



Resolution of the Zilker Neighborhood Association Opposing the Replacement of the Barton Springs Bridge

Adopted by membership January 27, 2025

Whereas, The Austin City Council and City staff are moving forward to demolish the historic Zilker Park Barton Springs Road bridge over Barton Creek and replace it with a larger, generic highway-style bridge at an estimated cost of \$40 million;

Whereas, Such demolition and reconstruction would cause substantial traffic problems, damage to Barton Creek, and replacement of Zilker parkland with expanded transportation pavement;

Whereas, The beautiful arched bridge over Barton Creek was built in the 1920s and expanded in the 1940s to its current configuration and was designed to match the beautiful archaic construction of the historic Lamar bridge over the Colorado River;

Whereas, The existing historic bridge is a contributing feature to the National Register of Historic Places' Zilker Park Historic District;

Whereas, The existing historic bridge provides a beautiful gateway to Zilker Park as well as a beautiful bridge for those people paddling under the bridge, hiking or walking under the bridge, and viewing the bridge from the existing bike/ped bridge over Barton Creek to the northeast;

Whereas, Demolition and reconstruction of the bridge with a larger highway-style bridge would directly disturb and damage archeological resources in the State-designated and protected Vara Daniel archeological site;

Whereas, The City improperly hid documents for months from public disclosure while it was seeking federal grant funding under a false claim of “national security information”;

Whereas, Structural engineer Tom Kam, who has built bridges for the City of Austin and many others, has reviewed the City’s technical documents and performed a visual inspection of the bridge that together establish that the bridge may be effectively and affordably maintained and operated indefinitely, in much the same way as historic bridges around the world that are many centuries old have been maintained and operated;

Whereas, The recent Barton Springs Road Safety Pilot, which City staff determined to be a success, has greatly alleviated conflicts between car traffic and pedestrians and bicycles; and

Whereas, Mr. Kam has proposed the concept of a simple, parallel span bridge to further increase bike and pedestrian crossing options over Barton Creek, in a way that would protect existing trees, Barton Creek, and riparian habitats and at a cost of a few million dollars rather than tens of millions of dollars; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Zilker Neighborhood Association urges the Austin City Council to protect and preserve the historic Zilker Park Bridge indefinitely, to reverse its initial decision to demolish the existing historic bridge, and to pursue a parallel bike/ped bridge near the historic bridge that would avoid existing trees and harm to riparian habitats while improving bike/ped traffic flow in the Barton Springs Road corridor at a fraction of the cost of the current plan and with no or minimal damage to the recognized and unique riparian, aquatic, historic, and archeological resources that would otherwise be damaged or entirely lost to build an ugly, standard highway bridge.