RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number: 20261103-005: CAMPO Parmer Lane (FM 734) Corridor Study

WHEREAS, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are conducting the Parmer Lane (FM 734) Corridor Study, whose short-term improvements are mainly traffic signal changes and turn lanes, and whose long-term concepts include controlled-access main lanes with grade separations at intersections and frontage roads on both sides, for which funding and a timeline "have not been identified"; and

WHEREAS, northwest Austin is already served by US 183, the 183A toll road, SH 45, and MoPac, which provide high-speed routes for regional and long-distance trips, and the two new toll lanes in each direction on US 183 between MoPac and SH 45 North are now open; and

WHEREAS, CAMPO's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan sets goals to "reduce severity and number of crashes for all modes" and to "support local government and transit agencies reaching TxDOT Road to Zero metrics," CAMPO's Regional Safety Action Plan sets a goal to "reduce fatal and serious injury crashes by 50% by 2035 and eliminate them entirely by 2050," and the Texas Transportation Commission directed TxDOT in Minute Order 115481 to work toward cutting deaths on Texas roadways by half in 2035 and to zero by 2050; and

WHEREAS, TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual states that "as motor vehicle speeds increase, the risk of serious injury or fatality for pedestrians in the event of a crash also increases" and quotes the federal presumption that bicyclists and pedestrians "will be accommodated in the design of new and improved transportation facilities," and the City of Austin has identified Parmer Lane on its High-Injury Network; and

WHEREAS, CAMPO's Congestion Management Process directs planners to "identify and support [travel demand management] projects and strategies before capacity projects when developing corridor studies," and lists complete streets, public transit enhancements, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements among its congestion strategies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Imagine Austin plan designates Parmer Lane as an Activity Corridor meant to be "walkable, bikeable, and connected," and CAMPO's 2050 plan seeks to enhance "economic development potential by increasing opportunities to live, work, and play in proximity for residents and visitors"; and

WHEREAS, among self-selected respondents to the study's first public survey, 78% use Parmer to visit shops, restaurants, or recreation, compared with 59% who use it to get through town; and

WHEREAS, among self-selected respondents to the study's first public survey, 48% ranked safety as their top concern and more than 43% ranked traffic congestion last, and among comments

received after the second public meeting, the most frequent themes were bike and pedestrian facilities (43% of comments), support of a shared-use path (39% of comments), and safety (39% of comments), while support for through lanes drew only 6%; NOW,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) supports Austin City Council Resolution No. 20261022-044; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTC recommends TxDOT and CAMPO adopt the following, in addition to the recommendations outlined in Austin City Council Resolution No. 20261022-044:

1. that the resolution be implemented in full, with CAMPO and TxDOT giving the City the technical information the resolution requests -- i.e. assumed ramp and access locations, the basis of the 2044 forecast, modeled travel times for each concept and for no-build, speed assumptions, and safety analysis -- and evaluating the complete-street alternative to the same level of detail as the study's concepts before any concept advances to schematic design;

2. that TxDOT and CAMPO fund and build interim quick-build safety fixes now, such as protected intersection features, refuge islands, shortened crossing distances, high-visibility crosswalks, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian-scale lighting, more frequent beacons and crossings, and lower posted speeds near schools and the highest-crash intersections;

3. that every concept -- including no-build and Council's complete-street alternative -- be evaluated by people moved on all modes, changes in vehicle miles traveled, crash reductions for all road users, induced demand, effects on local business and housing affordability, and not only on vehicle delay;

4. that TxDOT and CAMPO reassess traffic counts on Parmer post-opening of the US 183 North toll lanes, and that no funding for schematic design, right-of-way, or construction of any long-term concept should be committed until the reassessment is complete;

5. that TxDOT not build controlled-access main lanes, grade separation, or frontage roads on Parmer until the evaluations and assessments proposed above are complete;

6. that CAMPO prioritize regional safety and active transportation for Parmer Lane and apply its project-call criteria for safety, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, school connections, and person throughput;

7. that TxDOT and CAMPO add a continuous shared-use path along Parmer to connect to the Howard Lane/McNeil Drive path; and

8. that TxDOT and CAMPO work together with CapMetro and the City Manager to include -- in every concept -- transit signal priority at signals and stop locations with safe, accessible crossings and pedestrian connections tied to the Lakeline Station area resolution (Resolution No. 20260827-072) and to the proposed Project Connect rapid service for Parmer in CapMetro's Transit Plan 2035, with no design precluding transit priority lanes.

Date of Approval:

Motioned By: Seconded By:

DRAFT

Vote:

For:

Against:

Abstain:

Off the dais:

Absent:

Attest: _____

DRAFT