



MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Austin Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Council Members

FROM: Awais Azhar, Chair, Project Connect Community Advisory Committee

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager, City of Austin
Rodney Gonzales, Assistant City Manager, City of Austin
Rosie Truelove, Director Housing and Planning Department, City of Austin
Project Connect Community Advisory Committee Members

DATE: January 26, 2022

SUBJECT: Project Connect Community Advisory Committee Anti-Displacement Fund Budget Recommendations for Year 1 and 2

In the Contract with the Voters, Austin City Council directed that \$300 million of the Project Connect Tax Revenue be dedicated to acquiring real property and financing tools and other anti-displacement strategies related to the implementation of the program. In year 1 and 2 of the program, \$65 million of these funds have been made available to address the potential for transit induced displacement.

The Project Connect Community Advisory Committee has worked with city staff to streamline priorities and budget allocation for the available funds, while utilizing the Nothing About Us Without Us: Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool as the foundation for this work. Based on this work, we recommend that Council immediately direct staff to utilize these funds in areas identified as vulnerable to displacement that are along the Project Connect high capacity transit corridors.

These recommendations are based on the Contract with the Voters, Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool, Austin City Council Resolution No. 20210204-062, neighborhood-level demographic data, and other community proposals and priorities. While we recommend that in future years additional community engagement opportunities be created to further gain feedback on community priorities in relation to the anti-displacement funding, we ask that the funds from year 1 and 2 are immediately directed towards programs and priorities to ensure meaningful impact.

We recommend that the anti-displacement fund budget for years 1 and 2 is committed as following.

1. Commit \$23 million towards land acquisition and affordable housing preservation, in alignment with direction from Austin City Council Resolution No. 20210204-062.

2. Commit \$21 million towards the development of affordable housing through the City's housing development assistance programs.
3. Commit \$20 million towards Anti-Displacement Initiatives as outlined in the soon to be available notice of funding availability, based on Project Connect anti-displacement priorities and rooted in the Contract with the Voters, Racial Equity Anti-Displacement Tool, and data-informed maps.

In addition, we recommend that a portion of the funds for year 1 and 2 be committed to implementing anti-displacement programs and efforts by supporting staff needs. However, we recommend that in future years, staffing should not be funded from the \$300 million but from other alternative funding sources. It is critical to prioritize anti-displacement programs and strategies when making funding decisions in the future, while ensuring that staff has the necessary resources to implement programs and efforts successfully and sustainably.

If you should have any questions, I can be reached at bc-awais.azhar@austintexas.gov.

Date of Approval: January 26, 2022

Record of the vote: Approved on a X-X-X vote (Committee Members X and X absent)

Attest:  , Project Connect Community Advisory Committee Chair



**HOUSING &
PLANNING**

Update on Project Connect Anti-Displacement Funds

January 26, 2022



Project Connect Anti-Displacement Funds

Nov 2020 – City voters passed Proposition A authorizing a City tax rate increase to fund Project Connect, including providing \$300 million to acquire real property, support financing tools, and other anti-displacement strategies associated with the implementation of Project Connect

Feb 2021 – Austin City Council passed Resolution No. 20210204-062 directing staff to make available the first \$23m annual allocation of Project Connect Anti-Displacement funds to:

- 501c3 non-profits to preserve and develop affordable housing on small sites
- affordable housing providers to preserve existing affordability of rental and ownership housing on larger sites



Project Connect Anti-Displacement Community Acquisition Program (ADCAP)

Zero percent interest forgivable and non-forgivable loans that are available on a rolling basis:

- to 501c3 non-profits with experience renovating, constructing, leasing, and selling affordable housing in Austin
- for the acquisition of vacant and improved property one acre or less in size, to be developed, renovated, leased, and sold as affordable housing to low-income households
- in gentrifying areas no more than one-mile from a proposed Project Connect bus or rail line



ADCAP Implementation Status

- Program launched at the end of December 2021
- Program Guidelines and Application are currently located on HPD's website at the following web address:

<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/anti-displacement-funding>
- The first application is currently under staff review
- HPD may update the Program Guidelines at multiple points over the first-year to quickly respond to user feedback and lessons learned



Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) Multifamily Preservation

The AHFC has begun early conversations with owners of existing multifamily housing on Project Connect lines with the goal of purchasing one large development totaling between 100 and 300 affordable units before the end of 2022

The AHFC would likely partner with a developer partner with experience renovating and preserving affordable housing in this transaction, to own and operate the development long-term



Question and Comments

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METRO

Project Connect & Capital Metro Systemwide Accessibility Program

Martin Kareithi

January 24, 2022

ADA & Accessibility

Americans with Disabilities Act - civil rights legislation

- Guarantees equal access to transportation for people with disabilities (PWD)
- Creates a framework for regulations and standards to ensure that PWDs have access to transportation services and facilities



What is Accessibility?

Accessibility - the degree to which a facility, practice, program, service or technology is available and provides access to PWDs.

What does it mean for something to be accessible?

- Facility - degree to which it is readily usable by PWDs.
- Program or practice - degree to which PWDs can participate in full.
- Technology - Degree to which PWDs can use it with or without assistive technology.

Systemwide Accessibility

Coordinated approach to improving accessibility across the entire Capital Metro transit system:

- Facilities (transit stops and stations)
- Vehicles (MetroBus, MetroRapid, future light rail)
- Technology (customer communication and information, mobile apps, internal systems)



Facilities

- The built environment
- Where the pedestrian meets the infrastructure
- Incorporate accessibility at concept and design
- Includes pedestrian features such as sidewalks, shared-use paths, traffic signals and crossings
- Capital Metro-owned facilities and buildings
- Readily accessible and useable by PWDs
- Accessible to the public and for public meetings and appointments



Facilities

Sidewalks

- Access to transit begins & ends with a sidewalk

Curb Cuts

- Necessary pedestrian feature, must be ADA compliant, & incorporate detectable warning strips

Shared Use Paths

- Means of transportation for various users - pedestrians, cyclists & PWDs
- Requires sufficient ROW for safety & accessibility - minimize conflicts

Traffic Signals - Audible pedestrian signals

- Form of effective communication for PWDs, eg low vision & blind -audible queues

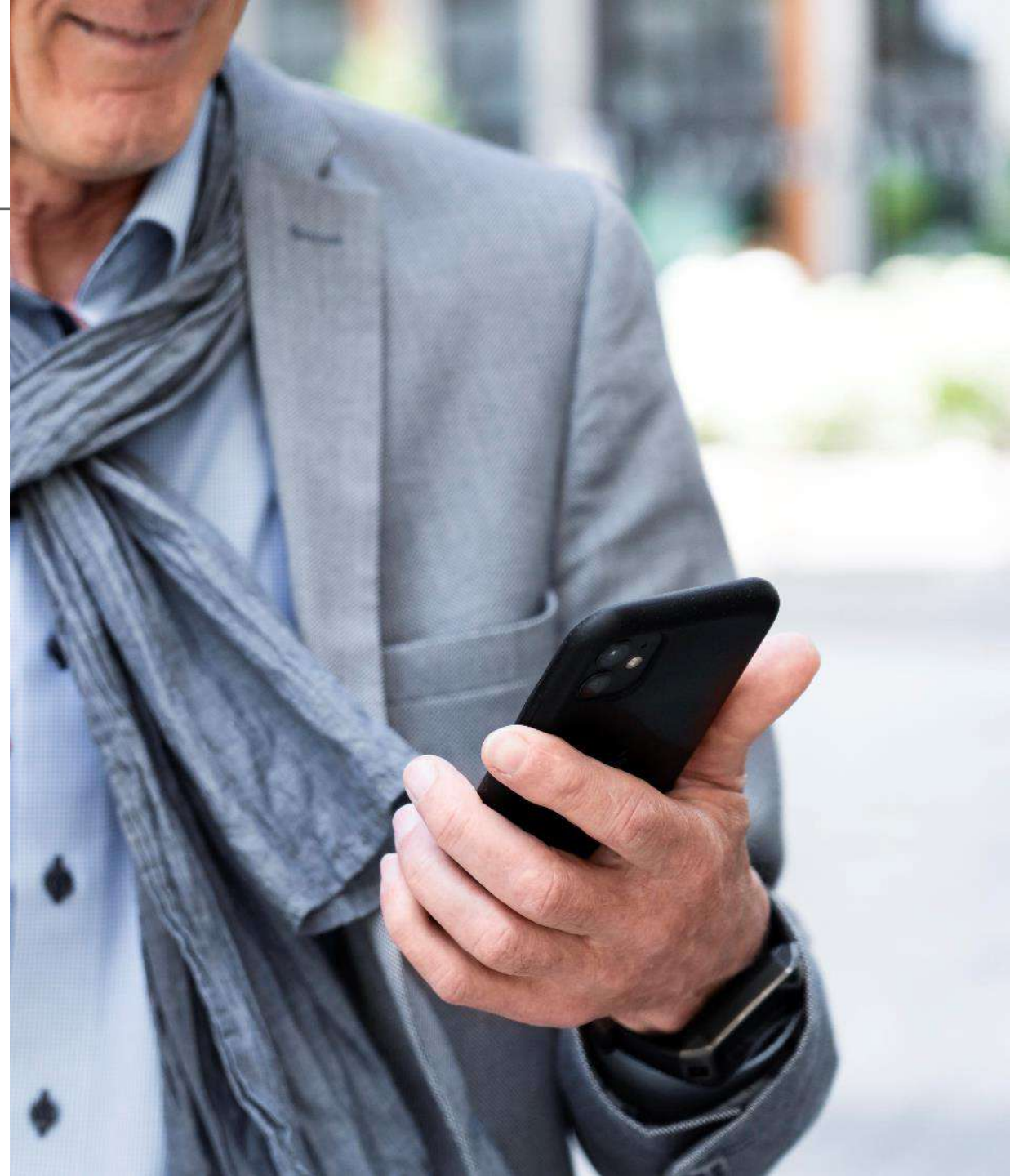
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) & Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB)

Vehicles

- Light rail, MetroRapid or MetroBus
- Incorporate accessibility features - ramps, audible announcements, securement systems, level-boarding rail platforms
- Be intentional about design
- Seek community input from PWDs
- Design responsive scope

Technology

- Customer information systems to improve the journey.
- Mobile apps and other technology can provide:
 - Information about the built environment
 - Wayfinding and navigation
 - Sense of ease and confidence



MetroAccess - Complementary ADA Paratransit Service

- Safety net service for persons with disabilities who can not use fixed-route due to their disability and functional abilities.
- Despite improvements to the built environment, vehicles, and technology, there will be others who will not be able to use fixed-route.
- MetroAccess will continue to be critical to PWDs in need of paratransit service.



Partnerships and Community Engagement

Technical

- City of Austin: Public Works, Austin Transportation Dept, Vision Zero, Travis County, TxDOT
- Leverage partnerships and maximize the effort to promote safety and accessibility

Community

- Access Advisory Committee, ADAPT, Criss Cole Center for the Blind, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
- Maintaining a feedback loop to share and incorporate ideas

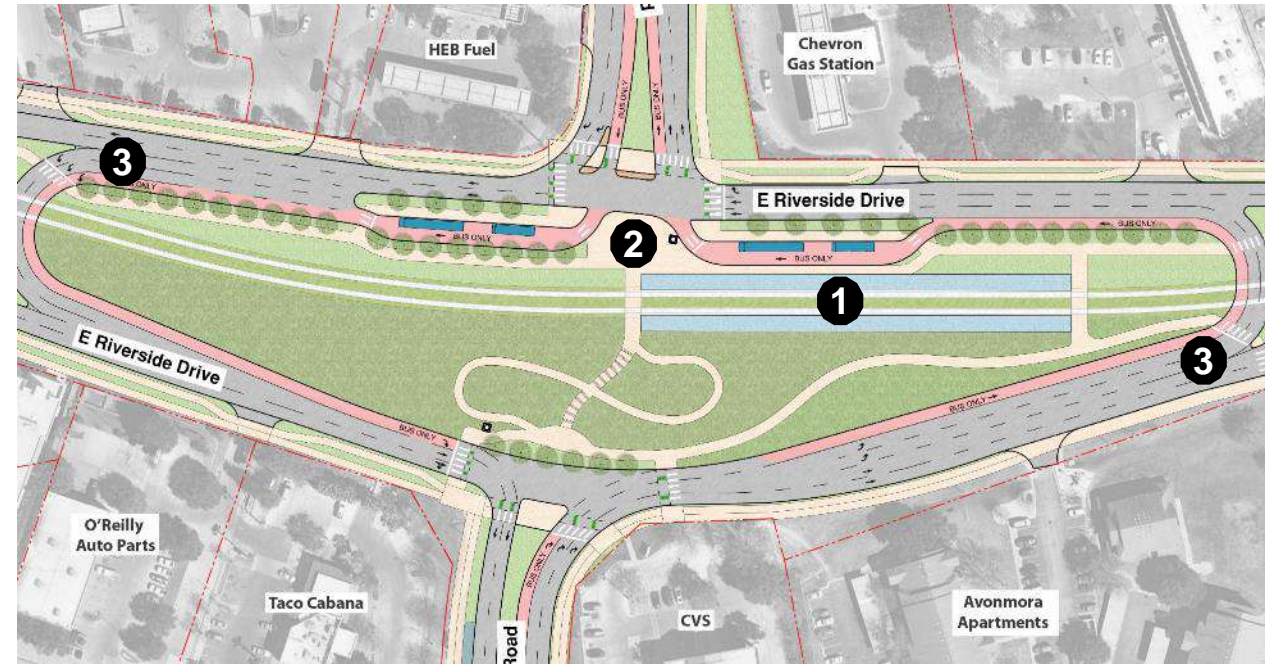
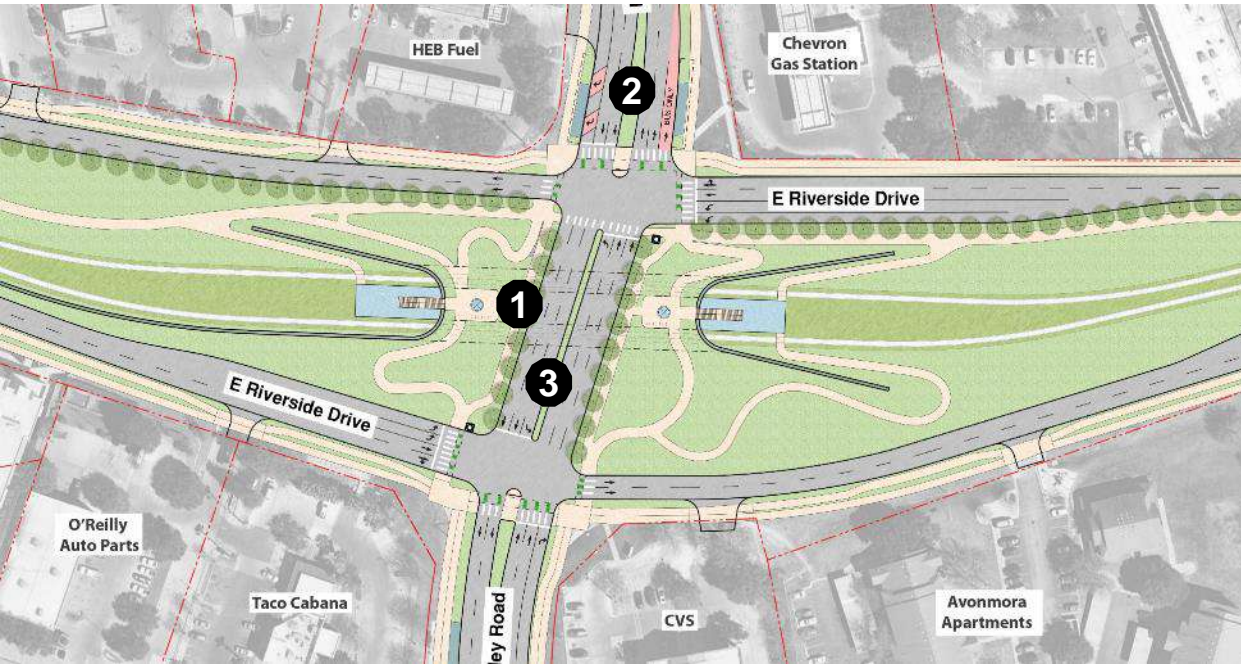
Looking Ahead to the Future

What could a systemwide accessible transit system look like?

- Full accessible paths of travel across the built environment to transit facilities with accessible pedestrian features.
- Vehicles designed for the future and for all functional abilities operating with precision technology.
- Customer information systems and apps to facilitate universal access to complete the journey with information at every step.



Pleasant Valley / Riverside Transit Plaza Design Options



Option 1: Blue Line Underpass

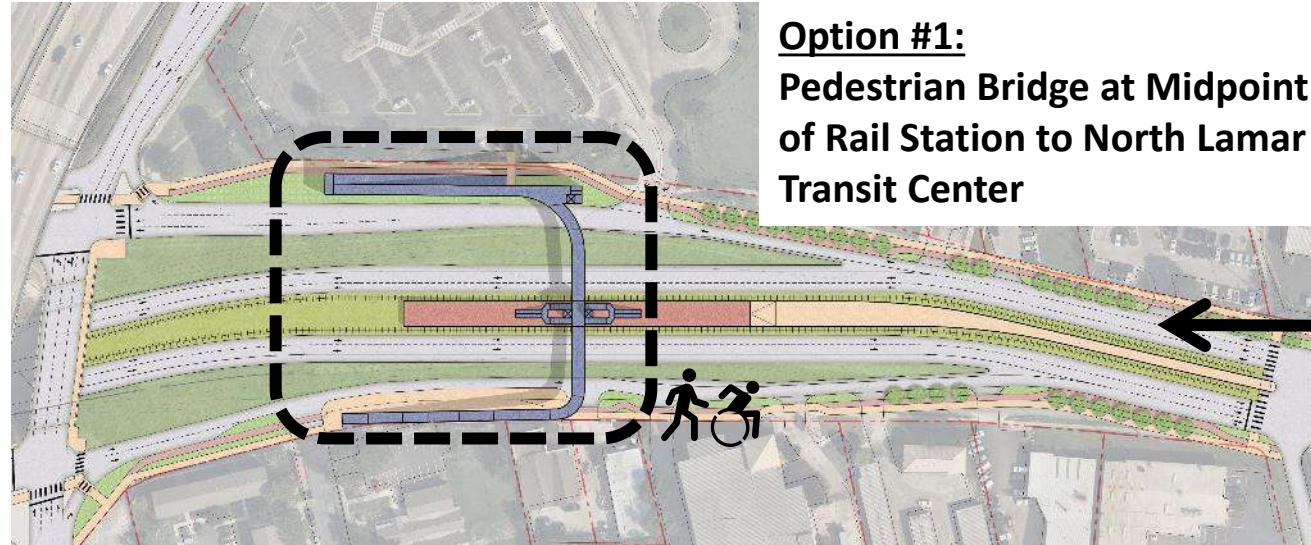
- ① Landscaped bridge and Pleasant Valley Rd above transitway
- ② MetroRapid stops located north of E Riverside Drive intersection
- ③ Through-traffic remains across Pleasant Valley

Option 2: At-Grade Transit Plaza

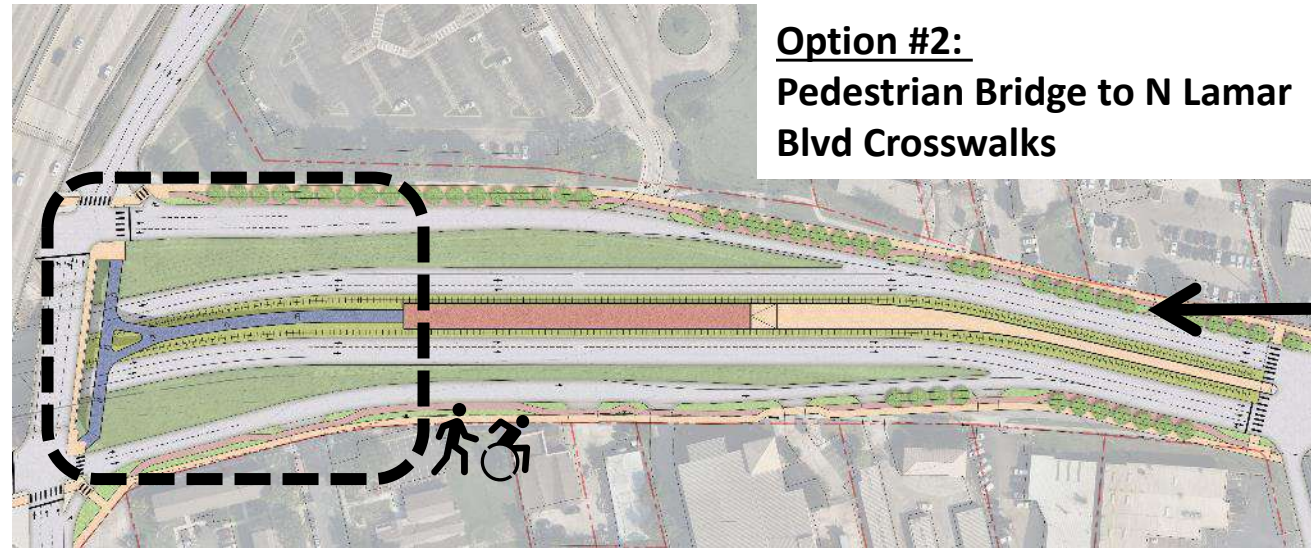
- ① Blue Line at-grade
- ② Blue Line/ MetroRapid transit plaza on E Riverside Dr
- ③ Pleasant Valley through-traffic diverted via elongated roundabout loop



North Lamar Transit Center: LRT Station Connection Options

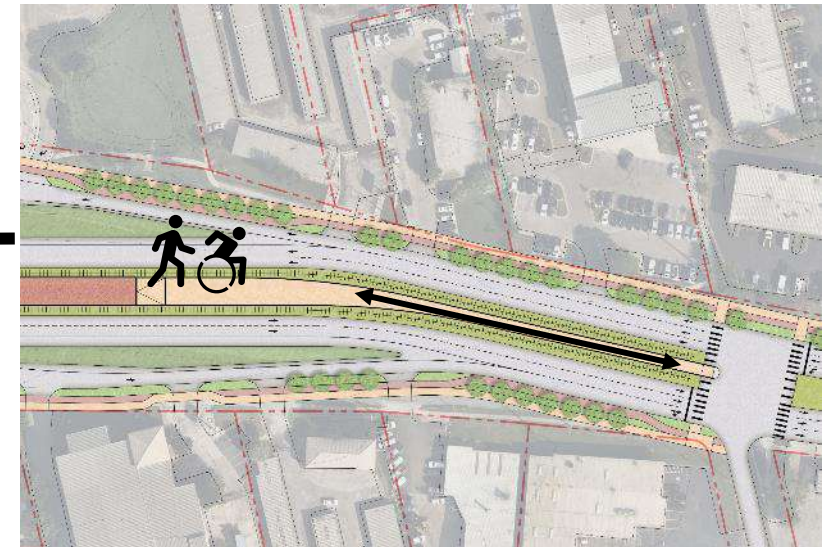


Option #1:
Pedestrian Bridge at Midpoint
of Rail Station to North Lamar
Transit Center



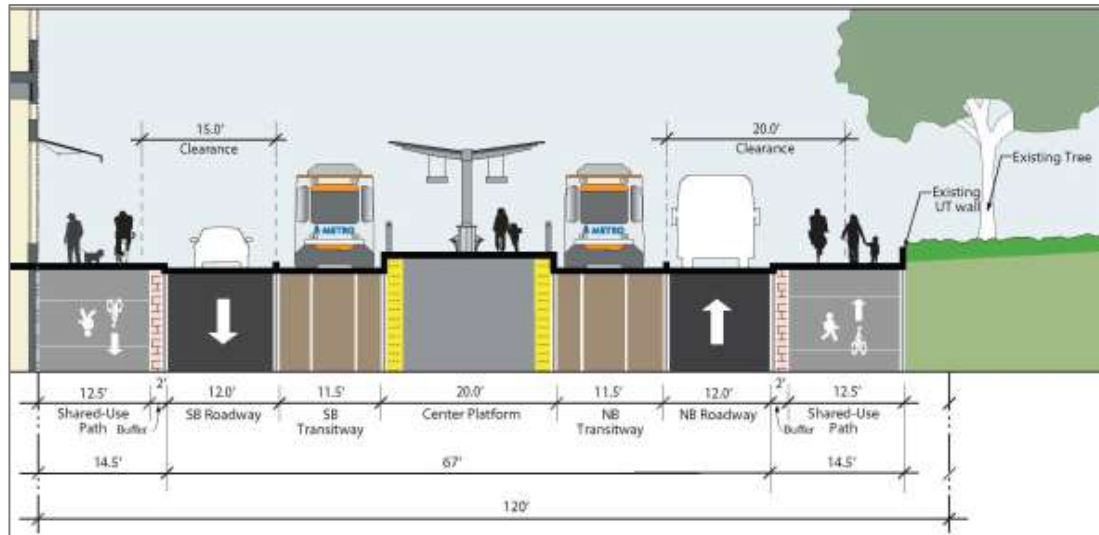
Option #2:
Pedestrian Bridge to N Lamar
Blvd Crosswalks

Both options include a pedestrian pathway from the north end of the station to Powell Ln, the nearest signalized crosswalk. Constraints mean that an at-grade crossing cannot be any closer to the station.



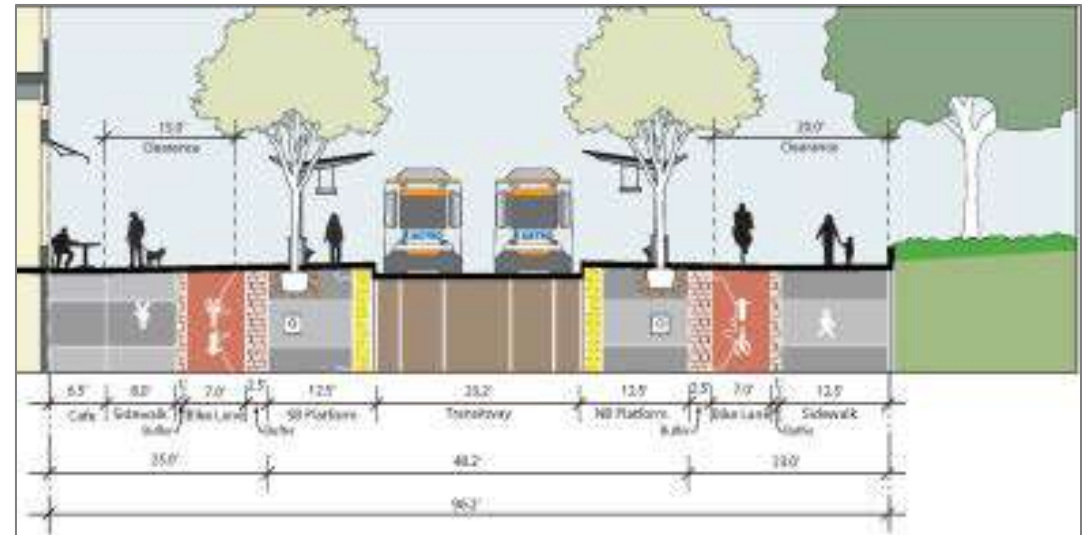
The Drag: Design Options

A Light Rail + **Traffic/Bus** Lanes and/or Bus Lanes only (22nd – Triangle) and Reduced Bike/Ped Facility



*Previously referred to as Option 3

B Transit Mall (22nd – 29th) and Full Bike/Ped Facility
Transitway could accommodate buses in addition to rail



*Previously referred to as Option 6



The Drag: Design Options

A Light Rail + **Traffic/Bus** Lanes and/or Bus Lanes only (22nd – Triangle)
and Reduced Bike/Ped Facility



B Transit Mall (22nd – 29th)
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Project Connect & Capital Metro Systemwide Accessibility Program

Q/A



METRO



METRO

THANK YOU!