



# Community & Internal Involvement Plan

Executive Summary

# Community & Internal Involvement Plan

The Transit Plan 2035 Community & Internal Involvement Plan (CIIP) is designed to make sure the agency is transparent and supports community-led decisions. Community involvement is essential for making decisions about transit because transit systems directly affect communities, especially those that are historically underserved. This document explains how CapMetro will share information about the plan, gather input, and respond to community feedback. The CIIP outlines a holistic approach for outreach both internal and external to CapMetro. Above all else, the CIIP strives to engage people where they are and ensure an open and transparent planning process. Internal efforts will engage (a) CapMetro staff, including administrative and frontline workers and (b) other groups outside the agency who regularly coordinate on infrastructure, operations, funding, and other items. External efforts include (a) the broader community and (b) key stakeholder groups like community based organizations (CBOs), employers, and partner agencies. While these groups may sometimes overlap in activities, they should be engaged in their own unique ways when needed.

By creating a strong CIIP, CapMetro will create a transit plan that meets the different needs and hopes of the community it serves. This approach aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of transit solutions and strengthen the partnership between CapMetro and the community. Through active involvement, Transit Plan 2035 will show how important shared input and a common vision are in shaping the future of public transportation in Central Texas. The CIIP will be reviewed and updated as needed at the start of each round of engagement.



## Goals

CapMetro held an internal workshop in Spring 2024 to set goals for the CIIP. These goals are based on CapMetro's Engagement Policies & Processes, focusing on inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility. The purpose of the CIIP goals is to ensure the community is fully involved in CapMetro's planning process and the overall success of Transit Plan 2035.

By following these goals, the CIIP will make sure that the community's voice is central to the planning process, leading to a more connected, fair, and effective transit system. CIIP goals include:

- **Comprehensive and Actionable Feedback**
- **Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**
- **Targeted and Inclusive Outreach**
- **Community Connection, Trust, and Transparency**
- **Efficient and Scalable Engagement**



# Stakeholders



## External

Getting communities involved that will be affected by or invested in Transit Plan 2035 is key to the plan’s success. While the project team identifies priority communities, they will also involve stakeholders and decision makers representing groups and external interests that have a stake in CapMetro’s operations. CapMetro will curate a stakeholder list from current databases and relationships ahead of the first round of community engagement.

Initial outreach will be conducted by CapMetro via email, sending important information about the plan, the purpose of engagement, and upcoming events to the stakeholder list. A variety of outreach methods, both traditional and modern, will be used by the project team to spread information about the plan. For more details about these methods, see pages 5 through 8. CapMetro will work with key community organizations and use community-based strategies to inform and engage local networks and hard-to-reach stakeholders.



## Internal

Internal stakeholders include the CapMetro Board of Directors (Board), administrative staff, and frontline staff. Frontline staff consists of CapMetro drivers, maintenance staff, and safety and security employees. It is important to involve administrative and frontline staff because they have on-the-ground experience and interact with riders daily. Frontline staff will be encouraged to participate in the project through focus groups, surveys, and in-person meetings in breakrooms.



# Community Connectors

CapMetro hired community representatives, known as Community Connectors, to bring their personal experiences to the Transit Plan 2035 project through the Community Connectors Program! These Community Connectors will help CapMetro reach out to their unique communities by building relationships, sharing information, and working together to make sure diverse voices are heard while planning the future of public transportation in Central Texas.



**Community Connectors will be paid \$25/hr for their time and effort in connecting Central Texans to Transit Plan 2035**

## Community Connectors’ roles include:

**Networking:** Building and maintaining relationships with a range of different community members, including individuals and organizations.

**Information Sharing:** Spreading information and resources to ensure community members are well-informed and have the chance to provide input.

**Support and Advocacy:** Helping individuals or groups in need and voicing community interests.

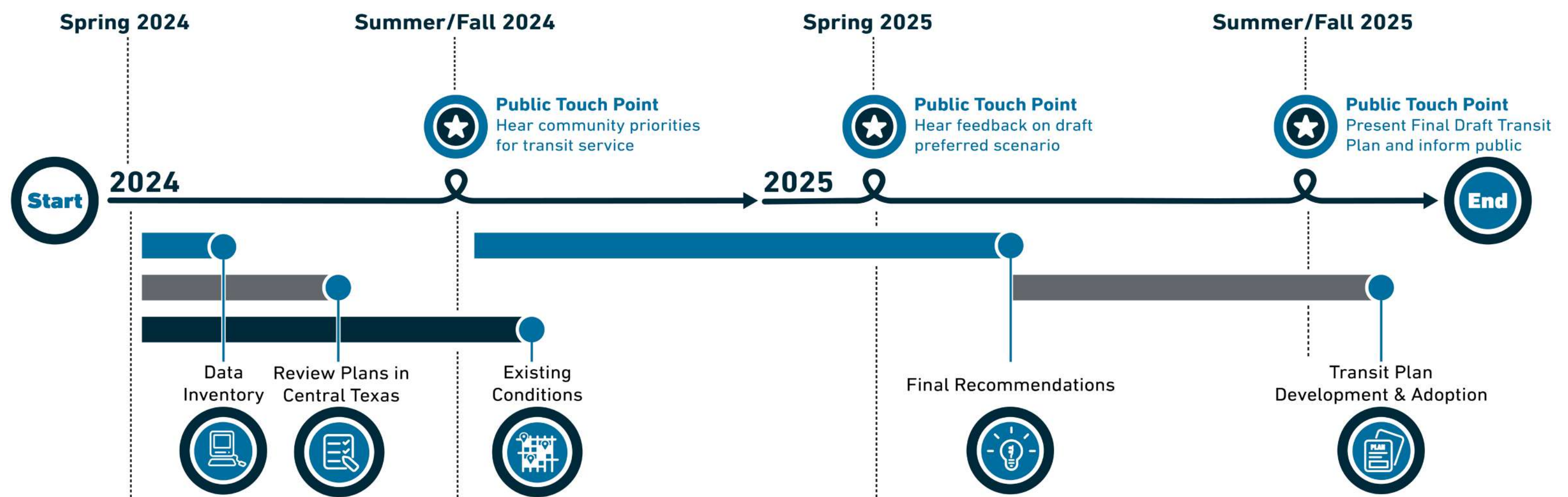
**Event Organization:** Planning events or activities that bring the community together and receive feedback.

**Problem-Solving:** Finding out what problems the community faces and working together to find solutions through Transit Plan 2035.



# Timeline

The figure below displays the timeline of the engagement program and how it connects with the technical work of the plan.





# Engagement Rounds

Transit Plan 2035's engagement structure will be divided into three rounds that will include stakeholder communication, feedback, and engagement activities. Each round, alongside its goals and engagement activities, is summarized in the figure below.

## Engagement Round Goals & Methods

ROUND 1



**Goal:** Gather information on the community's transit needs.

- Engage in community visioning and discuss trade-offs, constraints, and opportunities.

ROUND 2



**Goal:** Engage the Central Texas community and develop scenarios for potential changes to the transit system.

- Examine the feasibility and implications of potential changes.
- Review the draft and preferred scenarios with the community.

ROUND 3



**Goal:** Present preferred scenario to the public.

- Present to the Board and seek adoption of preferred scenario.

Engagement

**Internal Methods:**

Engage frontline and administrative staff through focus groups, surveys, in-person meetings, and email updates.

**External Methods:**

Engage community members through community pop-ups, focus groups, Community Connectors, surveys, community meetings, and Community Night Open House.








# Tools & Strategies

## Community Connectors Program

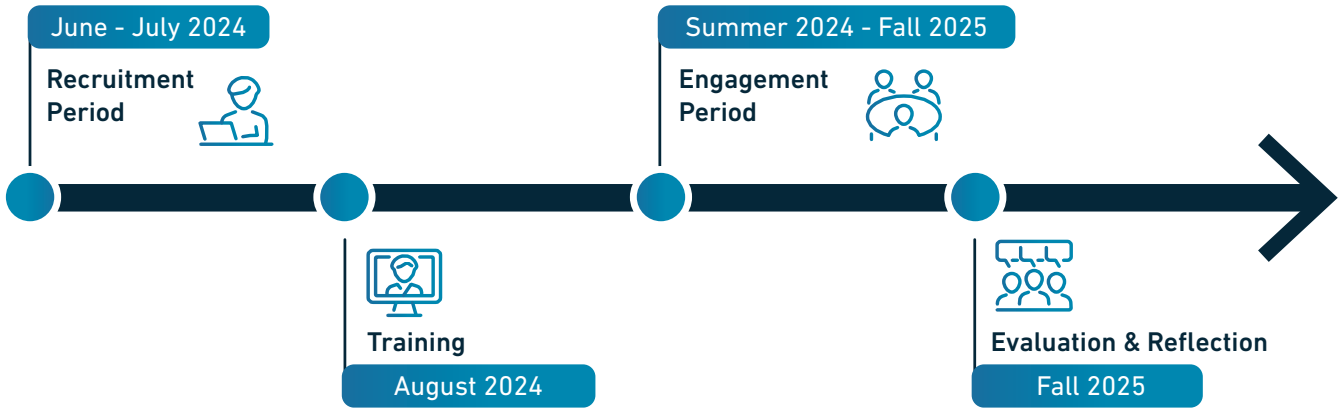
Transit Plan 2035 will build on CapMetro and the City of Austin’s past successes using the Community Connectors Program. CapMetro will use this program to connect with hard-to-reach communities identified through CapMetro’s existing contacts, past experiences, demographic studies, and local knowledge. The program’s main goal is to work with historically underrepresented communities throughout the development of Transit Plan 2035.

### Community Connector Program objectives include:

-  **Community-Led Engagement:** Foster a community-driven, community-based public input process for Transit Plan 2035.
-  **Skill Development:** Provide participants with knowledge about transit planning and skills for community organizing.
-  **Amplifying Voices:** Ensure a variety of community perspectives are included in the planning process.

The program selected a group of paid community members to act as a link between CapMetro and their local communities. Selected community members received training during their onboarding and will receive training at key stages of the project. Providing participants regularly with project updates and schedules will allow them to use the information to inform their peers about the plan and gather feedback on their needs and priorities. Participants will receive physical materials when appropriate and have access to an online portal. The program will use established community-based methods to strengthen feedback from other external and internal engagement efforts.

*The Community Connectors Program will boost community participation, especially from historically underrepresented populations. By involving a diverse group of community members, the program will ensure that Transit Plan 2035 reflects the needs and priorities of all residents in the study area.*



## Public Meetings & Community Workshops

In order to create an environment of openness, empowerment, and strengthen community input, CapMetro will design “Community Nights” that share space with active nodes around Austin and offer rewards and incentives to public participants for their attention and feedback. These Community Nights will be held in person with a virtual option available. At Community Nights, the public will participate in and learn about the planning process, and the project team will glean important feedback on the needs, opportunities, and recommendations from the community. These engagement opportunities encourage participation and allow community members to share ideas and concerns and ask questions openly.

When possible, snacks and refreshments will be provided, and children’s activities or childcare options will be available. CapMetro may also coordinate with civic, service, or non-profit partners to make presentations to organizations and groups, adjusting presentations to suit the focus and time available for each group.

## Pop-Up Events

CapMetro will host pop-up events to spread plan awareness and advertise upcoming engagement events. Pop-up events will involve setting up tables with informational materials in:

-  Key destinations such as libraries, local cultural institutions, universities, and grocery stores.
-  Public events including community festivals, street fairs, farmers’ markets, and sports events.
-  Neighborhood spaces and events such as local parks, recreation centers, resilience hubs, neighborhood association meetings, door-to-door engagement, and walking tours.

During these pop-up events, CapMetro will share important information, answer questions, and engage with people passing by. This will be done using informational boards, interactive activities (like post-it or sticker board activities) and handing out flyers. This approach is meant to meet the community where they are, making it easier for those who might not attend formal meetings to participate. These events will play a crucial role in increasing awareness of Transit Plan 2035 within the community, promoting its initiatives, and gathering valuable feedback. The pop-up events will encourage active participation and community involvement by listening to the community’s needs and priorities.

Transit Plan 2035 is CapMetro’s blueprint for the future of public transportation in Central Texas.



# Digital Engagement Strategies

## Transit Plan Webpage

A Transit Plan 2035 webpage will exist on CapMetro's website, serve as a central hub for information, and give the community a chance to learn about and get involved with the plan. The webpage and its content will meet CapMetro standards, be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant, and be easy to use. CapMetro will include maps, visuals, and feedback tools on the webpage to inform the community about the plan's progress. The webpage will also include features such as:

- *A survey section, updated per engagement round, to gather input from those who want to further engage.*
- *A virtual mapping tool so individuals can pinpoint and comment on specific areas of interest.*
- *A mailing list to opt-in for subscribers to receive periodic news, updates, and invitations via email.*
- *A resources section with documentation of engagement and technical work.*



## Public Input Platform

CapMetro will use the Public Input platform, an online community engagement tool that can be integrated with the Transit Plan 2035 webpage, to help with stakeholder engagement and the community involvement process. CapMetro will use Public Input to manage stakeholder databases, track interactions and community feedback, host public meetings (both in person and online), and report on engagement data. During Transit Plan 2035, CapMetro will create and upload materials for engagement efforts, monitor the database, and write support and comment response documents.





# Communication Tools

To support in-person engagement, CapMetro will use a range of communication tools to share updates on the plan, raise awareness, and encourage involvement. At the start of each engagement phase, clear messaging and talking points will be developed to guide these communications.



## Social Media

CapMetro will create content and graphics for its social media platforms (like Facebook, Instagram, and X) to share project updates, announce upcoming community events, and publicize meeting details, all with the goal of increasing community awareness and involvement in the project. Partners and Community Connectors will also be encouraged to share these posts on their platforms.



## Traditional Media

To reach as many communities as possible, a strategic combination of traditional media (including local news outlets - both online and in print), transit advertising, and community-based approaches will be used.



## Marketing Materials

Marketing materials will be produced to promote the plan’s messaging, resources, and engagement events. These materials will also provide information on the project’s schedule and milestones, and how to give feedback, sign up for email updates, and contact CapMetro. Transit Plan 2035 materials will be available in various formats, including but not limited to the following:

- **Fact sheets**
- **Brochures**
- **Flyers**
- **Postcards**
- **Handouts**

# External Focus Groups

Focus groups will be held to allow for deeper discussions on transit plan topics. Participants will include community leaders, business groups, social service agencies, and organizations representing current or potential transit users, all selected from CapMetro’s stakeholder database. Participants will receive compensation for their insights, which will help gauge community understanding, express concerns, and gather input on plan recommendations. CapMetro will analyze this feedback to identify key themes and inform Transit Plan 2035.

# Internal Focus Groups & Interviews

CapMetro will lead a series of internal focus groups and interviews with the Board, leadership team, frontline staff, and administrative staff to build trust and encourage collaboration throughout the engagement program. These efforts will involve agency partners and technical advisory groups, including those influencing transit service discussions (like CapMetro committees and technical working groups). Each session will provide a forum for individuals and groups to share their perceptions, concerns, and ideas about CapMetro’s current transit services and future recommendations.

