

# NORTH LAMAR

West 45<sup>th</sup> St. to West 6<sup>th</sup> St.

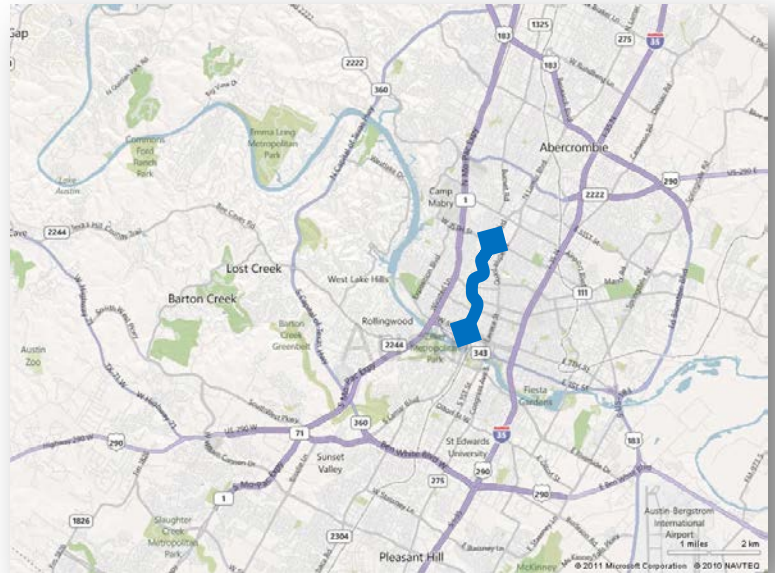
## Current Conditions

North Lamar is a major arterial in central Austin, running from North IH 35 to Ben White Boulevard (Highway 71) on the south side. Lamar is a five-lane arterial with two lanes in both directions and a center turn lane. Much of the road is flanked with commercial development, and the section from 30<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> streets borders a greenbelt that contains parks and a running trail. North Lamar does not experience the drastic speed decreases of other congested freeways, but rather remains congested for most of the day. The street does experience additional slowdowns in the evening with both north- and southbound directions matching each other throughout the day.

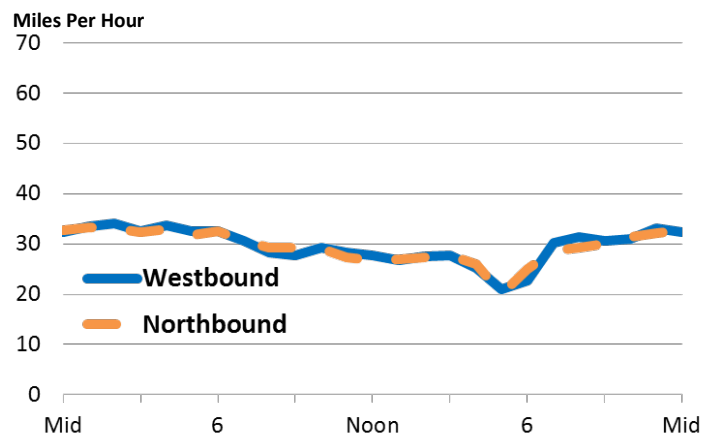
- Segment Length: 3.5 miles
- Road Type: 4- to 6-Lane street
- Annual Hours of Delay: 477,000
- Texas Congestion Index: 1.46
- Commuter Stress Index: 1.56

## Possible Congestion Causes

Lamar is a viable alternative to MoPac and IH 35 through central Austin, although the roadway experiences heavy congestion throughout the day, particularly during the AM and PM commuter rush. Additionally, the section of Lamar from 45<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Street has limited potential for expansion due to the greenbelt between 30<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets, and commercial developments that abut the road from 45<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. There are numerous driveways servicing the commercial developments that create access/egress congestion points. Traffic backs up in both left turn lanes at 29<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> streets where access is provided to the University of Texas campus.



<b>2010 Rank: 24</b>	<b>2013 Rank: 71</b>
<b>Annual Hrs of Delay/Mile:</b>	<b>137,000</b>
<b>Congestion Time:</b>	<b>3 Hours</b>
<b>Annual Cost of Delay:</b>	<b>\$9.9 Million</b>
<b>Average Daily Traffic:</b>	<b>32,000 Vehicles</b>





## Projects in Progress or Completed

### *Bus Rapid Transit*

A bus rapid transit line (BRT) is being implemented on North Lamar running into downtown via Guadalupe that includes traffic signal priority, limited stops, and articulated buses. Capital Metro expects service to begin in late 2013 or early 2014.

The city is currently working with Capital Metro to develop criteria for the implementation of bus rapid transit lanes. Both agencies are working together to adopt a policy for adequate BRT improvements that will not adversely affect throughput on corridors such as Lamar.

### *Signal Timing & Dynamic Messaging Signs*

The city has made downtown signal timing improvements that will alleviate some congestion. In late 2012, the city installed

dynamic messaging signs to better inform the public of delays, special events, and accidents. The city will be using \$1 million in STP-MM funding to upgrade the entire signal and communications system.

### *Complete Streets*

A portion of the \$15 million from the last city bond election will go towards improvements on North Lamar, including bicycle, pedestrian, drainage and utility improvements. The city is interested in piloting a fully complete segment of North Lamar to show the public what it could look like.

## Planning Efforts to Date

### *Loop 1 Express Lanes*

Add express lanes to Loop 1 (MoPac) to provide a suitable alternate route for traffic.

### *Roadway Improvements*

The City of Austin plans to install full bike lanes from Guadalupe to downtown and will include new signal timing for the corridor.

### *Travel Options Marketing*

The Downtown Transportation Management Association (TMA), known as Movability Austin, has initiated a demand management marketing campaign to reduce single occupancy vehicles. It will also assist with trip planning and travel coaching.



MetroRapid Bus, Capital Metro

## Public Involvement

Corridor studies on Lamar are being undertaken by the City of Austin, which will include multiple opportunities for public engagement.

- Stakeholder meetings with directly-affected individuals and groups (property owners, neighborhood associations, etc.).
- Public open-house meetings at the beginning and end of the process, including a session especially for corridor business owners.
- Print and electronic notices and updates.

## Next Steps

- There are severe limitations to expanding the footprint of North Lamar due to urban development and the presence of parkland. Given its proximity, Loop 1/MoPac is a logical alternate route to North Lamar. Current plans to **improve Loop 1 by expanding the footprint to add two express lanes** could draw longer trips from North Lamar onto Loop 1.
- The planned bus rapid transit and the City of Austin's signal timing effort will support congestion relief. However, there is no comprehensive effort to **examine traffic and demand reduction strategies** in the corridor. Possible strategies to consider include the following:
  - Access management.
  - Traveler information.
  - Overnight truck deliveries.
  - Grade separation.
  - Intersection improvements.
  - Super street arterials.
  - Bicycle/pedestrian options.

- Austin is lagging behind its peers in the application of traditional and innovative demand management strategies. The formation of the **Downtown TMA will support employer outreach** for downtown commuters and should be closely linked and coordinated with the University of Texas program, Commute Solutions (to reach employers outside of the central area that may have employees who utilize North Lamar for commuting), and State government (which employs over 24,000 people in the urban core).
- The AIM High program has identified the **development of a pre-positioning plan for incident management equipment and preparation of incident diversion plans for North Lamar, Loop 1, and other congested corridors as a high priority**. Additionally, there is a need for integrated system management and operation, to ensure that an institutional framework is in place to operate North Lamar and other congested corridors in a seamless way under both recurring and non-recurring congestion.
- There is an opportunity for **agencies to work together to provide public information and strategic outreach on actions related to the development and potential changes to North Lamar and other congested corridors via web-based strategies**. Sharing project updates between agencies would allow all of the agencies involved to offer the same level and detail of information at a single source, simplifying the message, and ensuring consistent communication.