



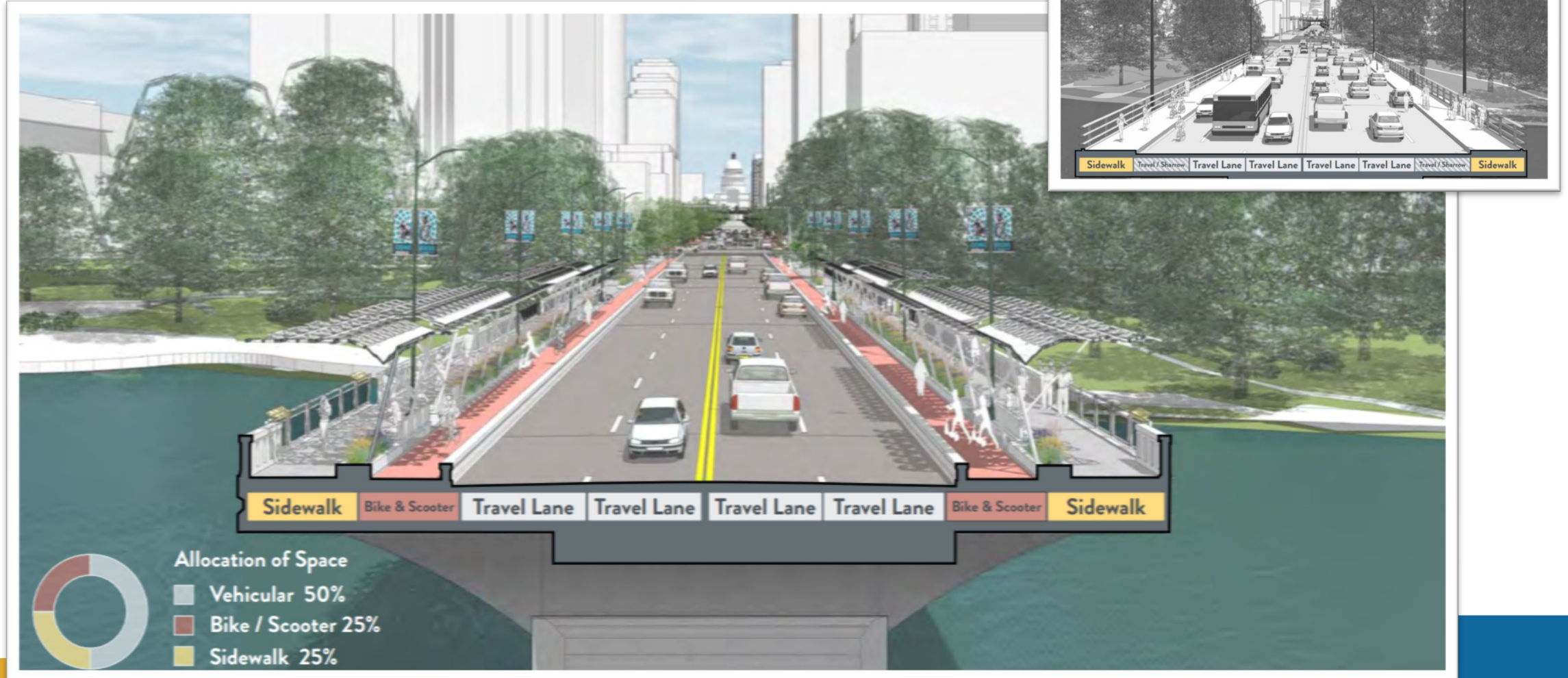
**Downtown Commission**

# **Congress Avenue Interim Safety and Mobility Improvements**

**OCTOBER 21, 2020**

NOTE: This presentation is not discussing election-related matters. This presentation gives information about currently funded work on Congress Avenue between 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Riverside Drive.

# *A Vision for Congress Avenue*



# Current Council Direction

- Recognizes that street space is needed to maintain social distancing under COVID-19 risk-based guidelines
- Calls for temporary improvements to open street space, as well as options for retaining safety benefits once social distancing is no longer needed
- Recognizes that interim improvements align and build towards the long-term strategy for re-balancing mobility and connectivity options along the avenue

COVID-19: Risk-Based Guidelines

	Practice Good Hygiene Stay Home If Sick Avoid Sick People	Maintain Social Distancing	Wear Facial Coverings	Higher Risk Individuals Aged 65+, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, lung and kidney disease, immunocompromised, obesity			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/Shopping	Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/Shopping	Workplaces Open
				Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/Shopping							
Stage 1	•			Greater than 25		Except with precautions	Gathering size TBD						All businesses
Stage 2	•	•	•	Greater than 10		Except as essential	Greater than 25						Essential and reopened businesses
Stage 3	•	•	•	Social and greater than 10	•	Except as essential	Social and greater than 10						Essential and reopened businesses
Stage 4	•	•	•	Social and greater than 2	•	Except as essential	Social and Greater than 10	•		Except expanded essential businesses			Expanded essential businesses
Stage 5	•	•	•	Outside of household	•	Except as essential	Outside of household	•		Except as essential			Essential businesses only

Use this color-coded alert system to understand the stages of risk. This chart provides recommendations on what people should do to stay safe during the pandemic. Individual risk categories identified pertain to known risks of complication and death from COVID-19. This chart is subject to change as the situation evolves.

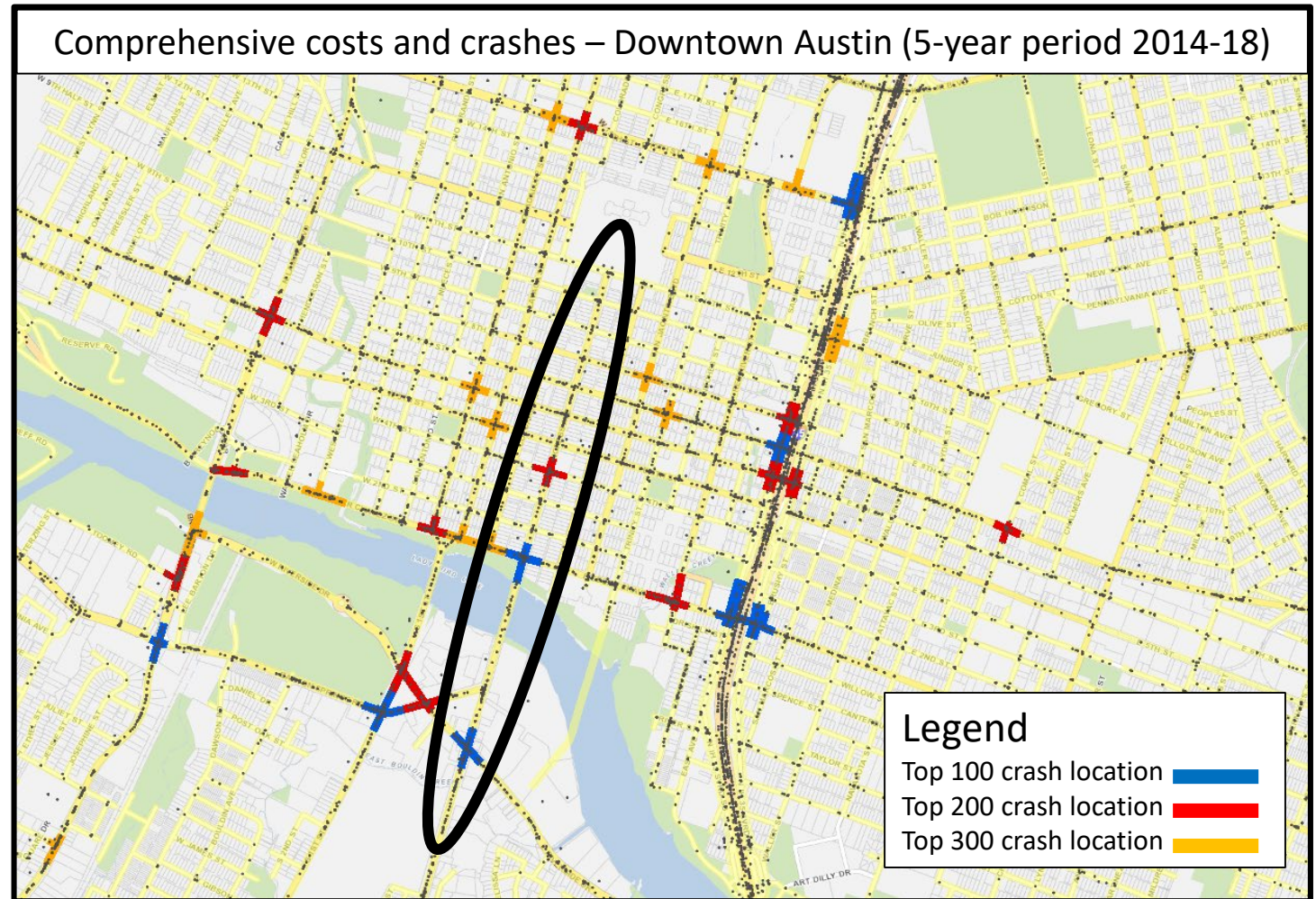
# Temporary Pilot Installation

- Established on June 30, 2020
- Separates people on scooters and bicycles from motor vehicles using tall cones
- Well-used by people on scooters, bicycles
- Decreases conflicts on sidewalks between people walking, dining, shopping, bicycling and riding scooters
- Requires daily maintenance
- Does not offer optimal aesthetic option nor does it address all safety concerns, within available resources



# Safety Analysis

- Multiple crash types found throughout corridor
- Top crash intersections citywide, including:
  - Cesar Chavez Street
  - Riverside Drive
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- 2 of the worst 5 downtown signalized intersections for pedestrians
  - Cesar Chavez Street
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Street

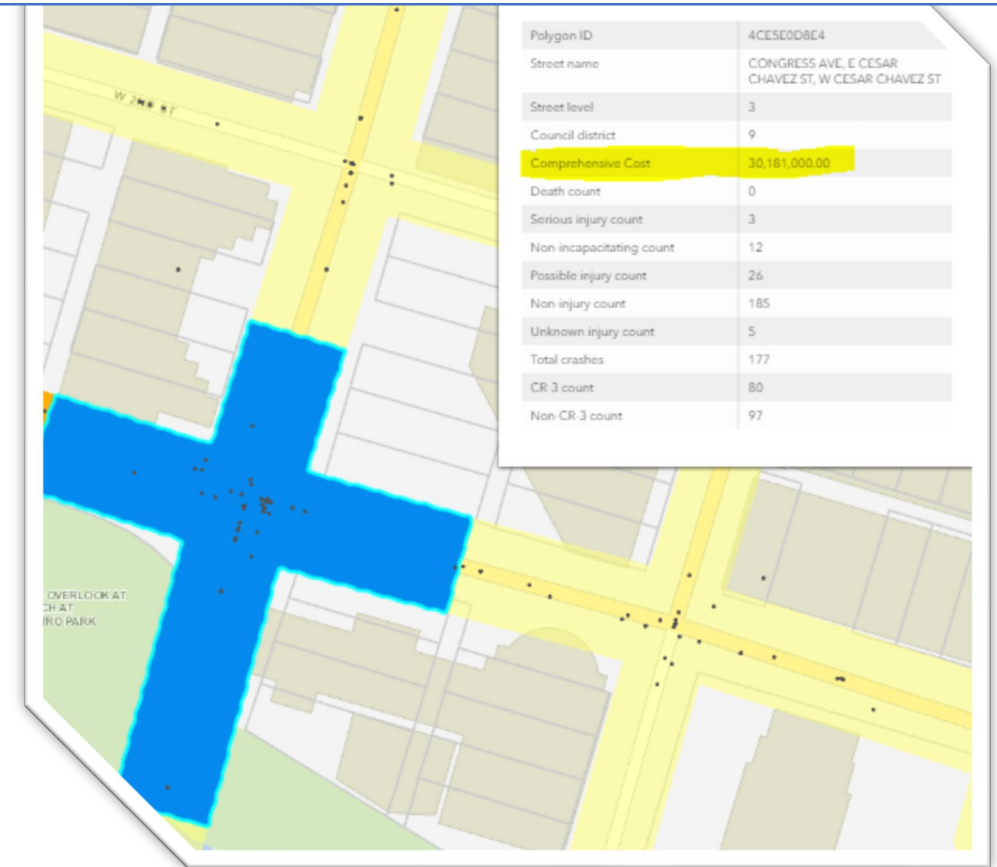


Source: [Vision Zero High Injury Roadways Comprehensive Crash Cost Analysis](#) using Texas Department of Transportation Crash Record Information System and National Safety Council cost scale methodology.

# Safety Analysis

- \$190 million in comprehensive crash costs over the last 5 years (2014-2018)
- Account for losses from:
  - Wages
  - Productivity
  - Medical expenses
  - Motor vehicle damage
  - Employers' uninsured costs
- As well as quality of life losses – or what we are willing to pay to reduce the risk to our own health and safety

The intersection of Cesar Chavez Street and Congress Avenue carries \$30 million in comprehensive crash costs alone.



Source: [Vision Zero High Injury Roadways Comprehensive Crash Cost Analysis](#) using Texas Department of Transportation Crash Record Information System and National Safety Council cost scale methodology.

# UDI Mobility Analysis

- Current 6 lane configuration is not optimal for anyone
- Pre-existing [pre-COVID] congestion driven by traffic bottleneck at Cesar Chavez Street and Riverside Drive
- Left and right turn lanes at Cesar Chavez, Riverside, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> are important as lanes are reconfigured for safety and motor vehicle operations
- 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> streets do not drive congestion on the corridor – 4 or 5-lane configurations were acceptable per the UDI mobility analysis
- Very uncomfortable for people on scooters and bikes such that they often choose the sidewalk over the general travel lane, causing conflicts with pedestrians and other street life

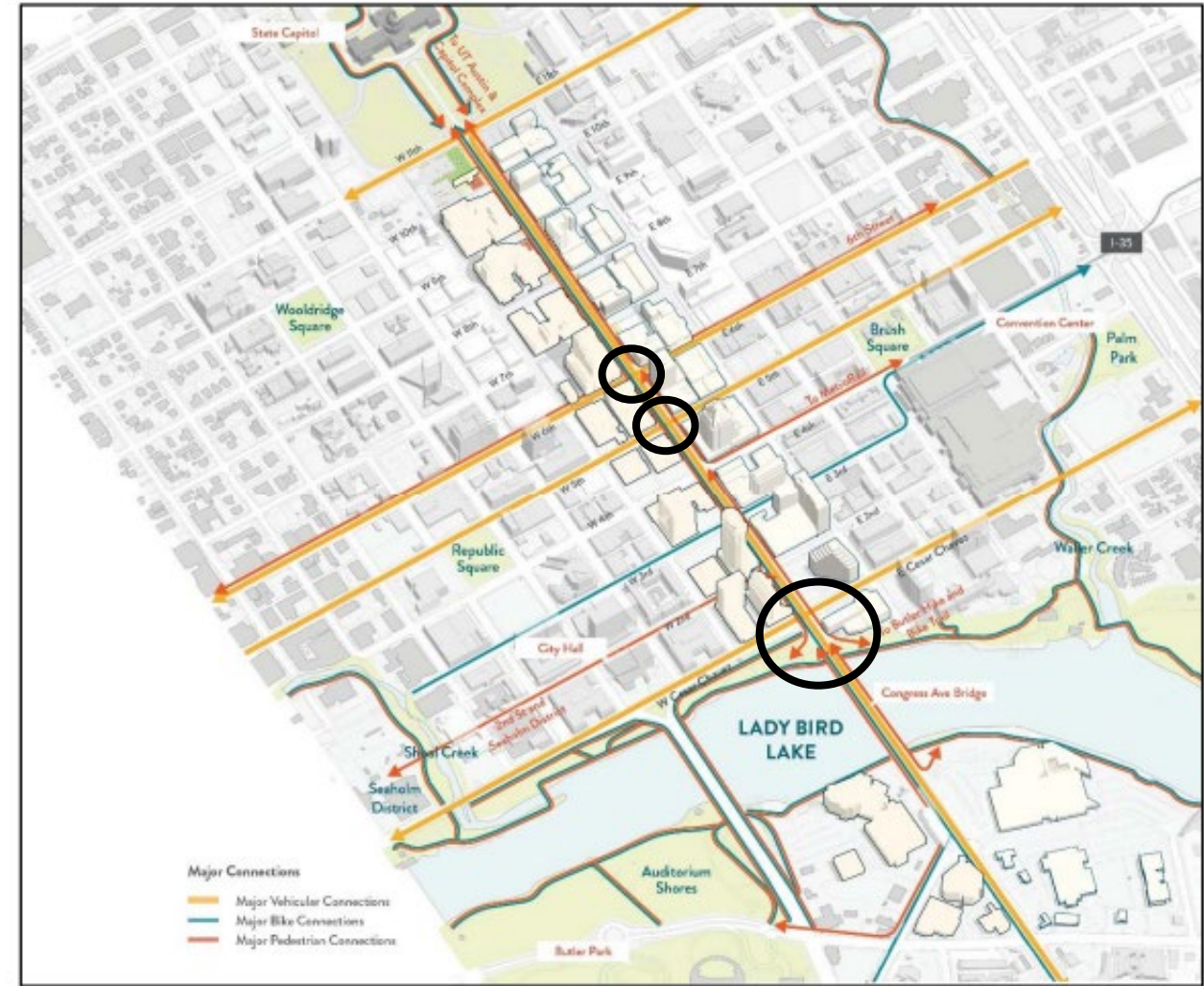
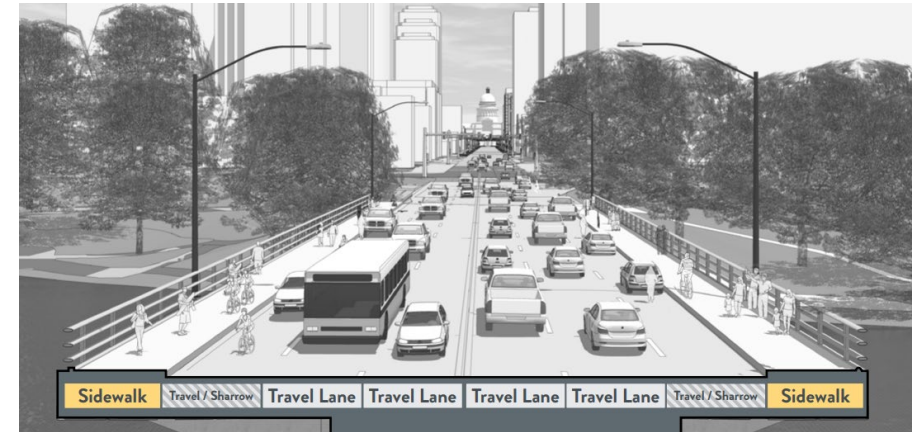


Figure 2: Congress Avenue Major Connections

# UDI Mobility Analysis

- Traffic growth was forecasted to 2040 accounting for new development
- Mode shift is necessary to maintain overall operations as growth continues to 2040.
- Current configuration suppresses high potential for mode shift
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities are expected to support a 4 – 12% decrease in existing motor vehicle trips, and 30 - 60% of future trips

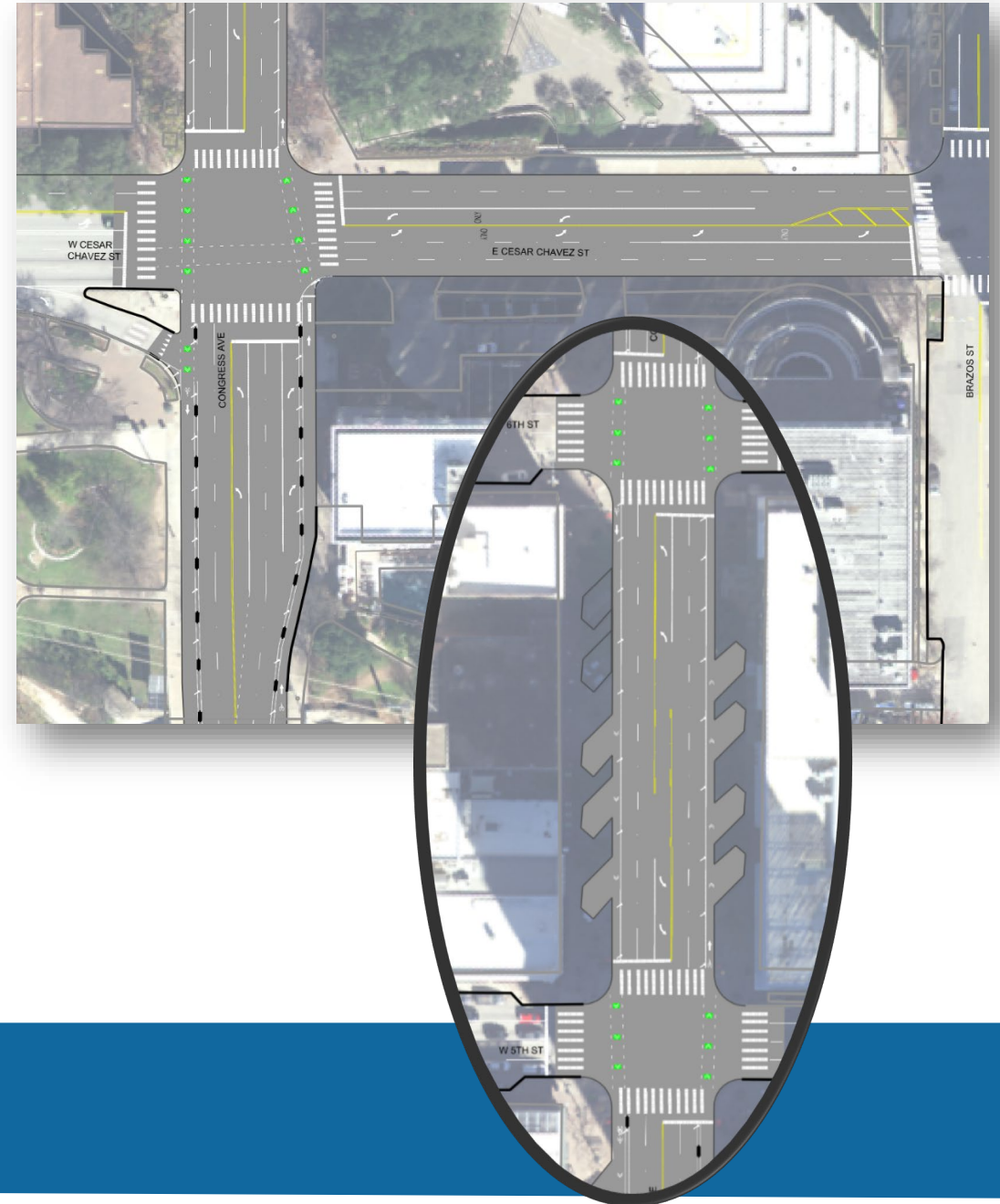


*“At a certain point, the demand cannot be met by supply in terms of space. In the case of Congress Avenue, there is little that can be done to accommodate an ever-growing increase in vehicular demand, currently at saturation during peak hours, other than replacing some of those trips with other modes like transit, walking, or biking/scooter that offset the demand for vehicular space.”*

*- Congress Urban Design Initiative Mobility Report - March 2019*

# About the Interim Design

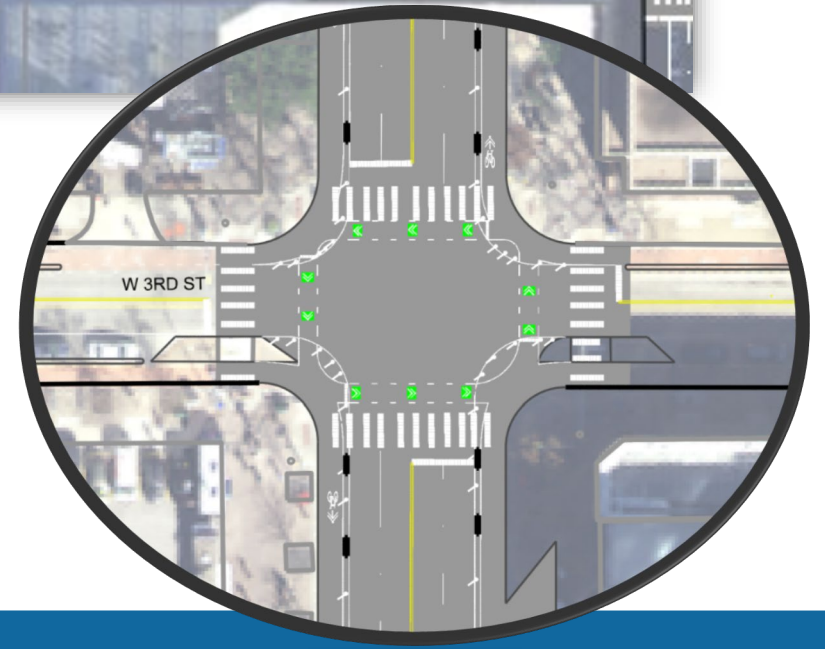
- Significant safety benefits expected
- New left turn lanes at Cesar Chavez Street, 5th Street, and 6th Street with protected turn phases to reduce head-on crashes and pedestrian conflicts
- Dedicated right turn lanes at northbound Cesar Chavez Street, Barton Springs Road, and northbound Riverside Drive with leading pedestrian and bicycle signal phases and yellow flashing right turn arrows to increase yielding to people crossing the intersection
- Simplified lane configuration along Cesar Chavez Street between Congress Avenue and Brazos Street
- Designed for post-COVID traffic levels



# About the Interim Design

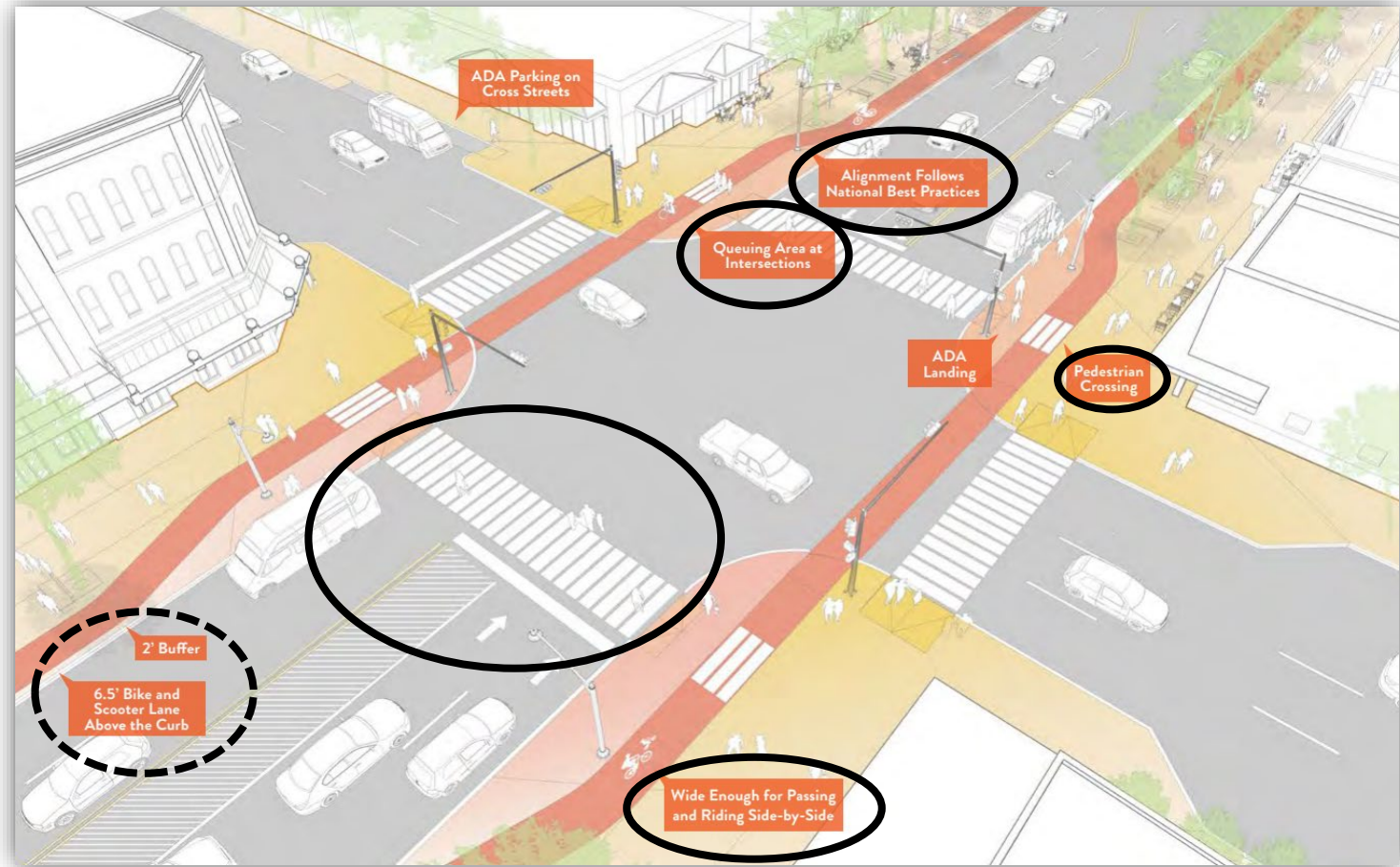


- Shorter pedestrian crossing distances
- Protected intersection designs at Riverside Drive, Barton Springs Road, 3rd Street, and 11th Street
- Enhanced bicycle crossing markings in front of on-street parking locations – all existing parking maintained
- Protected bicycle lanes between Riverside Drive and 11th Street



# Alignment with the Congress Urban Design Initiative (CAUDI)

- Catalyzes the rebalancing called for in the CAUDI draft vision improving safety, quality and enabling mode shift
- Generally follows recommended traffic lane configuration at key intersections: Cesar Chavez, Barton Springs, Riverside, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> to improve safety and operations



# Alignment with the Congress Urban Design Initiative

- Offers higher comfort for people crossing the street
- Separates people on scooters or bikes from motor vehicles
- Decreases the conflicts between people on scooters, bicycles and people walking along the sidewalk
- Frees more space for queuing, dining and other economic activity in the amenity and storefront areas along the avenue



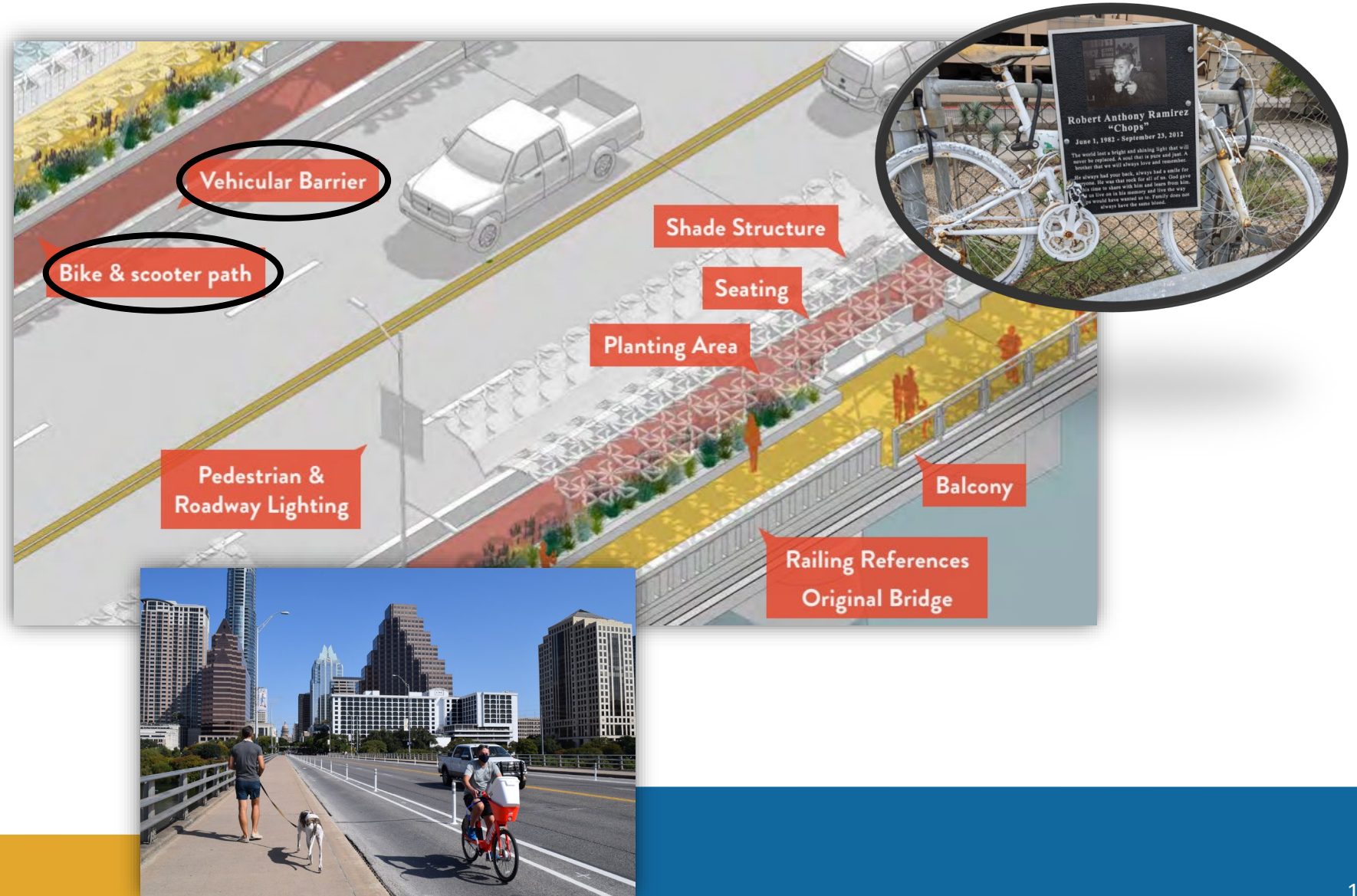
8' Storefront Area

9.5' Walking Area

8' Amenity Area

# Alignment with the Congress Urban Design Initiative

- Provides separate protected pedestrian and bicycle/scooter spaces across the Congress Avenue bridge.
- Significantly improves safety and comfort across the bridge for people walking, riding bikes and scooters, and bat watching.



# Differences Between Congress UDI and Interim Safety and Mobility Improvements

- The Congress Avenue UDI envisions a full right-of-way reconstruction project for which resources are not available
- Estimated cost for interim improvements: \$250,000
- The existing position of curbs do not allow a raised protected bicycle lane or its position in the cross section
- At key intersections with higher left turns north of the river a 5-lane approach will be used (in alignment with the Congress UDI) and a narrow bicycle / scooter lane
- At other intersections, a 4-lane approach will be used to provide a more adequate and protected bicycle and scooter facility
- All on-street parking to remain in place



# Phased Installation

We are here

Phase 1

Intersection reconfiguration at Riverside Dr, Barton Springs Rd, Cesar Chavez St.

Phase 2

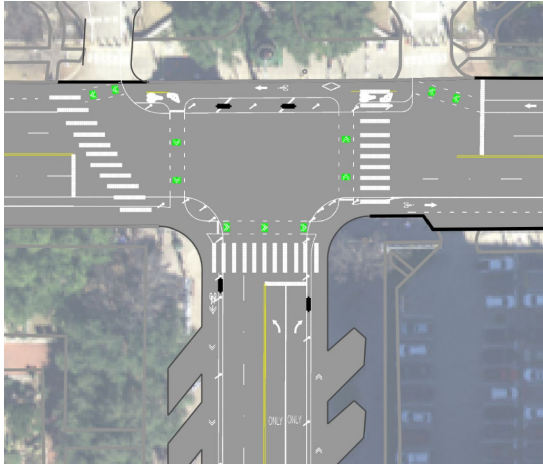
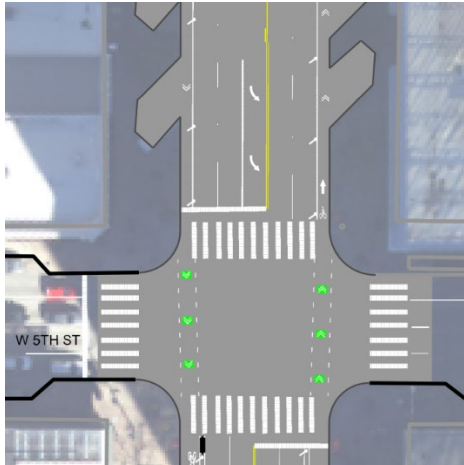
Physical protection south of 2<sup>nd</sup> St.

Phase 3

- New left turns lanes at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>
- Fresh markings and buffer lines

Phase 4

- Protected intersections at 11<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> St.
- Physical protection north of 2<sup>nd</sup> St.



# Towards The Complete Vision of Congress Avenue

