

RE: Request funding of RM-620 improvement to 6-lane divided with raised medians

Brian Thompto
Chairman, Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association

High Level Summary:

- **RM-620 will be in a failing state even after the RM-620/RM-2222 intersection improvements (bypass, 2222-widening) are completed in 2020**, including:
 - @ Anderson Mill Road (worst delay / LOS)
 - @ RM-620 (2nd worst delay / LOS)
 - @ Cavalier/Aria Drive in Lakeway (near Lake Travis High School)
- **RM-620 was the #1 cited roadway by the public for improvement for both Travis and Williamson counties with special emphasis on US-183 through RM-2222** (based on the CAMPO 2040 plan public input conducted in 2015 and other studies) and has well known and documented traffic bottlenecks.
- TXDOT released a corridor study for RM-620 in January 2017 that gave a clear next step for RM-620:
 - Make it a **6-lane median divided highway**, that will: *"would substantially reduce delay and improve safety by reducing conflict points along the corridor"* according to TXDOT.
 - This plan will also provide **separation of bicycle and pedestrian from vehicular traffic**.
- The CAMPO transportation and improvement project list for 2019-2022 is undergoing review in April 2018 - **presently RM-620 between US-183 and north of Mansfield Dam has been completely left off the proposed list with no local government partner funding**.
 - **The southern section of the improvement from north of Lakeway Blvd. to SH71 is on the proposed project list** (about \$98 million total with \$59 proposed from CAMPO). *"Given the strong local support from City of Bee Caves and City of Lakeway"* according to TXDOT, each of which are contributing \$5 million.
 - **The norther section (US-183 to just north of Mansfield Dam) is NOT included on the project list** and *"there are no plans at this time to advance the northern segment beyond the feasibility study"*, according to TXDOT, with *"no strong indications of support or commitments from the local entities as compared to the southern segment"*.
 - The northern section is multi-jurisdictional and has no local partner funding from City of Austin, Travis County, City of Cedar Park, or Williamson County
 - **While there is no clear single owner, there are many parties who could chip in to partner with TXDOT and CAMPO to fund this project.**
- **We request that our local governments partner with TXDOT to sponsor funding for RM-620 from US-183 to Mansfield Dam with high priority given the urgency of the project including both the current and forecast conditions of the roadway and the criticality of this major arterial to the region.**

Full Details:

RM-620 will still be in a “failing state” based on TXDOT’s level of service measure even after the already funded improvements at the RM-620/RM-2222 intersection are completed in 2020. Those who travel near Anderson Mill Road and RM-620 know this very well today. The RM-620/2222 and RM-620/Anderson Mill intersections as well as RM-620/Cavalier/Aria Drive in Lakeway will continue to be at an “F” level of service in 2020 with a forecast for the corridor to get much worse in the years ahead according to the [TXDOT RM-620 corridor study](#) concluded in 2017. This study identified the next step needed to address the dire congestion and

safety issues already experienced along these segments of RM-620. **The proposal is to go from a 4-lane flush median highway to a 6-lane raised median divided highway:**

*“The main improvement — constructing a raised median along the entire length of RM 620 and widening from four lanes to six lanes from SH 71 to Lakeway Boulevard and Quinlan Park Road to US 183 — would substantially reduce delay and improve safety by reducing conflict points along the corridor” (see pg. 62 of the study). The plan also notes that “Adding sidewalks and shared-use paths along RM 620 would allow for other modes of transportation” **including separation of pedestrians and bicycle riders from vehicular traffic.***

The \$98 million southern portion of the project (south of Mansfield Dam) has been prioritized by TXDOT and is on the CAMPO TIP funding proposal for 2022. Of the project total, they are requesting \$59 million from CAMPO, \$39 million coming from TXDOT funds and \$5 million each from the City of Lakeway and the City of Bee Cave.

Unfortunately, the northern end of the proposed improvement from US-183 to Mansfield Dam has no local funding partner for TXDOT and is not currently on the proposed projects list for the CAMPO TIP – meaning it is no-where in sight. This northern segment is multi-jurisdictional including the City of Austin, Travis County, the City of Cedar Park, and Williamson County. This means while there is no clear single owner, there are many parties who could chip in to partner with TXDOT and CAMPO to fund this project. Note that TXDOT prioritizes based on partner funding so the lack of any sponsoring support from the City of Austin, Travis County or Cedar Park puts this project out of contention.

From TXDOT (March 2018):

“Given the strong local support from City of Bee Caves and City of Lakeway for the 6-lane divided southern section and the City of Austin’s funding commitment on the RM 2222/RM 620 intersection, TxDOT, along with CAMPO, have been able to address the funding gaps needed to advance these projects to letting.”

“As for the northern segment, there have been no strong indications of support or commitments from the local entities as compared to the southern segment, therefore, there are no plans at this time to advance the northern segment beyond the feasibility study. The northern 6-lane divided section is currently estimated at \$121 million.”

A brief look at the TIP project list for CAMPO has many forward looking projects totaling hundreds of millions of dollars, but doesn’t prioritize RM-620 between US-183 and Mansfield Dam despite being the number one cited roadway in the CAMPO 2015 regional study and having major traffic problems NOW:

From the [CAMPO 2040 Plan, Table 6: Priority Projects Identified By Respondents to Survey](#):

Travis County, top priority:

- 1. RM 620 – Anderson Mill Rd. to SH 71 W**
2. Interstate 35 – Travis County – SH 45 North to SH 45 SE
- 3. SH 45 – US 183 W to RM 2222 – Extend SH 45**

Williamson County, top priority:

- 1. RM 620 – US 183 to Anderson Mill Road**
2. Interstate 35 – Williamson County – SH 45 N to SH 195 N
3. Anderson Mill Rd – Parmer Ln to Loop 1

The clear next step for RM-620 is to request that our local governments partner with TXDOT to sponsor funding for RM-620 from US-183 to Mansfield Dam and to request that TXDOT and CAMPO take the lead in ensuring this critical multi-jurisdictional project doesn’t fall through the cracks.