# Completing Austin's Streets


**Robert Spillar, Director | City of Austin Transportation Department | January 2016**

## OVERVIEW

# Part I. 10 Lessons Learned in Austin
# Part II. Peer City Best Practices
# Part III. Austin Projects

# Part I. 10 Lessons Learned

Or, The City of Austin's evolutionary path

from a **Bike Program***

to a

**Complete Streets Program**

paired with an

**Active Transportation Program**

** with pedestrian and transit programs too*

# 1. Terrible traffic helps.

- Austin-area roadways are among the most traffic-congested in the country.

# 2. Integrate investments with CIP $$$.

- Built a mission-driven group of designers, planners, PM's, community outreach staff.
- Project team in Public Works, integrated with CIP $$

# 3. Add bike lanes during road work.

- 2002 City Council resolution: bike + ped 20%

"Whenever you can, add bicycle facilities during road work -- otherwise you lose that opportunity, perhaps for a generation."

-- Public Works Director Howard Lazarus

# 4. Build community advocates.

- Street Smart Task Force built momentum
- Gung-ho cycling community (Bike Austin)
- Bicycle Advisory Group – Advises Mayor & Council
- Nonprofit for Bike Share

# 5. Create + update a Bicycle Master Plan.

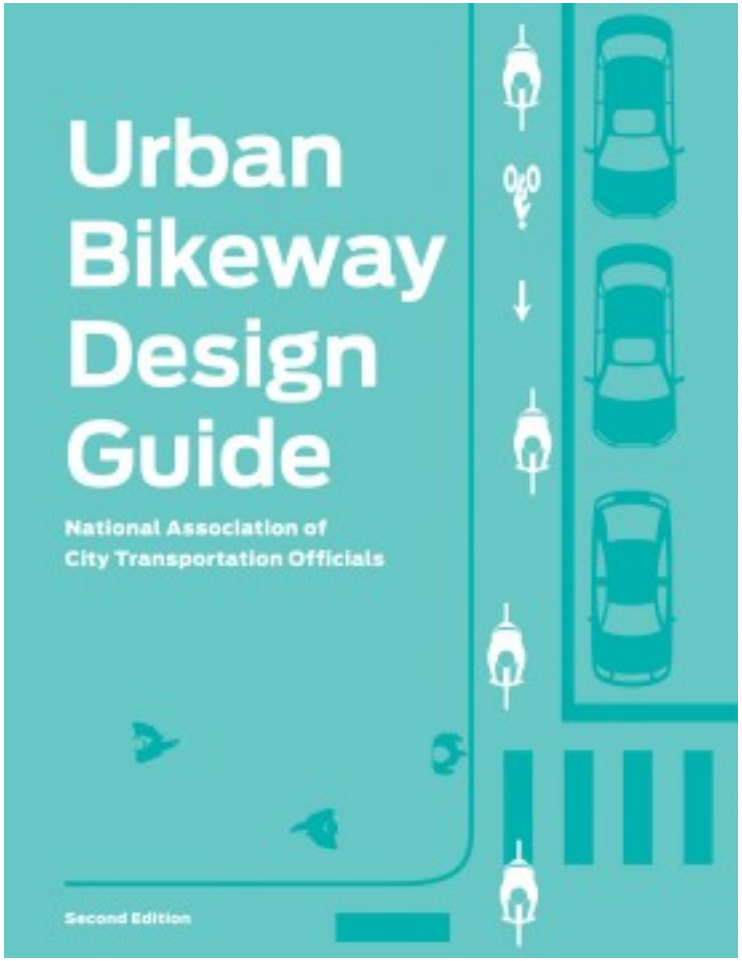
1998 > 2009 > 2014

# 6. Build a lot of bicycle routes fast.

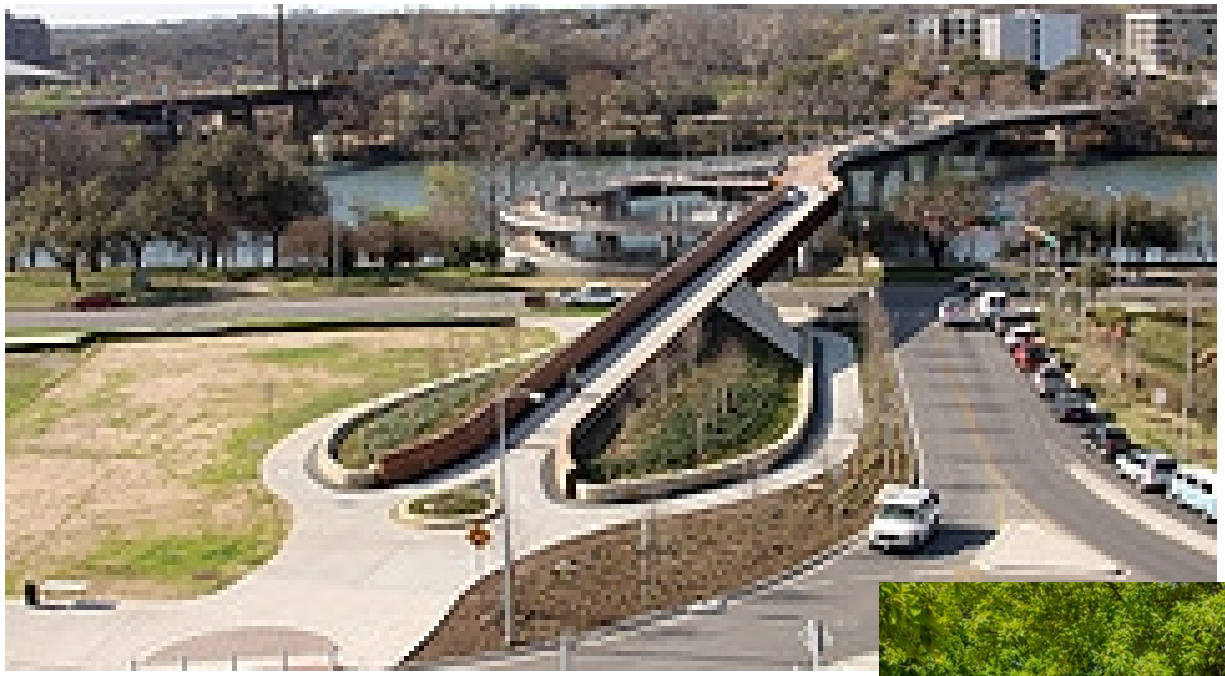
- 2008-2013 175 miles of bike facilities

# 7. Adopt the NACTO guides.

National Association of City Transportation Officials




# 8. Shift City Culture: “Business As Usual.”



Pfluger Bicycle Bridge

Ribbon Cutting Event

# 9. Send decision makers on study tours.

- The Green Lane Project, 2011-2013
- 1 of 6 cities, People for Bikes
- Holland & Denmark: *See it, ride it, believe it!*


Hotel
Info
Park Plaza Brasserie
FEBO

Big Take-Away:

"I'm excited about making any investment where one of the ROI's is joy."

City Manager
Marc Ott

Big Take-Away: “Cities need to serve not ‘cyclists’ but rather ‘people on bikes’.”

Public Works Director Howard Lazarus

Big Take-Away: "It takes decades to build mature bicycle networks, so make incremental improvements and retrofits every year." -- Council Member Chris Riley

# 10. Activate a Complete Streets policy.

# Policy: Community Co-Benefits

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Affordability
- ✓ Going Green
- ✓ Economy
- ✓ Choices
- ✓ Smart growth

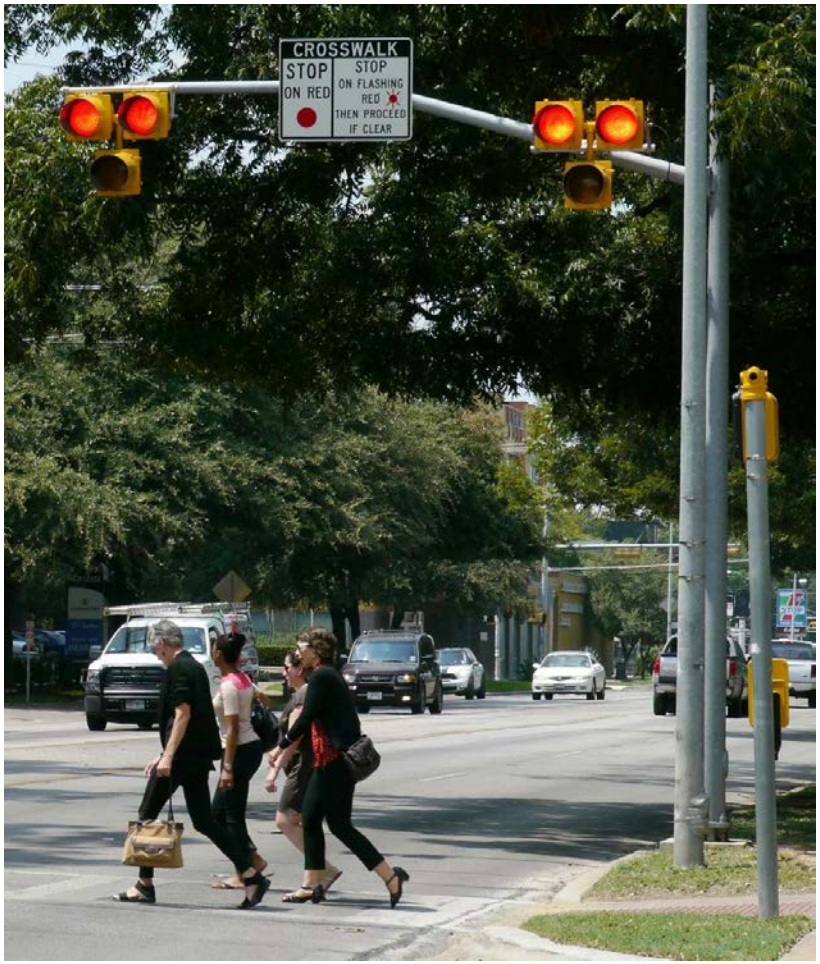
Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

National Complete Streets Coalition

# Policy: Integrates Pedestrian

## Ongoing efforts include:

- ✓ Sidewalk Program
- ✓ Great Streets Program
- ✓ Sidewalk Cafes
- ✓ Urban Trails
- ✓ Pedestrian Beacons



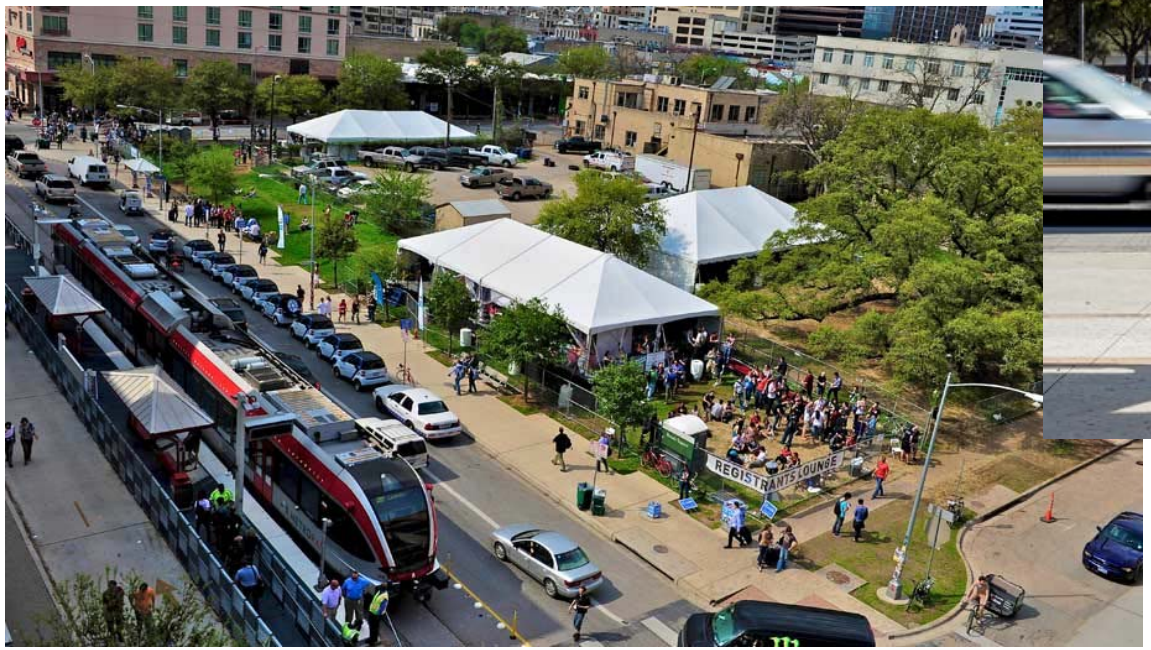

6ixth
Buffalo Billiards
LUNCH IS SERVED!
NOW OPEN AT 11AM
MONDAY - FRIDAY
Buffalo Billiards
SODA


AHEAD

# Policy: Integrates Transit

## Ongoing efforts include:

- ✓ Bus Rapid Transit and Rail
- ✓ Transit Priority Lanes

# Policy: Integrates Green & Placemaking

# Austin Complete Streets Policy

- **Mobility**
- **Urban Design**
- **Green Streets**

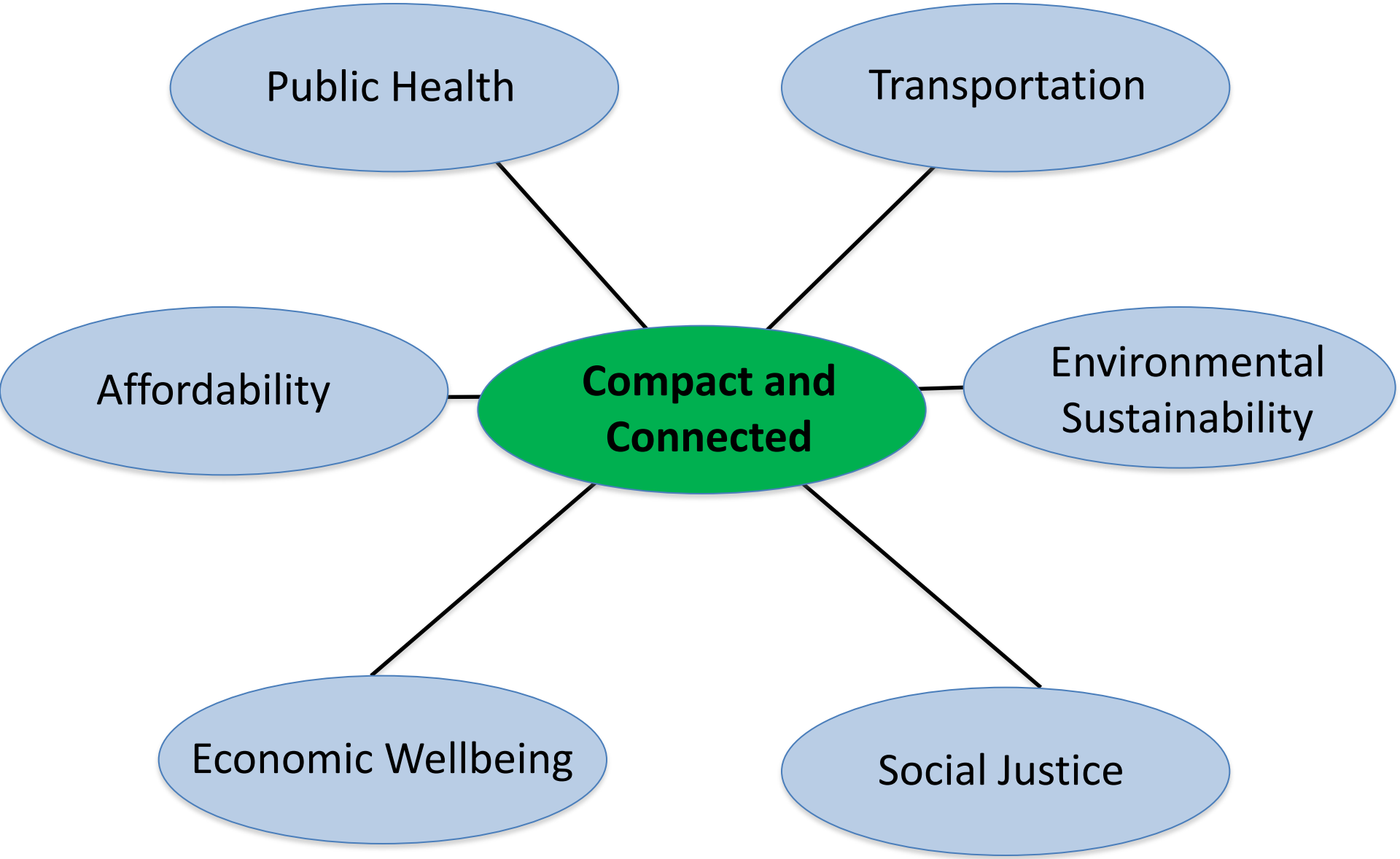

## FOUNDATION

**2012 - New City Comprehensive Plan**

## PRIORITY PROGRAMS

- **Invest in a compact and connected Austin.**
- **Sustainably manage our water resources.**
- **Use green infrastructure to integrate nature into the city.**
- **Grow Austin's creative economy.**
- **Develop and maintain household affordability.**
- **Create a Healthy Austin Program.**
- **Revise development regulations and processes to promote a Compact and Connected city.**

# Imagine Austin Preferred Growth Pattern: Many Benefits



**Austin Complete Streets Policy: 8 Principles**

**Complete Streets...**

1. Serve all users and modes.
2. Require connected travel networks.
3. Are beautiful, interesting and comfortable 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.

Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

National Complete Streets Coalition

# The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2014

February 2015

## CITY OF AUSTIN COMPLETE STREETS POLICY
## VISION AND INTENT

Complete Streets are a tool to advance multiple long-term community goals defined by the vision and policies of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

The intent of this Complete Streets policy is to enhance Austin's quality of life by advancing mobility, public health and safety, livability, sustainability, equity, affordability, economic activity, climate resilience, green infrastructure, excellence in urban design and community character.

Specifically, this Complete Streets Policy is a tool to implement a core Imagine Austin Priority Program: "Invest in a compact and connected Austin."

As part of this program, the City of Austin commits to making improvements within the right of way that support making pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel as safe and convenient as vehicle travel.

Complete Streets support compact development patterns and expand everyone's mobility choices throughout Austin. They are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

The City of Austin recognizes that the design of streets and the right of way provides a unique opportunity to thoughtfully integrate and advance multiple objectives for our community while delivering maximum benefits from City investments.

PART II

# PEER CITY RESEARCH

# LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICES

## CREATING A COMPLETE STREETS CITY CULTURE

# RESEARCH: What's between a POLICY …

- Complete Streets Program: Create, staff, fund
- Internal Alignment: Multiple departments
- Staff Training. Community/Partner Education.
- Private Sector (site plan review process)
- Project Funding (Transportation user fee)
- Update Guidance
  - Code Revisions
  - Criteria Manual
  - Street Design Guidelines
  - Process: Project development and reviews

… and PROJECTS?

# SAN FRANCISCO 7 Year Process +

**2005**
Better Streets Policy

**2006**
Complete Streets Policy

**2008**
Better Streets Plan: released for public review

**2010**
Better Streets Plan

Final

**2012**
Project Guidance Issued

Integrated website

SAN FRANCISCO BEST PRACTICE

# Design Guidance by Street Type (Typologies)

## Downtown Commercial

Downtown commercial streets such as Grant or Kearny Streets handle high pedestrian volumes and high levels of activity throughout the day. Due to their importance, visibility, and high levels of pedestrian activity, downtown streets should have generous sidewalks, high levels of pedestrian amenities, and distinctive, formal design treatments.

Streetscape guidelines for downtown commercial streets are described in the *Downtown Streetscape Plan*, adopted in 1995.

Downtown streets cater to a high volume of local and visiting pedestrians and should reflect a high level of amenity and quality of care.

### Considerations

- High levels of pedestrian activity
- Desire for generous pedestrian environment and public realm
- High volume of through traffic
- Important transit functions
- Access needs for local businesses
- Potential presence of sub-sidewalk basements
- Limited sunlight access to sidewalks

### Standard Improvements

Marked crosswalks with curb ramps (Section 5.1)

Sidewalk planters (planter boxes) (6.1)

Pedestrian signals (countdown and APS) (5.2)

Stormwater control measures (6.2)

Corner curb extensions (5.2)

Pedestrian-scale lighting (6.3)

Street trees (6.1)

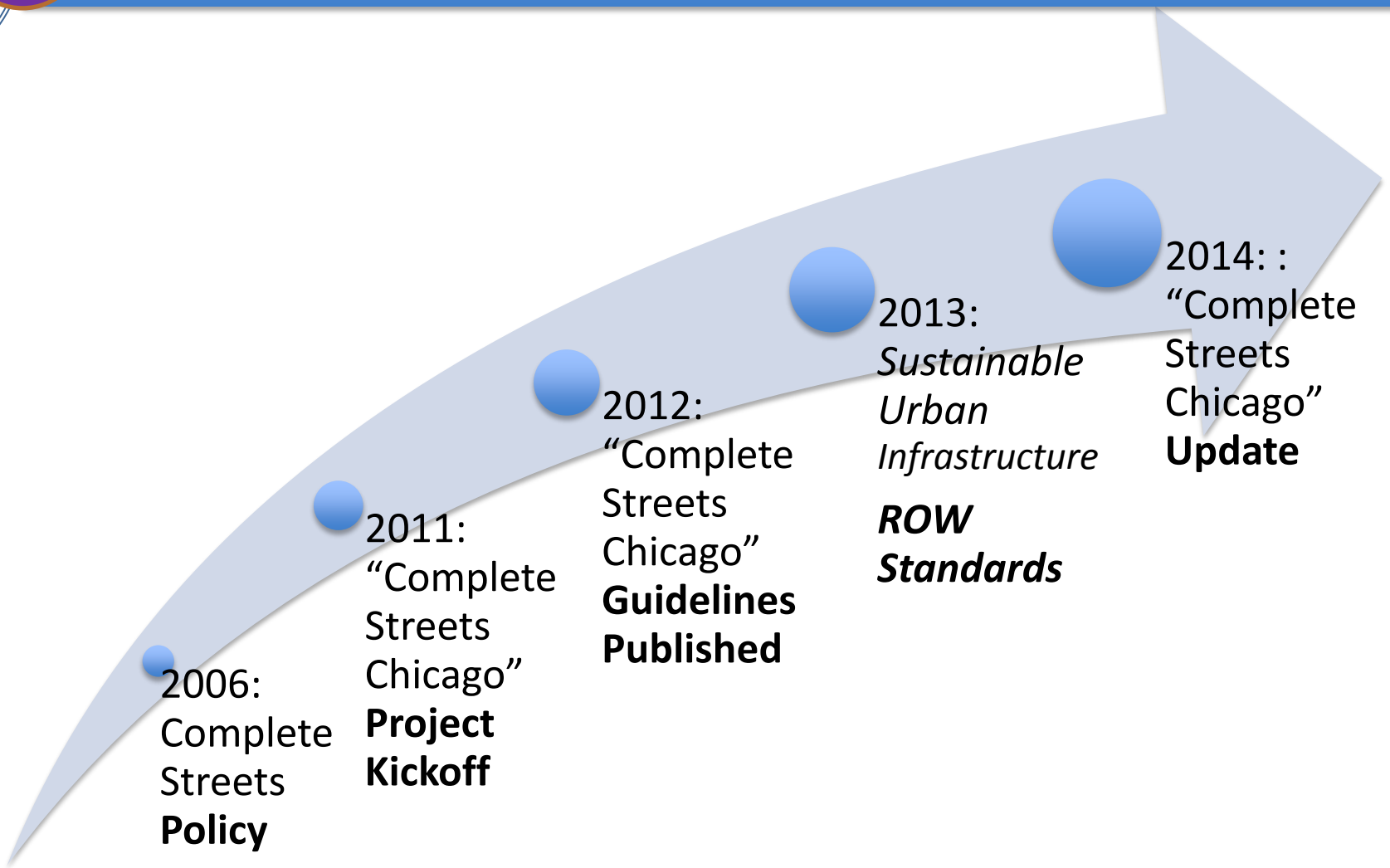
Special paving in furnishings zone (6.4)

Site furnishings (6.5)

### Additional Guidelines

- Downtown Commercial streets should follow the guidelines in the Downtown Streetscape Plan
- For specific stormwater control measures, see Section 6.2.

# CHICAGO 8 year process



CHICAGO BEST PRACTICE

# 4 Part Framework

#1 pedestrians
#2 transit
#3 cyclists
#4 vehicles

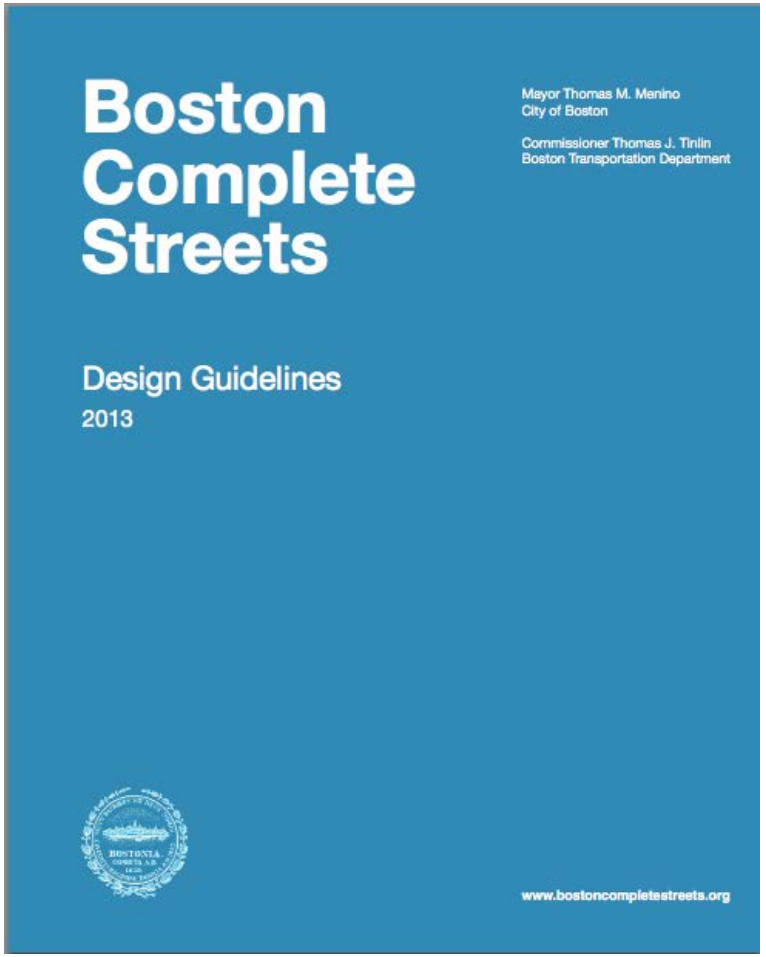

Street Types - by context

Project Delivery Toolkit

Design Guidance

# BOSTON Complete Streets Design Guidelines

- Vision
- Street Types
- Sidewalks
- Roadways
- Intersections
- Smart Curbsides
- Implementation

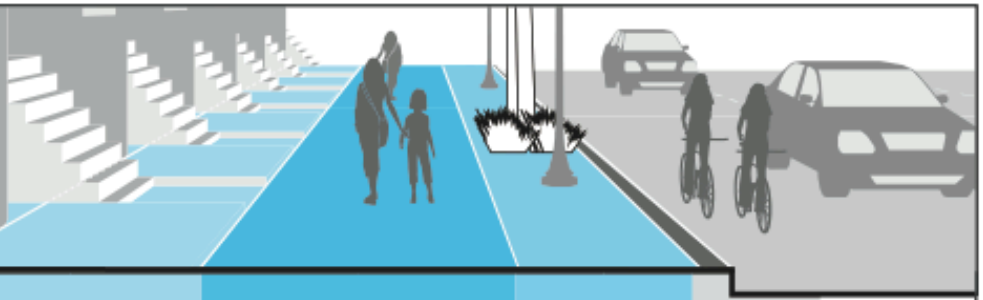


BOSTON BEST PRACTICE

# Clear ROW & Engineering Guidance

## Preferred and Minimum Widths for Sidewalk Zones

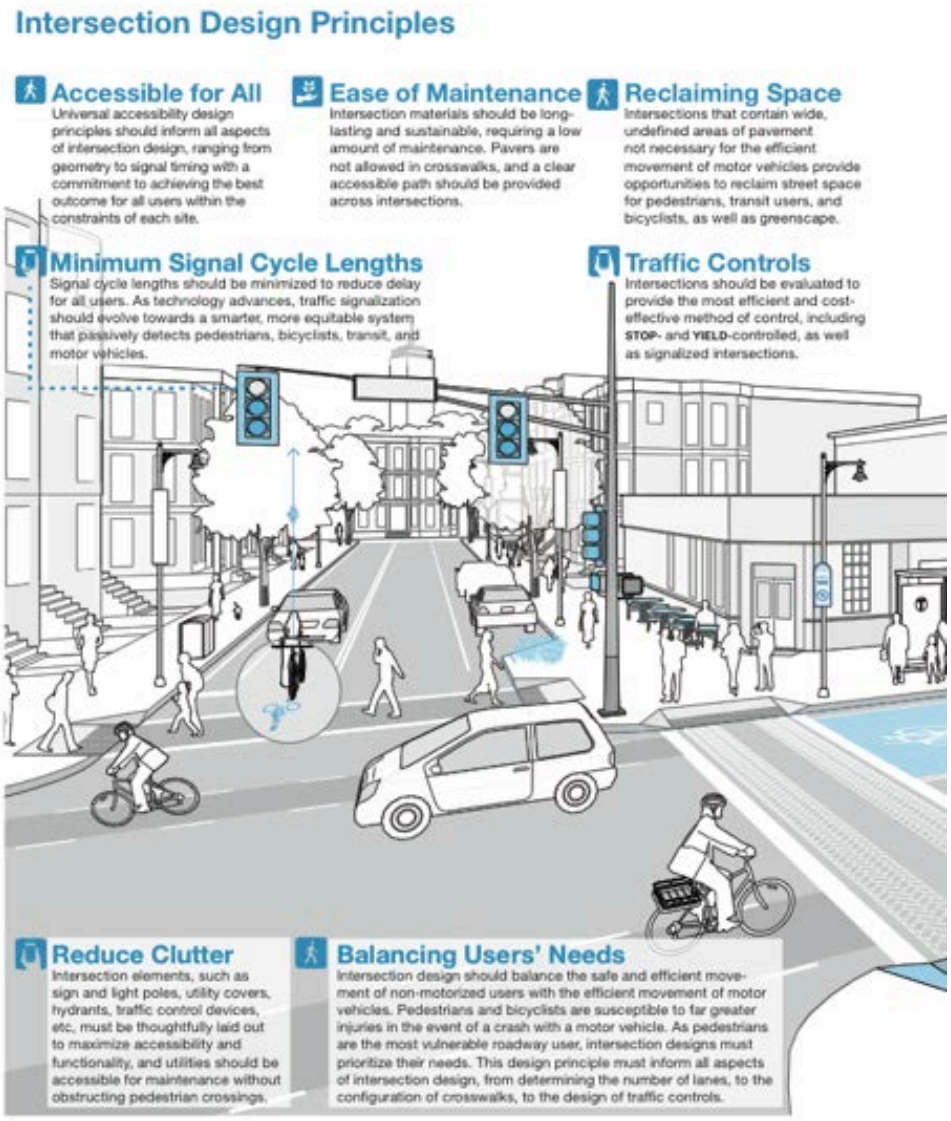
The width and design of sidewalks will vary depending on street typology, functional classification, and demand. Below are the City of Boston's preferred and minimum widths for each Sidewalk Zone by Street Type.



| Street Type | Frontage Zone | | Pedestrian Zone* | | Greenscape/ Furnishing Zone | | Curb Zone | Total Width | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Preferred | Minimum | Preferred | Minimum | Preferred | Minimum | | Preferred | Minimum |
| Downtown Commercial | 2' | 0' | 12' | 8' | 6' | 1'-6" | 6" | 20'-6" | 10' |
| Downtown Mixed-Use | 2' | 0' | 10' | 8' | 6' | 1'-6" | 6" | 18'-6" | 10' |
| Neighborhood Main | 2' | 0' | 8' | 5' | 6' | 1'-6" | 6" | 16'-6" | 7' |
| Neighborhood Connector | 2' | 0' | 8' | 5' (4')* | 5' | 1'-6" | 6" | 15'-6" | 7' |
| Neighborhood Residential | 2' | 0' | 5' | 5' (4')* | 4' | 1'-6" | 6" | 11'-6" | 7' |
| Industrial Street | 2' | 0' | 5' | 5' (4')* | 4' | 1'-6" | 6" | 11'-6" | 7' |
| Shared Street | 2' | 0' | Varies | 5' (4')* | N/A | N/A | N/A | Varies | Varies |
| Parkway | N/A | N/A | 6' | 5' | 10' | 5' | 6" | 16'-6" | 10'-6" |
| Boulevard | 2' | 0' | 6' | 5' | 10' | 5' | 6" | 18'-6" | 11'-6" |

BOSTON BEST PRACTICE

# Design Guide: Graphic & Accessible



BOSTON BEST PRACTICE

# Accessible Visuals: example for driveways

FEATURES TO ACTIVATE SIDEWALKS

## Driveways

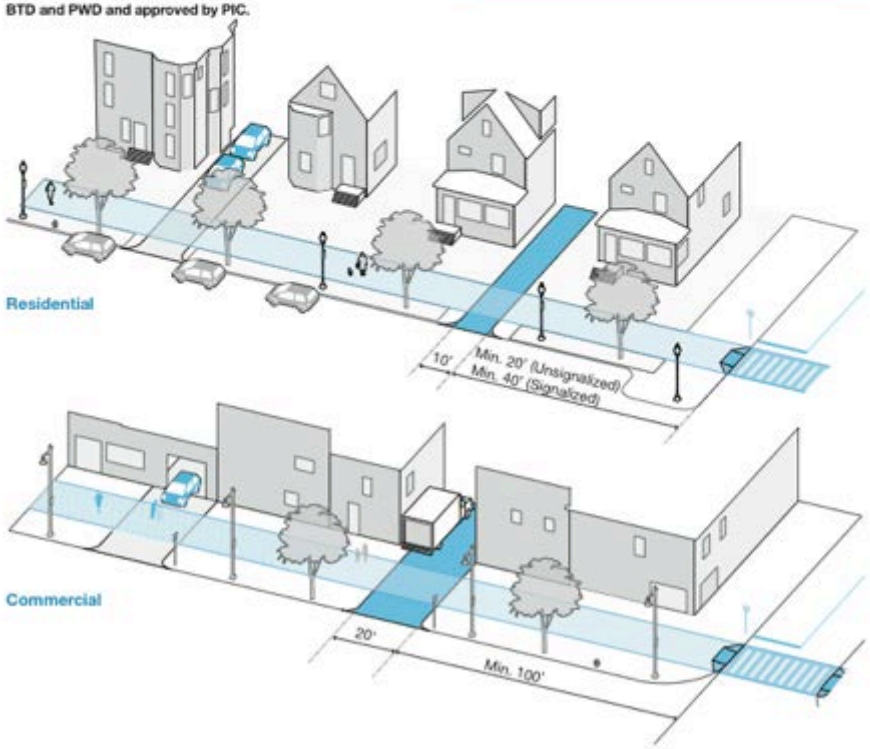
### Overview

The design of driveways should provide a continuous and level Pedestrian Zone across the vehicular path and encourage vehicles to yield to pedestrians on the sidewalk. Driveways across public sidewalks are sometimes needed to link streets to off-street parking facilities and loading zones, however driveways can create conflicts and require special treatments in order to maintain a safe and comfortable walking environment.

**New driveways, or changes to existing driveways for either commercial or residential use must be reviewed by BTD and PWD and approved by PIC.**

### Driveway Setbacks and Widths

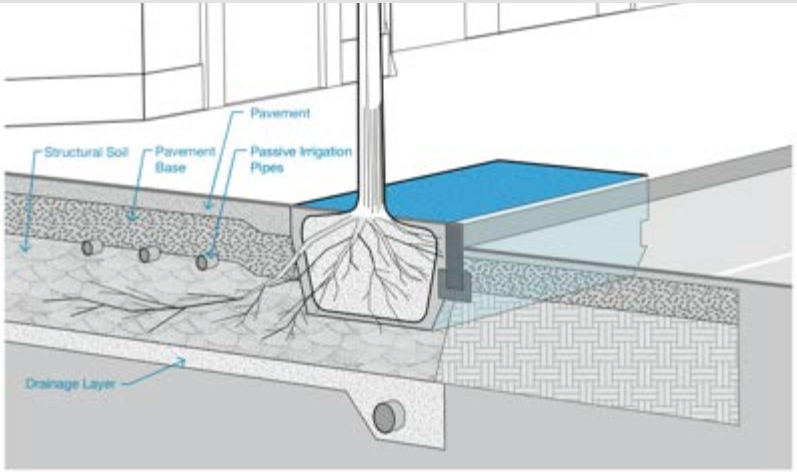
| | Min. Distance from Signalized Intersection | Min. Distance from Unsignalized Intersection | Min. Driveway Width | Max Driveway Width |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commercial Driveways | 100' | 100' | 20' | 24' |
| Residential Driveways | 40' | 20' | 10' | 12' |



BOSTON BEST PRACTICE

# Specifications: example for street trees

## Root Environment for Street Trees



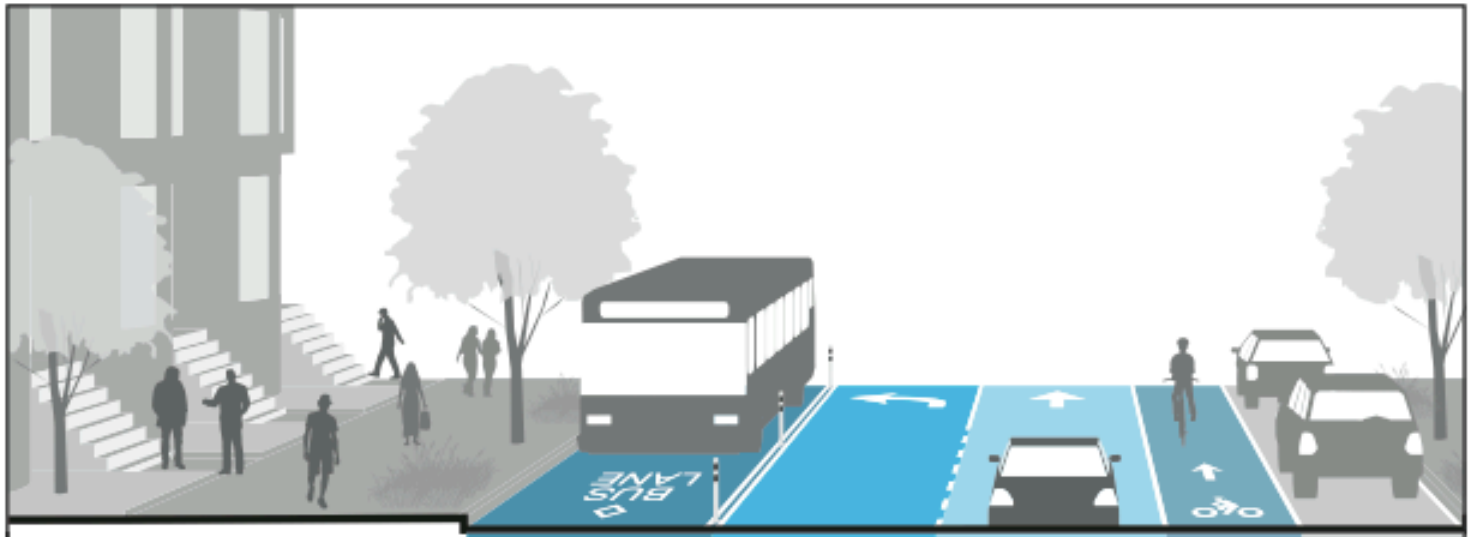

## Preferred Tree Spacing and Offsets

| | 1 Short Stature Ornamental Trees | 2 Medium Stature Trees | 3 Large Stature Shade Trees |
|---|---|---|---|
| On-Center Spacing | 20' | 25' | 30' |
| Offset from Curbs or Path Edges | 2'-6" | 2'-6" | 2'-6" |
| Offset from Light Poles | 15' | 15' | 15' |
| Offset from Driveways, Fire Hydrants, Loading Zones | 10' | 10' | 10' |
| Offset from Intersections (Depending on direction of traffic) | 20' | 20' to 40' | 20' to 40' |

BOSTON BEST PRACTICE

# Specifications: Lane widths

## Minimum Widths for Roadway Lanes




| Street Type | FHWA Classification | Bus Lane | Turn Lane | Travel Lane | Bicycle Lane | Parking Lane |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Downtown Commercial<br>Downtown Mixed-Use | Arterial | 11' | 10' | 10' | 5' | 7' |
| Neighborhood Main<br>Neighborhood Connector<br>Neighborhood Residential | Collector | N/A | 10' | 10' | 5' | 7' |
| Industrial Street<br>Shared Street<br>Parkway<br>Boulevard | Local | Local roadways are typically one to two travel lanes, with or without parking, and do not have pavement markings. | | | | |

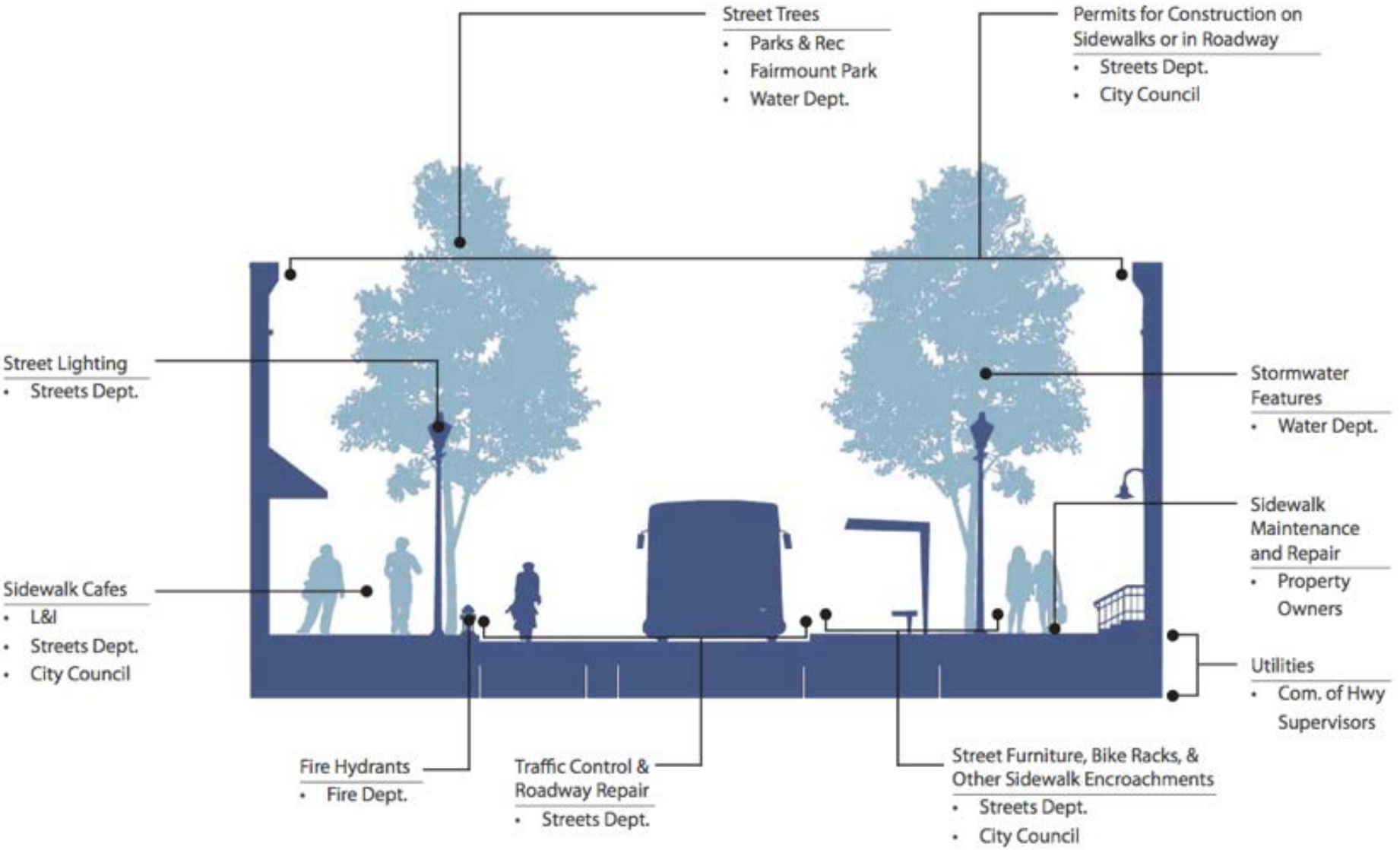
BEST PRACTICE

# Philadelphia Complete Streets Design Handbook

- ✓ Street Planning and Design Process
- ✓ Street Types (Typologies) with Map
- ✓ Complete Streets Components
- ✓ Street Design Guidance
- ✓ Implementation and Enforcement
- ✓ Green Streets Design Handbook

PHILADELPHIA BEST PRACTICE

# Graphic: Who's Who in the R.O.W.



PHILADELPHIA BEST PRACTICE

# Street Type Classifications

- **High-Volume Pedestrian**
- Walkable Commercial Corridor
- Urban Arterial
- Commercial/Industrial
- City Neighborhood
- Low-Density Residential
- Local

**Each type of street has its own section in the Complete Street Design Handbook, that shows exactly how to design it.**

PHILADELPHIA BEST PRACTICE

# Design Guidance: By Street Type

## 3.1 HIGH-VOLUME PEDESTRIAN

These streets are important pedestrian destinations and connections in high-density commercial, residential, and mixed use neighborhoods. High-Volume Pedestrian streets serve more than 1,200 pedestrians per hour during the midday. Many of these streets also provide important connections for vehicle traffic and serve high vehicle volumes. As a result, these streets must often be designed to prioritize pedestrian movement and accommodate high vehicle traffic volumes.

**PEDESTRIAN SIGNIFICANCE**

High

**VEHICLE SIGNIFICANCE**

High to Medium

**FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

Major or Minor Arterial

**TYPICAL LAND USE & CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Commercial, mixed use, higher-density residential (R10+)

**CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Primarily located in Center City
- High levels of pedestrian activity. Focus on pedestrian environment and public realm.
- Buildings set at edge of street line and commercial uses create high potential for sidewalk encroachments.

**DESIGN TREATMENTS:**

### 4.3 PEDESTRIAN COMPONENT

*Required*

- Min. clear width 8' or half total sidewalk width(4.3.2)
- Curb ramps (4.3.3)

*High Priority (include if width permits)*

- 16' sidewalk width (4.3.1)

*Appropriate in Limited Circumstances*

- Festival (curbless) street (4.3.5)

### 4.4 BUILDING & FURNISHING COMPONENT

*Required*

- Min. 4' furnishing zone (4.4.2)

*High Priority (include if width permits)*

- Bicycle parking (4.4.3)
- Lighting (4.4.4)
- Street trees (4.4.7)
- Street Furniture, Honor Boxes, Etc (4.4.10)

*Priority (consider if width permits)*

- Benches (4.4.5)
- Planters (4.4.8)
- Stormwater planters (4.4.9)

*Appropriate in Limited Circumstances*

- Sidewalk cafes (4.4.6)
- Newsstands (4.4.11)
- Vendors (4.4.12)
- Architectural features (4.4.13)

### 4.5 BICYCLE COMPONENT

*High Priority (include if width permits)*

- Conventional bike lane (4.5.1)
- Buffered bike lane (4.5.3)
- Bike route signs (4.5.11)

*Priority (consider if width permits)*

- Marked shared lane (4.5.9)

*Appropriate in Limited Circumstances*

- Cycle track (4.5.6)
- Bicycle friendly street (4.5.8)
- Green colored pavement (4.5.10)

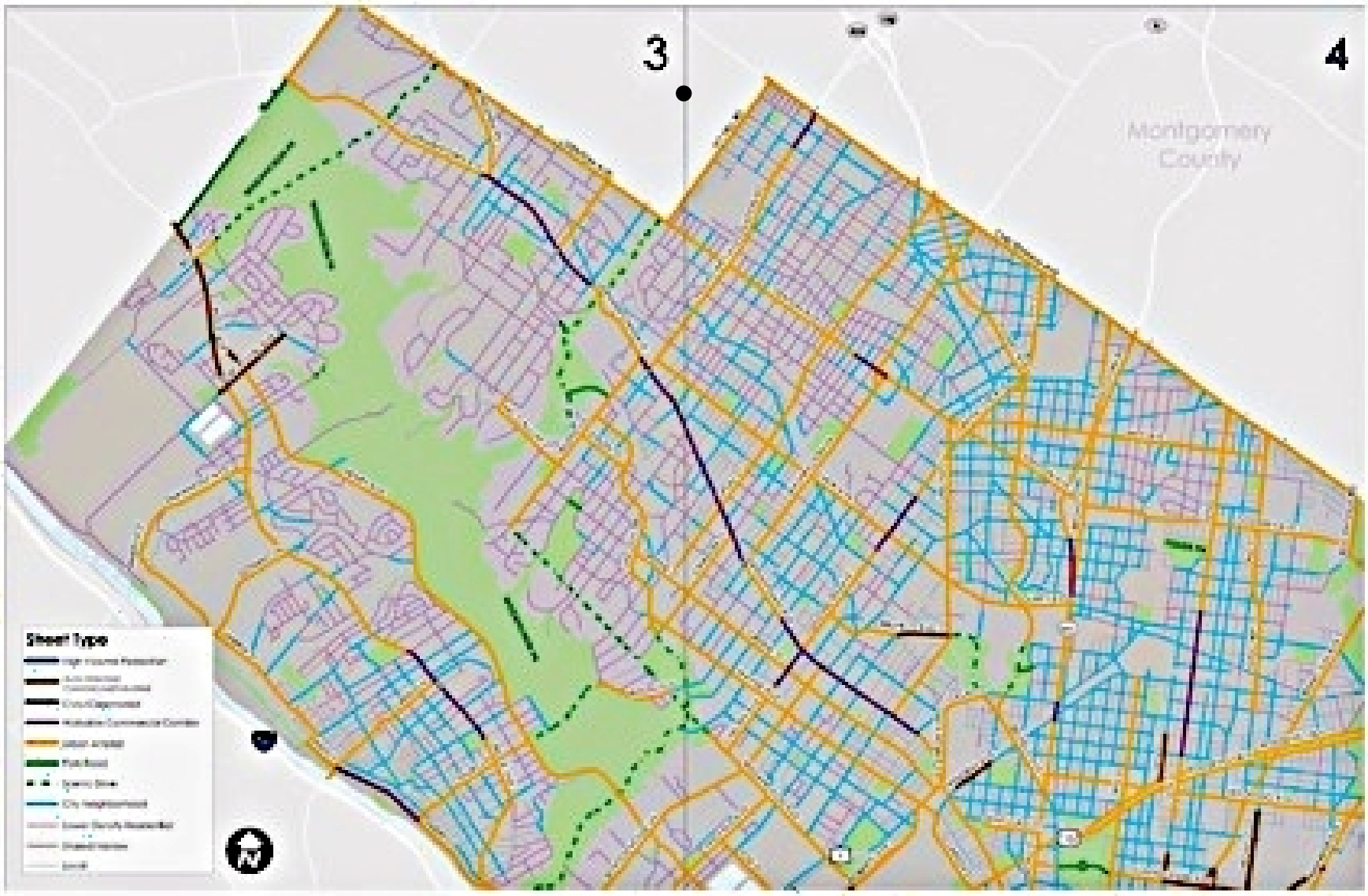
### 4.6 CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

*High Priority (include if width permits)*

- On-street parking (4.6.1)
- In-street bicycle parking (4.6.2)
- Loading zones (4.6.4)
- Transit stops & shelters (4.6.5)

PHILADELPHIA BEST PRACTICE

# Street Types: Map  Find your street, know your design



# So, back to Austin …

# AUSTIN 5 Year Process

Bike and Pedestrian Projects
+ Transit Priority continue

**2014**

**Policy Adopted**

**2014-15**

**CS Program Launched**

**Active Transport.**

Bike Plan

Trails Plan

**2016**

**Street Network Plan**

**Street Design Process**

**Vision Zero**

**CodeNEXT**

**CS Metrics Report**

**2017-2018**

**Strategic Mobility Plan**

CS Design Standards

New Code & Criteria

**2018-2020**

**Transformational Projects**

Metrics

*Continuous Improvement*

*ALL YEARS*

*Education*

*Enforcement*

*Funding*

*Safety (Vision Zero)*

# AUSTIN 2014 - A Busy Year!

- ✓ Policy Development
- ✓ New! Complete Streets Steering Committee
- ✓ **Complete Streets Policy Adopted**
- ✓ National Complete Streets Coalition

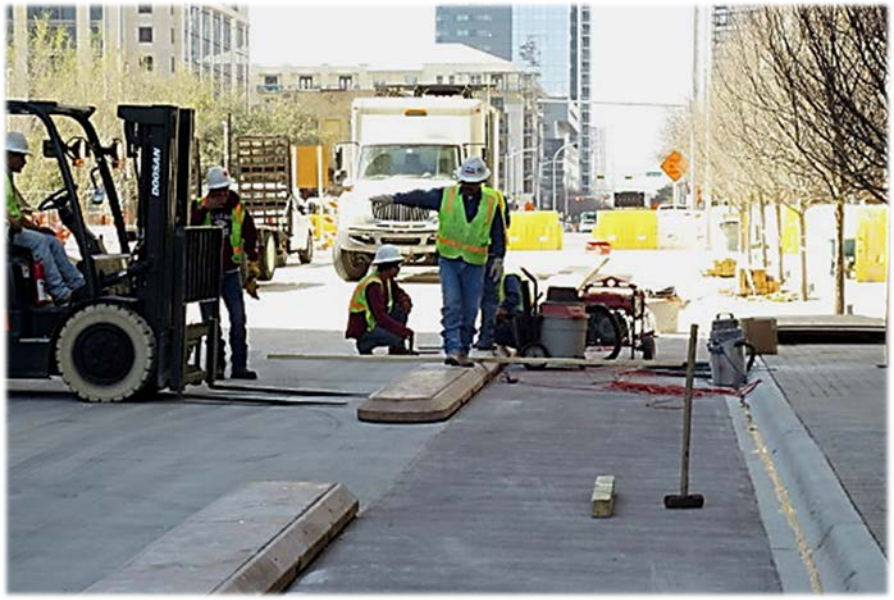
  *2 Training Workshops*
  - ✓ City Staff
  - ✓ Community
  - ✓ Draft work plan
  - ✓ Pilot projects

- ✓New! **Active Transportation Program**
  (Bike Program moved from Public Works)
- ✓New! **Complete Streets Program**
  (Manager plus Consulting Engineer)
- ✓New! Green Streets Working Group
- ✓**Bike Plan Adopted**
- ✓**Urban Trails Plan Adopted**
- ✓5-Year: Developed phased approach

# AUSTIN 2015-16 – Maturing A Program

## 6 C.S. Program Elements

1. Policy, Program & Funding
2. Street Design
3. System Development
4. Project Compliance Reviews
5. Education, Outreach & Communications
6. Metrics



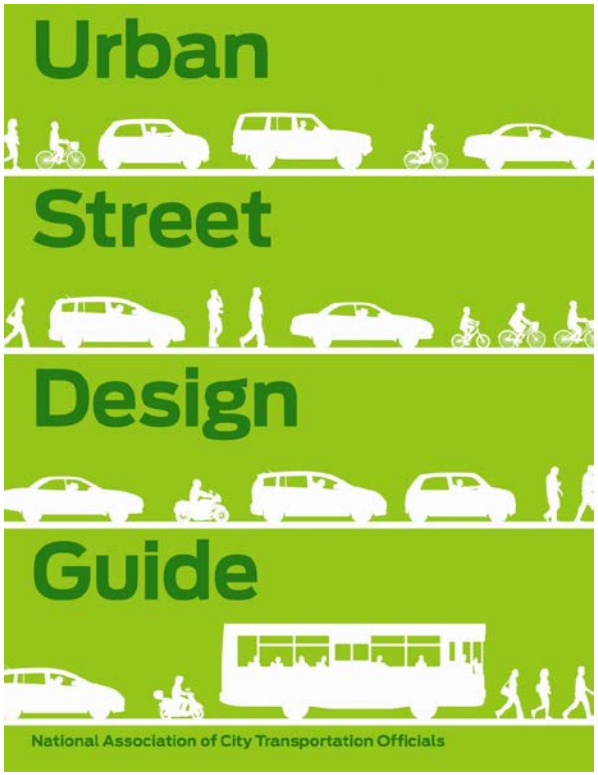
**Active Transportation Program**

**Cycle Track Project, Third Street**

Links Downtown Convention Center to City Hall/Second Street District

# NACTO Designing Cities 2015 Conference in Austin

Austin welcomed city transportation officials and practitioners from across North America for a series of conversations on urban street design and transportation policy.

# Part III. Austin Projects

- **South Congress Avenue**
- **Guadalupe St.** (The Drag)
- **Great Streets** Downtown

# South Congress Avenue





AUSTIN
MOTEL
NO ADDITIVES
NO PRESERVATIVES
CORPORATE FREE
SINCE 1938
I LOVE
HAPPY
BACON
& SNACK BAR
James
The Circle

# South Congress Avenue

- **Date Opened: 2011**
- **Budget: $5M***
- **Location: "SoCo" entertainment and tourist area**
- **Scope: 11+ blocks, bicycle lane, rapid transit stations**
- **Special features: Stormwater treatment channels; pedestrian "bulb outs" with bike racks**
- **Parking: Reverse angle parking**
- **Next Steps: Extending the bike lane southward**

# South Congress Improvement Project - Timeline

**1998 –** $4 million project funded by 1998 Bond Election

**2000 –** Project put on hold pending Light Rail referendum

**March 2003 –** Lighting study complete; construction not desired

**May 2002 –** City partners with TX School for the Deaf for improvements

**October 2004 –** Potential project list generated for Feasibility Study

**February 2005 –** Feasibility Study initiated

**July 2006 –** South Congress Avenue re-striped

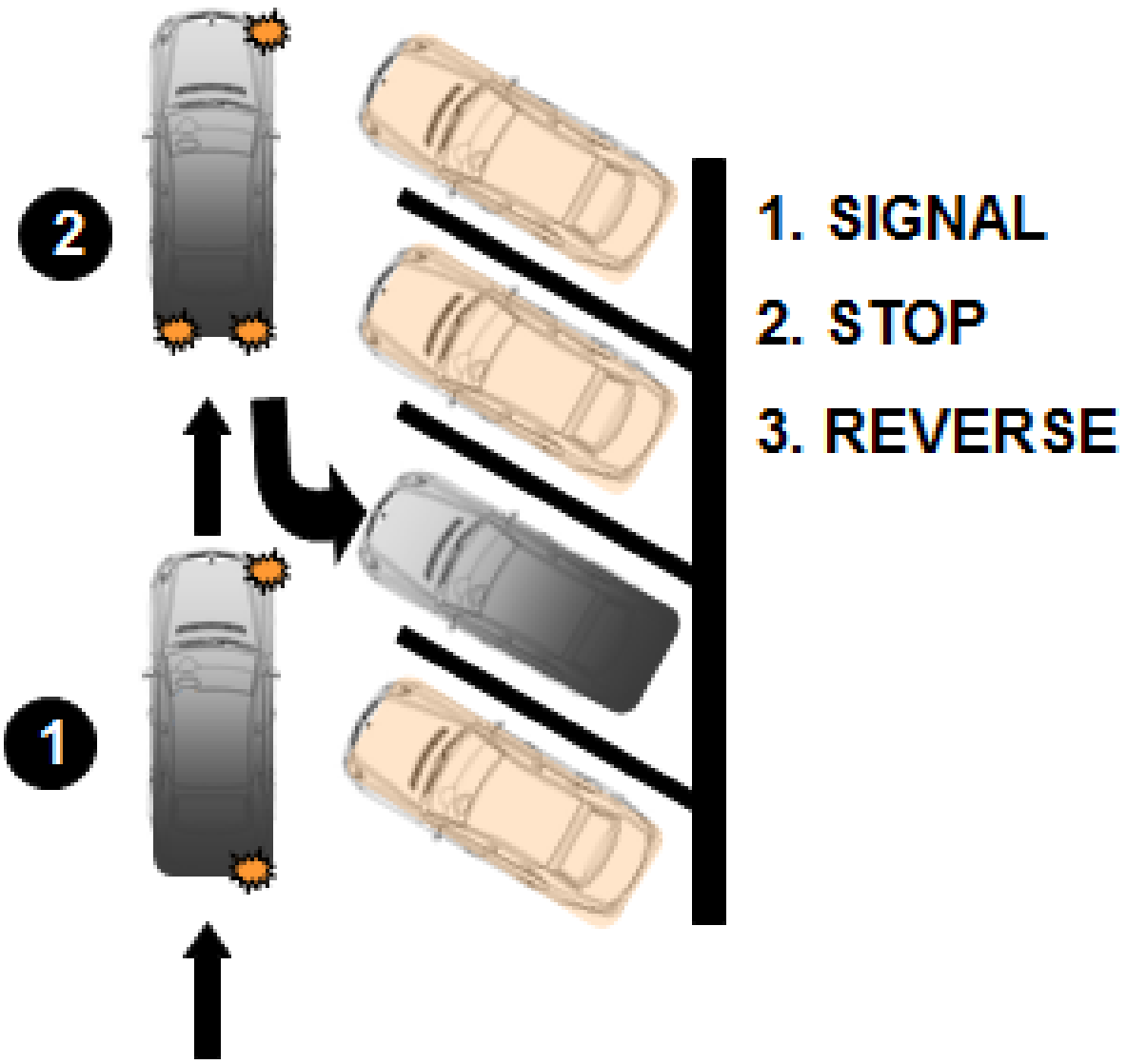
**March 2007 –** Feasibility Study completed

**2007-2010 –** Community meetings; design/construction of improvements

**2011** – Project Completion

# Back-in Angle Parking

Designed for the safety of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians




Gibson

# South Congress Avenue


maya


CESAR CHAVEZ
ONLY

# Guadalupe Street (The Drag)

# Guadalupe Street (The Drag)

- **Date Opened: Oct. 2013**
- **Budget: $650,000 (bond funding)**
- **Location: "The Drag" at heart of University campus**
- **Scope: 5 blocks, protected bicycle lane, MetroRapid stations, bike share station**
- **Special features: Green lane, buffer area with 2 rapid bus stops, pedestrian islands, planters**
- **Parking: Cars form a buffer for bike lane**
- **Next Steps: Full Corridor Plan, 10 blocks**


VARSITY
noodles
The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf


RIDING BIKES
OR
SKATEBOARDS
ON SIDEWALK
PROHIBITED
5 WOODROW


TEXAS
CVS
Grocery
Beauty
Photo

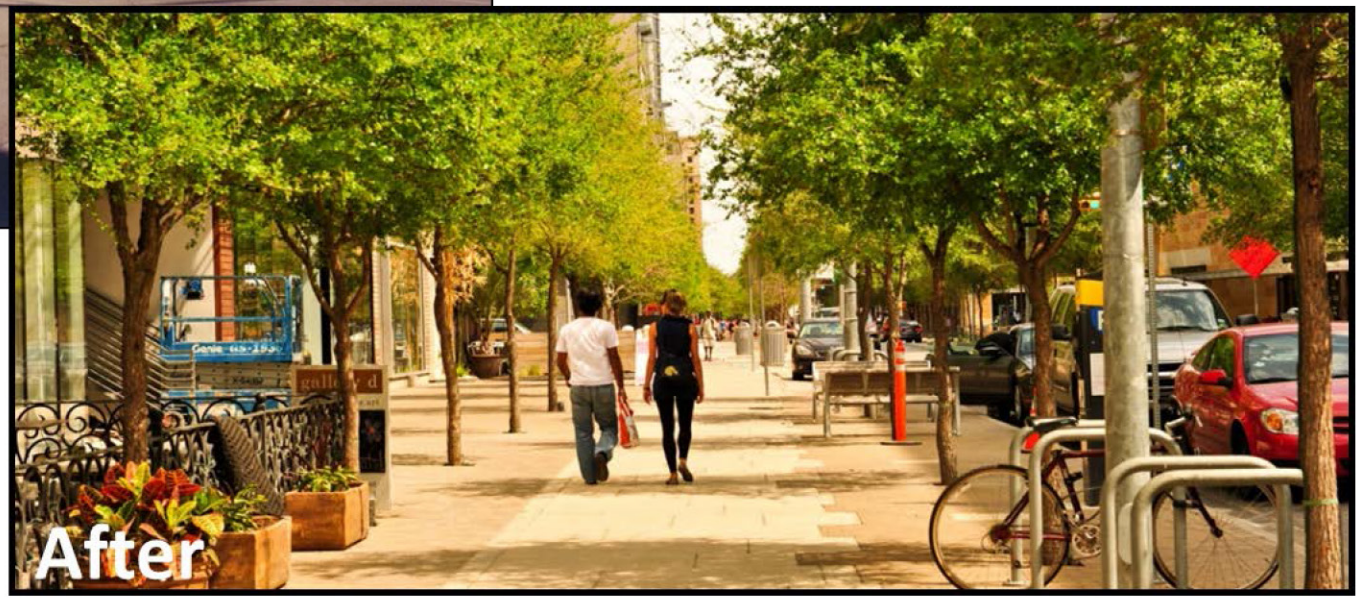

9310
CAUTION
TEXAS
CVS

# Great Street Success: **Second Street**


Great Urban Design

Creates

Economic Development



# Great Streets Program: 15 Years

**Mission:** To improve the quality of downtown streets and sidewalks, to create great public spaces and places

**Streetscape Standards:**

- Wide sidewalks: 18 or 32 feet
- Street furnishings: benches, bike racks, public art
- Street trees, to create pedestrian shade canopy
- Transit stops; pedestrian and/or transit/bike priority
- Sidewalk cafes

**Developer reimbursements:** Funded by parking $$$

# 2nd Street: Walkable Retail District





# 2nd Street: Pedestrian Priority

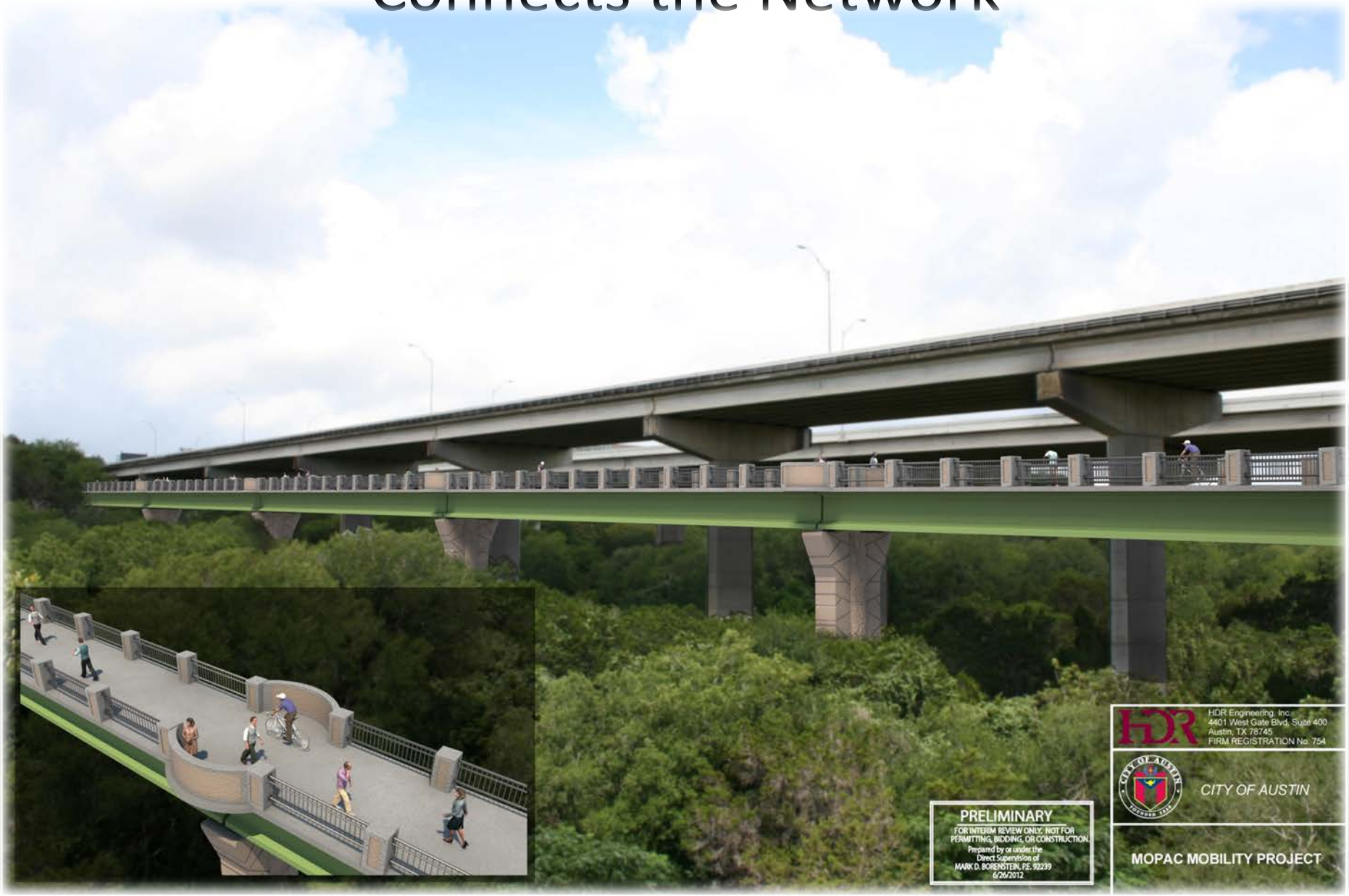

Jo's
NEW COFFEE CUVÉE
NEW TASTE
PROVIDED BY... COFFEE
LIVING RECORD
4

# 3rd Street: Cycle Track


# 3rd Street:  Bicycle Priority


# 4th Street: Transit and Bicycle Priority

# Mopac Bridge (over Barton Creek) Connects the Network




183A Shared Use Path
Paid for as part of Toll Road Extension

# Complete streets are lively streets …


VIVA! STREETS austin 6th street


OM
PETER TSAI
PHOTOGRAPHY


John R Rogers
photographic artist

# Thank You!

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