



## BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

### Urban Transportation Commission

#### Recommendation Number 20201013:02A Austin Climate Equity Plan

WHEREAS, transportation is the main driver of local air pollution and is on a course to become the single greatest source of greenhouse gases in Austin;

WHEREAS, the roughly 600,000 fossil-fuel-burning private cars and trucks on the road are the greatest challenge to reducing local greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS, by 2030, the City's Office of Sustainability predicts that the Austin area is likely to have over 800,000 vehicles on the road;

WHEREAS, in order for the City to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, the City's Office of Sustainability predicts that about 460,000 of those vehicles must be electric by 2030, making up about 40 percent of all vehicle-miles traveled;

WHEREAS, electric vehicles, in their manufacture and operation, produce significant pollution, in addition to perpetuating reliance on an ever-expanding roadway network that incentivizes sprawl and travel via single-occupancy vehicles;

WHEREAS, the draft Climate Equity Plan aims for active transportation modes like bicycling, rolling, and walking to make up only 4 percent of all distances traveled by 2030;

WHEREAS, the City could immediately reduce reliance on personal vehicles by implementing relatively inexpensive active transportation solutions, as demonstrated by the Healthy Streets program;

WHEREAS, the perpetuation of car-oriented regional transportation traces back to decision made by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), acting through its Transportation Policy Board;

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the CAMPO Policy Board voted to adopt the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan, which, like its previous plans, prioritizes road building to serve sprawling development based on overestimated population projections in suburban and rural areas and underestimation in urban areas;

WHEREAS, in June 2020, the CAMPO Policy Board voted to allocate \$633 million to widening the portion of I-35 that passes through Austin;

WHEREAS, the CAMPO Policy Board includes members of the Austin City Council and other local elected officials;

WHEREAS, the aggressive goals set out in the Austin Community Climate Plan and the Climate Equity Plan cannot be reconciled with CAMPO's regional transportation plans and policies;

WHEREAS, in March 2020, this Commission approved Recommendation No. 20200310-03A, by a 7-0 vote, identifying inconsistencies between CAMPO policies and Austin goals, and recommending solutions;

WHEREAS, successful implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan will depend on focused attention and initiative from the City Council and other City leadership across departments, regional cooperation with local partners, and continued engagement with the broader Austin community;

WHEREAS, on September 11, 2020, staff with the City's Office of Sustainability presented to this Commission the draft Climate Equity Plan and sought input from this Commission;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION recommends that the Austin City Council move as quickly as possible to:

1. Direct the Office of Sustainability to revise the draft Climate Equity Plan to establish aggressive goals to reduce the number of cars on the road and proportionally increase the amount of space and infrastructure dedicated to non-car travel, including buses, light rail, bikes, electric bikes, scooters, wheelchairs, and walking;
2. Direct the Austin Transportation Department and Office of Real Estate to work together to identify city-owned right-of-way that could be dedicated to non-carbon-producing modes of transportation, and immediately implement plans to do so;
3. Direct Council members that sit on the CAMPO TPB to actively advocate for policies that support the City's adopted policies in line with the City's values and goals as set forth in Austin's Strategic Mobility Plan, Vision Zero, revision of the Land Development Code, Project Connect, and Austin Community Climate Plan; AND
4. Direct the Austin Transportation Department and Office of Sustainability to work with Council members on the CAMPO Board to sponsor an amendment to the 2045 plan to include consideration of climate change impacts of the plan and mitigation strategies.

Date of Approval: 10/13/20

Record of the vote: 8-0 with Commissioners Franco, Hennessey, and Wilfley absent.

Attest: *Kaycie Alexander*

Kaycie Alexander, Staff Liaison

