



## **MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** February 7, 2022

**To:** City of Austin, Planning Commission

**From:** Mylea Bayless, Chief of Strategic Partnerships  
Andrew Sansom, Vice-Chair, Board of Directors  
Bat Conservation International

**RE:** Statement of Bat Conservation International on the Endeavor Project  
on the South-Central Waterfront. Planning Commission Agenda item  
B-06 C814-89-0003.02

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue for downtown Austin.

Bat Conservation International is a global organization committed to ending bat extinctions throughout the world.

Our organization has appreciated the many discussions we have had with the Endeavor Group regarding the bat population which seasonally occupies the structure of the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge. We are pleased to report that the Endeavor Group has been responsive to our concerns, and the proposed project, in the design phase, appears to have taken great care to consider its potential impact on the bats.

It is clear to us that the City of Austin and Endeavor have carefully considered the bats in the process thus far and that the South-Central Waterfront Plan embraces the Congress Avenue bat colony as an asset and, in fact, a centerpiece of the development opportunity.

Based on input from Bat Conservation International and other bat conservation interests, Endeavor has altered the following project components in consideration of the bats.

- The setback of buildings from the river
- Placing the parking garage underground to deter bat roosting in the concrete crevices
- Minimal landscaping immediately under and adjacent to the bridge to reduce interactions between bats and people



- No tree plantings immediately under and adjacent to the bridge to ensure unrestricted ingress and egress for the bats
- Downward facing lighting and some dark sky compliance, including elimination of bright lights shining directly on the bridge crevices
- Retention of the tree line along the river east of the bridge to provide cover for the bats as they emerge in the evening
- Improved public bat viewing areas
- Bat education signage and programs throughout the bat viewing areas in the project

We urge Endeavor and the City to continue to consider the bats by limiting the most disruptive construction activities (such as those that may cause excessive vibration to the bridge structure, for example blasting during excavation) to late Fall and Winter when the fewest bats are roosting in the bridge. Excavation activities that do not require blasting should not pose excessive vibration risks.

As plans for programmed events proceed, we ask the City of Austin to exclude events with bright lighting and loud noise to reduce disturbance to the bat colony. We ask for our input to be included as the process advances. We would like this provision added to the programming agreement for the development.

In addition, we would like the park maintenance agreement to include references to avoiding widespread pesticide use and the prioritization of native landscaping where feasible.

Finally, we've discussed these last three points with Endeavor, and they agree with our recommendations.

Once again, we are very grateful for the responsiveness of Endeavor to our concerns and look forward to working with the developer and the City to ensure protection of the bats as this project continues to take shape.