



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20241203-005: Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative

WHEREAS, Congress Avenue has often been described as the “Main Street of Texas” and a place for commerce, gathering, and community;

WHEREAS, initial funding for the Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative was allocated as part of the [2020 Mobility Bond Contract with the Voters](#);

WHEREAS, the [Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative \(CAUDI\) Vision Plan](#) envisions Congress Avenue as a more human-centered, multimodal, complete street with a public plaza from 7th - 11th Street and a rebalanced complete street from Cesar Chavez - 7th Street;

WHEREAS, [the Phase 1 Austin Core Transportation Plan Phase I Survey results](#) indicated residents wanted more access to downtown via biking, walking, and scootering, and preferred those modes over carpooling, ridesharing, and driving alone;

WHEREAS, TxDOT’s traffic counting station between 9th and 10th Street on Congress Ave (227HP5352) observed a [57% decrease](#) in Annual Average Daily Traffic for motor vehicles on the segment from 8,319 in 2015 to 3,539 in 2023;

WHEREAS, the Downtown Austin Alliance found Congress Ave had an average of [12,066 pedestrian trips per day](#) in March 2024;

WHEREAS, the 3rd Street Bike Lane sees an average of [827 bicyclists](#) on weekends (not including traffic on Congress Ave), the highest of any bike traffic counter in Austin;

WHEREAS, in Q3 2024, the Congress Ave bridge saw an average of [468 daily scooter trips](#), accounting for 6.5% of all scooter trips through the city;

WHEREAS, the Downtown street network is 1% of Austin’s overall network but accounts for [12% of all pedestrian crashes](#) and 17% of intersection-related pedestrian crashes.

WHEREAS, the CAUDI plan would result in a reduction of only 0.27% of all publicly available downtown parking spaces and 1.5% of all downtown on-street parking spaces;

WHEREAS, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Councils, Safe Streets Austin, CNU-CTX, and many other organizations have expressed their general support for the initiative and suggested changes to enhance the design;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission expresses its support for the Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative (CAUDI) Vision Plan and urges the City Manager to take all action necessary to ensure full adoption of the plan;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends the City Manager uses this opportunity to fully implement City Council Resolutions No. [20170622-033](#) and 20091119-070 to implement a Civlovía on Congress Avenue as a pilot for the plaza configuration of Congress Ave suggested in the CAUDI;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends the Director of Transportation and Public Works lift the indefinite [Moratorium on New Downtown Streets Events](#), which has been in effect since 2014, to ensure a regular schedule of programming can be implemented alongside the introduction of public plazas on Congress Ave and ensure the success of commercial businesses on the corridor;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends Transportation and Public Works evaluate opportunities to improve the 7th - 11th Street design in future phases and design iterations, including:

- The installation of retractable bollards where limited auto access is required (Safe Streets Austin);
- Designated lanes, markings, alternative routes, or preferred movements for bicyclists while traveling through the public plaza (BAC-PAC);
- Preparing for the eventual two-way conversion of 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Streets to two-way streets as envisioned by the Austin Core Transportation Plan (CNU-CTX); and
- Consider prioritization of bicycle parking in the proposed amenity zones;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends Transportation and Public Works evaluate opportunities to improve the Cesar Chavez - 7th Street design in future phases and design iterations, including:

- Designating the outer lanes from 2nd Street to 6th Street as curbside dropoff and delivery lanes and including bulb-outs at each intersection (CNU-CTX);
- Double-loaded sidewalks featuring destinations on both sides of the pedestrian walkway with buildings on one side and street vendors, kiosks, and dining on the other side of the roadway (Safe Streets Austin);
- Raised crosswalks for both the sidewalk and bikeway (BAC-PAC);
- Enhancing the pedestrian gateway at Cesar Chavez, including the elimination of the slip lanes (CNU-CTX, Safe Streets Austin, BAC-PAC); and
- Installing pedestrian scrambles at Congress Ave & Cesar Chavez and Congress Ave & 6th Street (CNU-CTX).

Motioned by: Commissioner Schumacher

Seconded by: Commissioner Wheeler

Date of Approval: 12/03/2024

Record of the vote: 9-0

Attest: Spencer Schumacher
(Staff or board member can sign)