



## Austin Cycling Association

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Mr. Mario Espinoza  
Deputy Executive Director  
Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA)  
301 Congress Ave., Suite 650  
Austin, TX 78701

Dec. 16, 2011

Re: Austin Cycling Association Support of League of Bicycling Voters (LOBV) Oct. 26, 2011  
Comments on Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure in MOPAC Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Espinoza,

The Austin Cycling Association would like to recognize and express thanks for the extensive efforts the CTRMA and the rest of the MOPAC Improvement Project team have made in gathering feedback from the cycling community. It marks an evolution towards addressing mobility needs beyond strictly providing toll lanes. Austin Cycling Association especially appreciates the CTRMA commitment to shared-use paths on US 183-A and US 290 East as exemplified in the first segment of the US 183-A pedestrian/bicycle pathway.

The Austin Cycling Association strongly supports the comments of the League of Bicycling Voters (LOBV) letter sent to you by Executive Director Tom Wald on Oct. 26, 2011, calling for a shared-use path along the project corridor. Our support is based on the following:

1. Complete bicycle and pedestrian networks both enable and encourage the use of alternatives to motor vehicles for shorter trips, providing significant community benefits in air quality, motor vehicle costs and community health. It is well documented that internal combustion engines create far more pollution and internal wear in the first few minutes of operation than in fully-warmed-up operation. Thus, walking or bicycling for short trips has a disproportionately large effect on air quality, fuel costs and engine wear. In addition, regular physical activity, even of just a few minutes of walking or biking to stores, etc., confers great health benefit to individuals, with an enormous reduction in community healthcare costs.
2. Connectivity is the key to maximum utilization of a bicycle and pedestrian network. Poorly connected transportation segments, whether for motor vehicles, bikes, or pedestrians, are often poorly utilized and open to criticism that such investment is not prudent. Few individuals travel the entire network, but the existence of a complete network effectively serves many more users than a series of segmented sections. The CTRMA-proposed east-west connections are a huge step forward in removing the obstacles presented to cyclists and pedestrians by MOPAC as it now exists. However, the addition of facilities along (in addition to across) the route will increase the usability of the system enormously.
3. There are few opportunities to efficiently upgrade bicycle and pedestrian

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Austin Cycling Association (ACA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in existence for over 30 years and is dedicated to furthering bicycling access, safety, education, and enjoyment in central Texas by sponsoring weekly bike rides, training, informational programs and an annual charity bike ride – the Armadillo Hill Country Classic, which benefits bicycle safety education and free helmets for kids.

infrastructure on a roadway such as Loop1/MOPAC. The ACA sees this corridor-length upgrade as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address the lack of access for non-motorized travel that was a part of the original MOPAC design. As taxpayers, we are all well aware that retrofit of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure alone is much more expensive than including such upgrades as part of the larger project. We are also aware of the conflicting constraints that are being put on this complex project leading to a desire to limit the extent of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

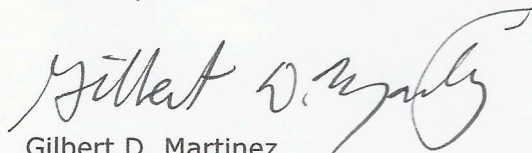
4. Commitment to a functional pedestrian/bicycle network as part of a balanced transportation system is consistent with policies as outlined by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), CTRMA, and the City of Austin.

5. Inclusion of innovative bike and pedestrian facilities support several of the stated project goals: improve mobility, manage congestion, provide a reliable transit route to reduce travel times and maximize the use of the facility. Faced with the region's growth projections, provisions for bicycling in the corridor will offload some demand and allow more time before the corridor is once again at capacity for motor vehicles.

Again, the ACA is very appreciative of the bike and pedestrian facilities already proposed but we are in support of inclusion of a shared use path along the entire corridor. We are confident that with strong political support from our state's transportation leaders, the project team is fully capable of producing a multimodal solution that will serve our community well. We hope to continue our work together and help build the needed political support.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the LOBV comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert D. Martinez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Gilbert D. Martinez  
ACA President