



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager
Robert Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

FROM: Robert Spillar, P.E., Director
Austin Transportation Department

DATE: February 27, 2017

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Approval of Amended Ordinances Modifying Existing Speed Limits on N Lamar Boulevard and Parmer Lane
(Items #28 and #29 on the March 2, 2017 City Council Meeting Agenda)

J. J. Dab
FOR ROBERT SPILLAR

On December 1, 2016, the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) requested approval of ordinances amending City Code Section 12-4-64 (D) to modify existing speed limits on N Lamar Boulevard and Parmer Lane. ATD requested that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) conduct an engineering speed limit study on N Lamar Boulevard to accommodate ATD's planned installation of a pedestrian hybrid beacon near Cooper Drive. Furthermore, TxDOT initiated an engineering speed limit study on Parmer Lane to determine whether modifications to existing speed limits were appropriate based on their observations of existing travelling speeds.

These items were postponed to the February 9, 2017 City Council Meeting, which were subsequently postponed to the March 2, 2017 City Council Meeting. In the meantime, Council directed staff to discuss with TxDOT whether existing speed limits on N Lamar Boulevard and Parmer Lane, within the study areas, could be lowered by an additional five miles per hour (mph), how to use speed limits to promote pedestrian and vehicle safety, and if other criteria could be used beside the 85th percentile speed in determining speed limits.

In addition, staff was directed to notify Council if the February postponement date interfered with any existing pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB) improvements scheduled in this area. The postponement will not interfere with PHB plans in this area. On February 16, 2017, City Council authorized award and execution of a construction contract for PHBs to be installed citywide. This contract will be used to install a PHB for N Lamar Boulevard near Cooper Drive. The speed limit at a PHB must be 40 mph or less for TxDOT to approve installation of a PHB.

Engineering Analysis and Recommendations

ATD worked closely with TxDOT regarding Council's direction to evaluate proposed speed limits on N Lamar Boulevard and Parmer Lane. Because TxDOT operates these streets, their partnership was required in the analysis.

Based on engineering judgment and conversations with TxDOT, ATD recommends the following speed limits on N Lamar Boulevard:

- Between Parmer Lane and Braker Lane: Maintain existing 50 mph
- Between 723 feet north of Oak Brook Drive and 407 feet south of Little Oak Drive: Maintain 35 mph school zone for Brentwood Christian School
- Between Braker Lane and Masterson Pass: Reduce existing 45 mph to 40 mph
- Between Masterson Pass and Payton Gin Road: Reduce existing 45 mph to 35 mph
- Between Payton Gin Road and Morrow Street: Reduce existing 45 mph to 40 mph

These proposed speed limits are appropriate based on traffic speeds collected for each segment, observations of traffic observations, and documented crash history.

The proposed 35 mph speed limit between Masterson Pass and Payton Gin Road encompasses safety improvements that ATD is implementing to reduce the number of crashes. Improvements include a raised center median near Rundberg Lane, scheduled for completion in March 2017, and a pedestrian hybrid beacon near Cooper Lane, scheduled for completion in spring 2017. These safety improvements support the determination to lower the speed limit to 35 mph on this segment.

Similarly, ATD recommends the following speed limits on Parmer Lane:

- Between N Lamar Boulevard and 465 feet east of IH-35 Northbound Frontage Road: Maintain existing 50 mph
- Between 465 east of IH-35 Northbound Frontage Road and Harris Glenn Drive: Reduce from 65 mph to 55 mph
- Between Harris Glenn Drive and 3,363 feet east of Dessau Road: Reduce from 65 mph to 60 mph

These recommendations remain consistent with ATD's proposal on December 1, 2016.

Under the current 2016 Mobility Bond to design and implement improvements along N Lamar Boulevard, ATD has the opportunity in coming years to redesign the corridor to further improve safety. This offers a long-term approach to positively impact driver behavior and re-evaluate existing speed limits as needed.

TxDOT's traffic engineering speed limit studies and ATD's exhibits presenting the existing and proposed speed limits for both streets are attached.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

Existing Speed Limits

Loop 275
(Lamar
Boulevard)

IH 35 Southbound
Frontage Road

IH 35 Northbound
Frontage Road

Harris Glenn Drive

Dessau Road

Proposed Speed Limits

Loop 275
(Lamar
Boulevard)

IH 35 Southbound
Frontage Road

IH 35 Northbound
Frontage Road

Harris Glenn Drive

Dessau Road



50 mph



55 mph



60 mph

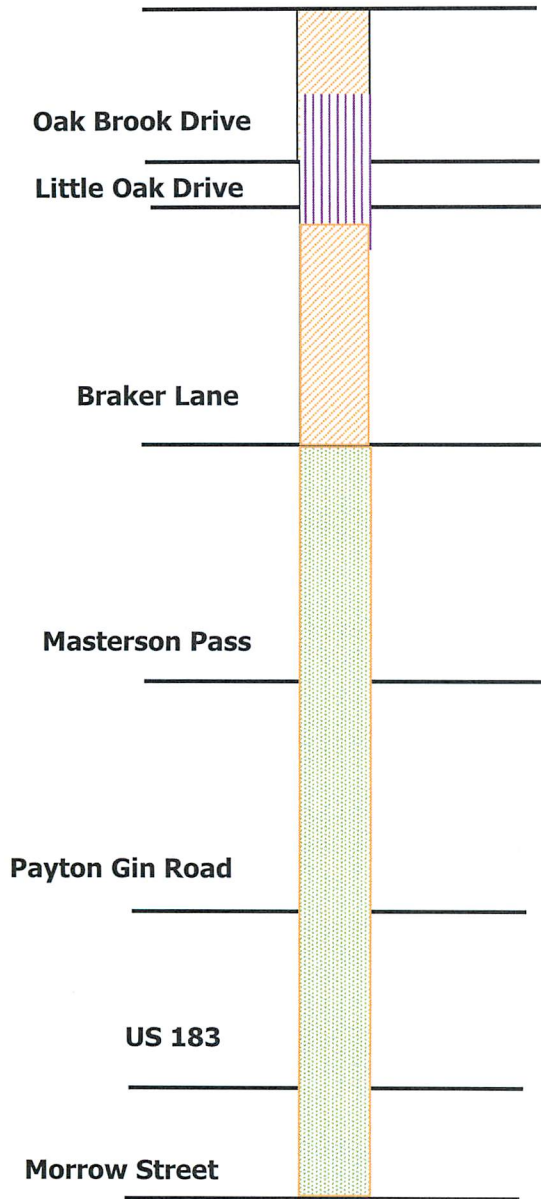


65 mph



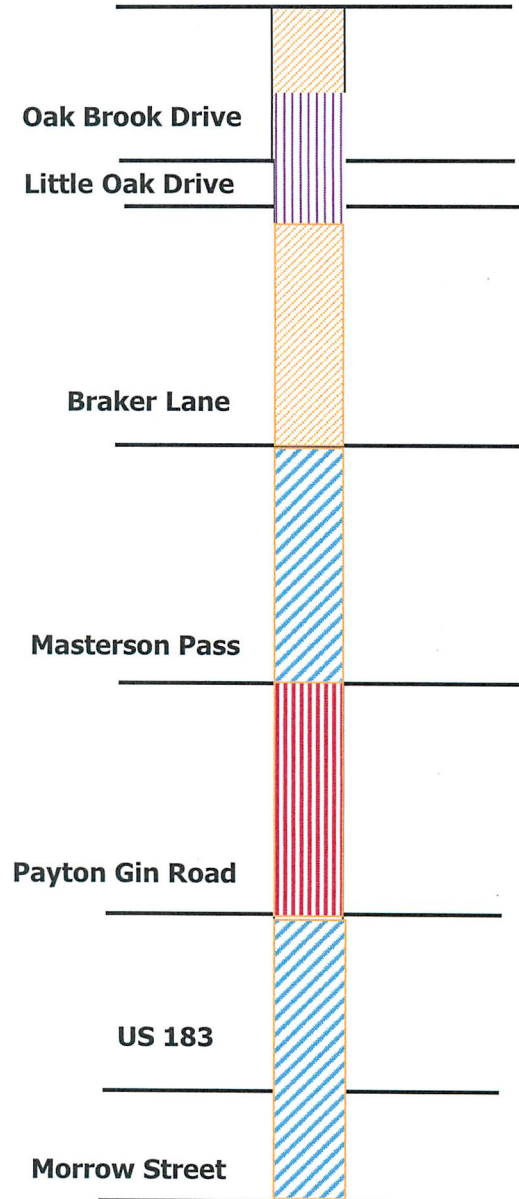
Existing Speed Limits

FM 734 (Parmer Lane)



Proposed Speed Limits

FM 734 (Parmer Lane)



50 mph



45 mph



40 mph



35 mph SZ
(School Zone)



35 mph



October 18, 2016

Eric Bollich, P.E., PTOE
Managing Engineer
City of Austin Transportation Department
3701 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78703

Mr Bollich:

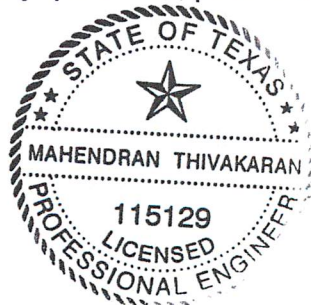
I am recommending a change of speed limit as shown below as per traffic speed studies conducted by the department on FM 734 (Parmer Lane) between Loop 275 (Lamar Blvd.) and 3,363 ft. east of Dessau Road in Austin on October 21, 2015.

- Between Loop 275/Lamar Blvd.(Mile Point 0.000) and 465 ft. east of IH 35 northbound frontage road (Mile Point 0.345) – Keep 50 MPH
- Between 465 ft. east of IH 35 northbound frontage road (Mile Point 0.345) and Harris Glenn Drive (Mile Point 1.491) – Reduce from 65 MPH to 55 MPH
- Between Harris Glenn Drive (Mile Point 1.491) and 3,363 ft. east of Dessau Road (Mile Point 3.216) - Reduce from 65 MPH to 60 MPH

The study was conducted as per provisions of the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 545, Subchapter H "Speed Restrictions" and TxDOT's "Procedures for Establishing Speed Zones."

I anticipate prompt approval of the proposed speed limits by the City of Austin.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself at (512) 832-7286.



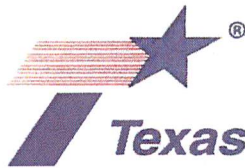
Sincerely,



Mahendran Thivakaran, P.E.
Transportation Engineer
TxDOT - Austin District

Attachments

cc: Imelda Barrett, P.E., Director of Trans Operations, Austin District, TxDOT



125 EAST 11TH STREET | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 | (512) 463-8580 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

October 18, 2016

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Managing Engineer
City of Austin Transportation Department
3701 Lake Austin Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78703

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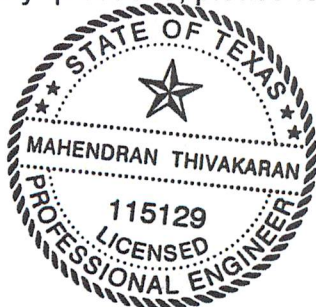
I am recommending a change of speed limit as shown below as per traffic speed studies conducted by the department on Loop 275 (Lamar Boulevard) between FM 734 (Parmer Lane) and US 183 in Austin on July 11, 2016.

- Between FM 734/Parmer Lane (Mile Point 1.264) and Braker Lane (Mile Point 4.211) – Keep 50 MPH
- Between Braker Lane (Mile Point 4.211) and US 183 (Mile Point 7.119) – Reduce from 45 MPH to 40 MPH
- Between 723 ft. north of Oak Brook Drive (mile point 2.351) to 407 ft. south of Little Oak Drive (mile point 2.680) – School Zone - Keep 35 MPH when flashing and 50 MPH all other times

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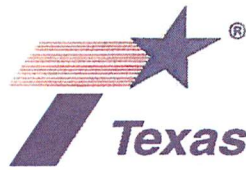


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Mahendran Thivakaran, P.E.
Transportation Engineer
TxDOT - Austin District

Attachments

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125 EAST 11TH STREET | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 | (512) 463-8580 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

December 20, 2016

Eric Bollich, P.E., PTOE
Managing Engineer
City of Austin Transportation Department
3701 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin, Texas 78703

Mr Bollich:

I am recommending a change of speed limit as shown below as per traffic speed studies conducted by the department on Loop 275 (Lamar Boulevard) between FM 734 (Parmer Lane) and US 183 in Austin on July 11, 2016 and crash data analysis between 2013 and 2015.

- Between FM 734/Parmer Lane (Mile Point 1.264) and Braker Lane (Mile Point 4.211) – Keep 50 MPH
- Between Braker Lane (Mile Point 4.211) and US 183 (Mile Point 7.119) – Reduce from 45 MPH to 35 MPH
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