



604 W 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701-2007
www.austinoutside.org

February 9, 2024

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Austin Outside is pleased to support the City of Austin's application for a 2024 RAISE discretionary grant to help build out the Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project. Austin Outside is a coalition of over 60 nonprofits and businesses who champion vibrant and thriving outdoor places for all throughout Greater Austin. This RAISE application aligns with our mission, as the Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project will create key connections to major transit corridors and stops in South Austin while significantly expanding the city's urban trail network, which will be the longest continuous trail in southeast Austin. The project would not only provide alternate transportation routes and easier commuting to and from employment centers and businesses, but would also improve quality of life for residents, as safe access to green space promotes mental and physical health.

The City identified the Trails to Transit project in part for its standout potential to advance equity. The project would proactively address short- and long-term safety, mobility, and connectivity needs within several historically underserved Austin communities by linking important thoroughfares and expanding mobility choices within these communities. In addition, the trail improvements would add important greenway features in areas that have been subject to significant heat island effects.

Austin has been among the fastest growing municipalities in the country for the last ten years. A sustainable transportation network will necessitate broad investment in multimodal infrastructure, including trails, shared use paths, and enhanced access to transit. The Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit project will provide a safe and dedicated bicyclist and pedestrian corridor across almost the entire width of south Austin, including the only crossing of I-35 and US-183 dedicated to pedestrians and bicyclists in south Austin. It will provide safe, dedicated, and direct bicycle and pedestrian access to Saint Elmo School, Saint Elmo School Park, numerous neighborhood shops and services, and the thousands of jobs located in the Commerce Center South Industrial Park and adjacent light industrial and commercial properties. Importantly, the project preserves the option of eventual extension to the Austin Bergstrom International Airport.



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Austin voters showed overwhelming support for urban trails and active transportation projects through the 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2023 transportation bonds. This RAISE application would leverage the broad public support for projects like Bergstrom Spur Trails to Transit, and we are pleased to support this important nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Siff".

Ted Siff, Interim Board Chair

Austin Outside