

“Complete Streets” on Riverside Drive

Dear Council Members Renteria and Tovo,

We write to thank you both for your service to Austin and your careful consideration of how to address our city’s rapid growth. As business, non-profit and community leaders, we are also writing out of concern for the safety of our customers, clients and neighbors, their access to downtown Austin, and their ability to contribute economically to your districts. We believe that one way to address all three of these concerns is by improving transit options on East Riverside Drive. We are therefore requesting your leadership to improve this major thoroughfare with protected bike lanes, pedestrian friendly infrastructure, and more reliable bus transportation.

As it stands, East Riverside Drive is a wide and busy road inhospitable to pedestrians and cyclists. In April of this year, a pedestrian and a cyclist were critically injured after being hit by cars on East Riverside Drive. One month later, a young cyclist was killed by a drunk driver on the 600 block of East Riverside Drive. And just recently, a pedestrian was killed walking on a part of Riverside with inadequate sidewalks. These are just a few examples of crashes that could have been prevented with better infrastructure along this busy road.

In addition to increased safety, improving East Riverside Drive’s infrastructure would also create great economic benefits for the community. First, when your constituents are more geographically mobile, they will become more economically mobile. Fast and reliable bus routes connecting southeast Austin to downtown are essential for ensuring Austin residents can secure and maintain good jobs in the heart of the city. Other improvements on East Riverside drive would also serve the business community. We know, for example, that small businesses in cities like San Francisco, New York, and Fort Worth have all seen their profits increase after nearby bike lanes and walkways were installed. Austin, too, stands to benefit from making our shops more accessible to the entire community through the creation of protected bike lanes and pedestrian friendly walkways. As Austin’s growth continues, the need for your leadership on these issues is more urgent than ever.

As Austinites, we have much to be proud of—our world-class music and restaurants, not to mention our thriving economy, attract tourists and new residents daily. But to really become a world-class city, we must ensure that everyone – long-time residents and new-comers alike - can access all Austin has to offer, including our small businesses. Better bus service, protected bike lanes, and pedestrian friendly infrastructure will help East Riverside Drive benefit from proven methods to increase safety, economic growth and affordability.

We look forward to working alongside you to make Austin a thriving and accessible world-class city.

Sincerely,

Organization/Business _____

Owner/Director _____

Phone _____

Email _____