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Presented by JPMorganChase



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How San Antonio wants to catch up on mass transit




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An example of a bus rapid transit station. Image: Courtesy of VIA Metropolitan Transit

San Antonio is the largest U.S. city without a light rail system, but experts say two new rapid bus lines can offer similar [transportation benefits](#) with lower costs.

Why it matters: As the city cements its status as one of the [most populous in the U.S.](#), it has lagged behind its peers in [public transit efforts](#).

Context: A decade ago this month, San Antonio voters [passed a charter amendment](#) that said the city would have to get voter approval for any light rail or streetcar systems.

- In 2000, voters [rejected](#) a light rail proposal; in 2014, a streetcar project [died](#).

State of play: Fast-forward 10 years, and VIA Metropolitan Transit leaders and transit experts say two coming bus rapid transit routes — the Green and Silver lines — will offer an experience similar to rail and move almost as many people.

- And officials are betting on it to move nearly 27 million trips in 2024, up from 11 million in 2014, according to the Transportation Association [data](#).



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our service to an all-new level."

The latest: [The Green Line](#) will run along San Pedro Avenue from San Antonio International Airport on the North Side through downtown to the Missions on the South Side. Construction is slated to begin in July.

- [The Silver Line](#) will run from the Frost Bank Center on the East Side through downtown to North General McMullen on the West Side. It's still undergoing design; construction could begin in 2027.

How it works: A rapid bus runs in a dedicated lane, rather than sharing the street with cars. It's expected to arrive every 10 minutes, and riders can pay their fare before boarding to speed up the process.

- Construction of both rapid bus routes is largely funded with federal dollars. Despite threats to funding under the Trump administration, Sanchez says VIA feels confident the city will keep it. It's already [secured \\$268 million](#) for the Green Line.
- Maintenance and operation will fall to VIA.

Follow the money: The Green Line is projected to cost a total of \$480.8 million and the Silver Line \$289.2 million.

What they're saying: Frequency is what matters most to convince riders to take public transit over driving, Kelly Blume, associate research scientist at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, tells Axios.

- If San Antonio creates "a transit speeds and can carry a lot of people transit or with rail," Blume says.



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Friction point: Some residents in nearby neighborhoods have been concerned that losing a lane for cars on San Pedro could cause more traffic.

- But Sanchez says intersections will be wider, green lights will last longer and there will be new turn lanes in some places.
- "We're improving traffic for everybody, not just our bus lines," Sanchez says.

What's next: The Green Line is expected to be up and running in early 2028.

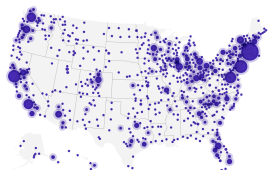


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