



**METRO**



**projectconnect**

## Project Connect Monthly CapMetro and COVID-19

Capital Metro owes a huge debt of gratitude to our partners and everyone on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. This is an unprecedented time, but in so many ways you are each helping our community. Capital Metro thanks you. Stay hopeful and stay resilient.

### Modified Service Schedule and Ridership Drops

As an essential service, CapMetro continues to operate transit service. However, the agency has implemented a modified service schedule as a result of COVID-19. Ridership has declined more than 60 percent as social distancing, teleworking and Austin's "Stay Home – Work Safe" guidance was issued. CapMetro has strongly urged the community to use transit only for essential trips, and that customers should stay home if they are feeling sick. Stay up to date with the latest info at [Capmetro.org/COVID19](https://www.capmetro.org/COVID19).

### How to Board Your Bus

CapMetro will implement free fares for all customers throughout April. Fare-free service will help social distancing by eliminating the need for customers to show their pass, pay the operator or use the farebox. It also speeds up boarding and reduces crowding at vehicle entrances. The goal is to protect operators and customers from close physical proximity and to support customers who use our service to perform essential duties.

Customers using wheelchairs or other mobility devices may use the front door of the bus. All others should enter the bus using the rear door to ensure safe social distancing and protect our frontline employees. MetroAccess customers will still be required to show a valid ID before boarding.

The fare-free period is not meant to encourage any additional ridership. Customers are reminded to use transit only for essential trips during the Stay Home - Work Safe shelter-in-place period.

### April Community Open Houses

In lieu of Project Connect Community Open Houses, we are looking at options for holding virtual meetings that community members can easily access. We will ensure the Austin community stays well informed about Project Connect and can continue providing input throughout this difficult time.

We encourage you to visit the [Project Connect website](#) where you can access documents and presentations that cover the Project Connect System Plan Recommendation. In addition, we will launch a Project Connect Virtual Open House in the coming months, where you'll be able to explore the various elements of the Project Connect System Plan Recommendation and provide your input.

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all Austin residents. We will continue keeping you updated on any new developments and future virtual meetings. Thank you for your continued support and participation!

## CapMetro and Austin City Council Joint Work Session

On March 9, the CapMetro Board and Austin City Council had a sixth joint work session. The session addressed Project Connect's progress and outreach, the System Plan Recommendation, and funding and governance.

### Progress and Outreach

Project Connect began its alternative plan analysis in April 2019 and has met with the Austin City Council several times since then. Community engagement has been ongoing over the last year, and to date more than 40,000 people have interacted with the program. Community engagement will continue to be an integral part of each step of the process, ensuring that every voice has an opportunity to be heard.

### System Plan Recommendation

The recommended plan is designed to significantly expand CapMetro's network to improve safety, capacity, frequency and travel time – now and into the future. The March 9 Recommended System Plan includes:

- Light Rail Transit as the primary mode proposed for the Orange and Blue Lines, – operating on dedicated transit lanes called transitways
- A downtown transit tunnel and underground stations
- A new Bus Rapid Transit service on the new Gold Line
- 24 new and improved Park & Rides and station amenities
- New and expanded MetroRail service with more frequency and hours of operation on the Red Line and proposed new Green Line commuter rail service
- 7 new MetroRapid routes
- 8 new MetroExpress commuter routes
- New all-electric, zero emissions vehicles (12 on order now)
- Enhanced MetroAccess service
- New circulators providing Pick-up service to more than 30 neighborhood zones

For more information, please visit [ProjectConnect.com](#).

### Funding and Governance

Capital Metro is expected to receive federal funding to cover 40 percent of the estimated costs of Project Connect, contingent upon a local, long-term investment of \$5.6 billion. CapMetro will partner with the City of Austin to form a new joint venture to manage those resources and oversee the construction and implementation of the project.

For more detailed information, please visit [ProjectConnect.com](https://ProjectConnect.com), watch a recording of the [Joint Work Session](#), and/or read the [transcript](#).



Visit [ProjectConnect.com](https://ProjectConnect.com) for more information

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**Visit the Project Connect Community Office**

607 Congress Avenue, 78701 Austin TX

Stop by any time between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

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