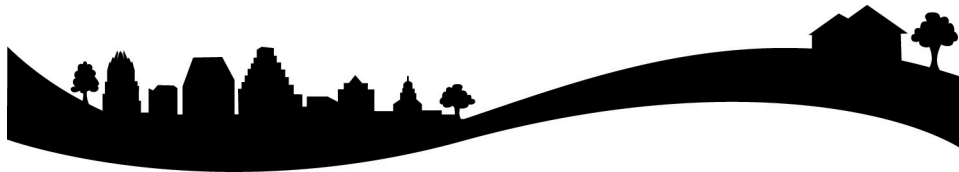


CHRIS RILEY ON TRANSPORTATION



For too long, Austin's transportation system has been focused principally on single-occupant cars, and other alternatives have been given short shrift. Our road network does need ongoing attention and maintenance, but to continue neglecting other travel modes is a serious mistake, for many reasons.

- ***Overdependence on cars is not affordable.*** Our driving habits aren't cheap: transportation is now the second-biggest expense for families, after housing. They're costly for our government, too: According to CAMPO figures, a seven-mile stretch of U.S. 183 South will cost at least \$490 million; seven miles of U.S. 290 East will cost at least \$623 million; and the exchange planned for the "Y" at Oak Hill will cost over \$500 million. Current plans call for financing these improvements with 40-year loans, backed by extensive tolling.
- ***Overdependence on cars poses environmental problems.*** Transportation accounts for 33 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in this country, and most of that comes from the burning of gasoline by cars and trucks. Car-centered development also consumes enormous amounts of land: over the last several decades, land use in the U.S. has grown at about 10 to 20 times the rate of population growth. We're losing more than 2.2 million acres of farmland, forests, and wetlands to development every year.
- ***Overdependence on cars is a dead-end road.*** The Texas Commission for Environmental Quality has already recommended that Travis County be placed on the list of counties in non-attainment of federal standards for ozone. That designation, which will likely be finalized by March 2010, will mean that we will need to reduce pollutants by a certain percentage each year, and federal transportation funds will be withheld unless we can show that our long-range transportation plans will not negatively impact air quality.

We need to work toward a robust, multimodal transportation system that enables Austinites to reduce their dependence on cars. Here are some of the steps we can take in that direction:

- ***Accelerate our progress toward a rail network.*** The Red Line from Leander to Austin, which will open in late March, is only a small start. We need to ramp up our efforts on the 28-mile Green Line to Manor and Elgin; a circulator to connect downtown with the capitol complex, UT, Mueller, and eventually the airport; and a Georgetown-to-San Antonio line along MoPac.
- ***Improve conditions for bicycling.*** Progress on our Bicycle Plan is long overdue, and the 2008 Street Smarts Task Force report provides an excellent basis for moving ahead.
- ***Step up our progress on sidewalks.*** Neighborhood plans have identified numerous priorities for sidewalks, and obvious gaps remain throughout the city.
- ***Fix the gaps in our trail network.*** We've already got a vast hub-and-spoke trail network along our creeks and the river, and it could be much more useful if we would just fix the gaps and extend the trails in accordance with longstanding plans.
- ***Improve our bus system.*** Progress on our rail system will allow more efficient use of buses. We need to ensure that our system adapts and grows to meet riders' needs.
- ***Make our new and existing development more walkable.*** Mixed-use development and improved connectivity will allow more Austinites to meet their daily needs on foot.
- ***Promote carsharing.*** Carsharing directly reduces car expenses as well as vehicle miles traveled. It's off to a good start here, but the city can do more by integrating carsharing into its fleet, and by ensuring that cars are made available near rail stops.

Chris Riley For Austin City Council
www.chrisforaustin.com

Political ad paid for by Chris Riley Campaign for Austin City Council Catherine Mauzy, Treasurer, PO Box 303552 Austin TX 78703
This campaign has not agreed to comply with the contribution and expenditure limits of the Austin Fair Campaign Ordinance. Accordingly, no public funding will be utilized.