

**VIA Advanced Rapid Transit North/South Corridor Project**  
**San Antonio, Texas**  
**New Starts Engineering**  
**Information Prepared October 2023**

<b>Summary Description</b>	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Bus Rapid Transit 10.4 Miles, 26 Stations
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$446.31 Million (includes \$23.3 million in finance charges)
<b>Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$ 267.78 Million (60.0%)
<b>Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2028):</b>	\$11.24 Million
<b>Current Year Ridership Forecast (2019):</b>	7,100 Daily Linked Trips 2,308,800 Annual Linked Trips
<b>Horizon Year Ridership Forecast (2040):</b>	13,500 Daily Linked Trips 4,401,800 Annual Linked Trips
<b>Overall Project Rating:</b>	Medium-High
<b>Project Justification Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating:</b>	Medium-High

**Project Description:** VIA proposes to implement a 10.35-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line from the San Antonio International Airport in the north, through downtown San Antonio, to Steves Avenue in the south. More than 75 percent of the project alignment, 7.95 miles, is in dedicated transit lanes. The proposed project includes 26 branded stations with off-board fare collection, next bus messaging, public announcement systems, bike parking, and safety features such as security cameras and lighting. It also includes the implementation of transit signal priority and procurement of 17 new low/no emission vehicles with level boarding.

During weekdays, service is planned to operate every 10 minutes for most of the day and every 20 to 30 minutes during early morning and late-night hours. On weekends, service is planned to operate every 15 minutes for most of the day and every 30 minutes during early morning and late-night hours. The service is planned to operate from 4:00 AM to 1:00 AM seven days a week. The forecasted ridership on the Project, using current year inputs of population and employment, is 7,100 daily linked trips. This number is expected to grow to 13,500 daily linked trips by the horizon year of 2040.

**Project Purpose:** The project connects several key destinations along the corridor including San Antonio International Airport, North Star Mall, Park North Shopping Center, San Pedro Springs Park, San Antonio College, VIA Metro Center, Baptist Medical Center, Downtown San Antonio, Roosevelt Park, Missions National Historic Park, and numerous high density commercial and residential areas. The project is intended to provide highly reliable, frequent, direct transit service with enhanced amenities, linking neighborhoods to key regional activity centers. It also is expected to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and support the region's land use vision and growth plans.

**Project Development History, Status and Next Steps:** VIA selected the locally preferred alternative (LPA) in October 2018. The LPA was adopted in the fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in September 2020. The project entered New Starts Project Development in August 2021 and completed NEPA with Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) in May 2023. VIA anticipates receipt of a construction grant in 2024, and the start of revenue service in 2028.

## Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
Section 5309 CIG	\$267.78	60.0%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Surface Transportation Block Grant)	\$1.43	0.3%
<b>State:</b>		
Texas Mobility Fund (TMF)	\$2.88	0.6%
<b>Local:</b>		
Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Loan repaid by Advanced Transportation District (ATD) II Sales Tax	\$87.83	19.7%
VIA Project Funds – Keep San Antonio Moving (KSAM) Reserves	\$62.87	14.1%
Advanced Transportation District (ATD) II Sales Tax	\$23.52	5.3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$446.31</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**NOTE:** The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

**TX, San Antonio, Advanced Rapid Transit North/South Corridor Project  
(Rating Assigned October 2023)**

Factor	Rating	Comments
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating</b>	<b>Medium-High</b>	
Non-Section 5309 CIG Share	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CIG share of the overall project is 60.0 percent.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary Financial Plan Rating</b>	<b>Medium-High</b>	
Current Capital and Operating Condition (25% of local financial commitment rating)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system average bus fleet age is 4.2 years, which is younger than industry average.</li> <li>• The most recent bond rating for VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority (VIA), issued in May 2023 is as follows: Standard &amp; Poor’s AAA.</li> <li>• VIA Metropolitan Transit’s current ratio of assets to liabilities as reported in the most recent audited financial statement is 8.24 (FY 2022).</li> <li>• There have been no cash flow shortfalls in recent years.</li> <li>• There have been no service cutbacks in recent years.</li> </ul>
Commitment of Capital and Operating Funds (25% of local financial commitment rating)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the non-CIG capital funds are committed or budgeted. Sources of funds include a Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), State of Texas Mobility (TMF) funds, dedicated Advanced Transportation District (ATD) II sales tax funds committed to repay a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan, construction funds from VIA’s Keep San Antonio Moving (KSAM) Reserve Funds, and a one-time matching contribution from VIA’s reserves expended on Project Development.</li> <li>• All of the funds needed to operate and maintain the transit system in the first year of operation is considered committed or budgeted. Sources of funds include FTA 5307 Formula funds, farebox revenue, both existing Advanced Transportation District (ATD I) and future (ATD II) sales tax revenue, parking lot revenue, media advertising on buses and bus stops, leasing revenue and annual system-wide transit funds from the City of San Antonio.</li> </ul>

<p>Reasonableness of Capital and Operating Cost Estimates and Planning Assumptions/Capital Funding Capacity (50% of local financial commitment rating)</p>	<p>Medium-Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumed growth in capital revenues is optimistic for FTA’s Section 5339 Bus funds, an unidentified Federal Grant for the project’s Second Operations and Maintenance Facility, the Build America Bureau TIFIA loan, KSAM ATD II Sales Tax Revenue and MTA Contractual Obligation Bonds based on recent historical experience. FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ), State of Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Clean Fleet Program Funds, Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) Sales Tax, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Volkswagen Settlement Fund capital funding assumptions are reasonable based on recent historical experience.</li> <li>• The capital cost estimate is reasonable.</li> <li>• Assumed growth in operating revenues is optimistic compared to recent historical experience for farebox revenue and anticipated local funds provided by the City of San Antonio. The assumed growth in operating revenue assumptions for forecasted ATD I and ATD Sales Tax Revenue is reasonable compared to recent historical experience. Assumed growth from FTA Section 5307 funding and advertising, parking and leasing revenue is conservative compared to recent historical experience.</li> <li>• Operating cost estimates are reasonable compared to recent historical experience.</li> <li>• VIA Metropolitan Transit has access to funds via additional debt capacity, cash reserves, and other committed funds to cover unexpected cost increases or funding shortfalls equal to 15 percent of the total Project capital cost and 29.6 percent (4 months) of annual system-wide operating expenses.</li> </ul>
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# VIA Advanced Rapid Transit North/South Corridor Project

## San Antonio, Texas

### New Starts Project Development (Rating Assigned May 2023)

#### **LAND USE RATING: *Medium***

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average population density in station areas is about 4,600 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Medium-Low rating. Total employment served by a one-seat ride is about 101,300 jobs, corresponding to a Medium rating. The average daily parking cost in the central business district is \$10, corresponding to a Medium rating. The ratio of the proportion of LBAR housing units in all station areas to the proportion in the county is 2.42, corresponding to a Medium-High rating.
- The project corridor is organized into four segments. The first segment is near San Antonio International Airport and is mostly industrial and commercial uses. Moving south along the proposed corridor, the second segment has an increasing number of single-family neighborhoods. The third segment, which covers Downtown, has denser development with a mix of uses, major employment and trip generators, and historic districts. The fourth segment has commercial uses along the major roadway that are surrounded by single-family properties.
- Pedestrian facilities are present throughout the project corridor but facilities outside of downtown are punctuated by network gaps or obstacles (e.g., utility poles) or are in poor condition.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: *Medium***

#### **Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: *Medium***

- *Growth Management:* Long-range regional transportation and neighborhood vision plans support concentrating new and infill development around regional activity centers and transit corridors. San Antonio's *Unified Development Code* (UDC), which governs land use and development in the city, establishes a transfer of development rights program.
- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Since 2010, the City of San Antonio has been updating authoritative planning documents to: support dense, mixed-use development; create pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environments; and link land use decisions to transit investments. Some station areas have unique vision/development plans.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* The station area zoning districts allow optional use of an alternative zoning code for transit-supportive special districts. The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Special District allows a denser mix of uses and more pedestrian-friendly environment with different standards for areas within one-quarter of a mile and one-half of a mile from high capacity transit stations. Permitted densities in the TOD Special District range from eight to 80 dwelling units per acre.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* Significant changes to the UDC are expected as part of a forthcoming update and include tools to achieve zoning and land use goals. Regulatory and financial incentives have typically targeted the downtown area. There is a desire to expand these incentives, such as tax increment financing, to other areas of the city. The UDC incorporates density bonuses for amenities or affordable units.

#### **Performance and Impacts of Policies: *Medium-Low***

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* The recently expired Center City Housing Incentive Policy resulted in about 8,000 new housing units in Downtown between 2010 and 2020. It is unclear how the city's policies affected the 18 development examples provided in the submission.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* Approximately 76 acres of land is vacant or under utilized within the station areas and is zoned for transit-supportive uses. The project corridor is forecast to outpace regional population and employment growth by about three times and 11 times, respectively. There are approximately 170 development applications and 200 preliminary and recorded plat records within the project corridor from 2021.

#### **Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: *Medium***

- Approximately 2,200 housing units are documented LBAR housing in the project corridor. Little information was provided on the need for LBAR housing in the corridor.
- The Strategic Housing Implementation Plan will mobilize \$150 million for affordable housing, with \$120 million devoted to assisting households of 30 percent AMI.
- The City implemented housing tax credit and density bonus programs for affordable developments.

**Figure 1:  
Project Map  
San Antonio, Texas**

**LEGEND**

N/S Proposed Corridor

N/S Stations

**Station Segments**

Airport Area/North Corridor

Central Corridor

Downtown

South Corridor

**Municipal Features**

Waterbody

City of San Antonio

Bexar County

Central Business District

**Transportation Network**

Intersecting Transit Route

Interstate

US Highway

State Highway

Farm to Market Road

Collector Road

Railroad

Sources: VIA (N/S proposed corridor, N/S stations, station segments, intersecting transit routes); TxDOT (city and county boundaries, roads, railroads); City of San Antonio (waterbodies, central business district boundary)

