

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority - DRAFT
Access Advisory Committee
Wednesday, September 1, 2021
Virtual Presentation
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Attendees

Committee Members: Andrew Bernet, Estella Barrera, John McNabb, Mike Gorse, Otmar Foehner, Chris Prentice, Paul Hunt, Glenda Born, Raul Vela,

Capital Metro Staff: Brian Carter, Chad Ballentine, Kenneth Cartwright, Suzie Edrington, Jacqueline Evans, Kathrine Gonzales, Martin Kareithi, Jesse Marroquin, JoAnne Ortiz, Jonathan Tanzar, Yannis Banks, Kevin Conlan, Marcus Guerrero, Danniella Madubuik, Edna Parra

Welcome / Introductions / Call to Order

Mike Grose had an issue over the weekend where he wanted to buy a 1-Day Pass for the Metro but did not see this option. Reason being, CapMetro gave free weekend service for the month of June and took this option away on the app. Mr. Grose suggested that a notice on the app/push notification on one's phone might be a helpful solution for a situation like this.

- To resolve this issue, a note is being sent to the IT Department / App Development Team.

Otmar Foehner raised an issue 1^{1/2} years ago about the MetroAccess vehicles having a GPS Tracking Feature. Is this feature still being developed?

- **Chad Ballentine:** We are purchasing new tracking software with the hopeful internal adoption in Fall 2021, with plans of full implementation in 2022. This feature is part of a robust renovation of the Metro Scheduling Algorithm and Passenger Information System within the mobile app for passengers to know where their Bus/Train/Tram is, and when it will arrive.

Paul Hunt: When can he expect to receive his free monthly Metro Pass and he re-iterates an ongoing issue of delays in our system, especially on major commuter routes.

- **Chad Ballentine:** We are aware of delays in the network and are trying to on-board as many drivers as possible with incentives like sign-on bonuses. The current sign-on bonus is \$3,500.00.

Glenda Born: How is the staffing issue being addressed and what are we doing to incentivize drivers to stay and bring on more drivers? How do the veteran drivers feel about the sign-on bonus only for new drivers?

- **Chad Ballentine:** We give veteran drivers first choice in picking routes they want to drive and seniority on work hours.
 - **Glenda Born:** What about burn-out? And after getting new drivers, how do we get them to stay?
- **Chad Ballentine:** Retention has not been a major problem for us, growth is.

Brian Carter: *We have given notification to customers for a service adjustment, effective Sep. 19th, 2021, to better serve the system as whole. Read More: <https://www.capmetro.org/september2021>*

Mike Grose: Are other Transit Agencies experiencing labor issues as well, in line with the national labor shortage?

- From committee and staff: A numerous amount of Transit agencies across the country and other industries are facing labor shortages for several reasons.

Project Connect Update

Yannis Banks, Community Engagement Manager

- Just finished the open houses for Orange and Blue line.
- We do have virtual community meetings for the Red line and MetroRapid
- We will be having some design workshops for the station design for Pleasant Valley, Riverside, Norwood Transit Center, 29th Street and stations along the Blue and Orange line corridors, all of which will be available to view online.
- We are having open conversations with people and businesses that would be affected by the building of the Lines.

MetroRapid Update:

Kathrine Gonzales, Project Manager

- Currently working on 2 Project Connect projects. MetroRapid Expo and Pleasant Valley line.
- Expo Line Objectives are to establish high-quality transit service east of IH35, and to provide service from northeast Austin to Downtown
 - Connect and improve access to major developments and destinations

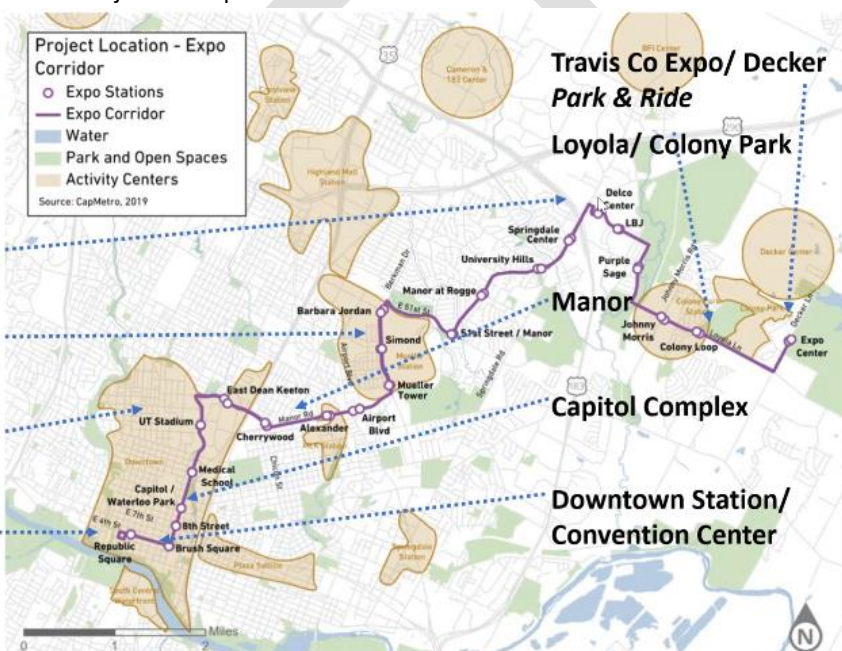
**Expo Line
Points of Interest & Major Sections**

Delco AISD Center and future park & ride

Mueller

University of Texas

Republic Square
All new light rail lines



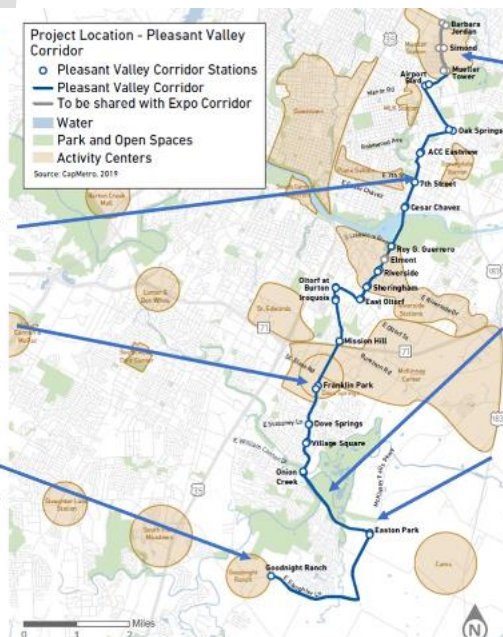
- Pleasant Valley Objectives are to establish high-quality transit service east of IH35, provide service to Southeast Austin, a growth area for new development and redevelopment, connect and improve access to major developments and destinations, and transfer opportunities with future Blue and Green lines.
 - View PowerPoint for line details:

**Pleasant Valley Line
Points of Interest & Major Sections**

North Pleasant Valley

Austin Lighthouse for the Blind with PHB

Goodnight Ranch/ Slaughter Park & Ride



MetroRapid Update (Continued):

Kathrine Gonzales:

- Expo & Pleasant Valley MetroRapid Lines
 - All electric fleet
 - 10-minute service
- Schedule
 - Engineering Phase
 - Construction between December 2021 – Mid 2023
 - In service by Mid 2023
- New MetroRapid Shelter Concept
 - Latest shelter design in progress
 - Dynamic message screens, real time arrival information
 - Solar where possible
 - Security cameras
 - Ticket Vending Machine at select locations
- Passenger Amenities
 - Floating stops and bulb outs with shared use path
 - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon installation: [Example](#)
 - Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Installation: [Example](#)
- Main goal is improving Pedestrian safety using infrastructure to better engage drivers with crossing pedestrians.
 - Considerations need to be made about accessibility for blind and deaf pedestrians.



Glenda Born: Wanted to know considerations for a Dog Guide user.

- **Martin Kareithi:** We have not used a dog guide user, but that is a clever idea.

Paul Hunt: The need for consistency. Indications made to where to cross and how to use the infrastructure for disabled users. Also, curious to know why we need specific pedestrian crossing infrastructure, when a typical crossing intersection is good enough?

- **Martin Kareithi:** It is more than only accessibility. Heavy vehicular traffic contributes to using a traffic control device that does not stop traffic regularly, but only when a pedestrian specifically wants to cross the street.
 - **Paul Hunt:** Give enough time for people with mobility issues to cross the street.
- **Kathrine Gonzales:** There is a median island for pedestrians to harbor while crossing the street.
 - **Paul Hunt:** There should be an audible/visual cue you are on the median, to avoid the unfortunate event of missing the median refuge area.
 - **Glenda Born:** In louder areas of traffic, the audio cues need to be loud enough for people to hear.
- **Martin Kareithi:** Excellent feedback, we do want to be as accessible as possible to all citizens.

Paul Hunt: Bus Stop sign placement; they are not consistent and difficult to locate.

- **Kathrine Gonzales:** We place the signs where the front of the bus is supposed to stop.
- **Martin Kareithi:** We need to make note of where the sign is in relation to the bench, and sometimes it is a tight space. So, drivers must make a judgement call on where to stop and how much space is allocated to the bus and other station amenities, so the bus door is not obstructed.

Glenda Born: enquired about street crossings for wheelchair users, and wants to make sure they are considered, as well as the loudness of the signals for the hearing-impaired matters as well.

Estrella Barrera: Motorized wheelchairs need more space than a manual wheelchair, so space allocation needs to be thought of too.

Mike Grose: An app issue involving timetables and bus stop locations and user location not refreshing in the app. Making it difficult to find the stations.

- **Martin Kareithi:** This is a Wayfinding issue and is on the docket to be addressed by a third-party App Development team soon.
 - **Mike Grose:** It would be great if there was a way for the app to be pin-point accurate, where it can detect you walking up to the bench of a station.

Andrew Bernet: Regarding the app, the City of Austin has partnered with Ford and Tappy Guide to cover “First Mile – Last Mile” commuting solutions.

Kathrine Gonzales asks **Martin Kareithi**: If a person on the Committee sees a Station that they really like and would like to commend, or see a Station that they think needs improvement, what is the pathway for them to do so?

- **Martin Kareithi**: Everyone here has my contact information, so they are allowed to reach me on their concerns on the status of stations.

Kathrine Gonzales on the matter of Floating Stops: We have seen the success and accessibility offered by Floating Stops, but there are a few around the city that need more upkeep than they are currently offered. The state of repair of Stations is of high priority.

Glenda Born: On the materials being used at the stations, whether they become too hot in the summer months for people with Guide Dogs, or wheelchair users, if the surface gets too hot to be hospitable for those people and the dogs. Will these stops be shaded for comfort?

- **Kathrine Gonzales**: We will have shelters and benches placed in stations that need them, to make them more comfortable and secure for people and animals. Currently we use lighter colored concrete, which expels heat better than asphalt or darker colored ground.
 - **Glenda Born**: A lot of people who would normally take the bus opt for MetroAccess instead, for the safety of their animals during the heat of summer.

Paul Hunt: Has there been consideration to have Floating Bus stops, with shared space for pedestrians and cyclists that is shaded?

- **Kathrine Gonzales**: No, we have not. There are a few locations where the right way is narrow. And Austin Transportation has a specific design criterion on how bike paths are constructed.

Service Changes for September

Danniella Madubuike; Transportation Planner

CapMetro is suffering from a driver shortage, so to compensate with that there is going to be service changes happening on Sunday September 19th, 2021.

Conditions Influencing Service:

- COVID – 19 and the Pandemic.
- Reverted to stage 5 several weeks after reaching Stage 2
- Services currently operating on adjusted August 202 COVID levels
- Labor shortages and illness impacting daily delivery of services
- Temporary changes to services to ensure consistency to meet demands

Daniella Madubuike: We need to continue monitoring COVID status, the labor shortage and adjust accordingly to keep service running.

Staffing Shortage:

- 80% operators short each day
- 10% of service not operating each day
- Operators do not have the capacity for overtime work – impacting special events such as Austin FC

Temporary Solution:

- Adjust service levels to match the number of available operators
 - Remove enhanced frequency improvement on routes 1, 2, 10, 20 & 300
 - Temporarily reduce Weekday frequency on Routes 18, 217, & 335
 - Temporarily reduce Saturday/Sunday frequency on routes 2, 4, 17, 18, 217, 311, 325, 333, 335 & 337
 - For more details: <https://www.capmetro.org/september2021>

High – Frequency Routes

- Routes 1, 2, 10, 20 & 300
 - 10-12 minutes to 15 minutes
- Routes 2, 4, 17, 18, 217, 311, 325, 333, 335 & 337
 - Route 311 from 15 minutes to 20 minutes
 - All others 15 minutes to 30 minutes
- Routes 18, 217, & 335

- 15 minutes to 30 minutes

Paul Hunt: [CapMetro] made a commitment to make frequent routes 15 minutes, so although this is an emergency, please keep this temporary as people depend on these routes. We also expect the RapidMetro routes as active as they can.

Daniella Madubiike: We will try to keep the routes as serviceable as possible, but this is an issue that is affecting not just us, but the whole country. So, we will continue to give the most service we can with the resources we have available. The goal is to hire more operators and get the service back to what it used to be. MetroRapid will continue its usual service during the working day time.

MetroRapid Service Change:

- Temporarily Suspend Late Night Thursday – Saturday service
 - Service ends at 12 AM instead of 3 AM
- Temporarily Reduce Evenings (8 PM – 10 PM) Frequency
 - 15 minutes to 20 minutes

Regular Service:

- Return to Pre-Covid Frequency – Route 1
 - 20-30 minutes to 30 minutes
- Other Routes: No Changes
 - Express
 - Flyers
 - MetroRail
- Routes 981 & 987 remain suspended

Specials:

- Suspend E-Bus (as of 08/26/2021)
- No Changes to:
 - UT Service
 - Night Owls
 - Rail Connectors
 - Senior Routes

Holiday	Current Schedule	Future Schedule
Thanksgiving	Reduced Sunday	No Change
Black Friday	Modified Saturday	New Sunday
Christmas Day	Reduced Sunday	No Change
New Year’s Day	Regular Sunday	New Sunday
MLK Day	Saturday	New Saturday

CapMetro App Details:

Jonathan Tanzer; Technology Systems Program Manager

There was an app update today (08/01/2021) for the Customer Payment System

- Trip Planner launched in Summer 2021
- Plan trips using the CapMetro app or Pickup App
- Combines all CapMetro services to give user the best and alternate routes to use to get to destination.
 - Buses
 - Trains
 - Pickup Vans
- Part of the update involved contacting Apple to allow the CapMetro app take priority over Apple Wallet, as to not close the app in favor of Apple Wallet. Which was causes issues for iPhone users.

Full Account Based System Upgrade:

- Upgrade to full account-based system
- Deploy physical smart cards
 - Tap & Pay branded smart cards



- Accommodates customers without a smartphone
- Mass distribution through street teams and the Transit Store
- Constrained Supply Channels
- Activate virtual smart cards in CapMetro App
- Enable fare capping pilot

CapMetro App Details (Continued):

- **Prepare for Release Readiness**
 - Testing planned for Winter 2021 prior to ready for customer release
 - Multiple rounds of testing between Bytemark (Transit software company), Capital Metro and a third-party testing agency
 - Pilot testing with an opportunity for community members to test prior to the customer launch
- **Release Timeframe & Customer Communication**
 - Ready for Customer Release: Winter to Spring 2022
 - Customer Outreach and Marketing to support the release

Future App Upgrades:

- Phase 4: Open Payment
 - Tap & Pay with NFC credit cards
- Phase 5: Integrations
 - Customer Relationship Management System
 - Data Warehouse & Business Intelligence
 - Enterprise Resource Planning
- Phase 6: Cash Farebox & Vaulting

Meeting Systems Update

Edna Parra; Community Engagement & Outreach Manager

Made sure that everyone that needed a service pass was on the list.

Adding Mike Grose and following up with Paul Hunt to make sure he got his pass

Went over the latest changes and made sure that no one in the group had any questions. Went over the plan to publicize the meeting and then posting everything online.

Also, Outlook invite will be resent with the new link, and that same link will be on the webpage, and I will also send that through email, along with the agenda and minutes before each meeting.

Chair Prentice – Edna Parra will follow up with Chair Prentice to set up a meeting to discuss what the board update will look like, and make sure he has the invite and information on how to log on.

Jaqueline Evans was unable to present to the committee due to time constraints and will be added to next month's agenda.

August's meeting minutes were approved.

Next Full Board Meeting September 27th, 2021