

LADDERS OF
OPPORTUNITY

Winner!

Austin, Texas

Austin, TX used the Mayors' Challenge to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and build Complete Streets with a focus on helping lower income residents gain safe access to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and resources. Mayor Steve Adler and the Austin Transportation Department embraced the USDOT Ladders of Opportunity agenda. Mayor Adler was one of three Mayors' Challenge leaders to accompany Secretary Foxx on a multi-day visit to Copenhagen, Denmark; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Oslo, Norway in April 2016, as part of an ongoing effort to learn from international partners about innovative ways to meet the transportation challenges of the future.

Demonstrated Successes

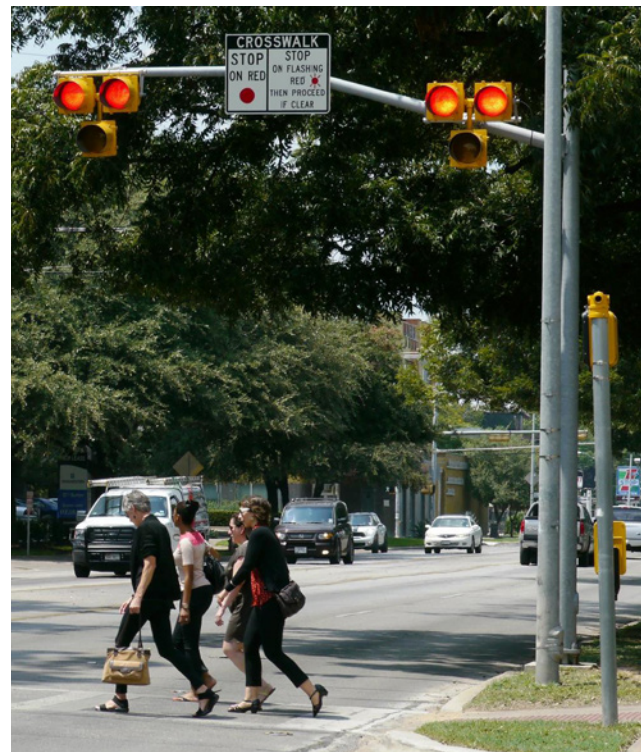
Newly Installed Safety Measures will Make Pedestrians More Visible

The city installed 15 new Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons and 18 Accessible Pedestrian Signals in designated environmental justice areas (communities with substantial minority and low-income residents). A Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon is a FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasure, which a pedestrian activates to stop traffic and safely cross the roadway, while an Accessible Pedestrian Signal helps pedestrians with vision and hearing impairments navigate the street more safely.

New Initiative Encourages Residents to Choose Active Transportation and Transit

In 2016, the City launched Smart Trips Austin, a new initiative that works directly with individuals to help them learn to navigate their community through a combination of walking, biking, and taking transit. Benefits of understanding how to effectively use these travel methods include increasing fitness, saving money, reducing traffic congestion, and helping maintain a livable environment. Following priorities set by the USDOT Ladders of Opportunity initiative, Smart Trips Austin was first piloted in the Rundberg neighborhood, a low-income, predominantly minority community where low-cost travel options are most in demand. Rundberg participants reported the following:

- An 11.8% increase in active transportation (walking and biking) trips, and



Pedestrians using a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon in Austin.

- An increased awareness of active transportation options (by 75 percent of survey respondents)

Next Steps

Austin plans to issue a Mayors' Challenge Final Report after the Challenge officially ends and will continue to use the Mayors' Challenge branding to maintain momentum on new and existing initiatives.



A separated bike lane connecting to an off-street trail in Austin.

"Imagining the possibilities is as vital to transforming urban mobility as technological innovations or building new infrastructure," said Austin Mayor Steve Adler. "If we believe that it is better to use bus lines, bike paths, and boulevards to more closely connect everyone than to divide entire communities, first we must see that it is possible. The cities we visited with Secretary Foxx showed us what is possible, and we are eager to incorporate these ideas into a future for American cities that provides ladders of opportunity for everyone."

– Mayor Steve Adler



Walk, bike, and roll map with bike routes and bus routes serving the Rundberg neighborhood.