

Pedestrian Advisory Council Recommendation:

2020 “Safe Mobility Bond” Proposal

WHEREAS, 2,500 miles of Austin’s streets currently lack sidewalks; and

WHEREAS, 88 people died from traffic crashes in 2019 and approximately five times as many people suffer serious injuries on Austin’s roads each year, disproportionately impacting communities of color; and

WHEREAS, 74 percent of Austinites drive to work alone in a private vehicle; and

WHEREAS, Austin’s automobile-oriented transportation system disadvantages those who choose not to drive or who cannot drive because of age, financial limitations, or disability; and

WHEREAS, vehicular air pollution causes negative physical and psychological health impacts such as asthma, lung cancer, heart disease, respiratory infections, and mental stress; and

WHEREAS, due to the phenomenon of induced demand widening roads has been shown to increase driving, worsen congestion, and inhibit access to daily needs; and

WHEREAS, shifting Austin away from an automobile-oriented transportation system would create a more equitable and accessible city by providing a broader array of safer and more affordable transportation choices; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) calls for a 50/50 mode share whereby 50 percent of commutes are made in ways other than driving alone, including a doubling of walk commutes, and completing the Austin Sidewalk Plan/ADA Transition Plan and Urban Trails Plan by 2039; and

WHEREAS, the Vision Zero Action Plan (2016) sets the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in Austin by 2025; and

WHEREAS, since passing the 2016 Mobility Bond, unprecedented progress has been made toward a more multimodal Austin through significant growth in walking, bicycling, and safe streets infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, funding for safe mobility infrastructure from the 2016 Mobility Bond will likely run out in the next few years and further funding must be found to meet many of the afore-mentioned goals by their target deadlines; and

WHEREAS, funding sidewalks, urban trails, and Vision Zero improvements are not provided as part of the City budget; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed travel patterns in Austin, resulting in greatly reduced driving and increased walking and bicycling rates, impacts that are likely to result in long-term changes in travel behaviors and public support for active transportation and safe streets; and

WHEREAS, recent efforts by the Austin Outside coalition to collect support from over 90 organizations and businesses and 3,100 members of the public for a Safe Mobility Bond, and a recent Austin-based community survey commissioned by MoveATX indicating that 55% of respondents would prefer to get around using a mode other than a personal car, demonstrate strong public support for a safer, more multimodal city; and

WHEREAS, the Healthy Streets program has demonstrated the need for implementing neighborhood shared streets as a complement to constructing sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and urban trails; and

WHEREAS, a high-capacity public transportation network and a citywide active transportation and safe streets network are mutually supportive; and

WHEREAS, there is no evidence from previous elections that related items, such as separate measures to fund active transportation / safe streets and public transportation, on the same election ballot would reduce the chances of any such items passing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the PAC recommends that, in addition to a Project Connect ballot item, the Austin City Council place a separate \$750 million Safe Mobility Bond on the November ballot to fund the following active transportation and safety measures that include the following ASMP elements and other goals:

- High and very-high priority sidewalk segments, ADA barriers and sidewalk system gaps
- Safe Routes to Schools Plans
- Tier I urban trails and identify alignments and develop designs for Tier II urban trails
- Safety/Vision Zero projects that reduce conflicts and improve safety for all users on the High-Injury Network and at high-risk locations
- Transit Enhancement Program: Projects that improve the speed and reliability of public transportation service on the Transit Priority Network
- Active transportation mobility projects sponsored through the Neighborhood Partnering Program

Date: August 3, 2020

Vote: 5-0 with Bauereis, Greenfield, Henderson and Mulcahy absent

Attest:

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

Emily Smith, staff liaison