



Red Line Parkway --- Initiative

The Red Line Parkway is a 32-mile trail and transit corridor that will serve Central Texas mobility, recreation, economic, parks, arts, affordability, physical & mental health, and public space needs. It is poised to become an iconic, world-class destination, creating the backbone of a metro-wide urban trail network connecting Austin's urban centers. The Red Line Parkway Initiative will ensure successful planning, implementation, and activation of the parkway through coordination of stakeholders & experts, facilitating a strong parkway culture, and hosting events along the corridor. The Red Line Parkway Initiative is seeking support to carry out its work.

This prospectus provides information about the parkway, its benefits, what the Red Line Parkway Initiative offers, and the resources the initiative needs to accomplish its goals.

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Introduction

The Red Line Parkway is a proposed linear park and public space along the planned *Red Line Trail*, extending 32 miles from Leander to Downtown Austin. The 12-mile urban component of the Red Line Trail follows (from north to south) the Capital Metro Red Line from the intersection of the North MoPac Trail and the Northern Walnut Creek Trail in North Austin, down to Boggy Creek in East Austin, and then to Downtown Austin. It is predominantly identified as a top priority (Tier I) trail in the City of Austin Urban Trails Master Plan (UTMP). Currently about 10-20% is completed or funded: Walnut Creek to Braker Lane, adjacent to Highland Mall, Boggy Creek Trail (part of East Link), and the Crosstown Bikeway (Lance Armstrong Bikeway). Community interest in a trail along the Red Line dates back at least to 2004, when voters approved the MetroRail proposal after a campaign that raised the possibility of a trail along the rail line.



The Red Line Trail runs north-south through the center of the map, shown as the dark-blue solid and dotted line

Our Initial Vision



Kenilworth Trail in Minneapolis with a pair of one-way bike paths and pedestrian path. An active freight rail line is adjacent and parallel on left side of the trails.

Our vision for the Red Line Trail includes a paved surface, separate parallel trails for bicycling and pedestrian access where feasible, complete grade-separation from motorized street traffic (bridges and tunnels at streets), and gentle inclines of 1-3% grade. Tributary connections will provide additional access to the Butler Trail around Lady Bird Lake, Shoal Creek, Waller Creek (both downtown and near Highland Mall), the Northern and Southern Walnut Creek Trails (eventually creating a continuous 30-mile trail loop), Mueller, The Domain, Wells Branch, and UT Austin. The Red Line Trail will enhance existing trail assets, creating a central part of a continuous 200-mile trail network. Since the trail serves Central Austin, it will connect its population center to all existing and future trails extending into South Austin, suburban, and rural areas. Implementation of the Red Line Trail will raise the bar and build demand to increase investment in protected bike lanes, sidewalks, and active transportation accommodations in Austin.

Timeline of the Red Line Trail

- 2004 — Austin voters approve new Capital MetroRail Red Line after a campaign that raised the possibility of a trail along the rail line.
- 2007 — The first Red Line Trail plan is published by Capital Metro, Bowman-Melton, Alta, others.
- 2013 — Capital Metro completes new trail segment from Denson Drive to Lamar Boulevard, and new trail crossing at MLK Station.
- 2013 — Austin Parks Foundation initiates East Link from Lady Bird Lake to Mueller, which includes the Red Line Trail corridor from Webberville Road to Manor Road.
- 2014 — The southern end gains improvements, connecting the Red Line Trail via the Pedernales Street protected bike lane to the Butler Trail on Lady Bird Lake, and the concurrent Red Line Trail & Crosstown Bikeway connection to downtown Austin.
- 2015 — Unused Capital Metro “Quarter-Cent” funding is allocated to construct the concurrent Red Line Trail & Boggy Creek Trail from 12th Street to MLK Station. (Also part of EastLink.)
- 2016 & 2018 — Austin Municipal Bonds include funding for the Red Line Trail from the Northern Walnut Creek Trail to Braker Lane; anticipated construction beginning 2020.
- 2017-2019 — Capital Metro implements new double-track “siding” for MetroRail for several sections.
- 2019 — The Boggy Creek Trail from 12th Street to MLK Station is due to be completed. (Also part of EastLink.)
- 2019-2020 — **Goal:** Wayfinding is installed for bicycle and pedestrian connections connecting all Red Line MetroRail Stations from Downtown to Kramer and to Northern Walnut Creek Trail.
- 2019-2020 — **Goal:** New public input process begins for planning the Red Line Parkway.
- 2020 — **Goal:** Capital Metro Board and Austin City Council both adopt resolutions demonstrating support to complete the Red Line Trail.
- 2030 — **Goal:** Continuous, paved Red Line Trail is complete from Northern Walnut Creek Trail to three southern termini: Southern Walnut Creek Trail, Lady Bird Lake, and downtown Austin.
- 2045 — **Goal:** Continuous, paved Red Line Trail is complete from Austin to Leander and San Gabriel River Trail.

Parkway Benefits

The Red Line Parkway will serve mobility, recreation, economic, parks, arts, affordability, physical & mental health, and public space needs. Numerous opportunities along the parkway exist for enhancing existing parks and creating new ones, enhancing existing development and allowing redevelopment—“Trail Oriented Development”—and creating public space and public art. Trail Oriented Development has been a vision for Austin since the 1970’s creek trail visioning plan. Additional trail benefits are described in the UTMP.

What Trails Offer:

Mobility: Trails provide additional mobility options, including walking, bicycling, and access to transit, offsetting the demand to expand roadway capacity and automobile parking.

Economic: Trails and public spaces are desirable places to live and work next to, they invite in tourist spending, and they enhance the value of real property and other nearby assets. The Atlanta Beltline, Minneapolis Midtown Greenway, and the New York City High Line serve as recent examples.

Health: Trails create healthy and low-cost recreation and transportation options in proximity to where people already live and commute. Public health is improved via regular and commonplace physical and social activity opportunities, reducing health care costs. Trails improve air quality both by creating a zero-emissions route and by replacing automobile trips that are the leading cause of Austin’s poor outdoor air quality.

Public Space & Art: Trails create opportunities for social interaction in public space and for people to reimagine the city they live in. Trail corridors serve as a flexible canvas for creative design and installation of public art.

Affordability: Improving accommodations for walking, bicycling, and transit in existing parts of the city are far-and-away more cost effective than increasing roadway capacity and parking for automobiles. The savings are reflected for individuals, government jurisdictions, and the private sector. Increasing access to multiple transportation modes in proximity to Downtown Austin and other high-opportunity areas increases the viability of living a more affordable car-free or car-light lifestyle, especially for those with strained household budgets.

Whom do trails serve?

Trails create an attractive, safe, and accessible place for people of all ages and abilities. The Red Line Parkway will provide a space to enjoy recreation activity, but it will also provide an additional commute route in the regional multimodal transportation system. Local people and visitors alike will experience its benefits. The opportunities for neighborhood stewardship on the parkway can enhance and expand Austin's unique local culture. With minimum environmental impact, the parkway will also nurture regional ecology and create educational opportunities through conservation and habitat preservation, notably via the many existing water, parks, and open space resources along the corridor.

Who is in the area?

Over 150,000 residents and almost 200,000 jobs are currently within one mile of the 12-mile urban portion of the Red Line Parkway corridor. There is also rapid residential, employment, and student population growth along the corridor. Five Austin Community College (ACC) campuses are within one mile of the full trail corridor.

Transportation

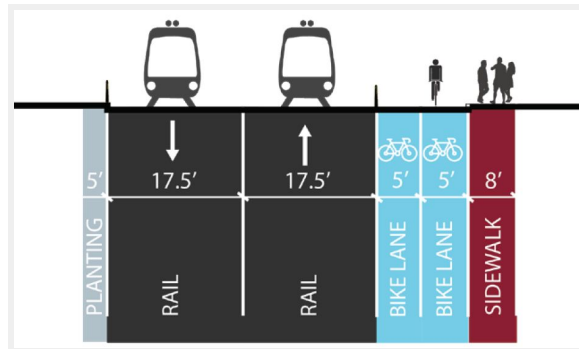
The Red Line Parkway will provide additional commuter traffic capacity within Austin's most congested area and through North Austin to the North Burnet Gateway area -- the major employment center near the confluence of U.S. 183, North MoPac, and Loop 360. It will provide significant shortcuts for bicycling and pedestrian connections to the MetroRail Red Line commuter rail, increasing use of existing transit resources.



Family with bicycles at a Capital MetroRail Station. Rail transit plus excellent bicycle access creates a robust transportation choice. Photo credit: Capital Metro

How the trail can fit within constrained urban space

The existing MetroRail right-of-way provides enough width for both a double-track rail line and for the trail in all or nearly all of the corridor. Adjacent commercial sites, brownfield sites, other transportation rights-of-way, and other parcels offer opportunities for creating wider trail corridor segments.



Cross-section showing double-track MetroRail and Red Line Trail within constrained right-of-way, just north of Crestview Station.

How the trail can be funded

Trail funding opportunities include municipal/county bond elections, metro/state/federal transportation grants, ACC and other public funding elections, tax increment finance districts, development fees-in-lieu, private foundations, additional mechanisms identified in the UTMP, and future public funding mechanisms. The November 2016 Austin Transportation Bond includes funding for one new segment to be built within the next several years. Based on a typical \$2MM implementation cost per trail mile described in the UTMP, the vision for separate bicycle and pedestrian paths where feasible, the need for substantial bridges at U.S. 183 and at I-35, and the need for substantial drainage infrastructure for much of the corridor, we estimate the cost to complete the urban portion of the Red Line Trail to be roughly \$50MM-\$100MM. Additional access points, tributary trails, parks, public space, and public art will require additional funding.

Potential Funding Sources for Planning & Building the Red Line Parkway

- City of Austin Transportation, Parks, Watershed, and Culture Bonds (past and future)
- Capital Metro, including land lease, projects in conjunction with rail projects, connectivity to stations
- Travis County Bonds
- Williamson County Bonds
- Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority Funds
- Texas Transportation Funds
- Federal Transportation Funds, including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), New Freedom Program, TIGER grants
- Private Donors and Foundations, including Trust for Public Land and local philanthropists
- Private Developers, especially on their properties
- Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program
- City of Austin Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

How much the trail will be used

Based on data from existing Austin bicycle traffic counters and similar urban trail examples in other cities, we estimate the Red Line Trail to serve 2000-5000 users each day at point locations in the first year of completion, and 5000-10000 users accessing at least one segment of the trail each day. The trail will see well over one million visits in its first year, rivaled locally only by the Butler Trail around Lady Bird Lake.



Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail. This pedestrian-bicycle shared-use path will be accompanied by a future adjacent transit line.



The downtown segment of the Red Line Trail is part of the Lance Armstrong Bikeway, and is one of the most popular bike facilities in Austin.

Existing examples of similar trails



Springwater Trail in Portland, Oregon. An active freight rail line is to the right of the fence.

Austin has few examples of paved urban trails, and the Red Line Trail will be unique among them when completed, as it serves multiple functions concurrently, e.g. transportation, recreation, train connectivity, parks & natural space. Nevertheless, similar Austin trail examples include the Crosstown Bikeway (Lance Armstrong Bikeway), Butler Trail and the Lady Bird Lake Boardwalk, Walnut Creek Trail, Shoal Creek Trail, and others. Examples in other cities of grade-separated, paved trails in urban contexts include the Atlanta BeltLine (right) and the Minneapolis Midtown Greenway, which incorporate trail-oriented commercial and residential development.



Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis. Note the "Adopt-A-Greenway" sign referencing the program of the Midtown Greenway Coalition.

Organization, Goals, and Timeline



Red Line Trail adjacent to Airport Blvd., near Highland Mall. This segment was completed in 2013.

The Organization

The Red Line Parkway Initiative (RLPI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that empowers diverse communities to enjoy, develop, and enhance the Red Line Trail and Parkway corridor to serve Central Texas mobility, recreation, economic, parks, arts, affordability, social equity, physical & mental health, and public space needs. The RLPI accomplishes this primarily through recreation/entertainment events, educational/informational events, outreach to community leaders and organizations, education to elected and public officials, general media marketing, collaboration with trail planners and builders, collaboration with real estate developers and property owners, and providing a consistent community institution to advance the Red Line Parkway. The existence of a large, broad, and engaged community in support of the Red Line Parkway will foreshadow a popular and cherished Austin amenity after implementation.

First Year Funding

In its first funded year, the RLPI will focus on several core programs & projects:

- Produce quarterly public events on the Red Line Parkway that invite diverse communities to come together for physical activity, art, social interaction, and the common interest in the Red Line Parkway.
- Partner with a consultant to develop a preliminary trail corridor plan, including:
 - Short-term, medium-term, and long-term visions,
 - Visual close-ups of ideal parkway segments that include trail cross sections, adjacent development possibilities, and other characteristics,
 - A proposed process for a subsequent public input process and more robust trail corridor plan.
- Host periodic, informal, public informational events.
- Begin periodic associated bike rides, walks, and runs.
- Establish and coordinate adopt-a-trail volunteer program to care for existing Red Line Parkway segments.
- Work closely with Capital Metro, City of Austin, and other governmental agencies for parkway development and planning.
- Work with City of Austin, Capital Metro, developers, and community stakeholders on newest trail segments near The Domain, Lakeline Station, MLK Station, and Plaza Saltillo Station.
- Work with Capital Metro to ensure enough right-of-way for the trail alongside double-track rail, especially in tight segments between private property.
- Establish suitable Red Line Parkway initial route, using existing trail segments, streets, and sidewalks. This includes initial coordination with government and community stakeholders, and implementation of temporary wayfinding signage, e.g. yard signs.
- Educate elected officials and establish funding for parkway improvements.
- Create an initial parkway advisory committee composed of essential diverse constituents.
- Establish 2500+ individual supporters, 250+ individual donors, and more large donors (\$5000+ each) for RLPI.
- Establish 25+ regularly engaged volunteers for RLPI and parkway needs, including trail advocates and neighborhood leaders.
- Identify and establish relationships with 50+ vicinity or metro-wide organizations.
- Establish relationships with all Austin City Council members, Capital Metro board members, and other key elected & appointed officials.
- Begin distributing Red Line Parkway promotional materials.

- Establish online presence (via website, social media, and e-newsletter) for parkway and RLPI information.
- Create promotional video for advertising the parkway and RLPI.
- Establish private and government grant funding for the RLPI.
- Develop a plan and a potential donor base for major donations for parkway capital improvements.
- Create a first-year report, including accomplishments and lessons learned.
- And more....

Second Year Funding

In its second funded year, the RLPI will:

- Continue producing quarterly public events, and periodic bike rides, walks, and runs.
- Continue collaboration with government agencies.
- Coordinate with the City of Austin and others to establish Red Line Parkway interim route, including implementation of semi-permanent wayfinding signage and softscape improvements (e.g. paint striping, flexible delineator posts, PHB signalled crossings, etc.). These improvements will be funded in part by existing bond funding.
- Establish 5000+ cumulative individual supporters, 500+ cumulative individual donors, and more large donors (\$5000+ each).
- Establish and maintain 50+ engaged volunteers.
- Establish other revenue streams, including point-of-sale donations and major online auctions.
- Begin constituent-group promotional material program.
- Advocate for and establish funding for parkway improvements.
- And more....

Third Year Funding

In its third funded year, the RLPI will:

- Co-host a public input process (as described in preliminary plan) to create a more robust parkway corridor plan.
- Inaugurate the RLPI flagship fundraising & promotional event, situated on or near the Red Line Parkway and centered around physical activity, e.g. walking, running, bicycling, and/or skating.
- Begin raising private funding for engineering & construction of capital improvements for the parkway.
- Organize a group study visit to another city, e.g. Atlanta, Minneapolis, or Seattle, to experience signature urban trails.
- And more....



Southern Walnut Creek Trail in east Austin. This trail will eventually connect from the Butler Trail around Lady Bird Lake to the Red Line Trail at MoPac, to become part of one of the grand trail loops in Austin.

Community Investment

The organization's needs and request to invest

Pre-Launch

Web & Design	\$500
Office Supplies and Software	\$500
Stakeholder Meetings Expenses	\$500
Printing	\$500
Total Pre-Launch Needs:	\$2000

Launch & Start-Up

Laptop & Accessories	\$1500
Web & Design	\$4000
Office Supplies and Software	\$1000
Total Launch & Start-Up Needs:	\$6,500

Operating Expenses

FY1 Annual Needs

Executive Director salary, including payroll taxes and stipend for health insurance	\$100,000
Accounting	\$2000
Coworking Space Rent	\$7000
Office Supplies and Software	\$1000
Web & Design	\$5000
Mission Marketing (printing, design, advertising, promotional swag, etc.)	\$10,000
Organization Insurance, e.g. for events	\$5000
Board Insurance	\$5000
Business Consulting	\$5000
Parkway Consulting, e.g. landscape architects, civil engineers	\$5000
Training & Conferences	\$5000
Intern Stipend (18 wks, 10 hrs/wk, \$15/hr)	\$3000
Subtotal:	\$153,000
Contingency (10% of anticipated expenses)	\$15,300
Total Operating Expenses FY1 Needs:	\$168,300

Parkway Planning

Consultant for Overview Document (during FY1 or FY2)	\$20,000
RLPI budget for staff, marketing, etc.	\$5000
Consultant for Parkway Plan, including public engagement (during FY2, FY3, and/or FY4)	\$150,000
RLPI budget for staff, marketing, etc.	\$25,000
Subtotal:	\$200,000
Contingency (10% of anticipated expenses)	\$20,000
Total Parkway Planning Needs:	\$200,000

Funding Sources

Annual Funding (FY1-FY3)

Institutional Sponsors	
Foundation Grants	
Corporate Sponsors	
Non-Profit Partners	
Individual Major Donors	
Donor Pools	
Launch Fundraising Campaign: Online & Events (FY1 only)	
Individual Small Donors (post-launch)	
Annual Walk/Run/Ride (FY3 only)	
Annual Gala/Event (FY2 & FY3 only)	
Other, including POS Donations, Merchandise	
Total Annual Funding (FY1 / FY2 / FY3):	\$305,000 / \$325,000 / \$350,000

Parkway Planning Funding (Total FY1-FY3)

Grants, private and public	
Local large donors and sponsors	
Local small donors and crowdfunding	
Total Parkway Planning Funding:	\$200,000