Call to Order:
Chairman William Shamburg, CSAC

Chairman Shamburg called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Introductions:

Committee members present were Chairman Shamburg, Vice Chairman MacKinnon, Oscar Gaytan, David Foster, Betsy Greenberg, B.J. Taylor, and Michael French.

Capital Metro staff members present were Sam Sargent, Joe Clemens, and John Andoh.

No citizens were present.

Citizen Communication:

There were no citizens present for citizen communication.

New Business

Project Connect Rollout:
Joe Clemens, Long-Range Planning, Capital Metro

Mr. Clemens provided an update on the public rollout of Project Connect (2.0) as the committee will receive regular updates in the coming year. He explained that Project Connect is Central Texas’ regionally adopted high capacity transit plan. The current work is to refine the plan by selecting new transit solutions for access into, out of, and within Central Austin.

The study area is the five county MSA, including Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop, and Caldwell counties. Representatives from each of these areas are providing input on the plan and public meetings are being scheduled throughout the study area.

Mr. Clemens, continued, explaining that Project Connect will be developed in three phases:

- Big Ideas, Bold Starts: a feasibility analysis that identifies where enhancements and new services are needed most and which projects are most critical. This will take 6 to 9 months.

- Real Solutions for Real Problems: an alternatives analysis that identifies the best system of solutions and the most effective strategy for rapid implementation. This will take 14 to
18 months, making use of phase 1 input and the expertise of Capital Metro and city staff, as well as the AECOM consultant team.

- Path to Implementation: adoption of Locally Preferred Alternatives (LPAs) that advance preliminary engineering and environmental designs, along with the submission of a federal application for project development. This phase will last 4 to 6 months.

A critical part of Project Connect is coordination with all regional transportation and planning entities, including TxDOT, City of Austin, CTRMA, and CAMPO. Capital Metro will also partner with municipalities, community stakeholders, transit users, employers, the FTA, developers, education leaders, and health and human services agencies. The City of Austin’s Strategic Mobility Plan will be integrated into the final Project Connect plan.

Three types of corridors will be identified throughout the process, falling into the categories of Commuter Corridors, Connector Corridors, and city center Circulator Corridors.

Mr. Foster asked for clarification on the project timeline. Mr. Clemens explained the phases and that the project is designed to end in time for a possible November 2018 ballot initiative.

Ms. Greenberg asked if Project Connect was focused on finding federal funding and if that was the reason for the extensive public involvement. Mr. Clemens replied that public involvement is always important to Capital Metro but federal funding or matching funds are critical to project implementation. Mr. Sargent provided more details on the public involvement process, including the Multimodal Community Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

Chairman Shamburg asked if the plans being studied in Phase 1 included earlier land use studies like Imagine Austin. Mr. Clemens said that they were through the coordination with the city’s Austin Strategic Mobility Plan. Envision Central Texas, however, is not being included in the study.

Mr. Gaytan asked if there were going to be any recommendations in Project Connect to reconnect parts of Austin’s street grid. Mr. Clemens stated that, as it relates to transit, absolutely.

Ms. Greenberg asked if Project Connect includes the additional stop pairs and added frequency for MetroRapid. Mr. Clemens explained that it does not because those improvements are already budgeted and are included in the Connections 2025 draft plan.

Ms. Taylor asked if any of the study corridors extend services further east. Mr. Clemens said that the proposed Green Line and MOKAN corridor do, but there are no additional managed lanes on the east side.

Mr. Foster asked if there was any discussion about adding Red Line stations? Mr. Clemens replied that Capital Metro is talking to private developers about public-private partnerships, including shifting the Kramer Station to the IBM campus area. Stations at Hancock, Airport and 53rd, and 7th Street have also been considered in the past. Mr. Foster also asked if electrification
of the Red Line was being studied. Mr. Clemens replied that it was not feasible at this time due to freight operations and the fact that electrified light rail vehicles are not crash compatible.

Mr. MacKinnon recommended that the Project Connect team work with other transportation providers including Car2Go, B-Cycle, TNCs, Amtrak, Megabus, and others. He also recommended that Capital Metro look at how other cities have pitched their longer term transit visions to their citizens. The project needs to be messaged so that the public agrees that something needs to be done and demands that community leaders follow the project time horizons. This could force leaders to speed projects and election timelines up.

Ms. Greenberg stated that it was critical to clarify for the public how this iteration of Project Connect is different from the 2014 urban rail election form of the project. It’s also important, she said, to prevent any confusion over Connections 2025 and Project Connect.

**Connections 2025 Draft Plan Update:**

*Mr. Sam Sargent, Community Involvement Coordinator, Capital Metro*

Mr. Sargent provided an update on the Connections 2025 timeline and board vote. He also informed the committee that Capital Metro planning and paratransit staff were continuing to work on a solution for ADA impacts from the draft plan. Mr. Sargent will invite MetroAccess staff to the February meeting of CSAC.

Mr. Gaytan asked for cost estimates for the proposed downtown circulators, to see if there were any potential cost savings there that could reinstate removed or consolidated routes. He also asked for peak and off peak ridership numbers for Route 5 south of the river.

Mr. Foster asked for an update on the removal of the bus stop at St. David’s South Austin Medical Center. The Connections 2025 draft plan places the closest stop on to the Ben White frontage road, adjacent to the medical center. Mr. Sargent will follow up with planning staff.

**Action Items**

**Discussion of a Connections 2025 Resolution**

The committee opted to work through resolution drafts for the Connections 2025 draft plan as a whole and a possible smaller resolution related to specific routes that are affected via email. This was done to ensure language clarity.

**Election of Officers for 2017**

Mr. David Foster was elected chairman of the Customer Satisfaction Advisory Committee for 2017 and Chairman William Shamburg was elected vice chairman.

**Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 8:15 p.m.