

April, 2020 – CAMPO Public Input (Page 1/3) – **RM620 IMPACT SUMMARY**

**RE: Preservation of priority funding for critical RM620 projects while reallocating \$600M for IH 35.**

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Texas Transportation Commission (TCC) has requested \$600 million in additional CAMPO funding for IH35 to complement a proposed \$1.4 billion investment from the state. CAMPO recently generated a list of possible projects to defer for this purpose which included all RM620 projects previously approved in addition to numerous other projects across the region.

**PETITION:**

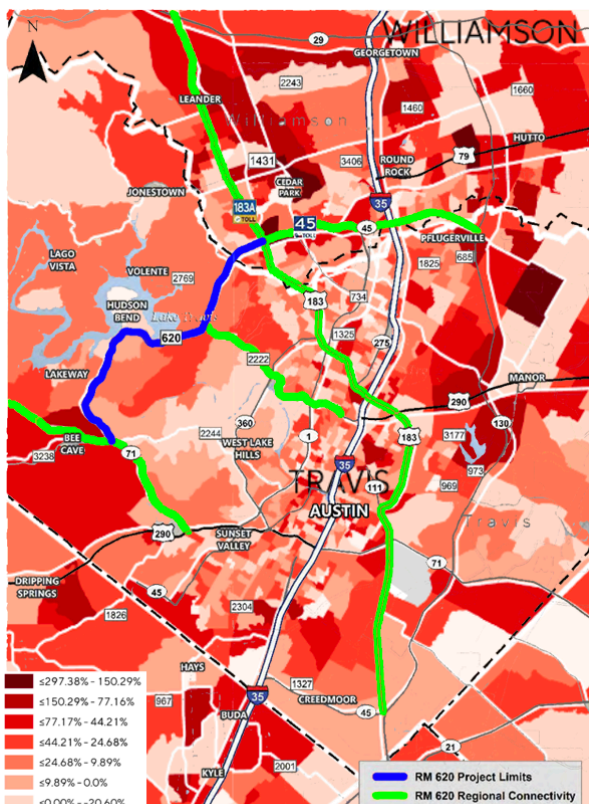
- **We ask that CAMPO prioritize major RM620 projects, and other regional connectors needed to address major existing bottlenecks. These projects should remain a top priority maintaining the original let dates when at all feasible.** This should be done by maintaining some of the most critical projects in the plan now, or if not, then by re-funding these projects in a timely prioritized manner as any additional funds become available. Please commit to not defer these projects years down the line.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

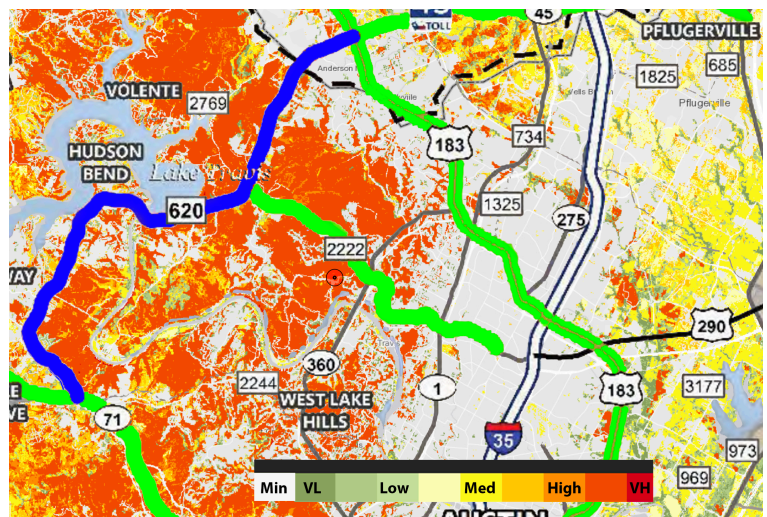
- Choosing \$600 million in projects to defer poses many difficult choices and there are no answers that will satisfy constituent or regional needs. Given this constraint, it is critical that projects which remain funded are those which serve critical regional priorities and address existing traffic bottlenecks. Delays on these projects will accrue a debt against regional connectivity and efficiency for years to come.
- RM620, between US183 and US71, serves as a significant regional corridor. As the only major north-south connection on the west side of the Austin ETJ, RM620 connects west Austin, western Williamson County, and southwest Travis County.
- RM620 is presently under-developed, with significant congestion and delays, especially at critical intersections. Major RM620 projects previously approved by CAMPO are critical stop gap measures essential to its functionality. Any significant delays in construction will cause real harm and impact to regional mobility and livability since this corridor is also a conduit for daily life. Significant growth in the west Austin metro area including in both Williamson and Travis counties has led to continuing demand on RM620 which is expected to continue, with traffic getting worse year over year\*<sup>1</sup>.
- RM620, as a ridge-line arterial, is the only option for emergency responders and existing gridlock slows critical response times, threatening the safety of those who work, live and travel in the corridor.
- RM620 is a major evacuation route in the event of a wildfire, running directly through high risk wildfire areas with large population centers\*<sup>2</sup>. Evacuation routes depend on a functioning RM620 with sufficient throughput; RM620 was shown to not have sufficient capability to handle a relatively small-scale wildfire incident in 2011 and the traffic/population have since grown dramatically.
- The Anderson Mill intersection is projected as the most congested on the RM620 corridor given its current failing state\*<sup>3</sup>, once construction finishes at RM2222. A \$25 million overpass for this intersection was approved by CAMPO in May 2019 at the same time as \$400 million was approved for IH35. This critical improvement is set to let in 2024, an excruciating wait for the corridor, which can ill afford additional delays. Along with widening RM620 south in Lakeway / Bee Caves, these projects constitute a sorely needed investment in this major arterial.
- The following list of projects were all proposed for deferral. These are critical to provide relief to grid-locked west Austin roadways RM620/LP360 that support all west Austin metro north-south travel:
  - **RM620 at Anderson Mill Road – overpass/grade-separation: \$25 million, let 2024**
  - **RM620 from Oak Grove Blvd to SH71 – widen from 4 to 6 lanes: \$59 million, let 2022**
  - **Loop 360 at Spicewood Springs Road – overpass/grade-separation: \$20 million, let 2022**
  - **Loop 360 at Lakewood Drive – overpass/grade-separation: \$15 million, let 2023**
  - **Loop 360 (South x3 intersections) – overpass/grade-separation: \$75 million, let 2025+**
- Federal stimulus dollars may be invested in the future and selected projects are likely to be those which are shovel ready. This further raises the importance to maintain focus on critical regional projects such as RM620. While not shovel ready today, these projects are highly time sensitive, should remain a top priority for funding, and should not get delayed in implementation if at all possible.

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- (\*1) TXDOT RM620 Feasibility Report, 2017: <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot/get-involved/aus/rm-620/corridor-study.pdf>
  - See insert figures for overlay RM620 Regional Connector map (blue/green lines)
  - (\*1) With continuing travel demand on RM620 due to regional and corridor growth TXDOT has projected 10 lanes will be the minimum needed between US183 and RM2222 by 2035, versus the current 4 lanes of travel.
  - See inset figure (A) showing RM620 connecting areas of extreme growth – also referencing CAMPO 2045 historical growth map.
  - (\*3) The Report Indicates that RM-620 will be in a failing state even after the RM-620/RM-2222 intersection improvements (bypass, 2222-widening) are completed in 2021, including:
    - @ Anderson Mill Road (worst delay / LOS)
    - @ RM-620 (2<sup>nd</sup> worst delay / LOS)
    - @ Cavalier/Aria Drive in Lakeway (near Lake Travis High School)
- (\*2) RM620 supports a high risk wildfire area and serves as a major wildfire evacuation route.
  - See inset figure (B) referencing the Texas A&M Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal. RM620 is in high to very-high wildfire risk areas and a critical evacuation route.
  - Reference: <https://texaswildfirerisk.com/Map/Public/#whats-your-risk>
  - Reference: <https://www.corelogic.com/insights-download/wildfire-risk-report.aspx>
  - Reference: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/when-not-if-it-happens-factors-favor-possible-austin-mega-wildfire-event/ar-BBZiRLK>



(A): RM620 connects regional growth. From TXDOT RM620 Feasibility Report (overlay) with Population Rate Change 2010-2017 (from CAMPO 2045 draft) (underlay, red growth key)



(B): RM620 is a critical evacuation route. From TXDOT RM620 Feasibility Report (RM620 connectivity overlay); Texas A&M Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (underlay, wildfire risk key)

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- **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
  - From **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

- **From the CAMPO 2016 TIP Plan**, which highlighted RM 620 as the most cited roadway based on public input, with 78% of all comments pertaining to this roadway; (from Community Outreach Report, 2017-2020, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Spring 2016)

**Supporting RM620 corridor stakeholders (additional pending):**

Steiner Ranch Neighborhood Association

River Place HOA

Canyon Creek HOA