

# Incorporating Equity into Active Commuting to School Infrastructure Projects: A Case Study

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# Background



Austin, Texas – \$27.5M for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure projects – split equally among council districts.



Evidence for the effects of infrastructure changes on active transportation in children – more physical activity



Need for assessing equity impacts of SRTS and infrastructure projects for walking and biking

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# Study Aims



To describe the City of Austin Safe Routes to School project prioritization process.



To describe community equity measures of identified SRTS infrastructure projects by council fund distribution.



To provide community perspectives on barriers and facilitators for implementation

# Methods

- Data from City of Austin reports combined with school-level demographic data to determine equity of need distribution
- Interviews were conducted with community partners.



# Austin SRTS Infrastructure Plan



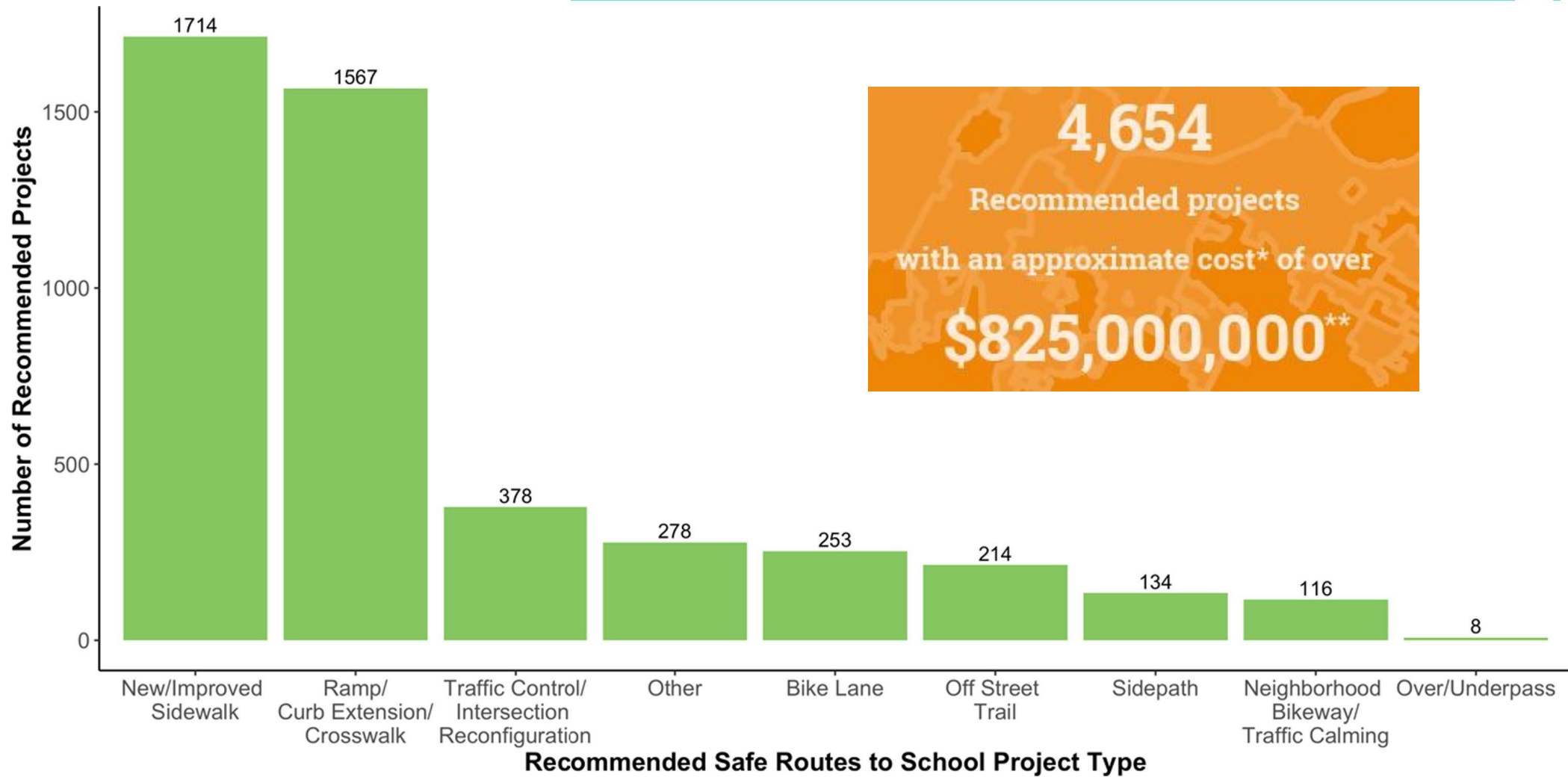
# Prioritization Process



Project ID	Project w/in 1/2 mi (ped) or 2 mi (bike) and attendance boundary of:	Location	Issue	Recommendation + = parking removal required ~ = private property acquisition required	Overall Benefit Category	Estimated Cost:Benefit Category
1G - 002	GARCIA, BARBARA JORDAN, BERTHA SADLER MEANS	CRYSTALBROOK DR	Excessive vehicle speeds, No bike facility, Wide ROW	Add speed cushions - CRYSTALBROOK DR from LOYOLA LN to SILVERBROOK LOOP, Protected Bike Lane - CRYSTALBROOK DR from LOYOLA LN to SILVERBROOK LOOP ~	1 - Very High	1 - Very High
1G - 004	BARBARA JORDAN, GARCIA, BERTHA SADLER MEANS	CRYSTALBROOK DR	Excessive vehicle speeds, No bike facility, Wide ROW	Add chicanes - CRYSTALBROOK DR from SILVERBROOK LOOP to PECAN BROOK DR, Protected Bike Lane - CRYSTALBROOK DR from SILVERBROOK LOOP to PECAN BROOK DR ~	1 - Very High	3 - Medium
1G - 005*	BARBARA JORDAN, GARCIA, BERTHA SADLER MEANS	PECAN BROOK DR	Desired bike route, No bike facility	Protected Bike Lane - PECAN BROOK DR from SPRINGDALE RD to CRYSTALBROOK DR ~	1 - Very High	3 - Medium
1G - 006	OAK MEADOWS, GARCIA, OVERTON, BARBARA JORDAN, BERTHA SADLER MEANS	LOYOLA LN	Desired bike route, Excessive vehicle speeds	Add Dynamic Speed Display Device - LOYOLA LN from CRYSTALBROOK DR to SANDSHOF DR, Protected Bike Lane - LOYOLA LN from WENTWORTH DR to MILLRACE DR	1 - Very High	5 - Very Low
1G - 007*	BARBARA JORDAN, GARCIA	JOHNNY MORRIS RD	Desired bike route, No bike facility	Sidepath - JOHNNY MORRIS RD from FM 969 RD to Manor EXPRY ~	1 - Very High	5 - Very Low



# City of Austin infrastructure projects



# City of Austin infrastructure projects





# Qualitative Interviews

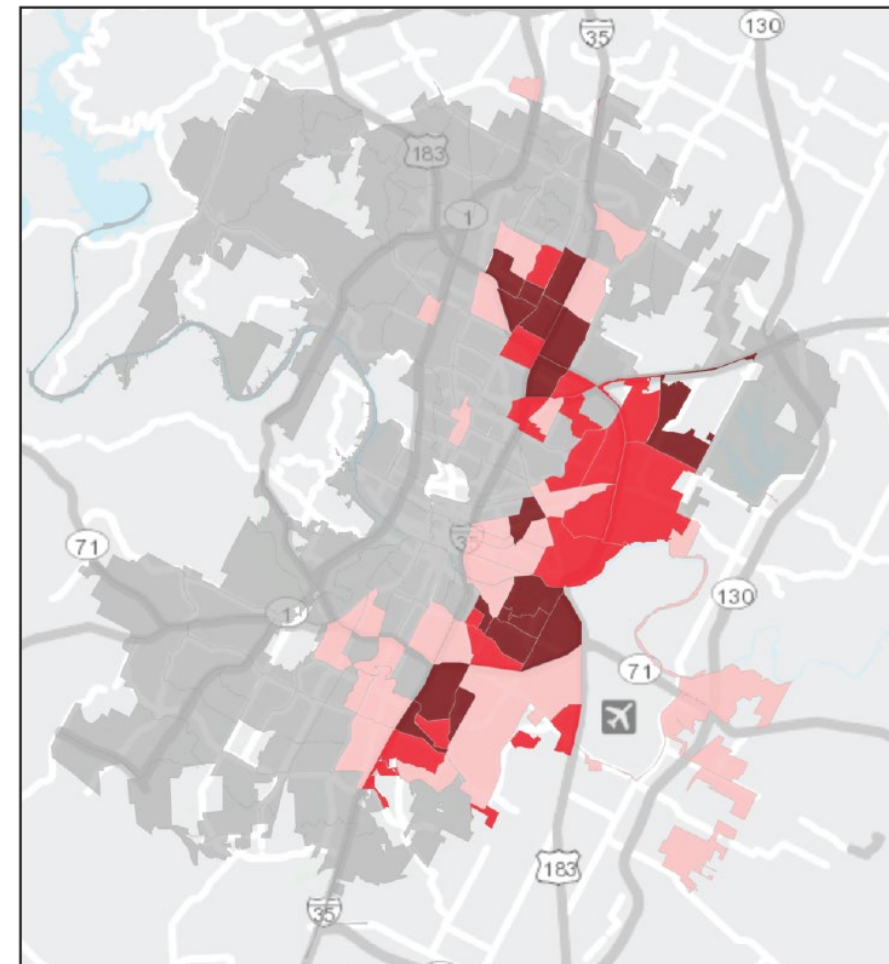
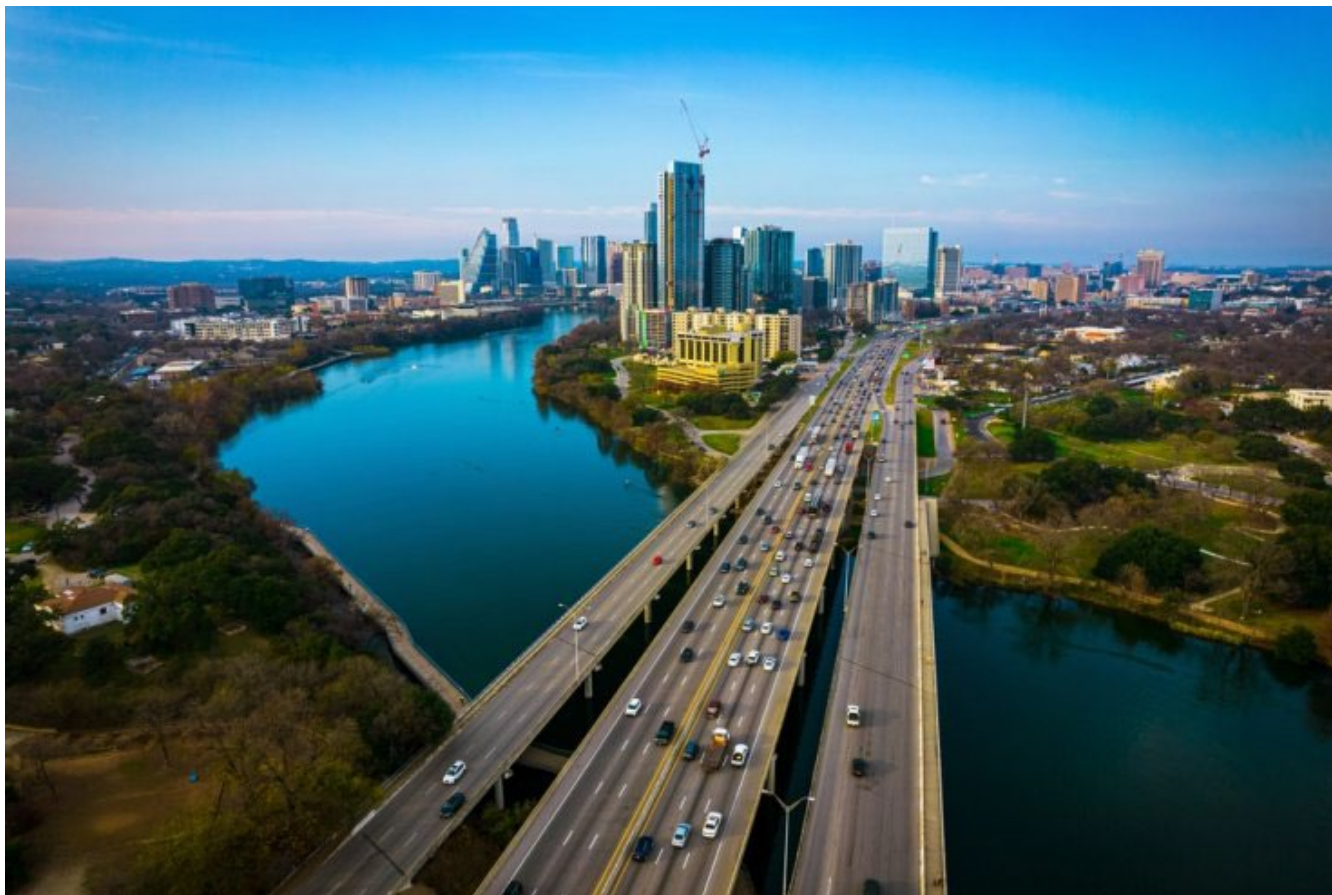


*"If you just look at the number of schools in different districts one has five another"*

*"Are you achieving the goals of safe routes by spending money on something that didn't really need to happen?"*

*"At some schools were looking at putting in protected bike lanes and others we're like, 'Can we just get some sidewalks going up to the school?'"*

# Discussion



Building “A City Of Upper-Middle-Class Citizens” Labor Markets, Segregation, And Growth In Austin, Texas, 1950–1973

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X. Zhu, C. Lee. Walkability and safety around elementary schools: economic and ethnic disparities. Am. J. Prev. Med., 34 (2008), pp. 282-290

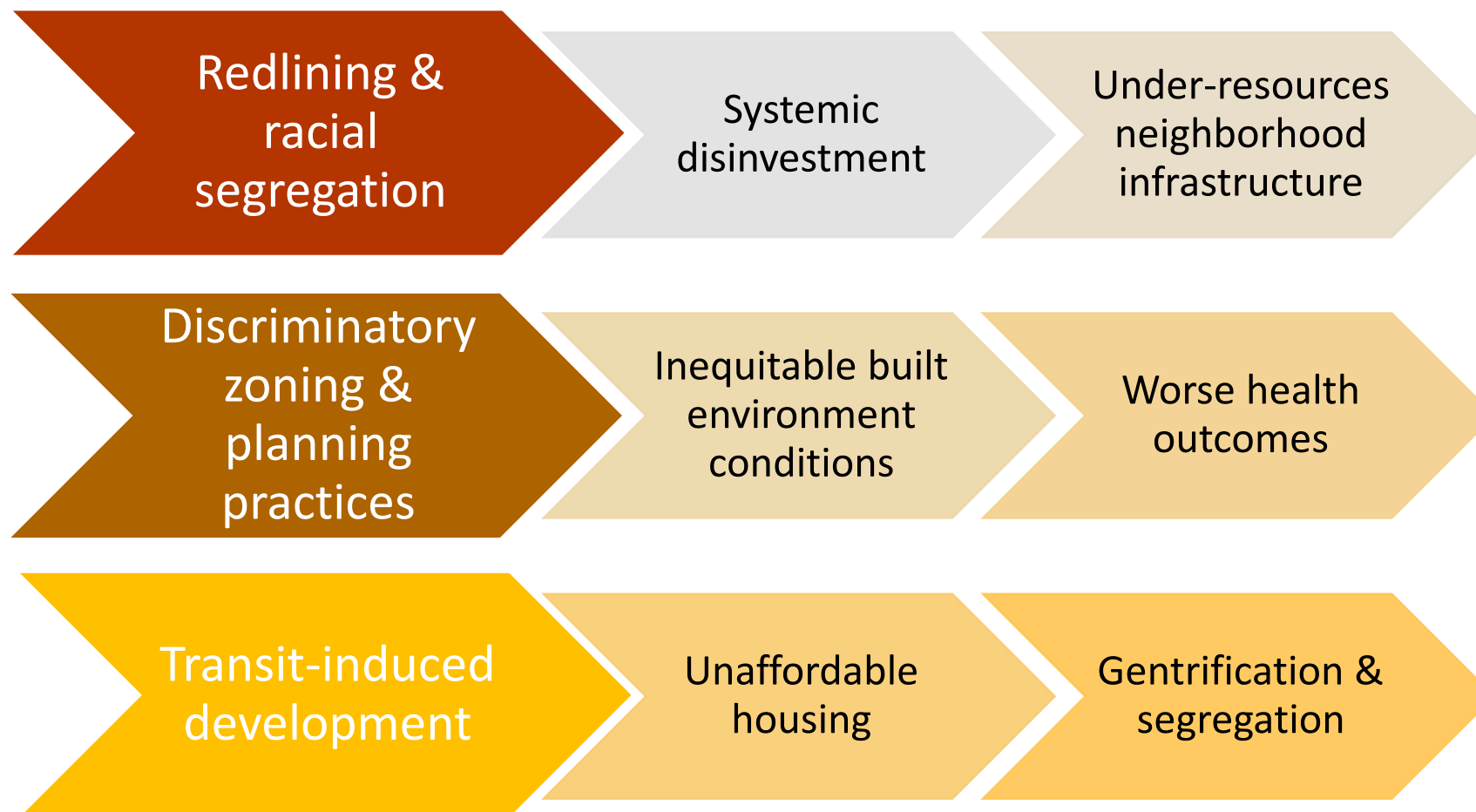
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# Discussion



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# Implications for practice and policy



## MOVING TOWARDS EQUITY

- 2020 Mobility Bond \$20M for high and very high priority SRTS projects – *not dependent on equal distribution*
- Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy Plan
- Presidential Executive Order: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government



## CALL TO ACTION

- Emphasize spatial and social equity principles
- More financial and infrastructural support in lower-income communities
- Engage underrepresented communities
- Need systematic approach to address equity
- Put people of color in leadership roles

City of Austin 2021b. Equitable Transit Resolution. Austin, Texas.

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# Thank you!

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