

# AUSTIN LIGHT RAIL SCOPING SUMMARY

The Austin Light Rail Implementation Plan was approved in June 2023, and Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) is advancing the first phase of a new light rail system in Austin, Texas. ATP is pursuing federal funding through the Capital Investment Grant program that is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). One of the requirements to receive federal grant funding is to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA (Scan QR code to see ATP's NEPA FAQ). As an early step, the FTA and ATP conducted public scoping meetings and other public involvement activities from January 19 through March 4, 2024. A full report that describes the process and what we heard, is available at [atptx.org](http://atptx.org). This summary provides an overview.



ATP's NEPA FAQ

## Spreading the Word



ATP sent mailers to

**38,445** homes, apartments, and businesses

\*within one-half-mile of the project area and along 45 existing transit routes

### Other advertising methods:

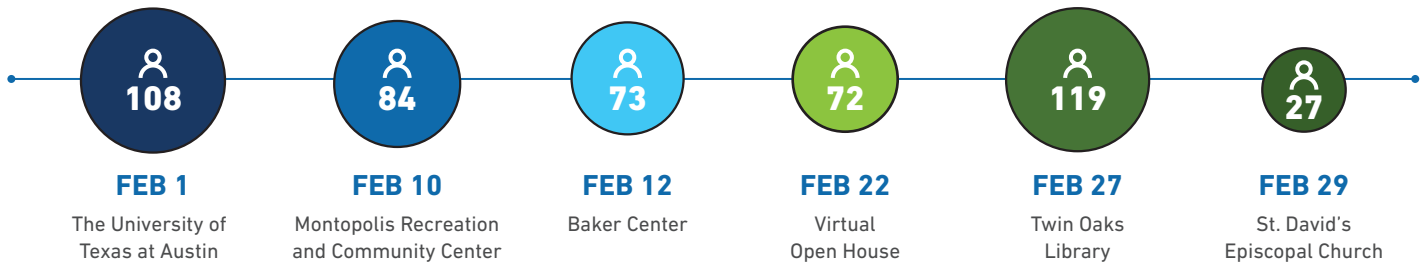
- ATP website
- Media advisory
- Social media posts
- Community calendars
- Print and online advertising
- Multiple listserv emails sent to 5,066 email addresses

### Flyers about scoping meetings were distributed to:

- Libraries
- Bus stops
- Community gathering places
- At large employers throughout the project area

## Open House Dates

How many attended:



**6** TOTAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

\*five in-person and one virtual



**480+** ATTENDEES

\*in-person and virtual meetings



**758** COMPLETED SURVEYS

\*in-person and online



Engaged with

**2,038+** PEOPLE AT OUTREACH EVENTS

\*includes at-stop outreach events, tabling, committee and stakeholder presentations, it does not include open house public meetings

### IN TOTAL, ATP RECEIVED:



**3,863** COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROJECT DURING THE SCOPING PERIOD

\* via mail, e-mail, in-person, online survey, and from public agencies and partners

# TOP THEMES

Comment themes were used to help ATP categorize and analyze the comments received.

## All Comment Themes



### In general, we heard:

- ➔ Participants were supportive of the plan to build Austin Light Rail
- ➔ Many urged ATP to build a reliable, safe, and cost-effective light rail system as quickly as possible

**NOTE:** Numerous comments were statements of 'General Support' and 'General Opposition.' These themes were removed from the percentages to focus on participants' main topics of interest that may be considered in continuing project development.

# WHAT WE HEARD

Below is a summary of feedback received about sections of the project, including the various design options presented to the public during the scoping period.

## Summary of Feedback

### NORTH SECTION

#### Park & Ride at 38<sup>th</sup> Street

Differing comments on location with some preferring further north to reduce congestion and others preferring a more central site. Comments identified the need to connect to more transit modes and future extensions. Other comments involved cost, safety and security, shade, water features, and preserving parkland.

### NORTH SECTION

#### UT Station Area

Some commenters prefer moving vehicles off Guadalupe St. and staying close to the UT campus, and other commenters raised concerns about where cars would be rerouted. Additional comments focused on increasing connections to more transit options, station accessibility, and safety and security.

### SOUTH SECTION

#### Lady Bird Lake Bridge Extension

Commenters had questions about cost and design, as well as connection and access to other modes of transportation. Other comments pointed to service reliability, station accessibility, and impacts on vehicular traffic.

### SOUTH SECTION

#### Park & Ride at Oltorf

Differing comments about location with some preferring the proposed site and ease of connection and access to other modes of transportation. Others prefer more focus on future extensions. Additional comments mentioned safety and security and impacts to ridership.

### SOUTH SECTION

#### Travis Heights Station

Comments were concerned with station accessibility and the effect on ridership in that area. Connection and access to other modes of transportation and to the neighborhood and community resources were also mentioned.

### EAST SECTION

#### Grove Station

The closeness to ACC and Ruiz Library was mentioned, as well as connection and access to other modes of transportation. Other comments raised concerns over station accessibility.

### EAST SECTION

#### Park & Ride at Yellow Jacket

Differing comments about location with some preferring the closeness to a priority extension, while others preferred a location further from the city center. Other comments mentioned impacts to vehicular traffic, connection and access to other modes of transportation, and station accessibility.

### DOWNTOWN SECTION

#### Wooldridge Square Station

Comments mentioned the closeness to the TX State Capitol and ease of connecting to and accessing other modes of transit, station accessibility, safety and security, and service reliability.

### DOWNTOWN SECTION

#### Cesar Chavez Station

Some comments focused on having connection and access to other modes of transportation and station accessibility, while other comments questioned whether neighborhood and community resources would be available at this location, and others questioned the cost.

### EAST SECTION

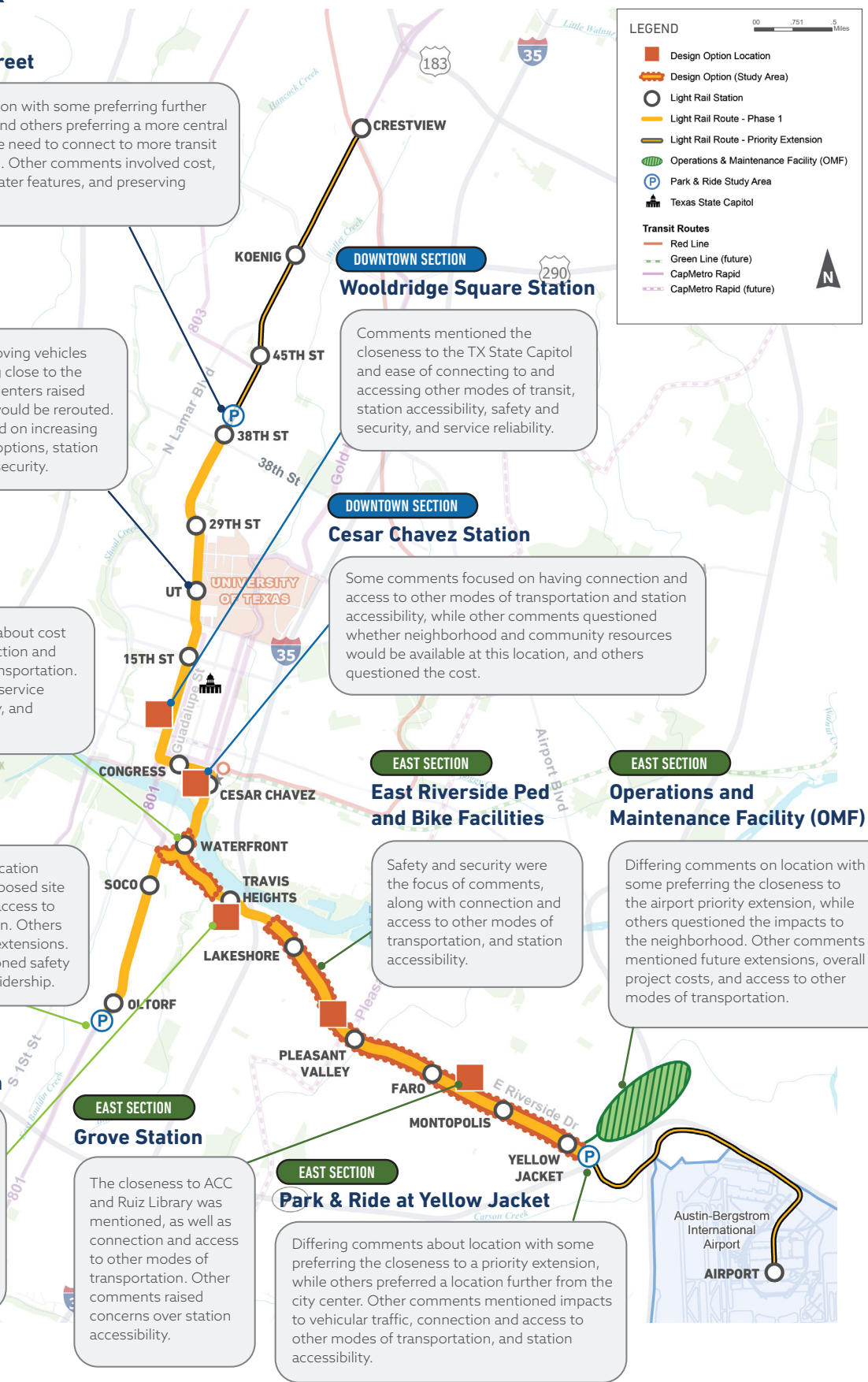
#### East Riverside Ped and Bike Facilities

Safety and security were the focus of comments, along with connection and access to other modes of transportation, and station accessibility.

### EAST SECTION

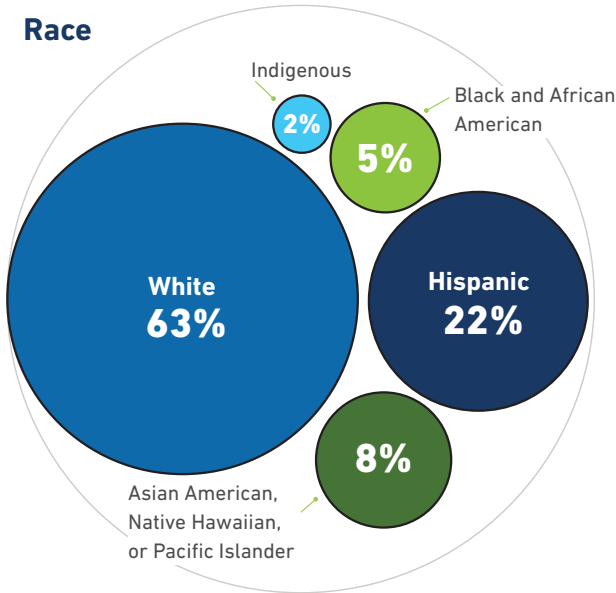
#### Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF)

Differing comments on location with some preferring the closeness to the airport priority extension, while others questioned the impacts to the neighborhood. Other comments mentioned future extensions, overall project costs, and access to other modes of transportation.

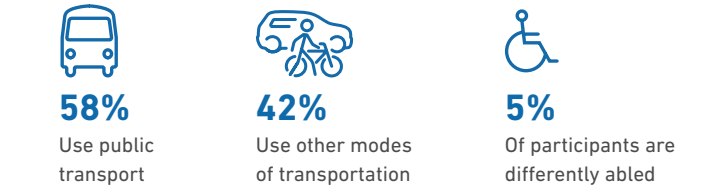
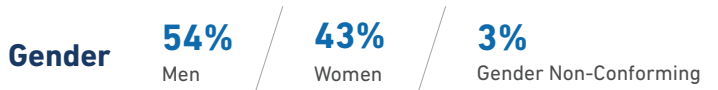
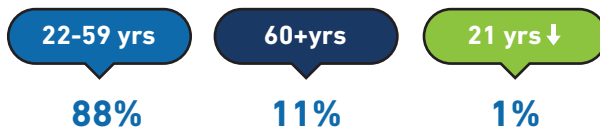


# WHO DID WE HEAR FROM

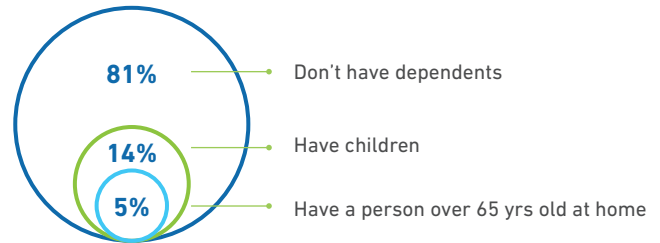
## Race



## Ages of Participants



## Dependents



# NEXT STEPS

The public and agency comments received will help the FTA and ATP:

- Finalize the purpose and need for the project
- Identify additional considerations
- Inform the evaluation of the proposed project and design options in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

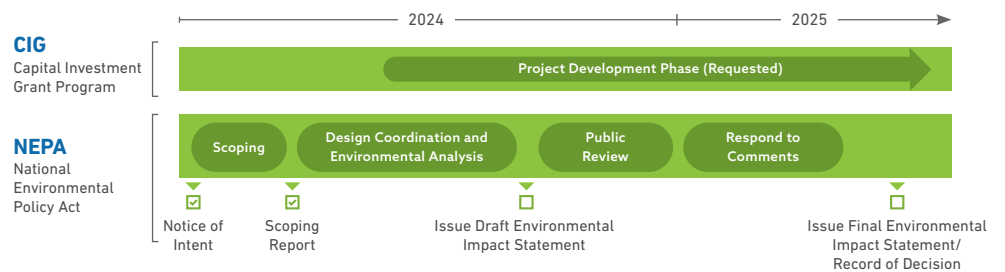
After considering scoping comments, FTA and ATP will prepare a Draft EIS:

The Draft EIS will evaluate the proposed project, design options, and describe why some alternatives were eliminated from detailed study

## Work to Advance Austin Light Rail

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

FEDERAL FUNDING PROCESS



## Resources that will be analyzed as part of the Draft EIS:

### Physical and Natural Environment

- Air Quality
- Soils and Geology
- Water Quality
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Energy
- Hazardous Materials
- Noise and Vibration
- Temporary Construction Impacts

### Human Environment

- Environmental Justice (EJ)
- Safety and Security
- Land Use and Zoning
- Socioeconomics and Economic Development
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Land Acquisitions and Displacements

### Cultural Environment

- Cultural, Historic, and Archeological
- Parks and Recreational
- Visual Quality
- Neighborhood and Community Resources