

Highway Enforcement Command

Rush Hour Rapid Response Initiative

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Traffic a Major Austin Issue

- In Austin, each year twice as many people are killed in crashes as by Homicide
 - many more are seriously injured, or permanently disabled.
- Residents and visitors alike, spend far too much time waiting in traffic.
 - Individual frustration, stress, quality of life, are all affected by time lost waiting in traffic.



Texas Transportation Institute's Urban Mobility Study (2005)

- Traffic incident delays comprised 54% of all delays in the urban areas studied**
- Traffic incidents caused more delays than routine heavy traffic**
- The average annual delay per person in Austin is 51 hours**
- Austin is the most congested mid sized city (500,000 – 1 million in population)**



Need for Emergency Traffic Management

- **CalTran study - when one lane blocked on three-lane expressway traffic flow capacity reduced by 60 percent**
 - **Caused by vehicles being forced to merge into the remaining lanes.**
- **Conducting a collision investigation on shoulder (with no lanes blocked) reduces capacity by 30%**
- **The loss of two lanes creates 90 % restriction.**
- **A motorist changing a tire on the shoulder reduces the traffic flow by 10 to 15 percent.**
- **Traffic studies suggest for every minute traffic is blocked, a 4 minute traffic delay is created.**

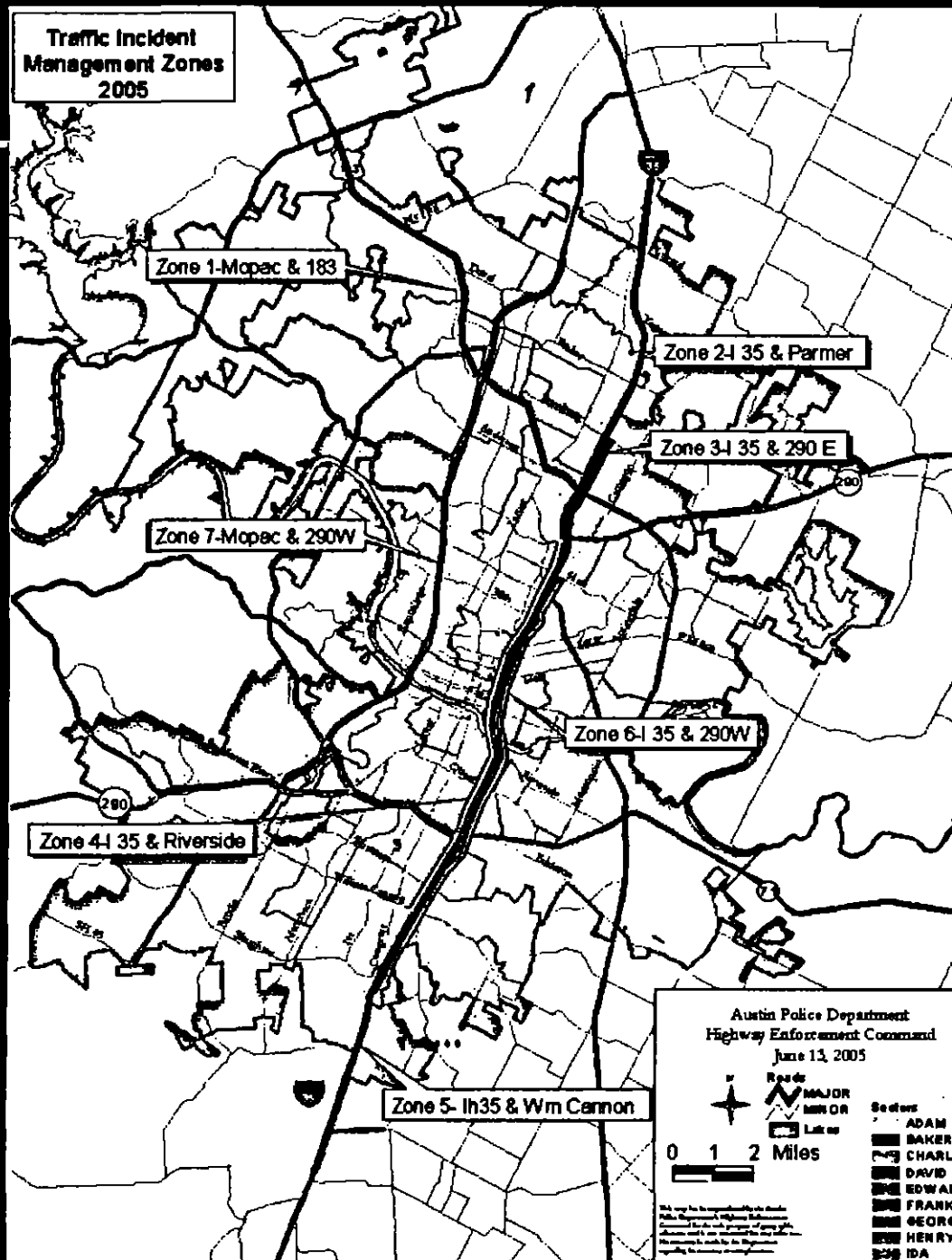


Need for Emergency Traffic Management cont.

- Cost of roadway delays est. \$1 trillion per year (USDOT)
- Congestion leads to delays, decreasing flow, higher fuel consumption & has negative environmental effects
- Congestion exacerbated by irregular occurrences:
 - Traffic accidents
 - Vehicle disablements
 - Spilled loads
 - Hazardous materials
- 14-18% of all crashes result from congestion incidents (USDOT)
- *Fed highway admin states 18% fatal highway collisions are secondary collisions due to unplanned or emergency obstruction on the highway, (e.g. Major wreck)*



**Traffic Incident
Management Zones
2005**

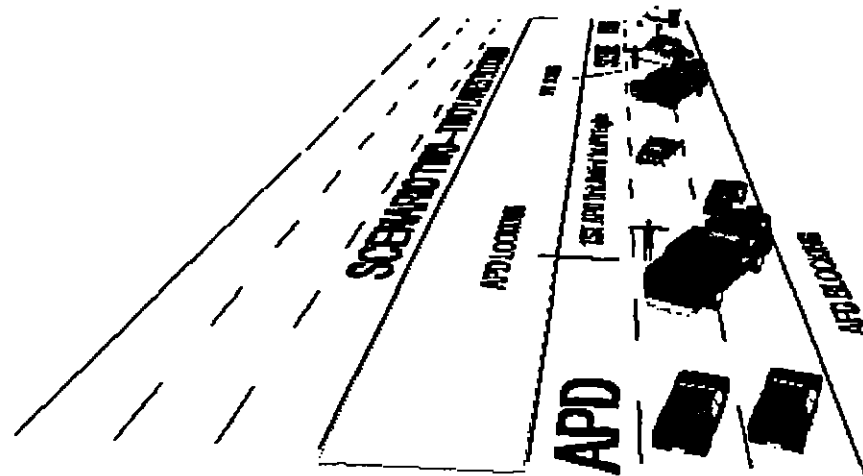
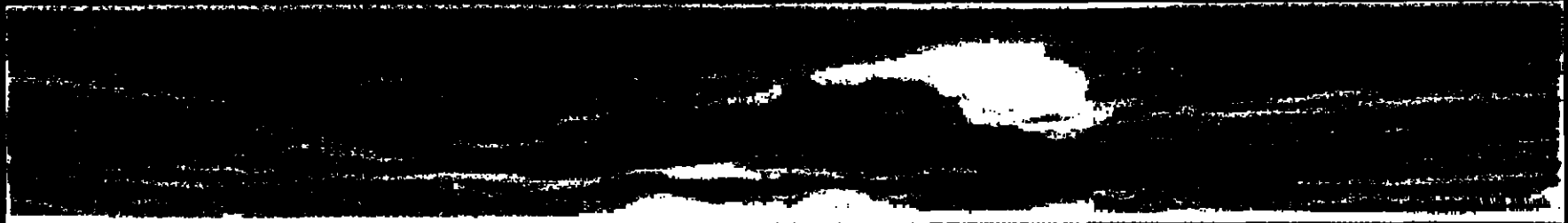


Highway Patrol “CDR” Zones

Morning &
Evening
“rush-hour”
(6a-9a, 4p-7p)

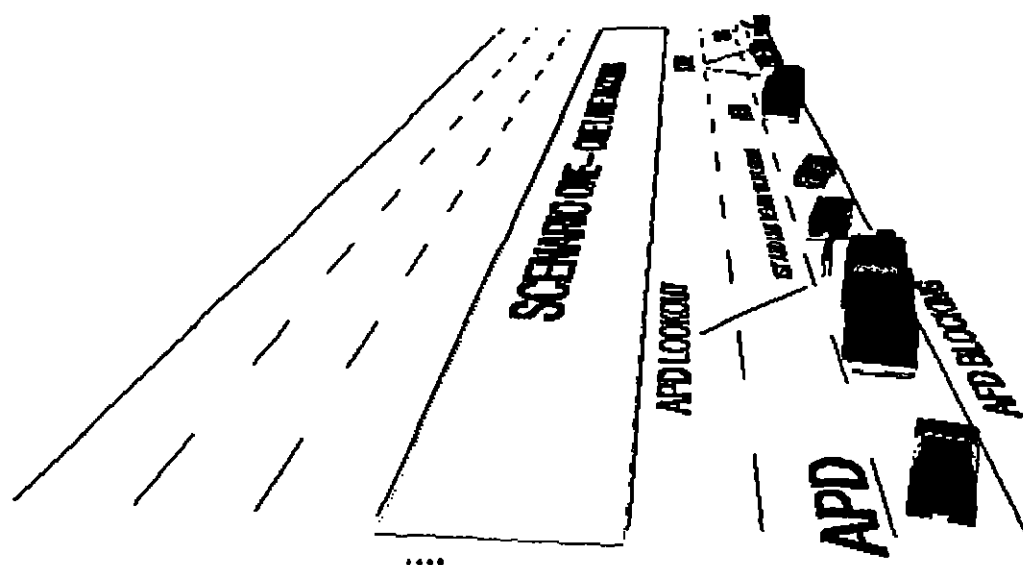
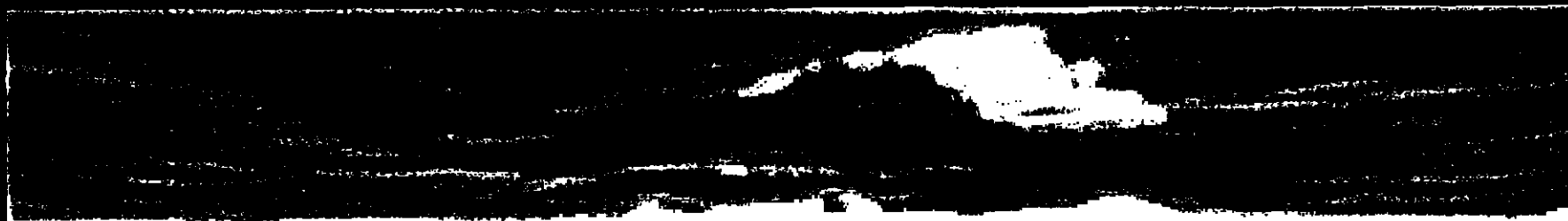


Road Capacity 79-90% restricted



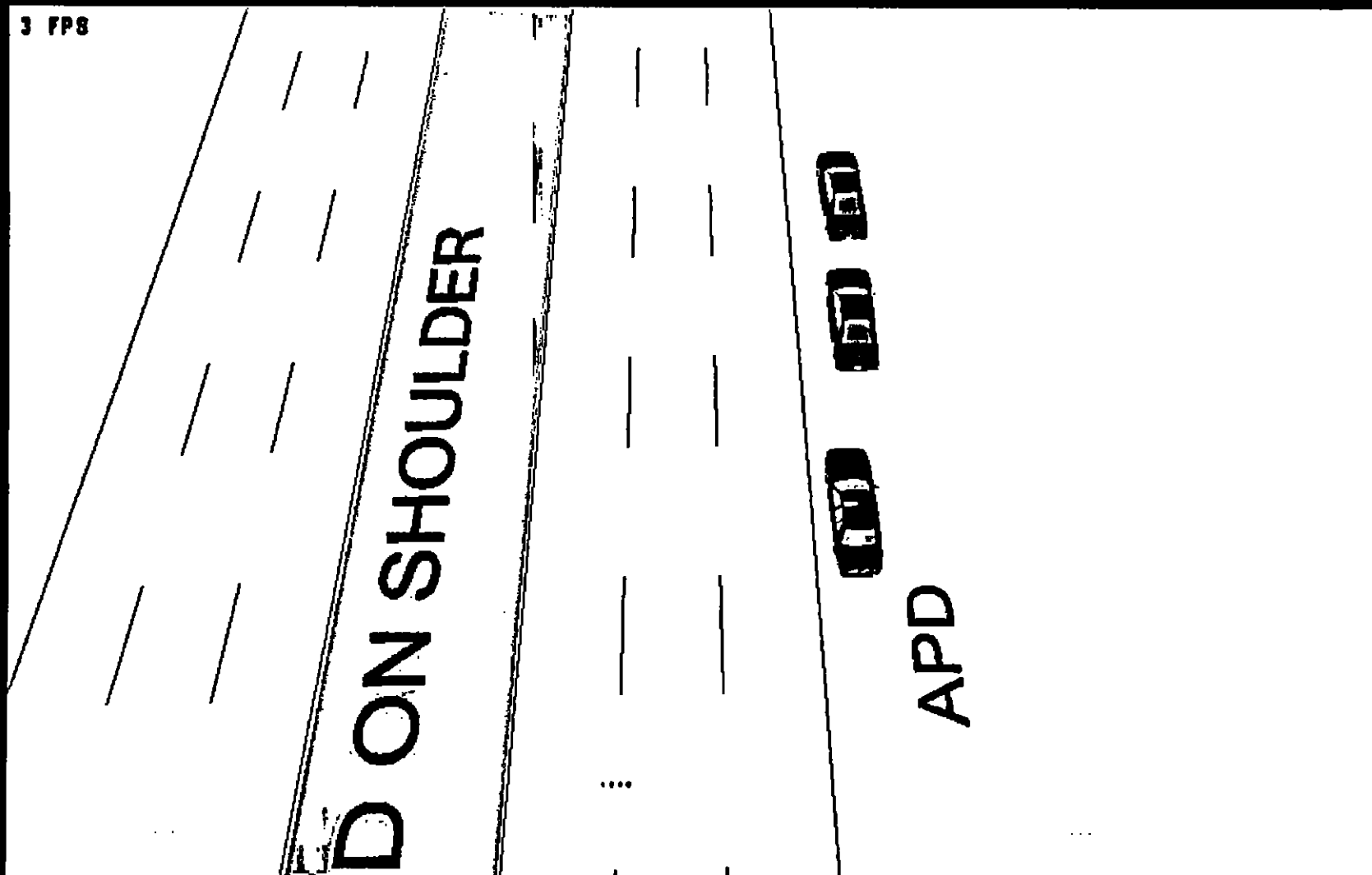


Road Capacity 50-60% restricted





Road Capacity 26-30% restricted





Road Capacity 10-15% restricted

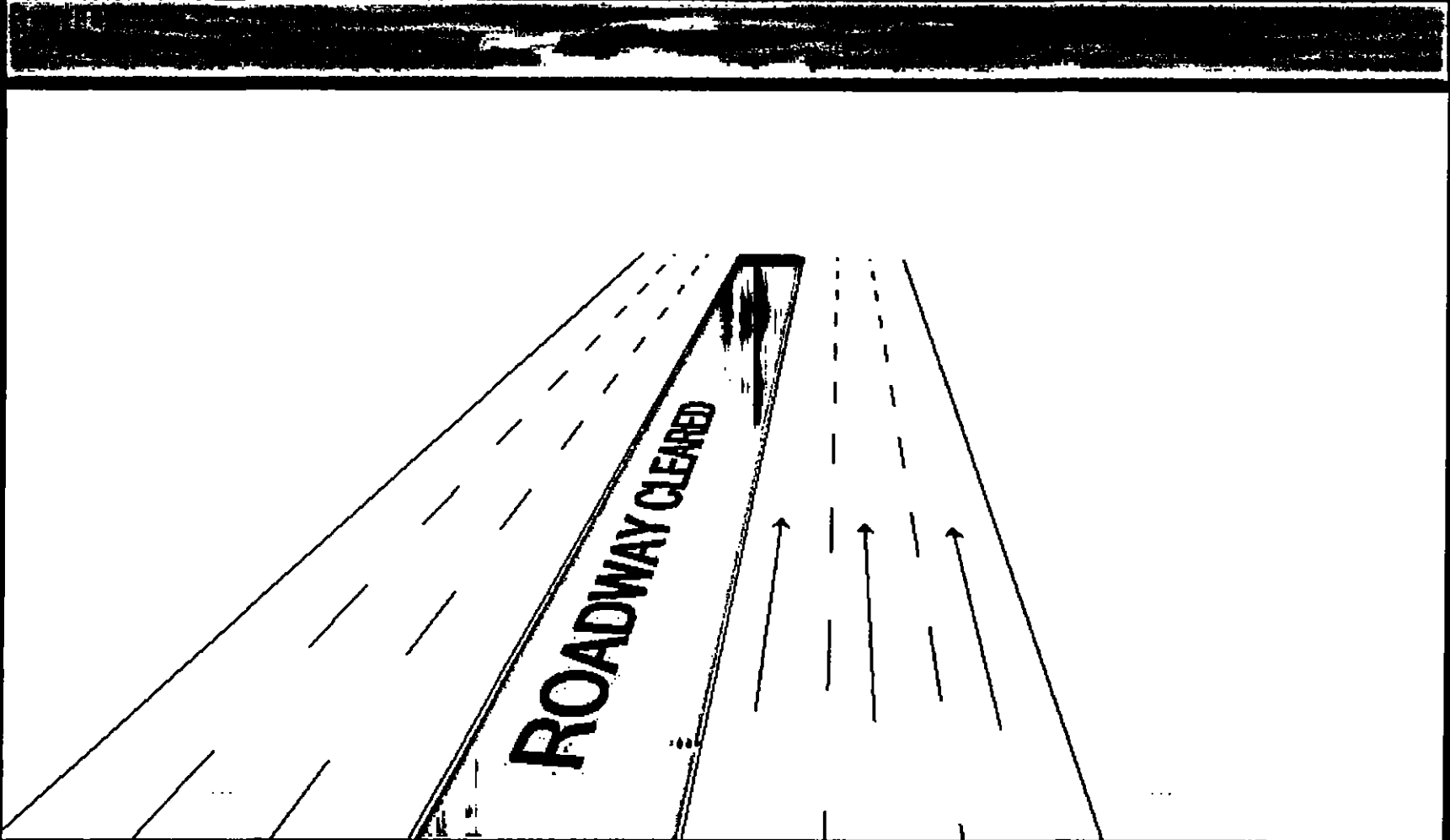
3 FPS

DO NOT SHOULDER





Restriction based on infrastructure limitation only





Rush Hour Rapid Response and TIM

- Enhanced communication with AFD, EMS, Patrol officers on the ground, and Wreckers
- Centralized Traffic Monitoring from Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center (CETCC)
- Increase use of “Air Enforcement” support: reports traffic incidents, captures reckless drivers
 - supported in part due to ongoing partnership with Cap Metro (currently refurbishing surplus helicopter)



Rush Hour Rapid Response and Traffic Incident Patrol (TIP)

- Retired Officers to provide courteous professional assistance to stranded motorist.
- Use push bar to remove stranded motorist from roadway, summon tow truck, provide phone, assist with minor repairs, direct traffic, summon first aid.
- Assist officers with reports as legally allowed (e.g... minor "Leaving the Scene" crashes).



Improving Wrecker Ordinance

- Purpose: Enhance Traffic Safety and Consumer Safety
 - Facilitate rapid clearance following traffic incidents
 - Provide consumer safety
 - Safe wrecker drivers
 - Bill of rights



Summary of Proposed Ordinance Changes

- **Require participation in the Rush Hour Rapid Response program / TIM**
 - Required as part of participation in the rotation list program
 - Requires participation in enhanced direct communication program; i.e. two-way radio communication between wrecker and TIM/TIP personnel
- **Annual registration and inspection of tow trucks and equipment**
- **Tow directly to a vehicle storage facility; prohibit temporary storage/placement of towed vehicles**



Summary of Proposed Ordinance Changes (cont)

- **Acceptance of credit card payment as an optional form of payment**
- **Establish criteria to allow denial, suspension, or revocation of tow truck operator license for ordinance/rule violations, including criminal history.**
- **Examples of criminal history issues:**
 - **Permanent Denial/Revocation – Murder, Sexual Assault, kidnapping**
 - **Timed Denial/Suspension – (vehicle theft or other consumer threats)**
- **Change from two classification of tow trucks (Light and Heavy Duty) to three (Light, Medium, Heavy Duty)**
- **Fee increases / creation of new fee**
- **Conversion of operational items from Ordinance to Rules for administration and enforcement**



Fee Schedule Comparison

	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Vehicles 10,000 pounds or less	\$95	\$130
Vehicles in excess of 10,000 but less than 26,000	\$393	\$400
Vehicles in excess of 26,000 pounds		\$600



Other City Comparisons

<u>Dallas</u>	
Maximum Towing Fees for:	
Vehicles 10,000 pounds or less	\$95
Vehicles between 10,000 and 26,000 pounds	\$150
Vehicle greater than 26,000 pounds	\$350
<u>El Paso</u>	
Maximum Towing Fees for:	
Vehicles 10,000 pounds or less	\$70
Vehicles more than 10,000 pounds	\$350



Other City Comparisons (cont.)

<u>Fort Worth</u>	
Towing within the limits of the city (First 30 minutes, then hourly rate)	\$135
Tandem axle (heavy duty) wreckers (First 30 minutes, then hourly rate)	\$216
Use of tilt bed/roll back car carrier (First 30 minutes, then hourly rate)	\$135
Hourly rate, charged in 15 minutes increments	\$100
<u>San Antonio</u>	
Maximum Towing Fees for:	
Light Duty	\$70
Heavy Duty (2 hour minimum)	\$115



Conclusion

All of the following are interlinked:

- *Road Congestion*
- *Driving Culture*
- *Police Enforcement*
- *Traffic Fatalities*
- *Economy*

The primary objective of the Rush Hour Rapid Response initiative is to get traffic moving which will result in safer roads, less driver frustration and reduce overall costs to Austin's residents and visitors