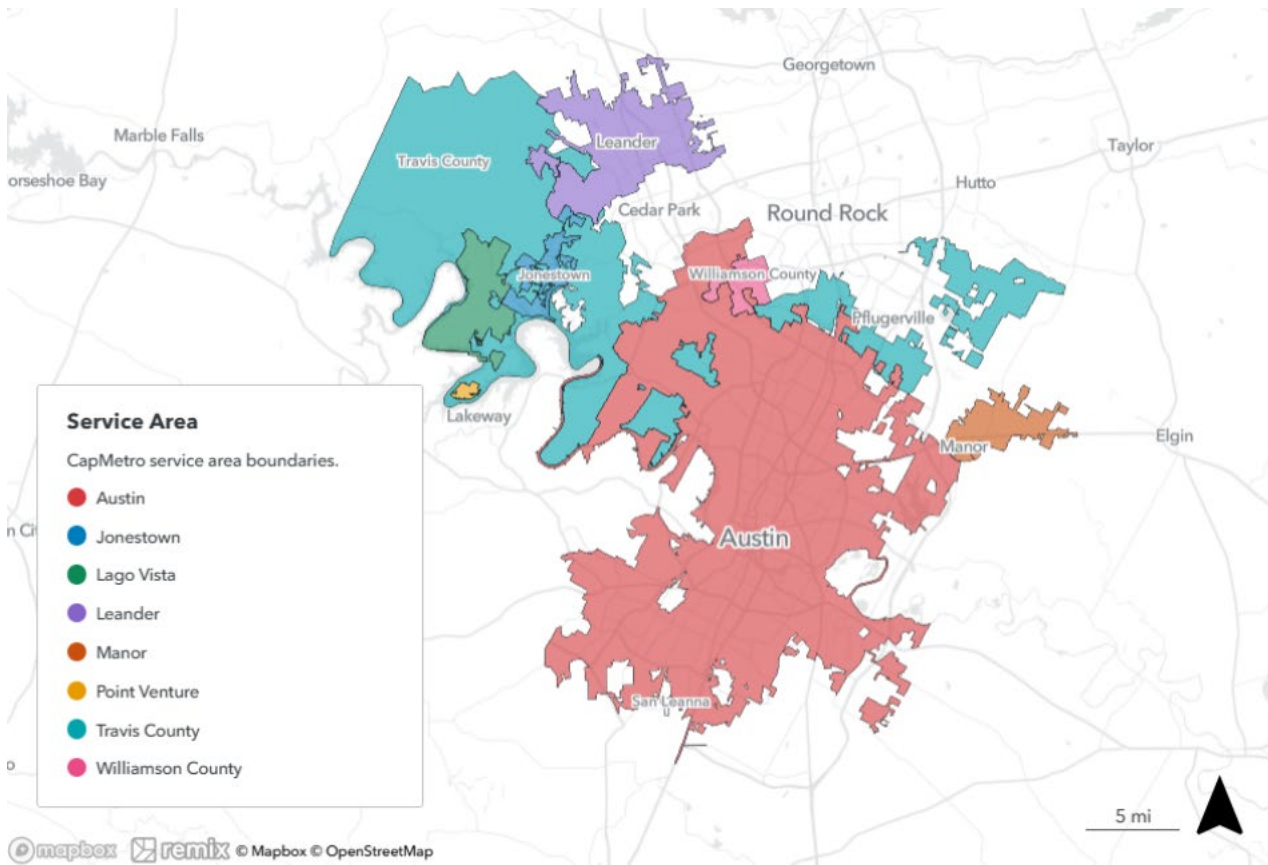
Baseline Data

Onboard survey data is CapMetro’s preferred data source to identify the demographics associated with each route affected by a service change. When onboard survey data is not available, CapMetro staff compare the population served by the proposed routes with the population in the service area using Census data. However, onboard survey data is available for all routes included in this service equity analysis. Based on onboard service data, the population in CapMetro’s service area is 67.7% minority and 49.5% people with low incomes, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Baseline Data, Onboard Surveys

	Actual Customers
Minority	67.7%
Low-Income	49.5%
Source	2023 Onboard Surveys

Figure 1: CapMetro Service Area



Frequency Adjustment on UT Shuttle Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside

Demographics

Staff utilized onboard survey data to identify the demographics on Route 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside. As shown in Table 1, both routes serve higher than average minority and low-income populations.

Table 2: Demographics of Route 661 and 670 Customers (Onboard Survey)

Route	Minority (Onboard Survey)	Low-Income (Onboard Survey)	Minority	Low-Income
Route 661 Far West	80.6%	50.8%	Yes	Yes
Route 670 North Riverside	75.2%	87.3%	Yes	Yes
Service Area Comparison	67.7%	49.5%		

Analysis

The **percent of minority and low-income populations** served by the proposed changes were compared to the **service area average** to determine whether there is a Disparate Impact or Disproportionate Burden, measured in revenue miles (as required by CapMetro policy).

Minority Results

CapMetro is proposing to decrease the frequency on both of these routes, resulting in an annual decrease of 88,942 revenue miles. This decrease in service will be received by a population that is 78.2% minority (10.5 percentage points higher than the service area average), as shown in the table below. **Conclusion: A Disparate Impact was identified for the changes to Routes 661 and 670.**

Table 2: Minority Results for Routes 661 and 670

Route	Minority Percentage	Revenue Miles Difference	Minority Revenue Miles
Route 661 Existing	80.6%	(49,956.00)	(40,247.31)
Route 670 Existing	75.2%	(38,986.00)	(29,298.48)
All Changes	78.2%	(88,942.00)	(69,545.79)
CapMetro Service Area (Onboard Survey)	67.70%		

Low-Income Results

The decrease in service will be received by a population that is 66.8% low-income (17.3 percentage points higher than the service area average), as shown in the table below. **Conclusion: A Disproportionate Burden was identified for the changes to Routes 661 and 670.**

Table 3: Low-Income Results for Routes 661 and 670

Route	Low Income Percentage	Revenue Miles Difference	Low Income Revenue Miles
Route 661 Existing	50.8%	(49,956.00)	(25,357.41)
Route 670 Existing	87.3%	(38,986.00)	(34,047.59)
All Changes	66.8%	(88,942.00)	(59,405.00)
CapMetro Service Area (Onboard Survey)	49.50%		

Conclusion for the Frequency Adjustment on UT Shuttle Routes 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside

The proposed change to Route 661 Far West and 670 North Riverside will result in less frequency for customers who ride these routes, however, the routes will still operate frequent 15–20-minute service, maintaining quality and frequent service. The routes have also not met our UT Shuttle route standards for some time, and the resources allocated to these two routes serve a small and declining student population (see Figure 1 in Appendix A). CapMetro will be able to distribute these resources throughout the CapMetro system to ensure reliable service for all routes, many of which are used by a higher population of students (whether UT Shuttle routes or not). CapMetro considered and analyzed alternatives, including keeping the UT Shuttle routes as is. While these alternatives might have a less disparate impact on minority riders these alternatives fail to accomplish CapMetro's legitimate goal of reallocating resources to support the entire transit system. In addition to maintaining frequent service on Routes 661 and 670, CapMetro provides alternatives for low-income riders affected by this change, including Route 30 Barton Creek / Bull Creek, which operates along many of the same segments of

Route 661 Far West, as well as Route 20 Manor Rd / Riverside, which operates along many of the same segments as Route 670 North Riverside. As this change will benefit the network as a whole, CapMetro has a substantial legitimate business case to implement this change.