



Bicycle Advisory Council Recommendation 20180918-05B:

Parmer Lane (FM 734) from RM 1431 to SH 45 Proposed Accommodations

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC) is to advise the City of Austin, and other jurisdictions, on all matters relating to the use of the bicycle;

WHEREAS, FM 734 (Parmer Lane) is identified in Austin's bicycle plan as a recommended all-ages-and-abilities route with shared-use paths (SUPs);

WHEREAS, TxDOT has no publicly available prescriptive Austin TxDOT District Bicycle Plan;

WHEREAS, TxDOT has not proactively approached the BAC for its ideas and recommendations for this project and most other Austin-area projects;

WHEREAS, TxDOT receives only 40-60% of its funding from user fees, e.g. gas tax, registration, and tolls, and the remainder of its funding comes predominantly from tax sources that are not transportation mode or user specific (References: [Tax Foundation: Gasoline Taxes and Tolls Pay for Only a Third of State & Local Road Spending](#), [Tax Foundation: How Are Your State's Roads Funded?](#), [TexPIRG: Who Pays for Roads?](#));

WHEREAS, TxDOT externalizes many of the costs that it imposes on its users and the general public, e.g. pollution, injuries & fatalities, other health impacts, user travel time and the work required to drive, land use impacts, and increased cost of providing services by counties, municipalities, transit authorities, and private industries;

WHEREAS, TxDOT is charged with serving all transportation modes and users, not only motor vehicle traffic and the most physically and mentally able;

WHEREAS, TxDOT states in the Texas Transportation Plan 2040 ([Section 8.1.1](#)) that safety is their number one priority, above all other considerations, including preserving or expanding motor vehicle traffic capacity;

WHEREAS, Terry McCoy, Austin District Engineer of TxDOT, affirmed on November 29th, 2017, "Here at TxDOT, safety is our top priority," ([Reference: Austin Chamber: TxDOT Launches Pedestrian Safety Campaign](#));

WHEREAS, TxDOT roads are far and away the most deadly and dangerous roads within the TxDOT Austin District 11-county region;

WHEREAS, FM 734 has a demonstrated history of bicycling fatalities and serious injuries resulting from roadway design, including provision of a shoulder as the only accommodation for bicycle traffic on a high-speed (60mph posted limit) suburban multi-lane highway;

WHEREAS, FM 734 is an irreplaceable transportation and recreational corridor for those traveling by bicycle;

WHEREAS, there is no alternative route to FM 734--the nearest proposed parallel all-ages-and-abilities route is over one mile away and has no implementation timeline within the next 25 years;

WHEREAS, TxDOT does not officially recognize sidewalks as bicycle accommodations, and cannot do so since it would violate their engineering judgment and safety standards;

WHEREAS, serious injuries and fatalities do occur as a result of poorly planned and designed SUPs and trails;

WHEREAS, typical pedestrian traffic volumes are low to moderate throughout the FM 734 corridor;

WHEREAS, the decisions made in the coming months for this project will serve for many decades to come;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BAC recommends shared-use paths (SUPs) on both sides of FM 734 for the entirety of the Parmer Lane (FM 734) from RM 1431 to SH 45 Project and that:

- the SUPs be at least 12' wide;
- the SUP be paved and that the choice of materials and construction methods provide an industry-leading smooth surface, e.g. by using compressed asphalt, exclusively saw-cut concrete expansion and cracking seams, and/or other industry-leading methods;
- SUP target design speeds be kept to 20 mph minimum wherever possible;
- any fixed-object obstructions or hazards, such as railings, signs, ditches, utilities, and retaining walls, be kept at least 2' from the usable trail edge;
- for any signalized crossing that requires user actuation, that actuation is either automatic (e.g. motion detection) or is via a mechanism (e.g. button) that is accessible to people on bicycles without requiring that they dismount;
- path lighting be implemented on the corridor, especially in key areas;
- additional SUPs or other all-ages-and-abilities accommodations be provided for bicycle traffic to cross at all intersections that allow motor vehicles to cross

Date of Approval:

Record of the vote:

Attest: