



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Robert Spillar, P.E., Director,  
Austin Transportation Department 

**DATE:** September 28, 2020

**SUBJECT:** **Second Report on the Healthy Streets Initiative (Resolution No. 20200507-062)**

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The purpose of the memorandum is to provide an update on the progress of the Healthy Streets Initiative (Resolution 20200507-062) established by Council to support the community's need for mental and physical wellness by creating street space to maintain social distancing, as recommended in Stage 2-5 of the Austin-Travis County [COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidelines](#). Currently, the City of Austin is at Stage 3.

### **Current Initiative Status**

The Healthy Streets Initiative has been in place for 3 months. There are currently approximately 10 miles of Healthy Streets in 7 of 10 Council districts, established with a combination of treatments to designate routes for walking, bicycling or using other personal and assistive mobility devices at appropriate physical distancing. Modifications have been made to several routes in response to feedback and changing conditions of the transportation system. A total of 32 people serve as volunteer block captains to support the Austin Transportation Department's (ATD) efforts to engage with the neighborhoods served by these streets. Regular maintenance support is provided by ATD and Public Works Department (PWD) staff.

More than 1,200 online comments have been logged since program inception, with approximately 64% expressing support for the program through the survey, and significant variation in support among individual segments based on the online map tool. A live link to all feedback received to date, including how Healthy Streets are being used, and comments on specific segments, is now available on the initiative's website [austintexas.gov/healthystreets](http://austintexas.gov/healthystreets) at [this link](#).

### **Recommended Mileage Goal, Program Timeline and Long-Term Investments**

[Resolution 20200507-062](#) requested staff to set a mileage goal and timeline for the initiative, as well as return to Council with recommendations for instituting long-term investments in "slow streets" programs citywide. Given the promising direction the community's 7-day hospitalization rate, staff recommend maintaining the current deployment of 10 miles of Healthy Streets through the end of September 2020. At the end of September 2020, some Healthy Streets segments would be removed and others would remain in locations where they provide the most benefit and can be maintained given available resources and the changing conditions of the transportation system.

A third batch of Healthy Streets is not planned at this time. However, should the community experience a surge in COVID-19 cases or reverse the trend in 7-day hospitalizations, additional streets would be quickly identified and confirmed through the same community-based process that shaped the second batch of streets.

As staff wind down the Healthy Streets Initiative, more time will be applied towards the continued buildout of permanent connections in the bicycle and pedestrian network, using traffic calming concepts advanced under the Healthy Streets Initiative. Many lessons have been learned from the Healthy Streets initiative and looking long-term, ATD and PWD staff have incorporated a pilot slow streets program into

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the update of the Sidewalk Plan. We anticipate bringing recommendations back to Council for ways slow streets can support more comfortable environments for walking in Austin neighborhoods as part of this update.

For questions please contact Anna Martin, Assistant Director, at [anna.martin@austintexas.gov](mailto:anna.martin@austintexas.gov).

**CC:** Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Gina Fiandaca, Assistant City Manager  
Stephanie Hayden, Director, Austin Public Health Department