

# Austin Strategic Mobility Plan



Draft Plan | February 2019

# Acknowledgements

## ***Austin City Council***

We would like to thank current and past members of Austin City Council for their leadership on the ASMP!

### **Mayor Steve Adler**

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## ***Multimodal Community Advisory Committee***

The Multimodal Community Advisory Committee (MCAC) is an advisory group to both the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) and Capital Metro's Project Connect. Thank you to all the community members who gave guidance to the ASMP and for your dedication over more than two years!

## ***Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Councils***

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### **African American Resource Advisory Commission**

#### **Asian American Quality of Life Commission**

#### **Bicycle Advisory Council**

#### **College Student Commission**

#### **Commission on Immigrant Affairs**

#### **Commission on Seniors**

#### **Community Development Commission**

#### **Downtown Commission**

#### **Environmental Commission**

#### **Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission**

### **Impact Fee Advisory Committee**

#### **Joint Sustainability Committee**

#### **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Quality of Life Commission**

#### **Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities**

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#### **Planning Commission**

#### **Urban Transportation Commission**

#### **Zoning and Platting Commission**

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<b>Austin 3-1-1</b>	<b>Equity Office</b>
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<b>Austin Fire</b>	<b>Law Department</b>
<b>Austin Police</b>	<b>Neighborhood Housing and Community Development</b>
<b>Austin Public Health</b>	<b>Office of Performance Management</b>
<b>Aviation</b>	<b>Office of Sustainability</b>
<b>Austin Water</b>	<b>Parks and Recreation</b>
<b>City Manager's Office</b>	<b>Planning and Zoning</b>
<b>Communications and Public Information</b>	<b>Public Works</b>
<b>Corridor Program Office</b>	<b>Austin Transportation</b>
<b>Development Services</b>	<b>Watershed Protection</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	

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<b>Capital Area Rural Transportation System</b>	<b>Texas Department of Transportation</b>
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## **Community Members**

We especially would like to thank the roughly 10,000 community members in the Austin area who provided their feedback throughout this process. We appreciated getting to know you and hear your concerns and desires for the future of transportation in Austin!



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# Executive Summary

## Purpose of the Plan

The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan is a comprehensive multimodal transportation plan for the future of our transportation network - and it is needed for us to achieve the mobility outcomes that will help to improve and sustain the quality of life for all community members. Austinites want our city, and our transportation network, to be safe, accessible, and inclusive for all members of our community. And we all want to be able to get where we want to go, when we want to get there. This plan presents the policies needed to guide us and the actions necessary to achieve our common goals as identified in the Imagine Austin transportation vision.

## Imagine Austin Transportation Vision

Our comprehensive plan calls for Austin to be mobile and interconnected. We envision a transportation network that is accessible and reliable, provides choices, and serves the diverse needs of our community.

### AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

*- Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*

## Mobility Goals

In reviewing past public engagement efforts, eight mobility goals emerged as recurring themes raised by Austin residents that serve as the goals for the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan: **Commuter Delay, Travel Choice, Health & Safety, Affordability, Sustainability, Placemaking, Economic Prosperity, and Innovation.**



### Commuter Delay

Reduce the amount of time workers spend traveling between home and work.



### Affordability

Lower the cost of traveling in Austin by providing affordable travel options.



### Placemaking

Build a transportation network that encourages social interaction through quality urban design, and connects users to the many places that make Austin unique.



### Sustainability

Promote integrated designs and quality additions to the built environment while reducing impacts and promoting efficient use of public resources.



### Travel Choice

Promote a balanced transportation network and the ability to make informed choices based on personal needs and preferences.



### Health and Safety

Protect Austinites by lowering the risk of travel-related injury and promoting public health.



### Economic Prosperity

Promote economic growth for individuals and the city through strategic investments in transportation networks that meet the needs of the 21st century.

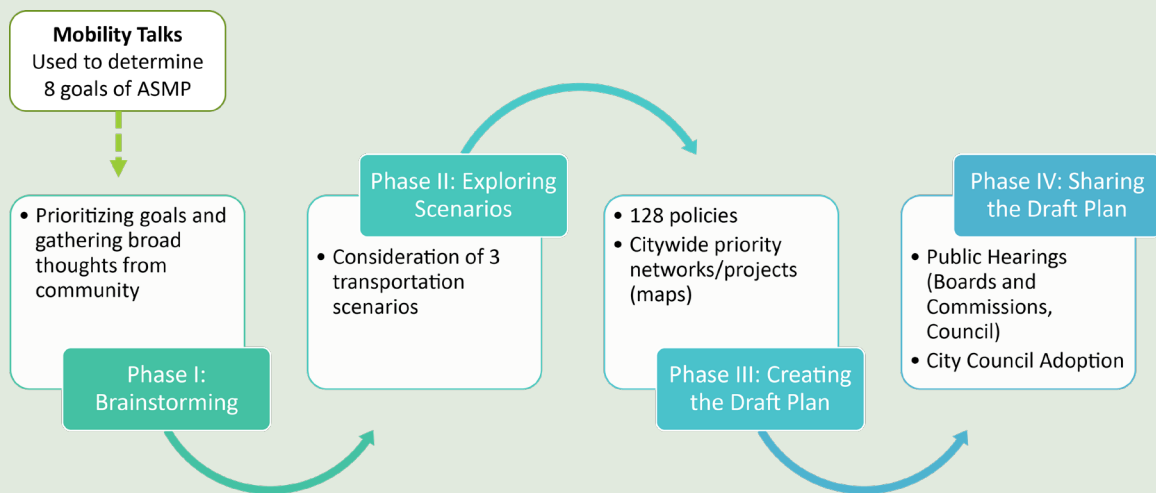


### Innovation

Draw inspiration from forward-looking cities around the world, change the way we think about what's possible, and set an example for the rest of the country.

## The Process

These goals were the starting point for the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan engagement efforts which began in early 2017 and occurred over four phases. In phase one, we asked the community to prioritize the plan goals. In phase two, we wanted to get input on future transportation scenarios and what mobility strategies the community wants to pursue to achieve the goals of the plan. In the third phase of engagement, we asked for feedback on draft policies and maps that make up the future transportation network. Together, these priorities and preferences informed the development of the plan. The last phase of engagement is the adoption process where the plan is reviewed by the community. Feedback will be heard through boards and commissions, public hearings, and ultimately City Council action.



We connected with the community during events and activities throughout these phases, specifically focused on elevating the voices of populations that have historically been underrepresented in planning processes: youth, seniors, people of color, and people with disabilities. Throughout the ASMP process, we worked to create deeper and better relationships with communities across Austin.



## Motivation behind the Plan and Primary Plan Objective

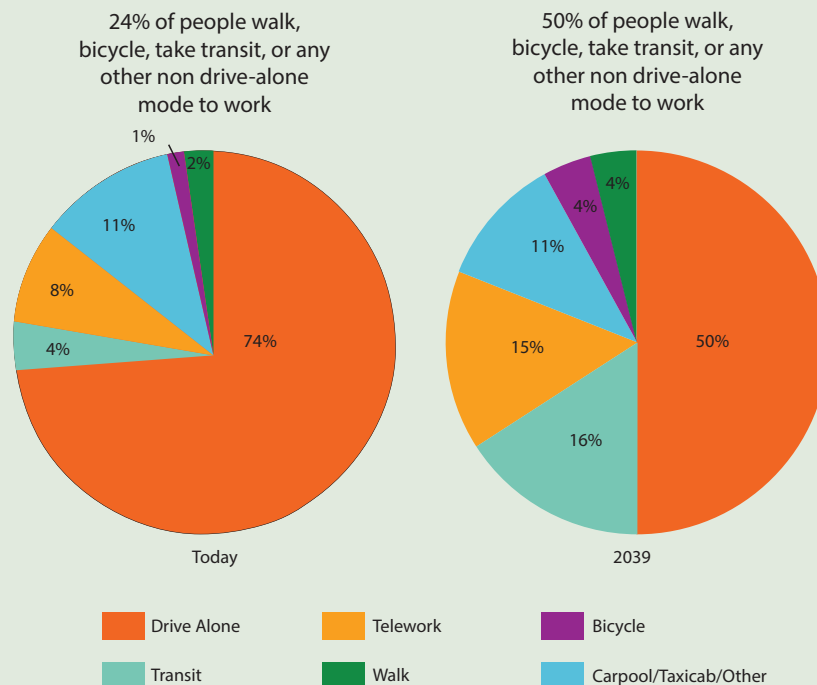
There are many factors that motivated the recommendations contained within this plan including past policy direction, what we heard from the community, our challenges, and our analysis of our projected growth and what it means for mobility.

Since our last transportation plan was adopted in 1995, Austin has added over 450,000 people and our region's population is slated to double in the next 30 years.

This growth trend is important when we consider our mode share. Our current mode share is 74% drive-alone to work, meaning 26% of working age members of our community are traveling by some other mode of transportation (taking transit, riding a bicycle, walking, carpooling, or teleworking). This measure is an important indicator of our congestion, transportation choices and access to those choices, and is a proxy for other community goals, such as air quality and affordability.

We conducted an analysis to understand what would happen if our mode share was maintained or if it shifted. In our most progressive multimodal scenario with a 50/50 mode share, 50% drive-alone, 50% all other options combined, we can manage congestion based on our forecasted growth by 2039. This means that we could maintain approximately the same number of cars as we have on the road today, while almost doubling in population. By aggressively shifting the growth of total trips to other modes and strategically expanding roadway system capacity, where feasible, we responsibly manage congestion into the future.

There are many ways to arrive at our 50/50 mode share goal. Below is one of what could be several different transit-intensive pathways to get there. Our primary objective is to track reducing our dependence on driving alone while keeping an eye on the trends of individual modes, allowing us to adjust as new solutions and options emerge during the life of the ASMP. This analysis was critical motivation for the development of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.



## Top Strategies to Reach 50/50 Mode Share by 2039

### ***Reduce traffic fatalities, serious injuries by focusing on safety culture, behaviors***

We must strategically promote a culture of safety by emphasizing education and encouragement focused on behaviors that contribute the most to traffic injuries and fatalities, while continuing to incorporate safe design principles into our multimodal infrastructure.

### ***Move more people by investing in public transportation***

We should invest in a complete public transportation system, with high-capacity vehicles in dedicated transit pathways, because it has the ability to move the most people in the region and through the core of Austin.

### ***Manage congestion by managing demand***

Transportation demand management (TDM) is an approach to tackling congestion through strategies that more quickly reduce our impact on the transportation network rather than adding costly capacity.

### ***Build active transportation access for all ages and abilities on sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail systems***

Expand multimodal transportation choices by completing the sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail systems, with a focus on completing the highest priority projects in the near-term.

### ***Strategically add roadway capacity to improve travel efficiency***

We should strategically add capacity for motor vehicles and improve the street grid to better distribute trips across the community. Working with partners to improve intersection operations and reduce bottlenecks in the roadway system will help smooth the flow of traffic.

### ***Connect people to services and opportunities for better health***

Our transportation network should increase access to healthy food, healthcare, workforce assistance, and childcare. By increasing choices for how we travel, we can provide the community with improved opportunities to meet these needs.

### ***Address affordability by linking housing and transportation investments***

We must coordinate housing and transportation investments to maximize affordability and minimize displacement knowing that mobility is a key component of household affordability.

### ***Right-size and manage parking supply to manage demand***

We should dynamically manage parking demand and supply to balance the needs of people and goods delivery. Dynamic parking management includes innovative curb space management and pricing as a tool to manage congestion.

### ***Develop shared mobility options with data and emerging technology***

Focus on shared mobility capabilities in the piloting of emerging technology. From public transportation to shared and on-demand mobility services, technology and data can connect our vehicles and infrastructure with people.

### ***Build and expand community relationships with plan implementation***

Recognizing the impact our transportation network has on our community, where we choose to live, and how we interact with each other, it is vital that all voices in our community are heard and are sought out to participate in the development of transportation projects and programs.

## Key Action Items:

To implement the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan there are some key actions items that should be completed in the near-term. These are:

- Establish benchmarks and targets for all ASMP indicators
- Advance public transportation initiatives, including Project Connect
- Update the transportation elements of the Land Development Code
- Expand the reach of TDM programming to more parts of the community
- Design and build improvements funded by the 2016 and 2018 bond programs
- Complete the Street Impact Fee and Non-Radioactive Hazardous Material Route Designation programs
- Participate in the CAMPO 2045 Plan
- Complete the Transportation Criteria Manual update

## What's in this Plan?

**Indicators + Targets:** More specific measures of our goals which help us know how well we are achieving them. Some indicators have identified targets necessary to make ambitious yet reasonable progress toward a goal within a specified timeline.

**Policies:** A definite course or method of action to guide and determine present and future decisions

**Actions:** Steps necessary to support policies, programs, and projects

**Priority Networks:** Designated for the roadway, public transportation, and bicycle systems to show where modes are prioritized to improve operations

**Transportation Network Maps:** Identify possible projects the City may pursue in the next 20 years based on a variety of factors, including the evolving needs of the transportation network, engineering analysis, public input, and available funding

**Street Network Table:** Inventory of our streets and their future conditions, which will be used to identify right of way requirements



# Introduction

## Purpose of the Plan

In 2012, the City of Austin adopted the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. This was the culmination of many years of planning efforts across the city, and it defined a vision for Austin as we reach our 200th anniversary in 2039. One of the key actions identified in Imagine Austin was to create a mobility plan, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, to guide future growth of the city's transportation network.

Austin has changed greatly in the past 20 years – socially, economically, and technologically. Given the continuous growth of Austin and its surrounding communities, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan is an important community-driven step to absorb and enhance growth in a way that balances travel needs and creates true choices among our mobility options.

The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan is a comprehensive multimodal transportation plan for the future of our transportation network - and it is needed for us to achieve the mobility outcomes that will help to improve and sustain the quality of life for all Austinites. We want our city, and our transportation network, to be safe, accessible, and inclusive for all members of our community. And we all want to be able to get where we want to go, when we want to get there.

The Austin Strategic Mobility Plan integrates the recommendations from previous transportation plans dedicated to specific modes, such as our Sidewalk, Bicycle, and Urban Trails plans, into one comprehensive document to align them into complementary systems. Additionally, it provides the basis for systems and strategies that do not have standalone plans, like the roadway system and managing demand.

This plan presents the the goals we want to achieve, the policies needed to guide us, and the actions necessary to achieve the Imagine Austin transportation vision.

## Imagine Austin Transportation Vision

The vision of this plan was established in Imagine Austin. Our comprehensive plan calls for Austin to be mobile and interconnected. We envision a transportation network that is accessible and reliable, provides choices, and serves the diverse needs of our community. Imagine Austin acknowledges that we need to build a “big-city” transportation network to meet our big city needs—a network that moves people around the city and region conveniently and safely, with or without a car.

### AUSTIN IS MOBILE AND INTERCONNECTED

Austin is accessible. Our transportation network provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable, and cost-effective to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of our citizens. Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality and reduce congestion in a collaborative and creative manner.

- Interconnected development patterns support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.
- Our integrated transportation system is well-maintained, minimizes negative impacts on natural resources, and remains affordable for all users.
- Austin promotes safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin region. These routes are part of our comprehensive regional transportation network.



## Challenges

Our current transportation network, trends, and opportunities present us with various challenges. To achieve our goals and vision of a mobile, safe, and interconnected Austin, we will have to address these challenges. Strategies to tackle these challenges motivated the recommendations in this plan.

### ***Challenge 1: How might we lower the risk of travel-related injury and protect and promote public health?***

Safety is the most important consideration in transportation decision-making. Even with that mission defining much of the work of the City, dozens of people die each year on Austin's roads. Our transportation network's most vulnerable and at-risk users, people who walk, bike, and ride motorcycles, as well as people of color, people with lower incomes, and those experiencing homelessness are disproportionately affected.

In addition to protecting Austinites from serious injury and death, transportation can affect public health in other ways. For instance, reducing vehicle-miles traveled reduces emissions associated with automobiles. Emissions, specifically ground-level ozone, have health effects for at-risk populations, including children and seniors. Transportation can also promote public health by increasing access to healthy food, healthcare, recreational opportunities, and active transportation options for commuting or meeting daily needs that can allow for physical activity as part of a daily routine.

### ***Challenge 2: How might we supply a multimodal transportation network (for driving, walking, bicycling and taking transit) that can meet the demands of a growing region while providing equitable access to transportation choices, opportunities, and services?***

With Austin's population doubling approximately every 20-30 years, our region struggles with the demand that growth has on our transportation network. The challenge is furthered by the fact that 74 percent of Austinites drive to work or school alone. The demand on our roadways is especially evident in the traffic congestion we see during peak hours. The average driver in Austin spends more than 50 hours in traffic every year. Consequently, congestion costs each Austin commuter approximately \$1,200 annually in excess fuel, vehicle wear and tear, and time lost. In total, congestion costs the region over \$1 billion annually.

Traffic congestion can lead to unreliable and slower travel times, as well as other critical externalities such as inefficiencies in goods movement, emissions from vehicles idling in traffic, and reduced access to jobs and services. Unpredictable traffic makes getting around Austin difficult, and a lack of alternative travel options leaves many with no choice but to sit in traffic jams.

While growth can bring economic vibrancy to the city, an efficient and accessible multimodal transportation network is required to supply these benefits for all Austinites. Barriers in mobility connectivity have created hurdles to individuals without vehicles, or those who frequently rely on transit services to reach higher wage jobs in various parts of Austin. Communities outside the core of the city struggle to access frequent and reliable public transportation services near where they live and work. People who do live relatively close to where they work find transit uncompetitive with driving alone because of commute time.

Adding supply to the transportation network for all modes, including driving, walking, bicycling, taking transit, and emerging mobility solutions, is a desire of the community that we heard throughout engagement efforts. Participants indicated our lack of options contributes negatively to their quality of life, access to jobs, and congestion throughout the community.

This is a complicated challenge. Providing multimodal transportation infrastructure requires prioritization and tradeoffs, as space is finite and resources are limited. Additionally, while the community supports adding supply to the transportation network, supply for what mode or where is often debated.

***Challenge 3: How might we prepare for and lead in leveraging rapidly evolving technology in transportation?***

The mobility landscape is changing due to rapidly evolving technology and its use in transportation. Connectedness among City departments, other agencies, and private partners, as well as clarity in the regulatory environment, are essential for successful integration of these new technologies.

While many of the barriers in our existing transportation network, like congestion, affordability, accessibility, and environmental concerns, can be mitigated by technological advances, there may also be unintended consequences. These consequences could include increased drive-alone trips and vehicle-miles traveled as a result of automated driving vehicle use. Additionally, access to mobility services that rely on smartphones or other technology are not available to all members of the community. There are also likely to be workforce and land use impacts of autonomous technologies and shared mobility services. Gaining value from new technologies in a way that integrates well with our existing infrastructure and continued development of basic transportation systems, such as our pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation systems, will be important to success.

There are many “unknown unknowns” about what is to come and how we will respond to and adopt new technologies. There is a need to balance government resources on technology while continuing to complete our traditional transportation systems (roadway connections and active transportation systems).

***Challenge 4: How might we ensure a financially and environmentally sustainable transportation network?***

Efficient, strategic, and targeted mobility investments are needed to ensure the financial sustainability of the City, environmental protection, and delivery of more affordable transportation choices for residents. Today, transportation agencies are called upon to design, implement, and operate transportation systems that, in addition to providing mobility and safety, are also socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable. With constrained financial resources, the City has the challenge of most efficiently using public resources to invest in infrastructure for more affordable mobility systems.

Affordable transportation options are essential as mobility is a key factor in the affordability equation. Household affordability is defined by the combination of housing and transportation costs. Increasingly, finding affordable housing for many Austinites is a challenge. Many families, especially middle and low-income households, are being displaced in search of cheaper housing options on the perimeter of the city, which generally lack mobility options other than driving. Moving further away for affordable housing often compounds transportation-related costs and congestion.

Many factors impact the implementation, operations, and maintenance of our transportation network. This includes not only maintaining the integrity and useful life of infrastructure, but also environmental stewardship. Balancing trade-offs with limited resources is a challenge.

***Challenge 5: How might we effectively collaborate with agencies, organizations and the Austin community around mobility decision-making?***

Collaboration with the community, partner agencies, and the private sector is vital to planning for



our future mobility needs, yet remains a major challenge. Multiple communities within Austin and in the Central Texas region, including communities of color, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and communities impacted by poverty are often underrepresented in processes leading to important decisions. We must find creative ways to remove barriers to engagement that commonly prevent historically underserved and underrepresented community members from engaging in mobility decision-making.

We also have to be context-sensitive in our decisions. New transportation infrastructure should be conscious of the traditions, desires, and behaviors of the people currently living in communities where it's being constructed.

To the community, it rarely (if ever) matters who manages or delivers a transportation project. Therefore, it is important to find common ground among the multiple agencies and private sector companies that directly or indirectly impact transportation, such as the Texas Department of Transportation, Capital Metro, Travis and other counties, school districts, and others. These challenges are different than the community challenges in that they can include regulatory barriers, varying levels of responsibility, and different views of what to prioritize.

## Motivation behind the Plan

There are many factors that motivated the recommendations contained within this plan. First, Imagine Austin set the direction for our transportation network, as mobile, interconnected, accessible, multimodal, efficient, reliable, and cost-effective. Since the adoption of Imagine Austin, we have also adopted additional transportation policy that has guided the development of complete streets, our sidewalk, urban trail, and bicycle systems as well as prioritized safety as our paramount objective.

Based on our experience working to implement these plans and what we have heard from the community, we know there are many tradeoffs and barriers to achieving our goals. These challenges are outlined below and have further informed the policies, projects, and actions contained in this plan.

### **Motivation: Past Policy**

In the past decade, Austin has worked to change the focus of its transportation policies toward a multimodal network. Our City Council adopted policies that emphasized the need to grow our public transportation, bicycle, urban trails, and sidewalk systems to meet the goals of Imagine Austin to improve livability and sustainable transportation options. These policies informed the development of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

In 2014, the City of Austin adopted a Complete Streets Policy as an initial step toward implementing Imagine Austin by advancing mobility, compact and connected development patterns, public health, and safety. The Complete Streets Policy provided guidance to focus on improvements that support safe, efficient, and convenient mobility for all roadway users - pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists—regardless of age or ability.

Also in 2014, the City adopted Bicycle and Urban Trails plans to establish goals and guide the development of those systems to accommodate users of all ages and abilities to capture short trips and reduce the demand on the roadway system. Additionally, the City updated the Sidewalk Plan/ADA Transition Plan in 2016 to identify priorities and milestones for completing our sidewalk system. The City also increased our commitment to transportation safety in 2016 in adopting a Vision Zero goal and action plan to reduce all transportation deaths to zero.

Together these plans and policies have guided the development of our transportation network and served as starting points for the development of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

### ***Motivation: Technical Analysis***

As our region's population grows, the shortcomings of our transportation network become more pronounced. Over the last sixty years, Austin's highways have shaped our growth patterns, facilitating massive outward expansion and suburbanization. Austin's developed land area sprawled from 53 square miles in 1970 to over 300 square miles in 2010. Since 2010, and the adoption of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, the total developed land area has grown to 372 square miles, creating a transportation network almost wholly dependent on cars. Since our last transportation plan was adopted in 1995, Austin has added over 450,000 people and grown to be the 11th most populous city in the country. Our region continues to see rapid population growth, historically doubling every 20 to 30 years.

This growth trend is important when we consider our mode share. Our current mode share is 74% drive-alone to work, meaning 26% of working age members of our community are traveling by some other mode of transportation (taking transit, riding a bicycle, walking, carpooling, or teleworking). This measure is an important indicator of our congestion, transportation choices and access to those choices, and is a proxy for other community goals, such as air quality and affordability.

To understand the future demands on our transportation network, we conducted a scenario planning and modeling analysis to understand what would happen if our mode share was maintained and if it shifted. In our most progressive multimodal scenario with a 50/50 mode share, 50% drive-alone, 50% all other options combined, we can manage congestion based on our forecasted growth by 2039. This means that we could maintain approximately the same number of cars as we have on the road today, while almost doubling in population. By aggressively shifting the growth of total trips to other modes and strategically expanding roadway system capacity, where feasible, we responsibly manage congestion into the future. Comparatively, continuing to pursue a modest investment in infrastructure, or a "business-as-usual" scenario, and a scenario where we do nothing at all, both showed a bleak warning of a future that is not sustainable and our goals are not met. This analysis was critical motivation for the development of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

To achieve a 50/50 mode share, we have to rely significantly on public transportation. Currently, our transit mode share is 4%. A large public investment and strategic coordinated implementation of capital projects, transit system operations, and land use changes will be necessary to achieve this aggressive trip shift. Seattle has achieved a 20% transit mode share using similar strategies, proving this goal is attainable but requires a long-term commitment.

In addition to investing in our multimodal systems, we must also work to reduce the demand on the network. With strong transportation demand management (TDM) programming, centered on education and regulation, we can increase the number of people teleworking or working from home, avoiding commute trips altogether.

Carpooling is another mode that can be used to maximize the capacity of our current network. We don't expect to see growth in the share of this mode without significant changes to how we manage capacity on the highway system and strong TDM programming to encourage carpooling. However, we hope to maintain, if not increase, the current mode share at 11%.

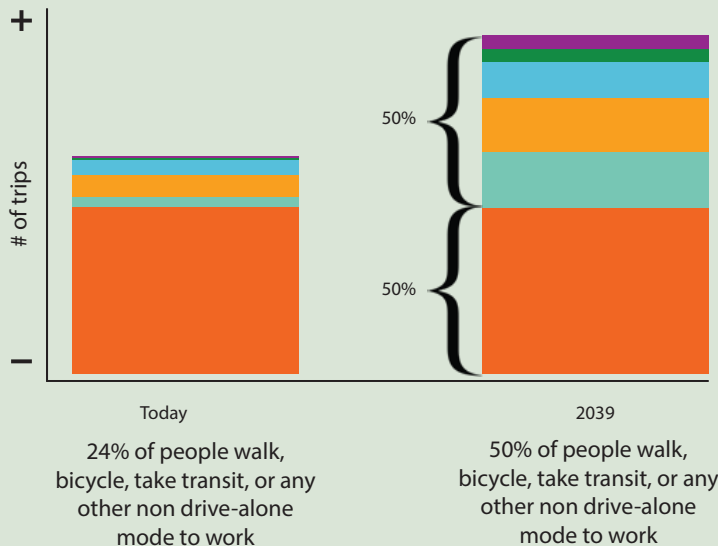
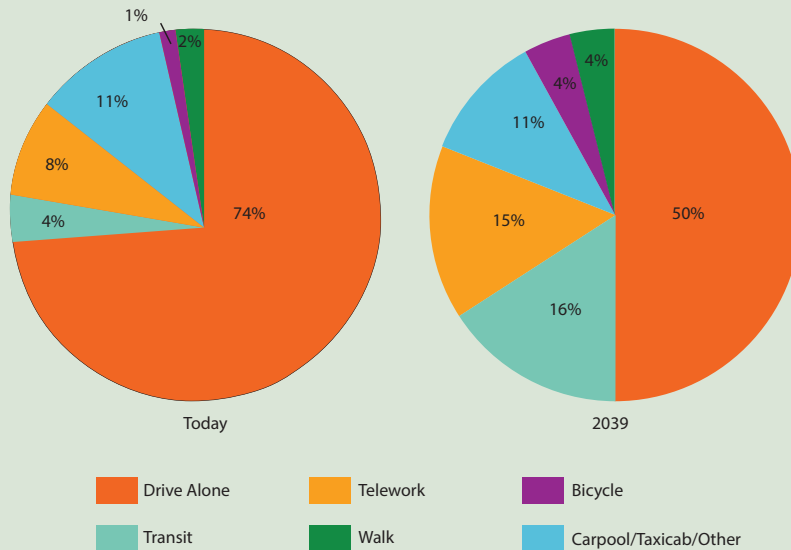
Increases in active transportation, such as walking and bicycling and other emerging modes, can also decrease the demand on the roadway system. The combined growth of the all ages and abilities bicycle network, supportive land uses, and scooters and other shared personal mobility devices offer an opportunity to capture significantly more short trips. Growth in walking trips can be achieved through improvements in the pedestrian realm supported by higher mixes of land uses and compact development as envisioned in Imagine Austin.

Maximizing all of these strategies will be necessary to achieve a 50/50 mode share and manage our congestion within Austin as the region continues to grow. As the city begins to realize this goal the benefits will be felt throughout the region, where regional mode share goals can further the impact on mobility.



### What does a 50/50 mode share mean for Austin?

A 50/50 mode share means 50% of our population drives-alone to work while 50% of us use other modes. This goal will help us manage congestion as our community grows. There are many ways to arrive at our 50/50 mode share goal. Below is one of what could be several different transit-intensive pathways to get there. Our primary objective is to track reducing our dependence on driving alone while keeping an eye on the trends of individual modes, allowing us to adjust as new solutions and options emerge during the life of the ASMP. We are always striving to reduce our dependence on the single (private) automobile to 50% or less, but there is a range of solutions to get us there.



## **Motivation: Public Engagement**

Our community has a rich history of engaging in planning for our future. The voices of our community are our greatest assets. Planning for the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan was no different. Throughout the planning process, community engagement and interaction acted as the foundation and motivated the recommendations found in this plan.

The plan is built on the outreach efforts that developed Imagine Austin and the 2016 Mobility Talks initiative. Together with the outreach conducted throughout the two year planning process for the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, these efforts provide a strong basis for understanding the community's needs, values, and challenges.

Since 1998, the City of Austin has engaged over 60,000 individuals through various methods in an effort to shape our city based on community desires. Imagine Austin represented the single largest public engagement effort in the city's history, with over 18,500 pieces of public input. In 2016, the City initiated Mobility Talks, a series of community conversations to gather input on our transportation challenges and priorities. The Mobility Talks survey reached approximately 7,000 people, including community members from each City Council District. An additional 52 previous plans were studied as part of Mobility Talks, forming a list of key themes and mobility considerations that have risen again and again in the past two decades. The individuals who informed these plans came from all over the city and all walks of life, each bringing a unique perspective on what is most important to consider for the future of Austin's transportation network. Their opinions, priorities, and concerns were extremely important in the development of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan.

Through Mobility Talks, and the analysis of other engagement efforts, eight mobility goals emerged as recurring themes raised by Austin residents: Commuter Delay, Travel Choice, Health & Safety, Affordability, Sustainability, Placemaking, Economic Prosperity, and Innovation.



### **Commuter Delay**

Reduce the amount of time workers spend traveling between home and work.



### **Affordability**

Lower the cost of traveling in Austin by providing affordable travel options.



### **Placemaking**

Build a transportation network that encourages social interaction through quality urban design, and connects users to the many places that make Austin unique.



### **Sustainability**

Promote integrated designs and quality additions to the built environment while reducing impacts and promoting efficient use of public resources.



### **Travel Choice**

Promote a balanced transportation network and the ability to make informed choices based on personal needs and preferences.



### **Health and Safety**

Protect Austinites by lowering the risk of travel-related injury and promoting public health.



### **Economic Prosperity**

Promote economic growth for individuals and the city through strategic investments in transportation networks that meet the needs of the 21st century.



### **Innovation**

Draw inspiration from forward-looking cities around the world, change the way we think about what's possible, and set an example for the rest of the country.

These goals were the starting point for the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan engagement efforts which began in early 2017. In an effort to hear from community members representing the diversity of Austin, we focused on engaging groups that historically have been underrepresented in past public engagement processes. These four focus populations were:

- Youth (People 15 to 24)
- Seniors (People 65 and older)
- People with Mobility Impairments
- People of Color

In prioritizing the eight goals, responses from 1,700 community members produced the following rankings:

#### Priority from all participants

1. Commuter Delay
2. Affordability
3. Health and Safety
4. Travel Choice
5. Sustainability
6. Placemaking
7. Economic Prosperity
8. Innovation

#### Priority from focus populations

1. Affordability
2. Commuter Delay
3. Travel Choice
4. Health and Safety
5. Sustainability
6. Placemaking
7. Economic Prosperity
8. Innovation

Largely, there was agreement that Commuter Delay, Affordability Travel Choice, and Health & Safety were the top goals. One important difference that the ASMP team noted in the results was the importance of transportation affordability for the focus populations.

We also surveyed community members about three mobility scenarios to determine what the community would like transportation to look like in the future. These scenarios were:

#### Scenario A

Scenario A emphasized roadway projects and continued the trend of investment in public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian projects across the city.

#### Scenario B

Scenario B emphasized balanced investment in roadway, public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian projects along Imagine Austin activity corridors and within activity centers.

#### Scenario C

Scenario C emphasized investing in public transportation, bicycle, and pedestrian projects along Imagine Austin activity corridors and within activity centers and fewer roadway projects.

Overall, 5,774 people participated in the scenario survey and nearly 2,000 of these participants were members of at least one of the four focus populations. Below are highlights of what we heard:

- 42% of the overall population chose Scenario C as the starting point, with Scenario B as the second most popular choice. Scenario C was also the most popular starting point for the focus populations, although it was chosen by only 38% of respondents; Scenario B was again second most-popular.
- The top strategy chosen, by both the overall and focus populations, to address transportation issues was to “provide more public transit service and enhance connections to/from public transit.”
- Again affordability was important to our focus populations, as the second-most-popular strategy chosen was to offer more choices in how we travel to reduce personal costs associated with car ownership.
- All participants had the opportunity to write open comments. Positive comments about public transportation were the most common comments received for both the overall and focus populations. More than one-third of all comments we received discussed the need or desire for more transit in the city.

With this information, we drafted policy statements and transportation network maps to share with the community as an early draft of the plan. The feedback we received on the draft policies and maps informed the final plan recommendations.

Throughout the planning process, we used many different tools and engagement techniques to hear from people across our community. We built relationships with community members and groups that helped shape this plan. However, we know that we can do more to create and foster relationships with the community and hear more voices as we move forward. Lessons learned during our engagement phases have informed our recommended next steps for public interaction and will help us to reach and learn from the Austin community as we implement the plan.



## Elements of the Plan

The plan is made up of several key components and is organized by chapters that reflect the comprehensive nature of the plan. These chapters contain policies to guide our decision-making, specific indicators to measure progress toward our goals, and the actions and investments we need to make to achieve them over the next 20 years.

### **Indicators + Targets**

Each chapter contains subchapters, each with a set of indicators that spell out our goals more specifically and will help us know how well we are achieving them. For some of these indicators, there are targets for us to work toward. For those indicators that do not have targets, one of the first actions to carry out this plan will be to identify targets. In certain cases, benchmarks, which show where we currently stand in relation to achieving that indicator, are included.

### **Policies**

The subchapters also contain policies that will be used to guide transportation decision-making. Within the discussions of the policies, specific implementation strategies from our own community or others across the country that inspire us have been identified.

### **Actions**

In addition to policies on our use of data, collaboration with our partners, and strategies for being financially sound, the *Implementing Our Plan* chapter contains an Action Table of action items, which are specific efforts for us to carry out. These actions range from programs to legislative or regulatory changes, partnerships, process improvements, capital investments, and more.

### **Priority Networks**

While this plan does not establish a mode prioritization, it identifies priority networks. Priority networks are designated for the Roadway, Public Transportation, and Bicycle systems. Priority networks are intended to provide guidance on where special treatments should be focused through strategic improvements in infrastructure and technology.

The Vehicle Priority Network is composed of the streets that are critical to the operations of the roadway system and carry the most vehicular traffic. The focus of the Vehicle Priority Network is to improve travel time reliability and to lessen the impact of temporary right of way closures on mobility. Possible improvements along the Vehicle Priority Network include signal timing and synchronization, limiting closures of the street during peak travel times, and implementing emergency vehicle preemption technology.

The Transit Priority Network includes Capital Metro's high-frequency service and planned expansions identified in Connections 2025 and Project Connect. These corridors would carry the largest share of transit riders. The focus of the Transit Priority Network is to implement transit priority treatments to improve the speed, reliability, and efficiency of public transportation and to lessen the impact of temporary right of way closures on transit service.

The Bicycle Priority Network is a short-term all ages and abilities network based on the 2014 Bicycle Plan. The Network consists of connected, protected bicycle lanes, urban trails, and neighborhood bikeways. Streets in the Bicycle Priority Network are prioritized for near-term all ages and abilities improvements.

Where multiple priority networks overlap, additional study will be conducted to understand each role they play along the corridor and prioritize elements where there is not an opportunity to design treatments that benefit multiple users. The project development process will provide the opportunity to further refine

how multiple priority networks are treated when they are competing for the same constrained right of way. As projects and improvements occur through the life of the plan, such as changes to high-frequency transit service or implementation of an all ages and abilities bicycle facility, the priority networks will be updated to provide the latest guidance for future project development processes.

### ***Transportation Network Maps***

Maps of the various transportation systems found throughout the document offer a vision of the possible projects the City may pursue in the next 20 years based on a variety of factors, including the evolving needs of the transportation network, engineering analysis, public input, and available funding. Some of what is shown in the maps is already in process and may be either fully or partially funded. Other recommended improvements would require further analysis, funding, and a public input process to be developed and constructed.

### ***Street Network Table and Map***

In addition to setting policy guidance and goals, this plan also contains an inventory of our streets and defines their future conditions to support our multimodal vision. This information is contained within the Street Network Table and Map (see Appendix B).

The Street Network Table and Map includes roads that are within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Austin and is used to identify right of way dedication requirements needed to accommodate future roadway conditions. These future roadway conditions are reflective of the recommended improvements in the ASMP and of updated design standards, which integrate all modes.



# Street Network Map

