




## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**CC:** Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
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Brian Manley, Chief, Austin Police Department  
Jason Bryant, Commander, Austin Police Department

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

**DATE:** November 26, 2019

**SUBJECT:** **Update on Rainey Shared Streets Pilot, Resolution No. 20190619-186 (CIUR 2177)**

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This memorandum provides an update to [Council Resolution No. 20190619-186](#) (Council Item Update Report 2177), which called for staff to initiate a shared streets pilot on Rainey Street; this Pilot will test the temporary closure of Rainey Street to motor vehicle traffic to determine effects on mobility and safety in the area. Planning of the Pilot is being led by the Austin Transportation Department (ATD), with the Austin Police Department (APD) leading the implementation of the temporary closure in a supportive, partnership role. Staff has collaborated to determine the dates, times, and duration of the pilot after consulting the Rainey businesses, area neighborhood and homeowner's associations, and the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC) Advisory Board.

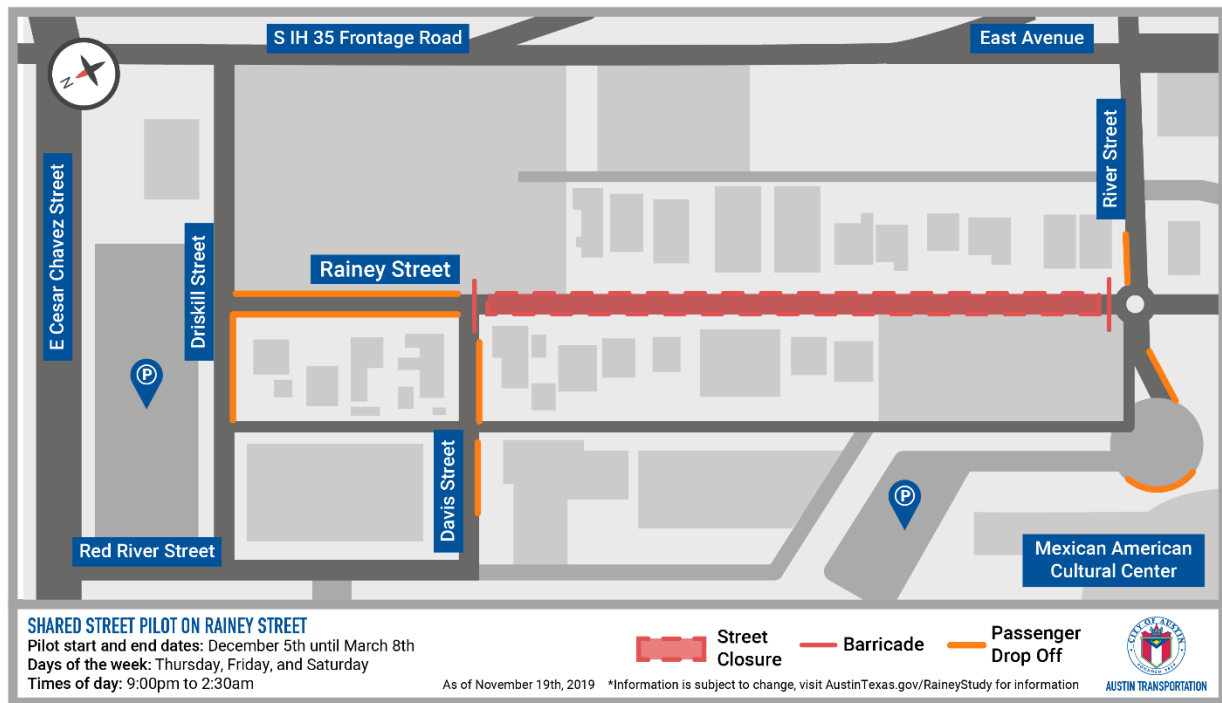
During the Pilot period, Rainey Street from Davis Street to River Street will close to motor vehicle traffic Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 9:00 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. The Pilot will last from December 5, 2019 through March 8, 2020. Within the closure limits, pedestrians, bicycles, scooters, pedicabs, and electric low-speed vehicles will be allowed. APD officers will be present to manage safety and mobility in the area during the closure. Through close monitoring of the Pilot and other public and private projects impacting area mobility, staff will maintain the ability to adjust as needed, including changing the logistics or suspending the Pilot. Any changes will be communicated publicly.

### **Pilot Details**

In developing the Pilot plans, staff considered how best to support multimodal access to the area for visitors, residents, workers and businesses, including maintaining motor vehicle access to properties and off-street parking and designating additional queuing areas for taxis and transportation network companies.

On the northern end of the closure, passenger loading and unloading will remain along the south curb of Driskill Street to the west of Rainey Street and on the south curb of Davis Street west of Rainey Street. The on-street parking on Rainey Street, north of Davis Street, will be converted to loading and unloading areas; signage will be updated. The taxi zone will remain in front of the Hotel Van Zandt. Alley access along the west side of Rainey Street will remain open. Signs for on-street parking within the closure limits will be updated to show restricted hours.

On the southern end of the closure, passenger loading and unloading will remain on the north curb of River Street east of Rainey Street. Passenger loading and unloading would also be provided along the curb adjacent to the ESB-MACC. All other on- and off-street parking and “no parking” signs in the area will remain the same.



### Background and Past Public Engagement

Prior to the Council resolution, ATD staff initiated a Rainey Mobility Study in early 2019 to understand how different future mobility scenarios and associated multimodal infrastructure improvements can better manage traffic congestion and safety in the area. The area has seen rapid growth in recent years, adding pressure to existing mobility infrastructure.

Through the study, traffic data was collected on Rainey Street, which showed high pedestrian volumes beginning around 8:00 p.m. on Thursday evening, peaking at approximately 900 pedestrians on Saturday at 11:00 p.m., and making up 80% of the total traffic on the street. In total, more than 7,000 pedestrians were counted between 6:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. each Friday and Saturday night on the evenings that were studied through the Rainey Mobility Study.

In summarizing and presenting this data to APD, staff determined that the high volumes of pedestrians increased the risk of potential conflicts with vehicles and supported a safety closure of Rainey Street to motor vehicles. Logistics of the Pilot were determined based on the traffic data that was collected, as well as input from Rainey area businesses and residents during the Rainey Mobility Study, including a business survey to understand daytime operations, such as deliveries, waste collection, and parking.

Prior to the Pilot logistics being drafted, the Downtown Commission was briefed at their meeting on Oct. 16, 2019. Staff provided briefings on the Pilot logistics to the Pedestrian Advisory Council on Nov. 4, Council's Mobility Committee on Nov. 5, and the Bicycle Advisory Council on Nov. 19. After receiving feedback from Mobility Committee and the Pedestrian Advisory Council, staff revised the Pilot plans to allow scooters, pedicabs, and bicycles within the closure to maintain access for these modes and support the concept of a shared street. The Bicycle Advisory Council was supportive of these changes.

The ESB-MACC board was not able to make quorum at their meetings on Nov. 6, 2019 or Nov. 13, 2019, so staff have been unable to present to them; however, ATD provided its presentation on the Pilot in their agenda back-up as well as by email to the board's staff liaison to disseminate to the board members following their bylaws. There will be another opportunity to present to the ESC-MACC board on Dec. 4, 2019. On Nov. 4, staff also met with a task force of Rainey neighborhood stakeholders who formed after the passage of the Council Resolution to provide input on the Pilot. Staff will continue to engage with this task force and other area stakeholders throughout the Pilot.

### **Next Steps**

Prior to the launch of the Pilot on Dec. 5, 2019, ATD will update signage in the Rainey area to reflect the curb use changes by time of day and will notify the residents and businesses in the Rainey neighborhood of the vehicle closure. Information regarding the Pilot will be available online at [austintexas.gov/RaineyStudy](http://austintexas.gov/RaineyStudy) and staff can be contacted via email at [RaineyStudy@austintexas.gov](mailto:RaineyStudy@austintexas.gov).

APD will initiate the Pilot and staff from both departments will maintain a presence throughout the closure to ensure safety. Staff will be gathering traffic data and conducting surveys with area residents, business and visitors to understand impacts and help to measure the success of the Pilot.

Findings from this data collection and surveying effort will help staff determine how a motor vehicle closure affects safety and mobility in the area. The Rainey Mobility Study report is also being finalized and will be available online at [austintexas.gov/RaineyStudy](http://austintexas.gov/RaineyStudy) once it is published. ATD will incorporate the results of the Study and Pilot into the Austin Core Transportation Plan process to support recommended improvements to Rainey Street and other streets in the Rainey area. These recommendations will also be coordinated with the Waller Creek/Palm District Master Plan per [Resolution No. 20190523-029](#).