FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

WHAT IS VIA REIMAGINED?
VIA Reimagined is a 10-year plan that begins implementing VIA’s Long-Range Plan, Vision 2040, which serves as the community’s vision for public transportation. If funded, VIA Reimagined will position VIA as the leading regional mobility service provider by focusing on three elements: Better Bus, Advanced Rapid Transit (ART), and Smart Transit.

A Better Bus System will improve the reliability, convenience, and frequency of VIA’s existing bus network by offering more frequent and reliable service, more weekend and late-night service, and more Express and Crosstown routes.

ART is 6 high-frequency corridors of modern, high capacity vehicles with transit signal priority and all-door boarding running in dedicated lanes to avoid traffic. The system connects major destinations and employment centers, with vehicles running every 10 minutes or better. VIA Reimagined focuses on the first 2 of 6 corridors.

Smart Transit improves the customer experience through the use of technology, including VIA Link and first-mile/last-mile partnerships.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS PLAN?
VIA Reimagined is designed to provide a new network of choices to manage the congestion we expect. The plan builds on a number of key improvements VIA has made in recent years to improve our system by adding more frequent service, made possible by funding provided by the County and the City.

WHAT IS THE LONG-TERM PLAN FOR TRANSIT IN THE REGION?
The region’s long-term plan for transit is guided by the VIA Vision 2040 Long Range Plan, adopted in 2016. This document describes a comprehensive, visionary approach to public transportation in the Greater San Antonio Region and is aligned with other key long-range transportation plans, like the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Mobility 2040 Long Range Plan and the City of San Antonio SA Tomorrow Multimodal Transportation Plan.
IS THE PLAN FUNDED?
VIA Vision 2040 is unfunded, so the ability to achieve the community’s vision for an expanded regional transit system depends on strategies to obtain increased funding. VIA aims to explore a combination of existing and new federal, state, and local funding over the next 25 years.

HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?
VIA engaged in a 2-year public engagement process, holding approximately 300 public meetings and presentations, collecting over 10,000 survey responses and engaging 50,000 San Antonio residents. Through this public process, VIA developed VIA Reimagined, a 10-year plan that begins implementing Vision 2040.

WHAT IS SMART TRANSIT? WHERE WILL IT BE OFFERED?
"Smart Transit" includes investments to keep the transit system smart and flexible. As technology grows and evolves, these investments could take many forms and will focus on improving the travel experience for customers. It may mean more investment in Mobility on Demand (MOD) services similar to the VIA Link service operating in the northeast part of San Antonio. Additionally, it includes investments in improved reservation systems for VIA trans service and offering more real-time information to riders to create a better transit experience for customers.

I LIVE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, HOW DOES THIS PLAN HELP ME?
Smart Transit helps support solutions that are convenient for a variety of customers. MOD services, for example, could expand to these other areas where buses are challenging or expensive to operate will help expand the reach and coverage of VIA service. These types of services offer accessible vehicles that can pick-up and drop-off within a defined area and will always connect to a fixed route hub to get you into the bus network.

WHAT’S THE PLAN AFTER THE FIRST 10 YEARS?
After 10 years, VIA will continue to strive to implement elements of the Vision 2040 plan, while also focusing on operating the improvements implemented through the VIA Reimagined 10-year plan. However, any additional services or improvements would require new, additional funding sources.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF THE PLAN

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE DO NOT INVEST IN VIA REIMAGINED?
If VIA Reimagined is not funded, the proposed Better Bus, Rapid Transit, and Smart Transit investments will not be possible in the given time frame without new funding. While VIA would work to continue providing quality transit options, growth in transit service and transportation choices in the region will be limited by the existing resource constraints of VIA.

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS FOR LOCAL BUS RIDERS?
VIA Reimagined is designed to improve the frequency, directness, and reliability of current VIA transit service, as well as provide new connections throughout the region. The plan includes new express routes and extensions, as well as mobility on demand services, which will increase the footprint of the VIA system. Under the plan, 8 out of 10 existing riders would have access to service with a frequency of 12 minutes or better.

WHERE WILL THE BUS SERVICE FREQUENCY IMPROVE?
If new funding is secured for VIA Reimagined in 2020, by January 2023, improvements will begin on VIA’s Core Network, which represents today’s most popular routes (with the highest number of riders). By January 2024, these improvements will expand to Express service. New connections are envisioned from Stone Oak to Medical Center and Alamo Ranch, as well as between the Airport and Downtown.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN HELP THOSE WHO DEPEND ON ACCESS TO TRANSIT?
The VIA Reimagined network is designed to attract those who need transit services to access jobs, healthcare, healthy food options, education and major centers of activity. New transit connections ensure the network responds to how people travel and their desired destinations, recognizing that downtown is not the only job center in our region.

HOW DOES THE PLAN HELP VIA SERVICE BECOME MORE RELIABLE AND ON-TIME?
VIA Reimagined envisions a system of Advanced Rapid Transit traveling in its own travel lane, separated from vehicle traffic. Providing a dedicated lane for transit will ensure that travel time is predictable and consistent to get customers to their destination on time. This time saving benefit for those who chose to ride transit provides a competitive alternative to driving a vehicle and will help managing the growing number of vehicles on the region's busiest roadways.
WILL THIS PLAN HELP WITH BUS CROWDING?
One of the goals of the plan is to reduce bus crowding. With more transit options and more frequent service, these improvements will reduce the number of people crowding on to board VIA buses during peak travel times.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES TO VIATRANS IN THE 10-YEAR PLAN?
VIAttrans is a shared-ride, curb-to-curb service transportation service option for customers who cannot utilize regular bus service because of a disability. If VIA Reimagined is funded, VIAttrans will grow in complement to any expansion of the fixed-route system.

Smart Transit improvements work to improve the VIAttrans customer experience, through improved real-time vehicle tracking, online scheduling, and innovative partnerships with Transportation Networking Companies (like Lyft or Uber).

WILL THE IMPROVEMENTS TO TRANSIT INCREASE MY TRANSIT FARE?
Transportation is the second-highest cost for households, and VIA understands that fares represent a financial challenge for many riders. VIA reassesses the fare structure every year to determine if the fare structure requires revisions, for example, to keep pace with inflation. VIA’s operating costs increase each year with the cost of labor and materials.

I NEVER RIDE THE BUS, HOW DOES THIS PLAN BENEFIT ME?
A goal of the plan is to preserve open space and natural resources, improves air and water quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. VIA Reimagined also encourages sustainable regional growth by supporting compact, walkable communities by creating an alternative to driving.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ADVANCED RAPID TRANSIT (ART)

WHAT IS ADVANCED RAPID TRANSIT?
Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) is a system that includes 6 high-frequency corridors of modern, high capacity vehicles with transit signal priority and all-door boarding running in dedicated lanes to avoid traffic. The system connects major destinations and employment centers, with vehicles running every 10 minutes or better.

HOW IS ART DIFFERENT FROM VIA’S CURRENT PRIMO AND LOCAL BUS SERVICE?
Advanced Rapid Transit vehicles have some of the same characteristics as Prímo buses, but they travel in their own dedicated lanes. With these lanes, customers travel faster and arrive on time more reliably than Prímo buses, which move at the pace of traffic. Rapid transit can avoid the delays of regular bus service with dedicated lanes, off-board fare collection, raised platforms for easier boarding, traffic signal priority (signals that let rapid transit go ahead of mixed traffic), consolidated stops, and high capacity vehicles.

WHAT KIND OF VEHICLES WILL VIA USE FOR RAPID TRANSIT SERVICE?
ART will use modern, attractive buses that will employ the best available power or fuel technology with a goal of helping to reduce ambient air pollution in the City.

HOW WERE THE ADVANCED RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDORS CHOSEN?
Rapid Transit Corridors were chosen during previous planning at VIA. A detailed analysis was conducted to determine which routes would optimize access, opportunities, and ridership. This effort relied on 2017 community feedback and criteria such as forecasted ridership, mobility improvements, and development potential.

WHY ISN’T LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT BEING CONSIDERED?
To accommodate future technologies and flexibility for mode, VIA is looking to establish dedicated rapid transit lanes which can better serve the region. The entire ART network can be built for one-third to one-half the cost of a light rail network with similar coverage.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

WHEN CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE THESE IMPROVEMENTS HAPPEN?
Over the next 10 years, these changes will take place in several phases. VIA is ready to begin increasing service on current routes. Some improvements will begin by 2023, while other investments are more long-term.

Better Bus improvements to the Core Network are anticipated for January 2023, and Express Service will begin in January 2024. Advanced Rapid Transit service, which requires more funding and new construction will require additional time to implement. The first phase of Rapid Transit, providing North-South service from Stone Oaks to Brooks, is scheduled to begin in 2028. East-West Rapid Transit service, from Kel-Lac to the Eastside Transit Center, will begin in 2030.

HOW MUCH IS THIS PLAN AND HOW WILL VIA PAY FOR THE 10-YEAR PLAN?
VIA Reimagined requires funds for both Operating and Capital costs. This plan will have an annual need of $44M and a capital, one time, need of $878M. Funding for this plan will require several sources, including local and federal contributions. New reoccurring annual operational costs, including labor and maintenance, will exceed VIA’s current operating budget and will need to be funded through additional funding. Capital costs, including new vehicles, new stations for Advanced Rapid Transit, and maintenance facilities, will also require additional funding sources. New funding revenue sources could include municipal bonds, federal grants, and additional sales tax.

COULD FARES COVER THE COSTS OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE?
No. Without additional funding sources, all of these activities would be impossible. Today, fares cover around 10 percent of VIA’s expenses.

HOW DOES THIS PLAN WORK WITH INVESTMENTS BY THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO AND THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION?
Critical to keeping VIA’s transit services reliable and on-time, the City of San Antonio provides infrastructure maintenance and improvements to many of the streets, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails, and traffic signals in the region. Ease of transportation is dependent upon partnerships. A VIA bus stop is connected by sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks built and maintained by the City of
San Antonio. VIA and TxDOT are partnering to build Park & Pool facilities along major interstate corridors that will provide easy access to the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in Bexar County.

**WILL THE 10-YEAR PLAN ACCOMMODATE PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES?**
One of VIA’s priorities is safer access to transit facilities. This includes creating partnerships to provide sidewalks, bike lanes, protected crosswalks, and park & ride facilities. Passengers will be allowed to take their bikes on board the rapid transit lines, and there will be free bicycle racks on local buses. Additionally, bike share facilities will be available at ART stations.

**HOW IS TRANSIT EXPECTED TO WORK WITH FUTURE INNOVATIONS IN TRANSPORTATION?**
Our transportation landscape is changing rapidly and dramatically. Today, VIA is already exploring innovative mobility solutions to improve the efficiency and convenience of transit services. By offering smart ticketing and trip planning services, new on-demand services, VIA is adapting its way of doing business to take advantage of proven technologies ensuring better customer experiences.

At this point, the future of emerging technologies, like fully-automated (including completely unoccupied) cars is uncertain and will require the resolution of numerous policy issues. However, when the time comes, rapid transit paired with fleets of fully automated vehicles and other customer-focused technologies can provide seamless connections between transit centers and local destinations.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NEXT STEPS

HOW CAN I STAY UP TO DATE AND GET INVOLVED?
There are multiple ways to stay connected and engaged over the course of VIA Reimagined. Visit our website, viaReimagined.com, to stay up to date on meetings and announcements. Follow us on social media. Sign up for notifications about future meetings and studies, and VIA is also able to send staff out to present to neighborhood and community groups. You can request a presentation by calling (210) 299-5105 or emailing Reimagined@VIAinfo.net.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

OVERVIEW OF VIA

WHAT TYPES OF TRANSIT SERVICE DOES VIA METROPOLITAN TRANSIT PROVIDE?
VIA is the public transportation provider of the Greater San Antonio Region. VIA provides a range of transportation options to meet the needs of residents and visitors across the region, including the following:

• Bus service: operating seven days a week from 4 a.m. to 1 a.m with over 7,000 bus stops along 90 bus lines.
• Express service: network of routes traveling long distances with direct, point-to-point connections.
• VIA Prímo: three frequent transit corridors with fewer stops and faster service than local bus service.
• Paratransit service: on-demand transportation serving riders with disabilities.
• Vanpool service: cooperative commute options for employees and employers.
• VIA Link: a new on-demand shared-ride service connecting to VIA mobility hubs.
• Special event service: strategic transit services improving mobility around major events.

HOW IS VIA CURRENTLY FUNDED?
Revenue for VIA is generated from the half-cent transit sales tax in VIA’s service area, the 1/8-cent sales tax under the Advanced Transportation District, farebox revenues, bus advertising, and grant money from the Federal Transit Administration.