

To: CapMetro Board of Directors
From: Sharmila Mukherjee, EVP, Chief Strategic Planning and Development Officer
Date: October 13, 2025
Re: Final Transit Plan 2035 Recommendations

[Transit Plan 2035](#) is CapMetro's community and data-driven roadmap for transit service over the next five to ten years. Transit Plan 2035 is the result of a process that took place over the course of 18 months and reached over 10,000 community members. This process included detailed technical analysis, multiple rounds of community and stakeholder engagement, and close collaboration with regional stakeholders and various CapMetro teams. CapMetro used community input to vet data findings and create an ideal network, which was then evaluated to ensure financial responsibility with our limited resources. This resulted in a final preferred network that will help CapMetro meet its Critical Results to increase ridership in the region, ensure fiscal responsibility, and help people best get to where they need to go.

Each phase of Transit Plan 2035 will be implemented incrementally through CapMetro's standard service change process, which includes additional community engagement and Board approval. Through this process, recommendations may be refined based on new insights about travel patterns and feedback. Thus, Board approval of Transit Plan 2035 is not a commitment to implement concepts exactly as depicted. In addition, CapMetro also updates their Transit Plan *every five years*, and so some of the recommendations will be further refined around 2030.

Summary of Recommendations

Transit Plan 2035 recommendations align our service with current travel patterns, prepare for high-capacity transit and Project Connect, and explore regional expansion. As CapMetro aims to efficiently distribute limited resources to best match service with demand, recommendations were organized into three phases, as described below.

5-Year Outlook (Cost-Efficient Changes):

Within the next five years, CapMetro is focused on growing ridership, helping more people get where they need to go, and specifically, making changes associated with bringing the new Rapid Lines—800 Pleasant Valley and 837 Expo Center—to their full frequency under Project Connect. This phase also includes:

- Two new Park & Rides - Goodnight Ranch and Expo Center;
- Route 350 joining the High Frequency Network;
- No major changes to Pickup;
- Red Line opening new North Burnet/Uptown Station along with later service on weekdays, earlier service on Saturdays, and ongoing enhancements to improve reliability and speed of service.

5+ Year Outlook (Fiscally-Restrained):

The 5+ Year Outlook plans addresses future growth by making changes to CapMetro’s Bus, Rail, and Pickup network that accompany Austin Light Rail service. It is financially restrained, meaning CapMetro is prioritizing projects based on need; however, implementation of all projects included will still require additional funding outside of CapMetro’s current revenue projections. Additional funding and/or partnerships may need to be identified to implement some of the recommendations. In this phase, key items include:

- Seven routes changing to integrate with Austin Light Rail service;
- One new Rapid line;
- Five routes joining the High Frequency Network;
- Two new Pickup zones (along with adjustments to five existing zones);
- Red Line operating more frequently with additional capital investments.

10+ Year Outlook (Financially Unconstrained):

The 10+ year timeframe includes concepts for what happens after Austin Light Rail is launched and beyond. The proposed changes for 10+ years in the future will address transit system growth throughout the region, and any concepts for Project Connect not implemented in the previous phases. These concepts are ideas where we see growth happening, but implementation would require more market readiness, additional partnerships, and/or investment to make them a reality.



More details about all the recommendations can be found in the attached Route Matrix and at CapMetro.org/Transit-Plan-2035.

Engagement

Transit Plan 2035 is built on the feedback from over 10,000 Central Texas residents, CapMetro staff and regional stakeholders to ensure recommended changes reflect the vision and need of those who use and operate the services. The engagement program was designed to ensure communities that have been historically underrepresented were prioritized in CapMetro’s planning efforts, and consisted of four rounds, each tied to key engagement aims:

- **Round 1:** Gathering input on the community’s transit needs and vision.
- **Round 2:** Informing the community on initial engagement and existing conditions findings to provide context on data driving the network development process.
- **Round 3:** Gathering feedback on draft recommendations to make revisions and create a preferred network that best meets the community’s needs.
- **Round 4:** Informing the community on the changes made and next steps following Board adoption.

The engagement program was driven by a variety of agency best practices and built upon CapMetro's previous engagement successes. The combination of in-person and virtual methods allowed CapMetro to increase awareness of Transit Plan 2035, tailor events to targeted audiences and hard to reach customers and ensure that the public had equitable access to Transit Plan 2035 engagement events and information. Strategies included:

- **Community Connectors** – a group of paid community members to act as a link between CapMetro and their local communities
- **Public Meetings** – in-person and virtual meetings designed to attract the community
- **Pop-up Events** – events that met the community where they are such as flea markets, festivals, etc.
- **Digital Engagement** – a web page developed to serve as a central hub for information
- **Focus Groups** – tailored groups that allowed for deeper discussions on Transit Plan 2035 topics

This feedback informed the development of recommendations. Our community expressed they wanted better access to destinations, more seamless transfers and direct routes to shorten travel times. Our community also requested more frequency, more hours of service, and weekend service.

Gathering feedback on the draft recommendations led to real change. Twenty-six of 60 proposed routes were updated, which is over 40% of the original proposals. These updates responded to concerns about discontinued service and gaps in service.

Overall, the plan was well-received with over 60% neutral or positive comments that praised increased frequency, extended or realigned routes for better east-west coverage and expanded airport service.

Existing Conditions

Findings from initial engagement efforts were paired with data-driven findings from the existing conditions analysis. The technical analysis was comprised of three parts: a review of the study area and regional trends, a market analysis and a service analysis. Together, these pieces identify where the system is performing well, where gaps exist and how changes in Central Texas are reshaping transit demand.

A review of the study area and regional trends included analyzing demographic, socioeconomic and travel trends in Central Texas. One of the most significant changes since 2019 has been the rapid rise of teleworking in Central Texas, which has outpaced national trends. This shift has reduced long commutes to major job centers like downtown Austin and the University of Texas and contributed to more short, local trips within neighborhoods and surrounding communities.

Market analysis assessed the current transit market by identifying locations that support transit, new activity centers and existing gaps in service. One of the most important tools created by market analysis is the transit propensity index. The transit propensity index combines equity considerations¹ with additional factors like population density, employment density and trip density to provide a single measure of demand for public transit. This guided recommendation development by understanding where transit is needed most and may be most successful.

¹ Includes low-income populations, minority populations, youth and senior populations, single-parent families, population with a disability, cost burdened households, households without vehicle, foreign born populations, and student populations

Service analysis evaluated existing CapMetro service performance trends. This analysis used CapMetro's operational data such as on-time performance and ridership and 2023 Origin-Destination Survey and created a detailed assessment of individual route productivity based on ridership, alignment complexity, and operational efficiency. Understanding which services are the most and least productive provided a starting point when considering route changes.

An online Existing Conditions Report that provides an in-depth walkthrough of all the existing conditions components can be found at capmetro-virtual-report-2035-capmetro.hub.arcgis.com.

Next Steps

If approved the Transit Plan 2035 recommendations would begin to be implemented through the service change process in 2026. Each phase of Transit Plan 2035 will be implemented through the established service changes process, including potential for refinement based on new insights about travel patterns and community input. The established service change process includes a significant public engagement effort that provides detailed information regarding changes to specific routes and potential customer impact, a Title VI analysis with reporting of findings (as applicable), a public hearing, and approval by the Board of Directors in advance of implementation.

CapMetro is aware that future service changes may impact some CapMetro Access customers and remains committed to engaging potentially affected customers and collaborating with our partners to explore options in advance of potential changes. CapMetro continues to collaborate with Austin Transit Partnership (ATP), the City of Austin, and other regional stakeholders prior to the opening of the Austin Light Rail for key service adjustments and implementation strategies. The Transit Plan 2035 documentation is available on our website at <https://www.capmetro.org/transit-plan-2035>.

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