

Hancock Neighborhood Association Urban Rail Working Group (HNAUR)

Comprised of HNA Executive Committee, HNA Parks and Green Spaces Committee, and Chair of HNA Transportation Committee

Report of Finding from HNAUR meeting with Kyle Keahey, Project Connect, and Mike Trimble, City of Austin Capital Projects Office, held September 11, 2014.

The Route of the Central Corridor Line

The proposed first urban rail line is the Central Corridor segment. The decided route is shown in the jpg titled Proposed-First-Line-of-Urban-Rail or at the Project Connect link below. Hancock Center would be a main transit node/station. The Proposition 1 Bond funds this line.

Timetable

The current level of design at this point is less than 5%. If the bond passes, the Preliminary Engineering (PE) and National Environmental Policy Act phase would begin in Spring 2015. The PE would advance the project design to 30%. The PE/NEPA process entails a broad range of studies including environmental impact, traffic, land use, noise, property acquisition, and mitigation strategies. This phase will expend about 10% of 600 million bond and run until the last quarter of 2017. At that time a Record of Decision based on the PE/NEPA finding will be made to apply for federal funding. Release of the remaining bond monies is contingent on approval of matching federal funds. A final decision is anticipated at the end of 2018, with construction to start at that time. The estimated acquisitions budget for the line is 40 million. See the pdf titled Timeline. The project does carry the right of imminent domain.

Alignment Options on Red River

Based on the current level of project design (less than 5%) the City has an existing right-of-way along Red River that varies from 61 feet to 80 feet. There are currently three alignment options – and possibly others that may be suggested – that the City will consider as the project advances into preliminary engineering and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scheduled to commence in 2015. The “minimum” approach would require a cross-section, or width, of 70 feet, which is within the 61’-80’ width of Red River. There is some potential for some narrow strip acquisitions that the City would seek to minimize or eliminate during the PE/EIS process. Project Connect states they do not anticipate any full property acquisitions.

For the Red River alignments see pages 3-4 on the pdf titled Typical Section-091514. This pdf file includes the cross-sections along Dean Keeton, along Red River and along Airport Boulevard between 45th and 53rd 1/2 Street. The current concept is to be underground from Hancock Center to just north of 45th with the other option being going over. As with the section along Red River, Project Connect has some options to consider along Airport, including a west-side running option and a center

running option. They will be look into these options when the project advances into the preliminary engineering/Environmental Impact Statement phase next year.

When we asked if there was a study on the property impact of Urban Rail, the study on the Dallas DART by Dr. Terry Clower was recommended, which can be found at: http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc30386/m2/1/high_res_d/Clower-2002-Assessment_DART_LRT_Taxable_Property.pdf

Website on the Proposed Urban Rail for More Information:

City Websites

Project Connect, Proposed 1st Line of Urban Rail:

<http://projectconnect.com/central-corridor-urban-rail>

Capital Planning Office, 2014 Bond:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/2014bond>

Advocacy Websites

Let's Go Austin: <http://www.letsgoaustin.org/>

Coalition On Sustainable Transportation: <http://www.costaustin.org/>

Central Austin Community Development Corporation:

http://www.centralaustincdc.org/transportation/austin_urban_rail.htm

Austin Rail Now: <http://austinrailnow.com/>