



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20200805-02B: Safe Mobility Bond

WHEREAS, The City of Austin has committed to a 50/50 mode share split by 2039, as per the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan,

WHEREAS, the City's sidewalk plan identifies over 2,500 miles of absent sidewalks across the city, and estimates that the 580 miles of missing sidewalk considered high or very high priority will cost \$308 million to construct,

WHEREAS, the City's 2014 Bicycle Master Plan calls for full implementation by 2025, and estimates that the remaining unbuilt portions of the planned network will cost \$170 million for both on-street bike lanes and Tier 1 urban trails identified in the Urban Trails Master Plan,

WHEREAS, The City's Vision Zero Plan and Safe Route to School Program will require additional funding to continue implementation after funding from the 2016 Mobility Bond is depleted,

WHEREAS, the 2016 Mobility Bond funds could be completely depleted by 2022, potentially ending the momentum and capacity built up while that funding has been deployed to construct sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure and general road safety infrastructure,

WHEREAS, funding from the Project Connect Transit Bond will be essential to meeting the city of Austin's transportation, equity and climate goals, but the funding may be limited transit construction and nearby streetscape improvements,

WHEREAS, a safe and convenient active transportation network is essential to the success of Project Connect by enabling users to access transit without a vehicle, and would multiply the effectiveness of the Project Connect Bond,

WHEREAS, Austin has a strong history of approving multiple bond packages, including the approval of 7 separate bonds in the 2018 election, and there is no evidence that adding the Safety Mobility Bond will negatively affect the approval of the Project Connect Bond,

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in people walking, biking and other active modes for both transportation and recreation, overflowing the capacity of much of the active transportation network and creating unsafe conditions in some areas,

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the need for the "Healthy Streets" program to promote social distancing, which has achieved improvements in crucial areas that could be made permanent with the Safe Mobility Bond funding,

WHEREAS, ongoing protests against police brutality and economic inequality have shined a spotlight on the systemic injustice of our transportation system and infrastructure, which has been used to subjugate minority populations through inequitable enforcement of traffic laws and segregate our communities through highway construction and expansion,

WHEREAS, there is strong evidence demonstrating that walkable neighborhoods have higher economic, health, and social outcomes, while displacement from walkable, inner-city neighborhoods to car dependent suburbs has reduced socio-economic opportunities and increased transportation costs for our city's historically marginalized populations,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that the Safe Mobility Bond be added to the November ballot for an amount no less than \$750 million, which meets the continued funding requirements for the above cited plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that the bond funds be spent in a manner that directly addresses systemic disinvestment in marginalized communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that if the Safe Mobility Bond is *not* added to the November ballot, that the Project Connect Bond include *significant* funding earmarked for the continued implementation of the above cited Active Transportation plans, and not just within a close radius of new transit infrastructure.

Date of Approval: August 5, 2020

Record of the vote: 8-0 with Commissioners Champion, Weatherby and Wilfley absent

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Smith". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Emily Smith, staff liaison