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Subject

Prepared Statement Supporting a Light Rail Minimum Operable Segment (MOS) on the November Ballot

Contact

Scott Morris, Central Austin CDC Director, 512-371-7961 smorris@centralaustincdc.org

Andrew Clements, Central Austin CDC Director, 512-783-6027 andrewwclements@gmail.com

Today, the Austin City Council Mobility Committee heard proposals for transportation projects for consideration on the November ballot. Several citizens testified in support of light rail. The following is a light rail system proposal and a prepared statement delivered as testimony to the Austin City Council Mobility Committee.

Cars don't fill jobs. Cars don't use our parks, cars don't attend school, or conduct business transactions. People do these things. Transportation success is measured in moving people, not in moving their cars. Rail offers the greatest capacity for moving people, surpassing any other mode for its cost effectiveness, capacity and throughput, against any other method, proven or unproven.

Our proposal for a light rail minimum operable segment is based on several decades' worth of planning and discussion, neighborhood planning ordinances, and over \$20 million in federally funded transit studies. They have arrived at a singular conclusion: Guadalupe-North Lamar would be a great place for a light rail investment. It would be the next step in Austin's utilization of rail, and would cost-effectively serve a corridor with the highest transit ridership, the highest population density, and the highest employment density of any other corridor in the city.

One of those studies was done for the FTA in 2000. That light rail plan used the same footprint in our proposal, plus track to McNeil. But ours goes farther, connecting 23 additional miles of existing MetroRail, providing Red Line passengers from East Austin and Northwest Austin a light rail transfer to 145,000 jobs in the Guadalupe-North Lamar Corridor.

But, this is just the next step. Our system concept extends light rail to destinations like East Riverside, South Lamar, North Lamar, and to the Airport. It delivers social equity by providing areas of high transit dependency like Rundberg and Dove Springs with access to jobs. It builds and operates extensions in SE Austin toward the Airport with the hotel occupancy tax. This proposal returns a very high ROI and connects people to economic opportunity.

There is strong support for moving forward with rail transit. Zandan polling in 2015 showed 66% support rail mass transit, as well as the taxes to pay for those projects.

That is a 23 point swing from the defeat of Project Connect. We only need a 7 point change to pass a bond measure.

But, the people also need your leadership. In this Year of Mobility, we need public transit and proven mobility alternatives on the ballot.

We feel that the people of Austin are ready to take this step. Voters deserve that choice in November.

Thank you very much.

Who We Are

The Central Austin CDC has been privileged to serve as a community organizer at a most unique time in our city's history. Over the last four years, we have engaged the public to work on an issue of utmost importance: planning for Austin's first phase investment of light rail. This work has empowered a diverse coalition of communities, non-profit groups, transit professionals, and light rail advocates. A consensus vision has emerged from this grassroots process for a north-south, expandable backbone of light rail service in the Guadalupe-North Lamar Corridor.

Resources

160614_Light_Rail_Presentation_to_Council.pdf
System Map with MOS Proposal 1605-CACDC_alignment_rev02.jpg
Press Release: Light Rail Project Defined for November Ballot
160602_Light_Rail_Project_for_Nov_Ballot.pdf
Press Release: Light Rail Progress Since the November 2014 Election
160607_Light_Rail_Progress_Since_the_November_2014_Election.pdf
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