

To: Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committee (CBAC)
From: Austin Outside
Re: Statement of Need: 2023 Travis County Bond Parks & Transportation Projects
Date: April 10, 2023

Greetings Honorable Citizens Bond Advisory Committee Members:

Austin Outside's mission is to champion outdoor places for all throughout Greater Austin. We are a coalition of 69 member organizations focused on parks, open space, active transportation, and the environment.

We are writing to express our strong support for the inclusion of the \$332 million in projects, as proposed by the Travis County Parks staff, in the 2023 Travis County Bond package. This funding includes \$200 million in critical funding for land acquisition in both eastern and western Travis County. As property values continue to rise, land acquisition throughout Travis County is a solid strategy for improving future access to outdoor and green spaces for residents. The \$132 million set aside for shovel-ready projects and priority alternates are key improvements to Travis County parks and instrumental in building out 70 miles of a trail network that links to our regional network.

In addition, we strongly encourage that as many transportation projects as feasible include separated Shared Use Paths (SUPs) and SAFE-2 designs. SAFE-2* is a modern alternative to MAD-4 designated roads, offering comparable capacity to MAD-4 roads - as stated by staff in the 4/5/23 CBAC meeting - and are approximately 20% less expensive for the taxpayer. Separated SUPs for both existing roads and proposed roads would make our entire network safer and more usable, especially when there is an opportunity to connect communities with parks.

Given that extensive public outreach will be underway shortly, **we urge you to request additional clarifications from staff** in order for everyone involved to be able to make more informed recommendations. Specifically we suggest you ask the following questions:

- Please indicate on each road project if a separated SUP is included in the cost estimate. If not, please provide a cost estimate to add a separated SUP.
- What is the estimated range of per-mile cost to add a SUP to one side of an existing roadway that is not otherwise being reconstructed or expanded?*
- What are Travis County staff's complete cost estimates associated with their highest priority projects?
- Which proposed projects best address the goals of Travis County's upcoming Vision Zero Action Plan?
- Are there proposed projects in staff's lists that are within incorporated areas, and could thereby directly benefit those residents and taxpayers?
- Can staff provide an evaluation of all 4-lane roadway expansion proposals with cost and feasibility of an alternative SAFE-2 design?

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.

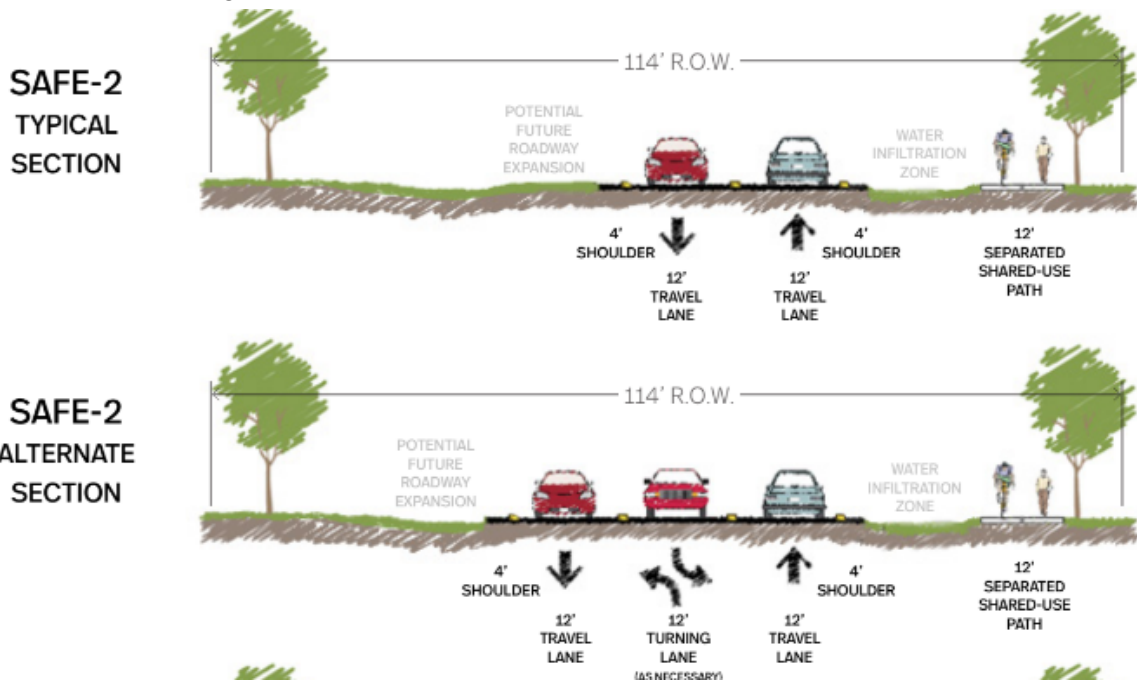
Sincerely,



Joanna Wolaver, Board Chair
Austin Outside

* The “SAFE-2” design improves upon TxDOT “Super 2” road design with the addition of a separated shared use path (SUP).

Visual of SAFE-2 designs:



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OUTSIDE

**Identifying a list of projects like the proposed Howard Lane SUP, using Bike Safety Task Force maps to identify high injury areas, and working in conjunction with other local transportation community leaders. Projects could include Old San Antonio Road, Old Highway 20, Springdale Road, and others.