

To: Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committee (CBAC)

From: Austin Outside JEDI Committee

Re: AO JEDI Committee Statement of Need: 2023 Travis County Bond Transportation Projects

Date: May 24, 2023

Greetings Citizens Bond Advisory Committee Members:

Austin Outside is committed to advancing justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) work within our coalition and facilitating opportunities for assessment and growth for us and our members. Additionally, we are committed to addressing any inequity in parks, greenspaces, trails, and all outdoor spaces in the Central Texas region.

AO's JEDI Committee submits the following questions concerning the Transportation Bond Proposal before CBAC makes its recommendations to Travis County Commissioner's Court:

- How can CBAC prioritize transportation projects in the Eastern Crescent while also protecting vulnerable populations from displacement?
- Would these prioritized projects include a holistic approach to protecting the existing communities in the Eastern Crescent, which would include public outreach (engaging, listening, and collaborating), protections for workers during construction, and measures taken to avoid community displacement once improvements are made?
- Travis County needs to plan for complete streets with separated shared use paths and other active transportation facilities, as traffic-related pedestrian and cycling injuries and deaths are more likely to impact vulnerable communities.
- A large portion of the transportation package should be composed of projects based on priorities for walking, bicycling, and transit connectivity. Nearly all of the projects currently proposed are focused on roadway expansion priorities, yet most of Travis County's existing roads lack safe walking and bicycling accommodations, even in areas of high need.
- There's a need for better public outreach and engagement in the decision-making process for transportation and park projects:
 - What was CBAC's strategy to engage residents that don't know about this process?
 - What was CBAC's advertising budget - who did they contract with to spread the word and get meaningful public engagement?
 - Why was there no virtual open house?
 - There's not a lack of interest from the public, it's more that they don't know about opportunities for public comment and transportation projects have been a moving target.

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- Are these projects being built with maximum benefit to current residents in mind or are they being built for future, more affluent residents that will displace current residents?

Travis County has the opportunity to present a forward-thinking bond package that enriches quality of life for its residents by focusing on park access, park amenities, and safe streets. We hope these questions lead to a productive discussion between staff, CBAC members, advocates, and community members. Please visit austinoutside.org for a full list of the Austin Outside Board of Directors and its member organizations.