

# City of Austin Urban Trails Master Plan

April 2014



# Agenda:

- Definition of an Urban Trail
- Urban Trail Master Plan Goals
- Existing Urban Trails
- Public Input
- Design Criteria and Considerations
- Prioritization Matrix



# Definition of an Urban Trail

A citywide network of non-motorized, multi-use pathways that are used by bicyclists, walkers and runners for both transportation and recreation purposes.

- Included in 2009 Bicycle Master Plan,
- Follows Imagine Austin,
- Considers definitions used by other communities, and
- Confirmed by Citizen Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Group.



# Urban Trail Goals for Austin

1. Provide **easy access** to urban trails for both transportation and recreation users.
2. **Connect** urban trails to the on-street bicycle network, sidewalk network, transit stops and bike share stations.
3. Ensure **adequate trail width** to accommodate both recreation and transportation uses.
4. Incorporate **trail amenities** and **features** that create unique, whimsical greenways.
5. Provide adequate funding and resources for **maintenance** and **operations**.
6. Ensure that all urban trails are **context-sensitive** and **environmentally sustainable**.



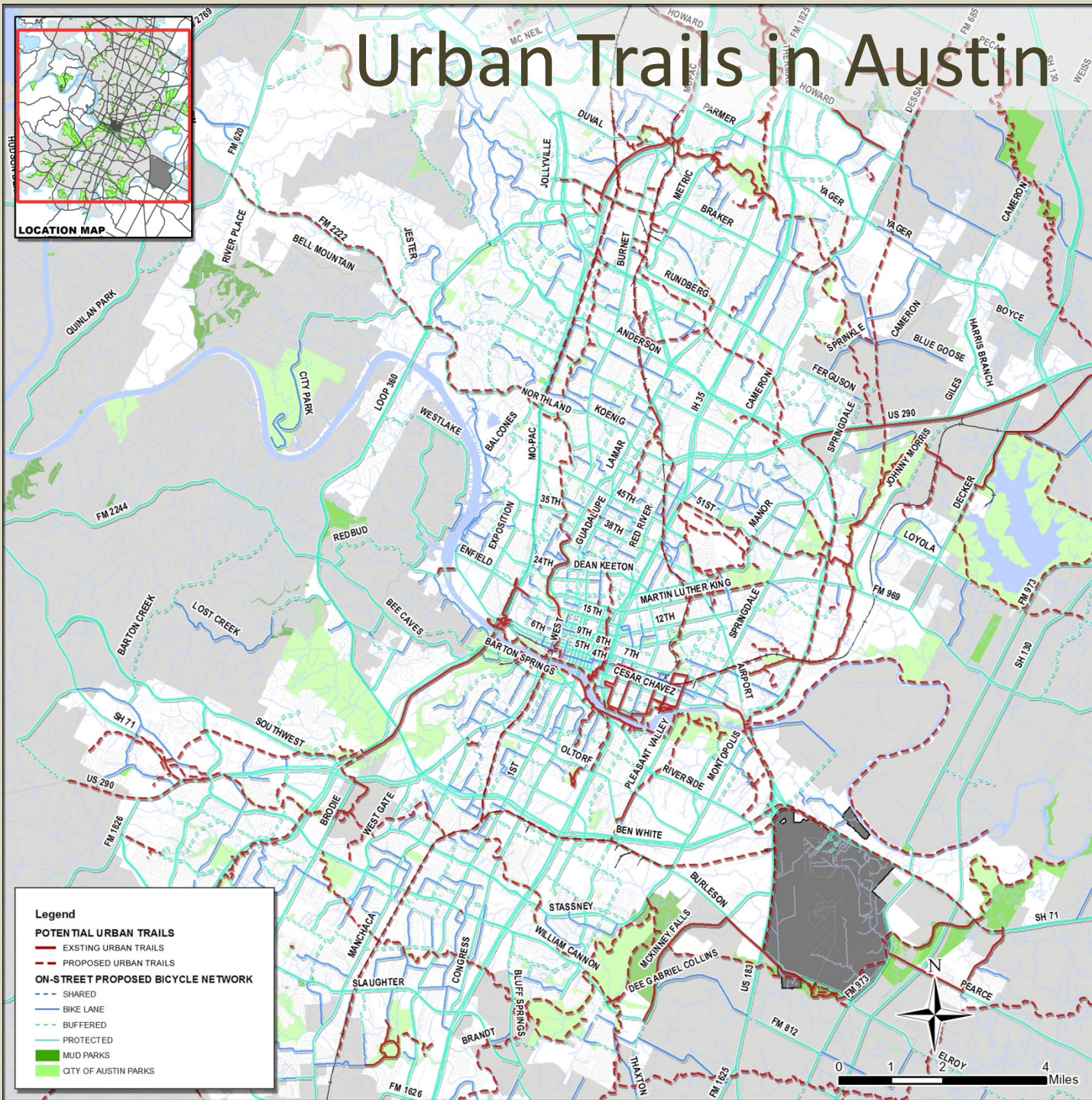
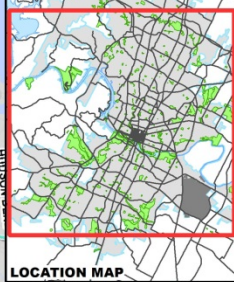
# Existing Urban Trails in Austin

- About **300 miles of trails** of all types.
  - About **60 miles** of existing trails are defined as Urban Trails.
- Boardwalk Trail at Lady Bird Lake – 1 mile
  - Country Club Trail – 4 miles
  - Johnson Trail – 1 mile
  - LAB – 6 miles total (about 2 miles of Urban Trail)
  - Shoal Creek Trail – 8 miles
  - Southern Walnut Creek Trail – 6 miles
  - Northern Walnut Creek – 8 miles
  - US 290 Sidepath to Manor – 5 miles





# Urban Trails in Austin





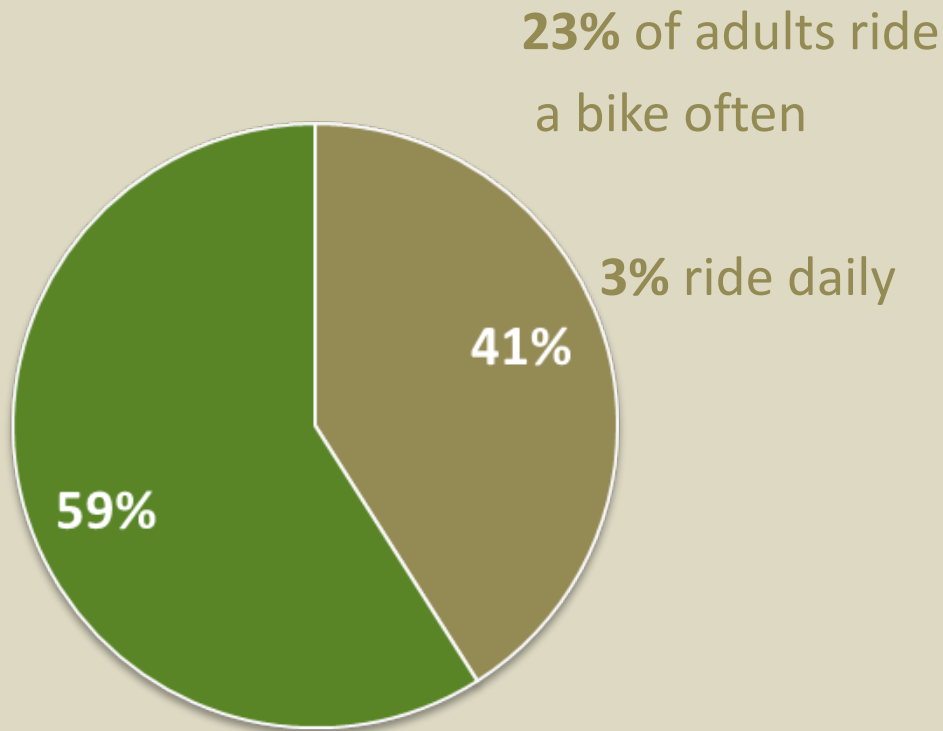
# Public Input on Urban Trails

- Telephone survey (statistically relevant survey): 603 respondents
- Austin Urban Trail User survey: 189 respondents
- Online survey: 2,392 respondents
- 5 public meetings
  - Questionnaire: 105 respondents
  - Online Open House survey: 66 respondents

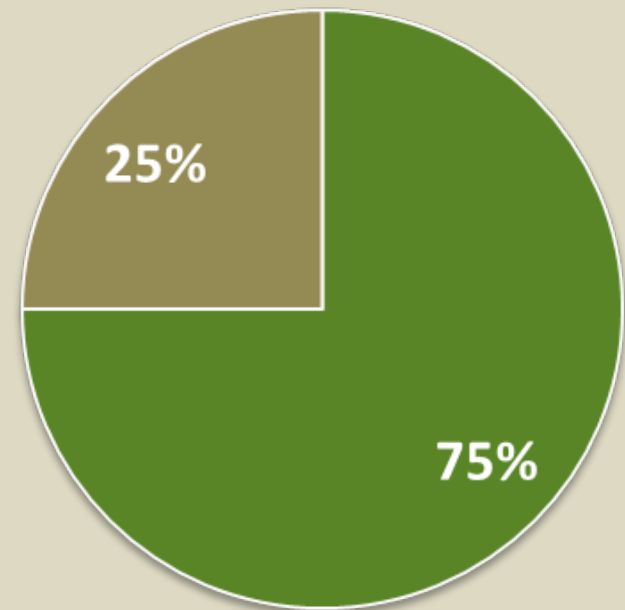


# Public Input on Urban Trails

**41% of Adults  
Ride Bikes in Austin**



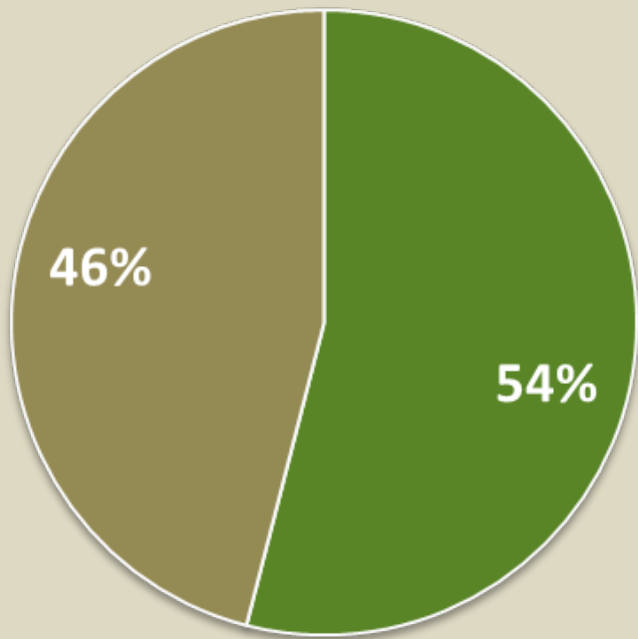
**Over 75% of Kids  
Ride Bikes in Austin**



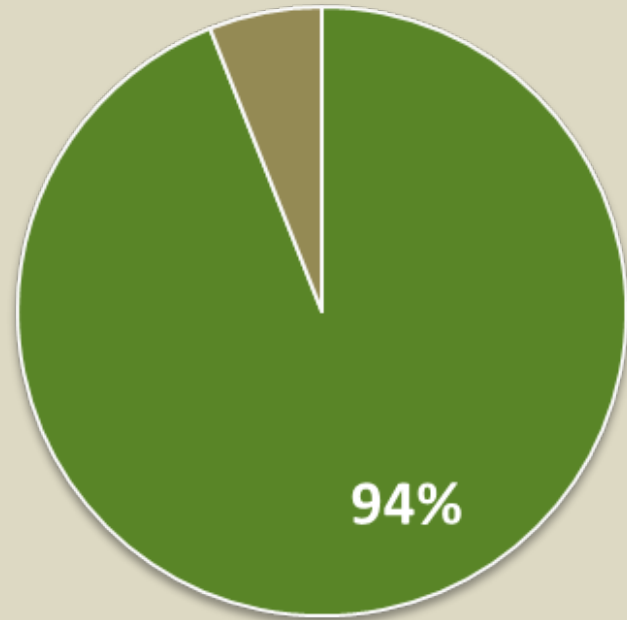


# Public Input on Urban Trails

**54%** of people in Austin want to ride more

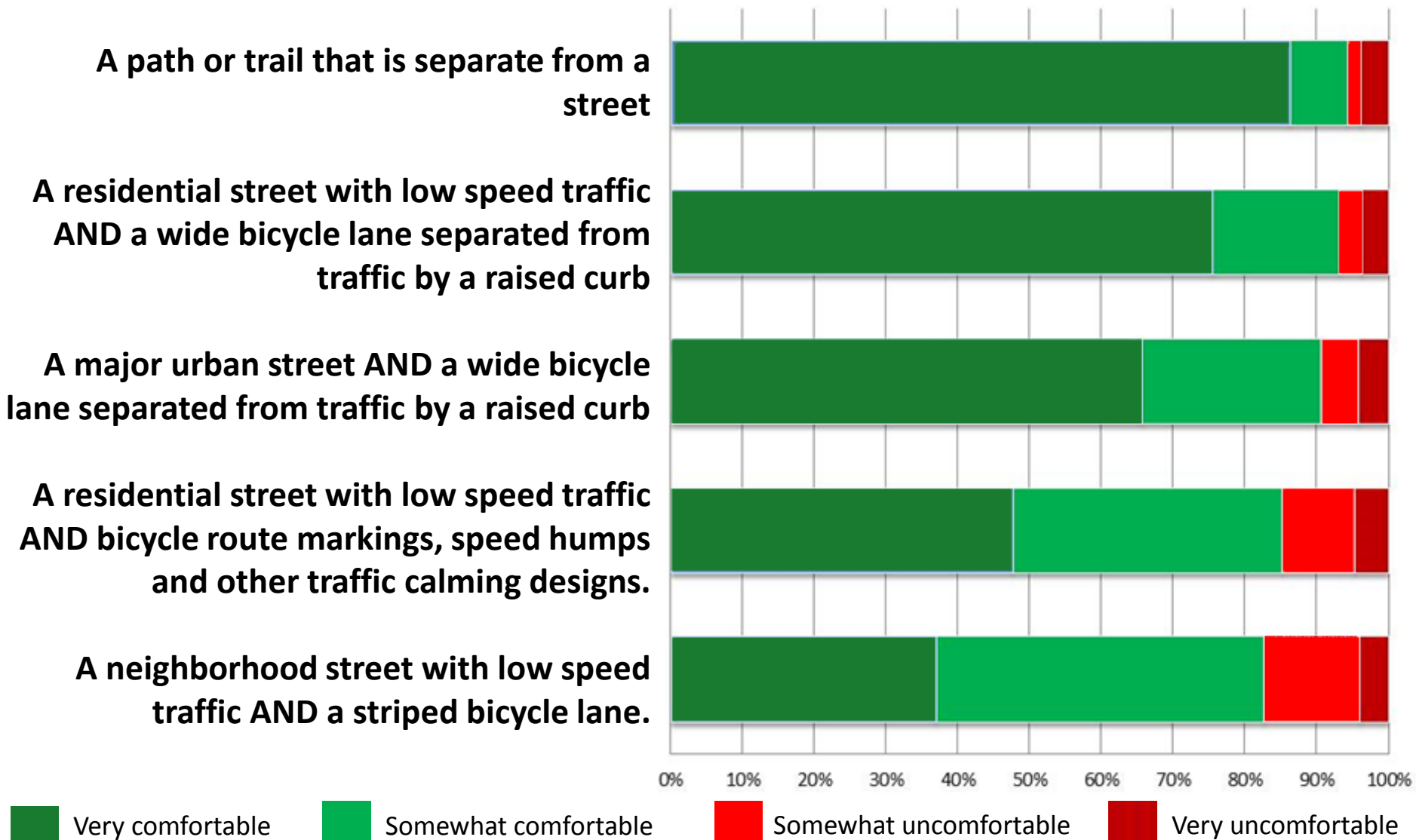


**94%** of bike enthusiasts feel comfortable riding on an Urban Trail  
**50%** feel comfortable riding in a traditional striped bike lane



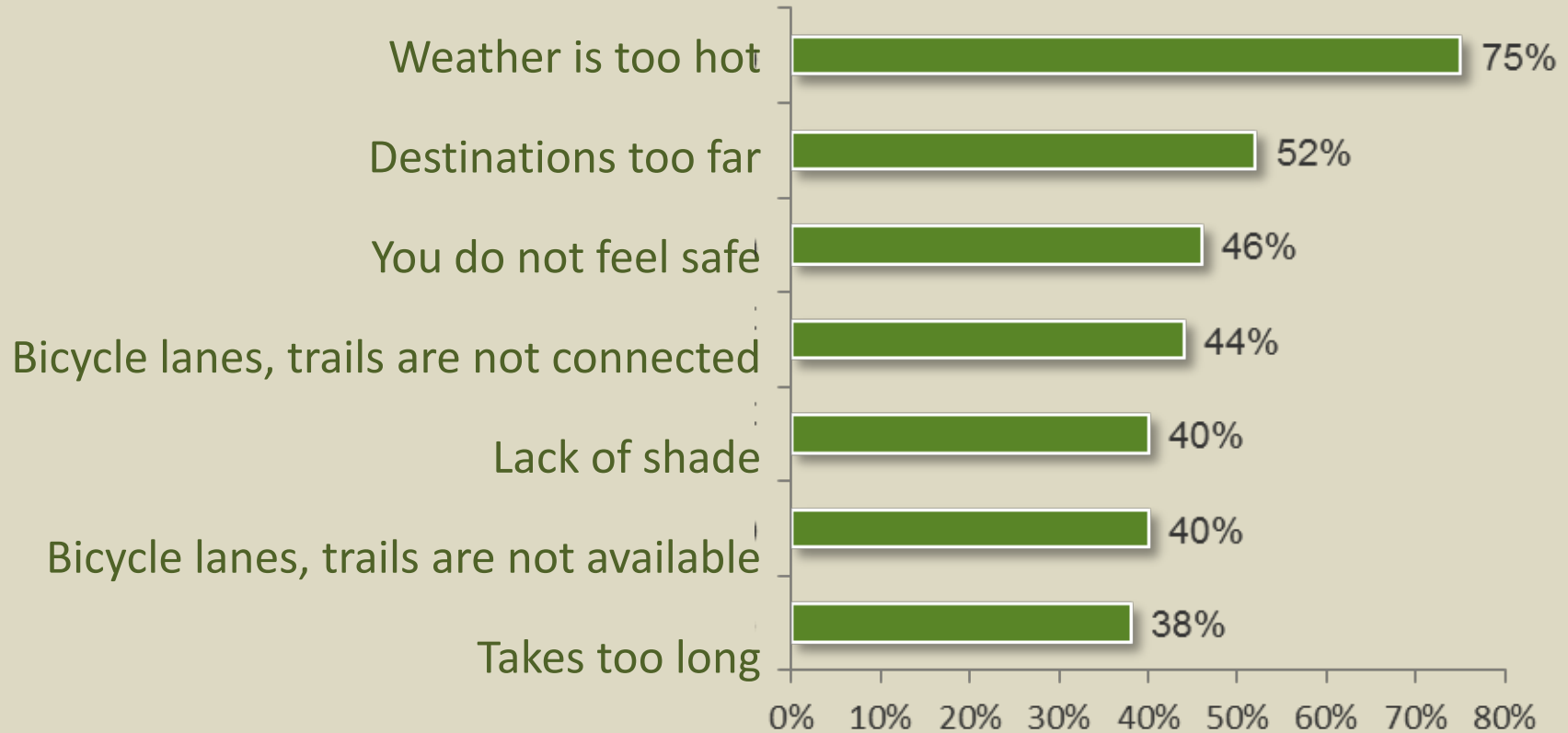
# Public Input

## Scenario Preferences



# Public Input on Urban Trails

## Top 7 barriers preventing people from riding a bike



# Public Input on Urban Trails

## Most Important Potential Improvements

**Add Lighting**



**Separate areas for  
walkers and  
bicyclists**



**Widen Trail  
surfaces**



**Improve Access**



**Improve smoothness  
of trails**





# The Austin Urban Trail



Southern Walnut Creek Trail

	Criteria
Minimum Width	12'
Minimum Shoulder	2'
Min. Vertical Clearance	10'
Maximum Cross Slope	2%
Maximum Grade	5% (8.25 % with handrails)



# Dual Track Urban Trail



Source: American Trails



Source: American Trails

	Criteria
Minimum Width	8' for pedestrian side 10' for bicyclist side
Minimum Shoulder	5' user separation 2' shoulder
Vertical Clearance	10'
Maximum Cross Slope	2%
Maximum Grade	5%



# Urban Trail Design Considerations

- Include **connections** to surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, places of employment, other trails, on-street network, public transit stops, bike share stations.
- Install **lighting** where appropriate to enhance security and nighttime accessibility.
- Design for **environmental preservation**:
  - Preserve trees or vegetation closer to the trail,
  - Incorporate scenic overlooks or pull-offs,
  - Incorporate smaller curve radii to preserve the scenic qualities of the corridor, and
  - Watershed Protection Ordinance supports Urban Trails.





# Other Urban Trail Considerations

- Plan for security presence and **emergency access**
- **Location Markers & Wayfinding**
  - Orientation, distance, and travel time,
  - Provide safety information, and
  - Educate about trail etiquette.
- **Promote and provide incentives** for development of Urban Trail segments and connections
- **Create a sense of place**
  - Engage the community





# Urban Trail Corridors – Prioritization Criteria

Criteria	Level of Importance (Weighting)
▪ Environmental considerations	3x
▪ Citizen support	2x
▪ Constructability	2x
▪ Corridor availability	2x
▪ Connectivity to Active Transportation Network	2x
▪ Connectivity to transit	2x
▪ Connectivity to local destinations/neighborhoods	2x
▪ Scenic qualities	1x
▪ Area population density	1x
▪ Helps overcome gap or barrier	1x
▪ First in its area of the City	1x

- Uses a point system.
- Criteria are weighted to emphasize importance.

# Priority Urban Trails

This map illustrates the Priority Urban Trails network in Austin, Texas. The trails are highlighted in brown and red lines, showing a comprehensive system that connects major urban centers, parks, and recreational areas. Key features include:

- Trails Network:** A dense network of trails is shown, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the city, connecting areas like downtown, the airport, and surrounding suburbs.
- Geographic Features:** The map includes major roads (e.g., FM 2222, FM 2244, FM 1626), parks (e.g., Quinlan Park, Barton Creek), and bodies of water (e.g., Lake Travis, Lake Austin).
- Scale and Orientation:** A scale bar in the bottom right corner indicates distances in miles (0 to 4 miles). A north arrow is also present.

# Timeline for Implementation

- April 8 – East ANC and Urban Transportation Commission
- April 14 – Land, Facilities, and Programs Committee (Parks and Recreation Board)
- April 15 –Bicycle Advisory Council
- April 16 – Environmental Board
- April 22 – Parks and Recreation Board
- May 1 – City Council (set public hearing)
- May 13 – Planning Commission
- May 22 – City Council (conduct public hearing)

Questions?