

Bicycle Advisory Council Recommendation:
Proposed US 290 Project from Oak Hill to Dripping Springs

WHEREAS, the Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC) advises the City of Austin and other jurisdictions on all matters relating to the use of the bicycle, bicycle infrastructure, and individuals of all ages and abilities who utilize bicycles; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2019, Austin City Council adopted the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan which calls for a shift to 50 percent of trips being independent from single occupancy cars;

WHEREAS, in Resolution 20190808 the Austin City Council declared a “climate emergency” and called for “immediate emergency mobilization to restore a safe climate” including directing the City Manager to promote the goals of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan;

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has launched the US 290 from Oak Hill to Dripping Springs Planning and Feasibility study, requesting input on future safety and mobility improvements to US 290 from RM 1826 in southwest Austin to RM 12 in Dripping Springs;

WHEREAS, there has been no day since November 7th, 2000 that there was not a fatality on Texas roads;

WHEREAS, one of the leading causes of traffic fatalities in the Austin area is a motor vehicle striking a pedestrian on a TxDOT service road;

WHEREAS, TxDOT is committed to eliminating all traffic fatalities in their transportation system by 2050;

WHEREAS, TxDOT staff is committed to safety above all other priorities, even above improving motor vehicle throughput;

WHEREAS, the mission of TxDOT includes not only serving those occupying private motor vehicles on its roads, but also serving those traveling on its corridors on foot, by bicycle, and via wheelchairs or other personal mobility devices, among other transportation users;

WHEREAS, the proposed US 290 from Oak Hill to Dripping Springs project would connect to the Oak Hill Parkway project, where TxDOT has proposed shared-use paths running along the length of the project, and a tunnel that allows bicycles and pedestrians to travel at particular intersections without encountering motor vehicle traffic,

WHEREAS, the currently existing stretches of bicycle lanes on the part of US 290 in the proposed project area near Oak Hill are discontinuous, unprotected, and are not effective or safe infrastructure for people riding bicycles or similar forms of transportation;

WHEREAS, the BAC recognizes and supports bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the proposed project area due to the lack of effective, safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in this part of southwest Austin and Dripping Springs,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BAC recommends that the Texas Department of Transportation:

- Designs and implements effective, safe, all ages and abilities bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along the entire length of the proposed US 290 project, no matter how the project changes or is phased,
- Narrow the existing car travel lanes and design them for slower vehicle speeds;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BAC recommends that such bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure includes shared-use paths that are:

- On both sides of the roadway;
- At least 10' wide, preferably 12' wide;
- Be separated from service road lanes by a guardrail, jersey barrier, or other similar barrier of fortitude to keep the shared-use path out of the so-called "clear zone" wherever possible;
- Be clear of any fixed-object obstructions or hazards, such as signs or utility poles, and that any obstruction, also including railings, ditches, and retaining walls be kept at least 1-2' from the usable trail edge;
- Where crossing non-state system roads, i.e. local streets and private driveways, that the crosswalk be raised to the level of the shared-use path rather than descend to the level of the road;
- Where they have a 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;
- Be lighted, including in places where existing road lighting is inadequate or does not exist

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BAC advises that TxDOT consider in their design process that, given topography, people using bicycles may be traveling at 30 mph or higher speeds along this corridor;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BAC requests TxDOT staff attend future BAC meetings and provide updates and responses regarding BAC's recommendations at least once during every phase of the proposed project.

Date: November 19, 2019

Vote: 7-0 with Flowers and LeBlanc 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