



MOBILITY **ATX** FINDINGS REPORT



GLASSHOUSE POLICY



WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR PARTNERS



CIVICANALYTICS



Acknowledgements

This process and report would not be possible without the generous support and leadership of RideScout, the Downtown Austin Alliance, Capital Metro and all MobilityATX community partners. But, most importantly, we could not do this without the Austinites who engaged to make this initiative a viable public conversation on Austin's mobility future!

Many thanks to Tocco Creative, who designed both this report as well as MobilityATX.com. A seemingly tireless web studio, their talent, creativity and vision knows no bounds.

This report would not be possible without the help and keen editorial eye of Grace Atkins.

A special thanks also goes to Brian Kelsey and Nathan Brigmon of Civic Analytics for their expertise and the creation of easy-to-read maps and simple explanations for exceedingly complex issues.

With the help of these and many more, Glasshouse Policy introduced and launched a new municipal support product and community engagement tool which reveals subtle nuances and insights into an existing policy ecosystem.

Foreword

by Austin Mayor Steve Adler

As Austin rapidly evolves, we must continually innovate new approaches to engage Austinites in the discussions that shape City policy. Given the participation in the MobilityATX initiative, it's clear Austinites are anxious to contribute their ideas for transforming mobility, and how it impacts our commutes, our economy, and our lives.

In April 2015, the MobilityATX platform was launched to engage the positive interest in Austin mobility and explore near term solutions. MobilityATX established a new conversation between Austinites, the City, and other stakeholders, to develop a new, shared perspective on of our foremost challenges.

We greatly appreciate the feedback and ideas contributed by Central Texans throughout the MobilityATX process, and they will no doubt contribute to the conversation about the future of Austin transportation and community engagement.

The final Glasshouse Policy report on this process provides me, my colleagues on the Austin City Council, private employers, public agencies, and all Austinites, with a new community perspective from which to approach our shared mobility challenge. We need to add this perspective to those gathered from other community engagement efforts to ensure that we hear from all Austinites in every district as we plan for our mobility future.

I'd also like to thank the array of public and private stakeholders for their vision and support of this effort, including business, government, and civic leaders like RideScout CEO Joseph Kopser, Dewitt Peart of the Downtown Austin Alliance, and Capital Metro CEO Linda Watson.

Each of you who took part in MobilityATX confirmed that all Austinites have something to say and deserve a forum in which to say it. I look forward to working with the MobilityATX partners to ensure Austin leads the global conversation on what constitutes a smarter, more connected city, and continues to reflect the innovators and entrepreneurs that call Austin home.

Mayor Steve Adler

City of Austin

What We Learned

by Glasshouse Policy

Before the November 2014 election, Austinites received grave signals from city leaders about the lack of options should Proposition 1 fail. And, sure enough, when Proposition 1 did fail, those leaders didn't have a Plan B to address Austin's traffic challenges.

As policy strategists and members of this community, we know Austin always has a Plan B. The extraordinary results of the November 2014 election, and the substantive nature of constituent feedback, were clear indicators of an Austin electorate more committed to citizen engagement and inclusion than ever before.

While the results outlined in this report represent an important new perspective on Austin's evolving mobility constituency, we learned quite a bit about our city during this process.

Priorities need to be collaborated.

In the last election, we were told that light rail was our number one priority and only hope. Austin didn't see it that way or didn't like the proposed light rail route, depending on how you cut the pie.

New models of government require time to breathe.

Our new City Council, both structurally and substantively, needed time to consider new methods of district and citywide engagement, assess the evolving transportation landscape, and determine new constituent priorities.

New constituencies require new approaches.

Austin's growth requires public and private commitment to ensuring all voices and communities impact the policymaking process. Simply talking about Austin's community engagement challenges is not enough.

There's no silver bullet.

Transportation policy creation is complex. However, rather than focus on the complexity, policymakers should see our transportation landscape as an opportunity to leverage effective, visionary leadership to focus our shared intellectual and experiential capital on solving these problems.

Landscapes change.

With the new City Council structure, the relationships between City Council, City departments, Capital Metro, and other stakeholders are developing very quickly. This evolving policy landscape provides Austinites the opportunity to advocate for the issues that are most important to them through multiple channels. Follow the contact links in each section to let them know what you think!

Successful community engagement requires a multi-modal approach.

It's important that all viewpoints and all voices have a chance to inform the policymaking process. MobilityATX partnered with a number of public and private outreach vehicles, both online and in person, to ensure broad community participation. We were more successful in some communities than others. City officials, civic leaders and the public must develop working models to engage all stakeholders.

There's always a Plan B.

And, maybe more importantly, there's always a reason to engage a community in developing Plan A.

Our Process

Part of the MobilityCity umbrella initiative, MobilityATX is a privately-funded online and in-person platform for all Austinites to explore discrete topics that impact Austin mobility. Lasting from April to July, MobilityATX curated a conversation by inviting the public, Austin community leaders, regional transportation brands, mobility influencers and regional employers to join this effort to turn citizen-sourced priorities into effective policy solutions.



Step 1 : Community Engagement

MobilityATX was divided into five topics, commuting, growth, impaired driving, parking, and what works for Austin. Each of these topics were introduced on the forum by community leaders every two weeks and discussed by the greater MobilityATX community. In addition, through a partnership with Leadership Austin and Conversation Corps, Austinites could join the discussion in-person through the twenty conversations, two in every City Council district, hosted throughout Austin during the month of June.



Step 2 : Town Hall Discussion

On June 23rd, we presented the preliminary MobilityATX findings to the Austin community through a town hall conversation. Hosting the Mayor, mobility leaders and professionals, this town hall was a collaborative event, allowing the public to interact directly with policymakers.

Step 3 : Collect Data & Publish Results

The final step in the MobilityATX process is this report. Produced by Glasshouse Policy in conjunction with community partners and stakeholders, this report is a glimpse inside the MobilityATX process, detailing its participation, findings and priorities, as generated by the community.

How to read this report :

This report just scratches the surface of the wide array of conversations that took place on MobilityATX.com. It is a look inside the community and its priorities. Of the 4119 upvotes on MobilityATX.com, only 1143 are covered in this report across the 10 most popular user-generated ideas. To get a fuller, richer sense of the community conversation, spend some time browsing MobilityATX.com.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Audience Overview

In partnership with Glasshouse Policy, People Pattern analyzed thousands of individuals active on social media that had Austin traffic top of mind based on social conversation in order to inform and activate the launch of MobilityATX. MobilityATX is a community engagement initiative sponsored by both public and private community partners to create and shape public policy solutions to Austin's transportation woes.

1,850

Total number of people included in audience sample that mentioned "#ATXtraffic" on Twitter.

Age	Percentage
13 - 17	0%
18 - 24	2%
25 - 34	69%
35 - 44	29%
45 - 54	0%
55+	0%

100% of the sample audience in Austin talking about #ATXtraffic recently were of voting age and were largely 25 - 34 year olds.

Top Personas in Austin, TX. talking about traffic.

Driven Professional 17%
A businessperson spending everyday busy at work. A heavy traveler who is constantly connected across digital presences and mobile.

Entertainment Junkie 16%
Enjoys every moment of the day will be entertaining, whether through TV, movies or games.

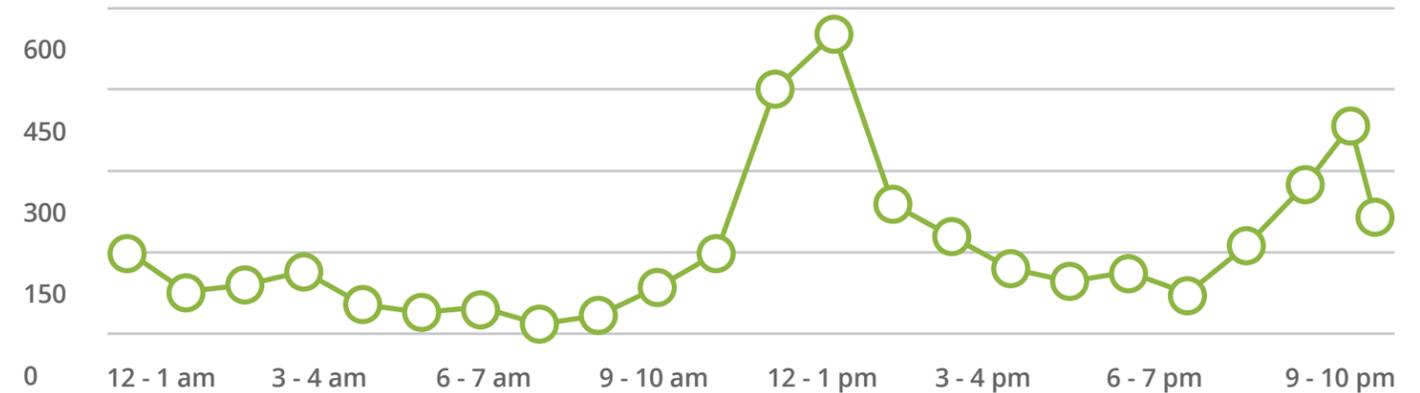
Arts/Music 13%
Driven by a love for the arts. Enjoys listening to music or going to an art gallery - and dabbles in their creative side occasionally.

Avid Newsie 13%
Up-to-date on both global and local news, the Avid Newsie is constantly checking multiple sources for the latest events.

Traffic Conversations

Based on an analysis of people mentioning "Austin" AND "Traffic" or "#ATXtraffic", the top time of day for people talking about traffic was identified, along with top Austin roadways being mentioned in context of traffic-related issues.

Post mentions of Austin and Traffic or #ATXtraffic



Based on an analysis of 4,273 mentions of Austin traffic, the peak hours for people talking about traffic in Austin, TX was 12-2 pm UTC. Discussed traffic-related issues ranged from event traffic (SXSW), collisions or injury wrecks, and signal problems, with people often retweeting news organizations sharing traffic updates.

Top words mentioned in Austin traffic-related posts between 12 - 2 pm.

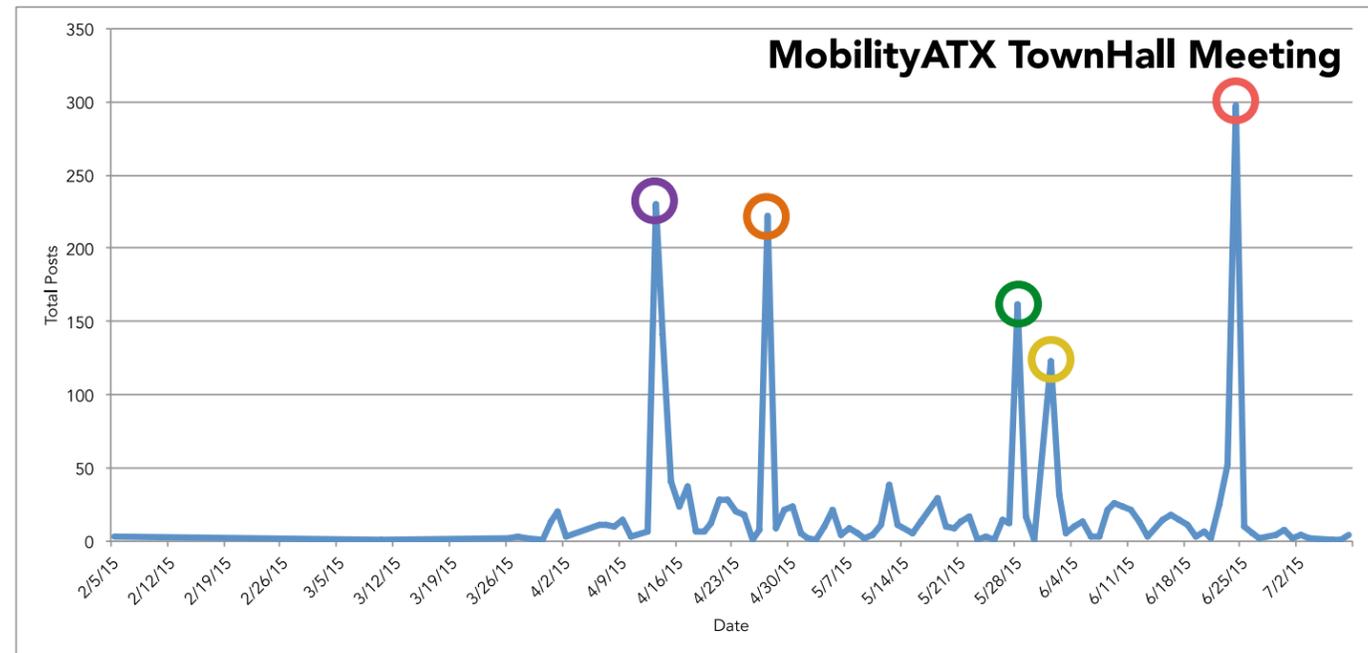
Roadway	Traffic Verbiage
Parmer	Hwy
135	Blvd
183	Lane
360	Ramp
MoPac	Lane
290	Wreck
Cesar (Chavez)	NB or SB
Bee (Caves)	Jam

Prepared by:



Mentions of @MobilityATX, Austin Traffic & Transportation Policy

People Pattern analyzed 2,230 tweets from 490 unique authors that mentioned "MobilityATX" across a sample of data from multiple social data sources including followers of @MobilityATX, followers of @RideScout, followers of other public transportation options in Austin (i.e. @AustinBcycle, @CapMetroATX) and users who mentioned Austin traffic. Authors of tweets include People & Organizations.



- 4/13/2015 - MobilityATX Launch
- 5/28/2015 - MobilityATX Live Stream - ATX DWIs
- 4/27/2015 - MobilityATX Live Stream - Austin Traffic Commuting & Growth
- 6/1/2015 - MobilityATX Live Stream - Austin Traffic Feat. Linda Watson

Keywords & terms used by MobilityATX audience when discussing public transportation

"Traffic"

- traffic every day
- less traffic
- #tradetrafficfortacos
- traffic solutions
- traffic fatality
- traffic jams
- traffic lights
- hours in traffic
- ease traffic congestion
- plan for traffic
- friday afternoon traffic

"Transportation"

- transportation funding
- fix #austin #transportation
- control over transportation
- sustainable
- transportation in Ausitin
- transportation committee
- austin transportation
- find transportation options
- know your transportation
- urban transportation
- best transportation plan
- biggest transportation
- transportation policy funding

"Bus"

- on the bus
- bus stop
- riding the bus
- rapid bus
- new bus route
- bus system
- wait for the bus
- extend bus service
- neighborhood bus
- good bus routes
- bus stop improvements

"Parking"

- parking garage
- parking spot
- people parking in
- new parking signs
- parking kiosk
- downtown parking
- parking flexibility ordinance
- reducing parking utilization
- parking is not easy
- pay for parking
- #onstreetparking with
- customer parking
- bicycle parking situation

"Commute"

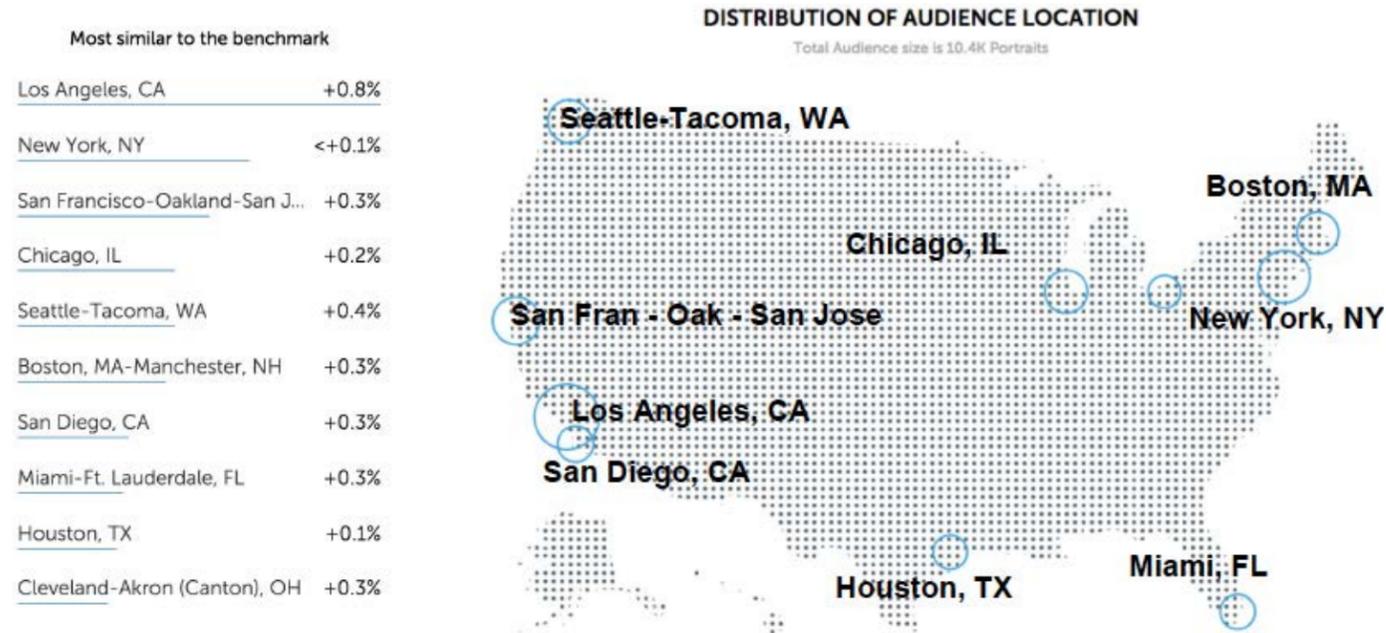
- morning commute
- commute more productive
- commute into work
- free commute
- commute pop up breakfast
- car commutes
- enjoy the nice commute
- #bikecommute
- commute to work
- worry free commute
- heck of a commute

"Cycling" or "Bicycle"

- cycling in Austin
- cycling is faster
- riskiest cycling hotspots
- story on cycling in
- cycling gear
- cycling around Austin
- diversity in cycling
- cycling infrastructure
- get back into cycling
- get on your bicycle
- bicycle bumps
- free bicycle valet
- no bicycle parking

Broader Transportation Conversations

Based on a sample of 10,400 people or organizations that mentioned “traffic” OR “transportation policy” and had a known location recently, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco were the top locations for this audience. Chicago, Seattle, and Boston were in the next tier of markets based on the location of accounts that mentioned “traffic” OR “transportation”.



Top hashtags related to mentions of “traffic” OR “transportation policy”

#Nashville **#Albuquerque** **#ElPaso**

While Nashville, Albuquerque and El Paso were markets that did not show up as a top location based on accounts that had a known location (see above), they did surface as top hashtags in this sample. A large portion of these conversations were from organizations sharing traffic news and information.

Example of posts mentioning “traffic” and #nashville

Recent conversations mentioning Nashville traffic were related to the CMA festival activities.

RT @michellebourey : Ohhh the traffic #nashville <https://t.co/HkCPgh0xCz>
Published: June 11, 2015 9:19 pm | Sentiment : Neutral

RT @MaggieNoonan_ : Traffic is fun this week. #CMAFest #Nashville
Published: June 11, 2015 12:46 pm | Sentiment : Positive

RT @heymichaeldukes : Fanlock = gridlock imposed by CMA Fest traffic. #Nashville
Published: June 10, 2015 11:41 pm | Sentiment : Neutral

RT @snoopy6602 : Crazy traffic out by the airport. #Nashville #Cma
Published: June 10, 2015 9:58 pm | Sentiment : Negative

Accident in #Hermitage on Central Pike at I40 #Nashville #traffic <http://t.co/rU1w1uAgW1>
Published: July 1, 2015 1:58 pm | Sentiment : Neutral

Accident in #East on I40 WB at Spence Ln #Nashville #traffic <http://t.co/rU1w1uAgW1>
Published: June 11, 2015 9:19 pm | Sentiment : Neutral

District Demographics

Total MobilityATX.com Users : 1,039

District :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Members :	80	22	74	38	86	160	93	65	177	72

MobilityATX Members vs. Austin Voting Districts

Based on a sample of 60 members that signed up to participate in the MobilityATX forum, the digital audience make-up of individuals actively participating in transportation policy conversations online was aligned to the overall trend in Austin, TX based on 2010 U.S. Census data for voting districts.

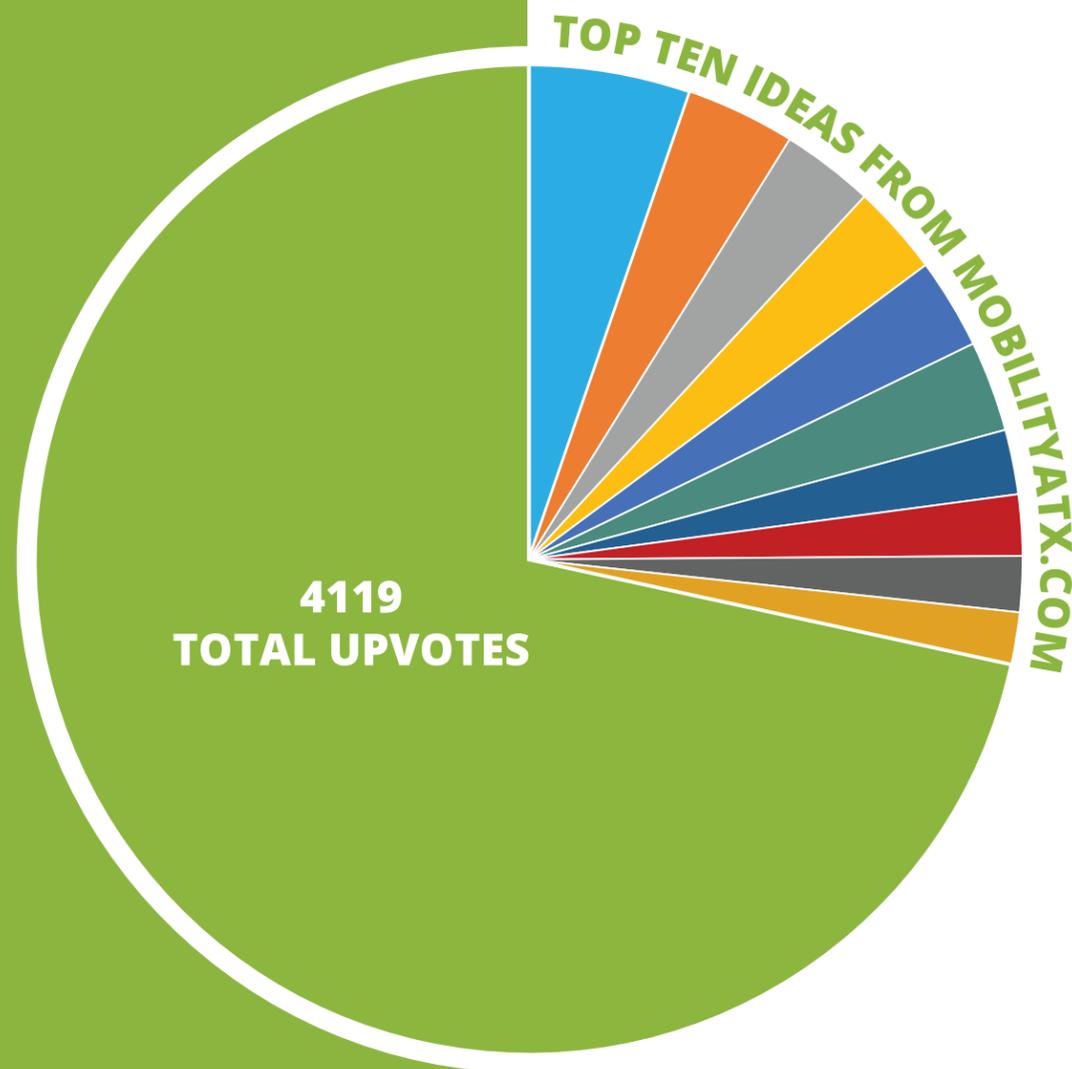
	Members	Voting Age %	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Minority
MobilityATX Sample	60	100%	85%	2%	6%	7%	-
District	Population	Voting Age %	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Minority
1	76,711	73.26%	47.12%	29.68%	3.59%	37.06%	71.39%
2	79,587	68.90%	58.92%	8.88%	1.58%	62.77%	74.02%
3	79,536	78.25%	60.44%	8.69%	3.33%	55.16%	68.35%
4	79,360	71.26%	57.05%	10.45%	3.47%	59.16%	73.81%
5	81,111	80.97%	81.15%	4.14%	2.93%	26.90%	35.65%
6	82,747	76.30%	76.80%	4.60%	11.99%	13.82%	32.36%
7	80,924	81.86%	73.66%	7.51%	9.48%	20.04%	38.82%
8	77,399	74.48%	83.61%	2.38%	7.69%	16.06%	27.70%
9	79,299	92.16%	78.13%	3.49%	10.60%	15.83%	32.13%
10	81,152	80.28%	86.15%	1.81%	8.24%	8.70%	20.33%

Sources

- MobilityATX Sample : People Pattern
- District Data : 2010 census figures for Austin, TX



MOST POPULAR IDEAS



Top ten most popular ideas from MobilityATX.com & corresponding number of upvotes.

Fully fund the Bicycle Master Plan.

218 Upvotes

Support Reconnect Austin's vision of an I-35 that's buried through the center of downtown.

147 Upvotes

Dedicated bus lanes in high traffic corridors throughout the city.

125 Upvotes

Remove all sidewalk exemptions.

122 Upvotes

Fix Anderson Mill Road from HWY 630 - HWY 183.

122 Upvotes

We need to allow for small scale apartments all over the city, especially in central city neighborhoods.

122 Upvotes

Restore the original frequency on the 1 and 3 local routes.

87 Upvotes

It's time to reboot the Dillo!

82 Upvotes

We need to get rid of parking minimums and consider parking maximums all over town.

75 Upvotes

We must get cracking on planning a light-rail line that will serve the greatest number of riders on day one, and going forward.

70 Upvotes



Popular Idea #1

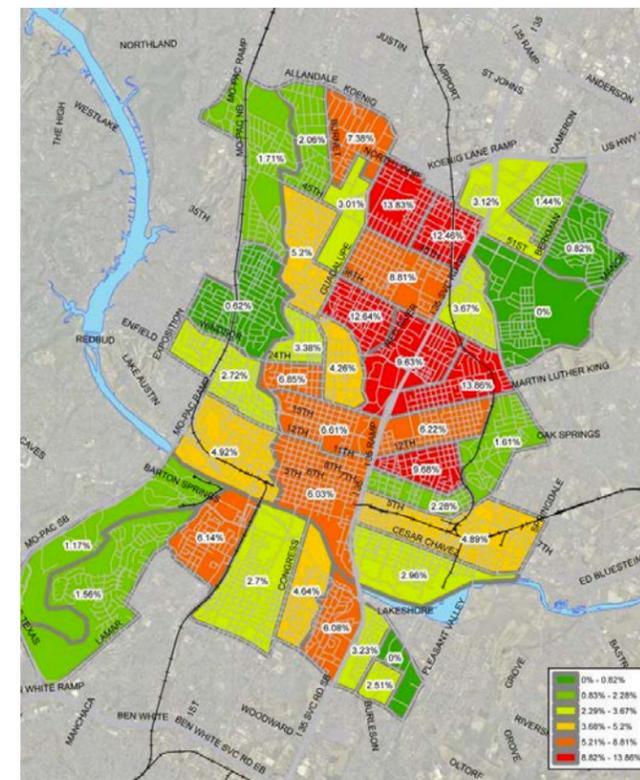
“ Fully funding Austin’s Bicycle Master Plan will relieve congestion where it counts and ensure that Austinites of all ages and abilities can safely access healthy food, public transit, jobs, schools, parks and fun on two wheels.”
- *Bike Austin*

FULLY FUND THE BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

Fully fund the bicycle master plan. As mentioned in the plan itself, the amount of cars which would be taken off the road by fully funding the plan would be equal to the capacity served by the new lanes on Mopac. This is a no-brainer and would make Austin a more livable, greener city that would be healthier as well.

✓ **218 Upvotes**

☰ **18 Comments**

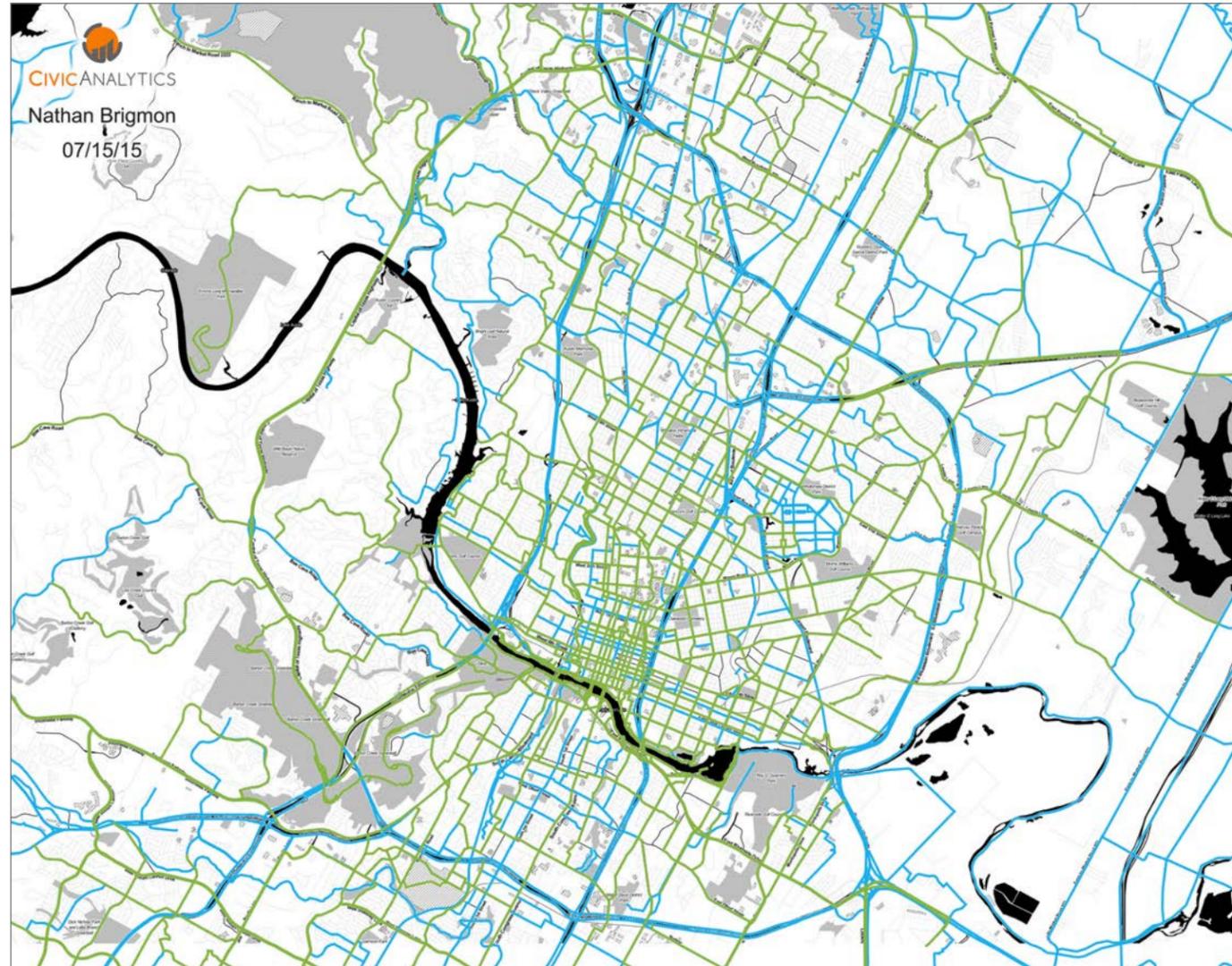


A look at Central Austin bicycle mode share by census tract. American Community Survey 2011 5-Year Composite (Yrs. 2007-2011)

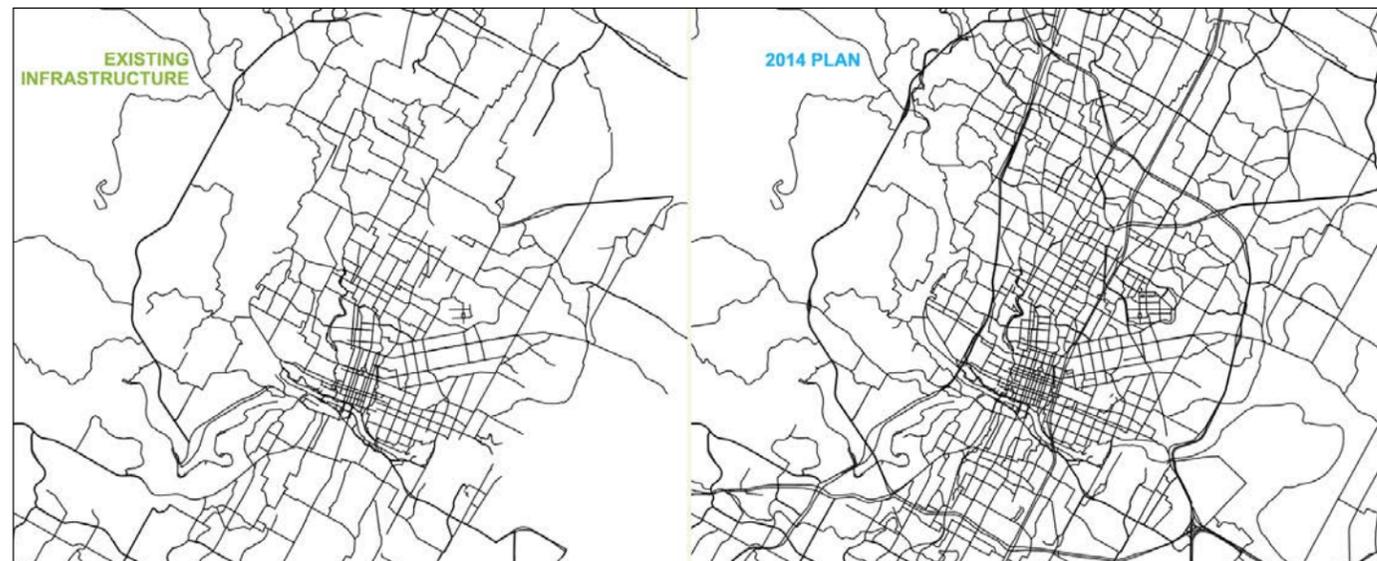
Background

Building on its established reputation as a great city for cycling, the City of Austin published the original Bicycle Master Plan in 2009. Since then, voters have approved \$20.7 million in dedicated bicycle and trail bond funding - helping to grow Austin’s bicycle network to 210 miles, a 70% increase. The Austin Transportation Department (ATD) updated the plan in 2014. The plan outlines a doubling of Austin’s city-wide cycling mode share since 2009, up to 2%, with Central Austin’s bicycle mode share as high as 13% in some census tracts.¹

The updated Bicycle Master Plan calls for 247 miles of facilities to create a complete all ages and abilities bicycle network, which would cost \$151.7 million. All told, a completed all ages and abilities network is estimated to capture 20,000 existing short trips to downtown daily, effectively adding 7% to the transportation network’s capacity to deliver people to downtown.²



A look at how the City of Austin's 2014 Bicycle Master Plan would improve connectivity and mobility across Austin if implemented in full. Nathan Brigmon for Civic Analytics.



A side by side comparison of Austin's current and proposed bicycle infrastructure. Nathan Brigmon for Civic Analytics.

What's happening now?

In 2014, the Austin Transportation Department, in conjunction with City Council and other stakeholders, updated the Bicycle Master Plan, calling for \$150 million worth of new bicycle facilities to build an all ages and abilities bicycle network.* For infrastructure expenditures of that size, Austin usually relies on publicly approved bonds to fund the project either to completion or for several years of development. In order to complete the plan, the public will need to call for new bonds to be approved to continue funding construction of new bicycle facilities.

What You Can Do

Securing \$150 million in bond money to fund the completion of the updated Bicycle Master Plan's all ages and abilities bicycle network is a two-step process. First, City Council needs to vote to put that bond on a ballot for approval by popular vote. Once City Council votes to put a bond funding the Bicycle Master Plan on the ballot, the public must approve that plan at the ballot box.

If you'd like to help enact this policy, contact your [City Council member](#)³ or get involved with some of the bicycling advocacy organizations working in town, like [Bike Austin](#).⁴

* There are other funding needs outlined in the plan. The all ages and abilities bicycle network investment is the highest priority.



Popular Idea #2

“Depressing I-35 and making as many connections across I-35 as possible (including at 5th Street) will heal Austin’s disrupted transportation grid and connect east and west Austin.”

- Mateo Barnstone, District 9

SUPPORT RECONNECT AUSTIN’S VISION OF AN I-35 THAT’S BURIED THROUGH THE CENTER OF DOWNTOWN.

Support Reconnect Austin’s vision of an I-35 that’s buried through the center of downtown, correcting the fifty-year-old mistake of dividing the city by a big ugly highway. It might be the only chance in a generation to remove this physical and psychological scar through downtown Austin.



147 Upvotes



42 Comments

Background

Interstate 35 is the backbone of Central Texas’ transportation system, an economic force and the second most congested roadway in Texas. I-35 has contributed to putting Austin onto lists for most time wasted in traffic with Houston, LA and New York City.⁵

In addition to lying at the center of Austin’s traffic woes, I-35 has long been identified as a social and economic barrier between east and west Austin. According to many Austin stakeholders, that barrier impacts additional Austin growth-related stress points including affordability, gentrification, and education.

Among other solutions, [Reconnect Austin](#), a proposal by design firm [Black + Vernooy](#), advocates for depressing, or lowering, the main lanes of I-35 from Holly St. to 15th, essentially moving the interstate below grade. In addition, the Reconnect Austin plan calls for the walls of the depressed main lanes to be structured so they can support a future cap along the entire corridor, which would allow better east/west

connections to be built above the interstate. Reconnect Austin’s long-term vision also includes replacing the current frontage roads with a boulevard on top of the proposed cap, which would allow for green space, pedestrian access, and greater connectivity between downtown and East Austin.

What’s Happening Now?

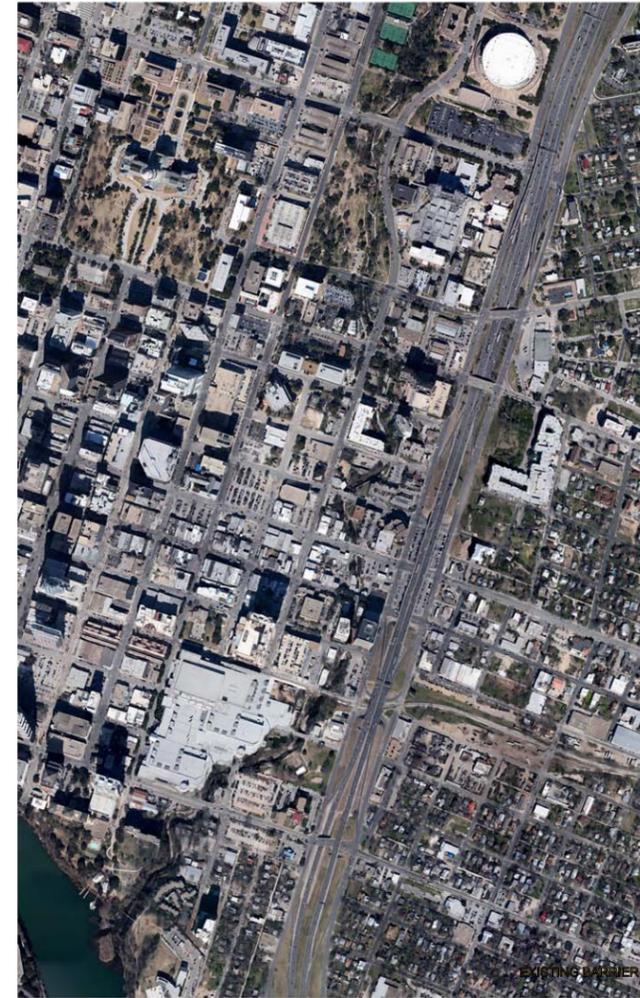
The June [announcement](#) of Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) \$4.3 billion, 10-year plan to renovate I-35 in Central Austin tabled this question for the time being. Under TxDOT’s plan, an additional lane can be added in each direction to the upper decks of I-35 in Austin. In addition, the concept allows for I-35 to go under 15th Street, providing the possibility of depressing the I-35 main lanes in downtown Austin from 15th Street to Lady Bird Lake. However, there are no plans for I-35 to be capped.

Since the official announcement of TxDOT’s plan, it is not anticipated that the full Reconnect Austin vision will be realized.

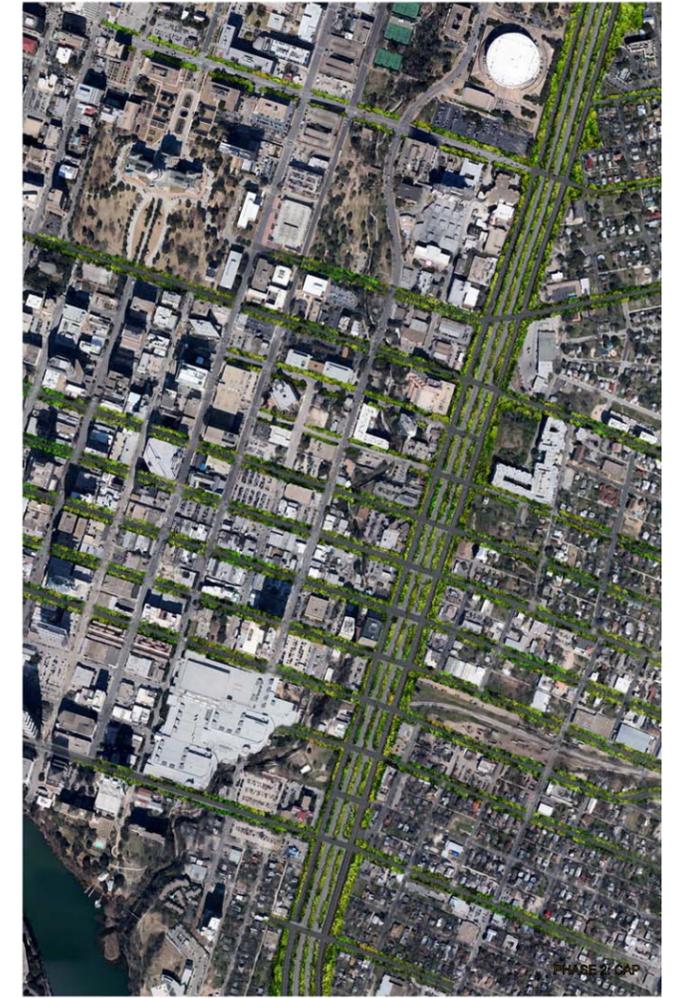


Rendering of Reconnect Austin's vision for I-35 from reconnectaustin.com

Reconnect Austin "Phases of Connection"



Before
From reconnectaustin.com



After

What You Can Do

If you support Reconnect Austin's policy proposal, the central focal point of all advocacy should be Texas Department of Transportation.⁶

Reconnect Austin has a [form](#) on its website that advocates can use to contact TxDOT directly. You can find that form and learn about other ways to get involved on Reconnect Austin's website.⁷



Popular Idea #3

“ Bus priority lanes allow service to be more predictable, faster and have greater reliability which ultimately can lead to greater ridership. In addition, buses operating in their own lanes, out of mixed flow traffic, allows to us provide more service with no additional costs.” - Capital Metro CEO Linda Watson

DEDICATED BUS LANES IN HIGH TRAFFIC CORRIDORS THROUGHOUT THE CITY

Many people are discouraged from riding the bus because the bus is sitting in the same traffic as everyone else. Worse, the bus actually becomes part of the traffic problem. If buses had their own protected lanes, they could bypass traffic - leaving more space for cars and empowering the buses to move faster, which would make them more appealing to commuters.

Maybe take the idea one step further and allow school buses to use the dedicated lanes as well - because they aren't in traffic, it would eliminate the need to stop traffic in both directions when loading and unloading. This would make buses safer for the children while also getting them out of the flow of traffic.

 **125 Upvotes**

 **10 Comments**

Background

New transit priority lanes on Guadalupe and Lavaca have reinvigorated interest in a high-speed, reliable bus system serving Austin's transit consumers.

Austin's new transit priority lanes bring Capital Metro closer to a fully realized bus rapid transit system, wherein buses travel in dedicated lanes on strict schedules to create a transit system with rail-like predictability, without the large infrastructure costs upfront. Although a true bus rapid transit system is far from being realized, Austin's current and future transit priority lanes help Capital Metro's buses avoid being bogged down in Austin's traffic.

What's Happening Now?

Although not limited to dedicated bus transit, the [MoPac Improvement Project's](#) new express lanes will be accessible by all Capital Metro buses as well as the toll-paying public, with the goal of improving mobility

along that corridor for both commuters and transit riders.

Furthermore, a recent study concluded that nearly 50% of those who pass along The Drag during rush hour are aboard buses, making it a prime target for transit priority lanes.⁸

Ultimately, implementing new transit priority lanes must be a collaborative effort between the Austin Transportation Department, which will design and build the new lanes, and Capital Metro, which must effectively service the new transit priority lanes with bus routes. Continued public pressure will ensure that these lanes eventually become a reality.

The City of Austin and Capital Metro have established the new Transit Priority Working Group to identify ways to improve reliability and travel times for Capital Metro routes.



What You Can Do

Developing a widespread network of dedicated bus lanes in Austin requires cooperation between the Austin Transportation Department and Capital Metro. Increased public support for more transit priority lanes will help move both organizations towards identifying and designing new transit priority lanes.

Capital Metro encourages individuals to provide feedback about transit priority lanes or any other of their projects by attending board meetings or [emailing them](#).⁹ The Austin Transportation Department also encourages community feedback by [emailing the department](#).¹⁰



Popular Idea #4

“ Mobility is about access to opportunities and Austinites of every age and ability need safe, reliable options to get where they need to go. Sidewalks are the foundation of mobility because they are the beginning and end of most trips for work, life, and play. Sidewalks are not only an essential part of a well-connected system, they are central to the health and welfare of Austin’s people, businesses, and culture.”

- Ann Kitchen, Austin City Council, District 5

REMOVE ALL SIDEWALK EXEMPTIONS

Remove all sidewalk exemptions. We currently have a fee-in-lieu structure that allows developers to pay instead of building sidewalks. It’s a ridiculous notion, just think about allowing this for roads.

Getting rid of that ordinance is something the city can do to make transportation better today for free.

 **122 Upvotes**

 **19 Comments**

Background

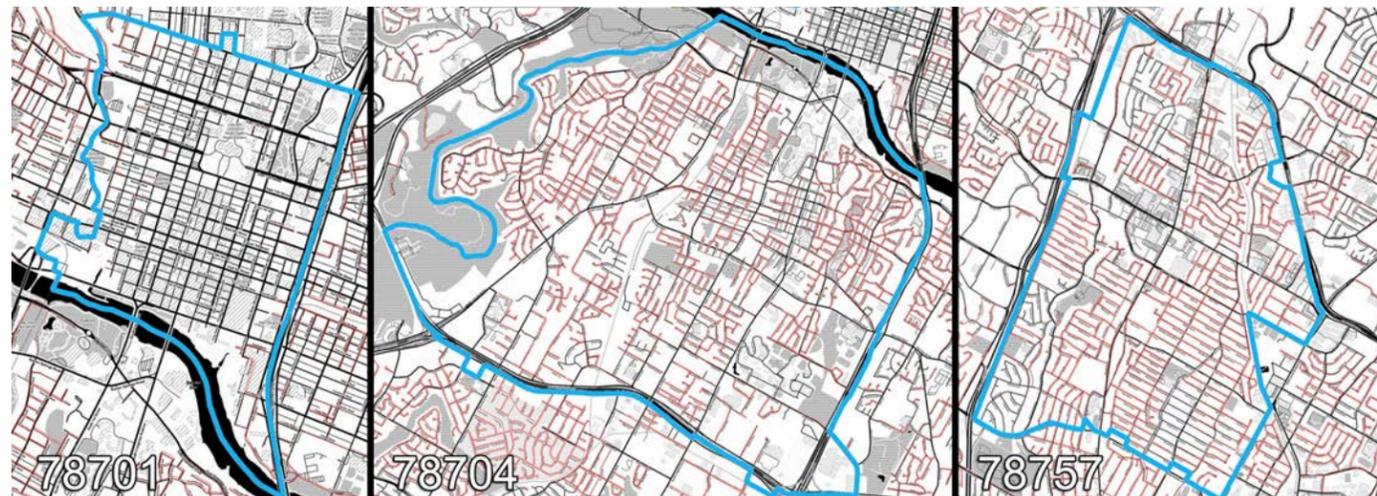
Austin is missing about half of the sidewalks it’s supposed to have - roughly 2,200 miles worth of pedestrian walkways.¹¹ One of the several factors contributing to the dearth of sidewalks in Austin is the [Land Development Code, Chapter 25-6-354](#), which allows for developers to pay a fee in lieu of building sidewalks when projects meet certain criteria (known as the fee-in-lieu structure).

According to city policy, when fee-in-lieu is utilized, the money paid is set aside in a fund for future sidewalk construction in that neighborhood. Money collected through the fee-in-lieu structure must be spent within ten years by the city or may be returned to the developer by request. MobilityATX users pointed out that the fee-in-lieu structure has contributed to the disproportionate lack of sidewalks in the city. To see the distribution of money collected from the fee-in-lieu structure by district see Appendix A.

Furthermore, a lack of sidewalks hurts property values. A recent study showed increasing an area’s walkability, or one’s ability to walk to common locations like schools, parks, and stores, by 15 percent increases home values by an average of about 12 percent, with the actual values ranging between 4 and 24 percent.¹²



A look at Austin's missing sidewalks.
Nathan Brigmon for Civic Analytics.



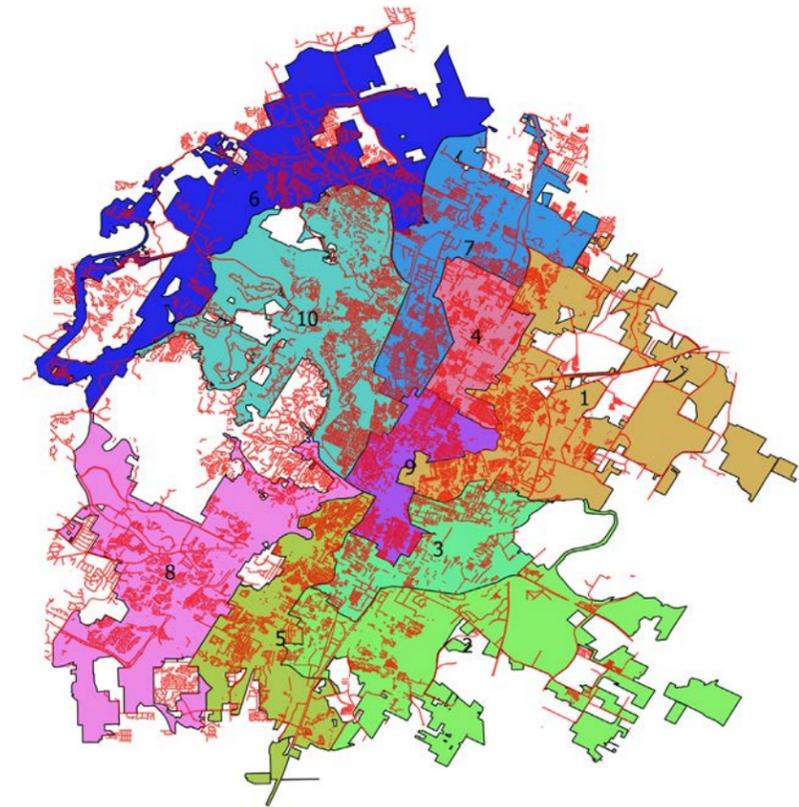
View by selected ZIP codes.
Nathan Brigmon for Civic Analytics.

What's happening now?

Safe, functional sidewalks are a necessity in a modern city - people cannot use transit if they cannot walk safely to the stops, let alone walk to work or leisure. In addition to eliminating the fee-in-lieu system, creating a functional pedestrian infrastructure and sidewalk system in Austin requires building more sidewalks. However, Austin Public Works cannot build what's not budgeted for, and the bond money that is currently funding sidewalk construction is running low. More bond funding will have to be issued to fund sidewalk construction if Austinites would like to fill in their pedestrian facilities.

What You Can Do

Ultimately, eliminating or amending the fee-in-lieu structure requires a change to the City of Austin's Land Development Code, which is currently being reworked as part of CodeNEXT. The most immediate way to advocate for this change is to [get involved with CodeNEXT](#) or call or write your [City Council Member](#) and ask that they work to change the City of Austin's Land Development Code to prohibit developers from paying a fee to the city in lieu of building sidewalks. You can use a form on the City of Austin's website to [email all City Council Members](#).¹³



A map overlaying the absent sidewalks in the City of Austin with City Council Districts. In many neighborhoods and City Council Districts there is a dearth of sidewalks, which affects both property values and mobility access.
Francisco Enriquez for Glasshouse Policy



Popular Idea #5

“ The road is much too narrow and the speed limit is too high for the number of cars entering and exiting the road from the commercial businesses and churches. ”
- Diane Gadell, District 6

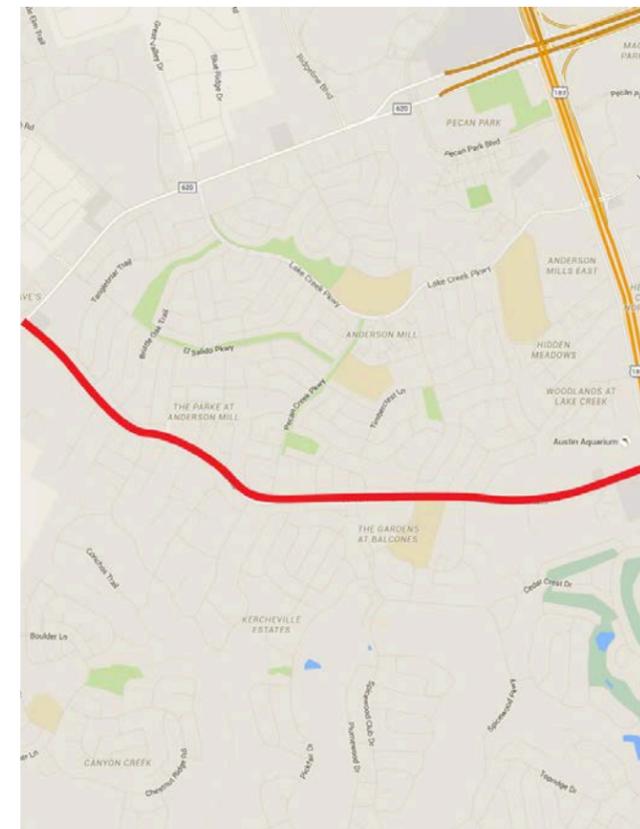
FIX ANDERSON MILL ROAD FROM 620 TO 183

Anderson Mill Road from Hwy 620 to Hwy 183 has become a major commuter route over the last 5 years. Accidents along the 1 mile improved section since 2012 are 1/2 the # of accidents along the unimproved 1 mile section from Spicewood Pkwy to Hwy 183. This is the busiest part of the road and has the most businesses including two major shopping malls at the intersection with 183. Access to the bus stops by pedestrians and bike riders is almost impossible due to unsafe bike lanes & discontinuous sidewalks.

I am told that this section was not improved years ago when the rest of Anderson Mill Road had center turn lanes, bike lanes, medians & sidewalks added because much of it sits on the county line and that it can't be improved now because there is no money available. Tell that to the families of residents and commuters who have had our cars wrecked and suffered injuries (and a fatality in 2013) along this road! What is the cost of doing nothing in damage to property, injuries to people, and higher insurance costs? We need action now!

✓ **122 Upvotes**

☰ **25 Comments**



Background

Geography matters in the mobility conversation. Anderson Mill Road is a prime example, where the accident rate doubles on Anderson Mill Road west of Texas State Highway 183 compared to the eastern side of Anderson Mill Road.¹⁴

Anderson Mill Road has become a major arterial for commuters. Like many other pieces of the Austin transportation system, it has fallen victim to rapid, unprecedented growth. With limited funding and no scheduled corridor study, no drastic improvements are planned for Anderson Mill Road in the short-term.

Map from Google Maps.

What's Happening Now?

In the new City Council District structure, Anderson Mill Road lies within District 6, represented by Council Member Don Zimmerman. According to his office, Council Member Zimmerman views improving Anderson Mill Road as the top priority for the [Quarter-Cent Funding](#) for transportation projects. Specifically, the priorities he outlines for Anderson Mill Road are expanding Anderson Mill Road from Spicewood Parkway to 183 and creating more turn lanes at Spicewood Springs Road onto 183 southbound. Council Member Zimmerman and his staff will put forth this plan to the City Council Mobility Committee.

In addition, despite the lack of imminent improvements, neighborhood activists continue to work to improve the corridor. A new, crowdsourced corridor study managed by the Northwest Austin Coalition is working to expedite the official corridor study.

Since typical corridor studies take 18-24 months for study and planning, local advocates argue that a citizen-led, community-sourced process can reduce that evaluative time frame and save the city hundreds of thousands of dollars in staff time and planning resources.

What You Can Do

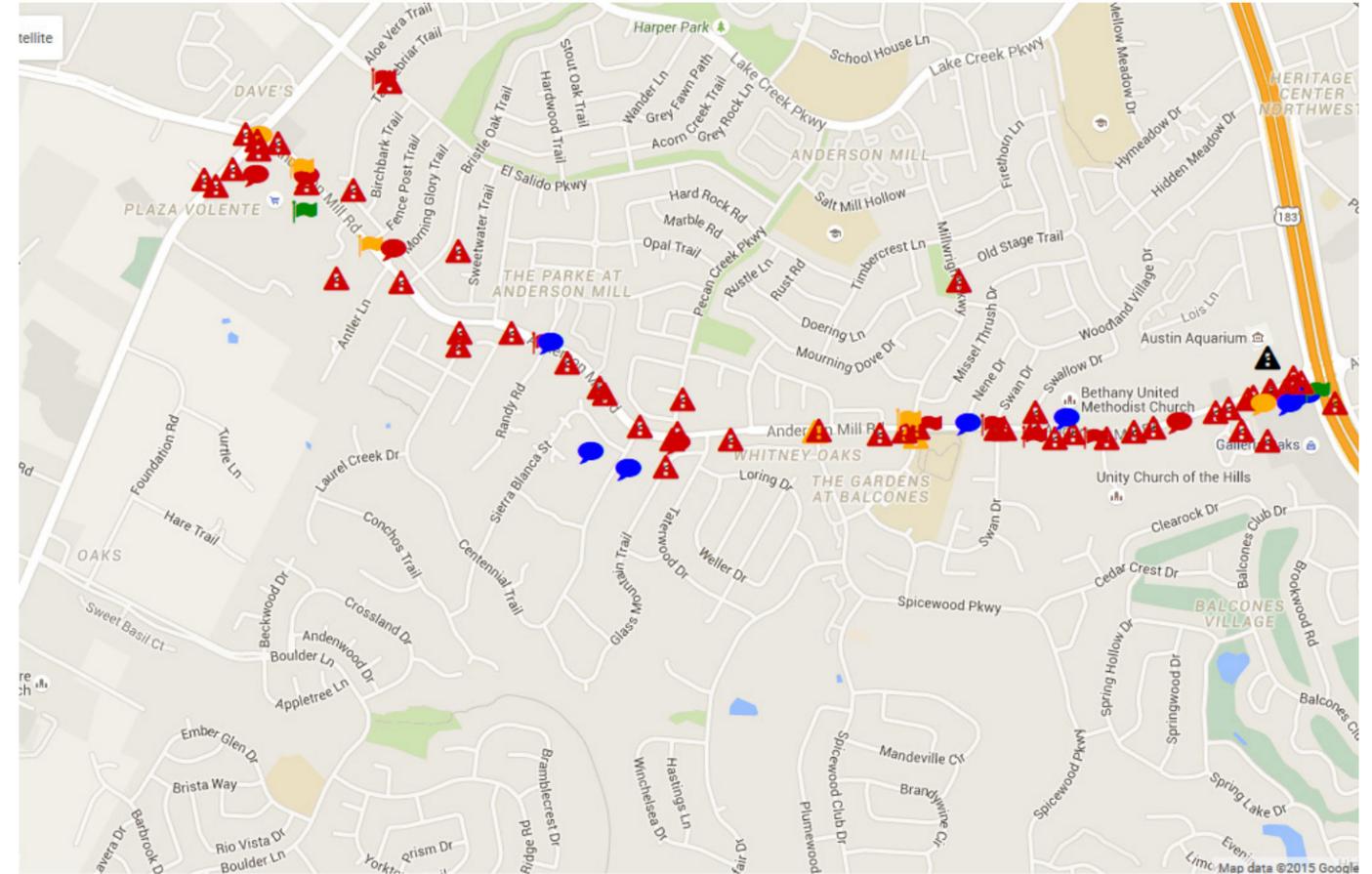
Council Member Zimmerman hosts a town hall in the District 6 once a month, scheduled through March at the time of this report's publication. If you have other specific ideas about how to improve Anderson Mill Road, make your opinions known to Council Member Zimmerman.¹⁵

In addition, [Council Member Zimmerman's](#) proposal for Anderson Mill Road needs to pass through the Mobility Committee and the general City Council. Provide feedback about proposed improvements by contacting the [committee's members](#).¹⁶

Finally, in the absence of any immediate Austin Transportation Department plans to study and improve Anderson Mill Road, if you're interested in improving the safety and mobility of Anderson Mill Road, you can take part in the Northwest Austin Coalition's crowdsourced corridor study.¹⁷

Anderson Mill Rd

Citizen-led corridor improvement project for Anderson Mill Rd between 620 and 183





Popular Idea #6

WE NEED TO ALLOW FOR SMALL SCALE APARTMENTS ALL OVER THE CITY, ESPECIALLY IN CENTRAL CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

“Allowing homeowners to add a garage apartment or a small cottage in their backyard is a no-brainer. The lack of accessory dwelling unit reform is a symptom of a larger problem of the city over-regulating land use to the detriment of renters and low-to-mid-income homeowners.” - *Ward Tisdale, RECA President*

We need to allow for small scale apartments all over the city, especially in central city neighborhoods. More people living in those communities will have fewer miles to travel for work and play. Keeping it small scale can preserve the intimate feel of the neighborhoods.



122 Upvotes



19 Comments

Background

Accessory dwelling units go by many names: granny flats, garage apartments, or ADUs. Regardless of their name, advocates argue more widespread construction of ADUs could dramatically increase density in Austin, which could in turn positively impact transit use, walkability, and affordability.

Current law requires a lot to be larger than 7,000 sq ft. to build an ADU on it.¹⁸ ADUs also have strict parking regulations, requiring homeowners to construct off-street parking space for a new ADU.

As Austin continues to face a housing deficit, ADUs may be an efficient way to both increase density and add supply to the rental market. However, since 2007, during a period of unprecedented growth, Austin has added less than 250 ADUs.¹⁹

What's Happening Now?

In 2014, City Council passed a resolution calling for changes to ADU rules in order to make ADUs less burdensome to build, including smaller lot size requirements, less distance required between the ADU and original structure and other changes to make ADUs more practical for homeowners to build and rent to tenants.

Any policy change related to ADUs will have to originate in the City Council Planning and Neighborhoods Committee. Chaired by District 4 Council Member Greg Casar; the committee has been grappling with the ADU debate since August.

Other changes to ADU rules could further improve Austin mobility. Eliminating the parking requirement for new ADUs inside transit-oriented districts or near

transit stops, for instance, could both reduce cost of construction and encourage future residents to use alternative transportation modes, which would help ease Austin's traffic burden.

What You Can Do

ADU policy changes are currently working their way through City Council's committee process. City Council's Planning and Neighborhoods Committee has jurisdiction over this issue and is actively working on Council recommendations for policy changes. If you want your voice to be heard on this issue, contact members of the [Committee](#).²⁰



Popular Idea #7

“The fact is the 801 and 803 routes do not provide a sufficient increase in service to justify the longer walk for most people, so most people who aren’t directly next to an 801/803 stop actually got a service downgrade with the change. The actual short-term solution would be for Capital Metro to reinstate the original 1 and 3 schedules and/or just put them in the frequent service network.”

- Mike Dahmus, District 9

RESTORE THE ORIGINAL FREQUENCY ON THE 1 AND 3 LOCAL ROUTES

Restore the original frequency on the 1 and 3 local routes. Even with the change to 30 minute frequencies, the 1 is still the highest ridership route in the city; and should never have been cut. The 801 and 803 are not sufficiently good service to make up for the longer walks. It’s ludicrous that the new “Frequent Service Network” proposal does not include these two locals (no, Rapid is not part of this network; its fares are incompatible with local service).

✓ **87 Upvotes**

☰ **9 Comments**

Background

In January 2014, Capital Metro launched two new MetroRapid routes, the 801 and the 803, on major transit corridors. MetroRapid is based on bus rapid transit (BRT), which is a high-quality industry standard of bus service designed to make a bus system speedier and more efficient through infrastructure changes such as dedicated bus lanes and high-frequency service. Although MetroRapid is not BRT, the transit priority lanes on Guadalupe and Lavaca downtown bring those routes closer to BRT-level performance.

However, in order to launch MetroRapid, two local routes that run along the same corridor, the 1 and 3 local routes, received service cuts and the 1L and 1M North Lamar/South Congress were combined into a new route - the Route 1 Metric/South Congress. Due to MetroRapid’s less frequent stops and higher fare, this change decreased service for some individuals along Capital Metro’s most used corridor.

What’s Happening Now?

Capital Metro will be evaluating service levels on these two routes as a part of the Service Plan 2025 study. Capital Metro has included funding for additional frequency in its long-range financial plan, and the specific routes where additional frequency will be added are subject to additional review and public input in the coming year.

Certain routes, including the #1 and #3, require additional buses to have frequency upgrades since the agency’s fleet is at capacity in the morning and afternoon peak periods.



What You Can Do

Through Capital Metro's Service Plan 2025 Update initiative - set to launch later this year/Spring 2016 - community stakeholders can get involved by providing feedback in the planning and reimagining process of Capital Metro's bus network. The service plan study will analyze frequency and coverage for all of its routes including MetroRail and MetroAccess. For engagement opportunities in the immediate future, anyone is invited to attend regularly scheduled [board meetings](#) to address Capital Metro's board of directors.²¹

Capital Metro also invites [customer feedback](#) year-round and especially during the service change development process, which happens three times a year - Capital Metro kicked off a process in mid-September for service changes that would be implemented in January of 2016.²²



Photograph from Capital Metro

Map of Capital Metro's high frequency bus routes as of June 2015
Capital Metro



Popular Idea #8

“ The Downtown Austin Alliance believes further investigation of a downtown circulator concept is timely and warranted. The right system could serve to better utilize all of our transportation assets more efficiently. ”

- Dewitt Peart, Downtown Austin Alliance President and CEO

TIME TO REBOOT THE DILLO

If you work, live or play downtown, imagine a fully electric, clean and efficient mode of urban transportation that could be hailed on the street or by a smart phone app day or night.

Electric Cab of Austin has the largest for-hire fleet of NEVs in the nation and currently operates a similar business model but only late at night. The City of Austin & CapMetro should take advantage of this under-utilized resource and work to bring this concept to the daytime market.

In the short term this idea would reduce congestion and our carbon footprint, in the long term it would reduce our over all dependence on cars and be a great complement and value add to our public transit system.

 **82 Upvotes**

 **13 Comments**

Background

The ‘Dillo was a shuttle system that ferried individuals downtown every five minutes and, for most of its lifespan, was free, until late 2008 when a 50 cent fare was added. In the fall of 2009, due to a number of factors including the fare increase, a bus operator strike, and decreased ridership, the ‘Dillo was canceled.

What’s Happening Now?

Taking initiative on behalf of MobilityATX users and citing a lack of transit connectivity in downtown Austin, RideScout, a transportation technology company headquartered in downtown Austin, volunteered to run a trial of a new downtown circulator, called the RideScout Route, from June 23rd through the end of July.

This pilot experimented with multiple routes, vehicles and frequencies to measure the impact that a downtown circulator might have.

Partnering with local ride providers, RideScout tested two versions of the RideScout Route pilot. From June 23 - July 3, RideScout contracted with Electric Cab of Austin to provide the circulator operators and vehicles. From July 1 - July 31, R&R Limousine functioned as the RideScout Route ride provider..

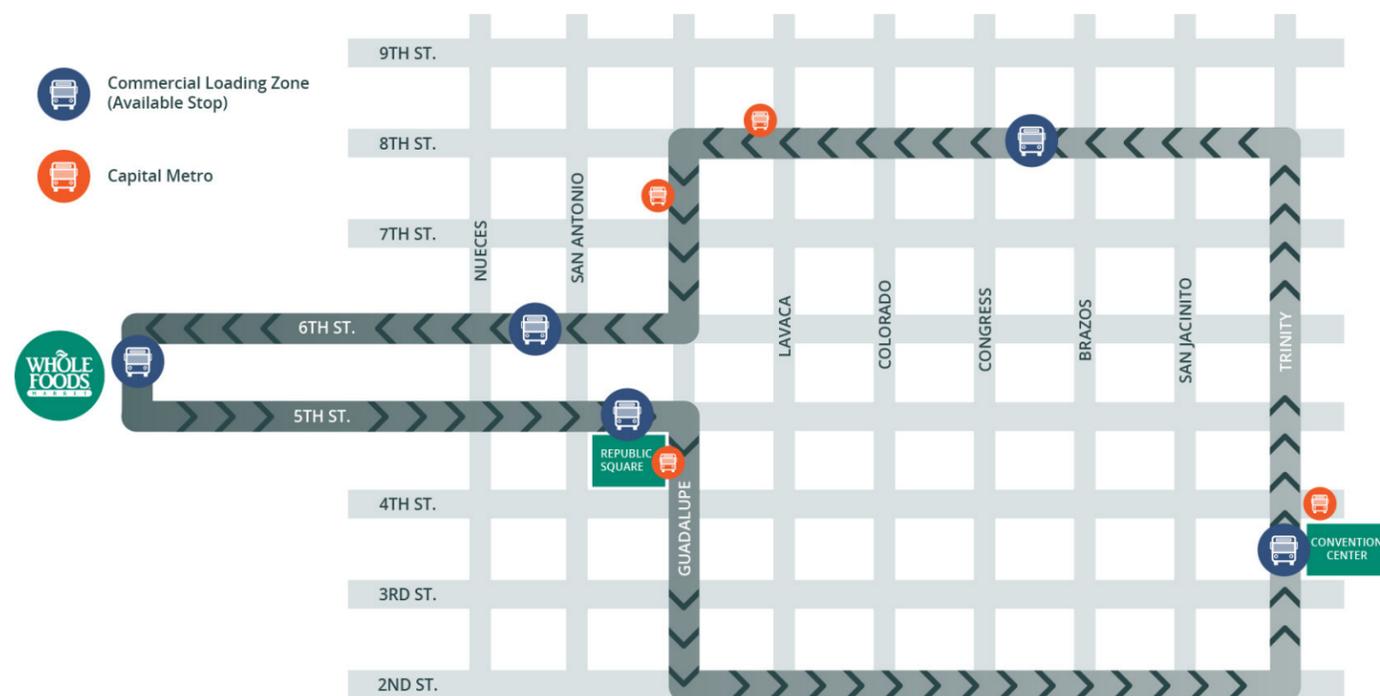
To see each iteration of the RideScout Route and key observations from the pilot, see Appendix C.

“The RideScout Route idea surfaced after MobilityATX conversations revealed a need for more reliable east to west transportation options in downtown Austin.

We decided to offer a free, hop-on, hop-off circulator shuttle to address the ‘last mile’ gap in transportation. With 125,000 people traveling into downtown Austin for work every week, our goal was to encourage more commuters to leave their cars at home and use existing transportation infrastructure.

I hope that the data gleaned and lessons learned from the RideScout Route will help other stakeholders design and implement a useful, efficient downtown circulator.”

- Joseph Kopser, CEO RideScout



What you can do

Beginning in early 2016 Capital Metro will continue the Project Connect study designed to improve mobility in Austin’s central core. Among other things, it will look at the feasibility of a downtown circulator. There are several ways to contact with [Capital Metro](#) about the revival of the ‘Dillo system. Anyone is invited to attend regularly scheduled board meetings to address Capital Metro’s board of directors.²³



Popular Idea #9

“ Instead of a parking minimum, a parking maximum would send a message that city land use isn’t about making space for cars--while also opening up the door to better housing design, more housing options and pervious cover reductions to limit runoff.”

- *Brendan Wittstruck, District 9*

WE NEED TO GET RID OF PARKING MINIMUMS AND CONSIDER PARKING MAXIMUMS ALL OVER TOWN

Its a bit counterintuitive, but we need to get rid of parking minimums, and consider parking maximums all over town. If people know they’re going to have to pay for parking or have trouble finding it, they will change their mode of travel or be prepared to use the often underutilized parking garages all through downtown. Fewer cars will make trips, fewer cars will circle constantly, and congestion will be eased.

 **75 Upvotes**

 **11 Comments**

Background

When developers build a structure, be it an apartment complex, house or office building, municipalities generally mandate a minimum number of parking spaces that must be built as well. Austin is no exception.

Mandatory parking minimums are counterintuitive, critics say, since it ensures developers continue to plan and build around the automobile - rather than people and the diverse, evolving modes of transportation they may want to use. Furthermore, parking minimums mean less space for development, increasing the cost to both businesses and tenants. Finally, since parking requirements are not dynamic nor frequently updated, they often mandate construction of more parking than private developers would build without regulation.

What’s Happening Now?

Parking minimums were eliminated for downtown in 2013. For other parts of the city where parking requirements have not been eliminated, the [CodeNEXT Land Development Code Diagnosis](#) noted that, “High parking requirements do not reflect the existing or proposed walkable context of development,” negatively impacting affordability and the vision of a compact and connected city.

What You Can Do

There is no organization working specifically on parking policy. However, in Austin, member-based organizations like AURA actively organize and advocate for urbanist public policy. Advocating for this policy is as easy as calling your [City Council member's](#) office.



Popular Idea #10

“ It is imperative that we step forward as a city with a comprehensive rail plan.” - Brian Boitmann, District 9

WE MUST GET CRACKING ON PLANNING A LIGHT-RAIL LINE THAT WILL SERVE THE GREATEST NUMBER OF RIDERS ON DAY ONE, AND GOING FORWARD

We must get cracking on planning a light-rail line that will serve the greatest number of riders on day one, and going forward. We can't give up on light rail just because the city floated a bad plan and voters shot that bad plan down. Bus Rapid Transit is not a substitute.

 **70 Upvotes**

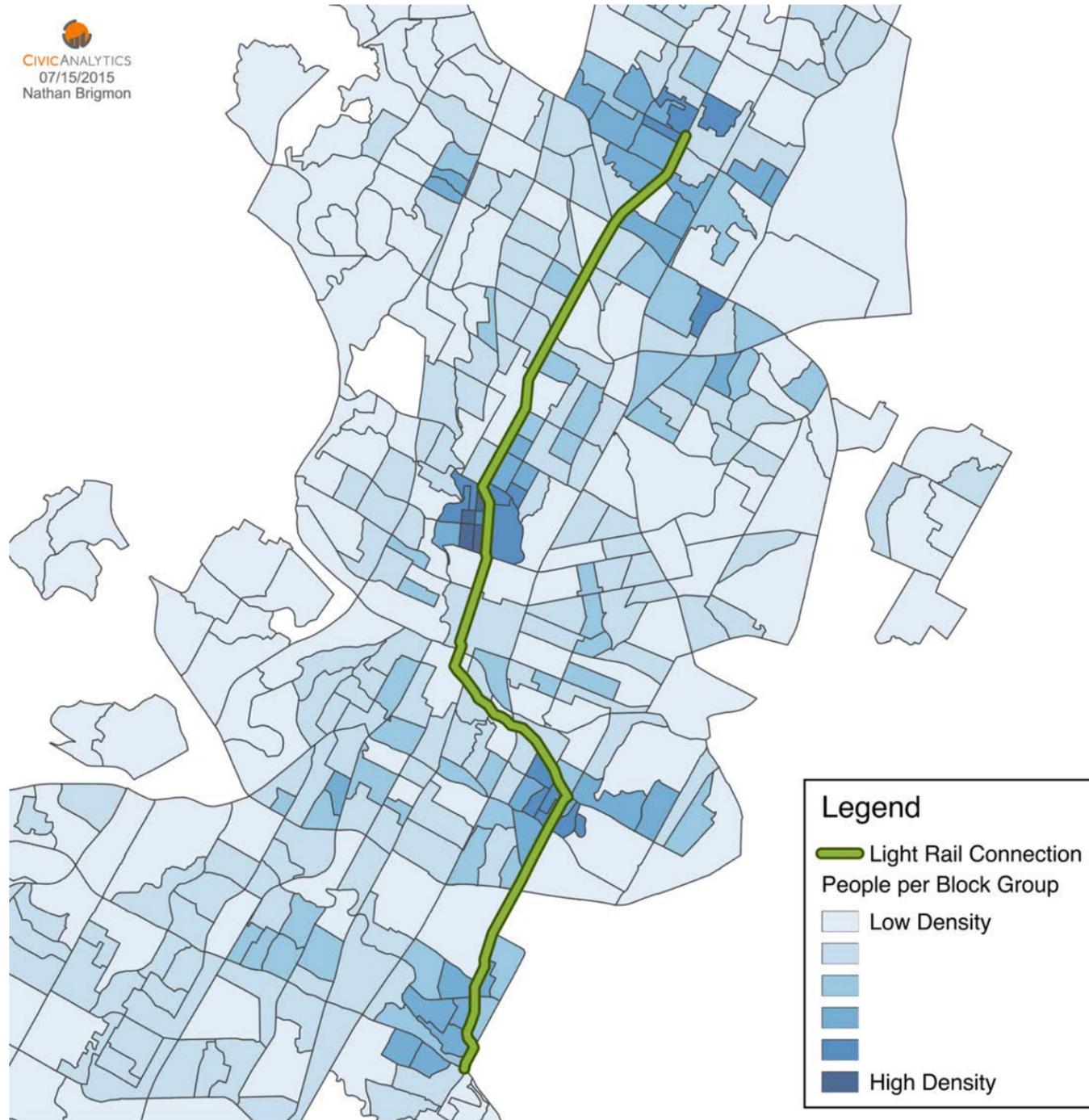
 **11 Comments**

Background

Austin has seen two unsuccessful bonds for light rail plans in the past fifteen years. In 2000, a \$739 million plan for a 15-mile light rail line failed by less than 2,000 votes. In 2014, a proposed \$600 million plan (part of a larger \$1.38 billion bond) failed by almost 25,000 votes.

Despite two major defeats for light rail in recent history, it's clear that there is sustained community interest in exploring and developing an expansive light rail system in Austin. According to the [2015 Zandan Poll](#) of Austin-area residents, 63% of respondents would favor seeing an increase in taxes to construct an above ground rail system.

In addition, Austin's commuter rail line, the MetroRail Red Line, has seen dramatic increases in ridership. There was a 500% increase in MetroRail ridership from 2008 to 2014.²⁴



What's Happening Now?

After the defeat of Proposition 1 in November, there has been no significant movement to develop a new light rail plan for Austin. In order to build new light rail in Austin, bond funding would have to be secured for a new plan. There is no official public effort underway to develop a new light rail plan.

Austinites are anticipating that city and regional transportation authorities will develop a new plan for a light rail system, a process that should include sustained and inclusive community input in the planning and development of that system. Beyond all other data collected, the expectation of inclusion is most critical to understanding Austin's evolving mobility constituency.

What You Can Do

Contact your [Council Member](#).²⁵ Like the Bicycle Master Plan, building a light rail line requires a bond election. In order for a bond to appear on the ballot, City Council must vote to put that bond proposal up to popular vote. Once City Council does that, a simple majority in a popular election is required to pass the bond proposal.



To ensure all Austinites had the opportunity to participate in this important conversation, MobilityATX partnered with Conversation Corps, a community focused conversation series that focuses on a different topic every month. Conversation Corps engages the people of Austin in meaningful civic dialogue focused on public issues, hosted by community hosts across the entire city.

Throughout the month of June 2015, Conversation Corps hosted 18 conversations about MobilityATX and the future of Austin mobility, with a total of 53 participants. Conversations were hosted and organized by City Council district.

Conversation themes ranged from the need for better pedestrian facilities, to more frequent buses and more comfortable bus stops, all of which were also mentioned on MobilityATX.com.

Conversation Corps divided community feedback from these discussions under three mobility focused topics: Personal Behavior, Barriers, and Other Themes.

The following assessment was provided by Conversation Corps: This is just a piece of the input and thoughts provided by Conversation Corps participants. To see the full input set, visit MobilityATX.com/reports/ConversationCorps.pdf

Opportunities : 18	Conversations : 14	Hosts : 29	Voices : 74
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Personal Behavior

Conversation Corps participants identified the following aspects of personal behavior as important in discussing congestion and mobility issues.

- Would (and have tried) to give up cars, but it is very difficult.
- Flex schedules
- Personal planning
 - Planning and adjusting own habits, educate self.
- Ride sharing
- Two-wheeled vehicles

Barriers

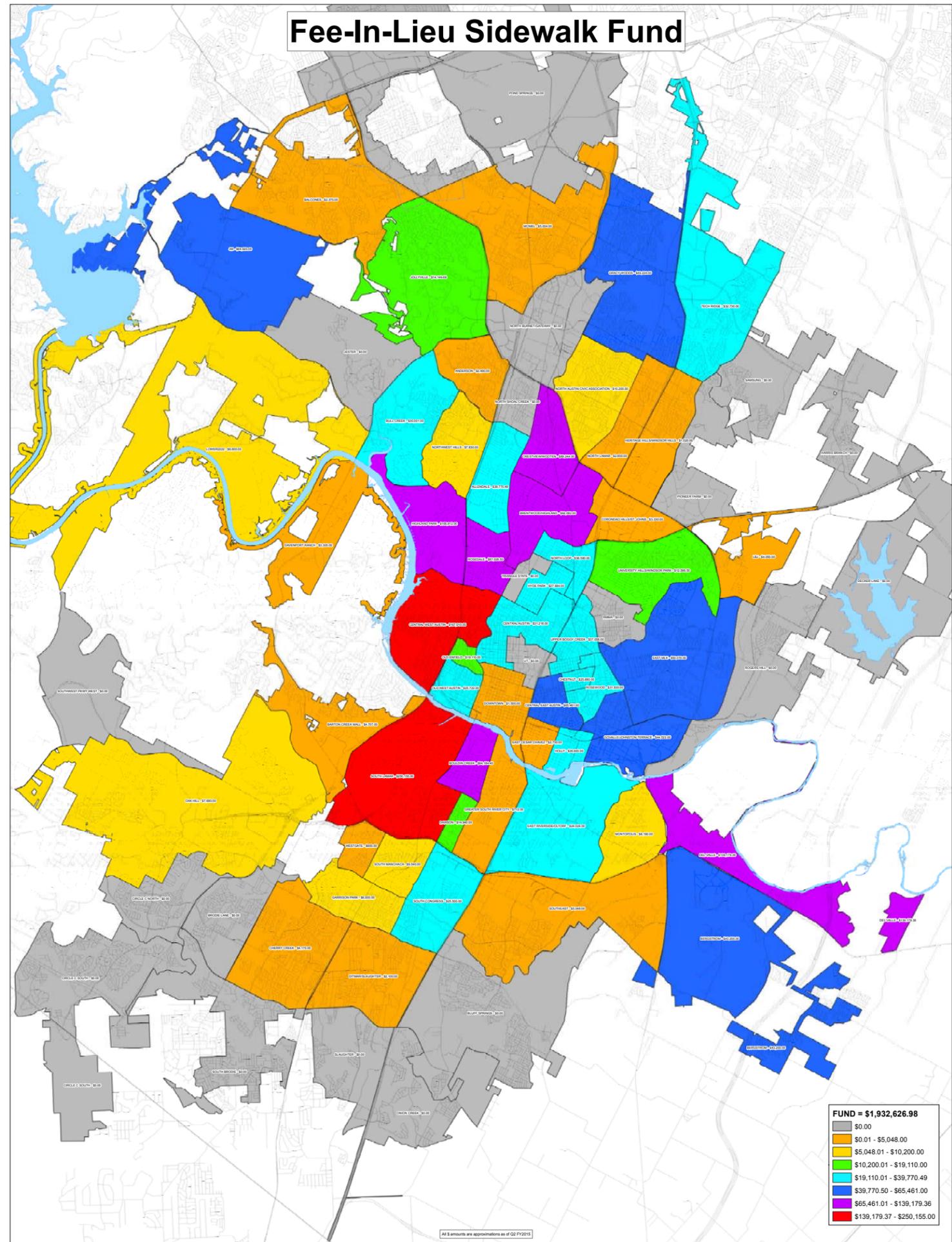
Participants identified the following as barriers to a more mobile and less congested city.

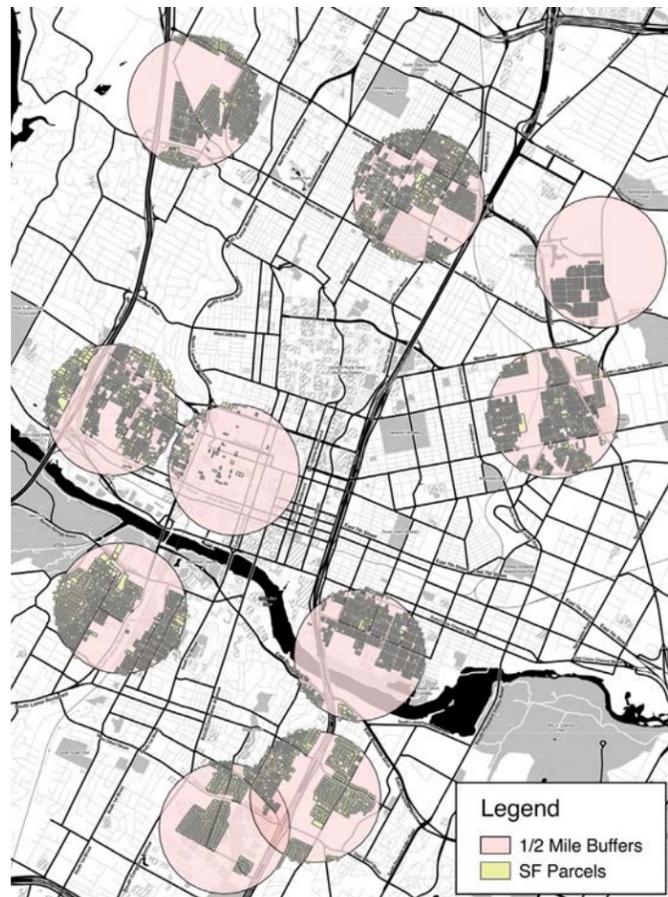
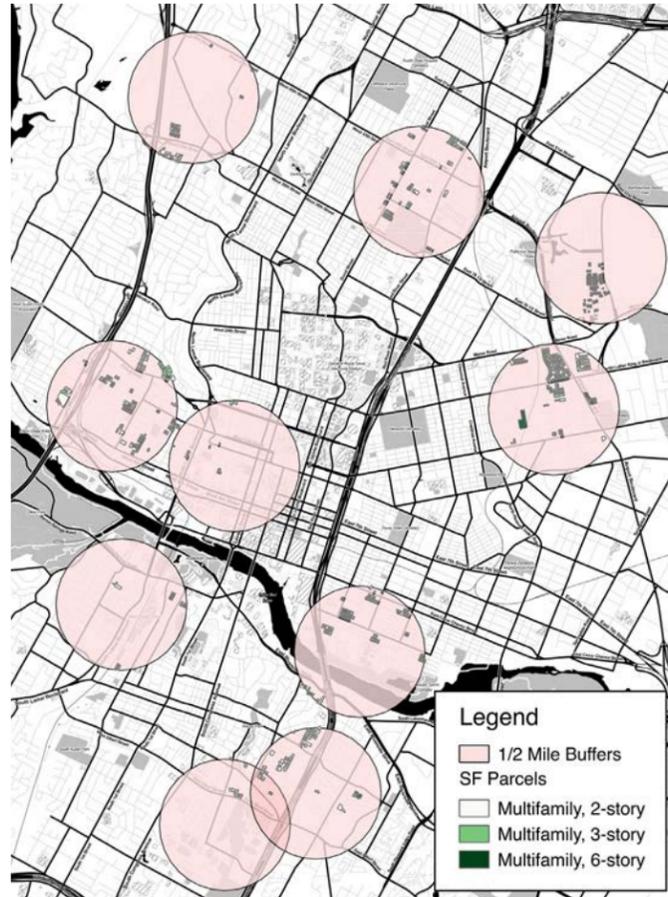
- Quality
 - Stops need to be more comfortable, including benches and shade
- Availability: More service in more places (train and bus)
 - Late night service and weekends
 - Outskirt public transit - Neighborhoods overlooked
 - Getting around downtown - circulator / "dillo" need
- Safety
 - Pedestrian crosswalks needed
 - More sidewalks are needed
 - Safety for cyclists
 - Drinking and driving - there is no late night service.
- Cost
 - Cost increase without service increase
 - Should public transit be free?
 - Supportive of increased fares
- Infrastructure
 - More bus lanes are needed
 - Learn from other cities like Houston – grid, circle around city, more east west routes
 - HOV lanes
 - Avoid toll roads - need more informations about where they go.
 - Monorail?
 - Low capacity variety vs. high capacity transit (carpool, uber, etc) – concern of big empty buses

Other Themes

- Technology
 - Apps are needed to show if bus is on time
 - Social app for transportation options and ride sharing
 - Kudos on technology for Capital Metro
- Neighborhoods
 - Neighborhood Associations should not have more voice than riders
 - Incentives
 - Incentivize businesses to adopt flex plans – City-led systematic approach
 - Incentives for riding bus – Such as free bus passes
 - Incentives for living near work
 - Give incentives for two wheeled vehicles – better parking
- Advocacy and Public Understanding
 - Need more advocating for value of public transit
 - Make alternatives more attractive
 - Don't give up on light rail -need better public buy in
 - More info on 311
 - Better education about two-wheeled vehicles
- Growth
 - Density causing traffic in neighborhoods
 - Stop encouraging growth
 - Parking costs East vs. West
 - Technology gap

APPENDIX A





Civic Analytics Analysis of Potential accessory dwelling unit Development

Process for this analysis:

1. Select 10 neighborhoods with highest projected growth rate for 2014 – 2019.
2. Create 1/2 mile buffer from point within neighborhoods.
3. Select all parcels zoned for single family.
4. Develop 10% of those parcels within 1/2 mile radius of neighborhood centers with multifamily apartments.
5. Compare the difference of that development with single-family development.

The following building prototypes were used for multifamily apartments, which are all based on typical Central Texas building codes and financial structures:

- 2 Story Multifamily
- 3 Story Multifamily
- 6 Story Multifamily

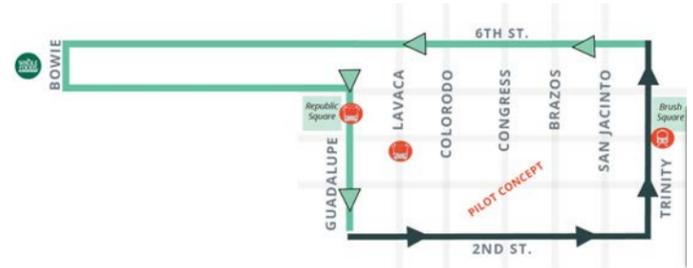
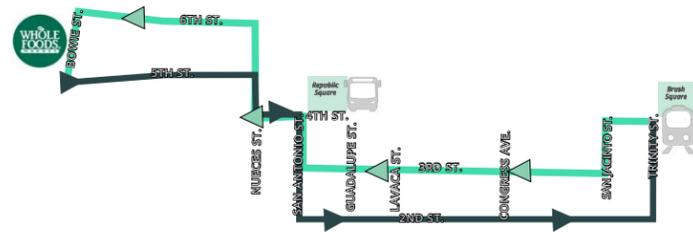
To create a baseline value, one building prototype was used:

- Single Family, Standard Lot

The impact analysis was done using Envision Tomorrow, a scenario-planning tool from Fregonese and Associates. All single family acreage in the buffered areas amounts to about 1,500 acres. The developed 10% of that acreage (150 acres) minus the baseline value yield the following results:

Total Acreage Developed	145.8
New Population	13,906
New Housing Units	6,365
New Building Value	\$486,333,200
New Property Tax Revenue/yr	\$2,512,106

APPENDIX C



The total cost of the RideScout Route pilot project, including planning, marketing and execution was \$32,000.

Key observations from the RideScout Route :

Category	Observation	Recommendations for long-term circulator success
Parking	Vehicles must have designated places to sit idle at the convention center and other key stops to pick up commuters coming into downtown	Remove existing street parking spots for circulator usage. While an unpopular proposal on the surface, providing mass transportation in place of S.O.V. in the right of way serves larger mobility goals.
Signage	Signage on a sidewalk (a public ROW) has to look like City of Austin standard square metal signs - and that's the only way they will be permitted; thus feather signs or other signs at designated stops are not allowed.	The City of Austin R.O.W. permitting shop should make an exception for circulator stop signage under similar conditions of any other mass transit operator.
Marketing	Correlation between marketing/advertising and increased ridership	Employ a comprehensive marketing concept with incentives
Stops	Lack of designated stops a huge barrier to entry.	Work with COA to develop safe, designated stops that either replace commercial loading zones or on-street parking spots.
Real-time location information	Riders reported frustration in not knowing when the vehicles were coming.	Offer a real-time location solution.
Route Alignment	Optimal circulator service runs bi-directionally but Austin's one-way network makes clockwise and counterclockwise operations (on different streets) confusing to passengers.	Make route simple to remember and geometric and work within the constraints on Downtown Austin's one-way street alignment.

Notes

1. City of Austin 2014 Bike Plan Update. Rep. City of Austin, 19 May 2014. Web. <<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=210250>>
2. Ibid
3. The city has links to contact each Council Member by district on their website: <http://austintexas.gov/government>. There is a form to email all City Council Members at <http://austintexas.gov/email/all-council-members>.
4. <http://bikeaustin.org>
5. 100 Congested Roadways. (2014, August 31). Retrieved from <http://www.txdot.gov/inside-tdot/projects/100-congested-roadways.html>
6. <http://my35.org/contact-us.htm>.
7. <http://reconnectaustin.com/get-involved/>.
8. Blair, Jenny. "Transit Priority Lanes Considered for the Drag." Austin Monitor. N.p., 12 Feb. 2015. Web. <<http://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2015/02/transit-priority-lanes-considered-for-the-drag-on-guadalupe-street/>>.
9. <http://www.capmetro.org/boardmeetings/> or feedback@capmetro.org
10. AustinMobility@austintexas.gov
11. City of Austin Sidewalks Peer Cities Report. Rep. City of Austin Public Works Department and Transportation Department, 22 July 2015. Web. <<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=237459>>
12. Cortright, Joe. "The Value of Walkability across the US." City Commentary. N.p., 05 July 2015. Web. <<http://cityobservatory.org/the-value-of-walkability-across-the-us/>>.
13. See note 3
14. According to Austin Police Department data, an average of twice as many traffic accidents occur annually on the section of Anderson Mill road from Spicewood Parkway to 183 as the section of Anderson Mill road from Spicewood Parkway to 620.
15. Contact Council Member Zimmerman: <http://austintexas.gov/email/donzimmerman> District 6 town hall schedule: <http://austintexas.gov/department/events/2292>
16. <http://austintexas.gov/department/mobility-committee>
17. <http://www.nwaustin.org/>
18. Affordable Austin: Why Can't We Build the Supply We Need. Rep. Real Estate Council of Austin, n.d. Web. <<http://www.reca.org/public/uploads/files/general/2015RECAAffordabilityWhitePaper2.pdf>>.
19. Community Impact, "Rental Homes Becoming Unaffordable" May 28, 2015
20. See note 3
21. See note 9
22. <https://www.capmetro.org/servicechange.aspx?id=4294967322>
23. See note 9
24. 2014 Annual Report. Rep. Capital Metro, n.d. Web. <http://www.capmetro.org/uploadedFiles/Capmetroorg/About_US/AnnualReport2014_web_accessible.pdf>.
25. See note 3

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