



MEMORANDUM

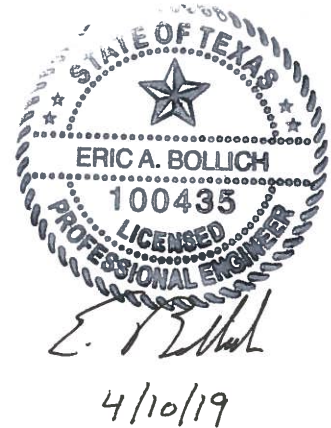
To: Traffic Study Files

From: Eric Bollich, P.E., PTOE
Managing Engineer, Transportation Engineering Division
Austin Transportation Department

Date: April 10, 2019

Subject: Speed Zone Investigation

Location: Ralph Ablanedo Drive – S 1st Street to S Congress Avenue



A speed zone investigation was conducted by the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) to determine if the existing speed limit of 40 miles per hour (mph) should be modified on Ralph Ablanedo Drive between S 1st Street and S Congress Avenue. This engineering study documents existing conditions and recommendations based on collected data and engineering judgment. Figures at the end of this document present existing and proposed conditions.

Location and Conditions

Ralph Ablanedo Drive is a two-lane, undivided collector that runs in a general east-west direction for a length of approximately 0.8 miles between S 1st Street and S Congress Avenue (the study segment). It is intersected by several local streets (Swanson Lane, Cullen Lane, Shallot Way, and Chick Pea Lane) and two collector streets (Francia Trail and Peaceful Hill Lane). Francia Trail and Cullen Lane connect Ralph Ablanedo Drive with W Slaughter Lane to the south; Peaceful Hill Lane connects Ralph Ablanedo Drive with W Dittmar Road to the north.

Throughout the study segment, Ralph Ablanedo Drive has a pavement width of 22 feet with no curb or sidewalk on the north side of the street. A five-foot wide sidewalk is along the south side of the street. For a majority of the study segment, this sidewalk is located adjacent to the edge of street pavement and separated by a slotted curb. Parking is not permitted along the study segment, and no bike lanes are marked; however, the study segment is recommended for bike lanes in the City Council-adopted *2014 Austin Bicycle Plan*.

Traffic Data

The following speed and volume data were collected in 2019 to measure conditions along the study segment.

Block Number	Location	Posted Speed Limit	85 th - Percentile Speed	Average Daily Traffic Volume
600	East of Swanson Lane	40	40	3,648
200	East of Cullen Lane	40	38	
100	West of S Congress Avenue	40	39	

Crash Data

Austin Police Department's crash database includes eight documented crashes along the study segment within the past three years. None of those crashes resulted in a fatality or serious injury. Three crashes were attributed to drivers failing to yield right-of-way to other vehicles, while two crashes were due to driver inattention or distraction. The remaining three crashes were attributed to various factors: disregard of signage, animal related, and no reason/other.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity

In addition to vehicle activity on the study segment, pedestrian and bicycle activity was observed. On a weekday with favorable weather, pedestrian and bicycle volumes in the morning and afternoon peak periods were low. Although few individuals were observed, a latent demand of pedestrian and cyclists is expected due to the existing connectivity that Ralph Ablanado Drive provides between the neighborhoods north and south of the street and S 1st Street and S Congress Avenue. The close proximity of the sidewalk to the edge of street pavement does not provide a high level of comfort to existing and potential pedestrians and cyclists using the sidewalk. This safety condition is exacerbated when two vehicles pass on Ralph Ablanado Drive where someone is present on the sidewalk.

Sight Distances

ATD reviewed sight distances at select intersections to determine if adequate lines of sight were available to drivers attempting to turn onto Ralph Ablanado Drive from side streets. Based on the current speed limit of 40 mph and the guidelines provided in the AASHTO "Geometric Design of Highways and Streets" (2011), two locations do not have intersection sight distances meeting minimum guidelines, creating adverse alignments along Ralph Ablanado Drive.

For vehicles turning left from Cullen Lane onto Ralph Ablanedo Drive, the available sight distance corresponds with an operating speed of 35 mph on Ralph Ablanedo Drive due to a horizontal curve in the study segment. Similarly, vehicles turning left from Francia Trail onto Ralph Ablanedo Drive have an available sight distance that corresponds with a 20-25 mph operating speed on Ralph Ablanedo Drive due to the vertical alignment of the study segment.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the engineering study for Ralph Ablanedo Drive between S 1st Street and S Congress Avenue, the current speed limit should be lowered from 40 mph to 30 mph due to the following:

- More than one location where adequate intersection sight distances are not achieved, and the visual obstructions cannot be removed or modified without a reconstruction of the road. A statutory speed limit of 30 mph would bring the differential from an advisory speed limit of 20-25 mph near Francia Trail to better adherence with engineering safety practice.
- The close proximity of the sidewalk to the edge of street pavement does not provide a high level of comfort to existing and potential pedestrians and cyclists using the sidewalk. This safety condition is exacerbated when two vehicles pass on Ralph Ablanedo Drive where someone is present on the sidewalk.
- A speed limit of 30 mph would be more consistent with streets of similar characteristics and operating conditions in the vicinity of Ralph Ablanedo Drive.
- An existing 25 mph school zone for Williams Elementary School is located on Ralph Ablanedo Drive from 200 feet west of Peaceful Hill Lane to 210 feet east of Peaceful Hill Lane. The extents of the school zone should remain, but the speed limit should be reduced to 20 mph to better follow engineering safety practice.



FIGURE 1.
RALPH ABLANEDO DRIVE

Study Segment and Location

4-5-2019



FIGURE 2.
RALPH ABLANEDO DRIVE

Existing Typical Cross Section

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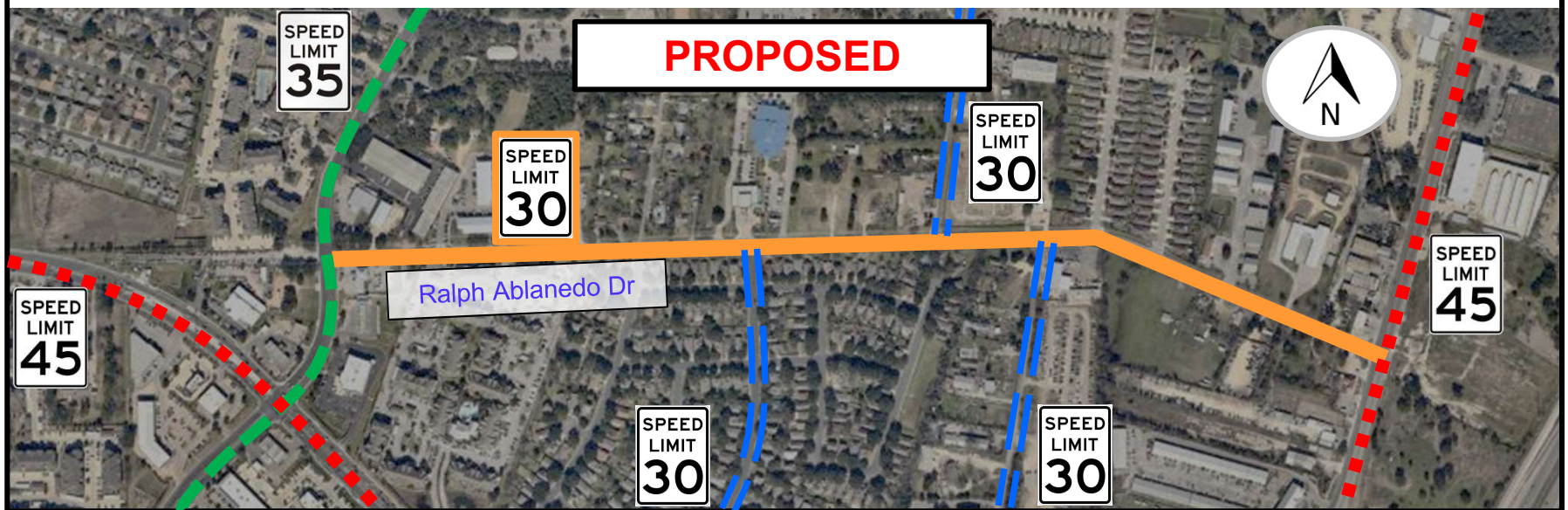







FIGURE 3.
RALPH ABLANEDO DRIVE

Existing 30 MPH 
 Existing 35 MPH 
 Existing 40 MPH 

Existing 45 MPH 
 Proposed 30 MPH 

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