



Energy Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR

May 10, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Energy Commission
 Submitted by: Bentham Paulos, Chairperson, Energy Commission
 Subject: Recommendation that Vision 2050 Infrastructure Bond Prioritize Clean Mobility

RECOMMENDATION

The Energy Commission recommends that the Vision 2050 infrastructure bond contemplated for the 2022 ballot prioritize transportation, with an emphasis on building the clean mobility network of the future.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No fiscal impacts are associated with this recommendation at this time.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Council will soon be considering a ballot measure to provide revenues for infrastructure improvements. There are three major reasons for those funds to focus on transportation. First, the majority of Berkeley's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation, as do California's. Transportation is also the largest local contributor to conventional pollutants, such as particulates, nitrogen oxides, and smog, which impact public health. This is especially true along arterial roads, where a substantial amount of new housing is being built. There are two strategies to reduce global warming pollution from cars: we can get gasoline out of cars by encouraging electric vehicles, and we can get people out of cars by encouraging a suite of mobility options, such as transit, walking, biking, and other electric devices like scooters.

Second, Berkeley has been encouraging and is planning for a substantial increase in housing to meet growing population demand, lower the cost of living, and provide housing to the unhoused. Housing and transportation are two sides of the same coin. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) envisions almost 9000 new housing units this decade, in addition to plans UC Berkeley has to increase enrollment and housing.¹ This substantial increase in population will boost demands for transportation, putting a premium on non-car mobility. Expanding the population without improving transportation will quickly erode quality of life.

Third, the need to repair streets is an opportunity to follow through on the many plans formulated in recent years on safety, biking, walking, and safe routes to schools (collectively referred to as complete streets). It is a chance to build the diverse low-

¹ City of Berkeley Housing Element Update 2023-2031, <https://www.cityofberkeley.info/housingelement/>

carbon, low-stress, and low-danger transportation system for the Berkeley of tomorrow. Enabling more transportation options will lower the cost of living and increase the quality of life for all.

At its March 23, 2022 meeting, the Energy Commission voted to send this recommendation to City Council by a vote of 5-0-0-0 [(Zuckerman), Second (Guliasi), Ayes: (Paulos, Wolf, Tahara, Guliasi, Zuckerman). Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None].

BACKGROUND

The Commission was briefed on the concept of a ballot measure by Public Works Director Liam Garland on December 1, 2021. Mr. Garland laid out the many pressing needs Berkeley has for improvement, as reflected in the Vision 2050 plan. We think transportation is the most important thing to focus on, and think that voters will agree.

Specifically we would call attention to [Measure B](#), passed by voters in Austin, Texas in 2020. Proposition B raised \$460 million in general obligation bonds for transportation infrastructure including sidewalks, transportation-related bikeways, urban trails, transportation safety projects (Vision Zero), safe routes to school, and substandard streets.² We believe this structure is a good model for Berkeley to emulate. The Austin Council's resolution is included as Attachment 1 to this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

An infrastructure bond is an opportunity to make the capital investments that guide the future of the city in ways that address sustainability and climate priorities. No infrastructure is more important right now, and more of our City government's responsibility, than transportation.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Energy Commission recommends that the City focus on transportation for this infrastructure bond, with specific allocations in the measure to ensure sufficient funding is available for the full range of complete streets measures.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

We did not consider alternative actions.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission's report.

CONTACT PERSON

Billi Romain, Energy Commission Secretary, 510-981-7432

² City of Austin, 2020 Mobility Elections Proposition B, <https://www.austintexas.gov/2020PropB>.

Attachments:

1: Austin, Texas City Council, "Proposition B Contract with Voters," (Council Resolution No. 20200812-011), August 12, 2020.

RESOLUTION NO. 20200812-011

WHEREAS, equitable mobility and accessibility are vital to a functioning and prosperous society; and

WHEREAS, the average American family spends more on transportation-related expenses than all other types of expenses except housing; and

WHEREAS, transportation costs are regressive and lower-income residents spend a larger share of their resources on mobility; and

WHEREAS, Black, Latinx, lower-income, immigrant, and differently-abled residents have disproportionately lower access to car ownership; and

WHEREAS, transportation and mobility systems, at 35 percent, accounted for the largest share relative to any other category of greenhouse gas emissions in Travis County in 2010; and

WHEREAS, between 2012 and 2019, an average of 79 people died each year using Austin's transportation system, accounting for a total of 635 fatalities, 210 of whom were people walking; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (2012) calls for a "complete-streets design that includes features such as traffic calming elements, street trees, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access throughout Austin, considering the safety needs of people of all ages and abilities"; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) (2019) calls for a 50/50 mode share whereby 50 percent of commutes are made in ways other than driving alone and envisions completing the Bicycle, Sidewalk, and Urban Trails Plans by 2039; and

WHEREAS, the ASMP directs transportation decisions to be centered on equity, including a policy to “partner with the public and private sectors to expand and improve mobility solutions for historically underserved communities”; and

WHEREAS, the Vision Zero Action Plan (2016) sets the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2025; and

WHEREAS, in June 2020, Council adopted Ordinance No. 20200611-045, approving specific changes to implement speed management; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Sidewalk Plan/ADA Transition Plan (2016) sets a target to “address all very high and high priority sidewalks within one-quarter mile of all identified schools, bus stops, and parks” by constructing sidewalks at a rate of 39 miles per year; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Bicycle Plan (2014) sets the goal of implementing, by 2025, 80 percent of an all-ages-and-abilities bicycling network to increase ridership, improve safety, and provide equitable access; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Community Climate Plan (2015) set the goal of reaching net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS, Council’s Strategic Direction 2023 has as one of its mobility goals to: “Provide equitable access to multimodal transportation choices to link people to

opportunities, such as education, healthcare, healthy food including community amenities such as grocery stores, open space, and jobs, especially in historically underserved and underrepresented communities”; and

WHEREAS, City Council is ordering a Special Election to be held on November 3, 2020 for the purpose of asking the voters to authorize \$460 million in general obligation bonds for transportation and mobility purposes; and

WHEREAS, City Council desires that the \$460 million bond program be completed within six years from the date Council approves the first project funded with these bond funds and in accordance with the guidance and procedures set forth in this resolution; and

WHEREAS, The Corridor Program Office (CPO) is strategically leveraging transportation improvement bond dollars to achieve comprehensive community outcomes and policy initiatives by partnering with other City departments, developers, non-profit organizations and agencies to extend the scope of the corridor transportation improvement projects so that together we can amplify the community, culture, and the mobility experience; and

WHEREAS, CPO has identified high impact opportunity areas that fall within districts, gateways or nodes along the nine Corridors in the Corridor Construction Program, including William Cannon, North and South Lamar, East MLK, East Riverside, Guadalupe, Burnet, Slaughter Lane, and Airport Boulevard; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Council, by this official action, reaffirms its commitment to the voters regarding the conditions and guidance contained in the ordinance calling the November 2020 Bond election. Further, Council, by this official action, clarifies and declares its intent and commitment to the voters to create a contract with the voters that specifies that the proceeds from the bonds and notes shall be used for the projects and programs identified in the ordinance calling the November 2020 Bond election.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Council, by this official action declares its intent to contract with the voters as to the following permissible purposes for which bond proceeds must be expended and the processes that must be followed in determining and prioritizing those expenditures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council desires to allocate the \$460 million for transportation improvements identified in the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan as follows:

- \$80 Million for Sidewalks, including construction and rehabilitation of high- and very-high priority sidewalk segments and elimination of ADA barriers and gaps in the sidewalk system.
- \$80 Million for Urban Trails, including construction of transportation-related Tier I urban trails and identification of alignments and development of designs for transportation-related Tier II urban trails.

- \$40 Million for transportation-related Bikeways, including implementation of the All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Network.
- \$65 Million for Safety/Vision Zero, including projects that reduce conflicts and improve safety for all users by systematically implementing both major reconstruction and rapid implementation of low-cost, high-impact engineering countermeasures, including speed management.
- \$20 Million for implementation of Safe Routes to Schools Infrastructure Plans.
- \$19 Million for Local Transit Enhancement Program as described in the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, including projects not being delivered by Project Connect that improve the speed and reliability of public transportation service.
- \$1 Million for Neighborhood Partnering Program, including active transportation mobility projects that leverage community-led partnerships.
- \$53 Million for Improvements to Substandard Streets, prioritizing fully funding Johnny Morris Drive and at a minimum \$35 million toward the full construction of Ross Road per the April 19th, 2019 engineer study both the north and south portions of Ross Road, Cooper Lane, Circle S Road, and including the 2016 list of substandard streets reflected in the contract with the voters for the 2016 bond election, as well as the Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for Nuckols Crossing Road and Bradshaw Road.

- \$102 Million for Major Capital Improvements to be used for the Longhorn Dam Bridge, Congress Avenue Urban Design Initiative, Barton Springs Road Improvements, and South Pleasant Valley Corridor Improvements, as well as, in an amount not to exceed \$5 million, Corridor Program Projects not funded through the Corridor Construction Program (Council Resolution 20180426-028) to build pedestrian and associated infrastructure included in the corridor programs for the following roads: Slaughter Lane, North Lamar Boulevard, South Lamar Boulevard, Guadalupe Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Burnet Road, and Riverside Drive.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Funding for Barton Springs Road Improvements shall only be used for improvements between Barton Boulevard and Lou Neff Road after completion of the preliminary engineering study for a Barton Springs Bridge, which shall include a community engagement process, and after presentation of improvement options, a public hearing, and approval of options by City Council. Any improvements shall be aligned with the Zilker Park Vision Plan once approved by Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The funding shall be used in a manner that provides equitable access to transportation choices that connect people to opportunities, such as education, healthcare, healthy food

and grocery stores, open space, and jobs, especially in historically underserved and underrepresented communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to develop recommendations for implementation of these proposals in manner that prioritizes investments in traditionally underserved communities, low-income communities, and other vulnerable communities; and anticipates unintended consequences that may disproportionately affect historically underserved and underrepresented populations and proactively mitigates these effects. Existing project prioritization criteria for all programs identified in this resolution should be reevaluated and, where necessary, modified to further prioritize equitable outcomes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Council contracts with the voters to adopt guidelines for the implementation of this bond program in a manner that maximizes opportunities for local hiring, apprenticeships, and other workforce development activities in traditionally underserved communities, low-income communities, and other vulnerable communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Council contracts with the voters to adopt guidelines for implementation of the projects funded with these bond funds that maximizes opportunities to integrate green infrastructure, increase the urban tree canopy, complete open space connections, and enhance water quality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to analyze existing capital project delivery systems and processes in order to recommend potential changes and resource requirements to accelerate project delivery and maximize the number of projects to be included in the \$460 Million Bond Program to be completed within six years of Council approval of the first project funded with these bond funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Council has taken formal action to approve the reimbursement of expenditures of funds to construct certain streets that are part of the Quarter Cent program with the expectation to issue certificates of obligation to finance the street improvements, and council contracts with the voters that proceeds of the bonds will not be used to fund those streets for which council has previously issued the reimbursement resolutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

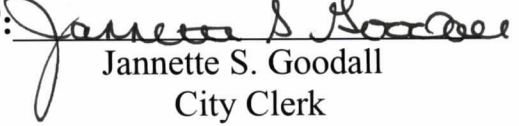
Council contracts with the voters that proceeds of the bonds will not be used to fund streets, sidewalks and related mobility infrastructure in connection with the redevelopment of properties at 7211 N. Interstate 35, Austin, Texas, and 7309 N. Interstate 35, Austin, Texas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City may amend the funding levels and purposes established in this resolution, after a bond proposition passes, only to the extent that the amendments comply with the

law, comply with the ballot language passed by the voters, comply with the guidance in the preceding Be It Resolved Clauses in this resolution, and with an affirmative vote from the City Council.

ADOPTED: August 12, 2020

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk