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March 16, 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 Bridge Investment Program discretionary grant to fund replacement of the Barton Springs Road Bridge. Austin Outside is a coalition of nonprofit organizations who strive to build equitable access to outdoor parks, greenspaces, and natural areas that are connected by a safe and comfortable network of trails, bikeways, and sidewalks. Austin Outside supports this application to fully replace this bridge that is a vital link to Austin's signature park, Zilker Park, and believes the enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities will significantly improve safety and access to this area of Austin that is known for its robust network of parks and trails.

The City has invested significant resources over a decade to assess the condition of the bridge and identify the best solution for extending its life, ensuring safety, and meeting the needs of community-users. Replacing the Barton Springs Road Bridge will preserve and expand access to Zilker Park and the many unique natural areas and greenspaces adjacent to it, including Barton Springs Pool, Zilker Botanical Garden, Austin Nature Science Center, Umlauf Sculpture Gardens, the Butler Hike and Bike Trail, Barton Creek Greenbelt Trail, and more.

This project also aligns with Austin's Vision Zero program by addressing known safety concerns on Barton Springs Road to aid in the citywide goal of achieving zero traffic-related fatalities or serious injuries. The bridge design complements ongoing City efforts to make bicycle and pedestrian travel along Barton Springs Road safer and more accessible to residents coming from the east, including those who access Zilker Park through major intersecting corridors and via transit.

The Barton Springs Road Bridge Project will ensure the bridge can continue to support current and future demands from residents of our growing city and region. It will offer safe multi-modal paths, which will include interior barriers for pedestrians and exterior barriers for bicyclists. The

multi-modal paths will align with existing Zilker Park shared use paths, trails, and amenities, thereby ensuring public access to this iconic park for generations to come.

Austin Outside hopes you will strongly consider this important application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ted StH", is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Austin Outside, Board President