



## Elgin Rail Beta Test August 29, 2008

Proposed commuter rail service between Austin and Elgin has been officially selected as the first regional transit project to go through a Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization **Transit Working Group** "decision tree" evaluation – most likely in mid-September.

An Aug. 25 memo from Doug Allen, **Capital Metro** executive vice president, to Cap Metro's board provided the rationale: "strong interest from project partners (City of Elgin), the fact that Capital Metro already owns the rail right of way, and the relative simplicity of the project relative to others being considered."

The other motivation: The learning curve from this "beta test" of the Transit Working Group review process should smooth the way for the more complex (and potentially controversial) Downtown Austin streetcar circulator proposal and subsequent financing plan, expected to be ready for Cap Metro board and City Council review in November.

At press time, the board was expected to seal its concurrence with Allen at a work session on Wednesday.

– *Katherine Gregor*