

Austin Pedestrian Advisory Council and Bicycle Advisory Council Joint Recommendation:

Recommendation # 20220621-003: Orange Line and The Drag

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;

WHEREAS, the Austin Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) advises the City of Austin and other government entities on planning, policy, design, funding, education, and enforcement regarding creating, maintaining, and operating pedestrian facilities;

WHEREAS, the Austin Transit Partnership (ATP) oversees of design, construction and implementation of Project Connect, Austin's transit expansion plan, including the new Orange Line light rail line;

WHEREAS, the BAC has previously [expressed support](#) for "the conversion of Guadalupe Street to a car-free street through the UT/Hemphill Park area as a preferred [Orange Line] alternative";

WHEREAS, the ATP has presented the public with the following four build options for the Orange Line on Guadalupe St between Martin Luther King Jr Blvd and 29th St (the Drag), as of June 2022:

- I. Option A: light rail, one general purpose traffic/bus lane in each direction, and shared-use paths on both sides of the street for pedestrians, cyclists, etc;
- II. Option B: transit mall; light rail only (no general purpose traffic) and dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the street;
- III. Option C1: enhanced transit mall; light rail and bus only, dedicated sidewalks on both sides of the street, including a wider 15' sidewalk on the west side with continuous street trees, and an "option lane" in each direction, to be used as shared bus/bike lane;
- IV. Option C2: The same configuration as C1, except buses operate in the light rail guideway and the "option lane" acts as a dedicated bike lane;

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP):

- I. calls for a reduction in the percentage of single occupancy car trips to 50% of all modes of transportation by 2039, and
- II. recognizes that a top strategy to this goal is to "build active transportation access for all ages and abilities on sidewalk, bicycle, and urban trail systems";

WHEREAS, a 2018 study found Guadalupe – between North Lamar and Cesar Chavez – to be the most dangerous street in Austin for cyclists;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin adopted the Austin Bicycle Plan in 2014, which included Guadalupe St from Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to 24th St as part of its recommended All Ages and Abilities Bike Network;

WHEREAS, a UT Engineering study found pedestrian volumes seen along the Drag far exceed any other area in downtown Austin;

WHEREAS, data from Ride Report indicates the Drag sees the highest volume of shared micromobility trips outside of downtown;

WHEREAS, the ASMP calls for “a Safe Systems approach to traffic safety” which seeks to “minimize the potential for conflicts between transportation network users,” in part by “providing appropriate separation and dedicated space for each mode”;

WHEREAS, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines state, “dedicated bus and bicycle facilities are preferred over shared bus-bike lanes. Bus-bike lanes are not high-comfort bicycle facilities, and are not a substitute for dedicated bikeways, particularly at peak periods and on high-volume bus routes”;

WHEREAS, NACTO guidelines further state that shared bus-bike lanes “should generally be limited to bus lanes with...transit headways of 4 minutes or longer (15 buses an hour)”, and the current alignment on the Drag routinely reaches 40-50 buses an hour in each direction during peak times;

WHEREAS, on January 28, 2019, Anthony John Diaz was killed by a CapMetro bus driver while riding his bike in a shared-lane configuration on San Jacinto Blvd, less than a mile from the Drag;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the BAC and PAC recommend the ATP move forward with build option C2, as the only build option that:

- I. enhances the pedestrian environment over existing conditions commensurate with the high volume of pedestrian activity in the area, via dedicated sidewalks, wider sidewalks, and additional street trees; and
- II. keeps key bus routes on the Drag to provide multi-modal connections;
- III. prioritizes both the high-quality transit and high-quality active transportation infrastructure called for by the ASMP; and
- IV. appropriately segregates modes by their speed and mass, in accordance with the ASMP’s “Safe Systems” approach and Austin’s Vision Zero goals;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BAC and PAC recommend that in the event the ATP moves forward with a different build option, that it be modified to accommodate the benchmarks outlined above;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BAC and PAC recommend that ATP include the following in the 60% design:

- I. Physical barriers preventing non-emergency motor vehicles from accessing the transit mall as well as physical separation between the bike lanes, sidewalks, and the transitway;
- II. Include micro mobility data in compiling throughput figures for the Drag, and future Project Connect designs;
- III. Dedicated space on the West side of Guadalupe for the parking of dockless micro mobility vehicles, keeping the vehicles out of pedestrian walkways, ADA ramps, station entrances, and bike lanes; and
- IV. Intersection design features to promote safety for vulnerable road users (e.g., raised crosswalks/intersections, curb extensions, etc.) at any location where general purpose traffic will be crossing the transit mall, such as at 24th St and Dean Keeton St.

Date: June 21,2022

Vote: 8-0 vote with members Johanson and Sobhani absent.

Attest: Christopher Parks, Staff Liaison

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Rogers", written in a cursive style.

Curtis Rogers, BAC Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Case", written in a cursive style.

Les Case, BAC Vice Chair