Lone Star Regional Rail – Strategic Considerations

- Lone Star Rail District
- Connectivity/Mobility Issues
Lone Star Regional Rail – Strategic Considerations

- Lone Star Rail District
Lone Star Rail District (LSRD)

- Independent entity authorized by State of Texas
- Created by cities of Austin & San Antonio and counties of Bexar & Travis in 2003
- San Antonio area has 7 of the 23 seats on the District’s Board of Directors
- Mission: Establish regular passenger rail service between Austin and San Antonio
LSRD Board of Directors

- **Region’s Board Representation:** 23 members representing the political leadership and business community of Central/South Texas, plus “at large” members appointed by the TxTC.
  - **Cities:** Georgetown, Austin, San Marcos, New Braunfels, Schertz, San Antonio
  - **Counties:** Williamson, Travis, Bastrop, Hays, Caldwell, Bexar
  - **Transit Agencies:** Capital Metro, CARTS, VIA, ART
  - **MPOs:** CAMPO, AA MPO
  - **Community College Districts:** ACCD
Connectivity/Mobility

LSTAR Line

• Local freight & passenger service

• Originally 16 stations at full service (up to 24 with split stations service)

• 32 round trips a day at full service

• 118 miles of passenger rail; San Antonio north to Georgetown

East Line - Freight Rail Line

• 30+ through freight trains per day rerouted to Freight Rail Line

• 80+ miles of new freight rail line from Seguin to Taylor

• 40+ miles of improved freight rail line from San Antonio to Seguin
Connectivity/Mobility - Finding the Right Fit

Distance vs. Speed

- LSTAR Passenger Rail
- High Speed Rail
- Regional Rail
- Commuter Rail
- Light Rail
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Streetcar
- Local Bus

# of Stops - Proximity to Origin and Destination

LONE STAR RAIL DISTRICT
LSTAR – Potential Stations

- Georgetown (1)
- Round Rock (TBD, 1-2)
- Austin (7)
- Buda (1)
- Kyle (1)
- San Marcos (2)
- New Braunfels (1)
- Schertz (1)
- San Antonio Stations (7)
Lone Star Regional Rail – East Line for Through Freight

Regional Mobility/Access

• Relocation of UP reduces freight rail traffic in city centers
  o “Through” freight trains are longer & slower
    (1-2 miles long; avg. 20 mph or less)
  o Passenger trains are shorter & faster (max. 8 cars; avg. 60 mph)
  o Moves “through freight” trains to East Line (approx. 30-40 trains/day)
  o Remaining local freight stays in the corridor (no loss of service)
Lone Star Regional Rail – Strategic Considerations

- Connectivity/Mobility Issues
Over 90% of trips are by auto
Connectivity/Mobility

Austin Employment/Activity Concentration in Core

- 2009: nearly 30% of all jobs in the Austin region were located in 78701, 78703, 78704, 78705
- 51,000 students at UT (80% live off campus) and approximately 9,000 at ACC’s Rio Grande campus downtown
- 2000: nearly 18% of all jobs in Austin Region were located in Austin’s downtown
  - 4th highest % in the nation

CBD Share of Total Urban Area Employment

- New York
- New Orleans
- Washington DC
- Austin
- Hartford
- Columbus
- Richmond
- Honolulu
- Chicago
- Charlotte
## Connectivity/Mobility

### 2009-2011 CAMPO Daily Work Trips

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trips</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hays County</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To Travis Co.</td>
<td>28,880</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Travis County</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In County</td>
<td>456,627</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Williamson County</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To Travis Co.</td>
<td>89,703</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bastrop County</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To Travis Co.</td>
<td>15,872</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caldwell</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To Travis Co.</td>
<td>4,506</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Trips</strong></td>
<td>791,504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travis Co. Trips</strong></td>
<td>595,588</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Connectivity/Mobility

Highway expansion capability is limited

- Right of way established in 1950-1970s
- Alamo Area MPO anticipates adding one million in population
  - Traffic model - avg. daily transportation system capacity overwhelmed between 2020 and 2040
- Capital Area MPO data – 12-14 additional southern lanes needed by 2035
Central Texas is a high growth region with an initial ring of suburban cities around the core supported by existing transportation system.
Connectivity/Mobility

- Limited capacity in IH 35 corridor
  - IH 35 demand above capacity during morning and evening peaks
  - Peak periods forecast to lengthen
Connectivity/Mobility
What We’ve Learned from Other Cities…

✓ **Community Tipping Point**
  - 30 minute trip
    - 2 million regional population
  - Congestion builds, mobility is limited

✓ **Personal Choices**
  - Find alternative route (Cut-through traffic)
  - Relocate residents/businesses (Closer to CBD or affordable area)
  - Relocate to avoid key destinations (new or expanding centers or move out of region)
  - Choose another mode of transportation (pedestrian, bikes, improved commuter transit)
Connectivity/Mobility

Highway System Funnels Peak Pass-Through and Commuter Traffic Together Through Rings of Congestion …

Regional growth increases pressure for mobility throughout region

Mature roadway portions of the system meter access to regional economic destinations
Free Flow Speeds

- San Marcos
- Leander
- Georgetown
- Manor
- Bastrop
- Lockhart

Congested Speeds

Travel Time (Mins)
- 0.50
- 1.00
- 1.50
- 2.00
- 2.50
- 3.00
- 3.50
- 4.00
- 4.50
- 5.00
- 5.50
- 6.00
- 6.50
- 7.00
- 7.50
- 8.00
- 8.50
- 9.00
- 9.50
- 10.00

Scale:
- 0 miles
- 5 miles
- 10 miles
- 15 miles
Connectivity/Mobility

- Austin is fastest growing large city in US
  - Region’s growth exceeds 110 people per day

- Commute time to increase
  - Round Rock to Central Austin – 3 hours
  - San Marcos to Central Austin – TBD
Connectivity/Mobility

Current Transportation Issues

• **TTI Mobility Investment Priorities Project** – Long-Term Central Texas IH 35 Improvement Scenarios (Aug. 2013)
  o IH 35 initiatives are short- and mid-term improvements
  o 2035 CAMPO - no large-scale improvements
  o Congestion is high, increasing faster than similar US areas
    ✓ Austin & San Antonio in 15 most congested

• **Findings**
  o IH 35 congestion will be severe even if substantial capacity is added
  o Long-term solution cannot be capacity-addition alone
    – Central Texas cannot “build its way out of congestion”
    – Need “everything including the kitchen sink”
      ✓ Operating system improvements
      ✓ New development patterns
      ✓ Travel behavior change
Connectivity/Mobility

Austin Public Impacts

- Mount Calvary Cemetery
- University of Texas
  - Athletic Practice Facilities
  - Mike Myers Stadium
  - Disch-Falk Field
  - Frank Erwin Center & Medical District (Dell Medical School)
    - John W. Hargis Hall
- Oakwood Cemetery
- Univ. Med. Center Brackenridge
- Austin Police Headquarters & Municipal Courts
- Palm Park
- Historic East Austin
Connectivity/Mobility

- Central Texas lacks highway expansion capacity
  - Right of way established in 1950-1970s
  - CAMPO data – 12-14 additional lanes needed by 2035
  - TxDOT funding is limited
Connectivity/Mobility – Trends and Impact

Growth Trends
• National shifting to information & service economy
• Convenient walkable mixed-use city centers/destinations
  – Quality of life or “experience” focus
• Communities seeking to diversify housing/lifestyle options
• Flattened national demand for new autos
  o Auto costs projected to increase for fuel & technology improvements
• Employers stressing “work at office” for collaborative relationships
• Location is still key – migration to more affordable second tier urban areas
  o Austin is #1 and San Antonio #3 destinations
  o San Marcos fastest growing city in 2010 census
• Impacts - rents rising, home sales spiking and traffic congestion increasing
Connectivity/Mobility – Multiple Modes and Strategies
Connectivity/Mobility - LSTAR Regional Rail Benefits

Economic Development

- Induces new station area development /redevelopment
- Can attract diverse types of high value development (TOD or TAD)
- Focuses development within/near activity destinations for walkable neighborhoods – Quality of Life Emphasis
- Links regional employment centers & anchors investment/property values
- Helps retain competitive advantage within region and nationally

Community Development

- Part of a broad vision for community & aligns with community plans/goals
- Reinforces community identity/brand as “connected to region”
- Reduces growth in traffic congestion
- Works well in an integrated bus/rail transit system
- Relocates most freight trains
- Safety and aids in air quality attainment