



Greater Austin Hispanic  
Chamber of Commerce  
*Expanding Business Culture*

July 14, 2010

2010 Bond Election

Mayor Lee Leffingwell:

Thank you for taking the time to use your wide-ranging experience and perspectives to review the initial list of recommended projects from the City of Austin Transportation staff regarding the potential 2010 Bond Election.

We are generally supportive of the initial list that was distributed by the Staff and on behalf of our 1,000+ members; here is a summary of our observations and concerns:

- The largest tangible project, the completion of the Lady Bird Lake Trail is an example of what we would have normally supported, but given the relatively small size of the bond package, are inclined to oppose. We generally have been supportive of ‘shovel-ready’ projects during this economic recession so the taxpayers get the most for their dollar, but this specific project is not a transportation project in our view. It will be a great asset to our Lady Bird Lake, but suggest it be a part of the larger 2012 bond referendum plans.
- With the added \$17 Million that is designated for the trail completion, we would instead suggest focused efforts on construction-ready projects that were lower on the priority list from the staff’s evaluation, but are high congestion points. If we could address even 3 or 4 other major congestion issues, we will be helping our air quality as well as improving commutes. Moreover, we would be providing more ‘deliverables’ to the voters in advance of the major request we will be undertaking in a 2012 package.
- There are other bicycle projects we do support because they are ready for construction and make good transportation sense. We have had too many deadly incidents involving moving vehicles and bicycles. When we provide a safer cycling environment, we are also providing more options for those who may be inclined to utilize a bicycle or combination of cycle and mass transit to get to their destination. These projects include:
  - Guadalupe Bike Facility – from 45<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Bike Crossing at Jollyville and U.S. 183
  - Dessau/Cameron Bike Lanes
  - Manchaca Road Bike Lanes





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- Our most significant traffic congestion point is Interstate 35. The funds and time needed to plan that are daunting, but they are the most dangerous part of traveling through Austin and are literally choking our City's and regional economic potential. We believe spending a mere \$2 Million towards the effort is not enough, nor do we believe the \$2 Million is part of a larger vision or plan to address the problem. We would like to see leadership and vision from the City when it comes to this congested and dangerous highway.
- We welcome the plans to address improvements and leverage funds for future upgrades to our mass transit system. We look forward to seeing how the plans for urban rail begin to unfold and demonstrate that a mature mass transit system provides great promise for improving our quality of life. Those plans include not only the bicycle improvements listed above, but also major corridors for either future rail or existing high-capacity bus routes.

Finally, we would encourage you to help us address the way in which projects were prioritized. We would strongly support projects that address congestion and equally important, air quality issues.

Thank you for your service to the Austin taxpayer and to those Central Texans who rely upon Austin infrastructure to move in and through the region.

Sincerely,

Andrew Martinez, President/CEO

The Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

CC: Pilar Sanchez, GAHCC Board-Chair

Celia Israel, GAHCC Advocacy Committee-Chair

City of Austin-Council Members

Citizens Bond Advisory Committee

