



Bicycle Advisory Council Recommendation 20180918-05A:

Loop 360 and Westlake Drive Intersection Project 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, Loop 360 (Capital of Texas Highway) is identified in Austin's bicycle plan as a recommended all-ages-and-abilities route with shared-use paths (SUPs);

WHEREAS, the Loop 360 Project is funded in major part through Austin 2016 Mobility Bond funding, which is granted only in alignment with the Austin Vision Zero Plan and Austin Complete Streets policies;

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (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, Loop 360 has a demonstrated history of multiple bicycling fatalities resulting from roadway design, including provision of a shoulder as the only accommodation for bicycle traffic on a high-speed (65 mph posted limit) suburban multi-lane highway, and guiding bicycle traffic across high-speed entrance and exit ramps;

WHEREAS, Loop 360 is an irreplaceable transportation and recreational corridor for those traveling by bicycle;

WHEREAS, there is no nearby alternative route to Loop 360--the closest accessible parallel routes are several miles away;

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, Loop 360 has significant hills that can result in both high (30+ mph) bicycle speeds and large speed differentials among shared-use path (SUP) users (50+ mph);

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 throughout the Loop 360 corridor;

WHEREAS, the decisions made in the coming months for this project will serve for many decades and for multiple generations not yet born;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BAC recommends a grade-separated shared-use path (SUP) for the entirety of the Loop 360 and Westlake Drive Intersection Project and for all complementary projects on the Loop 360 corridor and that:

- the SUP be at least 16' wide on hills and at least 14' wide elsewhere;
- 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 30 mph minimum wherever possible, especially on hills;
- 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;
- path lighting be implemented on the corridor, especially in key areas;
- several pocket parks with benches, sun-shade, and drinking fountains be provided along the Loop 360 corridor;
- additional SUPs or other all-ages-and-abilities accommodations be provided for bicycle traffic to cross Loop 360 at Westlake Drive and at other intersections;
- additional SUPs of 8' minimum width be provided to connect to individual destinations along the Loop 360 corridor that will not otherwise have direct access via the primary Loop 360 SUP recommended here

Date of Approval:

Record of the vote:

Attest: