



October 31, 2011

Sent by Email

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

Re: BikeTexas Support of League of Bicycling Voters October 26, 2011 Comments on Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Infrastructure in MoPAC Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Espinoza,

Thank you for your community outreach for the proposed MoPAC Improvement Project. BikeTexas especially appreciates the CTRMA commitment to shared-use paths on US 183-A and US 290 East as expressed by CTRMA Executive Director Michael Heiligenstein in his comments on September 29, 2011 at the ribbon-cutting for the first segment of the US 183-A pedestrian/bicycle pathway.

BikeTexas strongly supports the comments of the League of Bicycling Voters (LOBV) letter sent to you by Executive Director Tom Wald on October 26, 2011. Our support is based on the following.

1. 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.
2. Connectivity is the key to insure effective utilization of a bicycle and pedestrian network. Poorly connected bicycle and pedestrian segments are often poorly utilized and open to criticism that such investment is not prudent. As in a motor vehicle network, few individuals travel the entire network, but the existence of a complete network effectively attracts many more users than a series of segmented sections.
3. There are few opportunities to efficiently upgrade bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as part of an overall upgrade on a roadway such as Loop1/MoPAC. This roadway is essentially the same as it was when completed in the early 1970's. Decades will most likely pass again before the next upgrade. As you well know, retrofit of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure alone is very expensive compared to including such upgrades as part of a larger project. You are also well aware that accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians has been ignored for decades and we as a community simply have a lot of catching up to do.
4. Successful installation of a complete network of bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure in the Loop1/MoPAC corridor will provide tremendous momentum for complete bicycle/pedestrian networks on roadway projects across Texas. Successfully overcoming some of the particular challenges of the Loop1/MoPAC corridor will certainly provide such momentum.

5. It is well documented that complete bicycle and pedestrian networks provide significant economic benefits in the areas of family motor vehicle costs, infrastructure cost and maintenance, reduction of health costs through increase of daily physical activity and many quality of life factors considered by young workers, families, retirees and businesses in their choice of community.
6. Bicycling and pedestrian activities, especially as part of transit, are not adjunct transportation options. Review of community commitment and investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure shows that mode share increases in proportion with investment. Most well-publicized is the current bicycle commuting level of 36% in Copenhagen, Denmark, *with a commitment to increase that to 50% by 2015!*

Leaders and planners in the Austin area have completely accepted demographers' predictions that our population will double in the next thirty years. When we say that we highly value and need your partnership, we speak not only on behalf of bicycle and pedestrian advocates. We speak on behalf of many current and future residents who are busy supporting their families, but who state, when asked, that they want opportunities for their children and themselves to walk and bike more as part of their daily routine. Your decision and commitment to a complete bicycle and pedestrian system on this project will immediately provide capacity in the Loop1/MoPAC corridor. In the long run, it will provide a real "on-the-ground" example to steer us to the future transportation network to which we have committed as a community.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the LOBV comments. Please contact me anytime at robin@biketexas.org or 512-694-9158 (cell) if I can assist you in this project.

Sincerely,



Robin Stallings
Executive Director

cc: Mr. Steve Pustelnyk, Director of Communications, CTRMA
Mr. Joseph Carrizales, PE, Mr. Jon Geiselbrecht, Mr. Kon Kwan, PE, TxDOT Austin District
Mr. Paul Terranova, PE, HNTB
Mr. Tom Wald, Executive Director, Mr. Lane Wimberley, Board President, LOBV
Mr. Justin Ham, PE, Urban Engineer, Ms. Elizabeth Hilton, PE, Area Engineer & Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, Federal Highway Administration, Austin, Texas
Mr. Greg Griffin, AICP, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning, CAMPO
The Honorable Chris Riley, Austin City Council, and CAMPO Policy Board
The Honorable Mike Martinez, Austin City Council
Ms. Annick Beaudet, AICP, Neighborhood Connectivity Division, Public Works, City of Austin
Ms. Lynda Rife, Rifeline
Mr. Jeb Boyt, Mr. Hill Abell, Austin Metro Trails and Greenways
Ms. Eileen Schaubert, Vice President, Austin Cycling Association