

AUSTIN complete streets

A GUIDE TO CITY OF AUSTIN RESOURCES
MOBILITY + URBAN DESIGN + GREEN
Austin Transportation Department
City of Austin | 2015-2016



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Austin Transportation Department thanks the agencies and photographers that contributed images for this guide.

WHY COMPLETE STREETS?

City streets are public spaces where the shared life of our city occurs. They need to be safe, comfortable, and convenient for everyone.

Austin City Council adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2014 because this approach provides so many co-benefits for our community.

10 Key Benefits for Austin

Safety. Substantial data shows that Complete Street designs result in fewer crashes, injuries, and deaths for people walking, biking, and driving.

Mobility. Streets designed and updated to serve people using all modes expand the capacity of our streets, and everyone's mobility choices. Austin's existing street network can carry more travelers if some people travel by transit, bike, and on foot.

Health. Complete Streets encourage people to make active transportation choices, which are associated with improved health outcomes for people at all stages of life. Multiple public health benefits also result from reducing the air and climate pollution caused by vehicles.

Equity. Complete Streets serve people of all ages and abilities. They create more mobility and independence for young people, seniors, and the disabled. They serve motorists and non-motorists, people in wheelchairs and parents pushing strollers, kids biking and walking to school, and people who can't afford or don't want cars.

Affordability. Complete Streets help people reduce the cost burden of car ownership. They are needed to make it attractive and feasible to walk, bike, or take transit in Austin. As relatively affordable transportation investments, Complete Street improvements can deliver a great return, protect the City budget, and even protect against tax increases to fund roadways over time.



Beautification. Streets built to a high standard for urban design enhance life for all Austinites. They enhance civic pride through the thoughtful creation of place. Streets that become destinations in themselves – such as the Second Street District – define and elevate our city.

Economy. Our streets define the experience of Austin – so residents, companies, and visitors all thrive and benefit when they are handsome, well-designed, economically vibrant, and inviting. They help to make us competitive as a world-class city.

Environment. Streetscapes offer a great place to integrate nature and green practices into our city, with trees, landscaping, rain gardens, and other green/sustainable features. By encouraging alternatives to driving, they reduce the many negative environmental impacts of vehicles.

Fiscal Efficiency. As the Policy states: “A Complete Streets approach provides a unique opportunity to thoughtfully integrate and advance multiple objectives for our community, now and in the future, while delivering maximum benefits from both public and private investments.”

Comprehensive Plan. The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* calls for Complete Streets investments. The City Charter requires the City to implement its comprehensive plan through City investments. Activity Centers and Corridors are established as priority areas for Complete Streets, to support compact-and-connected growth.

TRAFFIC & MOBILITY: THE COMPLETE STREETS SOLUTION

Do Complete Streets improvements make traffic better or worse?

The body of evidence shows that multimodal streets benefit people when they drive, as well as when they take other modes. Well-designed Complete Streets reduce crashes, while having little or no impact on travel time.

We can't build our way out of congestion. But by improving our streets, we can improve mobility.

7 Mobility Benefits

Reducing new cars on the road. As Austin continues to grow in population, no one wants to see a corresponding increase in traffic. Complete streets make it feasible for people to take transit, bike for transportation, or walk for short trips – rather than adding their cars to congested roads. Complete Streets create a surprisingly big benefit aiding congestion.

Encouraging people to try new modes. To see these congestion-reducing benefits, Austin must make other modes safe and attractive. Research shows that more people will walk or bike if they feel safe. This is the goal of Complete Streets improvements. For example, research shows that when safer bikeways are added, a significant increase follows in people who bike regularly for trips of less than three miles to school, work, or for errands.

Doing more with less. The City right-sizes road lanes during routine roadway resurfacing and reconstruction. This low-cost approach can add two new bike lanes without removing vehicle travel lanes, all within the existing right of way.

Moving more people per road mile. In Central Austin, the right-of-way isn't wide enough to add more vehicle travel lanes, in most cases. What's a city to do? Roads designed to carry only vehicles – usually one person driving alone – require a lot of



road capacity per person. Streets actually increase their people-carrying power as they add modes. Maximizing people-carrying capacity through a complete streets approach is a smart solution. It makes more efficient use of a valuable public asset – the right-of-way.

Reducing neighborhood traffic. When people take short trips on foot or by bicycle, especially from their homes, it translates to fewer non-resident cars driving and parking on neighborhood streets.

Calming neighborhood traffic. Discouraging speeding on streets where people walk and children play or bike is integral to the complete streets approach. Research has shown that features that complete streets also help to reduce speeding – especially slowing the worst speeders.

Bang for the transportation buck. New roadways are tremendously expensive, typically costing hundreds of millions of dollars. Transportation funding is extremely limited. Complete Street improvements are fiscally conservative and taxpayer-friendly because they make better use of the City streets that we already have.



I. CREATING MULTIMODAL STREETS

COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM

About

To ensure that the vision and community goals of the Complete Streets Policy are fully reflected in our streets, transportation system, and right-of-way, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) established a Complete Streets Program.

The Program works collaboratively across departments. Initiatives include:

- Policy Implementation Oversight
- Street Design, including development of updated City street design guidance
- Complete Street Network Development
- Project Compliance Reviews
- Education, Outreach and Communications
- Complete Street Metrics and Reporting

Complete Streets Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides high-level guidance for policy implementation. It is composed of executives from key departments:

- Austin Transportation
- Capital Planning Office
- Economic Development
- Planning and Zoning
- Development Services
- Public Works
- Watershed Protection

Other collaborating partners include the Office of Sustainability, community groups, and regional transportation agencies.

The Directors of Transportation, Planning and Zoning, and Public Works Departments jointly review and must approve projects requesting exceptions to Policy requirements.



Complete Streets Program Website
austintexas.gov/complete-streets

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Austin's Complete Streets Policy (Ordinance 20140612-119) commits the city to "design, operate and maintain the community's streets and right-of-way so as to promote safe, comfortable and convenient access and travel for people of all ages and abilities" by all travel modes.

STREET DESIGN & ENGINEERING

Austin Transportation Department follows the best national practices for the design of multimodal City streets that connect and serve all kinds of places around our city - whether suburban, neighborhood centers in Central Austin, or Downtown. These national guidelines include:

- Urban Street Design Guide - National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
- Urban Bikeway Design Guide - NACTO
- Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach - Institute of Transportation Engineers

Much of our city's street network was originally engineered in an era that focused almost exclusively on vehicles. Today, serving motorists remains a top goal for the Austin Transportation Department. At the same time, the City seeks opportunities to update street designs to reflect current best practices. This approach focuses on helping people get to places - whether they travel by car, transit, bicycle, on foot, and/or in wheelchairs.

Taking this all-inclusive approach to street design ensures that Austin equitably serves the needs of all people in our community, regardless of the mode they travel. It allows Austin to absorb growth gracefully, as it evolves over time into a truly multimodal city.

Current & Recent Projects

Pleasant Valley Road (E. 7th Street to Lakeshore Drive):

Multimodal improvements are being planned to address traffic congestion at the Cesar Chavez intersection, poor bicycle and pedestrian safety over Longhorn Dam, high speeds that create a barrier to park lands, and bike/pedestrian connectivity to the Boardwalk Trail and the Pleasant Valley Bridge.



Website

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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Planning and Zoning

Community Partners

Urban Transportation Commission

Updated street design provides bike lanes, a crosswalk with pedestrian island, and curb cuts.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

About

The Active Transportation Program manages a variety of efforts that support and encourage bicycling and walking and access to transit. Active Transportation supports increased mobility choices to Austinites that help to reduce motor vehicle trips. Staff provides planning, transportation engineering, and street redesign guidance for many infrastructure improvements, such as bike lanes. In addition, the team provides community education, encouragement programs, and coordinates enforcement.

Within Active Transportation, the ATD Bicycle Program (see separate page) focuses on implementation of the City of Austin Bicycle Master Plan. The emerging ATD Pedestrian Program coordinates efforts to improve pedestrian safety, walking routes for transportation, and accessibility to transit.

Active Transportation staff in the Transportation Department work closely with Public Works staff responsible for the construction of sidewalks, urban trails, and bicycle facilities. Providing resources to mobility options beyond just the car helps further the Complete Streets effort.

Current & Recent Projects

3rd Street Cycle Track: This separated bicycle facility across downtown is scheduled for completion in 2016.

Sidewalks in the Rainey Street Historic District: The first project, in this high-pedestrian area on the edge of Downtown, is a new sidewalk that will replace a gravel pathway on the west side of Davis Lane.



Website

Active Transportation:
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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Planning and Zoning
Watershed Protection
Office of Sustainability
Parks and Recreation
Austin Police

Regional Partners

Texas Department of Transportation
Cities and Counties that make up the
Capital Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)
Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services

Bike Corral at 4th and Lavaca Streets.

BICYCLE PROGRAM

About

Austin streets are becoming places where people of all ages and abilities can bicycle comfortably and safely for transportation, fitness, and enjoyment – just one element involved in Complete Streets.

The Bicycle Program focuses on implementation of the City of Austin Bicycle Master Plan. This benefits the whole community by helping to activate our sustainable transportation future.

New bike facilities are now primarily added at the time roadways are restriped, after routine resurfacing, which is a highly cost-effective approach. More than 200 lane miles of bicycle facilities have been installed in this fashion. This has supported a substantial increase in the number of people who commute regularly by bicycle - now about five percent of commutes in the central city.

In addition, Bicycle Program staff manage the City's Bike Share program, install bicycle parking, and promote bicycling through targeted education and encouragement programs.

Bicycle Master Plan

The 2014 City Council adopted Bicycle Master Plan has an overarching goal to significantly increase bicycle use and improve bicycle safety throughout Austin. It includes a vision, linked to implementing the Imagine Austin Master Plan, and plans for both physical facilities and programs to encourage cycling for transportation.

Representative Project

Rio Grande Bicycle Boulevard: This facility combines traffic calming, shared space, and landscaping to create a north-south bike commuting route through downtown. The two-lane cycle track runs from Martin Luther King Drive to 24th Street.



Current & Recent Projects

Pedernales Protected Bicycle Facility: Pedernales Street from Canterbury Street to Pleasant Valley Road is identified as a route in the Austin Bicycle Plan and is recommended for protected bicycle facilities in the City-adopted Holly Neighborhood Plan. The project connects the Butler urban trail to the Upper Boggy Creek urban trail system and contributes to the creation of an all-ages, safe, and attractive on-street bicycle network for the surrounding neighborhoods and for the entire City.

Website

Bicycle Program:
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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Planning and Zoning

Community Partners

Bicycle Advisory Council
Austin B-Cycle
Bike Austin

Pfluger Pedestrian Bridge.

BIKE SHARE STATIONS

About

Bike share stations have become a frequent sight on streets in the center city. The closely spaced stations encourage people to make trips via B-Cycle. The B-Cycle stations also offer a “last mile” connection for transit riders. The attractive B-Cycle stations on our streets encourage people to try cycling as a fun and convenient way to get around.

Austin’s B-Cycle system set a U.S. system record of an average of 10.1 checkouts per bike/day during South by Southwest in March 2014.

B-Cycle provides people an alternative to their car, especially for short trips of less than three miles. The more people who convert short trips from car to bicycle or walking, the more of an impact on congestion we can see. More and more people are moving to Austin daily and by offering convenient ways for people to travel in addition to the car, the more “complete” the street and transportation network.

Austin Transportation Department works with Austin B-Cycle to identify the best station locations in the right-of-way along streets. Staff also work to encourage City employees and the community to make trips via B-Cycle.



Website

Bicycle Program:
austintexas.gov/bicycle
austin.bicycle.com

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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Parks and Recreation
Austin Convention Center
Watershed Protection

Community Partners

Austin B-Cycle
Downtown Austin Alliance
Austin Parks Foundation

B-Cycle station at 9th and Congress.

COMPLETING CORRIDORS

About

For our city to function well, its major corridors need to maximize their people-moving capacity. At the same time, they need to serve as the backbone for great places. At Austin Transportation Department, the Corridor Development Program is focused on this goal. Through in-depth corridor studies, ATD analyzes older roadways and develops and advances specific roadway improvement recommendations for updating them to serve people using all modes of transportation.

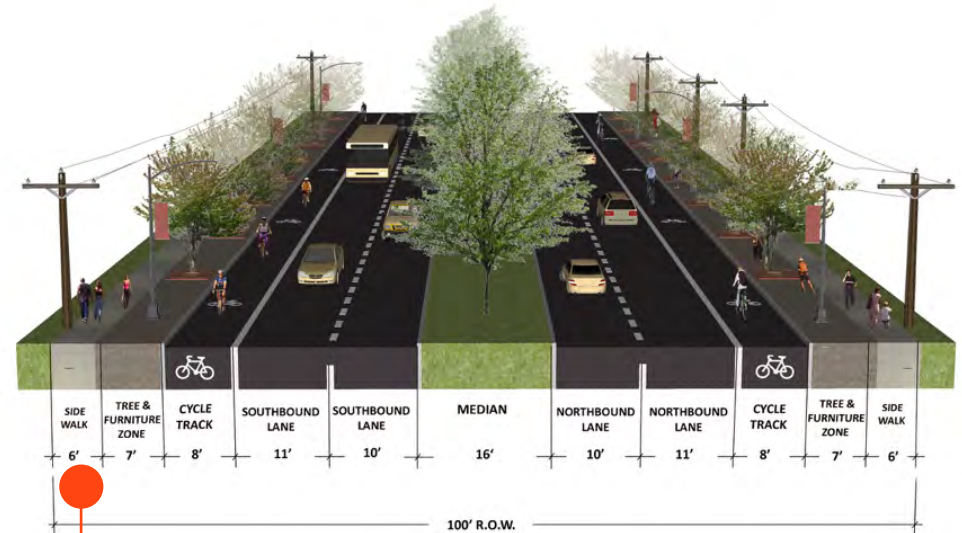
In taking a holistic approach to improving entire corridors, ATD works to advance numerous community objectives, including:

- Improve safety for people traveling by all modes, including pedestrians
- Increase mobility and accessibility for people traveling by all modes
- Improve quality of life and corridor vibrancy, for travelers and neighbors
- Support other Imagine Austin, urban design, and economic development goals

These studies and recommendations inform funding opportunities, such as bond referendums, for thoroughfare improvement projects, which ultimately are managed by Public Works. Significant funding will be needed to realize all of the recommended projects.

Current & Recent Corridor Studies

- North Lamar (US-183 to IH-35) and Burnet Road (Koenig to MoPac)
- Airport Boulevard (Lamar to US-183)
- East Riverside Drive (IH-35 to SH-71)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/FM 969 (US-183 to Webberville, TX)
- South Lamar Boulevard (Riverside to Ben White)
- Guadalupe Street (The Drag)



Website

Corridor Studies and Development Program:
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Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning

Community Partners

Texas Department of Transportation
 Capital Metro
 Neighborhood Associations
 University of Texas at Austin

North Burnet Gateway/Corridor Plan.

WALKABILITY

About

Imagine Austin established “walkability” as a major community goal. Walking to get around town is good for our health and supports a Compact and Connected city. In 2013, a new Pedestrian Advisory Council was formed. The City also began creating an Urban Trails Master Plan and updating the 2009 Bicycle Master Plan, to guide development of an “all-ages and abilities” active transportation network, that includes a system of connected trails and on-street bikeways fit for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Representative Projects

Boardwalk Trail at Ladybird Lake: Completed in 2014, the Boardwalk Trail at Lady Bird Lake connects the former end of the trail by the Austin American Statesman building to Lakeshore Park, closing the southeastern gap of the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail. Previously, pedestrians, runners, and bikers were forced to use the Riverside Drive sidewalk over Interstate 35 to complete the 10.1 mile trail loop.

Pedestrian Signals: To support Austin’s walkability, ATD began installing pedestrian hybrid beacons in 2009. These pedestrian-activated signals are located at mid-block locations to help people safely cross roads with heavy traffic.

Current & Recent Projects

In 2015, Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB’s) were installed at locations where pedestrians needed help to cross the street safely, ranging from S. Lamar Boulevard at Oxford Street to Guadalupe Street at 47th Street. In total, the City has installed 43 PHBs since 2009.



Website

Sidewalk Program:

austintexas.gov/department/pedestrian-program

Program Contacts

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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works

Planning and Zoning

Community Partners

Pedestrian Advisory Council

Boardwalk Trail at Ladybird Lake.

SIDEWALKS

About

To feel safe and comfortable walking on busy Austin streets and to provide a choice of travel mode, people need sidewalks. In Downtown, enhanced sidewalks that can accommodate many pedestrians (e.g. 18 feet wide) are being added through the Great Streets program. Sidewalk projects are expensive, so capital investments must be made gradually over time.

The City maintains a [Sidewalk Master Plan](#) that establishes priorities. It is being updated in 2015. An overall priority is handicapped accessibility, in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Sidewalks are constructed and repaired by the Public Works Department Sidewalk Program. Since 2005, it has completed 59 miles of new sidewalks citywide and over 60 additional ADA sidewalk improvements.

The Public Works Sidewalks Program works tirelessly to complete gaps in our city's sidewalk network and to address ADA concerns all over Austin. Residents and all members of the community are encouraged to request a new sidewalk or repair by calling 3-1-1.

Representative Project

Safe Routes to School: Sidewalks serving children walking to school are a top priority. Since 2013, new sidewalks have been added around Guerrero-Thompson Elementary, Lee Elementary, Baldwin Elementary, and Barton Hills Elementary. Ramp improvements have occurred along Guadalupe and Lavaca corridors, Windsor, Lamar to Harris, Blanco, West 6th to West 10th, Radam Lane, and East Powell Lane.

Current & Recent Projects

Citywide, the City typically has eight to 12 current sidewalk projects in construction at all times. Projects occur in areas of need throughout Austin.



Website

Sidewalk Program:
austintexas.gov/department/pedestrian-program

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Collaborating City Departments

Austin Transportation
Parks and Recreation
Austin Energy
Austin Convention Center

Community Partners

Capital Metro
Texas Department of Transportation

*About 60 total miles of sidewalk
Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)
completed since 2005.*

TRANSIT STREETS

About

Streets that serve transit riders well are essential along Capital Metro's network of routes for bus service, MetroRapid, and MetroRail. People in Austin use transit to take about 32.9 million rides system-wide annually.

Streets with transit routes need to be designed accordingly. Transit is an important element in complete street design. The addition of handsome new MetroRail stations in 2014 enhanced our streetscapes and the appeal of riding transit on Austin streets.

As every transit trip starts and ends with a pedestrian trip, the streets also must provide safe, comfortable, and convenient passage for people walking to and from transit stops.

Austin Transportation Department partners with Capital Metro to provide planning, design, and engineering guidance for our community's transit-serving streets. The construction of transit streets is led by Public Works.

Representative Projects

Transit Priority Lanes: These specially marked lanes help transit maintain a reliable schedule in congested areas. To serve the new MetroRapid service on Guadalupe and Lavaca Streets downtown, new "Bus Only" lanes opened in 2014. Up to 60 buses/hour operate in these lanes during rush hour - carrying more than twice as many people as the adjacent automobile lane.

Transit Signal Priority: ATD has installed new traffic signals (outside of downtown) that allow MetroRapid to maintain more reliable travel times. A MetroRapid vehicle can detect when it is running behind schedule and will automatically request the extension of a green light to improve timeliness. The light will be extended if the bus is running behind and if the extension will not disrupt overall traffic conditions.



Current & Recent Projects

Downtown Station Improvements: A new permanent Downtown station for adjacent to the Austin Convention Center is being planned. It will activate and enhance the area by creating a dedicated space for MetroRail, transit users, pedestrians, and cyclists. TxDOT awarded Capital Metro \$22 million dedicated to this project in 2014.

The existing Downtown station for MetroRail is being expanded and improved to create an activated place for all travelers.

Website

Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority:
capmetro.org

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Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Public Works

Community Partners

Capital Metro
Project Connect
CAMPO

The existing Downtown station for MetroRail is being expanded and improved to create an activated place for all travelers.

URBAN TRAILS

About

Austin's urban trails are characterized as a citywide network of non-motorized, multi-use pathways that are used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and runners for both transportation and recreation purposes. As part of our city's transportation network, they offer attractive all-weather routes for active transportation users of all ages and abilities.

Our Urban Trails help to create and maintain Austin's character as a green, healthy, and connected city. Of the 300 miles of trails within city limits, 30 are considered "urban trails." The others are typically loose-surface trails on parkland.

The 2014 Urban Trails Master Plan envisions a system of trails that connects all of Austin through an accessible network for people of all ages and abilities. It identifies 47 miles of high-priority trails to be built that would connect to the on-street bicycle and sidewalk network. Master Plan implementation includes a streamlined process for Urban Trail development.

Representative Project

Lance Armstrong Bikeway: Comprised of off-street concrete trails and on-street striped bike lanes and routes, the Lance Armstrong Bikeway will extend from Lake Austin Boulevard, on the west, to the Montopolis Bridge at US 183, on the east. It currently extends 4.6 miles with additional sections planned. It links existing trails along Lady Bird Lake and creeks, and the Pfluger Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge, with residential areas and downtown developments.

Current & Recent Projects

- J.J. Seabrook Stream Restoration Rain Garden and Urban Trail Project
- Boggy Creek Bikeway
- MoPac Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridges
- Country Club Creek Trail
- Violet Crown Trail



Website

Urban Trails Program:
austintexas.gov/urbantrails

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Collaborating City Departments

Austin Transportation
Parks and Recreation
Watershed Protection
Austin Water
Planning and Zoning

Community Partners

The Trail Foundation
Hill Country Conservancy

Enjoying a morning ride on the Lance Armstrong Bikeway.

CALMING NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

About

Slowing vehicle speeds is one of the most effective ways we can make our streets safer for everyone using any mode of travel. This is especially important on residential streets where children play. Overly wide streets may encourage unsafe speeding and may lack the protection that sidewalks provide to pedestrians and cyclists.

The Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) program installs traffic calming devices on neighborhood streets. It is a request-based program that responds to residents. The devices include speed humps, speed tables, speed cushions, roundabouts, median islands, chicanes, and bulb outs.

As new residential streets are built in Austin, updated design standards call for design features (such as narrower lanes) that inherently encourage safe driving speeds, so that expensive traffic-calming retrofits will not be required.

Representative Project

Woodward Street and Willow Springs Road: A combination of new street islands and speed cushions were constructed, where students cross near the St. Edwards University campus.

Current & Recent Projects

- Lakewood Drive, RM 222 to Bull Creek Bridge
- Rockwood Lane, Primrose to Steck Ave.
- Viewpoint Drive, Nuckols Crossing to Apple Orchard
- Sendero Hills Parkway, FM 969 to Toscana Ave.



Website

Local Area Traffic Management:
austintexas.gov/department/local-area-traffic-management

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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Austin Fire
Emergency Medical Service
Austin Resource Recovery

Community Partners

Neighborhood Association
Neighborhood Partnering

Traffic calming at Rockwood at Boxdale.

PARKING

About

Parking is an integral part of our transportation system. With Austin's rapidly expanding population and traffic concerns, parking issues remain a key priority when envisioning the City's future.

On-street parking is planned, designed, and managed as part of the streetscape and the right-of-way. In addition to serving motorists, on-street parking buffers pedestrians from travel lanes, helping to create a safe streetscape for all.

Parking spaces are metered (most with pay stations) for short-term use. This allows the spaces to serve the greatest number of people, including patrons of nearby businesses. The revenues generated by Downtown parking help to fund the Downtown Great Streets program and Wayfinding signage program.

Representative Project

Parking Benefit Districts: These special metered districts (outside of Downtown) yield twin benefits. They improve the availability of on-street parking and generate revenue to enhance the public realm. A portion of revenues are reinvested in streetscapes (including streetlamps, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities) in the immediate area; this encourages walking, cycling, and transit use, which in turn helps to manage parking demand.

The pilot district is located in the West Campus area near the University of Texas at Austin. Created in January of 2013, it includes 450 parking spaces. In 2015, the district generated an approximate average of \$11,000 per month. 51% of revenues are dedicated to streetscape improvements within the district, selected with neighborhood input.



Website

Parking Benefit Districts:
austintexas.gov/parking

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Collaborating City Departments

Economic Development
Planning and Zoning

Back-in angle parking on South Congress provides better visibility of cyclists.



II. STREETSCAPES & URBAN DESIGN

PEOPLE PLACES: DESIGN FOR MIXED-USE STREETS

About

Vibrant city corridors – attractive, livable streets that offer people a convenient mix of destinations and housing, and that are walkable, bikeable, and served by transit – are a secret to success as Austin evolves and grows. The Design Standards and Mixed Use Ordinance (Subchapter E of the Land Development Code) govern new developments along our corridors. They ensure that high-quality places are designed to enhance the public realm. The strongest Complete Street standards apply to Core Transit Corridors and Urban Roadways.

The Standards govern:

Sites. How to provide sidewalks, pedestrian connectivity, lighting, shade, parking, etc.

Building Design. How buildings frame the street, to positively shape public space

Mixed Use. How to integrate residential, office, and retail elements

These standards encourage active people places and greener streets. The appealing environment supports the success of local businesses and new housing options along the corridor.

Representative Project

Zach Scott Theater: Along South Lamar, streetscape improvements include wide sidewalks, a double row of street trees, landscaping, and public seating.

Current & Recent Projects

Burnet Marketplace: This mixed-use project is bringing new storefronts – opening onto streetscapes with new sidewalks, landscaping and cafes – to Burnet Road. The new streetscape will create a new walkable people place on a predominately auto-oriented corridor.



Website

Subchapter E Design Standards:
austintexas.gov/design-standards

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Collaborating City Departments

Austin Transportation
Austin Energy
Austin Water
Public Works

This streetscape for the Topher Theater at Zach Scott creates an inviting place to travel along Lamar Blvd.

WAYFINDING SIGNS

About

People are more likely to walk when it is easy for them to find their way around on foot. And they are more likely to visit Downtown and “park once” when they can easily find parking facilities. Austin is investing in “wayfinding” signage for those reasons - to help residents as well as visitors.

The Downtown Austin Wayfinding Signage System helps people find their way around Downtown Austin and locate popular destinations and attractions.

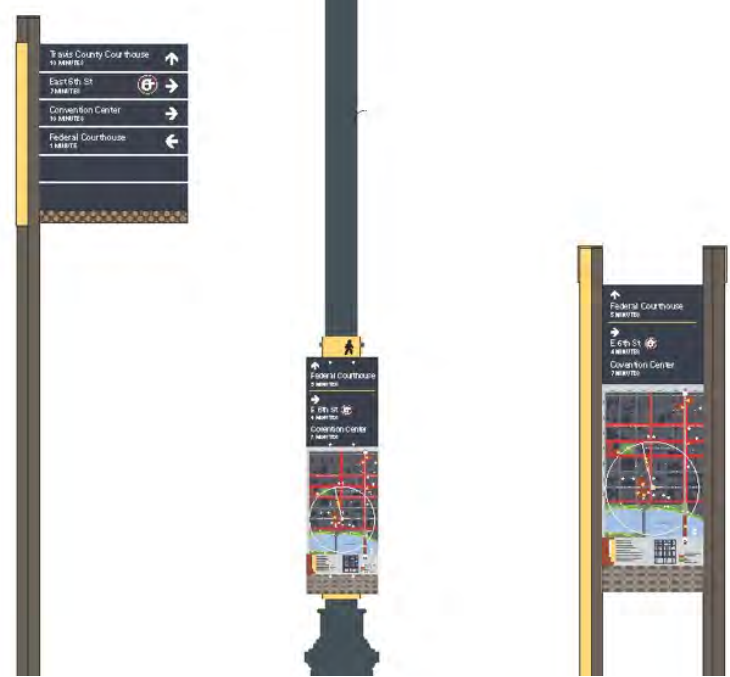
The types of signs and kiosks to be installed in the streetscapes of Downtown include:

- Pedestrian directional signs
- Vehicular directional signs
- Parking facility identification signs
- Pedestrian informational kiosks

The system adds to Downtown’s unique identity, as it improves mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists.

Representative Project

In 2016, an initial set of pedestrian, vehicular, and parking wayfinding elements are scheduled to be installed throughout Downtown Austin. These improvements are funded by Downtown parking meter revenues.



Website

Downtown Wayfinding:
austintexas.gov/wayfinding

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Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Development Services
Austin Transportation

Community Partners

University of Texas
Downtown Austin Alliance

Wayfinding signage system for Downtown Austin.

GREAT STREETS

About

The goal of the City of Austin Great Streets Master Plan and Development Program is to articulate the vision of “streets for people” through the implementation of streetscape standards in downtown that pursue a more equitable balance of space usage between sidewalks and streets.

Council adopted the streetscape standards in 2004; since then 154 block faces have been completed or are under construction in downtown. Managed by the Urban Design Division, the Great Streets Program continues to transform downtown streets into great public spaces.

The implementation of Great Streets has occurred in three principal ways:

- 1) As a public-private partnership
- 2) Through the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- 3) By the private sector as mandated by Council as a community benefit, in return for increased entitlements

Representative Project

Second Street District: On the south edge of Downtown, Austin’s Second Street District (Trinity to San Antonio) is a people-oriented place that embodies Great Streets goals. A six-block infill and redevelopment area, it features 32-foot wide sidewalks, a double row of street trees to promote walkability, street art, and numerous sidewalk cafés. Informational and wayfinding signage is being added.

Current & Recent Projects

- Brazos Street (Cesar Chavez to 11th)
- Colorado Street (Cesar Chavez to 7th)
- Eighth Street (Congress to San Antonio)
- Third Street (Nueces to Trinity)
- Seaholm Development
- Trammel Crow GWTP Development



Website

Great Streets Program:
austintexas.gov/page/great-streets

Program Contact

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Planning and Zoning Department
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Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Austin Energy
Economic Development
Austin Water
Austin Transportation

Community Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance
Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association

Wide sidewalks and outdoor dining on 2nd Street.

PARKLETS

About

Parklets are small public spaces, akin to parks, created out of street space formerly dedicated to parking. These temporary pedestrian plazas create vibrant community spaces. A national movement, parklets typically have a distinctive design that incorporates seating, greenery, and/or bike racks and accommodate unmet demand for public space on thriving neighborhood retail streets or commercial areas.

Parklets are desirable, cost-effective enhancements to the urban streetscape. They are most successful in areas where lots of people walk, with adjoining businesses that sell food and beverages. Parklets help bring a sense of community back to the streets and sidewalks.

Representative Project

Royal Blue Grocery: City Council initiated a pilot parklet at 609 Congress Avenue. Two parking spaces were converted into a parklet with a temporary pedestrian plaza provided by the grocery. Patrons of Royal Blue Grocery enjoy the space as a sidewalk cafe, adding a lively element to the “Main Street of Texas.”

Current & Recent Projects

Congress Avenue: A second parklet is being installed in the 800 block of Congress Avenue in early 2016, where four parking spaces will be converted into outdoor seating and dining space through the temporary sidewalk cafe permit process.

The Complete Streets Program is currently working to create an expanded Parklet Program.



Website

Right of Way Management:
austintexas.gov/rowman

Program Contact

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Austin Transportation Department
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512.974.7901

Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Austin Transportation
Development Services

Community Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance

Royal Blue Grocery at 609 Congress Avenue.

SIDEWALK CAFES

About

A sidewalk café is exactly as it sounds: a place established on the sidewalk designed for people to eat and drink. The sidewalk café provides a way for an adjacent restaurant to create space for people to enjoy the streetscape outside. Sidewalk cafés help to bring community and life to the sidewalks and streets to make them more vibrant places where people can relax, socialize, and dine.

Sidewalk cafés provide outdoor seating designated by balustrades, planters, or other barriers that designate the café zone. Elements of the café, such as tables and chairs, must be temporary and mobile.

Representative Project

Guero's: The South Congress Tex-Mex institution has had moveable furniture on their street patio for years. The restaurant recently converted their previous license agreement to a temporary sidewalk cafe permit.

Current & Recent Projects

Austinites are getting more sidewalk cafes each year, especially in the downtown area. The eased permitting process for sidewalk cafes has encouraged restaurants to add them.



Website

Sidewalk Café Program:

austintexas.gov/service/temporary-sidewalk-cafe-permits

Program Contact

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Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Austin Transportation
Development Services

Guero's on South Congress.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

About

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is mixed-use development within walking distance of a transit stop or station. Through intentional design, it creates a compact, walkable, mixed-use place and supports transit use.

Austin has adopted Station Area Plans for three TOD areas along the MetroRail line. The City is committed to creating transit-supportive communities by optimizing land use around high quality transit.

TOD is an opportunity for Austin to carefully coordinate transit and development for the benefit of the entire city. As Austin looks ahead over the next 20-30 years with the help of its comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*, Transit Oriented Development is one tool for growing as both a Compact and Connected city and an affordable and healthy community.

Representative Project

M Station Apartments: Located within walking distance of the MLK MetroRail Station, the 150-unit multi-family affordable apartments were built by the non-profit Foundation Communities in East Austin.

Plaza Saltillo Development Plan: This 11-acre parcel just east of IH-35 is being redeveloped by Capital Metro. Key objectives are to support ridership on the MetroRail line, and the development of a first-class, “complete” new mixed use neighborhood area that includes both affordable and market-rate housing.

Current & Recent Projects

Highland Mall Redevelopment: Adjacent to the MetroRail Highland station, the former Highland Mall is being transformed by ACC into a state-of-the art center for innovative learning, training excellence, and community engagement.



Website

Transit-Oriented Development:
austintexas.gov/departments/transit-oriented-development

Program Contact

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Tonya.Swartzendruber@austintexas.gov
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Collaborating City Departments

Austin Transportation

Community Partners

Capital Metro

Plaza Saltillo: Mixed-use around a MetroRail station.

STREET BANNERS

About

Street banners enhance the streetscapes of Austin by adding a vibrant element that enhances key corridors and the mobility experience for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists. Banners strengthen a sense of place and district identity in Downtown, mixed-use districts, and along corridors and are a cost-effective place-making tool. They also help inform Austinites and visitors about the festivals and other special events that define our city.

Street Banners also are an element within the Downtown Wayfinding Signage project.

Representative Projects

Congress Avenue District Identity Banners: Beginning July of 2015, 94 iconic lamppost banners were displayed on Congress Avenue serving as a pilot project for the Downtown Wayfinding Program and could serve as a template for future banner systems across the city. The banners help to create a stronger sense of district identity for our grand avenue, “the main street of Texas.”

Convention Center District: The Austin Convention and Visitor’s Bureau works with the Banner Program to maintain an active program of installing “Welcome to Austin” banners around the Austin Convention Center downtown.

Current & Recent Projects

In partnership with the Economic Development Department’s Soul-y Austin business incubator program, the Banner Program is helping create and install banners promoting pilot program business areas to promote and support Austin’s commercial areas and corridors. In 2015, Red River Cultural District banners were the first to be installed.



Website

Street Banner Program:
atxbanners.org

Program Contact

Lauren Seyda, *Street Banner Program Coordinator*
Austin Transportation Department
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512.974.9395

Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Economic Development
Austin Convention Center

Community Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance
Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau

“The Main Street of Texas” Congress Avenue district wayfinding banners, showcasing iconic images of Austin.

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

About

Civic art is one of the key characteristics that give a city a sense of identity and brings community to the public realm. Creative concepts are taken through a process of inception and development, eventually transforming public space.

In 1985, the City of Austin made a commitment to include works of art in construction projects throughout the city. The Art in Public Places (AIPP) Program collaborates with locally and nationally known artists to implement works of art, many attached to construction projects. To date, sites include the airport, Convention Center, libraries, parks, police stations, recreation centers, and streetscapes, all of which are home to various forms of art that enhance public space and contribute to a sense of place and creativity.

Representative Project

Crystalline consists of a series of polished stainless steel sculptures installed along Colorado Street in downtown Austin. The sculptures mirror the surrounding architecture and street life, inviting interaction and enhancing the urban experience for pedestrians of all ages.

Current & Recent Projects

The Seaholm District will bring many new artworks to the public realm, including artist-created bollards defining the pedestrian way in a new festival street; a group of large huggable sculptures in support of Austin as the family-friendliest city in the nation; and the art-as-infrastructure Seaholm Wall project, setting a precedent on a national level by keeping the public safe from an active electrical substation via public art.



Website

Art in Public Places Program:

austintexas.gov/department/art-in-public-places

Program Contact

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512.974.9314

Collaborating City Departments

Planning and Zoning
Public Works
Austin Transportation

Community Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance
Austin Art Alliance
Downtown Austin Alliance
Waller Creek Conservancy

Crystalline, 2013, by artists Dharmesh Patel and Autumn Ewalt. Photo by Philip Rogers.



III. GREEN STREETS

GREEN STREETS

About

Austin is a “green” city, and our environmental ethos is reflected in the “green streets” elements within our Complete Streets policy.

Complete Streets protect Austin’s sustainability and environment. By providing additional opportunities for people to travel using modes other than just the automobile, Complete Streets will help Austin advance toward its goals of sustainability and carbon neutrality. In the design, operation, and maintenance of its transportation system, the City seeks opportunities to integrate best-practice “green street” principles, features, and metrics adapted for the Austin climate. These may include stormwater management, tree canopy, shade structures, landscaping, climate protection and resiliency, urban heat island mitigation, accessible and integrated parks and natural areas, and other measures.

To ensure that our fast-growing city remains green, livable, and complete, new projects are required or encouraged to include street trees, other landscaping, pocket parks, green roofs, and wildlife habitat to enhance our public realm.

Representative Project

Rio Grande Bike Boulevard is a bicycle boulevard that incorporates vegetated bump-outs to manage stormwater while also acting as a traffic calming element.



Website

Green Streets Program:
austintexas.gov/complete-streets

Lead Contact

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Office of Sustainability
Marc.Coudert@austintexas.gov
512.974.2016

Collaborating City Departments

Watershed Protection
Austin Transportation
Development Review
Public Works
Parks and Recreation

Vegetated bike boulevard along Rio Grande.

STREET TREES

About

Street trees are a vital part of creating pleasant, walkable streets. They beautify our city, soften and humanize the built environment, add nature to the city, and are essential to the special character of Austin.

Practical benefits of street trees include:

- Provide shade for people walking, encouraging pedestrian activity during hot Austin summers
- Protect the safety and comfort of people on sidewalks, by separating them from vehicles
- Mitigate the heat island effect (which makes the central city measurably hotter than natural areas)

Planting new trees and preserving existing trees is required by code for many private development projects. Major City roadway projects dedicate 1% of their budget to tree planting.

The Public Works Department maintains trees growing in the public right of way along 4,800 miles of City streets.

Representative Projects

The City of Austin’s Austin Community Trees program, and NeighborWoods plant about 4,500 trees per year, combined, primarily along residential streets on homeowners’ property.

- [NeighborWoods](#)
- [Austin Community Trees](#)

Current & Recent Projects

- Third Street (Trinity to Nueces)
- Colorado Street, Phase II
- Cesar Chavez Esplanade, Phase II



Website

Urban Forestry Program:
austinurbanforestry.org
[Austin's Comprehensive Urban Forest Plan](#)

Lead Contact

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 Planning and Zoning Department
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 512.974.9548

Collaborating City Departments

Austin Energy
 Parks and Recreation
 Austin Water
 Watershed Protection
 Office of Sustainability

Community Partners

TreeFolks
 Austin Parks Foundation

Street trees along the Cesar Chavez Esplanade, along the end of Lady Bird Lake in Downtown.

RAIN GARDENS

About

A rain garden is a planted area that protects Austin waterways from pollutants by filtering stormwater runoff. Composed of plants and a filtration and/or infiltration system, rain gardens may be incorporated into landscapes and streetscapes to add welcome greenery and beauty to our streets.

Throughout Austin, rain gardens can be found in commercial, civic, residential, multi-family, and right-of-way projects using native plant species to stabilize soil and filter stormwater.

Practical benefits of rain gardens:

- **Conserves Water** - Rain water helps plants grow and reduces the need for watering.
- **Protects Water Quality** - Plants help filter pollutants such as chemicals from roofing tiles, fertilizers, and litter from the sidewalk.
- **Helps Reduce Flooding and Erosion** - Runoff collects in low area and soaks into the soil instead of rapidly washing into creeks.

Representative Project

One Texas Center: This demonstration rain garden with educational signage along Barton Springs Road can be easily viewed by the community. With 1.5 acres of drainage area, the rain garden treats an estimated over 750,000 gallons per year. It has prevented approximately 1,000 pounds of suspended solids from entering East Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake.



Website

Rain Garden Program:
austintexas.gov/raingardens

Program Contact

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Watershed Protection Department
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512.974.1882

Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Austin Transportation
Parks and Recreation
Planning and Zoning
Development Services

This Rain Garden with informational signage is part of the City-maintained streetscape at One Texas Center.



IV. SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

VIVA! STREETS AUSTIN

About

VIVA! Streets is Austin's take on the international festival, Cicloví, which transforms streets away from a place for cars and into a public space. The car-free festival allows typically auto-oriented roads to become pedestrian and bike friendly areas full of free activities for all ages. An estimated total of 40,000 people attended the first three events.

Street festivals such as Viva! Streets help to reclaim the streets as a space where the community can gather to interact with one another and enjoy the public street in ways other than in a car. Viva! Streets encourages healthy activities such as walking, biking, skating, and visiting local establishments. The event is free and open to all, including pets.

Neighborhoods interested in organizing an open streets event can contact the Active Transportation Program.

Recent Events

East 6th Street and Mueller Neighborhood: For the first two years of the festival, VIVA! Streets was held on East 6th Street.

In 2014, the festival moved to Austin's Mueller Neighborhood where a two mile route was closed off from motor vehicles. Streets were closed to vehicles and temporary installations included controlled intersections, public restrooms, Texas Farmers Market, bike share stations, and a plethora of activities for the public to partake in.

In 2015, this open streets festival moved back to East 6th Street, where it occurred on a similar scale.



Website

VIVA! Streets:
austintexas.gov/vivastreet

Program Contacts

Laura Dierenfield, *Active Transportation Program Manager*
Austin Transportation Department
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512.974.7189

Collaborating City Departments

Public Works
Health and Human Services
Austin Transportation
Office of Sustainability
Austin Police

Community Partners

Downtown Austin Alliance
Mueller Neighborhood Association
Bike Texas

Outdoor yoga demonstration on Sixth Street during Viva! Streets.

GREEN ALLEYS

About

Alleys are often neglected areas used primarily for service delivery, such as trash and recycling collection. With this Green Alley Project, Austin joins other leading cities around the world that are working to transform alleys into attractive, safe, and usable public spaces. The project demonstrates that alleys can be community assets and locations for green infrastructure and affordable housing.

Representative Projects

The Green Alley Demonstration Project: This pilot project is located in the Guadalupe Neighborhood of East Austin between East 8th and 9th Streets and bounded by Lydia and Waller Streets. It serves as a micro-scale model of neighborhood sustainability that exemplifies *Imagine Austin's* vision and integrates many priority programs. Through sustainable infrastructure, increasing affordable housing within the alleyway, encouraging compact neighborhoods, and activating alleys to increase public safety, the Green Alley Project provides a safe, accessible, and creative space where neighbors can meet and come together as a community.

The Alley Flat Initiative: The City of Austin replaced damaged paving in the alley, located in the Guadalupe neighborhood in East Austin, and installed two rain gardens as well as planting beds with native landscaping that the residents will maintain. Design studios from the University of Texas worked with residents to design and install art elements and habitat structures for bees and butterflies. The project features five private secondary homes along the alley, providing micro-density and increased housing options. The project also incorporates elements such as colored concrete and pervious pavement, recycled materials, and social gathering areas.

Retrofitted alley in East Austin with rain gardens, native landscaping, art elements, and bee and butterfly habitat.



Website

Green Alley Demonstration Project:
austintexas.gov/page/2012-demonstration-project

Project Contact

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Collaborating City departments

Public Works
Austin Energy
Austin Water
Austin Resource Recovery
Planning and Zoning
Watershed Protection

Community Partners

University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development
University of Texas School of Architecture
Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC)
Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC)

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERING PROGRAM

About

The Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) provides opportunities for community and neighborhood organizations to affect public improvements by sharing in the costs of those efforts with the City of Austin government. The projects include things like community gardens, traffic calming projects, neighborhood parks, and sidewalk and bike lane installations.

The Neighborhood Partnering Program consists of four subprograms that work together to cultivate complete streets and complete communities.

- 1) **The Neighborhood Cost Share Program (NCSP)** assists neighborhood groups in developing, resourcing, and executing small- to medium-sized improvement projects in the City's right of way or on City-owned property.
- 2) **The Grant Assistance Program (GAP)** provides City matching funds that enables applicants to meet cost sharing or matching requirements for external grant opportunities.
- 3) **The Parking Benefit Project Coordination Program (PBPCP)** assists with identifying, scoping, and coordinating local improvement projects for which Parking Benefit District revenue can be dedicated.
- 4) **The Adopt-A-Median Program (AAMP)** provides an approval mechanism for community groups interested in adopting, beautifying, and maintaining a median or other right-of-way areas.

Representative Project

Adelphi Acres Community Garden: This project was the first community garden created in the public right-of-way. The project created a community garden for lease and community use, funded jointly by City of Austin and the community, which contributed 1,500 hours of volunteer time.



Website

Neighborhood Partnering Program:
austintexas.gov/neighborhoodpartnering

Project Contact

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Public Works Department
Justin.Golbabai@austintexas.gov
512.974.6439

Collaborating City departments

Austin Transportation
Parks and Recreation
Planning and Zoning
Watershed Protection
Office of Sustainability

Community Partners

Neighborhood Associations, Homeowners Associations, non-profits, University of Texas at Austin, Sustainable Food Center, Austin Parks Foundation, Go Austin!/Vamos Austin!

Fairy Alley, once a mundane right-of-way, was "adopted" by the neighborhood and is now a whimsical delight for public enjoyment.

APPENDIX

Complete Streets Policy City of Austin

Austin City Council adopted a robust Complete Streets Policy in 2014, as called for in the community's *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*. The policy establishes an approach to our streets that simultaneously advances three community goals: multimodal mobility, creating appealing people places, and integrating nature/sustainability.

Eight Complete Streets Principles: City Policy

Complete Streets ...

1. Serve all users and modes
2. Require connected travel networks
3. Are beautiful, interesting, and places for people
4. Require best-practice design criteria and context-sensitive approaches
5. Protect Austin's sustainability and environment
6. Include all roadways and all projects and phases
7. Are the work of all City departments
8. Require appropriate performance measures

The full adopted Complete Streets Policy is at:
austintexas.gov/complete-streets



AUSTIN
complete
streets



COMPLETE STREETS PROGRAM

Austin Transportation Department
City of Austin, Texas

austintexas.gov/complete-streets

To contact individual City of Austin programs, call 3-1-1