



**Austin Transit
Partnership**

Austin Transit Partnership

Austin Light Rail Phase 1 Project
Socioeconomics Technical Report

Austin, TX
January 2025

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| Term/Acronym | Definition |
|---------------------|--|
| ATP | Austin Transit Partnership |
| CAMPO | Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization |
| CapMetro | Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority |
| City | City of Austin |
| DEIS | Draft Environmental Impact Statement |
| ETOD | Equitable Transit-Oriented Development |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration |
| Project | Austin Light Rail Phase 1 Project |
| Uniform Act | Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended |
| UT | University of Texas at Austin |

1 Introduction

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) are completing an environmental review of the Austin Light Rail Phase 1 Project (the Project) in Austin, Texas. This socioeconomics technical report was prepared to support the Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and related laws and regulations. FTA and ATP are the Lead Agencies in the National Environmental Policy Act process.

This report discusses the existing conditions within the Study Area; presents population, employment, and housing forecasts; and assesses the social and economic effects associated with the construction and operation of the Project. In addition, this report discusses the potential economic effects associated with losses to the tax base due to property acquisitions and displacements and describes the potential local and regional economic effects of the Project. Finally, this report assesses the potential to affect property values and the amount of affordable housing in the Study Area. The Study Area for the socioeconomic analysis includes the area within a 0.5-mile buffer of the proposed limits of construction.

The potential effects of the Project on land use and on neighborhood cohesion and community facilities are discussed in **DEIS Appendix E-2** and **DEIS Appendix E-3**, respectively.

2 Regulatory Setting

The Council on Environmental Quality is charged with implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500–1508). FTA and the Federal Highway Administration issued regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 771), Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, to address the National Environmental Policy Act responsibilities established by the Council on Environmental Quality. Subsequently, the Federal Highway Administration issued guidance complementing the regulations in Technical Advisory T 6640.8A, Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents (Federal Highway Administration 1987). Section G5 of the Technical Advisory describes assessing foreseeable economic effects, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Regional and local economic effects, such as the effects of the project on development, tax revenues (property or retail), public expenditures, employment opportunities, and accessibility; and
- Effects on established business districts, and any opportunities to minimize or reduce such effects by the private or public sector.

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 United States Code § 4601 et seq.), commonly known as the Uniform Act, identifies the process, procedures, and time frame for right-of-way acquisition and relocation of affected residents or businesses. The requirements of the Uniform Act apply whenever a project uses federal dollars in any phase of the project.

3 Methodology

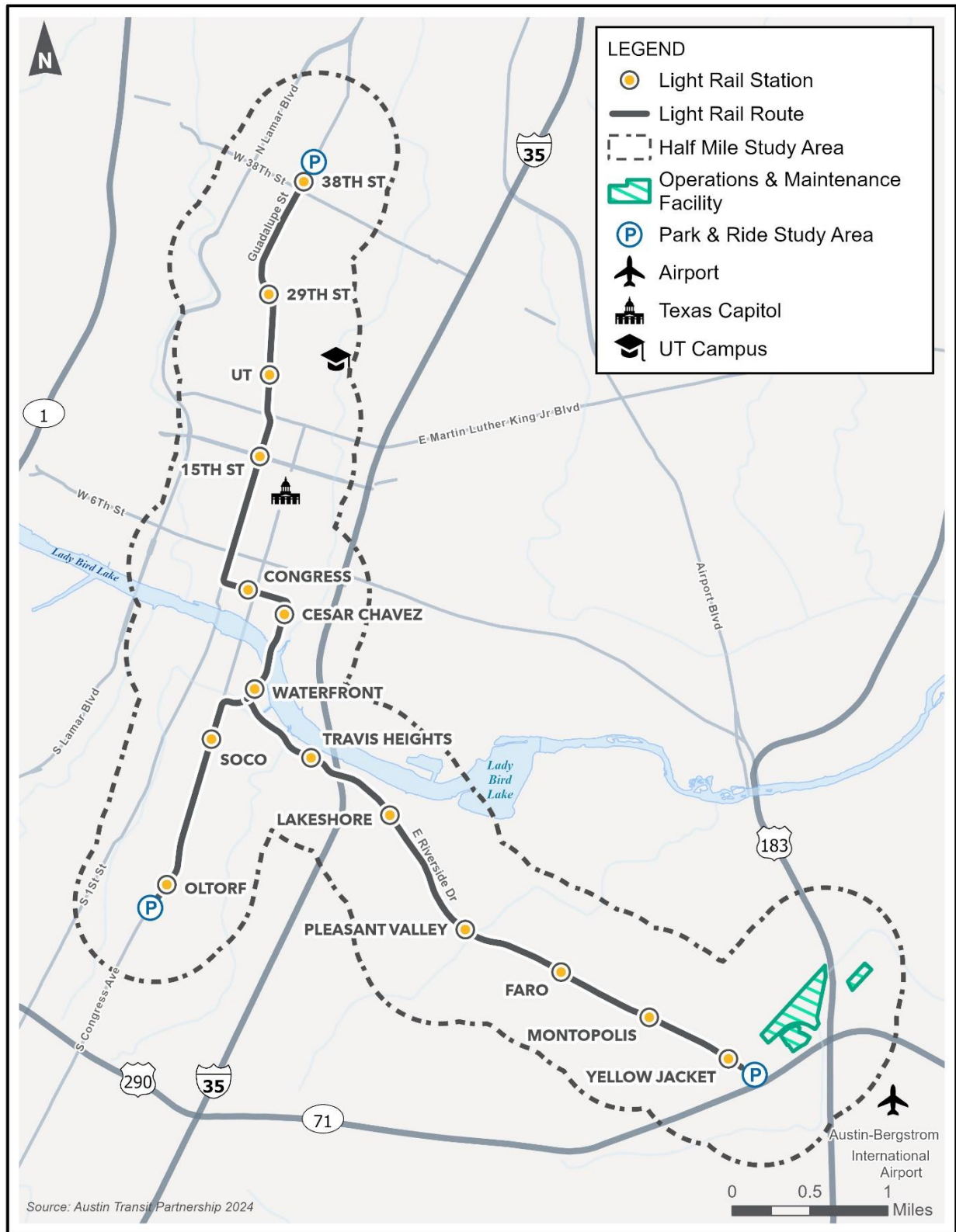
The methodology used to assess socioeconomic is discussed below. The Study Area considered for the socioeconomic analysis is shown in **Figure 1** and includes the area within 0.5 mile on each side of the proposed Project's limits of construction. The census tracts, block groups, and transportation analysis zones¹ that are included within the Study Area are shown in figures in **Attachment A**. A 0.5-mile buffer was used because that is the typical distance a person would be willing to walk to access transit. The census geographies and transportation analysis zones contained fully or partially within the 0.5-mile buffer were used in the analysis. Population, income, employment, age, disabilities, zero vehicle households, and housing and household data were gathered for the census geographies and compared to the larger area (i.e., Travis County). Additionally, the population, employment, and housing forecasts were pulled for the Study Area by transportation analysis zone.

To assess the social effects of the Project, the U.S. Census Bureau block group data was used, where available. Census block groups are smaller geographies than census tracts and provide data on specific areas at a more granular level. If data was not available at the census block group level, then the less granular census tract data was used and is specified in the report. Census tracts or block groups intersecting or within the 0.5-mile Study Area were included in their entirety within the Study Area analysis. The primary data source used for the analysis is the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2018–2022. Demographic data for the state and county are also provided to present unique socioeconomic trends and regional comparisons. Effects on socioeconomic conditions were qualitatively assessed for the No Build Alternative and for the Build Alternative and Design Options.

To estimate the economic effects of the Project, ATP used the Economic IMPLAN model. The IMPLAN model is an input-output economic model that uses project data (construction costs and operations and maintenance costs) and the years developed to estimate the effect of the investment on the economy. The model shows direct, indirect, and induced effects that would be expected in Travis County due to construction and operation of the Build Alternative and Design Options. Direct economic effects are related to the capital investment as well as construction and employment for the Project. Indirect effects include the employment and earnings in industries that support the capital investment down the supply chain (project materials for construction and supply chain labor). Induced growth is the result of increased spending across industries as a result of direct and indirect employment and earnings from the Project.

¹ Transportation analysis zones are the base geography used to study effects in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's *2045 Regional Transportation Plan*.

Figure 1: Study Area



To assess the fiscal effects of the Project, ATP identified the acquisitions and easements that would be required to construct the Project. Because real estate transitions represent a transfer of assets within the Travis County economy rather than economic growth, potential economic effects associated with property acquisitions for the Project are projected outside the IMPLAN model. Data from the Travis Central Appraisal District was used to estimate the total taxable appraised property value of acquired properties. This value represents a loss to property tax revenues because it would be converted to tax-exempt right-of-way.

4 Affected Environment

This section describes the socioeconomic characteristics of the Study Area, including population, age, housing and household characteristics, employment, transportation, and economic characteristics.

4.1 Population and Income

According to the 2020 Census, the total population for the Study Area was 108,324 (see **Table 1** and **Figure 2**). Approximately 8 percent of the population of Travis County lives within the Study Area. As shown in **Figure 3**, the greatest population densities within the Study Area are located around and north of the University of Texas at Austin (UT), near the proposed Oltorf Station in the St. Edward’s University area, and east of the proposed Lakeshore Station. The median age in the Study Area is approximately 2 years younger than the median age in the county or the state (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). The median household income is approximately \$9,500 lower in the Study Area than for the county overall but is more than \$10,000 higher than the median household income within the state (see **Table 1** and **Figure 4**). The percentage of residents in the Study Area who have limited English proficiency (speak English less than “very well”), was approximately 8 percent compared to approximately 10 percent and 13 percent for Travis County and the state, respectively.

Table 1: Population, Median Income, Median Age, and Limited English Proficiency

| Area | Total Population ¹ | Median Household Income | Median Age | Limited English Proficiency |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Study Area | 108,324 | \$83,254 ² | 33.0 | 7.9% |
| Travis County | 1,290,188 | \$92,731 | 35.1 | 10.3% |
| Texas | 29,145,505 | \$73,035 | 35.2 | 13.0% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023a.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau 2020.

² This is an average of the median household income for the census block groups within the Study Area. Median household income was not reported for 25 of the 97 block groups in the Study Area.

Figure 2: Study Area Total Population

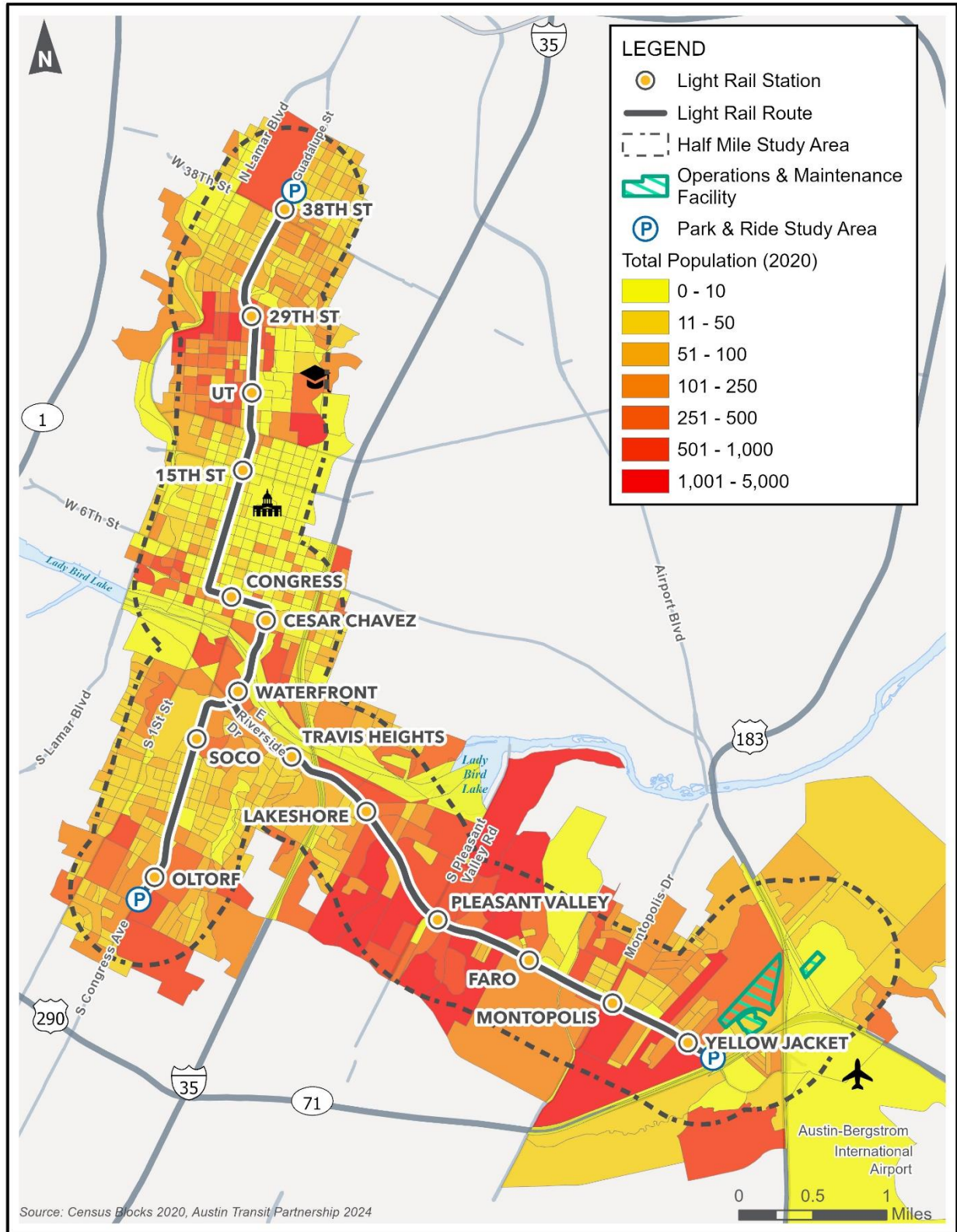


Figure 3: Study Area Population Density

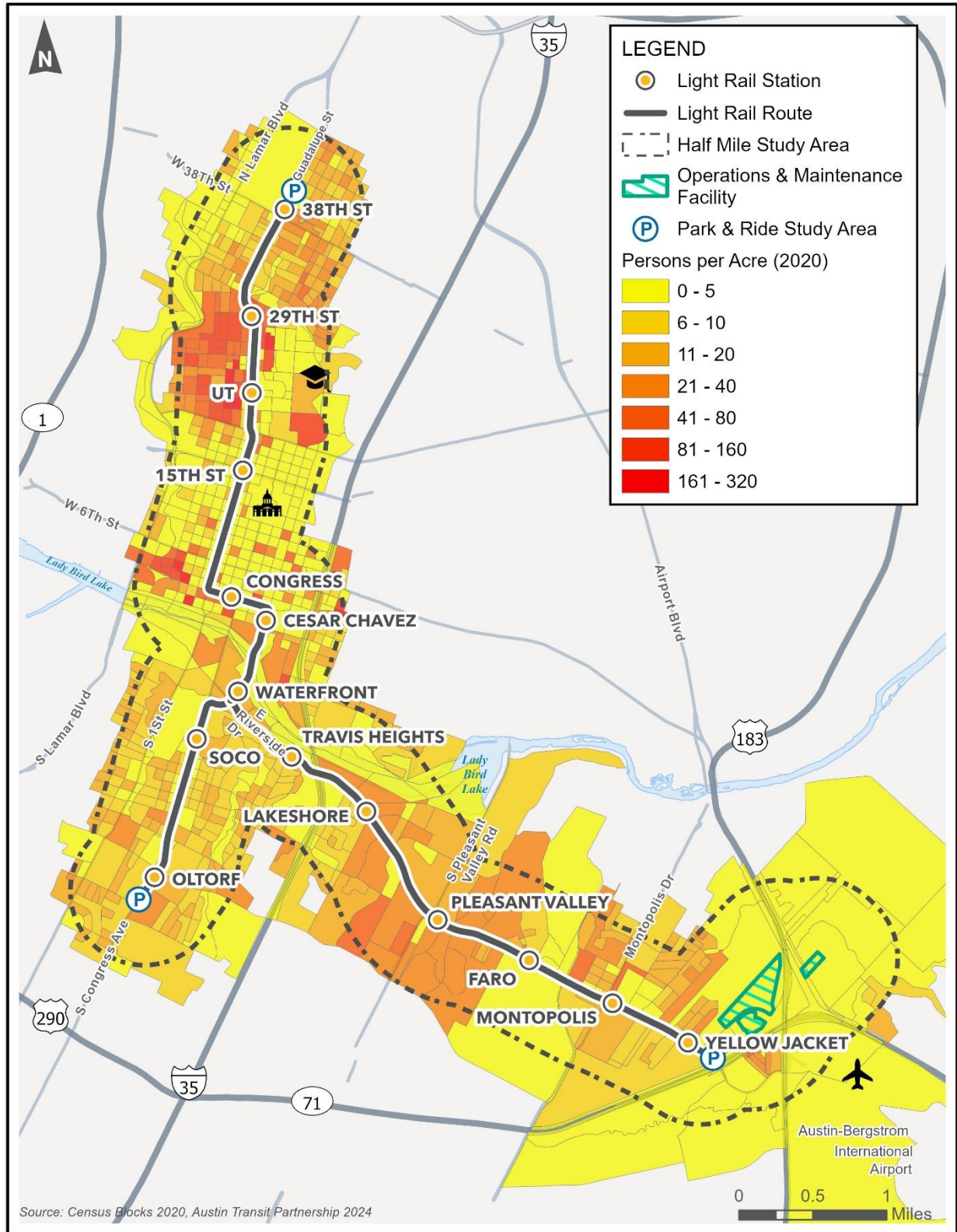
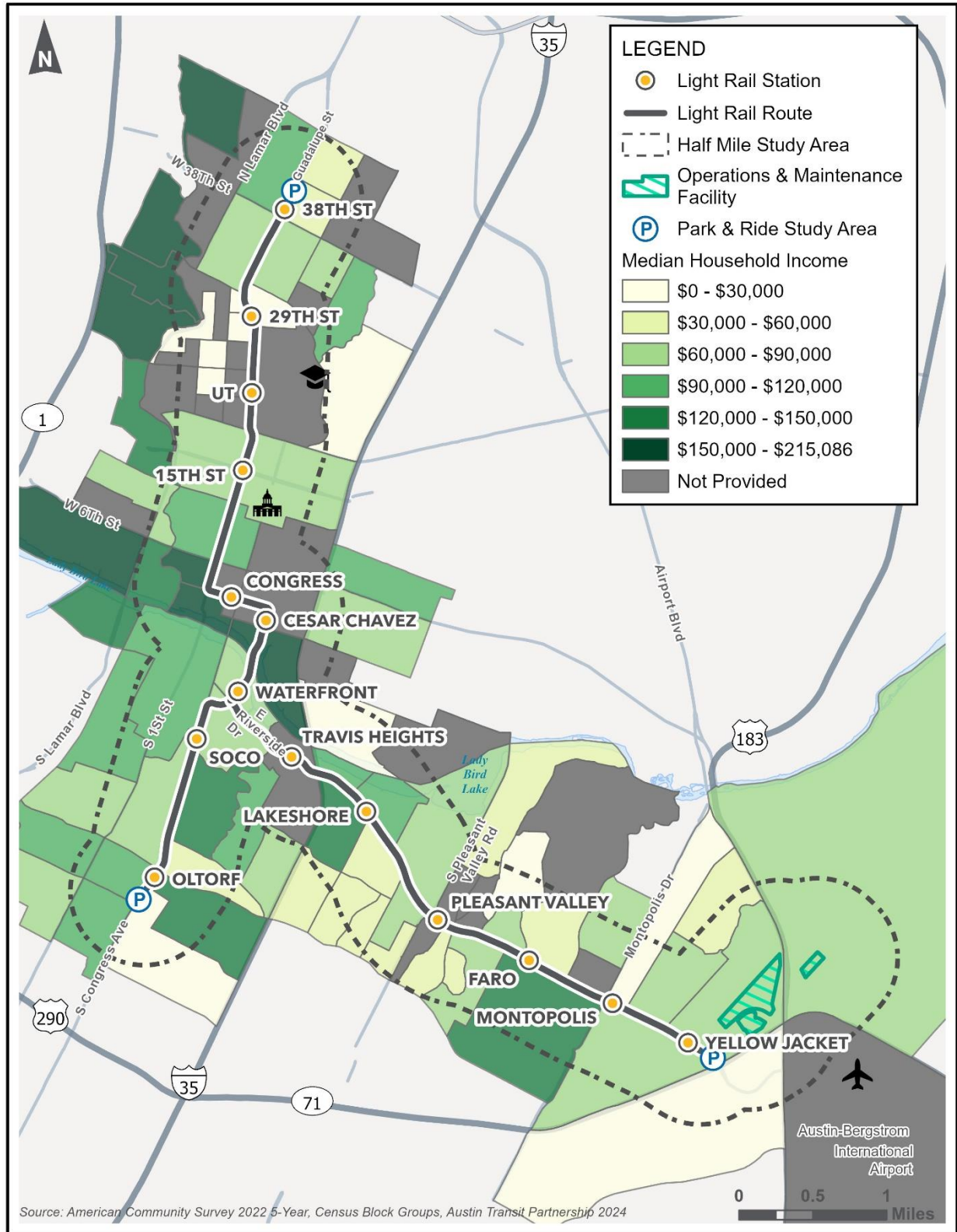


Figure 4: Study Area Median Household Income (2022)



According to the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the population living within the Study Area at the transportation analysis zone level was approximately 108,833 in 2015, and by 2025, the forecast population within the Study Area is 143,105. From 2015 to 2045, the Study Area population is expected to grow by more than 120 percent to 240,000. Travis County overall is expected to add almost 1.1 million residents between 2015 and 2045 for an increase of almost 100 percent (see **Table 2**). The Study Area traverses the Downtown Austin and South-Central Waterfront Regional Activity Centers, the Pleasant Valley Station (called Riverside Station in the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*) Town Center (along Riverside Drive) and lies adjacent to the St. Edward’s Neighborhood Center (City of Austin 2018). Regional Activity Centers are urban areas with the greatest density of people and jobs and are envisioned as retail, cultural, recreational, and entertainment destinations. Town Centers are less urban than Regional Activity Centers but also are large residential and employment centers. Neighborhood Centers are the least dense of the types of centers but are still intended to be walkable, bikeable, and transit-focused. As shown in **Figure 5**, areas of greatest projected growth are scattered throughout the Study Area but concentrated along the eastern portion of the Project east of Faro, Montopolis, and Yellow Jacket Stations, as well as near the Waterfront area.

Table 2: Population Forecast

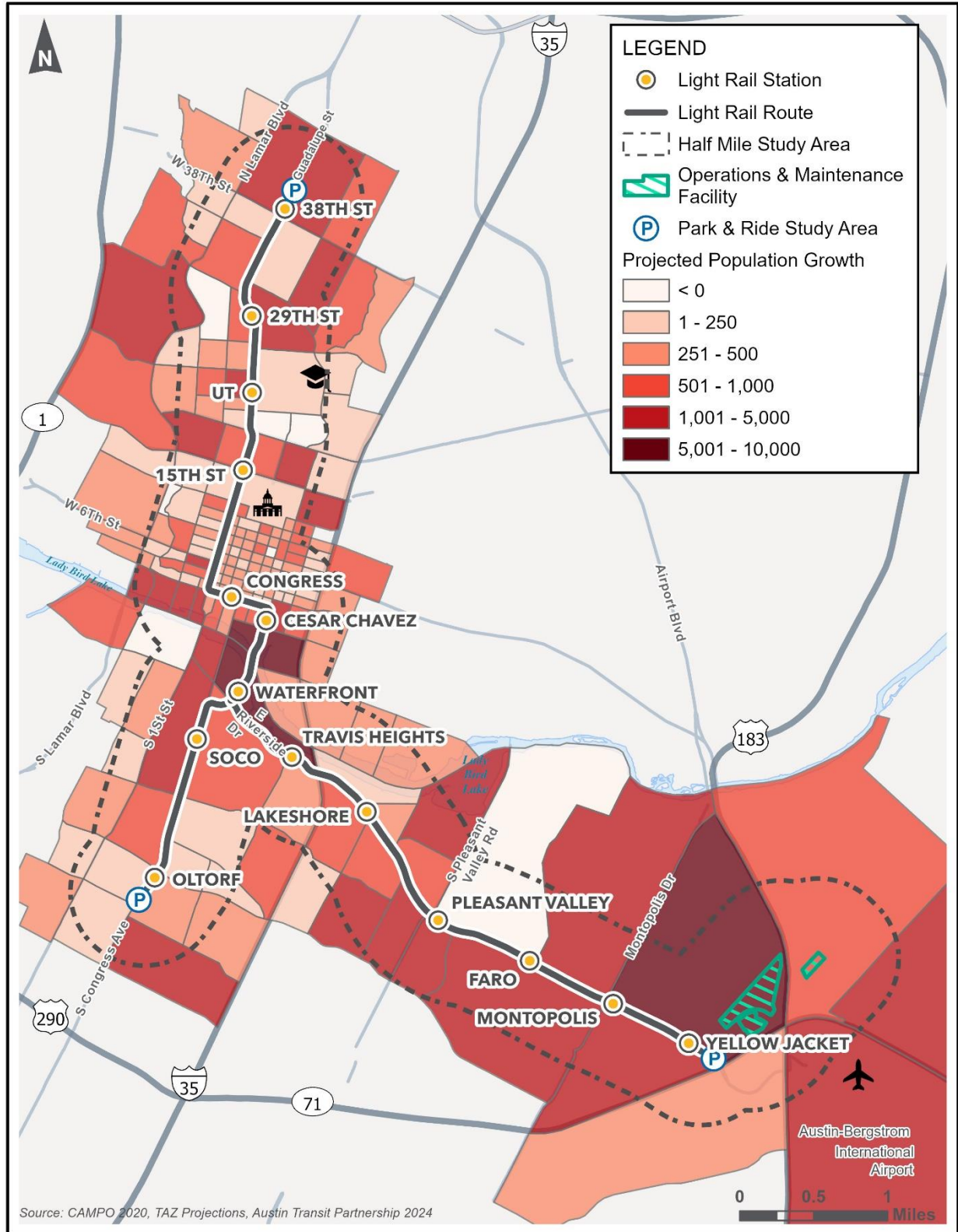
| Geography | 2015 Population | 2025 Population | 2045 Population | Forecast Total Change 2015–2045 | Forecast Percent Change 2015–2045 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Study Area | 108,833 | 143,105 | 240,000 | 131,167 | 120.5 |
| Travis County | 1,098,745 | 1,333,911 | 2,196,582 | 1,097,837 | 99.9 |

Source: CAMPO 2020.

CAMPO’s projections do not include unaccounted-for growth such as new developments that were not planned at the time the projections were made. Several areas showing no population growth are in areas of City of Austin (City) parks, including Auditorium Shores and Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metropolitan Park, and the State Capitol Complex. However, the transportation analysis zones surrounding these areas have high projected population growth.

Many City and Travis County planning initiatives support continued population and employment growth in the Study Area. The City’s *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*, which was adopted in 2012 and has been amended several times, identifies Downtown Austin and the South-Central Waterfront as important Regional Activity Centers; Pleasant Valley Station (referred to in the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* as Riverside Station Town Center) as an important Town Center; and St. Edward’s, adjacent to the Study Area, as a Neighborhood Center (City of Austin 2024a). The City’s *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan* designates Guadalupe Street, East Riverside Drive, and South Congress Avenue as high priority transit corridors (City of Austin 2023a).

Figure 5: Study Area Projected Population Growth (2015–2045)



The Study Area is zoned to support population and job growth. Several neighborhood plans, including the *Downtown Austin Plan* (2011), *Greater South River City Combined Neighborhood Plan* (2005), *East Riverside Corridor Master Plan* (2010a), *South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan* (2016), and *Waller Creek District Master Plan* (2010b), provide support for zoning that favors multi-modal connectivity, high-density, compact design, and mixed land uses within the Study Area. The *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan* is guiding the City’s short- and long-term transportation projects, programs, initiatives, and investments (City of Austin 2023a). The *Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Policy Plan* provides a framework to ensure that future development around the transit system supports residents of all incomes and backgrounds (City of Austin 2023b). A full description of the local land use plans and policies that will influence development in the Study Area is provided in **DEIS Appendix E-2**.

4.2 Employment

Table 3 summarizes the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey data for total employment and unemployment in the Study Area and Travis County (by census tract). In 2022, the Study Area accounted for approximately 13 percent of the employment in Travis County. Unemployment in the Study Area is higher than for the county (5.1 percent versus 4.2 percent).

Table 3: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment (2022)

| Geography | Total in Labor Force | Total Armed Forces Labor Force | Civilian Employed | Civilian Unemployed | Unemployment Rate |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Study Area | 102,109 | 39 | 96,873 | 5,197 | 5.1% |
| Travis County | 769,854 | 875 | 736,834 | 32,145 | 4.2% |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2023b.

Table 4 provides employment by industry in Travis County in 2016 and 2022 by North American Industry Classification System code. During this time, total employment increased by more than 279,000 jobs, or approximately 22 percent. Every industry gained jobs during this time period with the exception of farm employment (loss of 14 jobs) and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction with the highest loss at 5,033 jobs or approximately 38 percent.

Several of Travis County’s largest sectors, including professional, scientific, and technical services; health care and social assistance; and finance and insurance; experienced robust growth between 2016 and 2022. Professional, scientific, and technical services added more than 66,600 jobs and represented approximately 15 percent of total employment. Throughout this time, the professional, scientific, and technical services sector has been the largest single industry in Travis County. Health care and social assistance added approximately 17,600 jobs, representing approximately 8 percent of total employment in Travis County. Finance and insurance added almost 37,000 jobs, representing approximately 8 percent of total employment in Travis County.

From 2016 to 2022, private sector industries that demonstrated the highest rate of growth were management of companies and enterprises (increasing by 141 percent with a total of 28,568 jobs in 2022); transportation and warehousing (increasing by 86 percent with a total of 44,027 jobs in 2022); and information (increasing by 73 percent with a total of 54,893 jobs).

Table 4: Total Full-Time and Part-Time Employment in Travis County by North American Industry Classification System Industry

| Industry | 2016 | 2022 | Percent of Travis County Jobs (2022) | Total Change | Percent Change |
|--|---------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Farm employment | 1,337 | 1,323 | 0.1 | -14 | -1.0% |
| Forestry, fishing, and related activities | 570 | 671 | 0.1 | 101 | 17.7% |
| Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction | 13,330 | 8,297 | 0.7 | -5,033 | -37.8% |
| Utilities | 1,006 | 1,440 | 0.1 | 434 | 43.1% |
| Construction | 55,669 | 70,824 | 5.6 | 15,155 | 27.2% |
| Manufacturing | 41,308 | 49,574 | 3.9 | 8,266 | 20.0% |
| Wholesale trade | 35,167 | 37,593 | 3.0 | 2,426 | 6.9% |
| Retail trade | 76,113 | 84,987 | 6.7 | 8,874 | 11.7% |
| Transportation and warehousing | 23,669 | 44,027 | 3.5 | 20,358 | 86.0% |
| Information | 31,669 | 54,893 | 4.3 | 23,224 | 73.3% |
| Finance and insurance | 61,199 | 97,882 | 7.7 | 36,683 | 59.9% |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 54,828 | 82,485 | 7.0 | 27,657 | 50.4% |
| Professional, scientific, and technical services | 123,893 | 190,535 | 15.0 | 66,642 | 53.8% |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 11,831 | 28,568 | 2.3 | 16,737 | 141.5% |
| Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services | 66,389 | 86,671 | 6.8 | 20,282 | 30.6% |
| Educational services | 19,204 | 23,088 | 1.8 | 3,884 | 20.2% |
| Health care and social assistance | 80,654 | 98,323 | 7.7 | 17,669 | 21.9% |



| Industry | 2016 | 2022 | Percent of Travis County Jobs (2022) | Total Change | Percent Change |
|---|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 26,435 | 28,079 | 2.2 | 1,644 | 6.2% |
| Accommodation and food services | 84,260 | 89,666 | 7.1 | 5,406 | 6.4% |
| Other services (except government and government enterprises) | 52,239 | 58,005 | 4.6 | 5,766 | 11.0% |
| Total Private Sector Employment | 860,800 | 1,136,931 | 89.5 | 276,131 | 24.3% |
| Federal civilian | 11,231 | 12,465 | 1.1 | 1,234 | 9.9% |
| Military | 2,506 | 3,020 | 0.2 | 514 | 17.0% |
| State government | 59,876 | 60,641 | 4.8 | 765 | 1.3% |
| Local government | 55,580 | 56,788 | 4.5 | 1,208 | 2.1% |
| Total Government and Government Enterprises Employment | 129,193 | 132,914 | 10.5 | 3,721 | 2.8% |
| Total Employment (number of jobs) | 989,993 | 1,269,845 | 100 | 279,852 | 22.0% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis 2023.

Table 5 shows the 23 major employers within the Study Area, as determined by the Austin Chamber of Commerce (2023). Per this list, UT and St. David’s Healthcare are the largest employers in the Study Area, followed by Accenture, Whole Foods Market, and Oracle, all with over 2,500 employees. Some of these large employers, including UT, St. David’s Healthcare, and Whole Foods Market, have their workforces divided among many locations in the Austin area; these may not all be concentrated within the Study Area. Additionally, the City, Travis County, and the State of Texas are also major employers in the Downtown Austin area.

Figure 6 shows the density of employment within the Study Area. The highest density of employment is found around UT, along the proposed alignment just north and east of the Colorado River, and along East Riverside Drive near the proposed Pleasant Valley Station.

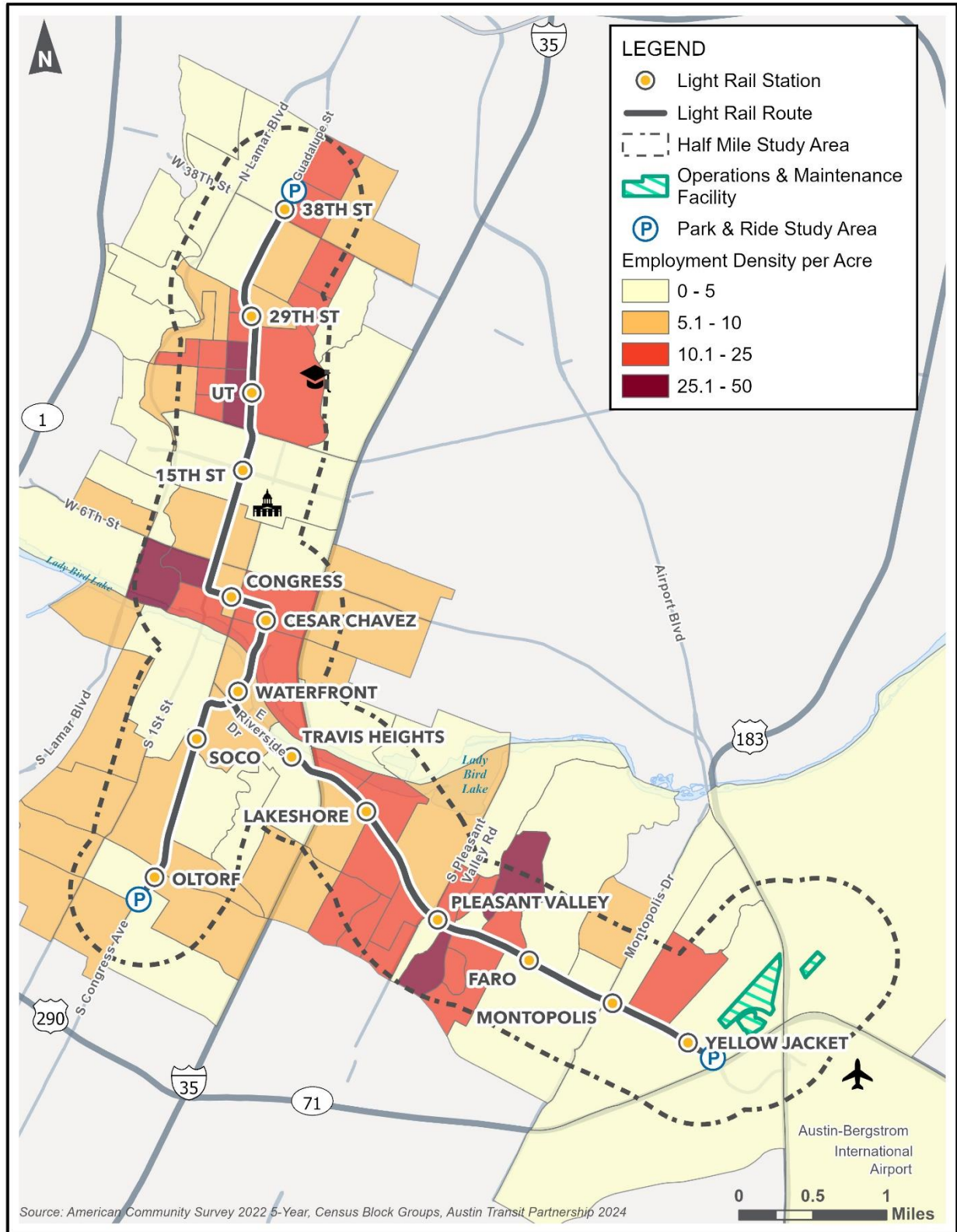
Table 5: Major Employers in the Study Area¹

| Employer | Employment Estimate | Address |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Accenture | 5,900 | 323 Congress Avenue |
| Bank of America | 570 | 607 West 3rd Street |
| Cirrus Logic | 942 | 800 West 6th Street |
| Deloitte | 1,224 | 500 West 2nd Street, Suite 1600 |
| Ernst & Young | 638 | 401 Congress Avenue, Suite 3200 |
| Gerson Lehrman Group | 628 | 301 Congress Avenue, Suite 300 |
| Google | 2,000 | 500 West 2nd Street, Suite 2900 |
| JPMorgan | 510 | 405 Colorado, Floor 25 |
| Meta (formerly Facebook) | 2,000 | 300 West 6th Street, 9th Floor |
| Oracle | 2,500 | 2300 Oracle Way |
| PPD | 850 | 7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 200 |
| Pricewaterhouse Coopers | 596 | 835 West 6th Street, Suite 1600 |
| ProCore Technologies | 653 | 221 West 6th Street, Suite 1800 |
| Silicon Labs | 580 | 400 West Cesar Chavez Street |
| St. David's Healthcare | 10,854 | 501 Congress Avenue |
| St. Edward's University | 995 | 3001 South Congress Avenue |
| Teacher Retirement System (TRS) | 865 | 816 Congress Avenue |
| Tik Tok | 750 | 300 Colorado Street |
| U.S. Army Futures Command | 2,400 | 210 West 7th Street, 19th Floor |
| UT | 23,925 | Various addresses |
| Wells Fargo Bank | 663 | 111 Congress Avenue, Suite 150 |
| Whole Foods Market | 2,915 | 550 Bowie Street |
| WP Engine | 500 | 504 Lavaca Street, Suite 1000 |

Source: Austin Chamber of Commerce 2023.

¹ Excludes school districts and other governmental organizations including the State of Texas, Travis County, and the City of Austin, which are all major employers in the Study Area.

Figure 6: Study Area Employment Density (2022)



The Travis County Office of Economic Development and Strategic Investment highlights the county’s economic development programs, county corporations, real estate redevelopment opportunities, facilities and strategic planning, investment portfolio, depository contract, and notable economic development opportunities. As of January 2022, the county has incentive agreements in place with several large employers, including Apple, Tesla, and Samsung (Travis County 2022). Incentive agreements are agreements between businesses and Travis County in which the businesses invest in new construction, offer substantial new jobs or training opportunities, and fulfill a set of requirements, and Travis County offers a portion of the property taxes back to the company based on several incentive categories (such as paying prevailing wages to construction worker and hiring veterans or economically disadvantaged persons).

The CAMPO 2045 Regional Transportation Plan forecasts robust job growth at the transportation analysis zone level, both for the Study Area and for Travis County. Between 2015 and 2045, CAMPO estimates that total employment in Travis County will more than double, increasing by approximately 640,000 jobs for an increase of approximately 107 percent. Jobs in the Study Area are forecasted to increase and add almost 106,000 jobs with more than a 68 percent increase over 2015 employment levels (see **Table 6**). Employment in the Study Area is projected to account for approximately 21 percent of the county’s employment by 2045, calculated using 2045 employment numbers in **Table 6**.

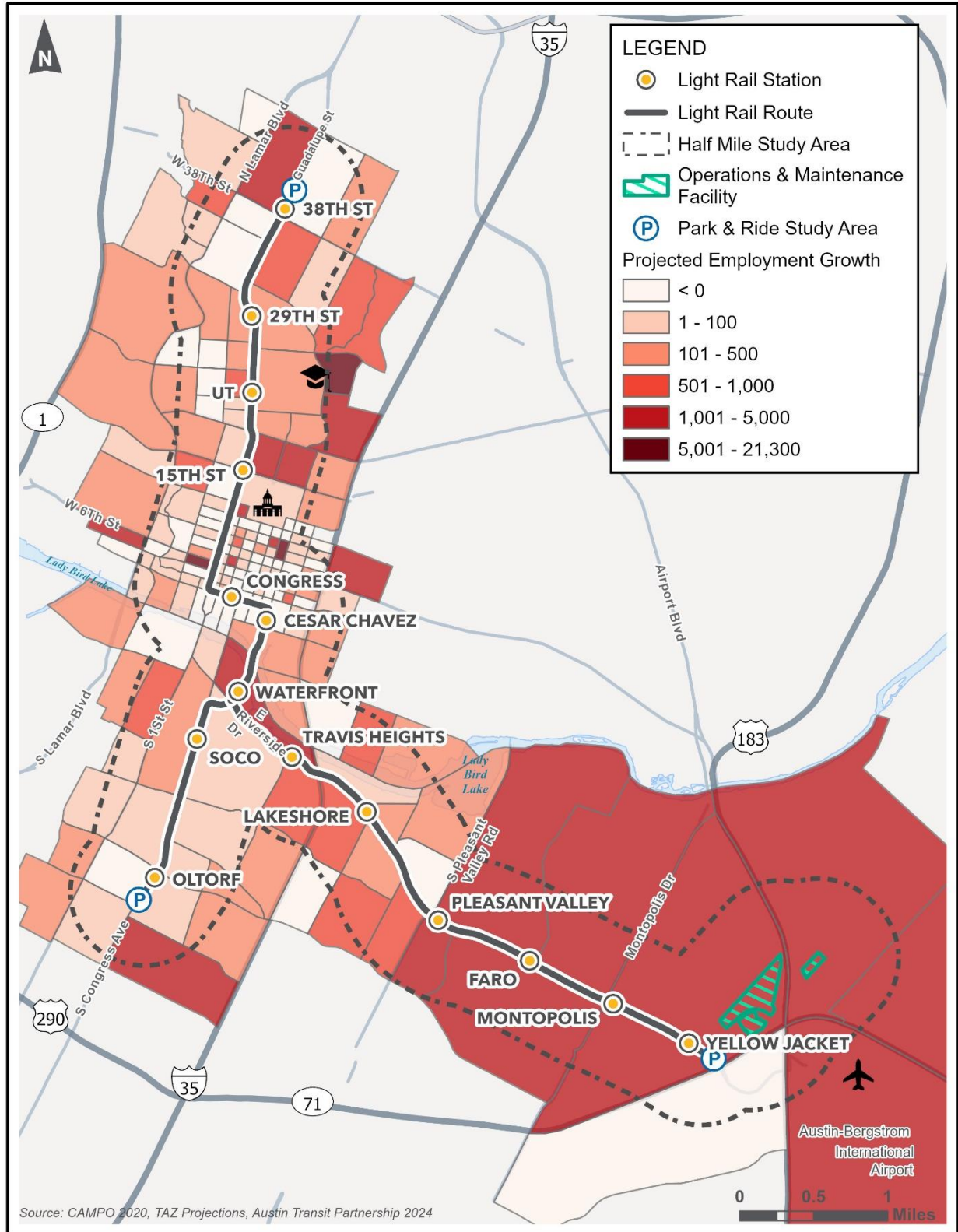
Table 6: Employment Projections

| Geography | 2015 Employment | 2025 Employment | 2045 Employment | Total Change 2015–2045 | Percentage Change 2015–2045 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Study Area | 155,037 | 176,817 | 260,636 | 105,599 | 68.1% |
| Travis County | 601,298 | 730,993 | 1,243,916 | 642,618 | 106.9% |

Source: CAMPO 2020.

As shown in **Figure 7**, the portions of the Study Area that are expected to experience the greatest employment growth are within the eastern portion of the Project area from the proposed Pleasant Valley to Yellow Jacket Stations. Additionally, it is anticipated that most of the growth in employment and population density in this area would be adjacent or near the alignment on Riverside Drive. While employment growth is expected within the Study Area, there are several transportation analysis zones, particularly in the downtown area, where employment would be expected to stay steady or slightly decrease. CAMPO’s employment projections are based on a 2015 base year.

Figure 7: Study Area Projected Employment Growth (2015–2045)



4.3 Transit-Dependent Communities

For the purposes of this analysis, transit-dependent communities were identified through a combination of demographic characteristics, including the percentage of the population whose incomes fall below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services federal poverty guidelines, households without vehicles, the population less likely to drive for reasons of age (below 18 years of age and 65 years of age and over), and the percentage of the population with a disability. According to the American Public Transportation Association, despite the drop in transit ridership that occurred with the pandemic in early 2020, transit ridership has recovered to about 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels (American Public Transportation Association 2024). These trips include work and other non-work-related trips, so while some work is now being done remotely and thus is not transit-dependent, ridership remains high and is dependent on delivery and reliability of the transit service and characteristics including the makeup of the local economy.

As shown in **Table 7**, the percentage of individuals in the Study Area whose incomes fall below federal poverty guidelines (approximately 23 percent) is higher than the level seen in the county (approximately 8 percent) and the state (approximately 14 percent). The concentration of individuals with incomes below the poverty level within some census block groups appears to be partly due to the student population and off-campus housing areas around UT and St. Edward’s University, as shown in **Figure 8**. Additionally, there is a higher percentage of people living below the poverty level north of Riverside Drive near Pleasant Valley Road.

Table 7: Transit-Dependent Demographics (2022)

| Area | Poverty Status | Households with Zero Vehicles | Population Under 18 Years of Age | Population 65 Years of Age and Over | Population with Disability |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Study Area | 23.1% | 11.7% | 9.2% | 6.4% | 8.5% |
| Travis County | 7.5% | 5.5% | 20.7% | 10.4% | 9.0% |
| Texas | 13.9% | 5.3% | 25.3% | 12.9% | 11.7% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023c.

The Study Area has a higher percentage of individuals who reside in zero vehicle households (almost 12 percent) compared to Travis County or the state (5+ percent each), as shown in **Figure 9** (U.S. Census Bureau 2023c). The highest concentrations of zero vehicle households are located around UT, near the proposed 38th Street Station, east of Interstate 35 north of Cesar Chavez Street, and near the proposed Faro Station.

As shown in **Table 7**, the Study Area has much lower percentages of both those under 18 and those 65 and over than is true either for Travis County or the state. The data shows that a high percentage of the Study Area population falls between the ages of 18 and 34 (approximately 56 percent), compared to that age range accounting for just over 29 percent of the population for Travis County overall. Additionally, the Study Area has a lower percentage of residents with a disability than is true for the county and state. The population with disabilities within the Study Area is shown in **Figure 10**; the highest percentages of persons living with disabilities are concentrated in Downtown Austin between the 15th Street and Congress Avenue Stations.

Figure 8: Study Area Percent at or Below Poverty Level (2022)

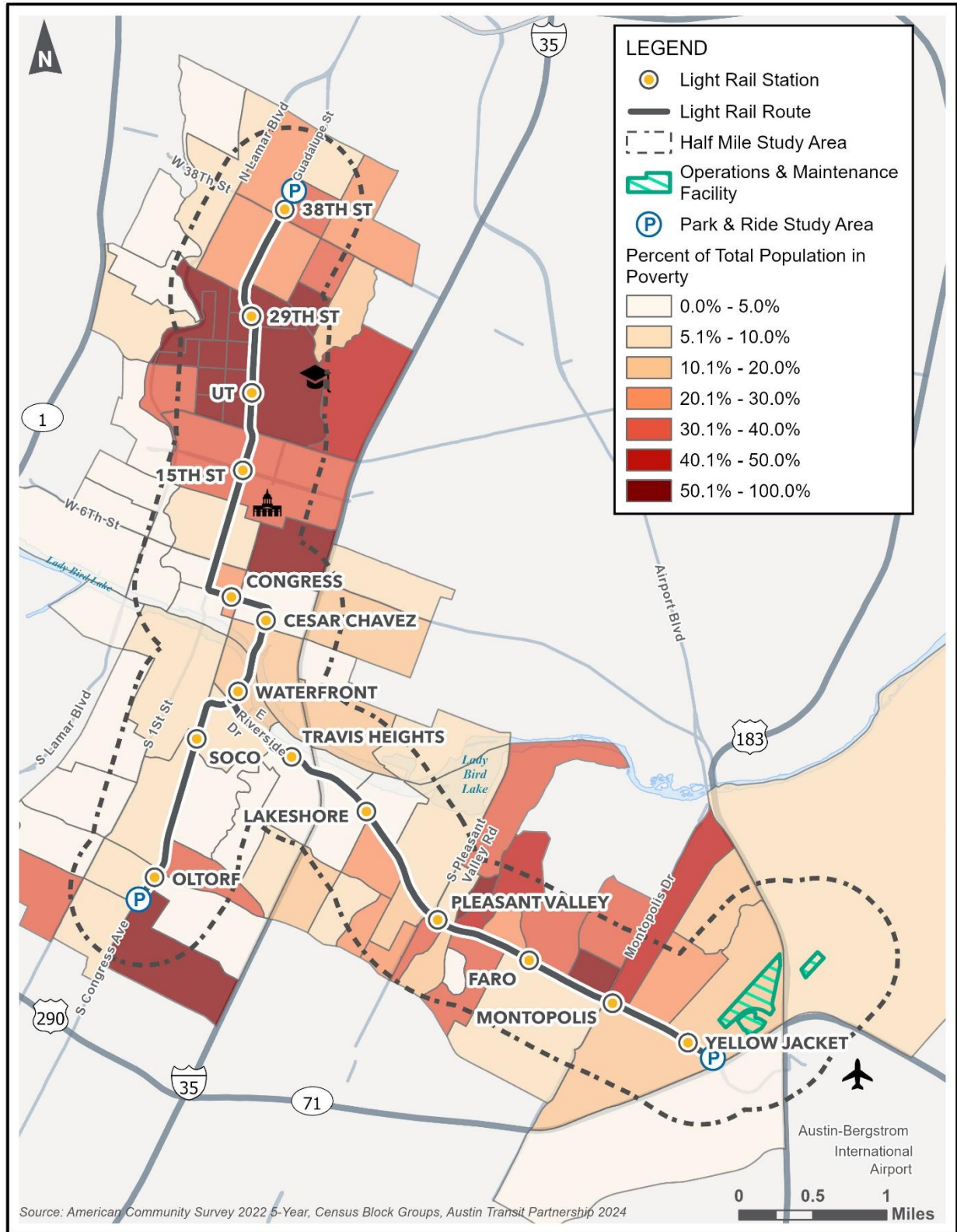


Figure 9: Study Area Households with Zero Vehicles (2022)

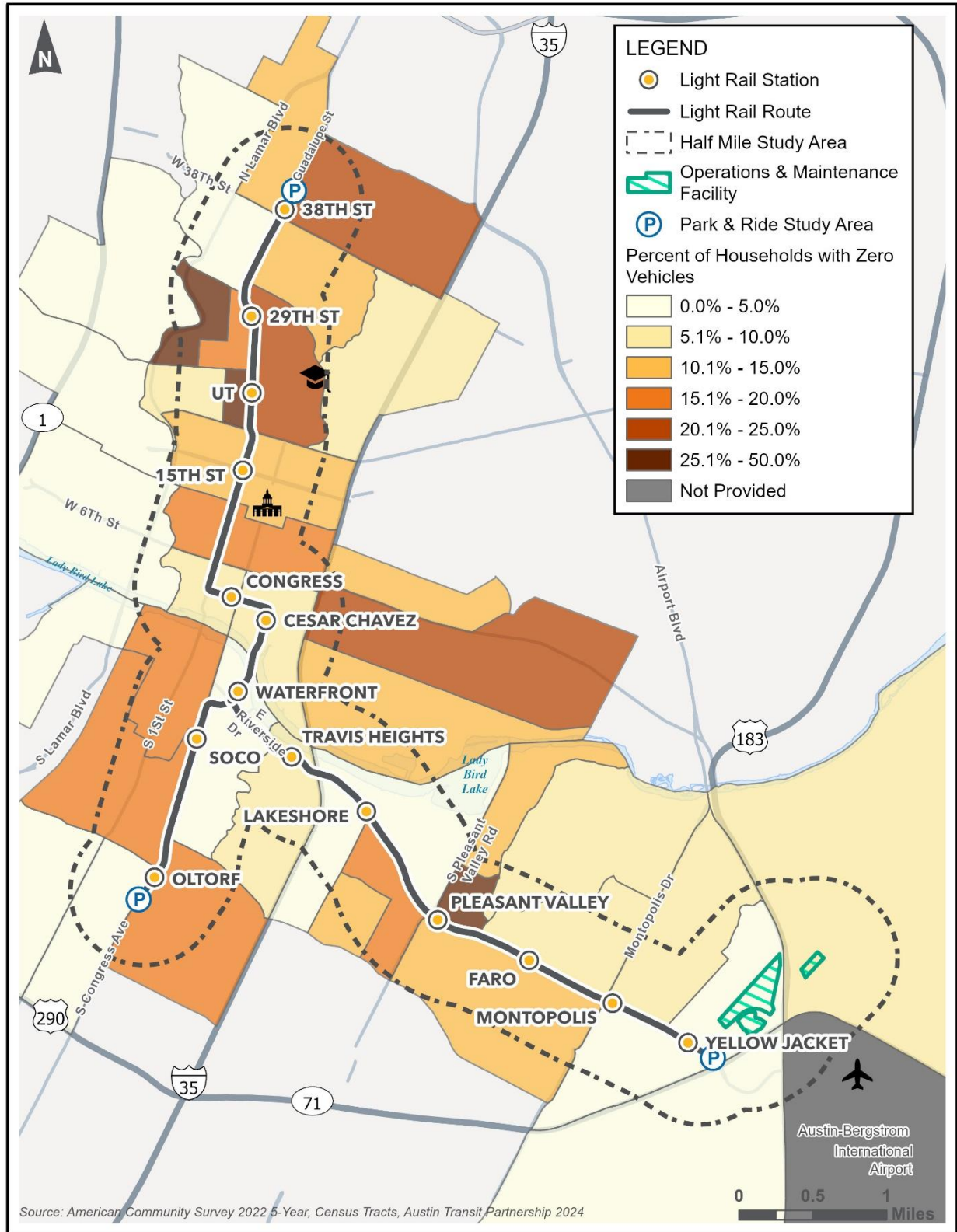
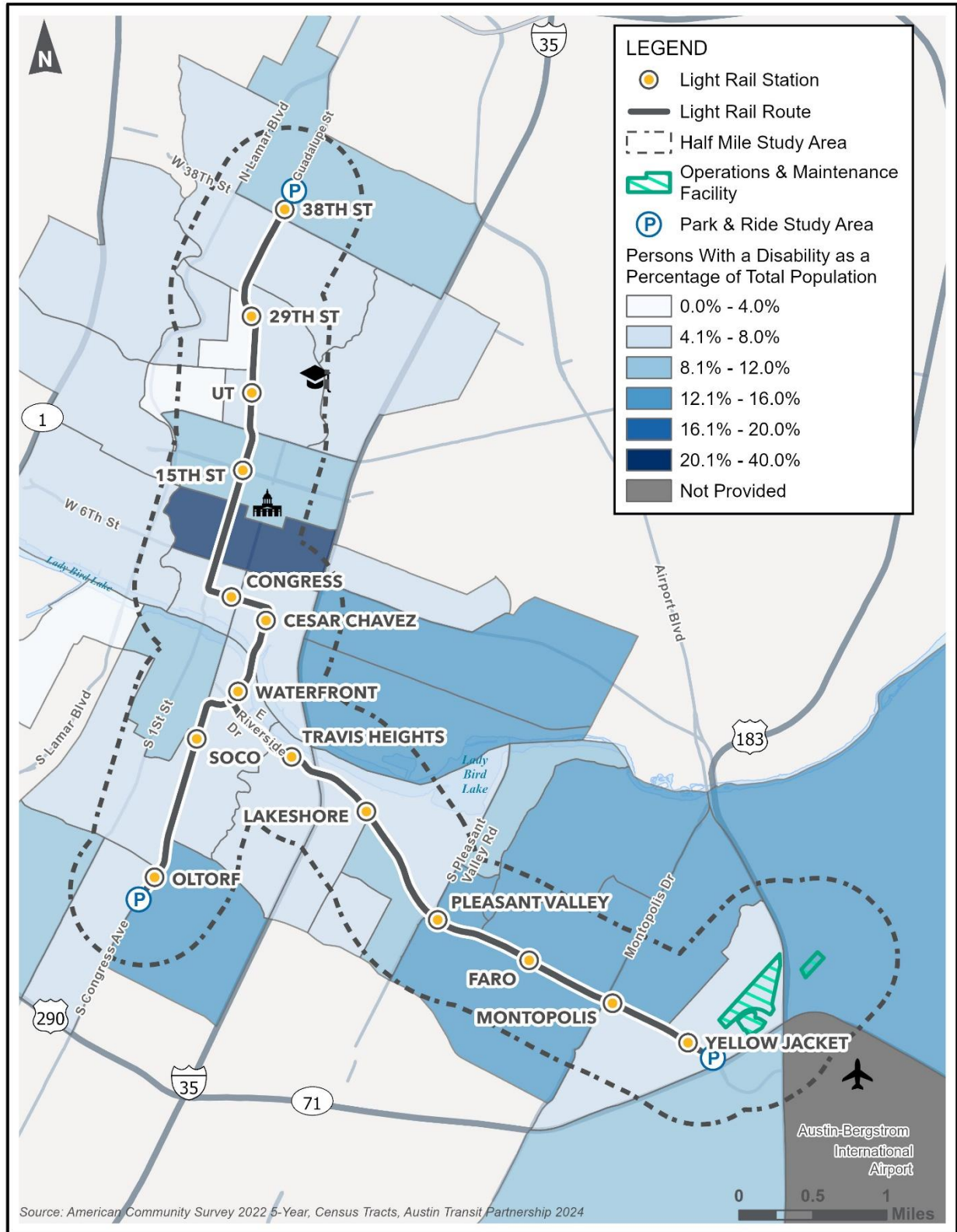


Figure 10: Study Area Percent of the Population with a Disability (2022)



4.4 Means of Transportation to Work

Table 8 shows the means of transportation to work by residents. The Study Area has a higher proportion of residents that commute using public transportation than is true for either the county or the state, and a higher proportion of residents choosing active modes of transportation to work (including cycling and walking). In the Study Area, almost 5 percent of residents reported commuting to work using public transportation, compared to less than 2 percent for the county and 1 percent for the state.

As of 2022, about 55 percent of Study Area residents drove alone on their commute. This is less than the percentage of solo drivers for the state and Travis County (approximately 75 percent for the state and 63 percent for the county). The percentage of people working from home within the Study Area is similar to the percentage of people working from home in Travis County overall.

Table 8: Means of Transportation to Work (2022)

| Geography | Car, Truck, or Van – Drove Alone | Car, Truck, or Van – Carpooled | Public Transportation (excluding taxicab) | Bicycle, Motorcycle, or Taxicab, or Other Means | Walked | Worked from Home |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------|------------------|
| Study Area | 55.1% | 5.8% | 4.7% | 4.3% | 6.5% | 23.6% |
| Travis County | 63.1% | 7.8% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 2.2% | 23.0% |
| Texas | 75.1% | 9.7% | 1.0% | 1.7% | 1.5% | 11.0% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023d.

4.5 Housing and Household Characteristics

As shown in **Table 9**, the Study Area includes approximately 55,400 households, which accounts for just over 10 percent of the households in Travis County. The Study Area has a much lower proportion of owner-occupied housing than is true for either the county or the state, with approximately 28 percent of households occupied by their owners and approximately 72 percent of households in the Study Area occupied by renters (U.S. Census Bureau 2023e). When compared to either Travis County or the state, households in the Study Area are more likely to be rented.

Table 9: Housing and Household Characteristics (2022)

| Geography | Total Households | Owner Occupied | Renter Occupied |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Study Area | 55,409 | 28.2% | 71.8% |
| Travis County | 538,109 | 52.9% | 47.1% |
| Texas | 10,490,553 | 62.4% | 37.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023e.

Affordable housing data are provided by the City’s Affordable Housing Inventory (City of Austin 2024b). The database provides a list of all housing projects that have received a subsidy from or participated in a City developer incentive program. Projects may include a mix of income-restricted and market rate units. According to the City, there are 6,298 legally binding affordable housing units (many in multi-family buildings) within the Study Area and 46,335 listed in Austin (City of Austin 2024b). The Study Area accounts for approximately 14 percent of the affordable housing units in Austin. Many of the affordable housing units in the Study Area are situated west of Guadalupe Street near UT. Existing affordable housing is shown in **Figure 11**.

The 2022 American Community Survey estimates indicate that approximately 11 percent of the housing within the Study Area is vacant. Of the vacant housing in the Study Area, approximately 30 percent is available for rent (see **Table 10**). The percentage of housing that is rented and not occupied in the Study Area is slightly higher than in the county, but much higher than in the state. The Study Area has a slightly higher percentage of housing that is for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use than the county or the state, and a smaller percentage of vacant housing that is for sale than the county or the state.

Table 10: Housing Vacancy Rate (2022)

| Geography | For Rent | Rented, Not Occupied | For Sale Only | Sold, Not Occupied | For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use | Other Vacant |
|---------------|----------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---|--------------|
| Study Area | 29.3% | 15.2% | 2.4% | 3.2% | 21.9% | 28.0% |
| Travis County | 31.2% | 12.1% | 9.6% | 9.1% | 17.0% | 21.1% |
| Texas | 28.4% | 4.8% | 6.5% | 4.4% | 17.2% | 38.5% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023f.
 Note: Values may not total to 100% due to rounding.

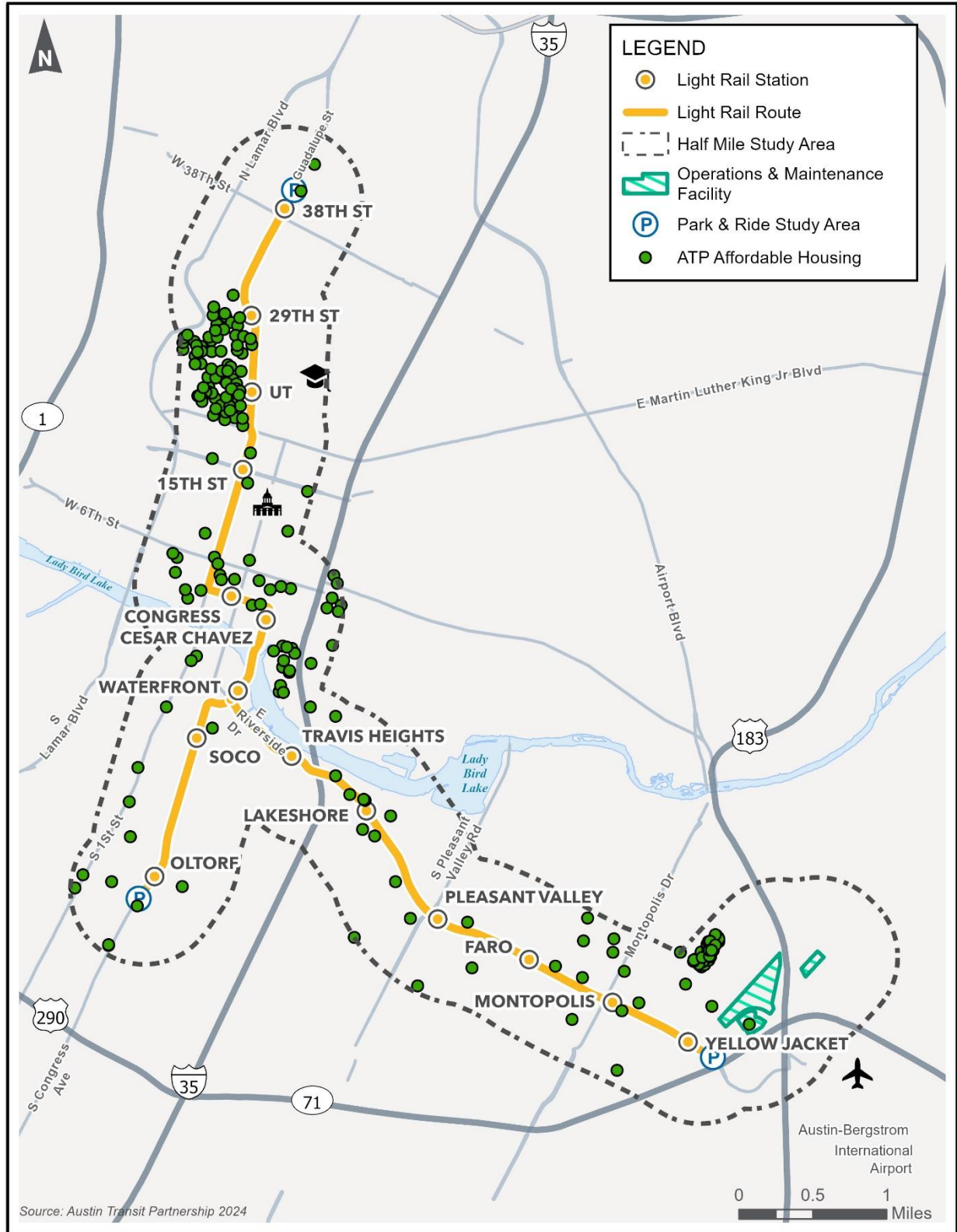
According to CAMPO, the number of households within the Study Area at the transportation analysis zone level is expected to be 102,807 by 2045, an increase of almost 118 percent between 2015 and 2045 (see **Table 11**). The number of households in Travis County is expected to increase by 112 percent (CAMPO 2020).

Table 11: Household Projections

| Geography | 2015 Households | 2025 Households | 2045 Households | Total Change 2015–2025 | Percentage Change 2015–2045 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Study Area | 47,178 | 61,919 | 102,807 | 55,629 | 117.9% |
| Travis County | 428,448 | 528,037 | 908,162 | 479,714 | 111.9% |

Source: CAMPO 2020.

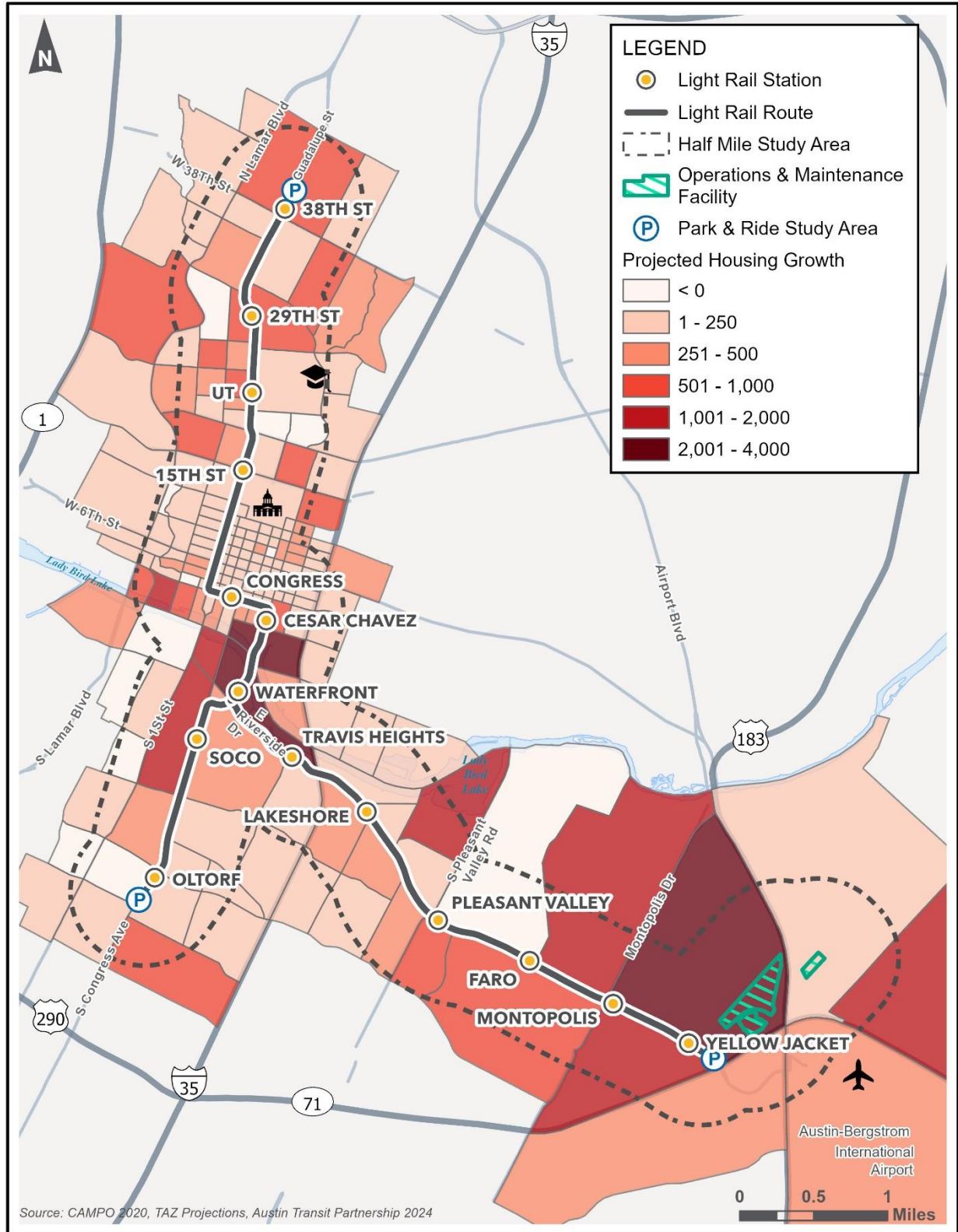
Figure 11: Study Area Existing Affordable Housing (2024)



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024

As shown in Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference., based on CAMPO projections, the portions of the Study Area that are expected to experience the greatest housing growth are along the alignment between the proposed Cesar Chavez and Travis Heights Stations and within the eastern portion of the Project area from the proposed Faro to Yellow Jacket Stations. This figure shows where substantial new housing is or has been built since the base year of 2015. The growth near the Cesar Chavez Station is projected to occur near the Rainey Street District, where the tallest building in Texas is currently being constructed, and along the Waterfront, where high density apartments are present along Riverside Drive and a large development will be built. Between the Faro and Yellow Jacket Stations, apartments are being constructed along the corridor with easy access to the proposed Project. The Austin Community College: Riverside Campus is a major employer and will continue to be a draw for students, particularly with free tuition for eligible students.

Figure 12: Study Area Housing Growth (2015–2045)



5 Environmental Consequences

5.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative includes the existing transportation network and the improvements included in CAMPO's *2045 Regional Transportation Plan (CAMPO 2024)* except for the Project. Under the No Build Alternative, population and employment in the region would continue to grow, as indicated in Section 4. However, CAMPO's projections are unconstrained in the sense that they do not assume that any deterioration in the existing transportation network would occur over time. Based on population growth and employment increases, traffic levels are expected to increase by more than the existing and future planned roadway capacities. As a result, traffic congestion would increase, as would the time required for commuting to work and delivering goods and services over the roads in Austin. Longer travel times would increase the cost of doing business and could make Austin a less desirable place to live and do business. Important criteria for selecting a business location include the quality of the area's transportation infrastructure and the availability and quality of the work force. As growth and the associated demand for housing push up housing costs, displacement in the Study Area is occurring and would continue to occur.

5.2 Build Alternative

5.2.1 Operational (Long-Term) Effects

5.2.1.1 Local and Regional Economic Effects

The Project would generate beneficial employment, earnings, and tax revenue. Direct economic effects of the Project would occur because of the spending and employment required to operate the Project. Indirect and induced economic effects may occur later in time or as part of a chain of events and would be a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the Project. Indirect economic effects are the business-to-business transactions that occur when the affected industry spends money on goods or services in its supply chain. Induced effects would occur when an initial change in spending, particularly among employees in the affected industry's supply chain, results in diminishing rounds of new spending as financial resources work their way through an economy. With each new round of spending, some financial resources would leave the economy in the form of savings, taxes, and imports.

ATP assumes the annual operation and maintenance costs of the Project would be approximately \$52.53 million starting in 2033. As shown in Error! Reference source not found., total effect on employment for Travis County, when accounting for growth in supply chain industries and consumer spending, could reach approximately 1,173 new permanent jobs per year. By comparison, this is approximately 0.15 percent of the total jobs in Travis County in 2022, which was 769,854. Jobs projected for 2045 in Travis County are 1,243,916. It is likely this 0.15 percent increase per year would not result in the need for additional housing or increase population more than is already projected in the county.



Labor income represents the total growth in earnings for individuals in new employment positions and could be approximately \$34.7 million annually, beginning in the projected operations year of 2033. Economic output is the total value of an industry’s production and is the basis for all other calculations within IMPLAN. Value added is a measure of the effect of an industry’s contribution to gross domestic product and is calculated as the difference between the economic output and the cost of intermediate inputs. (A negative direct value added is normal for the local government transit industry because it is a non-profit industry that generally relies on subsidies from state and federal sources [IMPLAN 2024]; however, the value added becomes positive—a net economic benefit—when including the effects on supply chain industries and spending growth, as shown in Error! Reference source not found..)

Table 12: Modeled Economic Effects of Operation per Year

| Effect | Travis County Employment (Jobs due to Ongoing Operations) | Labor Income (2033 millions) | Value Added (2033 millions) | Economic Output (2033 millions) |
|--------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Direct | 1,037 | \$23,959,655 | \$36,098,737 | \$52,530,000 |
| Indirect | 62 | \$5,570,222 | \$8,724,304 | \$15,855,034 |
| Induced | 74 | \$5,127,530 | \$9,296,834 | \$15,118,637 |
| Total | 1,173 | \$34,657,407 | \$54,119,875 | \$83,503,671 |

Source: IMPLAN economic model outputs using 2033 economic data; IMPLAN 2024.
 Note: Numbers in this table would be expected to recur annually from the start of service operations (2033 through the life of the Project).

The Build Alternative and Design Options would create an opportunity for infill development on parcels in the Study Area, especially in the areas around the proposed stations that are currently vacant or underutilized. Additional development from the Build Alternative and Design Options is anticipated based on existing development plans. The Project could contribute to induced development, resulting in more density and an increase in housing variety, which could attract transit users and businesses that factor in transit proximity for consumers and employees. The Study Area traverses through the Downtown Austin and South-Central Waterfront Regional Activity Centers, the Riverside Stations Town Center, and the St. Edward’s Neighborhood Center. It would be expected that station areas and the vicinity would be desirable for development of commercial and residential areas. ATP is working with the City on several economic development activities (discussed in Section 5.2.1.4) to encourage equitable and robust development.

The Project may trigger nearby investments and increase the value of nearby land for more intense developments. The City, in collaboration with ATP and the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro), is conducting land use and economic development planning activities associated with the Project. These include the adoption of an ETOD Overlay to enable greater densities along light rail while also incentivizing the development of affordable housing.

Other City initiatives complement the Project as a catalyst for growth and a tool to achieve other housing objectives. In March 2024, the City purchased the 107-acre Tokyo Electron campus located at 2400 Grove Boulevard, paid for in part by the Project Connect Anti-Displacement Fund Program. The acquisition will enable the City to advance their aggressive affordable housing plan and develop additional income-restricted units close to the proposed light rail stations on East Riverside Drive. The Variation to the Grove Station Design Option recommended by ATP to be advanced would serve this planned affordable housing development and the residents of Montopolis.

5.2.1.2 Permanent Acquisitions and Relocations

The Build Alternative includes guideways, roadways, sidewalks, bikeways, shared-use paths, elevated structures, and underground structures. The Project footprint varies throughout the limits of the Project but is primarily within existing public right-of-way and publicly owned lands, with the exception of the acquisitions and easements referenced within. The Project is in an urban area comprising a mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional. A full description of the acquisitions, relocations, and displacements that would result from the Project is included in **DEIS Appendix E-1**.

The Build Alternative would require the full acquisition of 27 properties, requiring the potential displacement and relocation of 59 businesses (28 of which are effects on parking and access, not buildings). Eight residential dwelling units from one condominium building could also lose access to parking spaces resulting in potential displacement of the residents in the condominium building. ATP is investigating opportunities to avoid the displacements through design of an alternative access route to the parking spaces. The same residential displacements identified for the Build Alternative would be potentially required under each Design Option, except the Lady Bird Lake Bridge Extension Design Option, which would not affect the eight-dwelling condominium. The Center-Running Bike/Pedestrian and Shade Tree Facilities on East Riverside Design Option would result in an additional four required residential displacements and five required commercial displacements. There would be no change from the Build Alternative displacements for the Cesar Chavez Station, Travis Heights Station, Wooldridge Square Station, Grove Station, and Variation to the Grove Station Design Options.

5.2.1.3 Economic Effects Associated with Acquisitions

The scale of direct displacement of businesses and employees associated with the Project would not be expected to change overall socioeconomic conditions in the Study Area. As noted in **Table 6** above, CAMPO projects that the Study Area would support over 260,636 jobs by 2045. ATP would provide relocation assistance to displaced businesses in accordance with the Uniform Act. Businesses may choose to relocate to sites in the same area, relocate to other areas, or permanently close after their property is purchased. While a small number of jobs may be lost, this number would be offset by jobs created by Project construction and operation and the substantial employment growth in the region that would be supported by the light rail service.

The loss of parking spaces in the business districts of Downtown and South Congress Avenue may result in loss of revenue from some customers who choose to patronize other businesses that have available and convenient parking. ATP expects that this loss in revenue would be short-term and offset by the anticipated increased activity in the station areas and the population growth of the region. Additionally, as people adapt to using alternative transportation options, businesses in station areas may benefit from a more consistent and diverse customer base, including individuals who previously relied on parking but are now accessing these areas via public transit.

The Build Alternative and Design Options would affect the local tax revenue base. Some property tax would be lost where property is acquired and converted to public (tax-exempt) use. Easements are generally not included in these calculations because it was assumed that tax liability would remain with the owner. Based on the proposed full acquisitions, approximately \$1,640,000 of annual tax revenue would be lost due to conversion to tax-exempt use under the Build Alternative. Additionally, due to partial property acquisitions, approximately \$1,171,350 of tax revenue would be lost due to conversion to tax-exempt use, for a total of approximately \$2,811,350 annual effect on Travis County tax revenue. Depending on the Design Option, this could vary from approximately \$65,800 to approximately \$74,760 (see **Table 13**). Acquisition of property required for the Project would result in a nominal loss of City tax revenue, composing approximately 0.056 percent of the fiscal year 2025 tax levy across the different taxing jurisdictions. These estimates are conservative in that some of the properties may be subject to property tax exemptions. In fiscal year 2024, Travis County has a proposed budget of \$1.69 billion (Travis County 2024). **Table 13** estimates total property tax revenue that would be lost from the conversion to tax-exempt status under the Build Alternative and for each Design Option, and the percent of the proposed county budget that would represent.

Property tax losses would likely be offset by new property tax revenue produced by increasing land values around station areas. The mechanisms by which station area property values and associated tax revenues would be likely to increase include:

- increased demand for properties near new light rail stations, which can moderately increase the value of land and existing improvements on those properties; and
- new high-density development near stations, which would change the total improved value of a property.

In addition to changes to property taxes, the Project would spur additional spending in Travis County from new labor income, which would benefit sales tax revenue.

Table 13: Estimated Effects on Potential Property Tax in Travis County (Includes Full and Partial Acquisitions)

| Geography | Total Effect on Property Tax Revenue (Annual) | Percent of 2024 Budgeted Property Tax |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Build Alternative | \$1,171,349 | 0.07% |
| Wooldridge Square Station Design Option (add this station) | \$65,811 | 0.004% |
| Cesar Chavez Station Design Option (off-street Cesar Chavez Station to eliminate the 90-degree turn on the alignment and promote transit-oriented development) | No change from Build Alternative. | -- |
| Lady Bird Lake Bridge Extension Design Option | \$72,624 | 0.004% |
| Travis Heights Station Design Option (eliminate the Travis Heights Station) | No change from Build Alternative. | -- |
| Center-Running Bike/Pedestrian and Shade Tree Facilities on East Riverside Design Option | \$74,759 | 0.004% |
| Grove Station Design Option (consolidate the Montopolis and Faro Stations into a single station at Grove Street) | N/A | -- |

Source: HDR 2024. (Based on design dated April 2024. Numbers will be updated with refined relocation data and based on field verification.)

5.2.1.4 Property Values and Affordable Housing

The Project could also result in increased property values and property taxes, which could affect current landowners and tenants in the Study Area. An amenity such as a light rail station has a high potential to increase the value of properties within walking distance. While the degree of effect varies, studies have shown that proximity to commuter rail increases property values. A 1994 study in Boston determined that properties within a community with a rail station were 6.7 percent more valuable (Armstrong 1994). A 1996 study in Washington D.C. found a correlation between distance from a station and rents—for every one-tenth of a mile further from a station, rents decrease by approximately 2.4 to 2.6 percent (Benjamin and Sirmans 1996). In Dallas, property values near Dallas Area Rapid Transit stations increased in value on average by 50 percent between 2005 and 2007 (Clower et al. 2007). Properties near transit stations also proved to be more resilient to the housing market downturn during the Great Recession (2007–2009). Between 2006 and 2011 in five cities (Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, and San Francisco), most properties decreased in value. However, properties located near transit stations did not decrease in value. In terms of property value change, properties near transit stations outperformed their regional averages by 41.6 percent (Center for Neighborhood Technology 2013). Based on this information, it is anticipated that property values, and subsequently property taxes and rents, would increase in the proposed station areas.

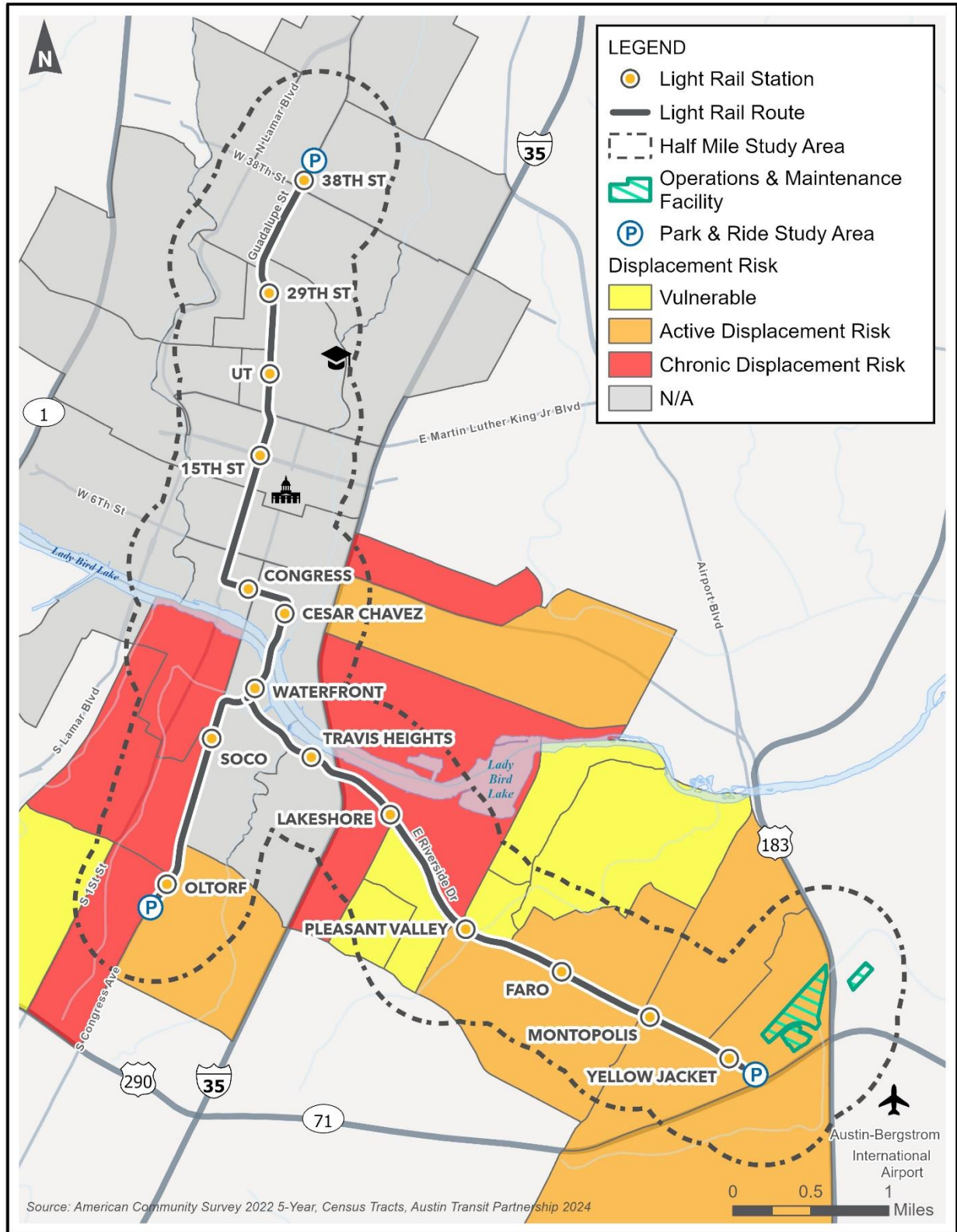
Increasing housing costs in Austin, coupled with more affluent residents moving into central neighborhoods, has affected low-income residents in Austin. According to the UT *Uprooted* report, gentrification occurs when a low-income household is displaced by a higher-income household, resulting in higher housing costs, increased property taxes, transformation of the neighborhood, and cultural change to the neighborhood (UT 2018). This study identified areas in Austin that are most vulnerable to displacement. Within the Study Area, those areas occur east of Interstate 35, especially along the East Riverside Drive corridor close to United States Highway 183. The City Housing and Planning staff updated the data from UT's *Uprooted* study and simplified the categories to the following (City of Austin 2023c):

- **Vulnerable.** Vulnerable populations present no substantial demographic change; some tracts are near or contain high-value and high-appreciation areas.
- **Active Displacement Risk.** Vulnerable populations present active demographic change, accelerating or appreciating the housing market.
- **Chronic Displacement Risk.** Vulnerable populations have been displaced; demographic change has occurred, and the housing market is high value and appreciated or appreciating.

The City's Displacement Risk Areas are shown in **Figure 13**. This map shows that the areas with active and chronic displacement risk occur along the South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive corridors. As mentioned above, construction of the Build Alternative and proximity to a station could increase property values and tax burdens. This could exacerbate the demographic change that is already occurring or contribute to the vulnerability of the community to gentrification pressures.

The City adopted the *Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint* (City of Austin 2017) to address ongoing issues of affordable housing. The goal of the *Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint* is to preserve affordable homes in established communities and increase the supply of affordable housing. The multi-faceted approach to create and preserve affordable housing includes fostering strategic investment collaborations, streamlining the City's construction permit process, assisting with leveraging density bonus programs, and setting goals for 60,000 units to be affordable to households at 80 percent of the median family income and below.

Figure 13: Displacement Risk Areas



The City, in coordination with ATP and CapMetro, is conducting land use and economic development planning activities associated with the Project, including the *ETOD Policy Plan*, which is a comprehensive framework to help the Austin community ensure that future development around the transit system supports residents of all incomes and backgrounds, especially those who have been disproportionately burdened by past transportation and land use decisions. In addition to traditional transit-oriented development goals like increasing transit ridership by encouraging transit-supportive development patterns, ETOD also actively attempts to mitigate displacement pressures and create new economic opportunities to help communities thrive. Ultimately, the ETOD Policy Plan is a citywide guide that helps focus future planning, programming, and investment decisions, such as the following:

- The ETOD Overlay adopted by the Austin City Council in May 2024 applies new land development regulations in station areas across the full system. This includes use and development regulations that apply to all designated parcels in an area in addition to base zoning regulations, as well as a bonus program applied to a smaller subset of specific parcels that would allow property owners to provide certain community benefits (e.g., income-restricted housing units, affordable commercial spaces) in exchange for additional entitlements (e.g., increases in floor to area ratio or height, relaxing site development standards). The overlay will apply differently to different station areas based on context and the type of transit investment planned.
- The ETOD *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* amendments will incorporate the ETOD station areas into the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* growth concept map series, including the station area typologies from the ETOD Policy Plan, as well as possible text amendments to align the comprehensive plan with the goals in the ETOD Policy Plan. These amendments would further demonstrate Austin's support of ETOD and allow for ETOD to be considered as part of other plan amendment and zoning cases.
- The existing *East Riverside Corridor Master Plan* and the *Regulating Plan for the East Riverside Corridor Zoning District* cover multiple Project station areas (City of Austin 2010a, 2013). However, these plans were adopted before details of station locations and transit service were determined. An updated planning process with public engagement will work to incorporate ETOD Goals into the East Riverside Corridor plans so that they speak directly to displacement prevention, cultural preservation, and providing additional economic opportunities to community members and businesses as well as ensuring elements such as the density bonus program are preserving and increasing the amount of affordable and attainable housing near transit.
- A vision planning process for the station areas north of the Colorado River that do not fall within the Downtown Austin or University Neighborhood Overlay boundaries will be initiated. This portion of Austin includes many existing adopted plans, but these plans pre-date the current Project. This planning process would provide a policy framework for ETOD in these neighborhoods.
- A vision planning process for the station areas south of the Colorado River that do not fall within the Downtown Austin, South Central Waterfront, or East Riverside Corridor boundaries will be initiated. This portion of Austin includes many existing adopted plans,

but these plans pre-date the current Project. This planning process would provide a policy framework for ETOD in these neighborhoods.

- The Tenant Notification and Relocation code amendment would create tenant notification and relocation protections. This supports transit riders today who are renters residing along the system to provide them with additional stability, helping keep core transit riders in place near transit.
- The Live Music and Creative Space code amendment would modify land use definitions related to theater and personal improvement services, modify regulations applicable to home occupations, and add performance venues and related alcohol sales. These amendments are intended to enhance the development and preservation of live music venues and creative sector businesses. ETOD includes a goal to expand Austin's diverse cultural heritage and small, minority-owned, and legacy businesses, and this code amendment supports that goal.
- The Childcare Services code amendment would modify the code pertaining to childcare and adult care services to adjust zoning district uses, eliminate minimum parking requirements for childcare services, add childcare services (limited) as an accessory use to a principal residential use, and modify definitions to increase opportunities for childcare services around Austin. ETOD includes a goal to "Support healthy neighborhoods that meet daily needs," and this code amendment supports that goal.
- The Unrelated Adult Occupancy code amendment would eliminate the dwelling unit occupancy limit for residential uses. Currently, the land development code limits the number of unrelated adults living in a single housing unit, regardless of bedroom count or total unit size. Eliminating that requirement may make it easier for more people to live in existing or future housing units near transit, while recognizing that health- and safety-based overcrowding limits would still be in effect that exist in other applicable codes and regulations.
- The Eliminate Parking Minimums code amendment would eliminate minimum off-street motor vehicle parking requirements from the code. This supports multiple ETOD goals, including "Enable all residents to benefit from safe, sustainable, and accessible transportation" by supporting multimodal transportation options, and "Preserve and increase housing opportunities that are affordable and attainable" by no longer requiring that space be dedicated to parking that could otherwise be used for housing opportunities.
- A group of code amendments related to Single Family Zoning includes the following individually initiated amendments: Accessory Dwelling Use Expansion allowing up to three units on a lot, lowering minimum lot sizes; Site Plan Lite part 2; Infill Lot Plat Process; Substandard Lots; and Single-Family Lot and Use Modifications. Collectively these amendments would make it easier and simpler to build smaller "missing middle" housing in more places in Austin, which would support transit ridership and allow for more people of diverse backgrounds to afford to live near transit.

- The Citywide Compatibility code amendment would modify height and setbacks triggered by proximity to single-family zoning and uses (also known as “Compatibility Standards”). One of the tools in the ETOD Policy Plan Policy Toolkit is “Reimagining of Compatibility Requirements” because allowing for more development potential could increase the density of jobs and housing near transit and possibly incentivize additional affordable housing as well.

The *South Central Waterfront Regulating Plan* would create a new regulating plan in the South Central Waterfront district to help realize the Vision Plan and other applicable City goals and policies. This district includes the Waterfront station area of the Project, and the regulating plan would include a density bonus program specific to this area of Austin (City of Austin 2018).

- The Home code amendment comprises two phases. In Phase 1, adopted on December 7, 2023, the changes allow for the construction of up to three homes on single-family lots, inclusive of tiny homes, and eliminate unrelated adult occupancy limits. In Phase 2, set for review and adoption in spring 2024, there will be a reduction in the minimum lot size required for building a single unit.
- The ETOD Overlay code amendment is proposing changes to the Land Development Code to create regulations that would apply to non-single-family properties that are located generally within 0.5 mile of the Project alignment and the Priority Extensions.

The Density Bonus code amendment includes a comprehensive approach that streamlines, calibrates, and combines existing and proposed programs across Austin. Density bonus programs are one of the primary mechanisms for creating income-restricted affordable housing units in Austin, and therefore, the performance of these voluntary programs is key to meeting our ETOD goals to support transit and allow for people of all backgrounds to benefit from living near transit and the opportunities it provides. Density bonuses allow developers to build more units than allowed by the site’s base zoning if the developer agrees to set aside a portion of units for income-restricted affordable housing or, in some cases, pay a fee. The affordable housing units must be income-restricted and leased or sold to a low-income or moderate-income household for the required affordability period. The University Neighborhood Overlay and the Downtown Density Bonus programs have been successful since their implementation and include a large portion of the Study Area.

The creation of new zoning districts includes previously initiated amendments to create new zoning districts, such as Town Zoning. These new zoning districts could include transit-supportive districts that may be appropriate for use near transit investments.

5.2.2 Construction-Related (Short-Term) Effects

5.2.2.1 Easements and Acquisitions

Easements, temporary easements, and fee acquisitions would be required, primarily for the relocation of utilities that conflict with the light rail transit guideway and in areas of constrained right-of-way to accommodate the guideway and its construction. Details of affected parcel and easement maps are provided in **DEIS Appendix E-1**.



5.2.2.2 Economic Benefits During Construction

Construction of the Project would generate economic benefits for Austin and the region from the creation of construction jobs and the wages and salaries paid to construction workers, as well as economic activity generated from the direct expenditures throughout the regional economy (i.e., the “ripple” or “multiplier effect”). ATP has estimated that construction of the Build Alternative would take approximately 6 years beginning in 2026 and would cost approximately \$4.774 billion total. As shown in **Table 14**, total employment effects for Travis County, when accounting for growth in supply chain industries and consumer spending, could reach approximately 7,282 temporary jobs per year during the Project construction phase. Labor income represents the total growth in earnings for individuals in new employment positions and could be approximately \$589 million annually during the 6-year construction phase.

Table 14: Modeled Economic Effects of Construction

| Effect | Travis County Employment (Temporary Jobs Due to Construction) | Labor Income (2024 millions) | Value Added (2024 millions) | Economic Output (2024 millions) |
|--------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Direct | 5,007 | 414,449,689 | 417,439,766 | 813,490,621 |
| Indirect | 937 | 83,402,505 | 141,609,762 | 240,465,840 |
| Induced | 1,338 | 91,320,242 | 166,275,466 | 269,522,780 |
| Total | 7,282 | \$589,172,436 | \$725,324,994 | \$1,323,479,241 |

Sources: IMPLAN economic model outputs using 2024 economic data; IMPLAN 2024.

5.2.2.3 Potential Adverse Economic Effects During Construction

ATP would develop a Construction Management Plan prior to construction to minimize traffic disruption and describe how access would be maintained to businesses for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Access to adjacent properties would be expected to remain open as much as possible. Changes in business access would be communicated by signs, displays, and social media platforms to adequately inform potential shoppers or visitors. Safe and convenient alternative routes would be designed to maintain access for people with disabilities. Businesses near construction sites would be adversely affected if noise, dust, traffic, and parking conditions cause customers to avoid shopping at those establishments. As described more fully in Section 6, Mitigation, ATP would coordinate with business owners along the Project corridor to identify strategies to minimize the effects of temporary construction easements, lane or road closures, and other property restrictions to ensure businesses stay open as much as possible.

6 Mitigation

Adverse socioeconomic effects would be primarily related to relocations.

As an integral component of the Project, ATP has incorporated \$300 million of anti-displacement funding to mitigate transportation investment-related displacement, manage potential adverse socioeconomic effects associated with housing affordability, and ensure that people of different incomes can benefit from transportation investments. Distribution of the funds is governed by a CapMetro and City-approved Joint Powers Agreement and an April 8, 2021, ATP–City of Austin interlocal agreement. Funds would be dispersed over Project Connect’s 13-year timeline with \$75 million in expenditures planned in the first 3 years (for land acquisition, community-initiated solutions, and land development).

In addition, ATP is working in regional partnerships across government, non-profit, and private industry to develop workforce development programs for local residents to be trained and ready for job opportunities and career pathways resulting from the Project, as well as other major infrastructure projects in the region. These efforts paved the way for the development of the new Infrastructure Academy in Austin and are anticipated to have a positive effect on socioeconomic conditions in Austin.

To mitigate potential effects on businesses due to construction activities, as part of the Preferred Alternative, ATP would develop a Construction Mitigation Plan that would include requirements for maintaining access to businesses, facilitating deliveries, developing signage, and creating traffic, noise and vibration, and dust control plans. ATP is currently developing a formal plan to reduce the burden on businesses prior to and during construction. When approved and executed, the plan would likely include mitigation measures and responsibilities for ATP and their construction contractors.

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Attachment A. Census Tracts, Census Block Groups, and Transportation Analysis Zones within the Study Area

Figure A-1: Census Tracts, Sheet 1 of 3

Figure A-2: Census Tracts, Sheet 2 of 3

Figure A-3: Census Tracts, Sheet 3 of 3

Figure A-4: Census Block Groups, Sheet 1 of 3

Figure A-5: Census Block Groups, Sheet 2 of 3

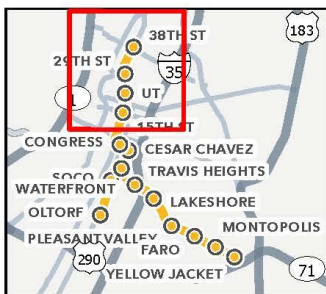
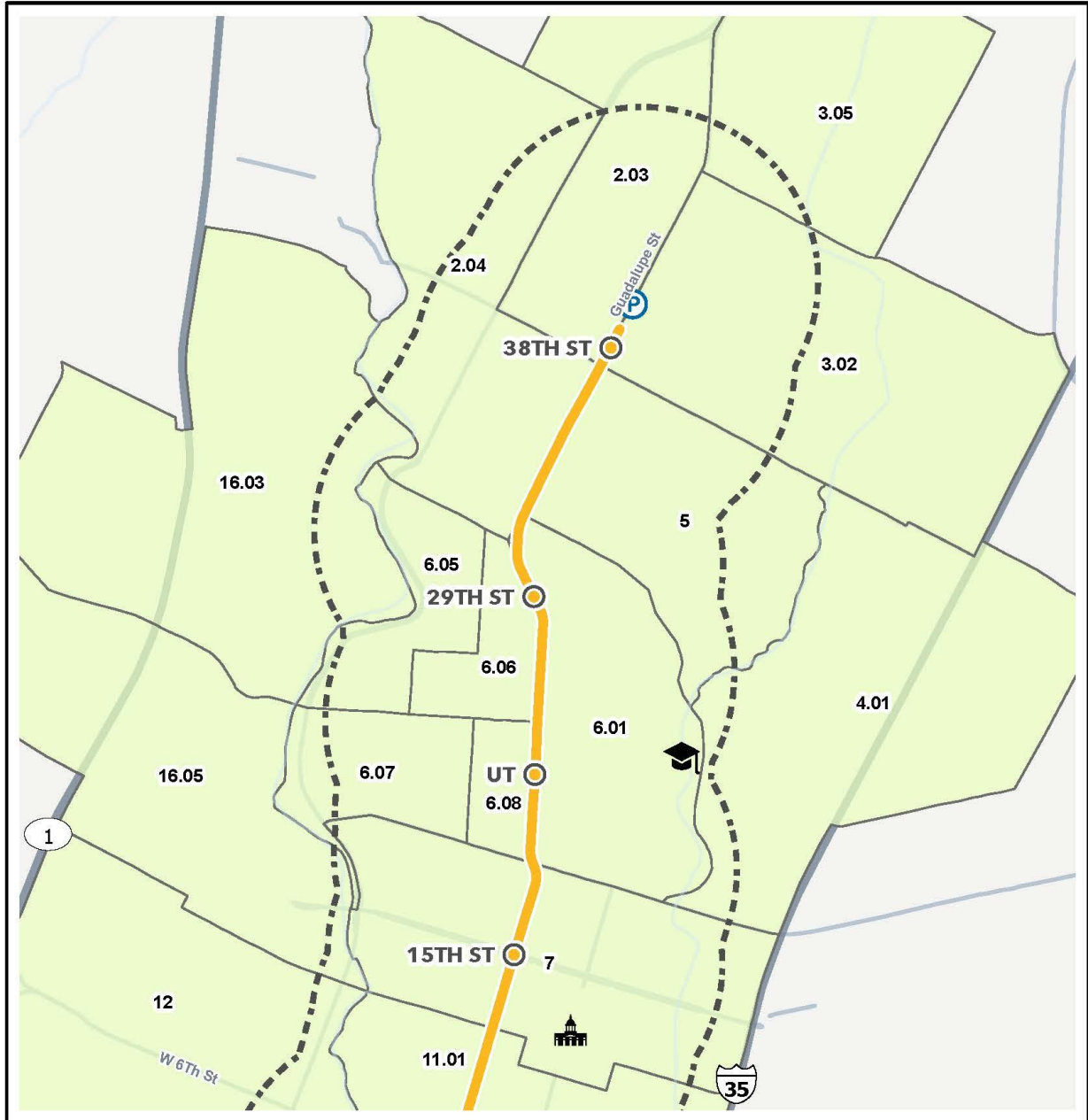
Figure A-6: Census Block Groups, Sheet 3 of 3

Figure A-7: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 1 of 3

Figure A-8: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 2 of 3

Figure A-9: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 3 of 3

Figure A-1: Census Tracts, Sheet 1 of 3

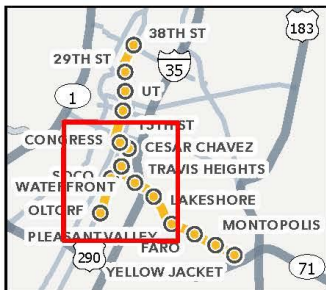


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Tracts (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-2: Census Tracts, Sheet 2 of 3

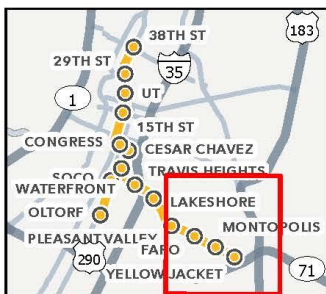


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Tracts (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-3: Census Tracts, Sheet 3 of 3

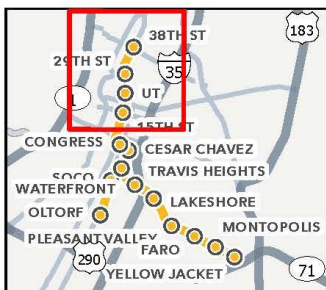
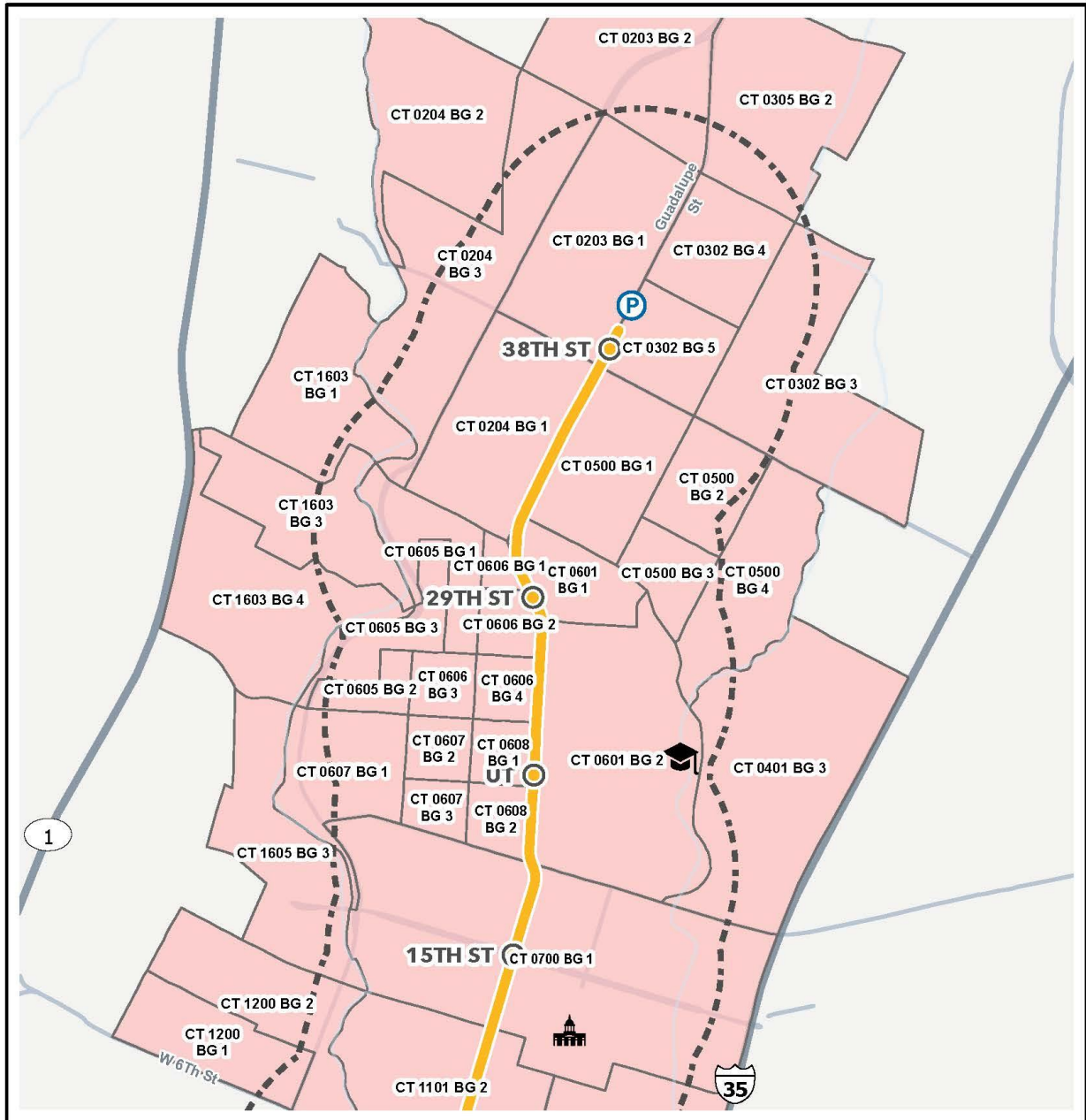


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Tracts (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-4: Census Block Groups, Sheet 1 of 3

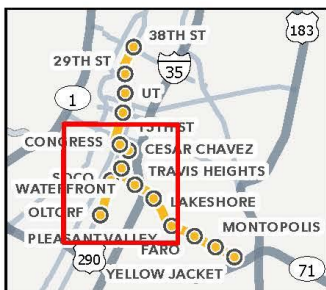


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Block Groups (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-5: Census Block Groups, Sheet 2 of 3

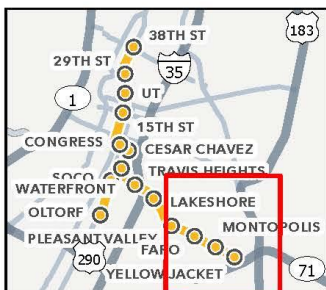
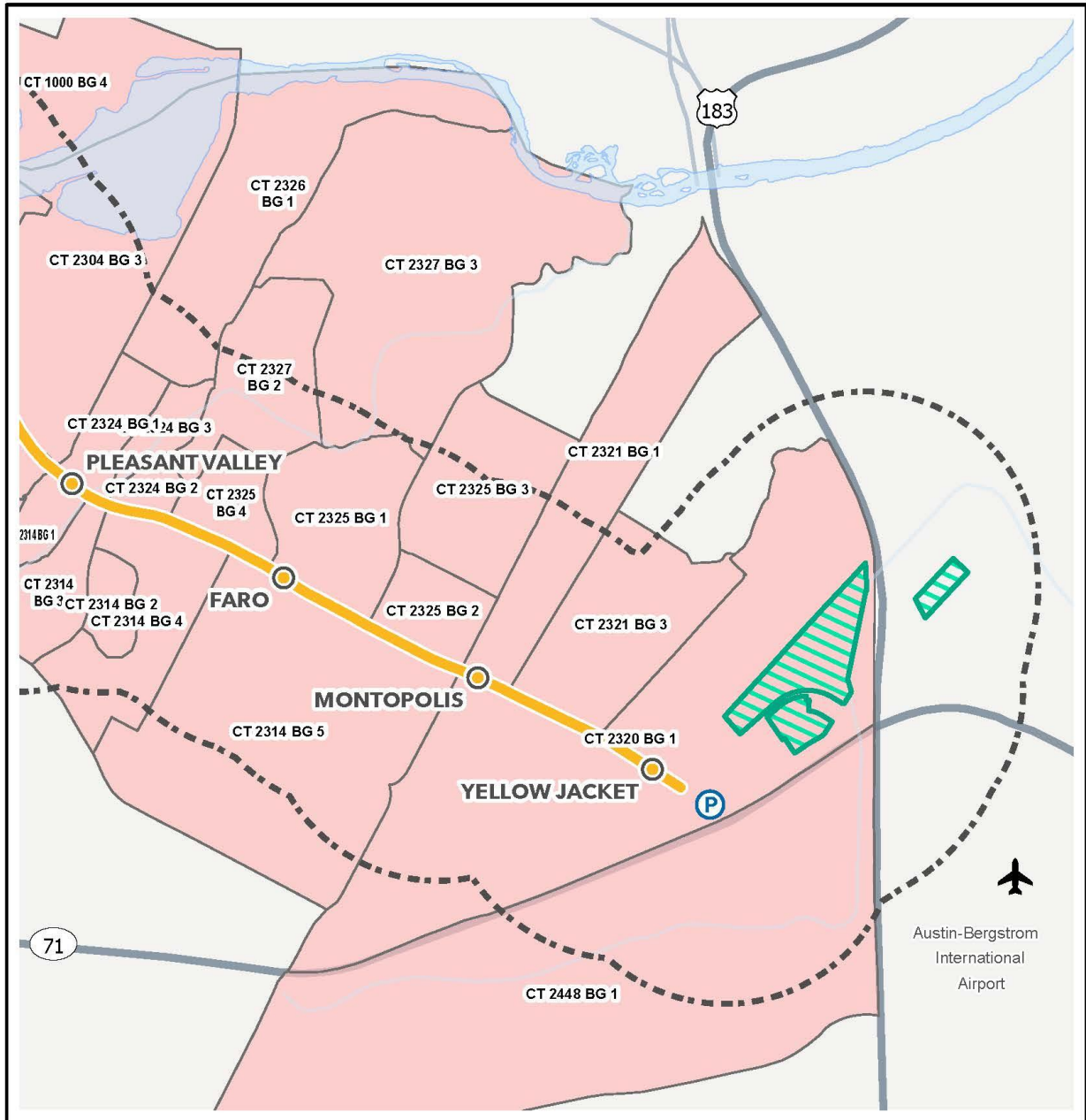


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Block Groups (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-6: Census Block Groups, Sheet 3 of 3

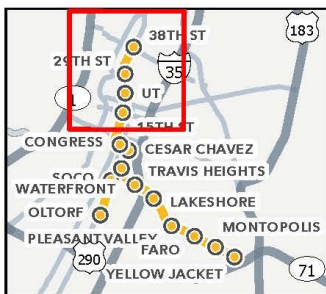
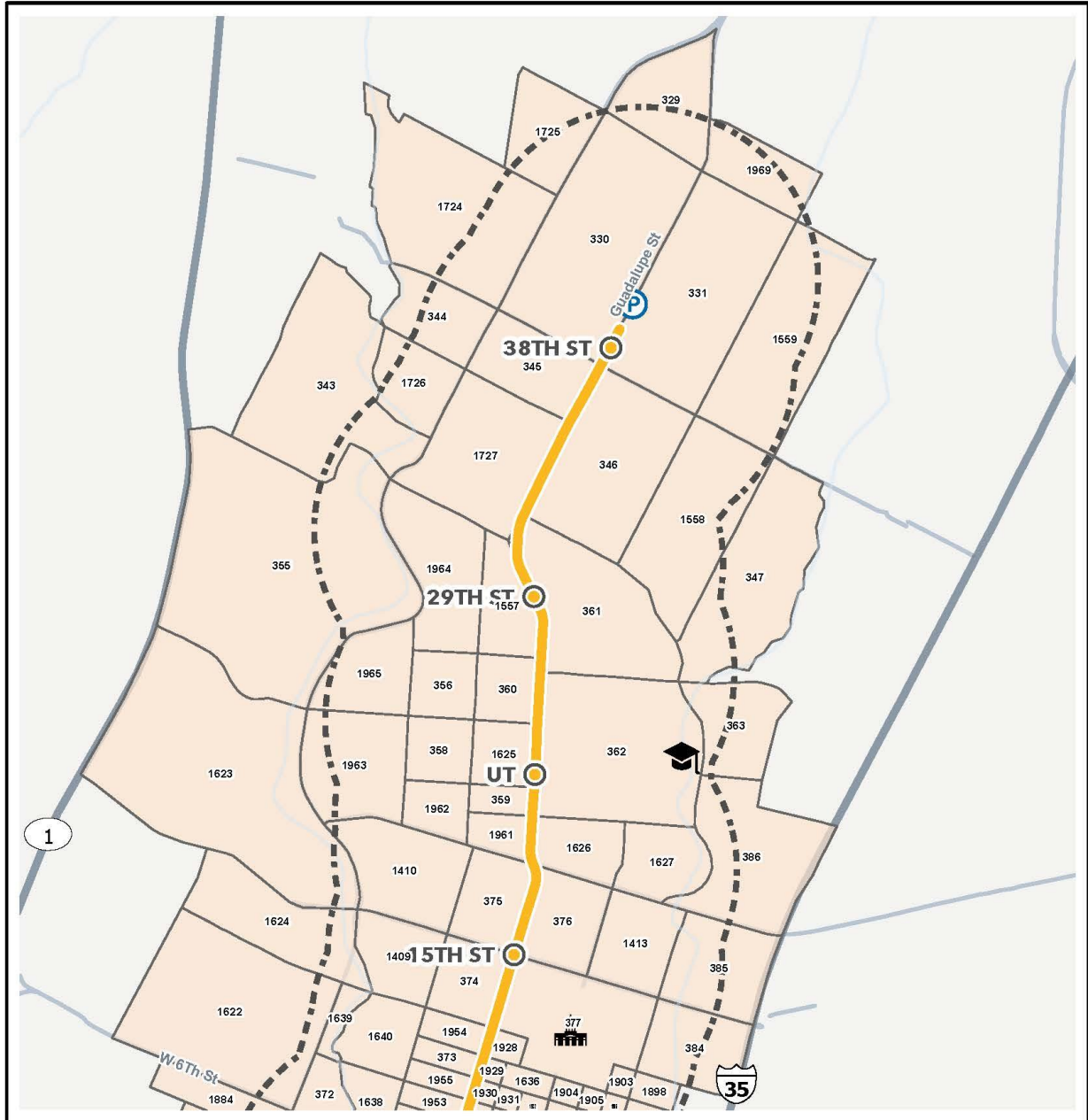


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- Census Block Groups (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-7: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 1 of 3

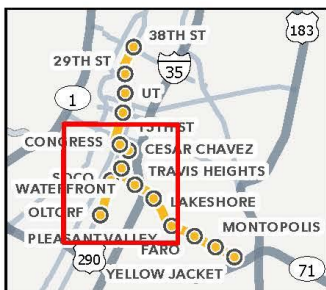


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- TAZ Projections (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-8: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 2 of 3

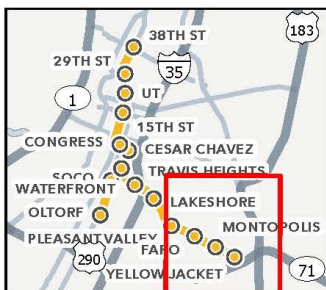
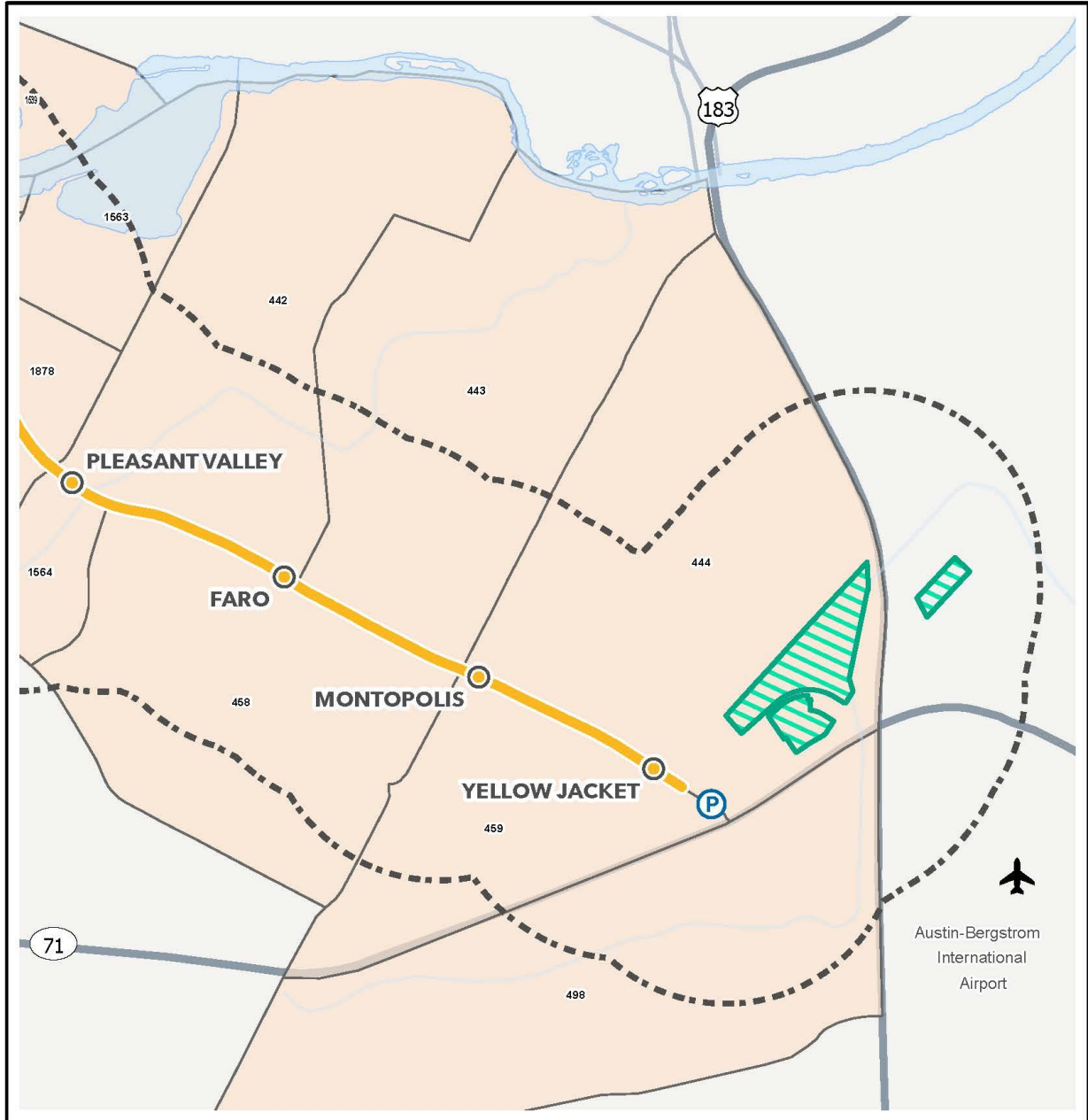


- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- TAZ Projections (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas

Figure A-9: Transportation Analysis Zones Projections (2020), Sheet 3 of 3



- Light Rail Station
- Light Rail Route
- Half Mile Study Area
- TAZ Projections (2022)
- Park & Ride Study Area
- Operations & Maintenance Facility



Source: Austin Transit Partnership 2024, Travis County, Texas