



RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: 20260420-010: Bettie Naylor Street Safety Corridor

The LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission recommends that the Austin City Council direct the City Manager to immediately establish a Bettie Naylor Street Safety Corridor by permanently restricting general vehicular traffic on West Fourth Street between Colorado Street and Lavaca Street, except for emergency vehicles and permitted commercial deliveries, and to implement coordinated safety mitigation, infrastructure, and venue preplanning measures.

Description of Recommendation to Council

1. Austin Incident and Proximity Risk

On March 1, 2026, a mass shooting occurred in Austin's West Sixth Street entertainment district, resulting in multiple fatalities and numerous injuries. Public reporting indicates that the suspect drove repeatedly around the block prior to initiating gunfire from a vehicle.

The LGBTQIA+ venue The Iron Bear, located at Sixth Street and Lavaca Street, sits approximately four blocks from the incident location. Numerous LGBTQIA+ bars, theaters, bookstores, and community gathering spaces operate along and adjacent to West Fourth Street in close proximity.

No permanent vehicle mitigation or corridor restriction measures have been implemented on Bettie Naylor Street following this incident.

2. National Precedent and Foreseeable Risk

On January 1, 2025, a vehicle-ramming attack on Bourbon Street in New Orleans killed at least 14 people and injured dozens more. Federal authorities investigated the incident as terrorism and

national security experts emphasized the vulnerability of dense entertainment corridors to hostile vehicle attacks.

More than one year has passed since that incident.

The March 1, 2026 Austin shooting further demonstrates vehicle-enabled reconnaissance behavior in a similar nightlife environment. These events reflect established attack patterns involving:

- Firearms and/or knife attacks at entertainment venues;
- Hostile vehicle use in pedestrian corridors;
- Rapid attacker scenarios in nightlife districts.

These risks are documented and foreseeable.

3. Bettie Naylor Street Designation

Between Congress Avenue and Rio Grande Street, West Fourth Street is designated Bettie Naylor Street, a historic and internationally recognized LGBTQIA+ entertainment and business district.

This corridor serves as a cultural, civic, and economic asset for the City of Austin and attracts visitors nationally and internationally.

4. Permanent Vehicle Restriction and Infrastructure

The Commission recommends:

1. Permanent restriction of general vehicular traffic on West Fourth Street between Colorado Street and Lavaca Street;
2. Continuous emergency vehicle access;
3. Scheduled, time-windowed commercial deliveries administered by Austin Transportation and Public Works;
4. Installation of effective hostile vehicle mitigation infrastructure sufficient to prevent unauthorized vehicle entry and sidewalk incursion, particularly at Bettie Naylor Street and Lavaca Street where the north sidewalk corridor currently lacks adequate physical prevention measures.

This action is intended to protect life, property, businesses, and emergency response operations at all times within the corridor.

5. Multi-Agency Building Preplanning and Rapid Attacker Response

The Commission recommends that APD, AFD, ATCEMS, and Homeland Security & Emergency Management update coordinated preplans for LGBTQIA+ establishments within and adjacent to the Bettie Naylor Street Safety Corridor.

Preplanning updates shall include:

- Documented ingress and egress mapping for emergency responders;
- Evacuation route planning and crowd flow analysis;
- EMS staging and casualty access zones;
- Unified command communication protocols;
- Scenario-based tabletop exercises addressing rapid attacker incidents involving firearms and edged weapons (e.g., knives or similar implements), consistent with national lessons learned from mass casualty events targeting entertainment venues.

These updates should be completed within 14 calendar days of Council passage.

6. Law Enforcement Parking and Staging

Given the proximity of LGBTQIA+ establishments to the March 1 incident, the Commission recommends:

- Designation of additional marked law enforcement parking and staging spaces near Sixth Street and Lavaca Street;
- Clear signage identifying these spaces as reserved for public safety use;
- Inclusion of visible corridor messaging stating:

All Are Welcome Here.

Hate Will Be Prosecuted.

Call 911 for Emergencies.

Visible public safety presence functions as both deterrence and rapid response readiness.

7. Additional Safety Enhancements Under Consideration

The Commission advises Council that the following measures are under active consideration and may be advanced as companion initiatives:

A. Radio-Integrated Emergency Panic Alert Pilot (24 Months)

- Emergency-only panic buttons at primary entrances and at least one behind the bar for participating establishments;
- Activation transmits a P25 Emergency Alarm event directly into the City's trunked public safety radio system;
- Panic button automated broadcasts a brief emergency notification on the APD George Sector talkgroup;
- Priority traffic handling consistent with P25 emergency encoding standards;
- Limited strictly to imminent life-threatening emergencies;
- 24-month pilot followed by formal evaluation and report to Council.

B. Expansion of Stop the Bleed Training

- Expanded training and certification opportunities for small business owners and staff within the corridor;
- Provision of bleeding control kits and trauma supplies;
- 24-month pilot with follow-up evaluation.

C. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

- At least two AEDs per participating venue;
- Staff training in AED use;
- Maintenance and compliance tracking;
- 24-month pilot followed by outcome review.

Rationale

Bettie Naylor Street is a designated LGBTQIA+ cultural corridor. The March 1, 2026 Austin mass shooting and the January 1, 2025 Bourbon Street vehicle attack demonstrate that dense entertainment districts face real and foreseeable threats involving firearms and hostile vehicles.

Permanent vehicular restriction, protective infrastructure, enhanced law enforcement staging, coordinated building preplanning, rapid alert capability, and life-saving medical readiness represent layered, evidence-informed risk mitigation strategies.

The LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission believes immediate action is necessary to protect life, property, and the safety of Austin's LGBTQIA+ community and visitors.

Date of Approval: April 20, 2026

Motioned By: Commissioner Brown

Seconded By: Vice Chair McLeod

Vote: 11-0

For: Chair Coyne, Vice Chair McLeod, Secretary Benson, Commissioners Brown, Daniel, Davis, Fierro-Pérez, Knutson, Krueger, Neal, Pituk

Against: None

Abstain: Commissioner Nguyen

Recuse: Commissioner Neal

Off the dais: None

Absent: Commissioners Bandit and Johnson

Attest: *Ryan Sperling*

Ryan Sperling, LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission Staff Liaison