



## TRANSPORTATION TEAM ISSUE PAPER

San Antonio Chamber of Commerce  
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce  
South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce  
West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce  
San Antonio Mobility Coalition

### Transit and Transit Funding

#### LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

1. Support increased funding opportunities for operations and capital expenses in collaboration with local partners to advance multi-modal transportation options as identified and supported by locally driven processes.
2. Support retention and expansion of authority for innovative project delivery methods, including utilization of public-private partnerships to deliver projects.
3. Support initiatives and actions serving to strengthen the operations, financial ability, and resources available to provide service to our customers and communities.
4. Support initiatives and actions serving to diversify funding mechanisms for public transportation operations and capital expenditures within the State of Texas.

**BACKGROUND:** As our state continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we look toward a changed future, we know that funding for transit services, especially within urban areas of the State of Texas, remains a critical component to ensuring the economic vitality of the state by ensuring essential workers can reach jobs, students can reach educational institutions, and residents can access opportunity regardless of socioeconomic status.

Transportation funding remains a critical element of our state's economic recovery and future economic growth. In November 2020, voters in the San Antonio region placed confidence in the benefit of increased transportation funding by authorizing an additional 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a cent allocation of sales tax to expand advanced public transportation options, starting in 2026.

However, even with this local funding increase, the San Antonio region remains dramatically behind peer communities in the state of Texas in being able to invest in long-term multi-modal modern mass transit options.

As was demonstrated during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, having a system that is more than 2/3<sup>ds</sup> dependent on sales tax for funding of all operations can introduce uncertainty

into a system that serves as a safety net to ensure economic mobility is accompanied by actual mobility.

The typical transit rider in San Antonio, based on a 2019 survey of ridership conducted by VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA), uses public transit 5-7 days a week. The majority of riders don't have a vehicle in their household (58%), use VIA to get to work (60%), live at or below the federal poverty line (67%), and are employed normally full time, including working one weekend day per week (72%).

With voter approval of the Keep San Antonio Moving Plan in November 2020 and the pending reallocation on January 1, 2026, of sales tax funds to augment VIA's existing resources, the opportunity ahead of the Legislature in the next sessions is to help provide options to benefit regional connectivity and transit.

**Recommendation:** The Legislature is encouraged to help support legislation and actions that allow for increased local decisions on funding of transportation projects. Additionally, we encourage the Legislature to allow for innovative project delivery – including partnerships with the private sector – to be utilized to deliver projects. Finally, we encourage the Legislature to provide for ways to diversify funding opportunities and operational abilities of metropolitan transit authorities. This would include, but not be limited to, enabling transit agency participation with funding available and authorized to the Texas Department of Transportation, including reopening the Texas Mobility Fund.

**CONTACT:**

Stephanie Reyes  
VP Public Policy  
San Antonio Chamber of Commerce  
O. 210.229.2162  
sreyes@sachamber.org