




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

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

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

DATE: May 14, 2015

SUBJECT: Removal of exclusive right-turn lane from westbound East 51st Street to northbound Cameron Road

Council offices may have been getting calls from travelers using East 51st Street regarding a traffic revision in progress at the intersection of East 51st Street and Cameron Road. As part of the IH 35 and East 51st Street Intersection Improvements Project, the westbound exclusive right-turn lane on East 51st Street has been removed (see attached map). As a result, significant temporary delays are being experienced by drivers travelling westbound on East 51st Street. The final project will result in a new direct access ramp from the northbound IH 35 frontage road to Cameron Road. This connector ramp will allow traffic to access Cameron Road without going through the Mueller Development and is anticipated to significantly reduce the turn volumes at East 51st Street at Cameron Road.

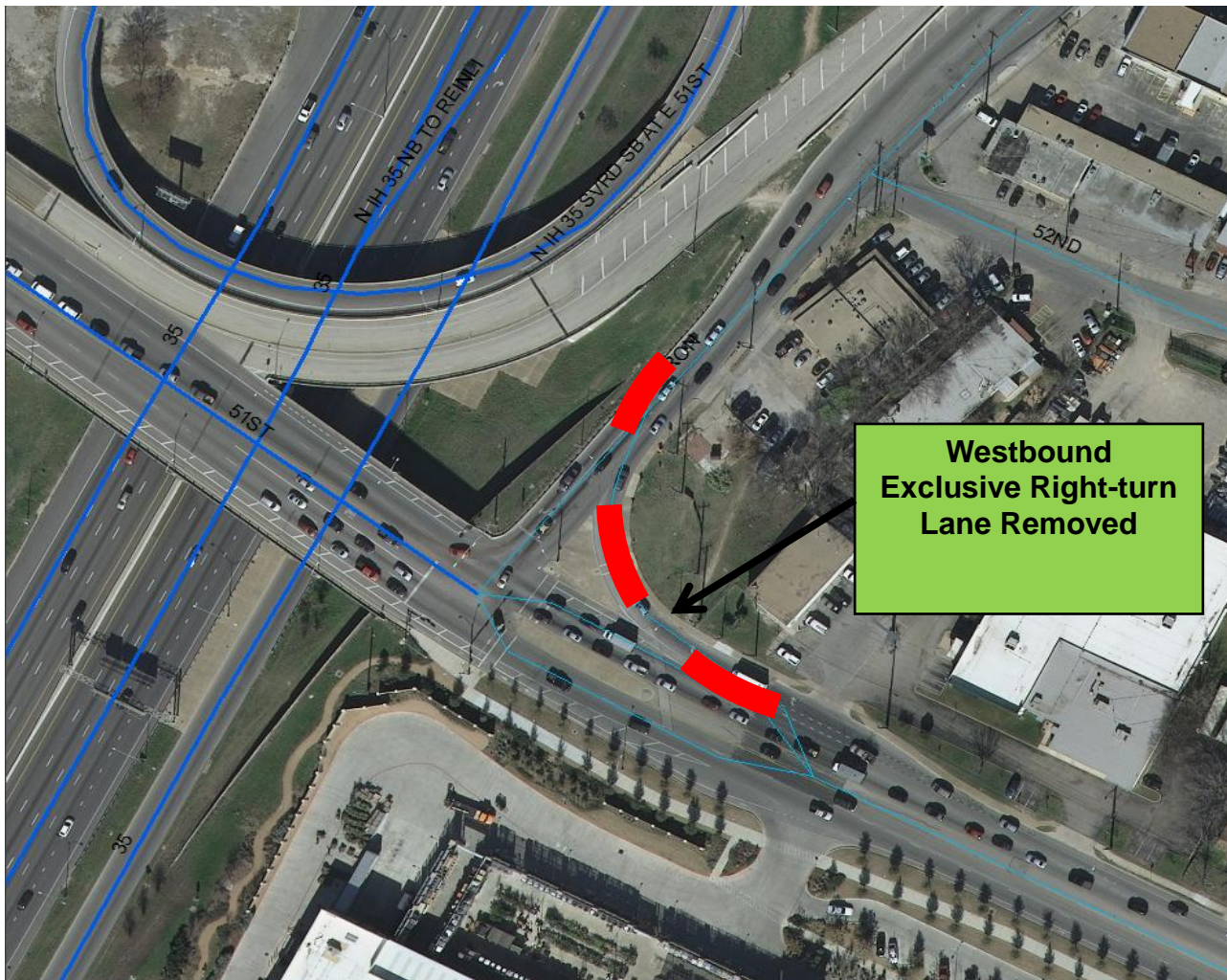
The construction of the new connector ramp being managed by Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is anticipated to take an additional 90 to 100 days. Austin Transportation Department (ATD) staff has been in contact with TxDOT staff and there is not a way currently to change the sequencing until after the new connector ramp is complete. The right turn lane has already been removed. ATD is moving to mitigate the construction impacts by adjusting the current signal timings at the intersection of 51st Street and Cameron Road to reduce the delays on East 51st Street. We fully anticipate that once the new ramp is completed that the traffic delays will be substantially reduced through this intersection.

This project included the construction of the connector ramp from northbound IH-35 frontage road to Cameron Road along with improving the pedestrian safety attributes of the intersection at East 51st Street and Cameron Road. The removal of the exclusive right-turn lane is anticipated to reduce the crossing distance and exposure of pedestrians to oncoming traffic as they attempt to cross through this congested area. The overall project is being constructed by TxDOT but was substantially funded by the City of Austin.

ATD staff participated in the design and advocated for the reconfiguration of the intersection. We regret the impact that the construction sequencing has caused on the traveling public and will make every attempt possible to mitigate the resulting congestion by retiming the associated signal. We anticipate the larger interchange improvements will significantly improve the safety of the intersection and once the direct connector to Cameron Road is completed, help in reducing congestion in this portion of the grid.

Please let me know if you need additional information.

cc: Greg Malatek, P.E., TxDOT, Austin District Engineer
Michael McKissick, P.E., TxDOT, North Austin Area Engineer
Gordon Derr, P.E., Assistant Director



**Intersection of East 51st Street and
Cameron Road**