BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number: 20250401-003: CAMPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan

WHEREAS, 23 USC 134(i)(2)(D) requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop Long Range Transportation Plans;

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2025 The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) released its draft CAMPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP);

WHEREAS, the RTP states that the region is growing and that "the regional transportation system plays a key role in where this growth occurs" (p.8);

WHEREAS, CAMPO wishes to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (p.75) and supports TxDOT's Road to Zero goals;

WHEREAS, vehicle miles traveled per capita, congestion levels, commute times, and crashes in our region have been increasing and the region is not meeting the safety targets recommended in the Texas Transportation Institute's (TTI) Regional Traffic Safety Plan;

WHEREAS, expanding highways leads to developmental sprawl, increases in traffic, air pollution, and per-capita vehicle miles traveled, while failing to relieve congestion;

WHEREAS, the draft CAMPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan proposes adding over 3,000 new lane miles, a 26% increase in roadway capacity (p.57);

WHEREAS, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority's (CTRMA) Mopac South project described in the RTP proposes to add four to seven lanes to Mopac between Enfield Road and Slaughter Lane, and TxDOT's 183 expansion described in the RTP proposes to add one main lane and three frontage road lanes in each direction between SH 71 and SH 130;

WHEREAS, Austin City Council Resolution 20241212-066 requested that CTRMA work with the City of Austin "to refine the proposal for the MoPac South project to align with the goals and intent of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, including the Urban Trails Plan, the Austin Climate Equity Plan, the Watershed Protection Strategic Plan, and the Project Connect System Plan" and requested that the resulting project not increase vehicle miles traveled nor greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS, Council Member Ellis, the resolution's sponsor and council-district representative of the project area, followed up with a letter requesting that the Mopac South project include no more than one additional lane in each direction;

WHEREAS, the Travis County Commissioners Court requested that the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) produce an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a thorough study of alternatives before moving forward with the project;

WHEREAS as of the date of this resolution CTRMA has been unwilling to modify the project or commit to performing a full EIS;

WHEREAS, the RTP acknowledges limited sidewalks and bike lanes as a challenge to safe transportation (p.6);

WHEREAS, CAMPO has the opportunity to allocate certain federal funds (like Surface Transportation Block Grants) to a wide range of projects including transit, active transportation, and safety;

WHEREAS, it is in the common interest for the RTP to be based on accurate forecasting and modeling;

WHEREAS, in previous long range transportation planning, CAMPO used UrbanSIM in combination with the State Demographer's data, to incorporate local jurisdictions' understandings of regional trends;

WHEREAS, for the CAMPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, CAMPO did not use UrbanSIM in the same way, and the data used to determine the detailed population and employment distributions for each county was not shared publicly;

WHEREAS in previous RTPs the Technical Advisory Committee had an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the demographic forecasts and methodologies used, but in the CAMPO 2050 planning process there was no opportunity for dedicated feedback on the forecasting and modeling was provided;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends the following for future CAMPO RTPs and transportation improvement programs:

- Prioritize funding for projects that improve safety for all users.
- Prioritize funding for public transit, and active transportation projects.
- Prioritize projects that will likely result in people living closer to employment and other opportunities.
- Deprioritize projects that increase vehicle capacity.
- Deprioritize projects that will likely result in people needing to travel greater distances to reach employment and other opportunities.
- Prioritize projects that have received the support of local governments.
- Include in the RTP information about whether goals in previous RTPs have been met.
- Include a section on the environmental impacts of the RTP and mitigation measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that:

- The Mopac South expansion be removed from the CAMPO 2050 RTP or amended from "up to two lanes in each direction" to "up to one lane in each direction."
- The 183 project as described should be removed from the CAMPO 2050 RTP.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that:

- CAMPO should share all data and modeling methods used in the demographic forecasts with the public, the Transportation Policy Board, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

- During each long-term regional planning process, City of Austin TAC members in consultation with any other relevant staff should review the demographic forecasts being used in the Regional Transportation Plan for accuracy.
- Make use of scenario planning for population forecasts so as to better reflect the impact of transportation planning on different growth scenarios.
- Improve traffic demand models so that they adequately account for the impacts of induced demand and reflect the fact that increases in roadway capacity will increase vehicle miles traveled and per capita vehicle miles traveled.

Motioned by: Commissioner Somers

Seconded by: Commissioner Alvarez

Date of Approval: 4/1/2025

Record of the vote: 7-0

Attest: Meredith Rusin

(Staff or board member can sign)