

An architectural rendering of a modern transit center. The scene is set in a vibrant, sunlit urban environment. In the foreground, a wide, paved pedestrian walkway with a red brick finish is lined with lush greenery and tall grasses. A man in a white t-shirt and a woman in a red shirt are walking hand-in-hand, smiling. To their left, a person in a wheelchair is also walking. Further back, a blue bus is stopped at a transit stop, and several people are riding bicycles. The background features a multi-story modern building with a mix of glass facades and vertical wooden slats. The sky is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

South Congress Transit Center Station Area Vision Plan

January 2025

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT



CapMetro

Acknowledgments

CapMetro

City of Austin
Planning Department

Consultants
Perkins&Will
Nelson\Nygaard
HR&A Advisors
Cultural Strategies
Movitas

Along with the staff mentioned here, many other City employees from various departments contributed their expertise, recommendations, and support in finalizing this vision plan.

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“Building on the previous efforts, North Lamar and South Congress Transit Center Vision Plans have a unique opportunity to serve as active templates for transit and equitable development to come together in a way that is accessible, multi-modal, sustainable, and responsive to the changing needs of our customers and our community.”

Sharmila Mukherjee

EVP for Strategic Planning and Development, CapMetro

“The North Lamar and South Congress Transit Center Station Areas present exciting opportunities to envision areas around transit investments in ways that benefit both current and future community members by increasing access to job opportunities, making it easier to meet daily needs, and increasing housing options.”

Lauren Middleton-Pratt

Director of Planning, City of Austin

01 Project Overview

Introduction

The Vision

Why South Congress Transit Center (SCTC)?

Process and Engagement

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) and the City of Austin are invested in Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD). ETOD strives to ensure that those with the greatest need for transit enhancements can also benefit from them. This typically includes people of color, low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, and households with limited or no access to cars. Achieving equitable outcomes through ETOD requires a holistic approach to transit and other investments that considers and addresses how transit infrastructure intersects with housing affordability, small business interests, economic opportunity, education, health, and patterns of inequality embedded within social and economic systems. This ETOD station area vision plan is a starting point to shape an equitable outcome in the South Congress Transit Center Station Area.







Introduction

The South Congress Transit Center Station Area Vision Plan is grounded in the three-year planning and community engagement process that was the basis for the ETOD Policy Plan. The ETOD Policy Plan establishes goals and priorities for equitable transit-oriented development in Austin.

The South Congress Transit Center (SCTC) Station Area Vision Plan (vision plan) captures the aspirations of the neighborhood’s current community members, transit riders, local business owners, the greater Austin community, people who visit the area, CapMetro, and the City of Austin, for transformative ETOD. As the owner and operator of public transit in Austin, CapMetro partnered with the City of Austin, the land use authority, to spearhead this vision plan to shape a future of equitable growth around the existing SCTC Transit Center.

This vision plan, along with the North Lamar Transit Center (NLTC) Station Area Vision Plan, are the first plans to be guided by the [ETOD Policy Plan](#) accepted by the Austin City Council on March 9, 2023. These station area plans will be attached to the Imagine Austin Plan and will provide policy-level guidance on regulations, programs, and investments in the station area. The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan supports six ETOD goals by recommending land use changes and transportation investments, reimagining the transit center, and implementing a variety of programs at the local and citywide levels.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Goals

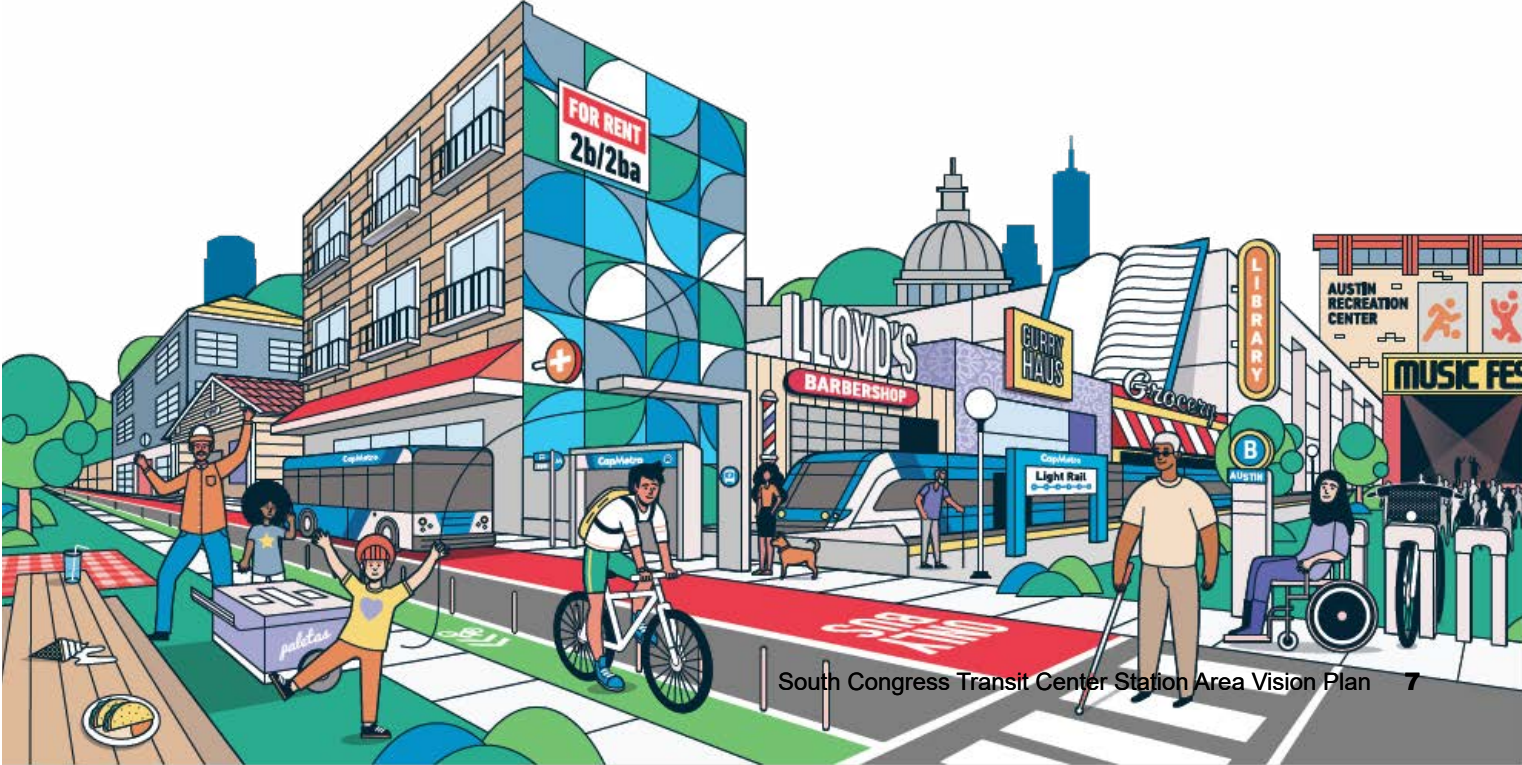
-  **Goal 1:** Enable all residents to benefit from safe, sustainable, and accessible transportation.
-  **Goal 2:** Help to close racial health and wealth gaps.
-  **Goal 3:** Preserve and increase housing opportunities that are affordable and attainable.
-  **Goal 4:** Expand access to high-quality jobs & career opportunities.
-  **Goal 5:** Support healthy neighborhoods that meet daily needs.
-  **Goal 6:** Expand Austin’s diverse cultural heritage and small, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)- owned, and legacy businesses.

What is Equitable Transit-Oriented Development?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) encourages compact, mixed-use projects centered around effective public transit. While this approach improves upon lower-density, auto-centric alternatives, TODs historically have not distributed benefits equally and have adversely impacted the quality of life for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) populations, as well as low-income communities and small businesses in Austin. Successful TOD can lead to an increase in property values, disproportionately burdening existing community members and small businesses in the area, and leading to the displacement of low-income households, small businesses, and communities of color. In response, the City of Austin, CapMetro, and the community have adopted an equitable TOD (ETOD) approach. ETOD seeks to go beyond a “Do No Harm” philosophy by generating fair outcomes that aim to deliver market-feasible community benefits. The intent is to ensure that all community members, particularly historically marginalized communities, can thrive and enjoy the advantages of complete communities and transit connectivity. Furthermore, ETOD emphasizes that transit infrastructure and policy interventions create opportunities for all Austinites to prosper.

Purpose of the Station Area Vision Plan

The purpose of this station area vision plan is to provide a comprehensive and strategic framework for developing and enhancing the half-mile radius area surrounding the transit station, and the transit station itself. A half-mile radius is used because that distance is approximately a 10-minute walk, bike, or roll from the station. In anticipation of the implementation of Project Connect—an expansion of the transit network encompassing light rail, rapid bus, and commuter rail—it is critical to envision the future of the SCTC and its role as a multimodal transportation hub. The vision plan addresses the area’s unique characteristics and offers tailored solutions that foster equity, sustainability, vibrancy, and connectivity in the communities surrounding the station. The station area vision plan follows community-driven priorities determined through robust engagement facilitated by CapMetro and the City of Austin, ensuring that community voices actively contribute to shaping the future of the neighborhoods surrounding the SCTC. These conversations were guided by resident knowledge of the neighborhoods, realistic market projections, and an understanding of the planning process required to implement ETOD.



Supporting Equitable Outcomes

The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan (vision plan) provides a framework for applying land use regulations and transportation investments in concert with other policy tools to support equitable transit-oriented development. The City, CapMetro, and the Austin Transit Partnership (ATP), are committed to implementing multiple policy tools within the SCTC Station Area and across the Project Connect System that will help support the vision of equitable transit-oriented development as the station area and transit system evolves. These policy tools, as outlined in the [ETOD Policy Plan](#), are envisioned to be applied to the station area.

Leveraging Publicly Owned Land

This vision plan includes a high-level concept plan for the future redevelopment of the CapMetro-owned SCTC site. CapMetro will use this concept as a starting point for property-specific planning and design activities that will occur on the site over the years ahead. As part of the redevelopment process, CapMetro is committed to exploring approaches that provide additional equitable community benefits, such as affordable housing and retail space, publicly available open space, and improved transit amenities, while continuing to serve its purpose as a transit hub. CapMetro anticipates conducting a market analysis, establishing key goals for the site, and presenting housing affordability targets, in mid-2025.

Investing in Affordable Housing and Displacement Prevention

When Austin voters approved funding of Project Connect in 2020, they also approved 300 million dollars in support of displacement prevention initiatives. The City of Austin Housing Department has partnered with the Austin Transit Partnership to expend this funding on land acquisition, housing development assistance, and anti-displacement solutions along the Project Connect System:

- **Land Acquisition and Affordable Housing Development Assistance**

Project Connect's anti-displacement funding supplements other sources of affordable housing funding to support direct land acquisitions as well as the Rental Housing Development Assistance and Ownership Housing Development Assistance Programs. A noteworthy investment is the Woodward Flats apartment complex, a half-mile north of the South Congress Transit Center, where all 52 apartments were bought by the Austin Housing Finance in 2023 and made 100% income-restricted affordable housing, with 14 apartments affordable at 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), 18 affordable at 50% of AMI, and the remaining 19 affordable at 80% of AMI.

- **Community Initiated Solutions**

The Community Initiated Solutions (CIS) program empowers local organizations to propose programs that reduce residential displacement and create economic mobility opportunities for vulnerable communities along Project Connect corridors. As Austin's transit system expands, these funds are critical to expanding access to stable housing and transit for low-income communities. As of September 2024, a little over \$18 million has been awarded to thirteen partners committed to preventing displacement of historically marginalized individuals by stabilizing tenants, preserving homeownership, or providing pathways to economic mobility. Several of these organizations already work with vulnerable communities in the SCTC area.

Since the program was launched in 2023, over 98,000 families that have been vulnerable to displacement have been engaged through outreach and educational events, and over 1,000 households received direct financial assistance. The CIS program has also contributed to the Community Land Trust accelerator program, homeowner support programs offered by Del Valle Community Coalition and LifeAnew, and workforce training from Goodwill, to mention some.

Incentivizing Community Benefits

In May 2024, Council created and applied a new zoning tool known as the ETOD Overlay along the Phase 1 Light Rail Line and priority extensions. This tool includes a Density Bonus that allows participating property owners to increase the density of their projects in exchange for providing affordable housing. Work is underway to engage the public and develop a similar zoning tool that could be applied to other Project Connect station areas, including the South Congress Transit Center Station Area in the future. The new tool could be used to encourage the development of affordable housing and potentially other community benefits including space for childcare, small business, and creative and cultural spaces. In addition, the Economic Development Department is working on additional economic incentives designed to support the protection and enhancement of legacy small businesses and cultural spaces that are described in more detail in the ETOD Policy Toolkit.

The draft Future Land Use Map included in the vision plan has been consciously designed to build on community assets, including existing affordable housing and small business ecosystem, and is intended to support careful consideration of land use changes over time while supporting new development.

Requiring Sensitive Redevelopment

To protect communities and enhance their awareness of proposed land use changes within their neighborhoods, staff will prepare a companion code amendment, outlining the future process for amending the Future Land Use Map once it is adopted. This amendment will require property-specific notice and community engagement, ensuring that community members have the opportunity to voice their opinions and participate in the public hearings before a Future Land Use Map amendment could move forward to City Council for consideration.

The ETOD Overlay, applied along the Phase 1 Light Rail Line and its priority extensions, includes redevelopment requirements that mandate property owners who participate in the density bonus to replace certain existing on-site affordable housing and commercial spaces. It is anticipated that any similar tool that is designed to apply to other Project Connect station areas would include similar requirements to ensure community needs are met.

Metrics for Success

To evaluate the impact of existing policies, programs, and investments designed to prevent resident displacement, the Housing Department is collaborating with the community to create Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Once these metrics are defined, they will facilitate monitoring the City's progress and support data-driven decisions related to resource distribution, policy modifications, and project prioritization. By involving the community in the development of these KPIs, and presenting the findings in a public database, the City aims to provide transparency regarding the considerations and efforts underway to address community needs.

Plan Integration

The South Congress Transit Center (SCTC) Station Area Vision Plan (vision plan) captures the aspirations of the neighborhood’s current community members, transit riders, local business owners, the greater Austin community, people who visit the area, CapMetro, and the City of Austin, for transformative ETOD. As the owner and operator of public transit in Austin, CapMetro partnered with the City of Austin, the land use authority, to spearhead this vision plan to shape a future of equitable growth around the existing SCTC.

This vision plan, along with the SCTC Station Area Vision Plan, are the first plans to be guided by the [ETOD Policy Plan](#) accepted by the Austin City Council on March 9, 2023. These station area plans will be attached to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and will provide policy-level guidance on regulations, programs, and investments in the station area. The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan supports six ETOD goals by recommending land use changes and transportation investments, reimagining the transit center, and calling for a variety of programs at the local and citywide levels.

The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan is a 30-year growth and development plan that guides the City’s decision-making to help make sure Austin is well-positioned to be a beacon of sustainability, equity, and economic opportunity. Imagine Austin is the foundation for different City programs and plans, including this station area vision plan. Among its many goals, Imagine Austin promotes a robust transportation network, economic growth, and environmental sustainability to meet the diverse needs of our community members. Guided by it, this vision plan identifies South Congress Avenue and South First Street as Mixed-Use Corridors, with South Congress also indicated as a High-Capacity Transit corridor. The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan supports the objectives of the Imagine Austin Plan and provides recommendations on those corridors that can increase access to public transit and ensure that opportunities are equitable and within reach for all community members.

The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) serves as the transportation element of Imagine Austin. The ASMP outlines planned roadways and bike lanes, as well as infrastructure investments needed across different modes of transportation, and generally supports a goal of shifting 50% of automobile trips to alternative modes of transportation including public transit. The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan proposes dense, mixed-use developments, and a range of transportation options oriented to public transit that will help the City meet the goals of the ASMP.

Implementation of the SCTC will require connectivity and access improvements in the station area. The ASMP will need to be amended to include proposed street connections for the City to require the necessary right of way and develop more specific plans for the construction of the new street connections in the future.

Additionally, this vision plan works with the Urban Trails Plan which seeks to provide community members with safe and comfortable access to natural areas, such as trails and parks. The Urban Trails Program identified the Bergstrom Spur Trail, a segment located within the SCTC Station Area, as a high-priority project in the 2014 Urban Trails Plan. This project which bisects the plan from east to west, is a key project in the area for its

potential to significantly improve local urban trail access in southwest Austin, improve connectivity, and provide a viable route to walk or bike to the airport. The Bergstrom Spur was also highlighted as a critical link for connecting regional pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks in the 2017 Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Regional Active Transportation Plan and the 2019 Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan supports the Project Connect Transit Vision by planning for the CapMetro-owned transit center and broader station area to support equitable transit-oriented development. Equitable transit-oriented development maximizes public transit accessibility, supports transit ridership, and ensures that the transit system serves existing community members, in particular those who are vulnerable to displacement. The transit center is at present envisioned to continue as a transit hub that serves as a MetroRapid Line station with high ridership, but light rail could be extended to the transit center in the future.

The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan is being coordinated with Project Connect and CapMetro to ensure that the redevelopment of the transit center and future transit services around the station areas are responsive to community needs. The vision plan plays a key role in a larger policy framework supporting a future where transportation options are varied, accessible, and integrated into the everyday lives of the Austin community members.



The Vision

Connecting transit, jobs, housing, and daily life.

Creating opportunities for community members of diverse backgrounds and means.

Generating equitable outcomes for the Austin community.



Why SCTC?

The SCTC is a key asset for the CapMetro transit system. At five acres, it currently functions as a major bus transfer center for some of Austin's most popular routes (801, 1, 310, and 315). The parcel today is occupied by a bus loop with ten shelters, a park-and-ride lot, and other transit amenities. While the SCTC is slated for future expansion of the light rail system (see Figure 1 below), in the meantime, it will continue to serve the neighborhood as an active bus hub. Situated along the highly visible South Congress Avenue corridor and commercial district, and at the strategic intersection with Ben White Boulevard/US-290, the neighborhood has seen rapid growth in recent years, with the predominantly industrial character partially transitioning to mid-rise multifamily development, creative industries, and entertainment destinations.

With this context in mind, CapMetro believes there is a major opportunity to reimagine SCTC in a way that improves the multimodal transit infrastructure while better serving community members, students, employees, and visitors with a richer mix of services, mixed-income housing, and job opportunities that are accessible to a wider segment of the community. The aim is for the SCTC to better meet the evolving needs of the community members and users, and create a multimodal transit hub surrounded by a well-connected, transit-supportive, and equitable neighborhood.

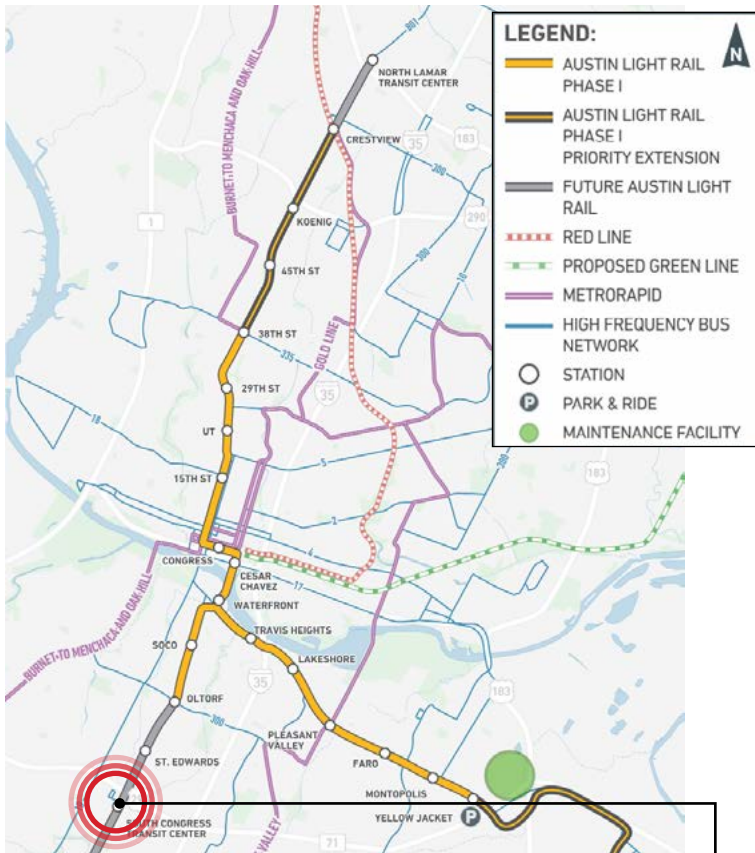


Figure 1: Project Connect Map
Credit : Austin Transit Partnership (ATP)

South Congress Transit Center

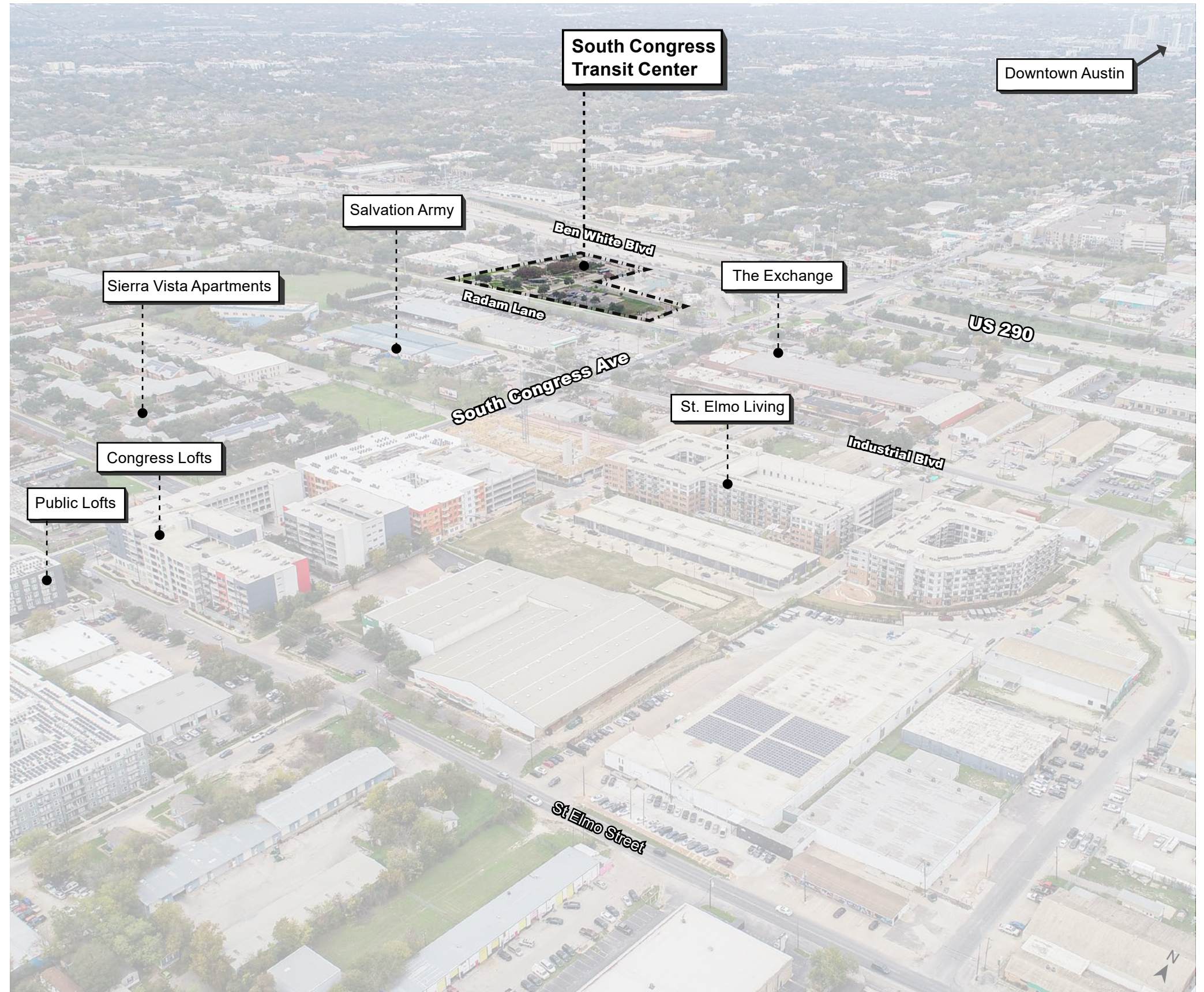


Figure 2: South Congress Transit Center Station Area

Process and Engagement

Achieving equity in TOD requires intentional, meaningful, and inclusive community engagement. The main goal of community engagement throughout ETOD planning is to involve historically underrepresented community members, compensating them for their time and knowledge. In line with the extensive ETOD engagement process and lessons learned that preceded the vision plan development, CapMetro and the City of Austin led a robust, inclusive community engagement effort to understand the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the community in the SCTC Station Area.

A key lesson learned during the ETOD engagement preceding the vision plan is that it took multiple engagement strategies to reach Austin's diverse communities. The vision plan outreach effort included a variety of input platforms to ensure voices not often heard through traditional engagement forums were reached. The engagement strategies implemented included online surveys, an in-person community workshop in the station area, compensated focus group meetings with targeted participation, tabling events, and neighborhood business walks to better understand the local lived experience in the station area and community members' aspirations for

the future. CapMetro also hired Community Connectors, a diverse, engaged, and compensated group of grassroots community members who helped us reach their networks. The priority for the vision plan engagement was to capture feedback from people who live, work, visit, and ride the buses in the neighborhood and incorporate that feedback as a foundation guide and influence for the vision plan development.

The first and second rounds of engagement for the vision plan took place in Spring and Fall 2023. In Spring 2023, we asked the community to tell us about the unique characteristics and needs of the SCTC Station Area including mapping existing community assets, areas for improvement, and community needs. In Fall 2023, we asked the community to respond to specific options for improving the area's street grid and connectivity, and open spaces as well as scenarios for future development. The metrics on the next page give a snapshot of the combined outreach efforts.



7094	Postcards mailed in the Spring and Fall of 2023
425	Flyers distributed
5	Languages used for engagement outreach
2	Online surveys
314	Survey responses
187	Local businesses visited
13	One-hour focus groups held
10	Tabling events
2	In-person four-hour public workshops at nearby public elementary schools
4	Virtual public workshops

**Combined statistics for NLTC and SCTC Station Area community engagement efforts undertaken during the Spring and Fall of 2023.*

Might be cool to have greenspaces around the area that are walkable, so people will frequent the businesses around as well.

With so much new residential construction with retail and restaurants in the St. Elmo area, it needs safe, pedestrian access between it and the transit station.

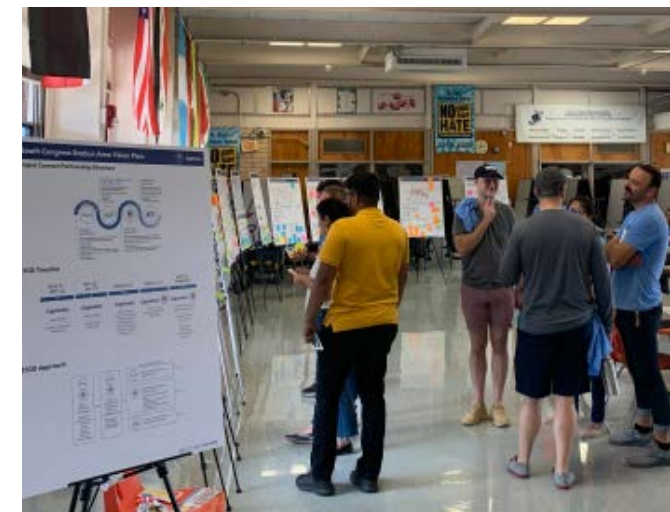
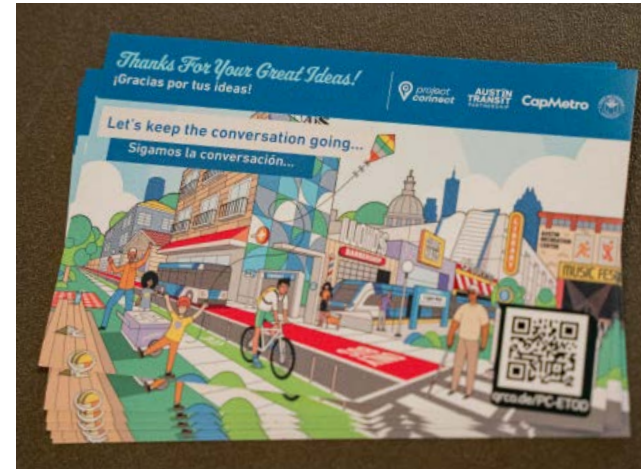
The Yard has been a great little hang out spot for coffee, food trucks, wine, spirits, and beer. I hope they continue to add to this especially after the SOCO train station opens.

There are not any sidewalks for three blocks from St. Elmo to the freeway. Please prioritize adding sidewalks to this stretch.



Surveys

To inform the SCTC Station Area Vision Plan, two online surveys were hosted, one in Spring 2023 and the second in Fall 2023, to engage area community members, transit riders, people who visit the area, and the greater Austin community. Responses from the first survey helped us understand important community characteristics that should be preserved and celebrated, and helped identify the community’s aspiration for future improvements. Responses to the second survey helped further refine the recommendations proposed in this vision plan. While the first survey relied on a Google translate feature for additional languages, the second survey was translated into Spanish, Mandarin, Chinese, Arabic, and Vietnamese.



Focus Groups

Thirteen one-hour focus groups were held across the Spring and Fall engagement periods with specific sessions held in Spanish and with an American Sign Language interpreter. The purpose of the focus groups was to:

1. Connect with and receive feedback from priority populations (BIPOC, Spanish-speaking, and low-income community members), users of the transit centers, neighborhood community groups and organizations, and local businesses.
2. Share with focus group members CapMetro’s ETOD study goals, station evaluation criteria, best practices, and existing conditions.
3. Provide a forum to explicitly discuss potential future improvements and development in the SCTC Station Area.
4. Build trust and demonstrate transparency around ETOD.

The focus groups were hosted as virtual Zoom meetings. The interactive presentations were displayed on Google Jamboard slides where the assigned notetaker would live capture participants’ feedback by applying virtual “sticky notes” throughout the discussion. Each participant received a \$50 HEB e-gift card within 24 hours of the focus group concluding. All text and content were translated to Spanish for the Spanish-speaking focus groups.

Radam Lane-Industrial Boulevard crossing is “most urgent”

South Congress Ave. & South First Street, both need safe crossings on bus streets, green spaces, sidewalk improvements for pedestrian access, and storm drains to ease flooding!

There are long-term businesses currently being driven out, leading to newer developments, which is not always a good thing.

Community Workshop

To inform the SCTC Station Area Vision Plan, four community workshops were held, three virtually in Spring 2023 and one in-person in Fall 2023. For the virtual workshops, American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation were provided. The project team provided an overview of ETOD planning to date, explained the purpose of the vision plan, and shared the existing conditions of the station area. The project team then led an open discussion with attendees that included live notetaking on Google Jamboards. The in-person workshop was held at St. Elmo Elementary School near SCTC. Attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback on both station areas at the workshops. The project team provided illustrative boards showing potential station area improvements and future development scenarios for the community to respond to. The in-person workshop provided high-quality feedback and a deep level of discussion. The average time a community member spent discussing the materials and providing feedback to staff was over an hour. Workshop attendees were mostly of individuals who lived or worked in the neighborhood, the intended engagement demographic.



Station and Business Walks

The project team and members of the Community Connectors knocked on the doors of 60 businesses within a half-mile radius of the SCTC in order to invite feedback via survey, public workshops, or email. These business walks reached out to a diverse community, from mom-and-pop stores to national retailers. Postcards and flyers were also mailed as part of the extended communication process.



Station Tabling

CapMetro engagement team tabled at different locations within the SCTC Station Area such as Sierra Vista, an affordable housing development, and at the transit center itself, during both morning and evening rush hours. This engaged a far more diverse set of respondents, ensuring transit riders, including unhoused Austinites, had a chance to inform this work as it progressed.

Bergstrom Spur should be treated as a bike and pedestrian lane with residences and coffee shops along its side to enable car-free living.

Transit Center should become a mixed-use TOD with electric bus/ rail/ metrobike stations. It will connect the future Bergstrom Spur trail to the airport and S. 1st.

Help local businesses. Austin is supposed to be so artistic, graffiti artists plenty (re local art installations).

02

Station Area Overview

Neighborhood Snapshot

Existing Connectivity

Existing Land Use

The SCTC Station Area is positioned as a major gateway into central Austin from the south, just over three miles from downtown and within easy bike and bus distance of the iconic South Congress commercial district and St. Edwards University to the north. The transit center serves the community with several frequent bus routes, and the planned Bergstrom Spur Trail will soon transform a former rail spur to connect the station area miles to the east and west with an off-street multi-use path. Large parcels of commercial and light industrial uses are prevalent here. However, area redevelopment has brought in several large mixed-use residential projects, and the area is emerging as a food, beverage, and entertainment destination that contributes to displacement pressure on existing community members and businesses. Highway US-290 stands as an infrastructure barrier that divides the station area north to south, making it difficult to navigate, and isolating community members of this area. The large block structure, presence of major infrastructure, lack of safe walking and bicycling connectivity, and limited open space pose challenges for this culturally-rich, racially diverse, and enterprising community.

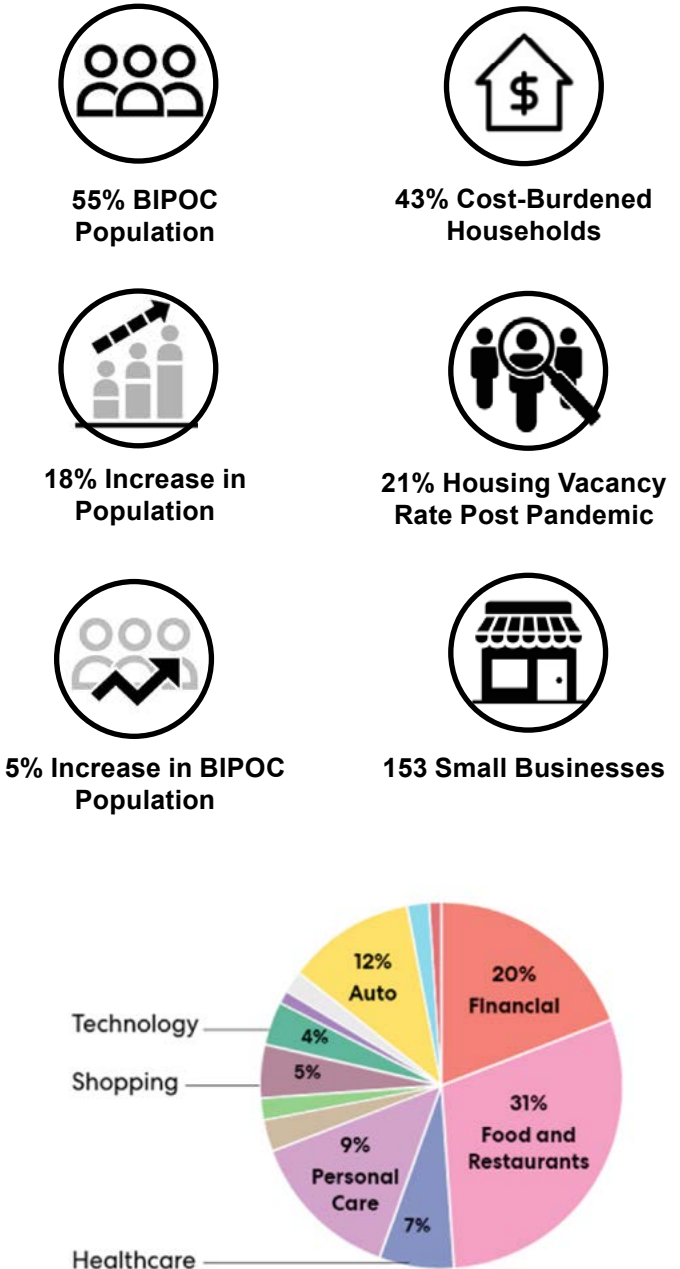
Neighborhood Snapshot

The SCTC Station Area is home to people from many backgrounds, with 55% of the community members belonging to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) populations. The total population and BIPOC share of the population both increased between 2010 and 2020. Although there are income-restricted and

naturally-occurring affordable housing in the area, many households are experiencing financial strain, spending more than 30% of their income on housing-related costs. New construction and rising land costs within the area are creating upward pressure on rents and increasing displacement risk.

This dynamic area offers a variety of essential community resources, including financial centers, personal care, and auto services. The diverse range of small businesses collectively contributes to the local economy and complements the presence of larger industrial uses. Many of these small businesses are clustered around the South Congress Avenue and South First Street corridors, with other nodes present within the half-mile buffer, including The Yard and The Foundry. Collectives of local small businesses oriented toward craft industries in food and beverage, fabrication, and creative arts add to the

vibrancy of the neighborhood and serve as a destination for people outside of the area. Additionally, noteworthy non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, Todos Juntos, and Planned Parenthood, contribute to the richness of community assets. The Salvation Army also operates as a store, distribution center, and adult rehabilitation center near the transit center. Although St. David's Medical Center and its surrounding healthcare services are located just beyond the half-mile buffer, their presence remains a significant asset to the community.

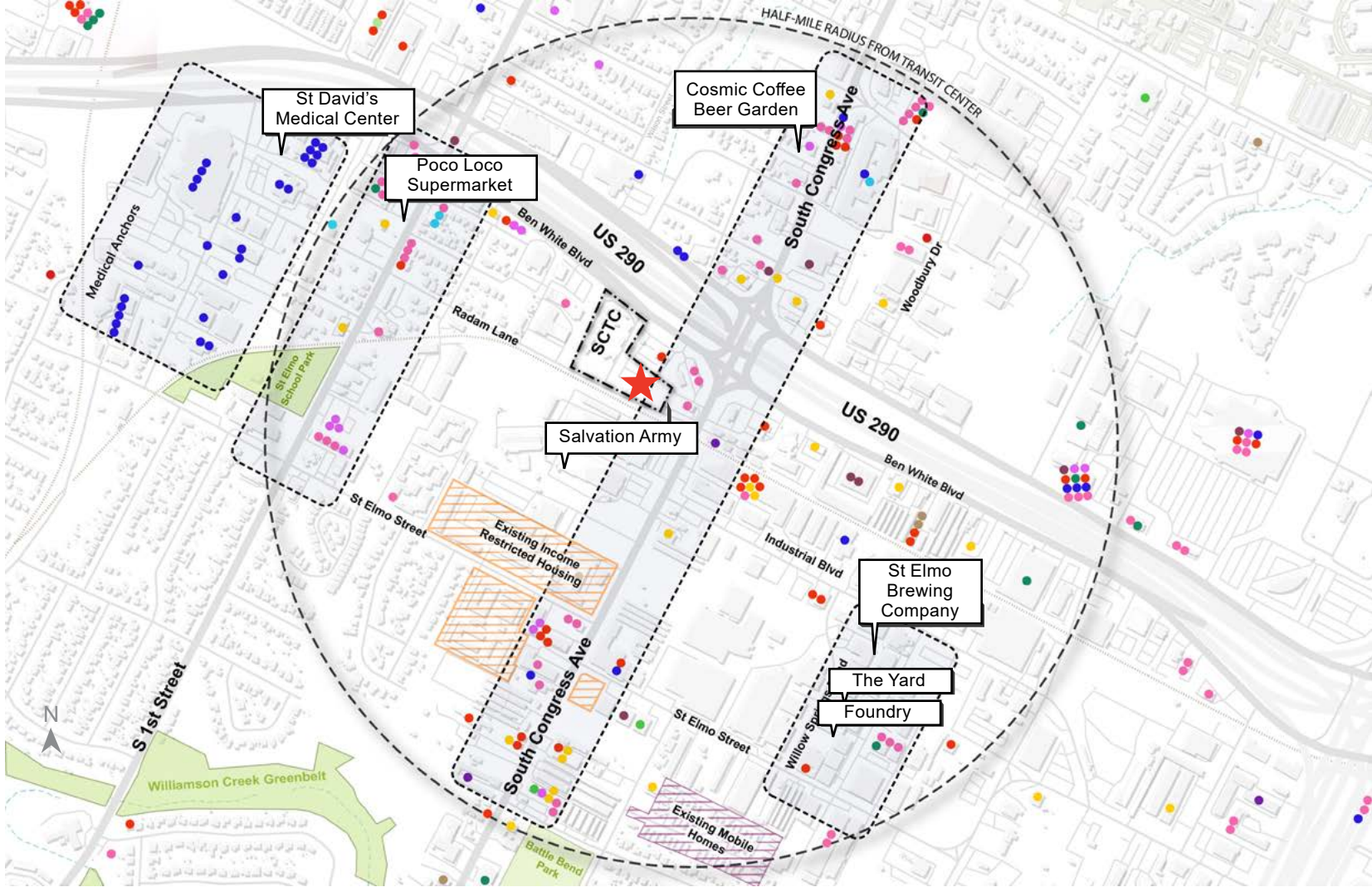


Legend

- SCTC Site Boundary
- South Congress Transit Center
- Local Small Business Clusters
- Local Small Businesses
- Income-Restricted Housing
- Mobile Homes
- Existing Parks

Small Businesses

- Sporting Goods
- Financial
- Travel
- Shopping
- Pets
- Recreation
- Personal Care
- Health Care
- Food & Restaurants
- Entertainment
- Clothing
- Auto
- Technology
- Miscellaneous



Small Businesses are entities with less than 20 employees. Government, Public Services, Education and ATMs were excluded.

Figure 3: Neighborhood snapshot

Existing Connectivity

The SCTC Station Area has significant connectivity issues owing in large part to the substantial highway infrastructure of US-290/ East Ben White Boulevard. The connections across US-290 that do exist (at South Congress Avenue and South First Street) are neither safe nor comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists. These areas were designed to facilitate high-speed vehicular travel by providing access on and off the highway. Today, community members face difficult, unsafe crossings and an overall unfriendly street experience.

While improvements have been made to portions of South Congress Avenue, the roadway can still be intimidating to those not in a vehicle, and particularly to individuals with mobility challenges. Large block lengths without internal pathways create a disconnected street grid that is unsafe and inaccessible for pedestrians and bicyclists, and that ultimately makes it more difficult to access transit, housing, jobs, and other daily needs without a personal vehicle. As the diagram below shows, these connectivity issues dramatically impact the distance a person can travel within a 5- or 10-minute walk or roll (walkshed).

Existing Street Conditions

- 1 US-290 creates a physical barrier along its length that limits connection across the northern and southern portions of the station area.
- 2 Connections across US-290 at South First Street and South Congress Avenue are narrow and uncomfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians. Most bicyclists use the protected bike lanes on South Congress Avenue since there are currently no bicycle facilities on this portion of South First Street.
- 3 Sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and shade are missing in many portions of the station area such as Industrial Boulevard and East St. Elmo Street.
- 4 While many businesses are concentrated along South Congress Avenue, high vehicle speeds and volumes and limited signalized crossings inhibit pedestrian movement to and through the area.
- 5 Large parcels occupied by commercial and industrial uses like auto dealerships and self-storage facilities, and even fenced multifamily housing complexes are sizable areas that limit street connectivity and pedestrian access.

Legend

- SCTC Site Boundary
- South Congress Transit Center
- High-Risk Pedestrian Crossings
- Physical Barriers
- Walking Distance Between Intersections
- Streets
- Parks
- 5-minute Walkshed
- 10-minute Walkshed

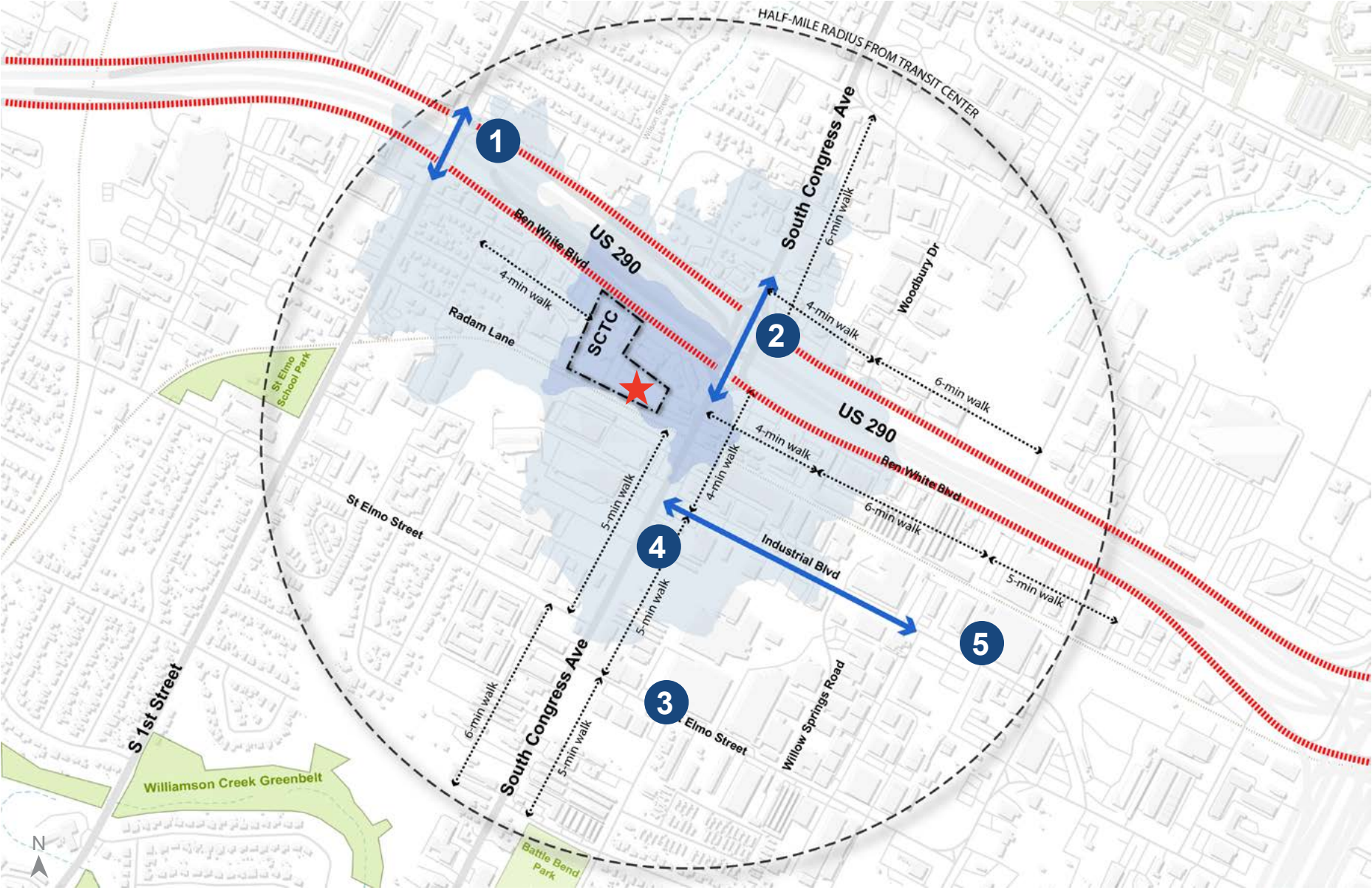


Figure 4: Existing connectivity



Broken street connections due to US-290



Inhospitable pedestrian connections



The SCTC Station Area has many challenging pedestrian and bicycling conditions such as inconsistent or absent sidewalks, long street blocks, lack of pedestrian crossings across South Congress Avenue that encourage people to make risky midblock crossings, and a lack of dedicated bicycle lanes. These conditions hinder the overall connectivity to the transit center and other amenities within the area.



Rail crossing at South Congress which is part of the planned Bergstrom Spur Trail



Limited pedestrian accessibility to the transit center

Existing Land Use

Large industrial and commercial parcels dominate the SCTC Station Area, though a significant amount of this land has begun to transition toward new mixed-use and multifamily development.

Commercial: The commercial land use surrounding the SCTC is characterized by a number of large, single-occupant parcels such as the Enterprise auto dealership, Salvation Army, and self-storage facilities. This mix also includes several strip shopping centers, and flexible commercial buildings that house several smaller businesses on one parcel. Buildings are predominantly single-story, with tenants that trend toward service, production, and repair uses, and limited overall commercial office space in the station area.










Industrial: Benefiting from its proximity to US-290, the SCTC Station Area contains a substantial amount of industrial land use as well. This includes small manufacturing, trucking and distribution, and various light industrial activities. Some of these industrial activities are shifting away from current uses and being redeveloped. These sites are also developed with large expanses of pavement to facilitate significant truck and car movement.

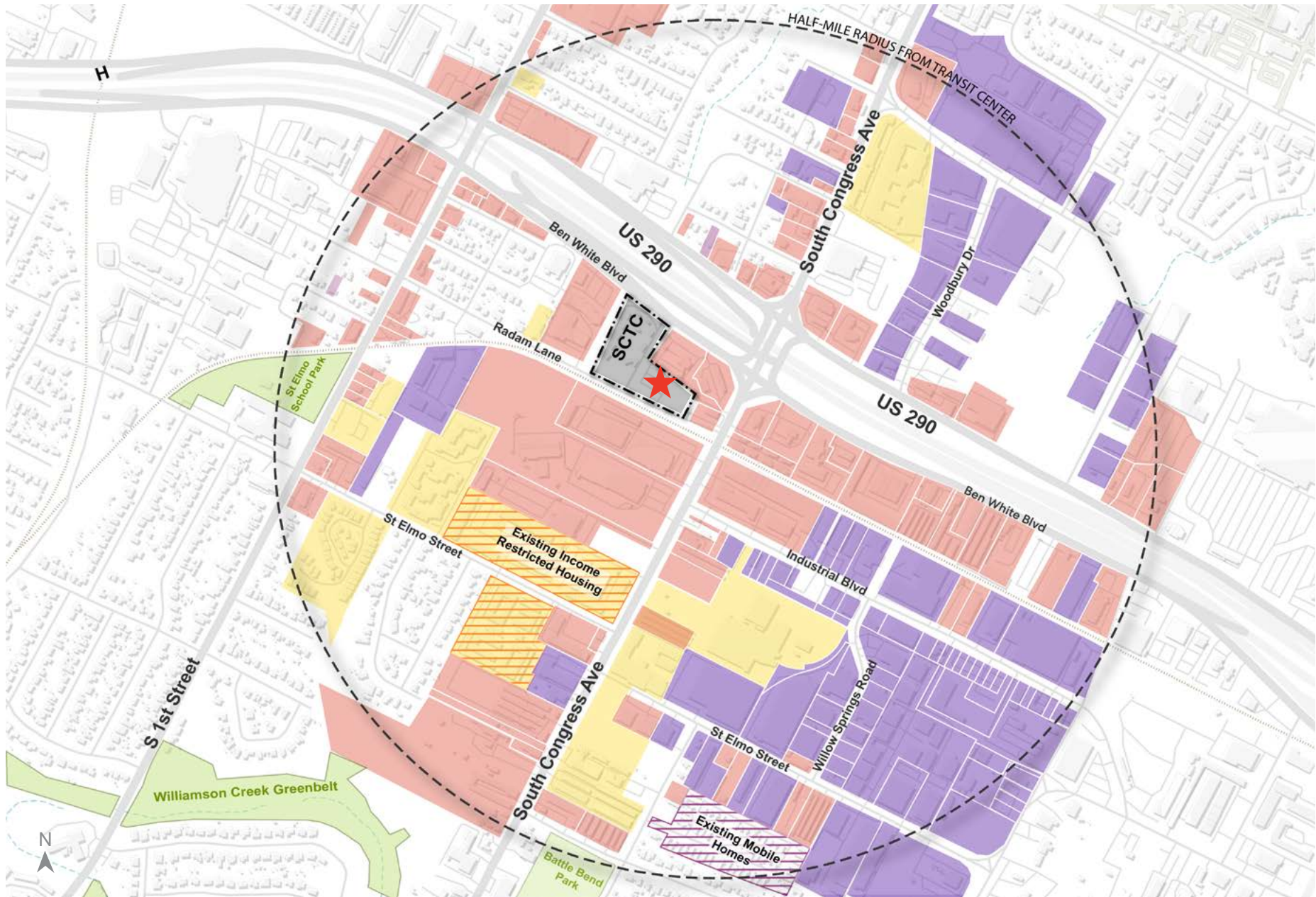
Transportation Facility: This is a CapMetro-owned parcel with a standalone bus transit center and a large surface park-and-ride lot.

Residential: Residential land use within the station area includes income-restricted units as well as naturally-occurring affordable housing, such as mobile homes. Mixed-use multifamily units have recently been built within the station area, many of which are market-rate but include income-restricted units as well. There are relatively few single-family homes within the station area, but beyond that area, the housing characteristics shifts quickly to single-family homes.

Open Space: Parks and natural areas are limited within the station area. Battle Bend Park and St. Elmo School Park, on the southern and western edges of the station area respectively, are the only parks within the half-mile radius. The lack of public open space, tree cover, and shade along public pathways creates a challenging pedestrian and residential environment around the SCTC.

Legend

-  SCTC Site Boundary
-  South Congress Transit Center
-  Commercial Land Use
-  Industrial Land Use
-  Transportation Facility
-  Multifamily Housing
-  Income-Restricted Housing
-  Mobile Homes
-  Parks



While the existing land uses below depict the current context, the land use in this area is rapidly evolving, with many projects completed recently and more already in the pipeline. This shifting market context provides a great opportunity to shape land use policy to support the six ETOD goals.

Figure 5: Existing Land Use



Art and fabrication industries are prevalent

The area of the SCTC Station Area is growing with dense multifamily development alongside existing apartment complexes. A concentration of local small businesses oriented toward craft industries in food and beverage, fabrication, and creative arts add to the neighborhood's vibrancy.



The Yard is a new community small business hub in the area with a strong presence of craft and entertainment uses



Recently built and planned multifamily developments - St. Elmo Living

03

Station Area Vision

Vision Statement

Proposed Connectivity

Proposed Open Space Network

Development Character Districts

Future Land Use Map

The vision for the SCTC Station Area is focused on a set of strategies that seeks to address future connectivity, open space, and the development character to create a more transit-supportive fabric. The vision paints a future that overcomes obstacles identified in the station area overview and promotes equity goals by enabling current and future community members to benefit from transit and infrastructure investments, and access opportunities within the neighborhood. The vision is intended to inform future implementation of regulations, investments, and programs within the area.

Vision Statement

VISION STATEMENT

The SCTC Station Area will transform into a dynamic and interconnected community, serving as a model for accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability. It will offer a range of transportation options, diverse housing choices, job opportunities, and essential services, all within an engaging and walkable environment. By enhancing transportation connections to the transit center, the vision plan will promote equitable access to opportunities for all community members. The vision plan highlights the area’s cultural wealth and aims to create an attractive built environment that encourages active lifestyles, engages both community members and visitors, and sets the standard for future transit-oriented developments throughout our city.

ETOD GOALS

The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan calls for implementation of the six Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Goals within the station area:

- 1 Enable all residents to benefit from safe, sustainable, and accessible transportation.
- 2 Help close racial health and wealth gaps.
- 3 Preserve and increase housing opportunities that are affordable and attainable.
- 4 Expand access to high-quality jobs and career opportunities.
- 5 Support healthy neighborhoods that meet daily needs.
- 6 Expand Austin’s diverse cultural heritage and small, BIPOC-owned, and legacy businesses.

ETOD TYPOLOGY

The ETOD Policy Plan categorizes the SCTC Station Area as a station where the focus should be to **Align** policies to provide affordability as development occurs. This classification aims to set priorities for adoption of policy tools that prioritize protections for community members vulnerable to or experiencing displacement as redevelopment occurs. The suggested ETOD Policy Tools to support this station area are detailed in Chapter 5 (Implementation: ETOD Policy Tools), and include tools that support small businesses, land acquisition for future affordable housing, and tenant protections for existing renters as redevelopment occurs.

Please refer to the city’s [ETOD Policy Plan](#) for a detailed description of the ETOD Typologies and the ETOD Goals.

ETOD Typology SCTC Station Area

Align policies to provide affordability as development occurs.

Fewer Residents Today / Vulnerable to or Experiencing Displacement / Rapid Change

This station area is not home to as many people today, have high population/job growth compared to other station areas, and pressures exist that could displace low-income households and communities of color if we are not careful. ETOD efforts should take advantage of the change occurring today to maximize community benefits in redevelopment and infill opportunities to increase the number of people who can afford to live here, while protecting existing community members at risk of displacement.

Proposed Connectivity

Transportation connections in the area are limited by US-290 and large commercial and industrial parcels. The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan addresses this lack of connectivity by proposing improvements to the street network. A better-connected roadway and transportation network with enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections will provide community members and commuters with greater access to future transit improvements.

In particular, pedestrian and bicycle improvements can create safer, more equitable access to and from services and resources already present in the area such as St. Elmo Elementary, healthcare services, affordable housing, and places of worship.

Recommended Actions:

- 1** Improve the safety and comfort of pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility crossings of US-290 at South Congress Avenue and South First Street to better bridge this physical barrier.
- 2** Coordinate connections to the planned Bergstrom Spur Trail to facilitate redevelopment of adjacent parcels and expand regional access to the station area along this trail.
- 3** Introduce mid-block connections to break down the large industrial blocks into walkable streets.
- 4** Continue improvements along St. Elmo Street to include all-ages bicycle facilities and tree-lined sidewalks.
- 5** Introduce sidewalks and shade along key streets that lack basic pedestrian infrastructure such as Industrial Boulevard to be safe and comfortable for people of all mobility levels.

Legend










-  SCTC Site Boundary
-  South Congress Multimodal Transit Complex
-  Improved Existing Street Corridors
-  Potential Future Street
-  Existing Parks
-  Existing Creeks
-  Street Level 1
-  Street Level 2
-  Street Level 3



Figure 6: Proposed connectivity

Proposed Open Space Network

A network of open spaces is critical to supporting health, wellness, and equitable outcomes for surrounding neighborhoods as they support physical activity, improve mental health, and encourage social interaction among members of the community. Though some park space exists within the station area, there are opportunities to bolster this network through creative strategies that invest in existing resources, create connections to nearby open spaces, and develop shaded streetscapes to improve the quality of life for community members.

Recommended Actions:

- 1 Support connectivity by establishing linear open spaces for pedestrians with shading, native plantings, and seating as they travel throughout the neighborhood.
- 2 Improve connections to nearby parks including St. Elmo School Park, Battle Bend Park, and the Williamson Creek Greenbelt within or just outside of the half-mile radius.
- 3 Integrate small public open spaces like pocket parks, “pocket forests”, and community gardens where possible to increase access to nature, reduce heat island effect, and improve air quality.
- 4 Introduce open space that community members can use for cultural activities and events, supporting a sense of community and identity.
- 5 Provide opportunities for local art installations, murals, and space for cultural activities and events in the existing parks to celebrate diversity, engage the community, and strengthen its identity.

Legend

- SCTC Site Boundary
- Future South Congress Multimodal Transit Complex
- Improved Existing Street Corridors
- Potential Future Street/ Mobility Connections
- Existing Parks
- Existing Creeks
- Proposed Urban Trails Project

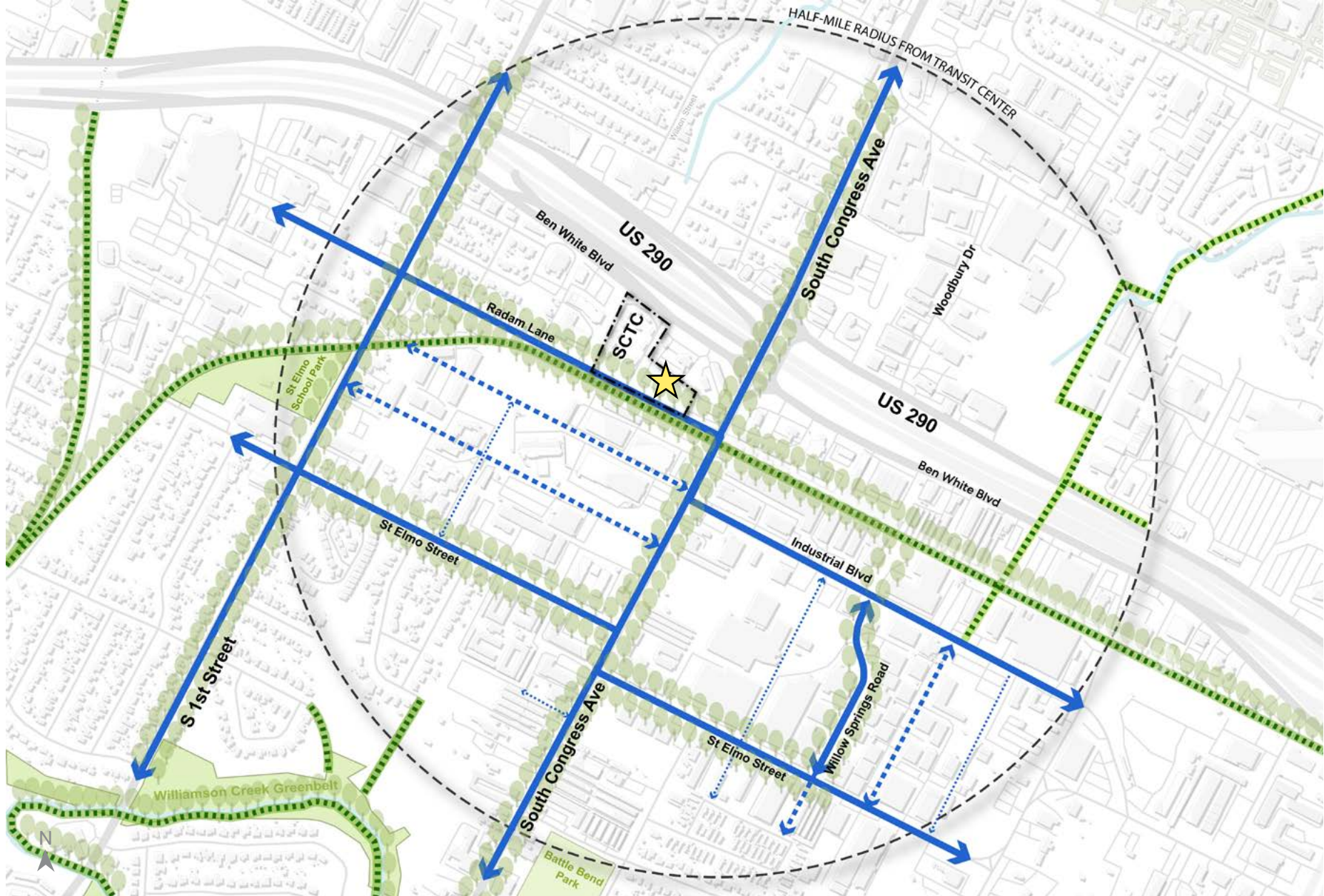


Figure 7: Proposed open space network

Development Character Districts

New development within the SCTC Station Area must help achieve the ETOD goals. The development character districts described here provide a vision for a complete community that can create additional mixed-income housing at different scales, as well as neighborhood commercial spaces, employment opportunities, and community services and amenities. Existing community members of the neighborhood, including those in income-restricted and naturally-occurring affordable housing can benefit from new neighborhood services and amenities that come with new development. The development character districts intentionally exclude all single-family parcels to protect the current housing stock.

The high-density mixed-use development character will be anchored along the two major transit corridors, South Congress Avenue, and South First Street, to support transit services. It will also be designated along the planned Bergstrom Spur Trail running east-west to promote high-quality trail-oriented development. This would not necessarily preclude moderate-density or employment focused development but is meant to allow the highest density and widest range of uses.

The moderate-density mixed-use development district fills in two pockets on either side of South Congress. This character is meant to complement existing residential development in the area, including income-restricted housing, with a focus on maintaining and enhancing the community and providing additional neighborhood amenities and services.

The employment focus development character is designated around portions of existing light industrial and small business nodes to promote workforce development and employment opportunities for nearby community members and commuters, building on existing industrial and craft uses clustered here. This development character may contain uses that are less complementary to housing, including businesses that produce, repair, and deliver goods.

Development along South Congress Avenue and the planned Bergstrom Spur Trail should encourage active storefronts and community facing uses at ground level to create a vibrant streetscape and capitalize on placemaking opportunities along these key transit and mobility corridors.

The development character districts are further elaborated in the following pages.

Legend

- SCTC Site Boundary
- Future South Congress Multimodal Transit Complex
- Improved Existing Street Corridors
- Potential Future Street
- Existing Parks
- Proposed Urban Trails Project

Development Character

- High-Density Mixed-Use
- Moderate-Density Mixed-Use
- Employment Focus
- Ground Level Storefronts

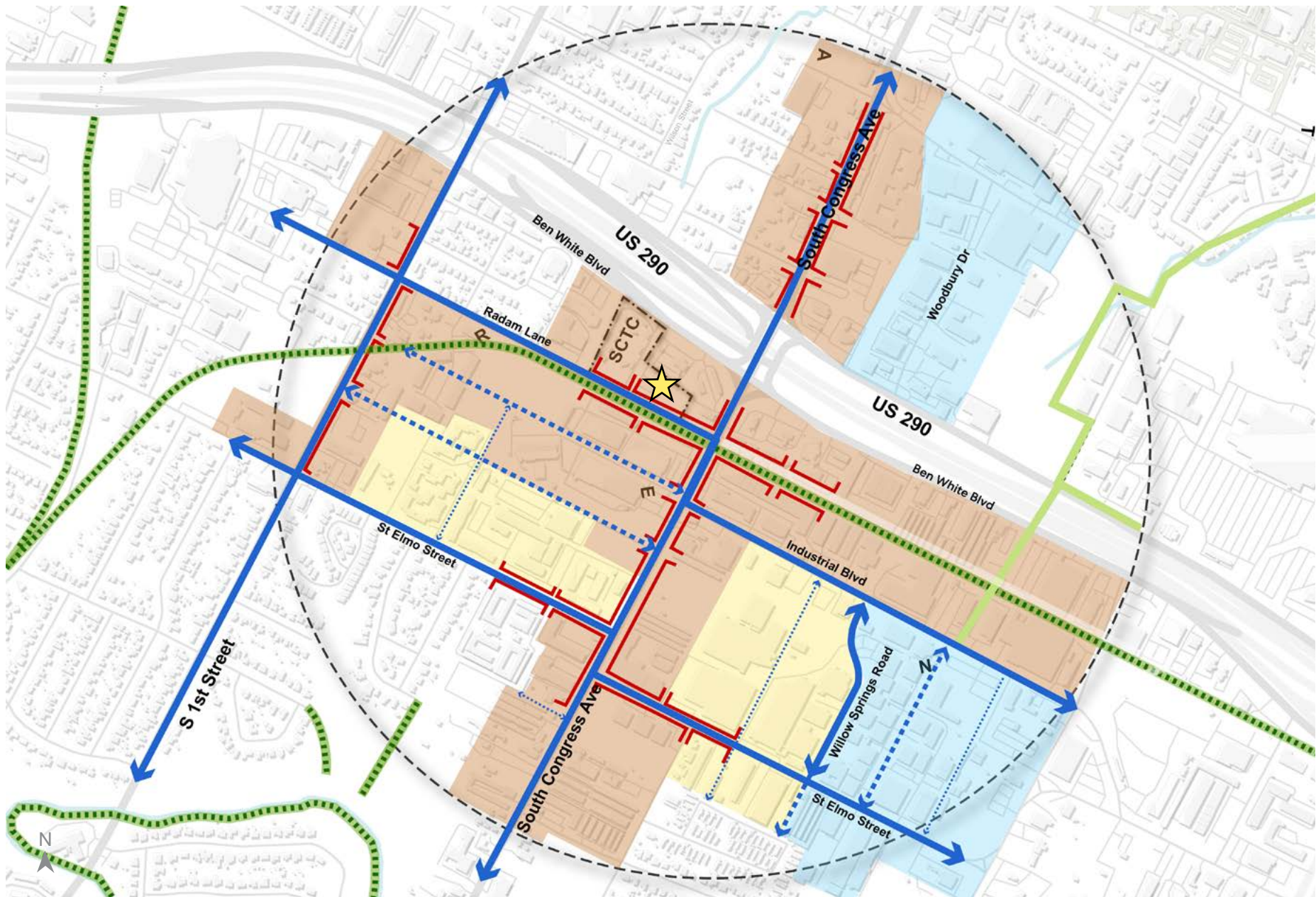


Figure 8: Proposed development character areas

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS DISCLAIMER

The maps and illustrations in this vision plan are aspirational and serve as a tool for visualizing and understanding proposed actions. However, this vision plan is a planning guide and should not be regarded as a guarantee of infrastructure improvements. Adherence to the following provisions is important to ensure that any future development complies with current regulations:

- Before moving forward with any of the recommendations presented in the open space network, and connectivity maps, a feasibility study may be required to assess the viability of implementing the proposed improvements.
- Proposed actions and other elements of the vision plan are subject to change contingent on new development, infrastructure improvements, modifications in zoning, and infrastructure regulations. Property owners and developers shall consult on all applicable city and state regulations to understand the limitations that may apply to any future development.
- The analysis underlying the connectivity map is based on several assumptions, including proposed changes in land use and projected growth. Deviations from these assumptions may affect the relevance and applicability of the connectivity maps.
- Users of the maps provided in this vision plan are encouraged to verify the most current information regarding local regulations before making any planning decisions. As such, these maps serve as a guide, and should not replace official regulations or supersede adopted maps.

High-Density Mixed-Use

High-density mixed-use development features a blend of residential and commercial spaces. This type of development is typically very active, with an abundance of residences catering to a mix of income levels, often over 100 homes per acre. The ground level is designed to provide stores, services, and amenities to meet everyday needs of community members.



Atlanta Beltline, Atlanta ▶



▲ Atlanta Beltline, Atlanta



▲ Marine Gateway, Vancouver

Marine Gateway, Vancouver ▼



Case Study

Marine Gateway, Vancouver

Marine Gateway is a high-density mixed-use transit-oriented development that integrates two major transit hubs (Marine Drive Station on the Canada Line and the South Vancouver Bus Loop exchange). It is an example for sustainable city-building, and a complete community around a transit facility that serves as the heart of the community. With multi-story residential, office, retail, and entertainment buildings it prioritizes a pedestrian environment, a vibrant and amenity-rich ground floor, and hosts community events like the art market at its public transit plaza.

Marine Gateway is an exemplary sustainable community helping to reduce climate change through measures like active stormwater control and extensive green roofs that create micro-habitats.



Moderate-Density Mixed-Use

Moderate-density mixed-use development primarily consists of housing, with approximately 60 or more homes per acre. Despite the higher density, it maintains a balanced sense of space and calm. The ground level often includes small stores or community spaces, promoting a shared sense of togetherness, and there are designated areas for outdoor gatherings.

Case Study

Fruitvale Village, Oakland

Fruitvale Village in Oakland, California is a 4-acre mixed use, mixed-income, transit-oriented development located at the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station which is also an Alameda-Contra Costa County Transit bus hub.

Developed by the Unity Council, a local non-profit community development corporation, the project mixes market-rate apartments with affordable units. The ground floor of Fruitvale Village houses locally owned retail spaces, while the second floor offers office spaces for important community resources and organizations. This project includes a pathway high school for first-generation college-bound students preparing for careers in public and community health. Other uses include a seniors' center, a Head Start child development center, a City of Oakland public library, and a health clinic that provides linguistically and culturally appropriate care to patients regardless of their ability to pay.

Mariposa District, Denver



Mariposa District, Denver



Ivy Station, Culver City



Ivy Station, Culver City



Employment Focus

Employment focused development consists primarily of non-residential spaces that create opportunities for local small businesses, employment, skills training, and production, repair, and craft-oriented industrial spaces. This type of development is intended to support economic activity and job opportunities within the community.

Case Study

The Hatchery, Chicago

The Hatchery in Chicago is strategically located right outside Kedzie station along the “L” rapid transit system, for ease of access for the community near and far. It enables local entrepreneurs to build and grow successful food and beverage businesses and provides job training and placement programs, which in turn creates sustainable economic growth and new job opportunities.

It is a 3.2-acre site which consists of shared and private kitchens and classrooms, business incubators, food storage, offices for non-profit organizations, and a large farmers market.

100 Hooper, San Francisco



100 Hooper, San Francisco



The Hatchery, Chicago



The Hatchery, Chicago







Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a parcel-level land use map illustrating how each place in the SCTC Station Area should evolve or be preserved to support the vision. It is the plan's primary land use decision-making tool and balances the community's needs, objectives, and priorities, while supporting ETOD in the area. Although it guides land use decisions, the FLUM is not a zoning map. When used for land use decisions, it should be used in conjunction with other plan elements to guide decisions about proposed zoning cases and the design and application of new development regulations.




*Previously adopted neighborhood plans include Future Land Use Maps that govern portions of the station area. The SCTC Future Land Use Map shall take precedence over the land use within the station area in the event of a conflict.

- TOD Mixed-Use** will include the highest level of development activity, ideally with a mix of ground floor commercial or other active uses with residential, commercial, and/or office uses on the upper floors.
- Mixed-Use Industrial** will include low impact industrial uses with added options for retail, office, and attached multi-family residential development.
- Neighborhood Transition** will include a variety of building sizes such as multifamily, duplexes, townhomes, or small-scale offices and commercial buildings. It serves as a transition between less intense single-family and more intense mixed-use, or commercial buildings.

Legend

-  SCTC Site Boundary
-  Future South Congress Multimodal Transit Complex
-  Existing Income-Restricted Housing
-  Mobile Homes

Development Character

-  TOD Mixed-Use
-  Mixed-Use Industrial
-  Neighborhood Transition

The future land use map also indicates areas within 1/2 mile of the transit center that will continue to be governed by the Future Land Use Map contained within a previously adopted neighborhood plan for the area.

**The base zoning districts that are consistent with each category are further elaborated on the following pages.*

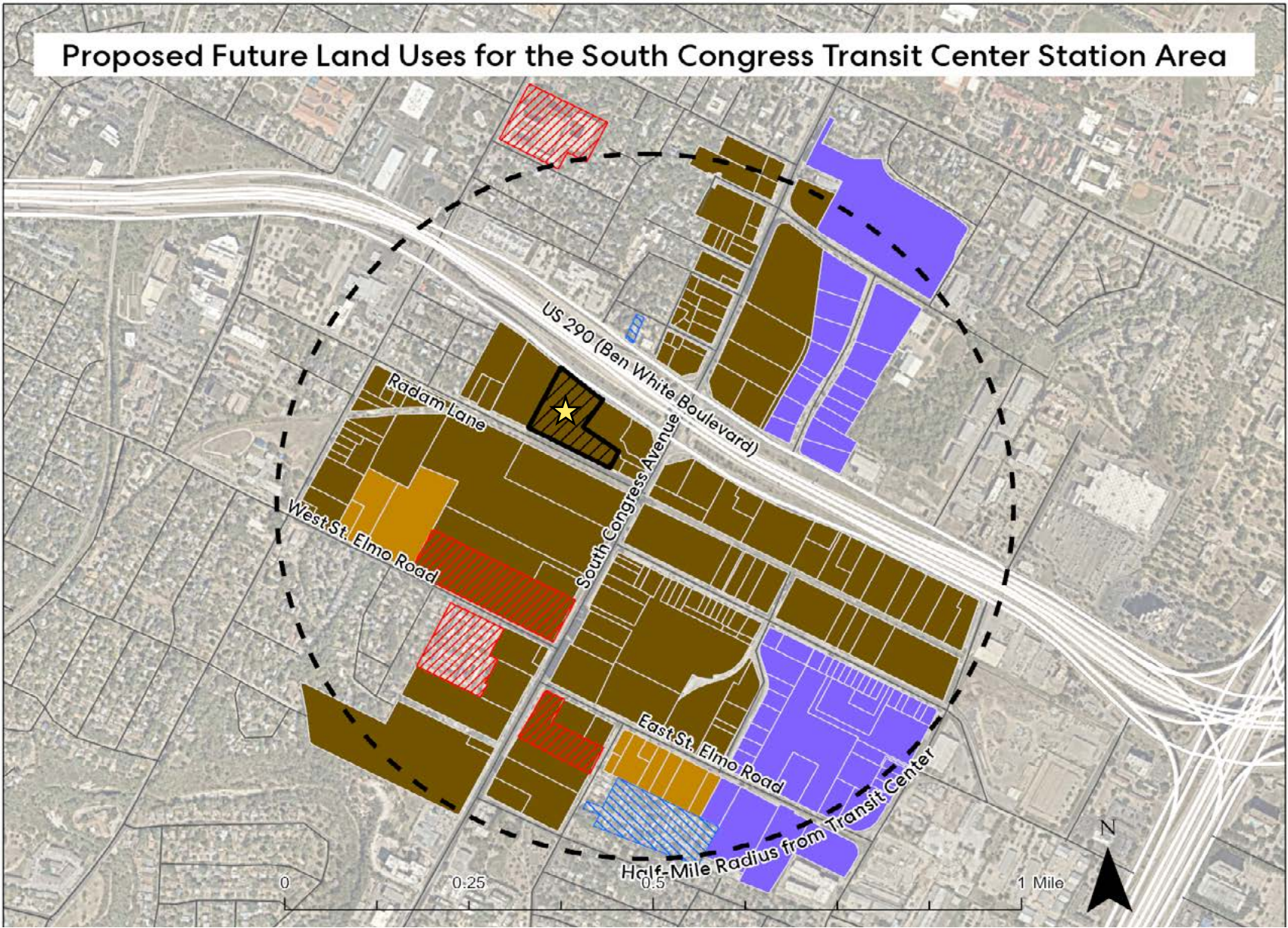


Figure 9: Proposed Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Map

Consistent Base Zone Districts

	TOD Mixed-Use	Mixed-Use Industrial	Neighborhood Transition
SF-5			SF-5
SF-6			SF-6
MF-1			MF-1
MF-2			MF-2
MF-3			MF-3
MF-4	MF-4		MF-4
MF-5	MF-5		
MF-6	MF-6		
MH			MH
NO		NO	NO
LO		LO	LO
LR		LR	LR
GO	GO	GO	
GR	GR	GR	
CS	CS	CS	
CS-1	CS-1	CS-1	
CH	CH	CH	
LI		LI	
IP		IP	
W/LO		W/LO	
R&D		R&D	
P	P	P	P
PUD	PUD	PUD	PUD

Additional combining districts and density bonus programs may be applied when regulatory requirements and procedures are met. To participate, applicants must submit a rezoning application.

Figure 10: Consistent Base Zone Districts for Land Use Map

04

South Congress Transit Center Concept Plan

A Vision for Transformation

A Reimagined Transit Center at SCTC

A Community-Serving Mix of Uses for SCTC

Sustainable and Resilient SCTC

The redevelopment of the CapMetro-owned South Congress Transit Center land is intended to transform the single-function transit center that exists today into an urban transit-integrated community. It is a bold vision to deliver a well-functioning multi-modal transit hub that provides seamless connectivity and an enhanced user experience across diverse mobility modes while anchoring a mixed-use, mixed-income, vibrant, and livable community. Opportunities for diverse housing options, employment choices, retail space for locally owned businesses, community organizations, and neighborhood services and amenities are envisioned at this transit center.

The SCTC will develop into its new role in the transit system beginning as a bus transfer center, providing housing and services to the neighborhood with immediate access to the transit facilities, while riders will have new amenities to support their journeys. Eventually, SCTC will also serve light rail transit riders as future extensions are built.

A Vision for Transformation

The SCTC presently functions as a stand-alone transit facility situated between US-290 and Radam Lane. It supports four bus routes (1, 801, 310, and 315), including one rapid bus (801). Bordering this major highway allows vehicular access but presents challenges for pedestrians and cyclists. The neighborhood connection from Radam Lane (and the future Bergstrom Spur Trail) provides major opportunities for improved bicycle and pedestrian access.

The 5-acre site is designed today to facilitate bus movements and easy access to bus routes via transfer or park-and-ride connections, and functions well in this capacity. The SCTC was constructed in 2008, and contains substantial facilities including ten bus shelters, a central green space, and bicycle storage facilities. Despite these amenities, the SCTC could offer more to transit users, nearby community members, and workers in terms of open space, amenities, services, and retail opportunities.



South Congress Transit Center street view
Credit: Journeyman

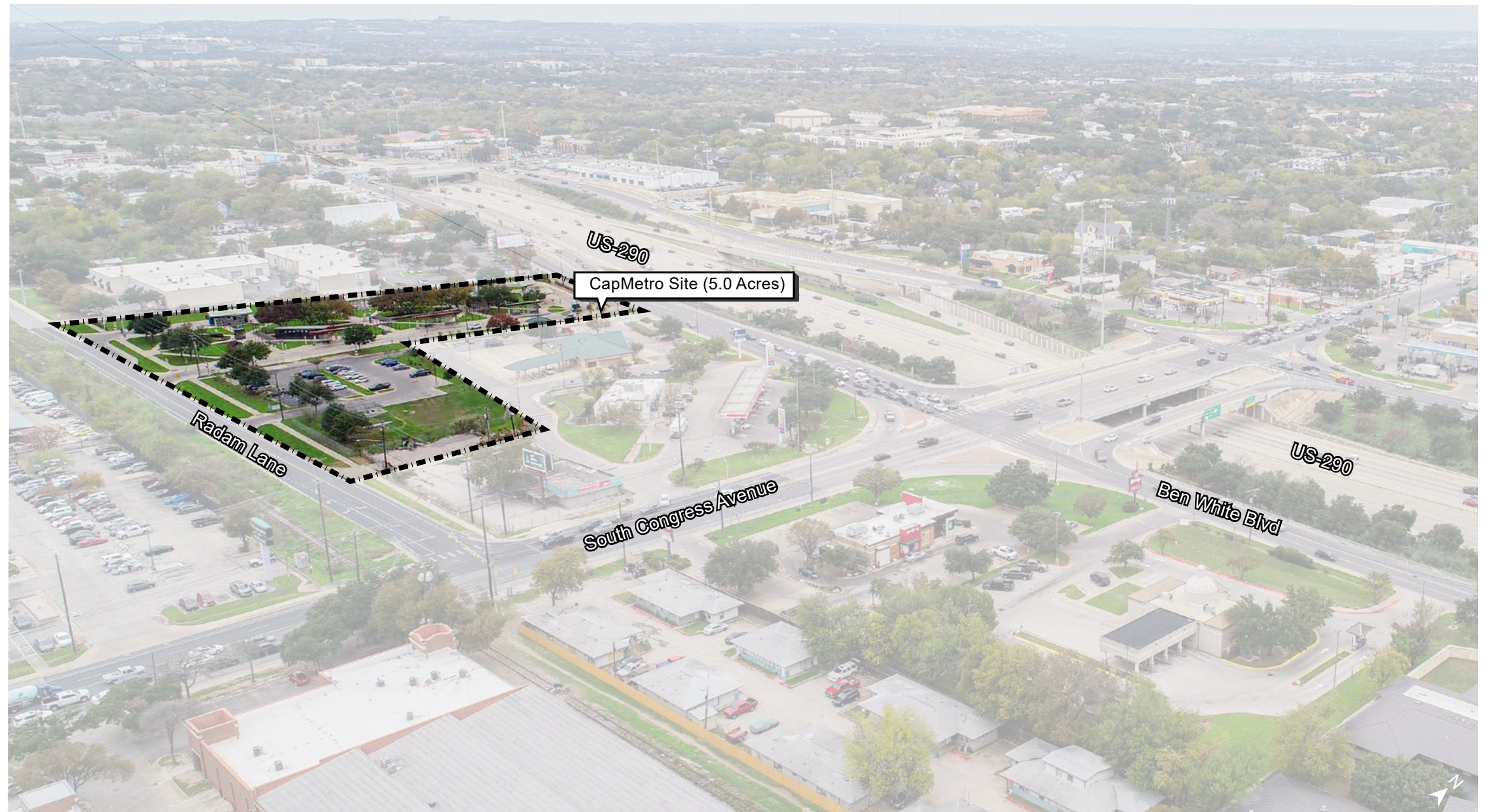


Figure 11: South Congress Transit Center aerial

A Reimagined Transit Center at SCTC

The SCTC site concept plan proposes a transformation of the CapMetro property that would serve as a catalyst for equitable transit-oriented development throughout the station area. This concept is intended to serve as a starting point for specific future engagement and design work to be done by CapMetro. The current bus circulation is organized around an interior loop of bus shelters that maximizes right-turn efficiency. The reimagined transit center maintains the flow from Radam Lane and from Ben White Boulevard. Future bus circulation, however, is proposed to be routed along multi-functional streets that are pedestrian-friendly with seating, plantings, and shade creating an attractive public realm along vibrant urban blocks. These routes lead to a centralized transit bus exchange plaza located at the southeast corner of the property.

The transit bus exchange loop is intentionally located as a free-standing shelter to allow for future relocation closer to the future light rail station along South Congress Avenue. When relocated, it would free up land for a future building footprint or a public open space.

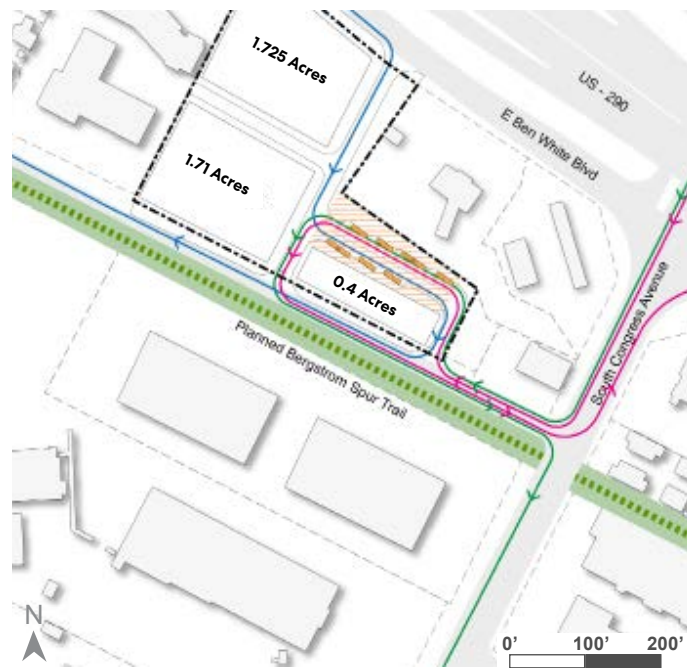
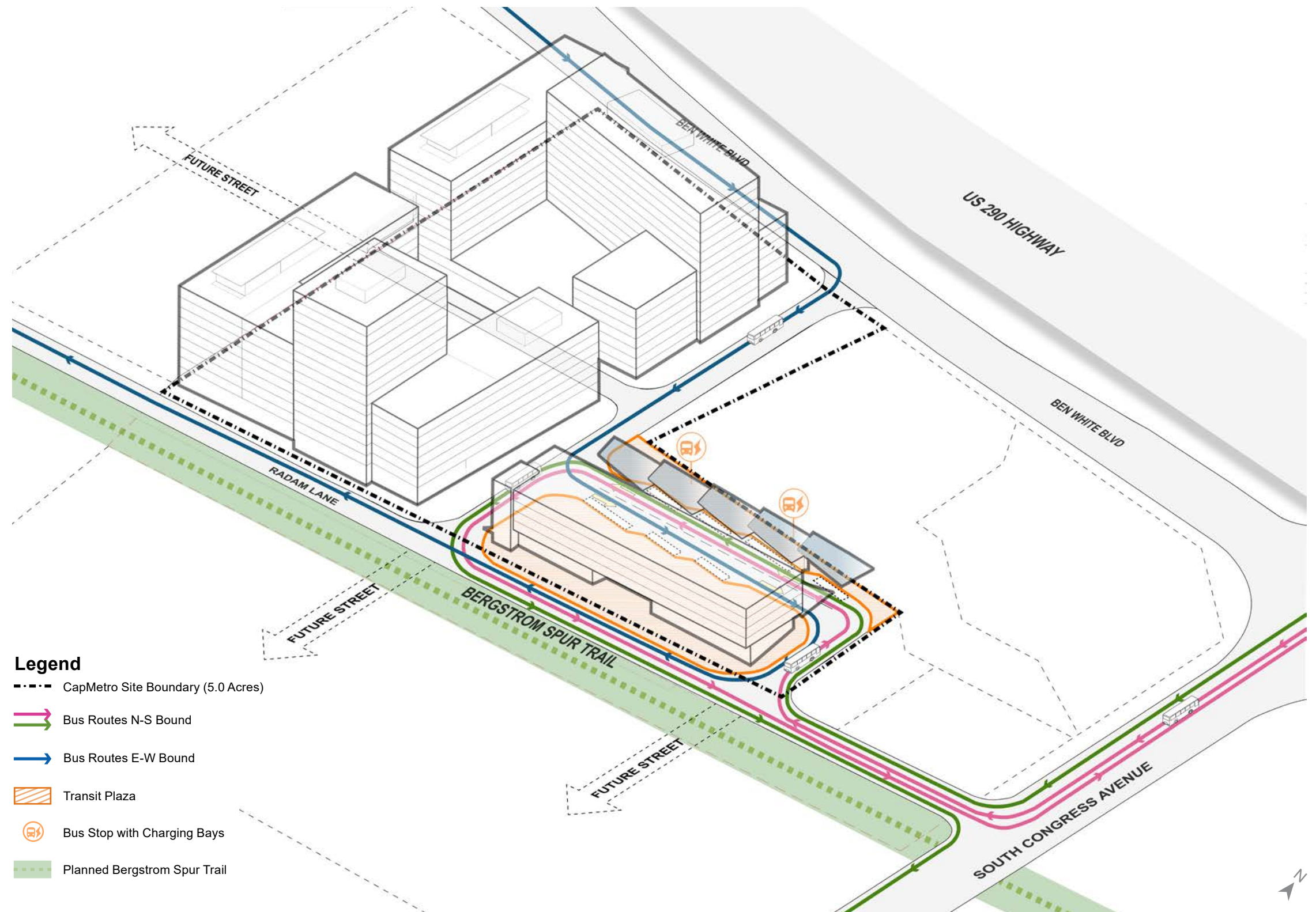


Figure 12: The graphic illustrates the site circulation and street design for CapMetro owned South Congress Transit Center site



- Legend**
- CapMetro Site Boundary (5.0 Acres)
 - Bus Routes N-S Bound
 - Bus Routes E-W Bound
 - ▨ Transit Plaza
 - ⊞ Bus Stop with Charging Bays
 - Planned Bergstrom Spur Trail

Figure 13: A reimagined transit center



Designed for curbside boarding along a 2-way internal street, existing bus routes (including 1, 801, 310, and 315) will be routed in a loop encircling the furthest east development block. Bus bays on either side of the internal street transit exchange provide a consolidated transit zone for seamless transfer between different bus routes, while offering transit users retail and services along a vibrant ground floor.

The urban block pattern aligns with the unique shape of this CapMetro site, with three existing small businesses nestled into the block segment's northeast corner. The design creates potential for street integration across these parcels as part of future development that may complement the vision laid out here. It initiates a street network that will be able to connect to future light rail transit service along South Congress Avenue.

Importantly, the design emphasizes the Bergstrom Spur Trail as an essential bicycle-pedestrian connector to the transit center. The planned trail is a valuable asset to the community that provides equitable access for a variety of non-vehicular travel modes and fosters active living.

Beyond facilitating an improved transit experience, this design reveals the site's valuable development opportunity, bringing a wide mix of uses to the CapMetro-owned property and creating opportunities for people to live and work near transit.



Figure 14: A reimagined transit center

A Community-Serving Mix of Uses for SCTC

When asked what they would like to see at the South Congress Transit Center site, the community shared their desire for a mix of housing, employment, and transit uses, with special consideration for the inclusion of services such as childcare, medical clinics, public restrooms, and affordable retail spaces. The redevelopment concept proposes mixed-use, mixed-income housing, flexible commercial and small business space, and ground floor space for community resources and services. This transit-oriented development prioritizes existing community needs and accessibility (physical, financial, and cultural) to ensure equity remains at the forefront.

The conceptual site plan is designed for three development blocks with a high-intensity mixed-use character. The two larger blocks to the west are mixed-income, mixed-use residential buildings. These buildings offer a variety of unit types available to people of different means and household sizes. These blocks would be designed to offer shared underground public parking to serve community members, commuters, and businesses. The buildings to the south, along Radam Lane, would interface closely with the Bergstrom Trail, where the most active ground floor uses are envisioned within the site.

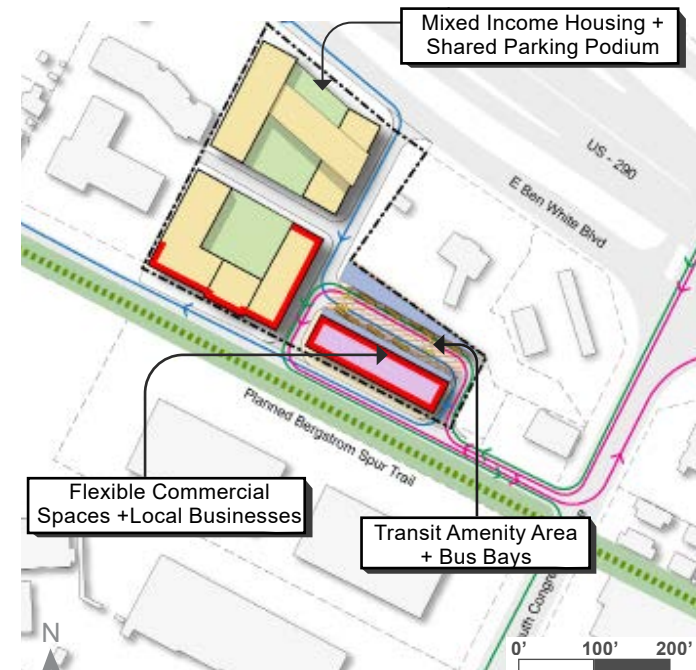
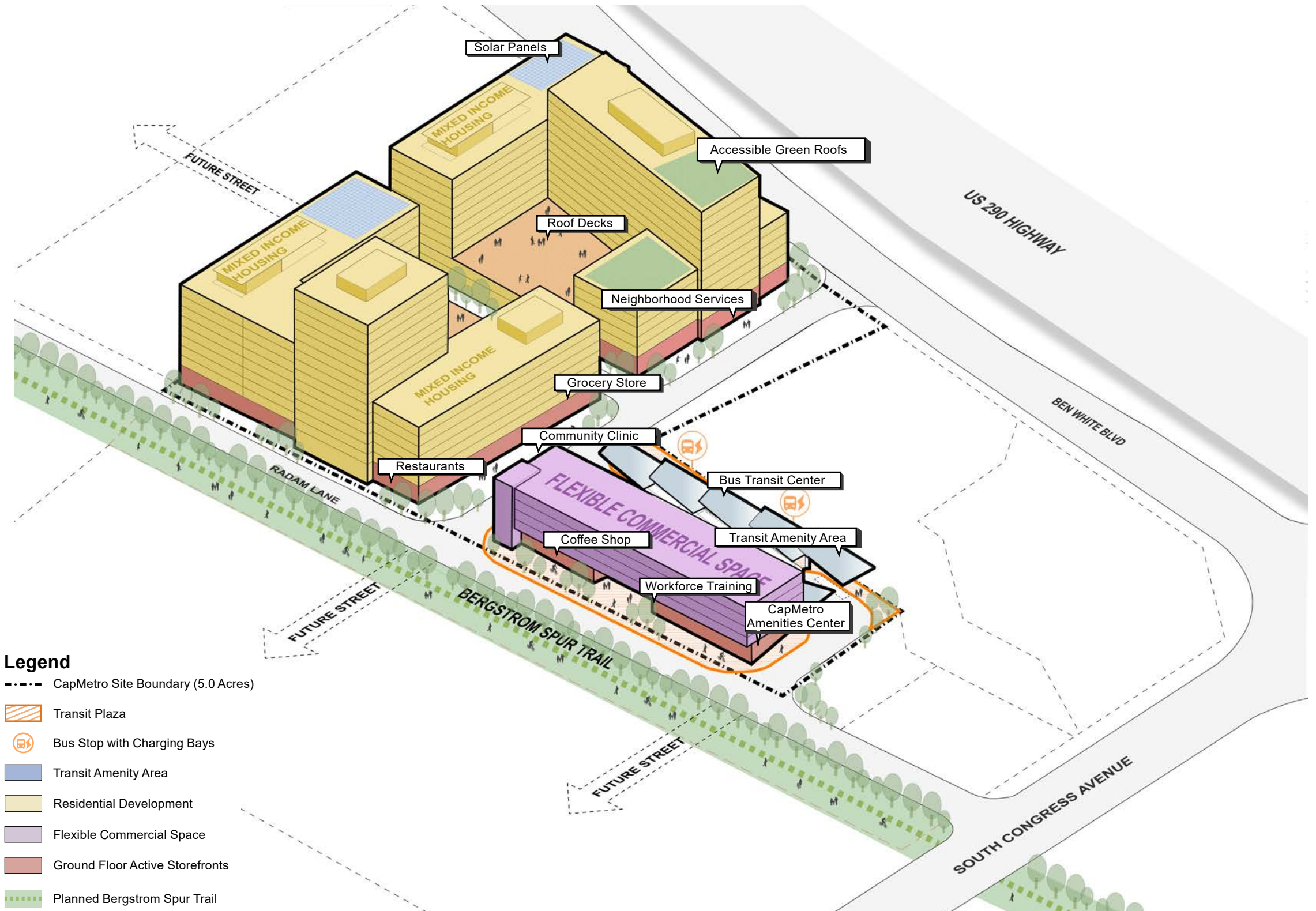


Figure 15: Calibrated mix of uses for a complete community.



- Legend**
- CapMetro Site Boundary (5.0 Acres)
 - ▨ Transit Plaza
 - ⊕ Bus Stop with Charging Bays
 - Transit Amenity Area
 - Residential Development
 - Flexible Commercial Space
 - Ground Floor Active Storefronts
 - ▬ Planned Bergstrom Spur Trail

The conceptual design will evolve and adapt with community collaboration during the future development process.

Figure 16: A vibrant, walkable, transit-integrated urban environment



The eastern development parcel which is integrated with the transit amenity area, is intended as a flexible commercial building with active ground floor uses that would serve the neighborhood. The ground floor contains an open pass-through space, allowing greater circulation and visibility to and from Radam Lane and the Bergstrom Spur Trail to the transit plaza. This building may include spaces that support small local businesses such as co-working spaces, incubation spaces, and leasable storefront or office space at a scale appropriate to these types of tenants, including a CapMetro Amenities Center. A community clinic, small business support or skills training providers on site could be accommodated on the ground floor to support the health and wellness of the community.

Affordability must be a leading principle while developing these buildings. It is crucial to provide a range of housing options that can accommodate different household sizes and promote a multi-generational community. Seniors, artists, young growing families, and low-wage workers should all be able to make a home here. As CapMetro determines specific affordability targets in the next phases of this project, the principles laid out here will guide their approach.



Figure 17: Inclusive and generous sidewalks lining the street storefronts on the ground floor of the mixed-income, mixed use development

Sustainable and Resilient SCTC

The vision for the SCTC is also formed around a sustainable and resilient design for the site. There is an opportunity to generate renewable energy, capture and re-use water on site, treat stormwater in bioswales (natural landscaping that captures and filters stormwater runoff), and provide shade and comfort to transit riders and visitors. The adjacent diagrams show a conceptual vision for some of these sustainable strategies that the project champions.

Bergstrom Spur Trail
An essential bicycle-pedestrian connector to the transit center, the planned trail is a valuable asset to the community that provides equitable access for a variety of non-vehicular travel modes and fosters active living.

Green Roofs
Reduced building energy load by cooling roofs; delayed flow of stormwater by up to 65%; and rich habitats for plants, animals, and insects are all benefits.

Rainwater Capture and Re-use:
Rainwater and condensate can be captured from rooftops and green roofs for re-use in landscaping.

Tree Canopy and Bus Shelter
Shade, comfort, safety, and protection from weather elements for community members and transit riders.

Renewable Energy Generation
Solar panel installations on rooftops can generate electricity for use in buildings and bus-charging bays.

- Legend**
- CapMetro Site Boundary (5.0 Acres)
 - ▨ Transit Plaza
 - 🚌 Bus Stop with Charging Bays
 - Transit Amenity Area
 - Accessible Roof Decks
 - Green Roofs
 - Stormwater / Reclaimed Water Network
 - Sun Movement
 - Solar Panels
 - Planned Bergstrom Spur Trail

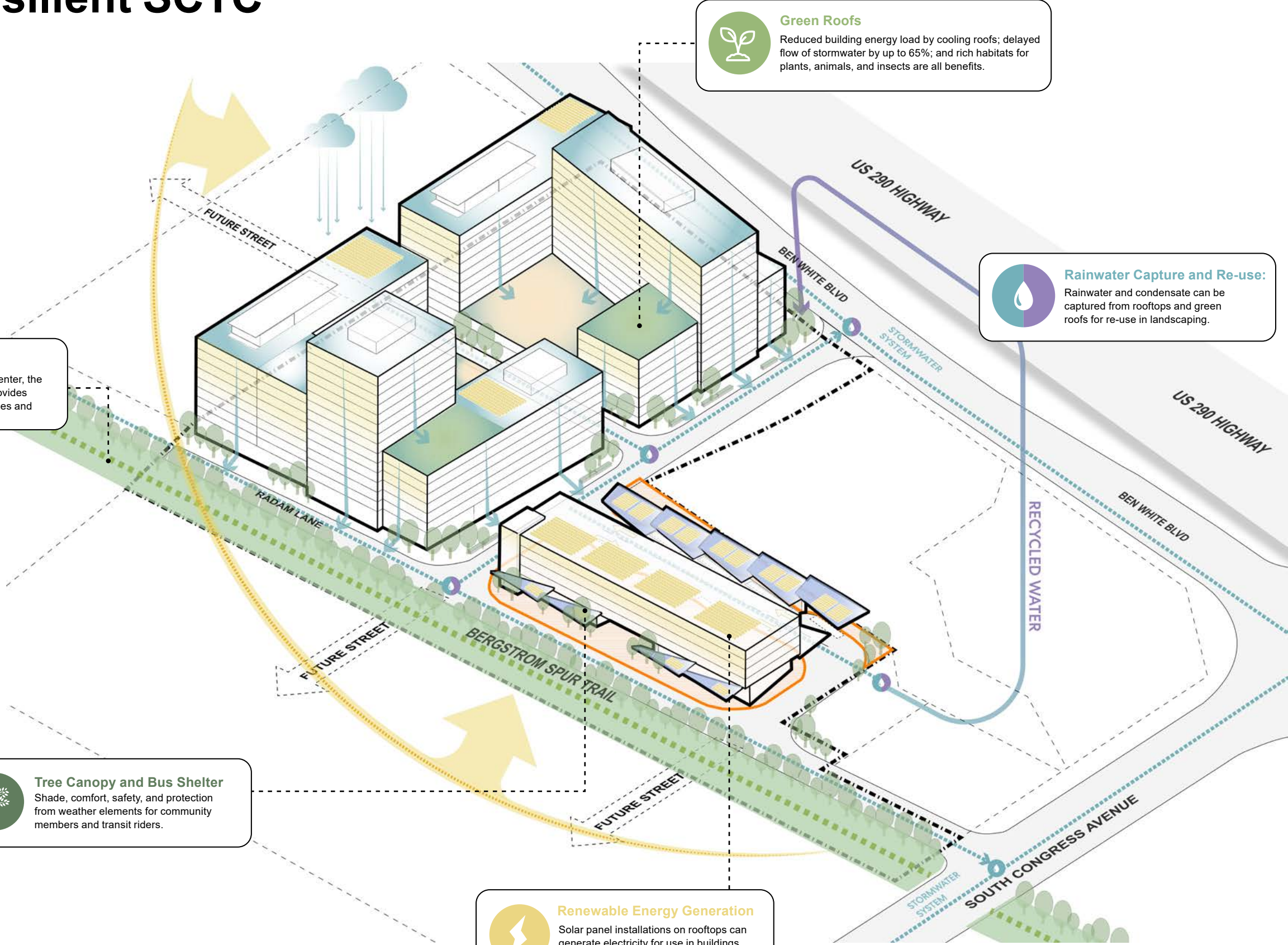


Figure 18: A sustainable and resilient community at South Congress Transit Center

05

Implementation: ETOD Policy Tools

This section identifies the ETOD Policy Tools that should be implemented within the SCTC Station Area as it evolves. These policy tools are each described in more detail in the Policy Toolkit that is included in the [ETOD Policy Plan](#). The tools are intended to align with land use regulations and investments, and to support the six ETOD Goals within the station area. Based on its characteristics, the station area has been identified as “Align” on the ETOD Typology, and implementation of these tools is intended to respond to that typology by supporting the development and preservation of affordable commercial and residential space as redevelopment of the transit center, and larger station area occurs over time.

Recommended ETOD Policy Tools

This section includes a list of the policy tools that should be implemented to move toward the desired outcomes identified in this vision plan. The recommended tools for this plan have been identified through the planning process and organized by implementation priority to support equitable outcomes across five broad categories: small business and workforce, housing, mobility, land use and urban design, and real estate and finance strategies.

While many of these tools are already moving forward as part of various ongoing city initiatives, they will remain priorities until full implementation in the area is achieved. In many cases, these tools would be implemented citywide or across the full Project Connect system. Please refer to the city's [ETOD Policy Plan](#) for a detailed description of each policy tool.

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT4	Support affordable ground floor space for local businesses & nonprofits	ATP + COA EDD
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT6	Promote skills-based and industry-specific job training and hiring	Workforce Development Providers + COA EDD + ATP + CapMetro
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT7	Support the Transit Line Construction Apprenticeship Program to enable local worker participation	Workforce Development Providers + COA EDD + ATP + CapMetro
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT8	Build capacity for small business participation in Project Connect construction and investments	ATP + CapMetro + CoA SMBR
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT9	Establish childcare grants	Workforce Development Providers + CoA APH + CapMetro + CoA FSD + CoA EDD
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT10	Develop and augment housing funds for preservation and creation of affordable housing	CoA Housing + CapMetro + ATP + AHFC + Texas Housing Conservancy

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT11	Promote land acquisition for affordable housing	CoA Housing + AHFC + AAHC + Texas Housing Conservancy + Non-profit fund managers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT12	Support community land trusts and other shared equity homeownership models	CoA Housing + AHFC + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT13	Seek abatement-financed housing acquisitions and joint ventures	CoA Housing + AHFC + HACA + Travis Co. + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT15	Establish an inclusive ETOD Overlay	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CapMetro + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT16	Reimagine ETOD requirements for accessory dwelling units	Workforce Development Providers + CoA APH + CapMetro + CoA FSD + CoA EDD
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT17	Support soft density by right	CoA DSD + CapMetro + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT18	Support tenants' right to counsel	CoA Housing + Legal non-profits
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT21	Expand home repair programs	CoA Housing + AHFC + CoA DSD
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT22	Expand the Emergency Direct Rental Assistance	CoA Housing + AHF + For-profit and non-profit developers

Underway

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Mobility	SCTC_PT25	Enhance first/last mile service to stations	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	SCTC_PT31	Create shared parking requirements/public participation program	CoA Transportation
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT36	Reimagine compatibility requirements	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT39	Incentivize public amenities that improve community health and well-being	CapMetro + ATP + CoA Housing + CoA Planning
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT40	Encourage provision of civic space around transit stations	CapMetro + ATP + CoA PLD + CoA PARD + Community
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT41	Engage community voices in the public space design process	CapMetro + ATP + CoA PLD + CoA PARD + Community + Artists
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT42	Incorporate context-specific bicycle / pedestrian infrastructure design framework	CoA Transportation + AHFC + HACA + Travis Co. + For-profit and non-profit developers
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	SCTC_PT44	Identify strategies to utilize public land in the station area in concert with citywide efforts	CapMetro + CoA EDD + CoA Planning + AEDC
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	SCTC_PT45	Establish a land acquisition plan	CapMetro + CoA Housing + CoA FSD+ AHFC + COA EDD + AEDC

1-5 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT1	Provide access to small business construction interruption fund	ATP + CoA EDD
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT3	Provide access to a small business assistance fund	CoA EDD + ATP
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT14	Create capacity building for community benefits	CoA Housing + CapMetro + Financial Institutions + Philanthropic foundations
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT19	Expand the Existing Preference Policy	CoA Housing + AHF + For-profit and non-profit developers
Housing Affordability	SCTC_PT20	Expand the Down-Payment Assistance Fund	CoA Housing
Mobility	SCTC_PT29	Mode Split Goal for Each Station	CoA FSD + ATP
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	SCTC_PT43	Support developer solicitation and procurement framework	CoA FSD + ATP

5-10 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT2	Promote the creation of a small business relocation plan	ATP + CapMetro + CoA EDD
Mobility	SCTC_PT24	Support legacy mobility benefits program (for existing people & businesses within station areas)	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	SCTC_PT23	Establish an ETOD Mobility Program	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + Movability
Mobility	SCTC_PT27	Promote a community car program	CoA Transportation + Carsharing Companies
Mobility	SCTC_PT28	Create an equitable station access strategy	CoA Transportation + CapMetro + ATP
Mobility	SCTC_PT31	Improve shared parking requirements/ public participation program	CoA Transportation + CapMetro
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT33	Establish minimum land use intensity of transit-supportive uses	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CapMetro
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT34	Allow more flexibility in permitted ground floor building uses	CoA Planning + CoA DSD + CoA EDD, For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT35	Establish high affordable housing goals for publicly owned land in ETOD areas	CapMetro + ATP + CoA FSD + CoA Housing + CoA Planning + Public agencies and Municipalities + Educational institutions

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT37	Provide public amenities that improve community health and wellbeing	CapMetro + ATP + CoA Housing + Coa Planning + For-profit and non-profit developers
Land Use and Urban Design	SCTC_PT38	Create an equity scorecard for ETOD projects	Coa Planning + CapMetro + Neighborhood and community organizations
Real Estate and Finance Strategies	SCTC_PT46	Create a city-led innovative and gap financing	CoA Housing + CoA FSD+ AEDC + CapMetro + Community

10-20 Years

Category	ID	Policy Recommendation	Lead(s) + Partner(s)
Small Business & Workforce Development	SCTC_PT5	Provide Business District Merchant Association support	CoA EDD
Mobility	SCTC_PT26	Create a universal basic mobility pilot	CapMetro + Movability + CoA Transportation
Mobility	SCTC_PT32	Improve park and ride parking management	CapMetro + CoA Transportation

The tools and strategies outlined in this section are intended to provide a framework for implementation; however, successful execution of these equity tools may require coordination and collaboration with additional partners over time.

06

Next Steps

Equitable transit-oriented development is a process that requires regulatory, planning, design, engineering, financial, and legal coordination. CapMetro, the City of Austin, and Austin Transit Partnership each have critical roles in taking all aspects of ETOD forward and will continue to partner and coordinate with each other and the community on its implementation.

Transit Center Implementation

The SCTC Station Area Vision Plan is one element in a larger coordinated initiative to support equitable transit-oriented development in Austin. This work is guided by the systemwide [ETOD Policy Plan](#) that was approved by Council on March 9, 2023.

Station area vision plans are intended to serve as geographically specific guides for how ETOD could be made a reality in a particular station area. The SCTC Station Area was selected as a focus for this planning because it is currently experiencing rapid change, includes a major CapMetro-owned transit center site, and could be served by light rail in the future under the ultimate Project Connect Long Term Vision Plan.

Moving forward, the City will work to support implementation of this vision plan through future regulatory changes and implementation of the investments and policy tools described in the plan. This plan will also serve as a model for future station area vision plans developed in other areas.

For CapMetro, the station area vision plan is a necessary milestone for future equitable transit-oriented development at its transit center. It not only gives a hopeful vision for what ETOD could look like here, but its guidance is grounded in community preferences for both the transit center site and the overall neighborhood character.

To realize this vision, CapMetro must now prepare for joint development by setting a financial strategy and determining organizational priorities for the property it owns. CapMetro will pursue a joint development partner who is prepared to deliver an innovative ETOD community that is environmentally sustainable, produces significant affordable housing, and is a catalyst for safe, dense, walkable future development in the station area.

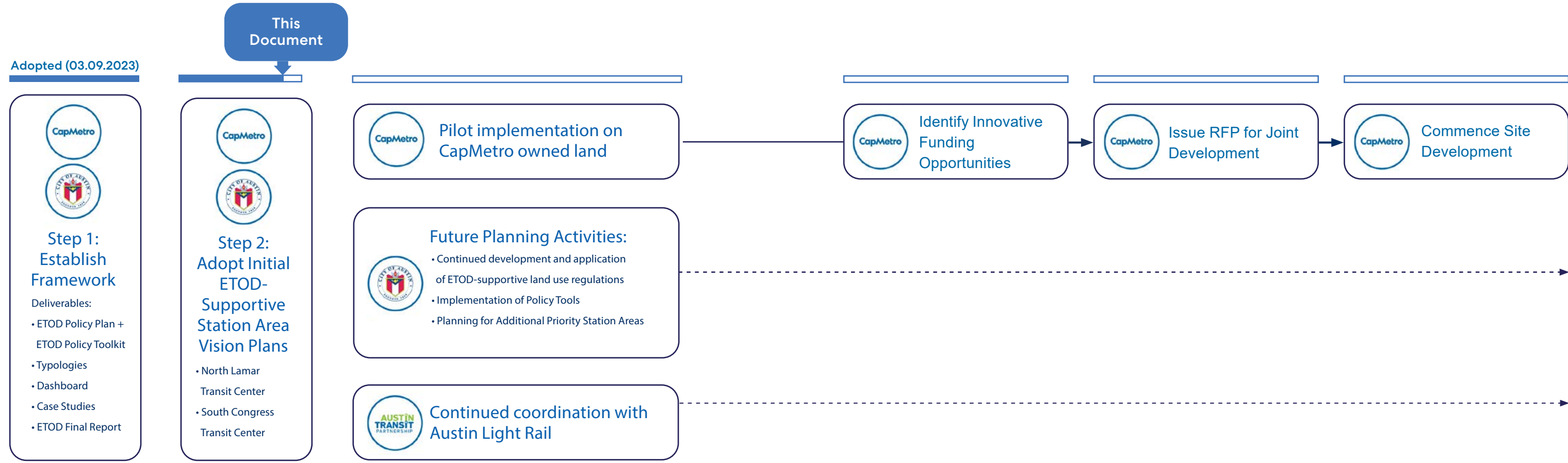


Figure 20: Next steps for the vision plan

Station Area Implementation

Bringing this vision plan to life will also require many City of Austin departments, CapMetro, Austin Transit Partnership, developers, and the community to implement a combination of investments, regulations, and programs. The following near-term next steps are recommended:

- **Develop the design for the transit center:** Work with the community to develop more specific designs and a strategy for transforming the single-function transit center that exists today into an urban transit-integrated community.

Lead: CapMetro

- **Apply the ETOD Overlay to properties within the station area:** Pending development of phase 2 ETOD Overlay regulations, engage the community and initiate rezoning of properties within the station area to add the ETOD Overlay as appropriate.

Lead: COA Planning Department

- **Amend the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP):** Integrate transportation connections and improvements identified in this vision plan to enhance accessibility and support growth in the station area.

Lead: COA TPW

- **Amend the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and related neighborhood plans, and review future rezoning requests against the Future Land Use Map:**

Adopt the station area vision plan as an attachment to Imagine Austin, amend neighborhood plan FLUMs for consistency, and ensure any proposed rezoning requests align with the vision as outlined in the Future Land Use Map.

Lead: COA Planning Department

- **Develop and implement displacement prevention strategies:** Continue collaborating with the City's Displacement Prevention Division to identify opportunities to support plan goals through citywide displacement prevention programs.

Lead(s): COA Housing + COA Planning Department

- **Implement infrastructure improvements:** Identify funding and opportunities to support infrastructure projects that advance station area plan initiatives.

Lead(s): COA TPW + COA Planning Department

07

Appendix

The role of the Austin community was critical in ensuring the South Congress Transit Center Station Area Vision Plan reflects the aspirations and challenges of its community members. The following community engagement summary details the different phases of engagement, outreach methods used, and feedback collected, highlighting our commitment to an equitable planning process.

Community Engagement Summary

The following section is a summary of the three phases of community engagement that took place during the planning process for the station area vision plans. Each phase of engagement was used as a building block to advance the next phase of engagement and produce a comprehensive draft vision plan. Station area-specific details related to transit, housing, and pedestrian safety are a direct result of the community's active participation to ensure the vision plans respond to the needs of existing community members. The three phases took place at different time periods over the last two years: Phase 1 in Spring 2023, Phase 2 in Fall 2023, and Phase 3 in Fall 2024.

The summaries below include the purpose for each phase and an overview of the different forms of communication and outreach used to boost community involvement and gather feedback from the public. This is followed by a breakdown of the individual outreach methods used to track engagement and provides data on the public's interactions with those methods. Those methods include public workshops, surveys, tabling events, online engagement, and emails. Each summary concludes with a table that categorizes feedback received via surveys and public workshops by the ETOD Goals outlined in the [ETOD Policy Plan](#).

Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 1:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 1 Engagement Purpose

The project team implemented the first round of engagement for the ETOD station area plans to set the priorities for land uses based on neighborhood-level policy recommendations within a half-mile radius of the station areas. Staff engaged the community regarding the

future of these station areas and meeting the community's needs. The engagement period took place from January to March 2023. The community feedback collected during this phase directly influenced the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans and design concepts, the next step in the planning process.

Engagement Overview

One of the primary objectives of the community engagement effort for all phases of ETOD planning is to create opportunities and methods to engage community members and transit users who have been historically underrepresented while compensating them for their time and knowledge. Accomplishing this required targeted methods for reaching those key communities that may be outside of the traditional methods.

In this round of engagement, the channels implemented to hear these voices included small, compensated focus groups, an online survey, and four public virtual workshops. CapMetro also hired Community Connectors, a diverse, engaged, and compensated group of grassroots community members that helped us reach their networks. These channels are further explained below.

Focus Groups

From February 2023 to March 2023, the project team sought community input through a series of virtual focus groups. Community engagement through these virtual focus groups helped inform the project team on the community's needs and priorities for both the NLTC and SCTC Station Areas. The purpose of the focus groups was to:

1. Connect with and receive feedback from priority populations (including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Spanish-speaking, and low-income community

members), transit center users, neighborhood community groups and organizations, and local businesses.

2. Share CapMetro's ETOD study goals, station evaluation criteria, best practices, and existing conditions with focus group members.

3. Build trust and demonstrate transparency around the ETOD study.

In total, there were six virtual focus groups held, four in English and two in Spanish, and each focus group lasted one hour. The focus groups were hosted as virtual Zoom meetings. The interactive presentations were displayed on Google Jamboard slides where the assigned notetaker would live capture participants' feedback by applying virtual "sticky notes" throughout the discussion. Each participant received a \$50 HEB e-gift card within 24 hours of the focus group concluding. All text and content used in the presentations for the Spanish-speaking focus groups was translated into Spanish.

Survey

An online survey tool was used to engage station area communities and transit users to help define the vision and set priorities for the future of each station area. The survey was open from February 13, 2023, to March 23, 2023, and offered two different ways for area community members and transit users to give their input. The first was station area surveys that were offered for both NLTC and SCTC, where respondents could provide input on station-specific questions. Secondly, an interactive map of NLTC and SCTC Station Areas allowed users to drop comment pins on specific points within each station area to highlight existing community assets, areas for improvement, and community needs.

Open Survey Period

- 120 Unique Users
- 50 Surveys for NLTC
- 60 Surveys for the SCTC
- 244 Station area mapping comments
- 156 Comments for NLTC
- 88 Comments for SCTC
- 77 Responses to other comments placed on the map

Virtual Public Workshops

Virtual Public Workshops were held to extend the project engagement reach by providing an additional forum for community members to learn about the ETOD station area planning and provide their feedback in an interactive discussion. Four total virtual workshops were held between February 28, 2023 and March 1, 2023. The project team provided an overview of ETOD planning to date, explained the purpose of the station area plans, and shared the current context specific to the station areas. American Sign Language and Spanish interpretation were provided at all workshops.

- Two NLTC workshops were held – one in the afternoon and the other in the evening.
- Two SCTC workshops were held – one in the afternoon and the other in the evening.

Community Connectors

To expand community participation and increase engagement from priority populations, Cultural Strategies worked with Capital Metro and its consultant team to expand CapMetro's Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Community Connector Program, a public

engagement effort that has been successful in reaching historically underserved communities and community members. The primary objective was to support a community-led public input and planning process for the first phase of engagement for the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans. Collectively, Community Connectors represented daily transit riders, connections to cultural organizations, college-aged student governance/leadership, differing abilities/disabilities, and housing and affordability advocates. Each Connector was equipped with accurate information about the project and active support to effectively engage their personal networks and local community.

Connectors participated in regularly scheduled meetings and one-to-one calls, attended the February 28, 2023 and March 1, 2023 Virtual Workshops, supported the business walk activities, shared survey and workshop links, explored opportunities to reach and engage their networks, and provided key-insights reports. The Community Connectors program provided community members and small businesses adjacent to the station areas with an opportunity to learn about ETOD. Overall, their engagement in the process helped amplify the community's priorities, challenges, and visions for the two station area plans.




Engagement Feedback Phase I




Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation

- [NLTC] More improvements to pedestrian and bike infrastructure, with emphasis on better sidewalks, protected crosswalks, protected bike lanes, and overall greater pedestrian connectivity. Streetscapes should be safe and accommodating for all.
- [SCTC] More walkability and greater safety considerations, including more pedestrian or bike trails, bike storage, and safer South Congress crossings.
- [NLTC] Currently there are many unsafe crossings in the area: there is a need for safer crossings.
- [SCTC] An important section of the station area is north of Ben White/Highway 290. However, it is very unsafe to cross this section. There is a clear need for safer pedestrian/bike crossings in this section.
- Green space and beautification efforts are needed.
- [SCTC] It would be great to capitalize on the Bergstrom trail.
- Lack of shade makes it difficult to move around, especially in the hot season.
- Individuals are concerned with the safety in the area.
- Need for graphic wayfinding, including in a variety of languages.
- Late night services are needed.
- Free and affordable bus and transit passes.
- Shuttle parking to increase use of public transportation.
- Bike/scooter rental stations and charging stations for electric cars.
- Concerns with long wait times, transfers, and transit delays were shared.

Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable

- Having affordable housing will bring a sense of community and people.
- People are struggling with housing and need more affordable options.
- More dense housing is needed.

<p>Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing tends to be more accepted when it isn't concentrated: spread it around instead of being concentrated. • There is potential to utilize existing buildings to create more affordable housing. • [SCTC] St. Elmo area is growing. However, there is nervousness about new developments. Housing costs are increasing exponentially, and there are concerns related to displacement with new developments. 	
<p>Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed-use housing, a variety of home types and apartments. • Increasing housing stock could help displacement for the working class. • Keep cultural diversity despite gentrification. • Investors should not buy all the housing – people, not just businesses. • Keeping families and kids safe. • Misconception that new is always better. There are established businesses currently being driven out: newer development pushing out others. • Prioritize people who are already here and trying to make a better living for themselves. 	
<p>Support Healthy Neighborhoods That Meet Daily Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more apartments/affordable housing. • Safety and security, accessibility, and walkability. • There is a need to increase density. Also, car dependency makes it difficult to have strong community centers. • Mixed-use development often misses basic needs: need more complete neighborhood businesses. • There is a need for more grocery options, healthy/affordable food. • [SCTC] More green space and outdoor play space is needed. Parks and recreation features, including dog parks, exercise facilities, shade trees. 	

<p>Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need for more community amenities, including high-quality health care, libraries and childcare. Grocery options are needed. • More grocery stores/local food vendors, corner markets, and farmers markets, with a focus on healthy food and local ownership. 	
<p>Expand Austin's Diverse Cultural Heritage and Small, BIPOC-Owned, and Legacy Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help small businesses and renters. • [NLTC] There is a current lack of community feel/integration. However, the area does have notable places beloved by the community, including a variety of restaurants and local businesses. • [SCTC] The area has many notable businesses and restaurants that people like to visit. • [NLTC] This area has a large international community/confluence of different cultures. • [NLTC] There is no real connection for the people who live in the area to the things to do there. • Need to make area friendly to non-English speakers. • [SCTC] Lacking Southeast Asian cultural presence. • Access to small businesses during construction is important. • Concerns that established businesses are being pushed out. • Security and safety are important. 	
<p>Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail component is important: means to activate the space and attract people. • Variety of business/service options easily reached via transit. • Need more employment opportunities; people are travelling far for work. • Job training/business incubators located in the station area. • Need more stores that meet daily needs, restaurants, pet stores, grocery stores. • More cultural arts and music venues, such as performance theaters, art vendors, music venues, and art galleries. 	

Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities

- Language training (ESL).
- More education and high-quality employment opportunities.
- A mix of large and small businesses.
- Avoid chains, more support for local businesses.
- Would like to see redevelopment: make it easier to make changes to improve the area.



Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 2:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 2 Engagement Purpose

The second phase of engagement for the station area vision plans took place in October and November 2023. Engagement applied the feedback received from round 1 on preliminary planning efforts for the station areas and identified community needs to accommodate the improvements necessary for the station areas' street connectivity, pedestrian safety, and open spaces network. These conversations prompted discussions for planning scenarios on what future development would look like for the station areas and the transit centers.

Engagement Overview

The engagement window was open from October 11, 2023 to November 9, 2023. The project team engaged with over 370 people through several methods of communication and outreach. Those methods included business walks, conducting surveys, public workshops, presentations, focus groups, sending emails, distributing flyers, mailing postcards, social media posts, and hosting tabling events. The feedback collected during this engagement period was analyzed by the project team to draft the first version of the station area vision plans which would be shared with the community for comments and questions in the next phase of engagement. The methods used for round two are included below.

Emails

Emails were sent to over 16,500+ ETOD and CapMetro subscribers inviting them to participate in various engagement efforts to get involved and provide comments on planning for the station areas. Email outreach was

broken down to focus on leveraging the different forms of communication in which community members could provide their comments. The methods of communication were as follows:

- Focus Groups: emailed 450+ community members.
- Public Workshops: emailed 500+ community members.
- Survey: emailed 15,000+ community members.

Business Walks

The project team sent emails and posted flyers inviting local small business owners in the station areas to provide feedback on future planning. Their feedback was collected via surveys, focus groups, and public workshops.

- NLTC: Staff spoke with ~ 70 small businesses.
- SCTC: Staff spoke with ~ 60 small businesses.

Postcards

Postcards promoting the public workshops were mailed to addresses located within a half-mile of the station area. The postcard included a scannable QR code that redirected users to the main ETOD SpeakUp Austin webpage.

- NLTC: 3,889 postcards mailed.
- SCTC: 3,205 postcards mailed.

Social Media

Social media outlets were used to promote participation in the public workshops and surveys. The primary outlets used were Facebook, Twitter "X", and Instagram posts on the City of Austin and CapMetro social media pages.

Additionally, CapMetro paid the following social media post that was accessible in English and Spanish:

- Facebook: 5000+ views
- Twitter: 10,700+ views
- Instagram: 3000+ views
- Paid Promotion: 20,300+ views

Presentations

A formal presentation was given to the Thurmond Heights Residential Council Meeting on November 16, 2023. The project team presented to the Thurmond Heights Neighborhood Association on ongoing engagement efforts and future plans for the NLTC Station Area. Surveys were accessible in English and Spanish.

Tabling

Tabling events are other City or community organizational events where the staff would have a table setup to invite community members to learn more about the project and participate in the comment period. Tabling was not originally included as one of the methods of outreach for this specific round of engagement, however, due to low turnout at the public workshops, staff added the following tabling events to engage more community members:

- Two mornings and two afternoons each at NLTC and SCTC (November 1, 2023, through November 3, 2023)
- Foundation Communities Sierra Vista Family Night (October 25, 2023)
- Todos Juntos Mi Familia y Me Pumpkin Party (October 26, 2023)
- Waterloo Greenway Día De Los Muertos (November 1, 2023)
- Thurmond Heights Apartments (November 8, 2023)

*Surveys in English and Spanish were accessible at all tabling events.

Focus Groups

Focus groups began on October 11, 2023 and concluded on October 18, 2023. There were seven one-hour virtual focus groups held throughout that week with sessions offered in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. The project team was able to locate participants by emailing community-based organizations and having their staff forward the focus group information to their members and clients. An existing CapMetro Community Connector with strong ties to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community was able to leverage outreach for ASL participants. Over all seven focus groups, 19 people participated and each was compensated with a \$50 H-E-B gift card.

Virtual focus groups for NLTC:

- Session 1: Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m.
- Session 2 (English + ASL): Wednesday, October 11, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 3 (Spanish only): Thursday, October 12, 2023, from noon to 1 p.m.
- Session 4 (Spanish only): Thursday, October 12, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Virtual focus groups for SCTC:

- Session 1: Monday, October 16, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 2 (English + ASL): Tuesday, October 17, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Session 3 (Spanish only): Wednesday, October 18, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Engagement Feedback Phase 2

Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation



- Feeling like the traffic and crossings in the area are not meant for pedestrians walking to the transit center.
- Children who go to schools nearby must be protected from cars when crossing. Cars do not respect pedestrians.
- [SCTC] For pedestrian safety, crossing under 290 is most important.
- [NLTC] Prioritize crossing closest to transit center through Powell Ln.
- [SCTC] Blind people work near St. Elmo at TAB. Some take the bus but more would do so if roads were improved.
- [NLTC] Improving Georgian Drive and NE Blvd is important for access to northeast Austin.
- [NLTC] Street lighting in the area should accompany improvements to Anderson Square Road and Morrow Street options.
- Need better sidewalks. At the moment you have to step on grass and mud.
- It is very difficult to bike at the moment, need a bike/scooter parking area.
- [NLTC] I like that there are connections to income restricted housing. Looks like not a lot of opportunities to cross 183.
- [SCTC] If there are night buses at SCTC, make sure it is well lit.
- More interested in trains over buses. Trains are more efficient; buses get stuck in traffic.

Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable



- Improve connections to affordable housing.
- Concern that although there are apartments with affordable rents for families [...] rents are still expensive and not accessible.
- Would like to live in the transit center.
- A mixed-use transit center would be incredible, there will always be a need for housing in Austin. Something like what they did in Mueller to provide affordable housing would be great.
- Affordable housing is so needed in Austin and the more the better.

Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gaps



- Support for pharmacy and clinics nearby, especially if you get sick at night.
- I go to a clinic nearby on Rundberg, but at night when there is no bus, it is good to have something close to go to. It's good for an emergency.
- Like having jobs close by, source of work.
- Many people supported mixed-use buildings in the Spanish sessions. Emphasis on providing amenities, but making sure it is accessible and equitable to lower-income folks and businesses.
- What I would love the most is to live in the transit center. It is the city's responsibility to provide the resources community members need. Hopefully CapMetro can give folks a better quality of life.
- Instead of just development, say how to help people stay.
- There's only a few [units of] student housing left that are affordable.
- Important for BIPOC population, especially people who want to stay central instead of being pushed out.
- Entire location should not cater fully to businesses, the site should have recreation and residential.
- Already financially stable businesses around, site should benefit people instead.
- I work with a non-profit. Other nonprofits have talked about renting one building together. But the entire location should not cater fully to businesses, should have recreation and residential.

Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs



- Preference for shaded tree groves, anything that casts shadows, native planting, community gardens, local art installations, dog parks, more sport areas, active recreation for kids play areas (including splash pads for hot weather).
- Preference for parks with big bike lanes, large space for people to exercise, something that is multipurpose beyond just a trail.
- More options to go to different parks, allows children to discover new places and encourage them to go outside.
- Accessible to people in wheelchairs, videos for sign languages in open spaces and along each stop.
- Deaf community likes to meet by soccer stadium, bookstores in area, and at transit stops.

- HEB Riverside is a good example: kids have fun, people can exercise, east access.
- Enjoys grabbing drinks and using restroom after getting off transport.
- Need for comfortable benches, greenery/overhang that provides shadows.
- I think it is a good idea to have parks and trails around. I think it is good for the environment and for us citizens.
- Prioritize community gardens.
- Smaller, incremental improvements, focusing on amenities such as water fountains.
- Design parks with benches, places to meet people and hang out.
- Have more security.
- Baseball recreation space.
- Means more greenery. Everyone wants to see the beauty of nature, not cars.
- More trees, benches, and street lighting to make area truly accessible.



Expand Austin's Diverse Cultural Heritage and Small, BIPOC-Owned, and Legacy Businesses



- Opportunity to mix priorities (through new and existing people) for new local and unique businesses.
- Improvements dependent on density types, i.e. moderate should have more small businesses, bike/ped friendly streets, and neighborhood services. If employment, more shops and restaurants.
- More accessible business connections with less crossing.
- I think it would be good because it would help to have more business connections and I wouldn't have to cross. There would be more access to small businesses like small stores so you don't have to go to the HEB.
- Opportunity to mix priorities (through new and existing people) for new local and unique businesses.
- SCTC can host more stores and businesses, will encourage more riders if this is a destination with things to do.
- Would love to trail and visit all the shops and businesses. Feels many people in Austin would agree.

Expand Access to High-Quality Jobs and Career Opportunities

- I feel like this blend of residential and commercial is a draw to bring people in to use the transit system, rather than just it being residential. Make it more of a destination.
- We need versatile community spaces.
- We need to work to be able to pay for housing.
- Be at close proximity between employment and housing.



Station Area Planning Engagement Phase 3:

NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans

Phase 3 Engagement Purpose

The third phase of engagement for NLTC and SCTC was completed in Fall 2024. The feedback collected from the first two rounds of engagement in 2023 was compiled to create the first draft of the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans. These plans were presented to the community through a series of open houses and media communications, providing the opportunity for community members to learn, ask questions, and comment on the station area vision plans. Staff incorporated resident feedback collected from the third phase of engagement into the final proposed vision plans.

Engagement Overview

The primary focus for the third round of engagement was to introduce the community to the draft station area vision plans and gather feedback on the content to ensure staff's alignment with the feedback gathered from the first two rounds of engagement. The vision plans include data highlighting areas to spark economic growth while still supporting local small businesses and mixed-income housing, and showcase maps promoting safer street and pedestrian connectivity. Both station areas have an associated future land use map, or "FLUM" that would designate development character districts to complement existing and future development within the transit center and the surrounding neighborhoods.

To inform the community on the first draft of the vision plans, staff provided a webpage and survey, mailed out postcards, put up yard signs, distributed posters around various community buildings, sent out two email blasts, notified City Council offices (an announcement

was included in a district office newsletter), attended community tabling events, and hosted three public open houses. The City of Austin Planning Department spearheaded the third round of engagement but incorporated several other departments in the various engagement efforts. Those entities included: the City of Austin Economic Development Department, Transportation and Public Works Department, Housing Department, Public Information Office, Project Connect Office, and the Capital Metro Transit Authority.

SpeakUp Austin Webpage

SpeakUp Austin houses all online community engagement outreach for public meetings and projects in the City of Austin. For the NLTC and SCTC Station Area Vision Plans, the associated SpeakUp Austin page went live on October 31, 2023, two weeks prior to the scheduled public workshops. The webpage is reachable through the following link: speakupaustin.org/etodstationareas. The webpage included an overview of what station area planning means in Austin and what is expected for each transit center and the station area, with both draft vision plans available for download.

There was also information to direct the public to boost engagement through other forms of public participation during the adoption process. Finally, there was a survey and comments section to collect information on the community members' relationship to the transit center and to provide any questions or comments related to the draft vision plans. The webpage was accessible for translation in seven different languages and with further translation services available through iSpeakAustin.

Courtesy Postcards

Courtesy postcards were sent to over 8,000 addresses in proximity to the NLTC and SCTC. The postcards were mailed to community members within 500' of the station area on the same day the SpeakUp site went live on October 31, 2023. The postcards had information on the scheduled open house public workshops and a scannable QR code to direct individuals to the SpeakUp Austin page. The postcard included Spanish translation.

- 3600+ postcards were sent to addresses in the NLTC Station Area.
- 4300+ postcards were sent to addresses in the SCTC Station Area.

Posters

Posters announcing the public workshops were posted at various community buildings and organizations in the station areas. Similar to the postcards, the posters communicated the meeting date and time for the public workshop, a QR code, and a Spanish translation.

- NLTC Poster Locations: Austin Humane Society, La Reunion Co-Op, Oaks on North Lamar Apartments (City-owned income-restricted housing), Navarro Early College High School, Redeemer Lutheran School, T.A. Brown Elementary School.
- SCTC Poster Locations: CommunityCare Clinic, Galindo Elementary School, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Lifeworks, Salvation Army Family Store, St. Elmo Elementary School, St. John's Lutheran Church/Todos Juntos Learning Center.

Yard Signs

Yard signs were placed at various street intersections in proximity to the transit centers. The yard signs included an announcement of the public workshop and a QR code to direct users to more information via SpeakUp Austin.

- NLTC Yard Signs Locations: NLTC site, corner of Powell Lane and Georgian Acres Drive, corner of Powell Lane and N Lamar Blvd, corner of Jamestown Drive and Research Boulevard.

- SCTC Yard Signs Locations: SCTC site, corner of W St. Elmo and South First Street, corner of W St. Elmo and South Congress, and the corner of E St. Elmo and South Congress.

Email Blasts

Two email blasts were sent to over 2000+ ETOD email subscribers. The first was sent one week prior to the first workshop on November 13, 2023. The second email blast was sent on November 12, 2023, the day before the first workshop. The email blasts boosted engagement with the SpeakUp Austin webpage from 73 views to over 800 views.

Public Open Houses

Three public open houses were open to the community to learn about the draft station area vision plans. Two of the open houses were in-person — one for each transit center — and focused solely on the individual draft plan for the respective station. The third open house was a joint virtual meeting discussing both NLTC and SCTC. The meeting was recorded and posted on the SpeakUp Austin webpage and is available in English and Spanish.

The in-person open houses were setup in a casual environment. Poster boards highlighted major themes from the vision plans showcasing maps, graphics, and station area-specific information. This provided a relaxed environment allowing for open communication for the

public to speak directly with staff to ask questions and learn more about the plans. Staff representation at all three workshops included the City of Austin Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Transportation and Public Works Department, Housing Department, Public Information Office, Project Connect Office, and CapMetro.

North Lamar Transit Center Open House

Date: November 13, 2024
Location: T.A. Brown Elementary School
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Attendees: 17




South Congress Transit Center Open House

Date: November 14, 2024
Location: Galindo Elementary School
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Attendees: 7

North Lamar and South Congress Joint Virtual Meeting

Date: November 16, 2024
Location: Zoom
Time: 11 a.m. to noon
Attendees: 5

Engagement Feedback Phase 3

<p>Enable All Residents to Benefit from Safe, Sustainable, & Accessible Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [NLTC] Love the open space network! Pedestrian safety and access improvements on Anderson Square! Possibility of a real grocery store in a walkable area!.• [NLTC] Need 'low-hanging fruit' renderings of light rail transit – future connections if approved w/ funding between Crestview Station and Research Blvd/NLTC Station Area.• [NLTC] Big wants: Connect Dale Dr. and Wooten Dr. to Anderson Sq. to improve ped + bike access. Better traffic control on Anderson Sq and Anderson Ln intersection. All in all, looks very promising – Gault St. resident.• [NLTC] I like the addition of more pedestrian/cyclist connectivity. Connecting Wooten and Dale to Anderson Square is a good idea. Would like better traffic flow at Anderson Ln. and Anderson Sq. intersection. Currently awful to turn left off of Gault.• The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan has a goal to increase transit ridership 4x and the only way to accomplish that is dense development. The plan should refer to this adopted goal and council direction.	
<p>Preserve and Increase Housing Opportunities that are Affordable & Attainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This plan addresses many of my concerns as a resident within the zone. I appreciate the intention to actively AVOID gentrification.• [NLTC] I like the higher density and mixed use zoning. We would really love a grocery store. -Gault St. resident.	
<p>Help to Close Racial Health & Wealth Gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [Regarding the NLTC station area snapshot board] This is highly important to me, the percentage of BIPOC folks in my area should be higher.	
<p>Support Healthy Neighborhoods that Meet Daily Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [NLTC] The Plan looks very promising!• More green spaces & rooftops on the transit center (include plants & trees).• More density & canopy areas! Add protected bike lanes.	