



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**CC:** Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Robert D. Goode, P.E., Assistant City Manager

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

**DATE:** April 23, 2014

**SUBJECT:** **Riverside Drive Corridor Study**

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The Austin Transportation Department has completed a preliminary engineering study for the Riverside Drive corridor. Riverside Drive was one of the roadway corridors that were part of the 2010 Mobility Bond package approved in November 2010 by Austin voters for analysis. The Riverside Drive corridor report is now available at the Austin Transportation Department's website - [\\Coacd.org\dfs\FileTransfer\ATD Riverside Corridor Report](http://Coacd.org/dfs/FileTransfer/ATD%20Riverside%20Corridor%20Report).

### **Background**

As part of the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), the City of Austin and the ASMP team implemented a robust public involvement process that worked with the community, a council appointed Citizens Task Force, and several other partnering agencies to develop the 2010 Mobility Bond program. The \$90 million bond package contained a variety of mobility improvements that included pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities for selected roadways within the City of Austin. On November 2, 2010, Austin voters approved the bond package including funds to conduct a preliminary engineering design effort (PEDE) for the Riverside Drive corridor.

### **Study Purpose**

The purpose of performing the corridor study PEDE was to identify the needs of the roadway in order to develop a multi-modal transportation system supportive of mixed-use, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle friendly development patterns. The project required the establishment of a plan as well as an implementation strategy for the corridor. The study includes the identification of short, medium, and long term transportation improvements to improve safety; increase vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle mobility and accessibility; and improve quality of life along the corridor.

The process for the corridor effort included:

- A comprehensive public involvement process.
- Analyzing the corridor to identify key issues and needs to implement the community vision for Riverside Drive.
- Determining the anticipated traffic generation due to the land use changes as contained in the Riverside Drive Regulating Plan.

- Transportation analysis and recommendations for creating a safe, multi-modal, transit-supportive corridor, and identification of improvements for better circulation and connectivity.
- Identification of infrastructure improvements that would be required to implement the plan.

### **Project Details**

The East Riverside corridor study takes the vision of the East Riverside Corridor Master Plan and outlines an execution plan to make the vision a reality. This project also involved a multi-faceted “complete street” approach to provide a plan which includes a pedestrian friendly environment while offering multimodal access to areas of work, residence and recreation.

- **Short-Term Recommendations**

These improvements focus on intersection improvements such as lane reconfigurations and the replacement of striping, signage, signals, ramps, and pavement. Pedestrian improvements such as sidewalk additions and replacements, and bicycle improvements such as the addition of signage, pavement markings and bicycle lanes along selected cross streets are also included in the short-term recommendations.

- **Medium-Term Recommendations**

These improvements involve access management improvements such as driveway closures/consolidation as well as the closure of specific median openings. These actions will improve mobility and reduce pedestrian automobile conflicts.

- **Long-Term Recommendations**

The long-term improvements that are recommended for East Riverside Drive are meant to change the overall physical operation of the corridor and be constructed with the planning horizon year 2025. Key long-term improvements include:

- The travel lanes along Riverside Drive are reduced from three lanes in each direction to two lanes in each direction, with the third lane being converted for high capacity transit purposes. The traffic modeling that was done showed acceptable vehicular mobility with the reduction of automobile lanes along the roadway. There is no reduction in the number of lanes planned at the critical intersections of IH-35 and SH 71 in order to maintain vehicular mobility.
- Center running high capacity transit that is assumed to extend from west of IH 35 to SH 71.
- The construction of a 7 to 8-foot cycle track along east and westbound lanes that is buffered from the roadway and sidewalk.
- Sidewalks along the corridor will be expanded to meet the desired 15-foot width as designated by the Riverside Drive Regulating Plan.
- Pedestrian hybrid beacons are proposed between Grove Boulevard and Montopolis Drive. They will be placed at mid-block locations having high volume pedestrian crossing activity. A crossing has already been installed on Riverside Drive west of Pleasant Valley to serve the pedestrians crossing in the area.
- Landscaping such as street trees along the median and sidewalks.

### **Moving Forward**

The completion of the preliminary engineering effort for Riverside Drive represents a significant achievement through the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan and the Imagine Austin Plan. While it is in fact significant, there are still many roadway corridors within the City of Austin that would benefit from a similar analysis effort. The 2012 bond package included

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that enhances the environment and economic strength of the region.*

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partial funding for Riverside Drive in the amount of \$1M. Additional funding will be needed to implement all of the recommended improvements for Riverside Drive.

The Austin Transportation Department will be scheduling and making presentations to the Urban Transportation Commission and the Comprehensive Planning and Transportation Committee of the Austin City Council regarding the findings of the Riverside Drive Corridor Report.