

DRAFT Joint Sustainability Commission Transportation, Land Use, and Electrification Environmental Investment Plan Recommendations

Recommendation Description:

Expand All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network, Urban Trails, Sidewalks, and Shared Mobility

The JSC recommends the City of Austin (COA) invest a total of \$2.11 billion to expand the number of Metro Bike stations and to build out the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) Bicycle Priority Network, the Tier One Urban Trails network, and sidewalks and shared streets as recommended in the Urban Transportation Commission's "Climate Equity Investment" Recommendation 20240305-006. We recommend the following specific investments:

1. \$48,960,000 to build out an additional 148 miles of the AAA Bicycle Priority Network and meet the 2023 Bike Plan Goal of 380 miles built out by 2026. Projects should be selected using the project prioritization model in the 2023 Bicycle Plan, which scores projects based on equity, destinations & travel demand, connectivity & safety, and cost. Relevant plan sections: Austin Strategic Mobility (ASMP) Bicycle Policy 2, Austin Climate Equity Plan (ACEP) Transportation and Land Use (TLU) Goal 3, and 2023 Bike Plan Item 4.7.1a.
2. \$22,600,000 to build out an additional 200 Metro Bike Stations to reach the 2023 Bike Plan goal of 300 stations by 2025. The investment should prioritize new stations in low-income areas with high mobility needs and connections to CapMetro's existing high-frequency bus and Metro Rail network. Relevant plan sections: ASMP Shared Mobility Policy 1, ACEP TLU Goal 3, and 2023 Bike Plan Item 4.7.2.
3. \$75,826,000 to build out 15.6 miles of Tier One Urban Trails by 2028 and put COA on track to reach the 2023 Urban Trails goal of building all 94 miles of Tier 1 trails by 2043. City Manager should also consider investments to ensure "the Urban Trails Plan is deliver[ing] projects on an accelerated timeline" as the Urban Trails Plan notes doing so is "dependent on increasing internal City of Austin capacity across supporting departments concerning staffing, systems, and the processes for permitting" Urban Trails Plan Section 3.5). Relevant plan sections: See ASMP Urban Trails Policy 2 & 3, ACEP TLU Goal 3, and 2023 Urban Trails Plan Section 3.5.
4. \$64,000,000 to build out 136 miles of new sidewalks and 80 miles of shared streets per year through 2028, putting Austin on track to address all "Very High" and "High" priority sidewalks and shared streets within 10 years. Projects in the highest Equity Analysis Zones should be prioritized for funding, per the Sidewalks, Crossings, and Shared Streets Plan. Relevant plans: ASMP Pedestrian Network Policy 1 & 2, ACEP TLU Goal 3, and 2023 Sidewalks, Crossings, and Shared Streets Plan Section 2.3.4)

Benefits

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions reduction from reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled in single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs). More trips within Austin will use modes split between public transit, bicycles, walking/wheelchair, carpooling, or shared mobility, or will be avoided altogether. Public health benefits include improving air quality by reducing vehicle CO₂ emissions along with co-pollutants such as nitrous oxide (NO_x) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) as well as encourage more active transportation for overall wellbeing.

Community benefits of greater cohesion from using public spaces and infrastructure and being better connected to the city.

Greater land availability for uses other than car and parking infrastructure.

Equity benefits include increasing the variety and accessibility of modes of transportation besides SOVs which are significantly more expensive. Building out this infrastructure in underresourced zones will increase these benefits for low-income and communities of color.

Cost

1. \$48,960,000. 2023 Bike Plan estimates the average protected bike lane costs \$600k/mile. The total cost to reach the 2026 goal is \$88,800,000. The 2016 and 2020 Mobility Bonds have a total of \$39,840,000 in unspent bikeways funds (as of December 5th, 2023)
2. \$22,600,000. MetroBike received \$11.3 million from the Texas Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternative Set-Aside grant program. Those funds will build 100 new stations, including replacing 83 existing stations, and 800 new electric bicycles
3. The Urban Trails Plan uses the assumption of \$10 million per mile. To build out all Tier 1 trails by 2043, Austin needs to average \$52 million in Urban Trails spending per year. The 2016, 2018, and 2020 Mobility Bonds contain a total of \$80,174,000 in unspent funds for Urban Trails (as of December 5th, 2023)
4. \$64,000,000. The Sidewalks, Crossings, and Shared Streets Plan notes the city currently has "less than half the estimated funding required to meet plan goals through 2028". Those goals are spending \$32 million for 34 miles of new sidewalks and 20 miles of shared streets annually. Over four years that amounts to \$128,000,000.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

ACEP TLU Goal 3

ASMP Bicycle Policy 2, Shared Mobility Policy 1, Urban Trails Policies 2 & 3, Pedestrian Network Policies 1 & 2

2023 Urban Trails Plan Section 3.5

2023 Bike Plan Items 4.7.1a & 4.7.2

2023 Sidewalks, Crossings, and Shared Streets Plan Section 2.3.4

Recommendation Description:

Extend Pickup Service Zones

The JSC recommends CapMetro (CM) invest up to \$5 million per year to extend the service area for the CM Pickup ridehailing and ridesharing service. Pickup launched in 2017 and serves [11 zones](#) in Austin and the surrounding areas. Ridership is [projected](#) to increase 26.8% in FY2024 compared to FY2023; this follows a 200% increase over FY2022. On April 1, 2024, it passed the 1 millionth passenger mark. This milestone and the projected increase in riders attest that Pickup fulfills an unmet need in underresourced transit areas. It expanded to Dove Springs in January 2024 and plans to extend to Decker Lake. We recommend CM pursue the Decker Lake zone and also study user data and rider surveys through an equity lens to identify where it's needed most and expand into 1-2 additional zones by May 2025. Possible zones include the Del Valle and Montopolis. We also endorse CM's [planned initiative](#) to pilot an electric Pickup fleet by the end of 2024.

Benefits

Contributes to ACEP's overarching goal of "equitably reaching net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2040" and specifically Goal 3, "By 2030, 50% of trips in Austin are made using public transit, biking, walking, carpooling, or avoided altogether by working from home." Pickup reduces VMTs by connecting riders to services and amenities in their zone, including school, work, shopping, recreation, and medical clinics and hospitals. It also solves the "first/last mile" problem in transit accessibility and utilization by connecting riders to transit stops that may be prohibitively far away and therefore especially improves transit access for the disabled, elderly, and riders with children who may not be able to use e-bikes, scooters, and other solutions for short trips and the "last mile." Given Austin's extreme temperatures and paucity of shade corridors, eliminating the first/last mile is essential to encouraging transit ridership.

Provides community cohesion by connecting people to the services and amenities they need.

Cost

Based on CapMetro's FY2024 Operating Budget, we estimate the annual cost of adding 1-2 new zones will be **\$3-5 million per year**.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

CM's [FY2024 budget](#) lists extending Pickup service areas as one of its priorities (p. 91)
ACEP TLU Goal 3, Strategies 1, 3; if fleet is electrified, ACEP TE Goal 1, Strategy 5
ASMP Shared Mobility Policies 1-3, 5, 6

Recommendation Description:

Downtown Circulator

The JSC recommends that CoA and CapMetro (CM) invest **up to \$7 million per year** to resurrect a fare-free downtown circulator along the routes proposed by the Downtown Austin Alliance in [a June 2020 report](#), and with the addition of the Long Center and Barton Springs/Zilker Park to address 2023 Urban Trails Plan Policy 3, "Pursue opportunities to connect to and expand the Urban Trails System." This service should be free, thereby addressing ACEP Goal 3, Strategy 2 as well as Strategies 1 and 3. We also recommend the circulators be electric vehicles to reduce CO₂ emissions and co-pollutants in the downtown area. Reviewing and updating the DAA analysis for present conditions and drawing best practices from the models examined there will facilitate design and implementation.

Benefits

Contributes to ACEP's overarching goal of "equitably reaching net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2040" and specifically Goal 3, "By 2030, 50% of trips in Austin are made using public transit, biking, walking, carpooling, or avoided altogether by working from home." Circulators reduce VMTs and the associated environmental and public health damages of SOV travel. They also reduce reliance on expensive and dangerous ride-hailing services filling high-congestion downtown zones. Ride-hailing cars idle and block bike, bus, and car lanes, creating dangerous conditions for everyone on the roads. Reduce congestion and therefore emissions and co-pollutants.

Cost

\$7 million per year

Related Plan Goals & Sections

ACEP TLU Goal 3, Strategies 1-3; if fleet is electrified, ACEP TE Goal 1, Strategy 5
ASMP Shared Mobility Policies 1, 3, 5, 6
2023 Urban Trails Plan Policy 3

Recommendation Description:

Create equitable incentives for buying and leasing EVs.

The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends that the City of Austin (COA) provides incentives to COA's Customer Assistance Programs (CAP) customers to purchase and lease battery electric vehicles (BEVs). Incentives would be on a first come first serve basis. In addition, the City of Austin (COA) Equity Office in collaboration with Austin Energy, Office of Sustainability and other community engagement entities should establish community engagement programs to educate low-income and marginalized communities on these incentives and on relevant information about owning all-electric vehicles.

Benefits

Assuming that an average vehicle drives 30 miles/day (10,950 miles/year) and that an average passenger vehicles emits approximately 400 grams/mile of CO₂, the CO₂ reduction would be

as follows: CO₂e reduction = 10,950 miles x 400 grams CO₂/mile = 4,380,000 grams CO₂ or 4.38 metric tons of CO₂ per vehicle. Assuming that 5,000 BEVs per year will be able to be purchased with these incentives, total emissions avoided from internal combustion vehicles would be **21,900 metric tons/year of CO₂** (4.38 MTCO₂ per vehicle x 5,000 BEVs per year).

Benefits also include equity benefits by making electric vehicles more affordable to low-income communities.

Cost

\$5 Million per year. At \$1,000 per vehicle, that would help the purchase of 5,000 BEVs per year.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

Goal 1, Strategy 2 of the Austin Climate Equity Plan “Launch an e-bike and electric car-sharing program”. Create equitable incentives for buying and leasing EVs

Questions:

- Any study that shows how much incentives increase demand?
- Should we also include incentives for lease vehicles?

Recommendation Description:

Establish a city-owned all-electric carshare service.

The Joint Sustainability Committee recommends a City of Austin-owned all-electric carshare service established with at least 200 vehicles within the City of Austin by December 2025. This program has already been proven to be successful in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the city launched the largest publicly owned, renewably powered, electric car-sharing program in the nation called Evie Carshare. Therefore, the Evie Carshare should be used as an example for best management practice to establish a successful program. Service areas should be prioritized in low-income and marginalized communities.

Benefits

Based on Evie Carshare program, each carshare vehicle put into service reduces 71,540 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) annually, or 196 VMT per day. For 200 cars that would be 14,308,000 VMT. If we assume the average passenger vehicle emits about 400 grams of CO₂ per mile, that would be equivalent to displacing 5,723 metric tons of CO₂e annually from internal combustion engines

In addition, by reducing VMT in Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV) and replacing Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle trips with Electric Vehicle (EV), the project will significantly reduce harmful criteria pollutants, including Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrous Oxides (NO_x), and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). Benefits also include residents being able to drive an electric vehicle without the cost of having to purchase one.

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Cost

Assuming each car costs approximately \$30,000, total cost for 200 all-electric vehicles would be \$6 Million.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

Goal 1, Strategy 4 of the Austin Climate Equity Plan “Launch an e-bike and electric car-sharing program”: Create an electric bike and car-sharing program centered on low-income communities and communities of color to support functional, low-cost zero-emissions mobility

Recommendation Description:

Funding for low-cost, accessible charging stations at the City’s owned facilities.

Austin Energy will be conducting an assessment to identify city facilities where charging stations can be installed. The JSC recommends \$10 million is provided for the installations of the charging stations once they are identified in AE’s assessment. Service areas should be prioritized in low-income and marginalized communities.

Benefits

How much load from charging stations can be provided with the \$10 million (response pending from AE)?

Cost

\$10 Million for the installations of the charging stations, prioritizing areas of low-income and marginalized communities.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

Goal 2, Strategy 1 of the Austin Climate Equity Plan “Create a network with more low-cost, accessible charging stations” Continue to incentivize the installation of EV charging infrastructure by the City, businesses, auto manufacturers, and third-party charging companies to create a compelling (convenient, reliable, and low-cost) network accessible to all.

Recommendation Description:

Funding to install charging stations at multi-family homes with priority in low income communities.

Charging BEVs at home is the most affordable way to charge your vehicle. However, a significant portion of the population in Austin lives in multi-family homes where in most cases

charging stations are not available. Therefore, the JSC recommends \$10 million be provided to multifamilies in low-income communities for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations.

Benefits

How much load from \$10 million worth of installation?

Cost

\$10 Million for the installations of the charging stations, prioritizing areas of low-income and marginalized communities.

Related Plan Goals & Sections

Goal 2, Strategy 1 of the Austin Climate Equity Plan “Create a network with more low-cost, accessible charging stations” Continue to incentivize the installation of EV charging infrastructure by the City, businesses, auto manufacturers, and third-party charging companies to create a compelling (convenient, reliable, and low-cost) network accessible to all.

