

Posting: Approve a resolution directing the City Manager to work with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Texas Department of Transportation, and other partners to prioritize safety, walking, biking, and transit in proposed Parmer Lane (Farm to Market Road 734) improvements, and to advocate for a full environmental review of any proposal for the corridor.

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are conducting the Parmer Lane (Farm to Market 734 or Parmer) Corridor Study to identify, evaluate, and recommend potential improvements for Parmer from Texas State Highway Loop 1 (MoPac) in North Austin to Ranch to Market Road 1431 (Whitestone Boulevard) in Cedar Park, Texas; and

WHEREAS, this study is being conducted to identify safety and mobility enhancements along a road lined with apartments, offices, shops and childcare centers, with neighborhoods and schools within walking and biking distance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed short-term improvements consist primarily of intersection improvements, including traffic signal modifications and turn lanes, and the proposed long-term concepts include controlled access main lanes with grade separations at intersections and frontage roads on both sides; and

WHEREAS, northwest Austin is already served by United States Route 183 (U.S. 183), the 183A Toll Road, Texas State Highway 45 and MoPac, which provide high-speed routes for regional and long-distance trips, including express and toll lanes designed to keep traffic moving, while converting Parmer into a highway would divide the neighborhoods it serves and may make it harder to walk, bike and reach destinations along it; and

22 **WHEREAS**, the City wishes to ensure that studies of the corridor begin
23 with an objective statement of the transportation problems to be addressed and
24 fully evaluate all reasonable alternatives against that statement; and

25 **WHEREAS**, questions about the study's technical analysis remain
26 unanswered, including the ramp and access locations assumed in the traffic
27 modeling and how traffic would divide between the main lanes and frontage roads,
28 the posted and design speeds on the main lanes and frontage roads, the source and
29 basis of the 2044 traffic forecast, the modeled peak-period travel times for each
30 concept compared with the no-build scenario, and the anticipated effects of each
31 concept on traffic deaths and serious injuries; and

32 **WHEREAS**, key themes from written comments about the long-term
33 improvement concepts collected at three open houses resoundingly call for the
34 “[prioritization] of public transit and active transportation connectivity along the
35 corridor”; and

36 **WHEREAS**, neighbors submitted hundreds of comments expressing
37 concerns about the grade separation and lack of concern for multi-modal
38 transportation; and

39 **WHEREAS**, the Parmer Lane Alliance of Neighborhoods (PLAN), a
40 coalition of residents who live in seven neighborhoods along Parmer between
41 MoPac and Ranch to Market Road 620, formed to advocate for a Parmer that
42 works for everyone whether walking, rolling, biking or driving; and

43 **WHEREAS**, PLAN signed a letter advocating for shared-use paths, a
44 reassessment of traffic patterns on Parmer after the U.S. 183 toll lanes are active,
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attention to the routes children take to school such as the intersection of McNeil Drive and Parmer that must be crossed by McNeil High School students, and a re-evaluation of an elevated superhighway next to residential areas; and

WHEREAS, one of the few gaps remaining in a continuous bike and walk route for the 36-mile Red Line Parkway is Parmer between McNeil Drive and SH 45; and

WHEREAS, two upcoming Red Line Parkway projects will connect to either end of this gap: Howard Lane Shared-Use Path project by Travis County and Red Line Trail – Lakeline Station to West Parmer Lane by the City; and

WHEREAS, since 2015, the City has approved numerous plans embracing transit and reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, including the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), the Urban Trails Plan, and the Austin Climate Equity Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City has officially adopted a 50/50 mode share goal to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips to no more than 50% of all trips by the year 2039 to combat traffic congestion and accommodate rapid population growth; and

WHEREAS, City crash records and TxDOT roadway data for 2019–2024 suggest that frontage roads in the City had nearly higher than twice the rate of fatal and serious-injury crashes per mile driven as state-maintained arterial roads, and more than twice the rate on Parmer today; and

WHEREAS, frontage-road ramp junctions and merges are extraordinarily dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists due to high vehicle speeds, poor visibility, and "slip lane" geometric designs that prioritize automobile throughput over human safety; and

70 **WHEREAS**, an University of Texas study for TxDOT found that Texas
71 corridors with frontage roads had lower household incomes, lower population and
72 employment densities, and higher unemployment than comparable corridors
73 without them; and

74 **WHEREAS**, frontage roads typically lower residential property value
75 because of noise, safety concerns, and limited buyer interest; and

76 **WHEREAS**, transportation is a leading source of greenhouse gas emissions
77 in Travis and Williamson counties; and

78 **WHEREAS**, the Parmer project would significantly increase the volume
79 and speed of vehicles traveling along children's commute routes to both McNeil
80 High School and Jollyville Elementary School, thereby potentially raising the
81 exposure of school-aged children with developing lungs to harmful air toxins and
82 car emissions while increasing their exposure to high-speed roadways; and

83 **WHEREAS**, highway expansion projects have historically led to
84 developmental sprawl and increased traffic, air pollution, and carbon emissions,
85 which contradict the City's sustainability and smart growth objectives and
86 CAMPO's safety and transportation goals; and

87 **WHEREAS**, improved collaboration with the Central Texas Regional
88 Mobility Authority, CAMPO, TxDOT, Williamson County, Travis County, Capital
89 Metro (CapMetro), and other regional transportation and governmental entities on
90 major highway projects remains a priority for the City to ensure consistency with
91 the City's environmental and mobility goals and to promote mode shift away from
92 single-occupancy vehicles; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to work with CAMPO and TxDOT to align any proposed changes to Parmer with the goals and policies of the ASMP. Both short-term and long-term proposals should:

1. Provide continuous, safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including trails and crossings, and add new crossings with signals or pedestrian beacons where existing crossings are far apart, prioritizing routes to schools, for example, McNeil High School and Jollyville Elementary School;
2. Incorporate safety features, such as protected intersections, pedestrian refuge islands, shortened crossing distances, high-visibility crosswalks, leading pedestrian intervals and pedestrian-scale lighting;
3. Reduce, or at minimum do not increase, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions;
4. Minimize new impervious cover;
5. Minimize loss of tree canopy, replace any trees removed, and plant additional trees along pedestrian and bicycle facilities to provide continuous shade and reduce heat exposure;
6. Minimize widening of the existing roadway;
7. Pursue a reduction in posted speed limits, with lower limits near schools and activity areas; and
8. Avoid designs that would preclude the long-term improvements below.

In addition to the list above, long-term proposals should:

1. Include safe crossings at least every one fourth of a mile, in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration Pedestrian Safety Standards;
2. Not including free-flowing turns or ramps across crosswalks, bike paths or sidewalks

3. Have design and posted speeds no higher than 40 mph wherever the corridor has driveways, crossings or adjacent homes and business;
4. Be evaluated using travel times for trips that start or end within the corridor, not only through trips;
5. Demonstrate a reduction in deaths and serious injuries;
6. Not increasing traffic noise at adjacent homes; and
7. Support the Lakeline Station resolution (Resolution No. 20260827-072) for housing, trails and a walkable station area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to request that CAMPO and TxDOT evaluate a complete-street alternative for Parmer that meets the long term goals stated above, to the same level of detail as the study's recommended concepts, before any concept advances to schematic design; and to request the technical information identified in this resolution, including assumed ramp locations, the basis of the 2044 forecast, modeled travel times, speed assumptions and safety analysis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to advocate that any proposal for Parmer Lane undergoes a full environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act, including preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, and to request meaningful public engagement opportunities throughout that process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to work with CapMetro to identify roadway design needs, such as transit priority lanes, stop locations, and accessible pedestrian connections, in anticipation of future bus service on Parmer Lane.

145 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

146 The City Manager is directed to work with Round Rock Independent School
147 District to identify and address student and pedestrian safety needs along the
148 corridor, particularly at the intersection of Parmer Lane and McNeil Drive.

149 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

150 The City Manager is directed to ensure official staff comments align with
151 this Resolution and submit a copy of this Resolution as official comments from
152 Council to both TxDOT and CAMPO.

153 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

154 The City Manager is directed to provide a written update to Council no later
155 than March 31, 2027. The update should describe coordination with the agencies
156 named above, the status of any proposals and environmental review, and
157 recommended next steps.

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160 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2026

ATTEST: _____

Erika Brady
City Clerk