




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

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

DATE: October 2, 2020

SUBJECT: **Speed Management Program - Updates Regarding Recommended Speed Limit Changes and Speed Management**

On June 9, 2020, I provided the Mayor and City Council a memo update on the Austin Transportation Department's (ATD's) progress recommending speed limit changes and developing a prioritization process for installing speed mitigation treatments on neighborhood streets. On June 11, 2020, City Council approved an ordinance amending City Code Chapter 12-4 (Speed Limits) to add definitions of neighborhood street, downtown street, and urban core arterial street; establish a maximum speed limit of 25 miles per hour on neighborhood streets; establish a maximum speed limit of 25 miles per hour on downtown streets; and establish a maximum speed limit of 30, 35, or 40 miles per hour on urban core arterial streets.

This memo provides status updates on our speed limit sign installation plan related to the speed limit reductions and our development of speed mitigation components of the Speed Management Program.

Speed Limit Reductions

ATD has initiated its sign installation plan to reflect the newly adopted the speed limit reductions, which has coincided with our public awareness effort through spots on radio and social media platforms informing the public of the upcoming speed limit changes.

We have completed sign installations on downtown streets, and sign installations in the urban core should be completed by the end of this year. Speed limit signs in the urban core will be larger than our typically sized signs for multi-lane streets and include supplemental ribbons to enhance noticeability.

ATD will start installing 25 mph signs next year for neighborhood streets less than 36 feet wide and have front-facing residences. We have designed a custom sign which will incorporate a fluorescent yellow pattern to enhance noticeability. These signs will be placed at the entrances of neighborhoods indicating the speed limit on neighborhood streets is 25 mph unless otherwise posted. We will follow these installations by evaluating the need to reduce speed limits on neighborhood streets between 36 feet and 40 feet wide.

Speed Mitigation Components

Concurrent to our efforts to evaluate speed limit modifications, ATD has created a process to evaluate and prioritize streets for speed mitigation treatments on neighborhood streets. This new approach includes a balanced consideration of crash history, risk characteristics, and speed profile. The prioritization framework also includes equity considerations; proximity to community destinations and transit; and existing or planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities, among other factors. It also reflects the fact that we have many more projects than capabilities or resources to construct.

To launch this component of our Speed Management Program, we have completed the following, which are available at <http://austintexas.gov/department/speed-management>.

- Program Document: outlines the methodology used to score neighborhood streets. It also provides a list of frequently asked questions about the program for easier review.
- Toolkit: describes the function of various speed mitigation treatments and provides guidance on which options are appropriate based on the context and desired outcomes of these treatments.
- Street Map: displays an interactive map with scores of all neighborhood streets based on crash history, risk characteristics, and speed profile.
- Selected Projects: lists the set of speed mitigation projects chosen for construction based on available funding for this first year of the program.

Our immediate next step is to complete schematic-level designs for the selected projects, which will include an expanded set of speed mitigation treatments appropriate for the context of streets, based on feedback we received through a public outreach process last year.

Finally, we will hold meetings with neighborhoods having selected projects. We will of course be following appropriate safe distancing practices. Based on these meetings, ATD will refine the project designs as needed. We anticipate starting construction by the end of this calendar year and completing them in 2021, barring Council action to transfer funding to other priorities and unforeseen circumstances.

ATD estimates that we have program funding to install these 14 projects to start this program:

- Springdale Road (D1) – Airport Boulevard to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
- Briarcliff Boulevard (D4) – Cameron Road to Berkman Drive
- Rosewood Avenue (D1) – E 11th Street to Webberville Road
- Bolm Road (D3) – Springdale Road to Shady Lane
- Webberville Road (D1) – Springdale Road to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
- Crystalbrook Drive (D1) – Loyola Lane to Pecan Brook Drive
- Blessing Avenue (D4) – Atkinson Road to E Anderson Lane

- Heflin Lane (D1) – Springdale Road to Webberville Road
- Colony Park Drive (D1) – Loyola Lane to Ritchie Drive
- Powell Lane (D4) – Georgian Drive to IH-35
- Peppertree Parkway (D2) – E Stassney Lane to Teri Road
- Blue Meadow Drive (D2) – Bluff Springs Road to Meadow Lake Boulevard
- Palace Parkway (D5/D2) – W Slaughter Lane to W Dittmar Road
- Abilene Trail (D8) – Convict Hill Road to Beckett Road

These projects represent a substantially small portion of the entire citywide need to manage speeds on our neighborhood streets. ATD will seek a mid-year budget amendment next spring to request additional resources to expand the program, assuming the City's financial situation supports this request. We will also be ready to respond to a bond measure to fund safety and Vision Zero efforts related to speed management if one is called and passed by our voters.

We have recently completed individual meetings with the Mayor's office and each City Council office to discuss the Speed Management Program, but please contact me if you have questions about the updates provided in this memo or about other components of our Speed Management Program.

CC: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Gina Fiandaca, Assistant City Manager