

RESOLUTION NO. 20261022-044

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

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

WHEREAS, questions about the study's technical analysis remain unanswered, including the ramp and access locations assumed in the traffic

modeling and how traffic would divide between the main lanes and frontage roads, the posted and design speeds on the main lanes and frontage roads, the source and basis of the 2044 traffic forecast, the modeled peak-period travel times for each concept compared with the no-build scenario, and the anticipated effects of each concept on traffic deaths and serious injuries; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, PLAN signed a letter advocating for shared-use paths, a reassessment of traffic patterns on Parmer after the U.S. 183 toll lanes are active, 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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, improved collaboration with the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, CAMPO, TxDOT, Williamson County, Travis County, Capital Metro (CapMetro), and other regional transportation and governmental entities on major highway projects remains a priority for the City to ensure consistency with the City's environmental and mobility goals and to promote mode shift away from 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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

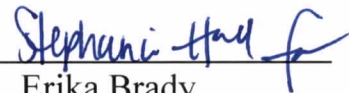
The City Manager is directed to ensure official staff comments align with this Resolution and submit a copy of this Resolution as official comments from Council to both TxDOT and CAMPO.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

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

ADOPTED: October 22, 2026

ATTEST:


Erika Brady
City Clerk