

CapMetro

Palm Beach TPA

April 2023

Table of Contents

1. Itinerary
2. Speaker Overviews
3. Notes
4. Presenters Slides



Itinerary

Day 1 Briefings

- 9:00 a.m. Intro to CapMetro

CapMetro President & CEO, Dottie Watkins, and Chief of Staff, Cheyenne Krause, oriented the group to Austin and CapMetro, including an agency overview and key initiatives.

- 10:00 a.m. Investing in the Future: Intro to Project Connect

CapMetro Chief of Staff, Cheyenne Krause, and City of Austin Project Connect Chief of Staff, Liane Conte, introduced the group to Project Connect, including a deep dive into the planning and community engagement foundations that led to the governance and finance/funding structure for Project Connect, and ultimately a successful approval of a dedicated property tax rate in 2020.

- 12:00 p.m. Working Lunch - Building Community: Housing and Transit

Stevie Greathouse (City of Austin), Anna Lan (CapMetro) and Peter Mullen (ATP) guided a discussion with on anti-displacement work, TOD projects, placemaking, and designing transit systems and facilities for the customer and non-customer alike.

Day 1 Tour

- CapMetro Chief of Staff Cheyenne Krause, and ATP Community Involvement Manager Vikram Sinha led a tour on board a CapMetro Battery Electric Bus of the future Project Connect investments.
- Tour highlights:
 1. Travis County Expo Center (MetroRapid)
 2. Colony Park Neighborhood (MetroRapid)
 3. Mueller Neighborhood and Town Center (MetroRapid) **
 4. Integration with Austin Community College and AISD (MetroRapid)
 5. Longhorn Dam (MetroRapid) **
 6. Riverside Drive/Pleasant Valley Intersection (MetroRapid/Light Rail)
 7. AUS Airport (Light Rail) **
 8. South Central Waterfront (Light Rail)
 9. Lady Bird Lake Crossing (Light Rail)
 10. “The Drag” and the University of Texas (Light Rail)
 11. State-owned properties along Lamar Boulevard (Light Rail)
 12. Crestview Station (Light Rail) **
 13. North Lamar Transit Center (Light Rail)

*** see notes for additional details about these destinations*

Day 2 Briefings

- 9:00 a.m. Transit Coalition Building

Community advocates and political players led a discussion on the passage of Proposition A (Project Connect funding) and how to keep people involved post-election. Speakers included Bill McCamely – Executive Director of Transit Forward, Sandy Guzman – Director of Austin Area Research Organization and former staffer to then State Senator/now Mayor, Kirk Watson, and Awais Azhar – Advisory Committee Chair

- 11:30 a.m. Working Lunch: The Role of Agencies in Education

CapMetro EVP of Engagement and Experience, Samantha Alexander, led a discussion of the resources invested by CapMetro to support the education and awareness of our community regarding CapMetro services before and during their consideration of 2020 Proposition A

Day 2 Tour

- CapMetro Chief of Staff Cheyenne Krause and CapMetro TOD Program Manager, Anna Lan led a tour of two transit-oriented development along the existing CapMetro Red Line Commuter Rail. After taking a battery electric bus from downtown to Crestview Station, the group then transferred to the MetroRail and rode back downtown.
- Tour highlights:
 1. Crestview Station**
 2. ACC Highland**
 3. Plaza Saltillo**

*** see notes for additional details about these destinations*



Speakers

Speakers

Dottie Watkins, President & CEO, CapMetro
Dottie.Watkins@capmetro.org

Dottie Watkins serves as the President & CEO of CapMetro, the transit agency serving the greater Austin region. Dottie first began her transit career in 1994 – driving buses part-time while she attended the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to her current role she was the agency's Deputy CEO, and before that Chief Customer Officer/Chief Operating Officer, and before that, CapMetro's Vice President – Bus Operations and Maintenance. She has been responsible for all aspects of the agency's contracted bus operations through active monitoring of service quality and contract compliance.

Dottie holds a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Texas and a Master of Business Administration from St. Edward's University. A native Austinite, Dottie regularly enjoys trips to the pool with her daughter and plays French Horn in a local community band.



Speakers

Cheyenne Krause, Chief of Staff, CapMetro
Cheyenne.Krause@capmetro.org

Cheyenne Krause is an enthusiastic professional working to advance mobility and transportation projects in Austin. Cheyenne serves as the Chief of Staff at CapMetro, supporting strategic and priority initiatives, and the CapMetro executive team. Prior to joining CapMetro in 2021, Cheyenne worked for several years in various roles with the City of Austin City Manager's Office and Transportation Department, most recently working for two years as the senior support for Assistant City Manager Gina Fiandaca. In this role she worked hand-in-hand with City leadership to manage the City's Mobility Outcome, including several City departments and transportation safety and mobility initiatives. Notably, she was an integral part of the team that collaborated with Capital Metro in the success of Project Connect in 2020, and has also played key roles on other critical initiatives while working in the City Manager's Office and Austin Transportation Department in government relations and communications positions.

Cheyenne is a native Austinite, attending Texas State University for her Bachelor's Degree and the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs for her Master's Degree in Public Affairs.



Speakers

Bill McCamley, Executive Director, Transit Forward
Bill@transitforward.org

Bill McCamley is the Executive Director of Transit Forward, and Austin 501c3 with a mission to educate and engage our friends and neighbors about transit with a focus on Project Connect.

Bill spent 20+ years as an elected and appointed official in New Mexico, including terms as a County Commissioner, State Representative, and Secretary of the New Mexico Workforce Solutions Department (the state Department of Labor). He also has experience as a university instructor and in the private sector as a founder of ROJO Ink, a custom good company that donates a portion of proceeds to feed hungry kids around the world.

Bill has a Bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University in government, and a Masters in Public Policy from the John F Kennedy School of Government. He moved to Austin in 2021, and has fell in love with the people, water, dancing, food, and music."



Speakers

Sandy Guzman, Chief Executive Director, Austin Area Research Organization
sguzman@aaroregion.com

Sandy Hentges Guzman is CEO of AARO, a six-county regional network of civic leaders working for a dynamic, thriving and sustainable region for all. Transportation has been a focus of the organization since its inception more than 40 years ago. The membership also engages in policy discussions in the education, health, social equity and water arenas, tackling seemingly intractable challenges at the systemic and regional levels.

Leveraging two decades of engagement in Central Texas transportation policy discussions and community efforts, Sandy is Board Chair of Movability - the transportation management association for Central Texas and is a founding board member and Vice Chair of Transit Forward - a civic coalition focused on informing the Austin metro community about the benefits of an accessible, regional, public transit system and advancing the implementation of transit-supportive programs and policies.

In 2008, Sandy joined then Senator Kirk Watson to support his work as Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Chair of the Capital Area Metropolitan Organization (CAMPO). Over the next eleven-plus years, Sandy was involved in the expansion of the CAMPO region, reconfiguration of the CAMPO and Capital Metro boards, evolving the 2020 Project Connect financing concept, drafting and stewardship of many pieces of transportation legislation including a review of Capital Metro by the Texas Sunset Commission, streamlining Texas' environmental review process for highways, supporting the senator's leadership to engage TxDOT with the community in the development of many projects throughout the region and a decade-long effort secure funding for the reconstruction of I-35.

New to Austin in 2000, Sandy served as Deputy Campaign Manager for the unsuccessful light rail election. The connections forged during that work continue to serve her community leadership today. Sandy spent the next eight years working for the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce on local, state and federal policy, with a heavy emphasis on transportation. Efforts included support for the 2004 election for commuter rail, the "Take on Traffic" initiative in support of a 2007 CAMPO vote to add a new system of toll roads to the regional plan, and a peer review of CAMPO that resulted in many reforms, among many other transportation policy efforts in which Sandy took the lead.

Sandy relocated to Austin from Washington, DC. There she worked for a Member of Congress following her graduation from The George Washington University with bachelor's degrees in International Affairs and Latin American Studies.

A California native, Sandy and her husband Robert are busy raising two young Texans and two pandemic puppies.



Speakers

Anna Lan, TOD Manager, City of Austin
anna.lan@capmetro.org

Anna Lan is a TOD Manager at CapMetro, where she leads transit-oriented development projects for the transit agency. A champion of safe and sustainable public transportation, Anna leads the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) project in partnership with the City of Austin and the Austin Transit Partnership. The project successfully delivered the ETOD Policy Plan, which was formally adopted by the Austin City Council in March 2023.

Before joining the public sector, Anna was a TOD planner for Arup where she worked on international integrated development projects, new rail alignment and station planning, Smart City implementation, and sustainability projects. Anna holds a master's degree in urban planning from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Southern California.



Speakers

Liane Conte, Chief of Staff, City of Austin
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Liane Conte, AICP is the Chief of Staff with the City of Austin's Project Connect Office where she supports the City's role in delivering Project Connect – Austin's high-capacity transit vision. She was previously with the Austin Transportation Department where she had a leadership role in transportation and related planning initiatives, such as the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, the Street Impact Fee program, the Climate Equity Plan, and the Austin/Travis County Community Health Improvement Plan. Liane also has also worked on infrastructure needs assessments and the City's award-winning comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*. Liane earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and master's degrees in Planning and Public Administration from the University of Southern California.



Speakers

Jacob Calhoun, Director of Transit System Enablement, CapMetro
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Jacob Calhoun is a mobility professional working towards creating a dynamic and diverse transportation network for Central Texas. He is currently CapMetro's Director of Transit System Enablement ensuring that the agency grows with the implementation of the Project Connect program and that the system is integrated into the fabric of the region. Previously, he was the Director of Program-wide Contracts for the Austin Transit Partnership managing \$200 million worth of contracts to deliver Project Connect. Prior to joining ATP, he was a long-range transportation planner back at CapMetro developing the Project Connect system plan. He has been working on Project Connect for over 7 years and has worn many hats in the program including: project management, corridor planning, public involvement, TOD and more. Jacob previously worked at ATG and the City of Temple prior to joining CapMetro. Jacob received his Master's in Urban Management and Development from Erasmus University and his Bachelor's in Sport Management from Texas A&M University. His focus is on bringing the future to reality through teamwork, clear communication and thoughtful planning.



Speakers

Nina Loehr, Program Manager, CapMetro
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Nina Loehr serves as the Program Manager in the Executive Department at CapMetro, supporting executive leadership on strategic projects and goals. Prior to joining CapMetro, Nina has worked in state government over 15 years, most recently as the Audit and Special Projects Coordinator for the Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division. She was responsible for the management of internal and external communication and timely reports on division projects and audits. This provided Nina with the opportunity to witness the impact of providing nutrition assistance to schools, and other food programs across Texas. She also has experience as a Planning Administrator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Nina has assisted Community Supervision and Corrections Departments on the creation and implementation of their strategic plans with the goal of reducing recidivism and creating positive offender change. She also serves on the Board of Directors for NYOS Charter School in Austin, Texas, promoting the school's mission and academic goals through guidance and governance.

Nina has a Bachelor's Degree in criminal justice from Sam Houston State University and a Master's Degree in public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin. She lives in Austin with her husband and two boys, Henry and Leo.



Speakers

Vikram Sinha, Public Involvement Manager, Austin Transit Partnership
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Vikram Sinha was born and raised in New York. After completing undergraduate studies at Brandeis University, he worked as a paralegal but found his true calling in public service after getting his Master's degree from NYU-Wagner in Public Policy. He is proud to have worked as part of multiple teams at NYCDOT, supporting projects spanning operations and engineering to the implementation of bus rapid transit, roadway repaving and markings, bike lanes, pedestrian and accessibility improvements. He has transferred that experience to the growing city of Austin, Texas following a successful referendum in 2020 for Project Connect, honing his focus on light rail. As Project Connect's Public Involvement Manager for the Orange Line, he works within a multi-disciplinary, matrixed project team to ensure Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program planning and development in a transparent and inclusive manner. He is responsible for engaging a wide range of stakeholders, ranging from property owners to residents, community members to policy makers. He can be found on LinkedIn @ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/vsinha1/>



Speakers

Stevie Greathouse, Manager, City of Austin

Stevie Greathouse is an urban planning professional with 25 years of experience managing land use and transportation planning projects and programs at the local and regional level. Stevie currently serves as a division manager for the City of Austin Planning Department, where she leads the City side of a partnership to deliver Equitable Transit Oriented Development in concert with the generational Project Connect transit investment. Stevie earned her Masters Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University and worked as a long range planner for the City of Portland, Oregon for almost a decade before returning home to Texas in 2003. In Austin, Stevie has held multiple planning positions in local and regional government, and is known as a collaborative, effective leader and project manager. In her spare time, Stevie serves on the board for a local non-profit focused on increasing access to public transit and enjoys spending quality time with her husband, dog, and 14-year old son.



Speakers

Samantha Alexander, Executive Vice President, Chief Experience and Engagement Officer, CapMetro
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As CXO for CapMetro, Samantha leads the agency's strategic initiatives and team members in Customer Service, Community Engagement, Communications, Marketing and Client/Business Development. These teams are unified in their effort to provide valuable experiences and meaningful engagements with our community, customers, partners and team members.

Samantha joined CapMetro in 2019 as its Director of Brand Communications and served as the Senior Director of Public Affairs and Engagement, leading the agency's Community Engagement and Communications teams, prior to her current role. Samantha began her career in public service at the City of Austin in 2010 in the Public Information Offices for City Hall and the Austin Transportation Department. Before joining CapMetro, she led large-scale communications efforts for Austin ISD, including the district's successful 2017 bond, as the Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Operations.

She is a volunteer for Seedling Mentor Program and an alumna of the University of Missouri Journalism School and Texas State, where she earned her Master of Public Administration.



Speakers

Peter Mullan, Executive Vice President of Architecture & Urban Design,
Austin Transit Partnership
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Peter Mullan brings decades of experience working in public space design and community engagement to Austin Transit Partnership. He believes Project Connect is an extraordinary opportunity to reinforce and enhance Austin's diverse and human-centered urban fabric.

Peter comes to the Austin Transit Partnership from the Waterloo Greenway Conservancy, where he served as CEO since 2015. An innovative public park system built around a restored Waller Creek, including the transformed Waterloo Park and Moody Amphitheater opening in 2021, Waterloo Greenway will give the Austin community a new public gathering place, combining access to art and culture with an immersive natural experience in the heart of the city.

Before moving to Austin, Peter played a critical role in the creation of the High Line in New York, a global model for next-generation public spaces. A licensed architect by training, Peter is a graduate of Princeton University and the Yale School of Architecture, where he was the recipient of the Alpha Rho Chi medal for Leadership.



Speakers

Awais Azhar, Chair, Project Connect Community Advisory Committee
Awais.nca@gmail.com

Awais Azhar is a Community and Regional Planning PhD student and Teaching Assistant at The University of Texas at Austin in the School of Architecture. His research focuses on how racial justice can be operationalized in relation to housing and land use planning. His previous research focused on affordable housing strategies in the United States and housing displacement in Pakistan.

Over the past six years, Awais has been involved in affordable housing and social justice advocacy in Austin, Texas. He currently serves on the City of Austin Planning Commission, the Project Connect Joint Community Advisory Committee, Executive Committee of the Austin Housing Coalition, the Advocacy Committee of HousingWorks Austin, the Membership Council of the Austin Continuum of Care, and the Board of Directors of Equality Texas.

Awais has a Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning degree and a Master of Public Affairs degree from the University of Texas at Austin, with a portfolio in Nonprofit Studies. He also has a Bachelor in Architecture degree from the National College of Arts, Pakistan. Previously, he worked as Program Manager for the Austin Community Investment Collaborative at HousingWorks Austin, focusing on affordable housing policy and research.





Notes

Austin Fast Facts

- **Square miles: 319.94**
- **Population (2020, city limits): 961,855**
 - Increase of 171,465 (18%) since 2010)
- **Race and Hispanic Origin**

White alone, percent	66.4%
Black or African American alone, percent	7.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.8%
Asian alone, percent	8.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.0%
Two or More Races, percent	8.7%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	33.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	47.8%

- **Housing**
 - 44.7% owner-occupied housing (majority renter community)
 - Median home value: \$381,400
 - Median gross rent: \$1,415
- **Median HH income: \$78,965**
 - 12.5% of pop. meets federal poverty definition
- **City Govt:**
 - Council-manager form of government
 - 10 council members representing geographic districts, 1 at-large mayor
 - CapMetro is a separate entity from the City and serves more than just Austin

Crestview Station TOD

The Crestview Station TOD is a mixed-use community sitting at the corner of North Lamar Blvd. and Airport Blvd. in north central Austin, served by Metro Rail, Metro Bus (local bus service) and Metro Rapid (BRT-light). There are approximately 1,890 units, of which, 63 were affordable. There is more than 30,000 square feet of retail and more than 30,000 square feet of office. The existing development (Midtown Commons) was developed on a mix of public (CapMetro) and privately-owned land.

On the south side of the rail line, across from Midtown Commons, construction is underway for another TOD phase on Ryan Drive. This is City-owned land, for which the City solicited an RFP to develop. The Council-approved and under-construction project includes 344 total housing units (335 rental, 9 for-sale) with 50% of rental units at or below 60% MFI and 100% of for-sale units at or below 80% MFI. The project also includes 3.2 acres of parkland utilizing open space under “floating” sections of buildings, and more than 16,000 square feet of commercial space, with an emphasis on artist studios and community-focused services (i.e., childcare). The Ryan Drive site connects to the existing Crestview Red Line Rail station via enhanced pedestrian path.

- [CapMetro's Crestview Station TOD Overview](#)
- [City of Austin Ryan Drive Overview](#)

Mueller Neighborhood and Town Center

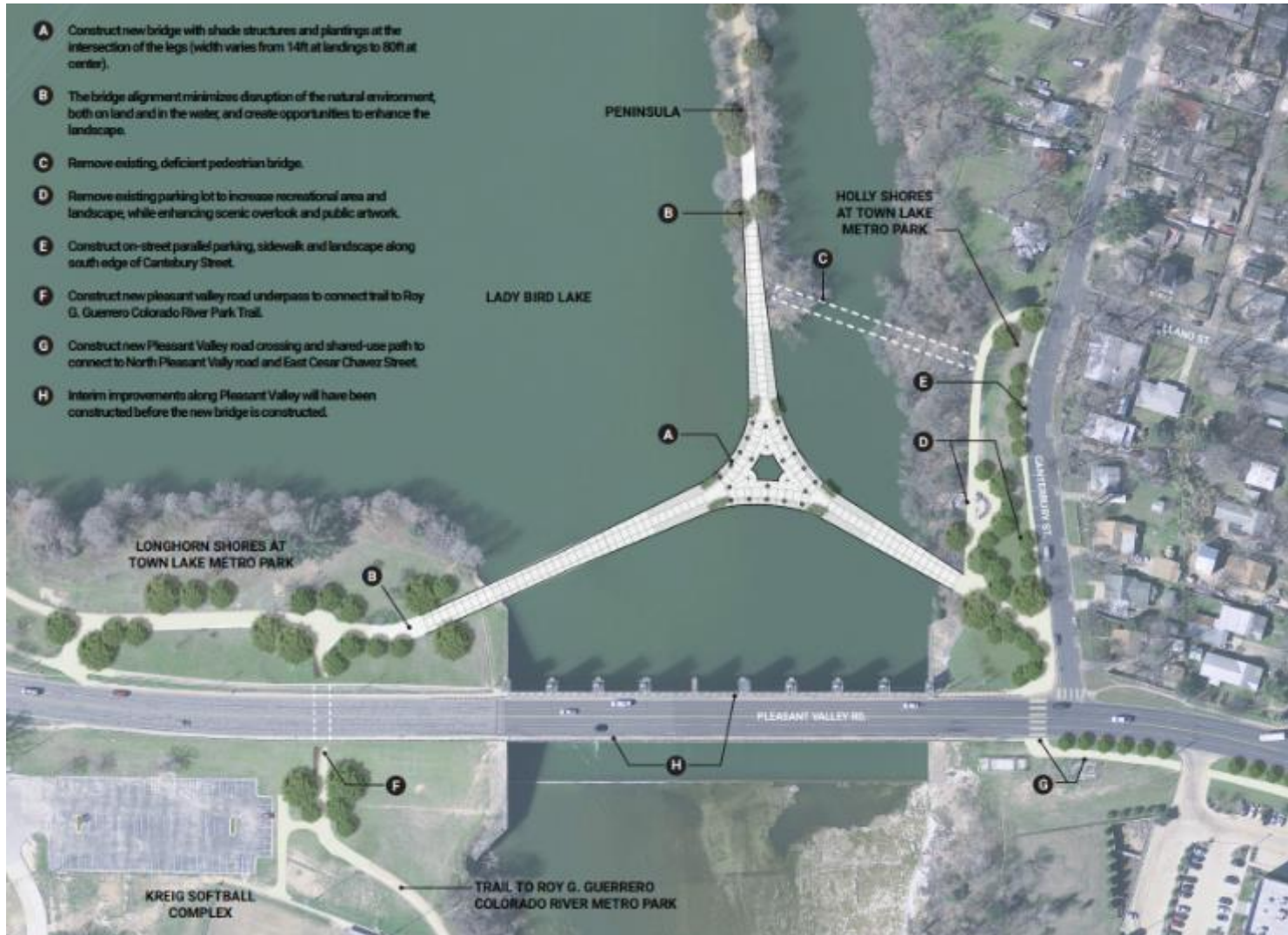
Mueller is a mixed-income, mixed-use community located in the heart of Austin at the site of the former municipal airport. This mostly City-owned property is master planned with significant investment in affordable housing, housing for all stages of life, parkland, and community centers. Mueller is a public-private partnership between the City of Austin and Catellus Development Corporation to redevelop the former Robert Mueller Municipal Airport (RMMA).

The Mueller Neighborhood will be home to several future MetroRapid stations, which will serve the residents and connect people to the shops, businesses, healthcare, healthy food, etc., located within the neighborhood.

[Mueller Neighborhood](#)



Longhorn Dam



In 2018, the City of Austin Public Works Department in partnership with Austin Transportation Department (ATD) began work on a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to evaluate the possibility of a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Lady Bird Lake, as well as a review of possible interim improvements to the existing bridge. The existing bridge/roadway design is out of date with modern standards, and has resulted in crashes and safety hazards.

Funding for interim improvements was made available from the 2016 Mobility Bond (voter-approved, general obligation bonds). Funding to fully design and construct a new bridge was recently approved by voters as part of the 2020 Bond.

Construction of interim improvements on South Pleasant Valley Road (Cesar Chavez Street to Elmont Drive) is complete. Design is underway on a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Lady Bird Lake near the Longhorn Dam bridge (design drawing, right).

[Longhorn Dam Multimodal Improvements Project](#)

AUS Airport

Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) is the fastest growing airport in the country by population. Prior to the pandemic, the AUS team completed a master plan to manage airport growth, including terminal expansions, a new terminal, investments in customer parking, a new taxiway, and more. Even with the pandemic, passenger growth has significantly outpaced projections.

The Airport will be served by a future Project Connect light rail investment.

[AUS Master Plan](#)



ACC Highland

Located 4 miles from downtown, Highland Campus is Austin Community College's premier learning destination, transformed from what was once Highland Mall (a true shopping mall) into a national model for innovative learning, sustainability, and training facilities. Austin Community College District is reshaping higher education and revitalizing a community by transforming the former Highland Mall into a state-of-the-art learning and training complex. ACC Highland serves as an anchor to a mixed-use community that includes parks and trails, apartments, office space, restaurants, and shops.

ACC Highland is served by CapMetro Red Line commuter rail service, and the rail station also features an expanded bike cage where customers can store and repair their bikes, on the go!

[ACC Highland](#)

Fast Facts

- 81 acres
- 3 new parks
- 1.25 miles of trails
- 20,000 students
- 6,800 employees
- 1,800 residents
- 1.3M square feet
- 800,000 square feet office space
- 150,000 square feet retail space
- 1,200 residential units with affordable housing options
- 200 hotel rooms

Plaza Saltillo

In a joint effort between CapMetro and the community, Plaza Saltillo has been transformed to a vibrant live-work-play space in Central East Austin on the site of CapMetro-owned property.

The 10 acres of the Saltillo District will include approximately 800 apartments, of which at least 15% will be deeply affordable (income qualifying residents who earn an average of 50% of Austin's MFI), 110,000 square feet of retail, 140,000 square feet of office space, 1.4 acres of open space and public art.

The Saltillo District will feature one of the region's most diverse mobility infrastructure programs, including the established MetroRail station, plus pedestrian paseos, an extension of San Marcos Street, new below and above-ground parking garage, electric vehicle stations, reserved Car2Go spaces, a B-Cycle station and an extension of the Lance Armstrong Bikeway.

Current community anchors include Whole Foods and Target, and the many locally-owned and operated restaurants, bars, galleries, breweries, etc., that serve the community.

Plaza Saltillo Rail Station was inspired by the plazas of Mexican cities, and named for Austin's sister city of Saltillo, Mexico. Plaza Saltillo was built in 1998 and boasts a beautiful courtyard and fountain, a space for outdoor vendors, and a bandstand. The city of Saltillo donated the ornate, traditional benches that are found throughout. Plaza Saltillo was a collaborative project between the city of Austin, Capital Metro, and an east Austin cultural group called Ole Mexico.

[Plaza Saltillo Development Overview](#)

[CapMetro Blog - Plaza Saltillo - 2009](#)