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## Capital Metro: Rail launch now set for Q1 2010

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The launch of Austin's much-anticipated, and much-delayed, commuter rail line has now been pushed back to the first quarter of 2010.

Officials with the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced late Monday that they now expect the remaining work on the 32-mile line running from Leander to downtown Austin won't be completed until early next year. This is the latest in a series of delays for the line that Capital Metro originally expected to open in 2008.

A spokeswoman for Capital Metro said several items remain to be taken care of before the line is ready for inspection by the Federal Railroad Commission. Those include programming modifications, operating procedure modifications, adjustments to crossing gate down time at several intersections and creation of a system integration document that's required by the FRA.

Also on Monday, Capital Metro's board approved a \$164.7 million fiscal 2010 budget. The agency agreed to tap into \$2.6 million in federal stimulus funds to help shore up its budget and paved the way to increase fares sooner than the current August 2010 time frame, possibly as soon as January. Officials said that increase will hopefully allow Capital Metro to redirect the stimulus funds back to their original purpose—making improvements to the new rail line.

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