

## STREET DESIGN, PROJECTS, AND SAFETY

### Active Transportation Projects, Austin Transportation Department (ATD)

ATD's Active Transportation team is rocking, adding complete streets improvements around Austin. This past fiscal year saw over 22 unique projects covering 36 miles of Austin streets. Highlighted projects include a new parking protected bicycle lane on San Jacinto (between Dean Keeton and Speedway), a new connection for the Violet Crown Trail on Sendera Mesa Drive, and improved connectivity for pedestrians across 32<sup>nd</sup> Street at St. David's Medical Center.

### Complete Street Improvements: Engineering Division, ATD

ATD engineers piloted the innovative design at Sixth and Waller (at right) and are working on more. To make streets safer, new "traffic calming" cushions are being installed on residential streets around town with documented speeding issues, by neighborhood request. Issues raised by citizens are being addressed weekly – and improved standards for crosswalks are moving forward too.

### Private Projects

Over at Development Services, the Transportation Review team is actively encouraging land-use-review applicants to comply with the Complete Streets Policy, on projects large and small. ATD engineers consult regularly on crafting specific project solutions. Need insights? A [Complete Streets Checklist](#) to guide private projects is available on our website 24/7.



ATD engineers redesigned this pedestrian-rich, crash-prone intersection at E. 6th and Waller to make it safer – especially for people walking.

**Street Design Guidelines:** To make streets complete, we need to design them differently. Toward this end, ATD has been actively at work on new standards for the design of Austin streets. These standards are part of a new **Street Network Plan**, being coordinated with CodeNEXT, that's grounded in a context-sensitive, complete streets approach. The final version will be included in the emerging Austin Strategic Mobility Plan. Consultant Kimley-Horn has been assisting Austin Transportation with this important project.

**Vision Zero:** Street design, to make streets safer for people travelling by all modes, is a core element of the draft Austin 2016-18 [Vision Zero Action Plan](#), developed towards achieving a vision of zero deaths and serious injuries. (The draft has been out for public comment in February.) A top Action in the Plan: **"Continue to implement the Complete Streets policy.** Fund infrastructure improvements for alternative modes of travel."

**Best Practices:** In New York City, a Vision Zero leader, **Street Design** is one of 5 major initiatives. The NYDOT Vision Zero website states: "Data shows that **the safest street designs** are those that **make the expected behavior clear** and **separate drivers from bicyclists and pedestrians**. DOT's redesigns often include updated markings to organize traffic, and curb extensions or islands to give pedestrians a place to stand." Austin Transportation is hard at work on similar projects; additional Vision Zero resources could allow us to increase the pace and volume.

**Mayor's Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets:** This USDOT challenge requires cities to “Take a Complete Streets approach.” For Austin’s participation, our mid-year progress report showed great progress is being made on dozens of initiatives identified citywide to improve the safety of people walking and biking. Look for upcoming stories about the individual projects in Austin Mobility News.

## PROGRAM NEWS

**Complete Street Heroes:** The Complete Streets Program recognized about 75 City staff across departments as “Heroes” for their “Innovation, Perseverance, and Active Advancement” of Complete Streets in Austin. At a Jan. 14 celebration, Certificates of Achievement and the updated [Complete Street Guide to City Programs](#) were presented by ATD Director Rob Spillar and Complete Streets Program Manager Katherine Gregor. A great group of city staff enjoyed catching up over breakfast tacos and coffee.

**USDOT Smart Cities Challenge:** We contributed to the City of Austin’s competitive submission to be selected as a finalist Smart City. One city will receive \$50 million. Our “Vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mobility System” defines a project that would powerfully jump-start Austin’s multimodal, self-driving car future.

**TEMPO Artboxes:** Tell your emerging-artist friends about this opportunity! Artboxes (artist-designed wraps for ATD signal boxes) are included in this year’s [TEMPO 2016 Call for Proposals](#). TEMPO enlivens public space with temporary artworks; **submissions are due March 10**. The pilot Artbox areas are on Burnet Road, South First St., Manor Road, and East 12<sup>th</sup> St. Two are [Soul-y Austin](#) business district areas and two are Austin [IBIZ Districts](#) (both funded by the Economic Development Department).

**Street Banners:** Street banners are enlivening more Austin streets, for more weeks each year. Their popularity is growing fast as a way to promote events by small local nonprofits (over-the-street banners), major cultural events in Austin (lamppost banners), and public information. ATD installed **over 900 Banners in 2015**, breaking all projections, thanks to the 2015 addition of Lauren Seyda as our Street Banner Program Coordinator – and 2016 is off to a seriously roaring start. Colorful lamppost banners up in February have drawn attention to 3 -1-1, Austin Marathon, and SXSW. Our own “Streets for Everyone” banners continue to raise visibility for the goals of our Complete Streets approach.



**Artbox programs in cities nationwide transform dull utility boxes into street canvases for art, as in this example from Burbank, CA.**

A new set of year-round **Seaholm EcoDistrict Banners** is going up on Electric Drive (with the Office of Sustainability) this spring; this will be our third set of district identity banners, after Congress Avenue (with the Downtown Austin Alliance) and the Red River Cultural District (with Souly-Austin) – both up on Austin streets.

**Two new interns:** This semester, two graduate students in the Community and Regional Planning Program at UT Austin are working with us 20 hours/week. **Allison Long** is tackling our first annual Complete Streets Metric Report and expanded communications. **Rebecca Fleisher**, an urban design student, is working on the piloting of an Artbox program, standards for the parklet program, and streetscape standards for business districts (with Urban Design and Soul-y Austin).

*Have a story idea for our next newsletter? Please send it to [Katherine.Gregor@AustinTexas.gov](mailto:Katherine.Gregor@AustinTexas.gov)*