



AUSTIN TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Heather Chaffin, Senior Planner
Planning and Zoning Department

FROM: Eric Bollich, P.E., PTOE, Acting Assistant Director
Austin Transportation Department 

DATE: November 12, 2019

SUBJECT: **Engineering Study Analysis and Recommendations Associated with November 14, 2019 Austin City Council Agenda Items 81 and 82**

Background

On the October 17, 2019 Austin City Council Agenda, Item 61 proposed to change the land use designation at 2401 Winsted Lane on the future area land use map from Single Family use to Neighborhood Mixed land use. In addition, Item 62 proposed to rezone the property from MF-2-NP to LR-MU-NP. Council postponed these items to the November 14, 2019 Austin City Council Agenda as Items 81 and 82 at the request of the applicant and neighborhood.

This postponement allowed Austin Transportation Department (ATD) to initiate and complete its transportation engineering study of the Windsor Road/Winsted Lane intersection (the study intersection), located adjacent to 2401 Winsted Lane, in response to residents' concerns about safety and operation at this location.

This memorandum provides a summary ATD's analysis and recommendations.

Crash Analysis

ATD first received a concern from the public about the study intersection in 2017 regarding the right-turn lane from westbound Windsor Road to northbound Winsted Lane, specifically the speed at which drivers were making this maneuver. In response, ATD installed delineators and markings with our operating budget to narrow the available maneuverable space for vehicles to reduce speeds. We received positive feedback as a result of our actions.

Of the 14 documented crashes at the study intersection within the last five years, the most prominent contributing factor has been drivers' failure to yield to oncoming traffic while attempting to make left turns from eastbound Windsor Road to northbound Winsted Lane. No crashes have been documented at the westbound to northbound right-turn lane.

Under the 2016 Mobility Bond, ATD has analyzed the top crash locations citywide based on crash frequency and severity to design and implement engineering solutions to mitigate

serious injuries. Based on this analysis, ATD has not prioritized the study intersection in the top 200 locations when prioritized against all others citywide.

Recommendations

ATD's mission is to provide the safest and most reliable transportation network to all users. As stewards of the public's money funding the 2016 Mobility Bond, ATD needs to ensure that our available funding sources are applied to locations with the highest need and prevalence of serious injuries. Based on our safety analysis and the study intersection's relative priority to all others citywide, ATD will not expend 2016 Mobility Bond funds at the study intersection as further improvements at this location cannot be made by operating funds.

However, ATD has identified these recommendations based on our observations of this intersection:

- Overgrown vegetation has reduced the available sight distance in the past between drivers and pedestrians using the westbound to northbound right-turn lane in question. While recent site observations do not indicate this is a concern, past observations indicate that some of the obstructing vegetation along Windsor Road originates from the private property at 2401 Winsted Lane. Per City code, property owners adjacent to the right-of-way are responsible for maintaining vegetation on all sides of their properties. Therefore, the property owner at 2401 Winsted Lane should monitor and address view obstructions at this location. ATD will also monitor this area for concerns.
- While documented crashes have not occurred at the right-turn lane in question, ATD recognizes that the current design could be improved to mitigate potential conflicts between drivers and pedestrians. This would require a reconstruction of the intersection to modify the angle of interaction between users; ATD has successfully implemented this type of modification under the 2016 Mobility Bond at various intersections within the City where the documented crash history justified these improvements. Applying similar improvements would require this intersection to be prioritized against all others citywide and a funding source to be identified. While ATD cannot guarantee this intersection would receive construction improvements, we will include the study intersection as one to evaluate for future funding opportunities. If selected, ATD would lead the design, cost estimation, and construction for appropriate engineering improvements.
- As stated previously, the most common type of crash is between eastbound left-turning vehicles and westbound through vehicles. The most effective solution would be to widen Windsor Road to add a short left-turn lane to separate movements to improve safety. However, right-of-way constraints and the nearby bridge over the creek make this infeasible. ATD can evaluate signal phasing changes with additional infrastructure to improve safety if future funding is identified.