

LOOP 1 (MoPac)

Parmer Lane to US 290

Current Conditions

From Parmer Lane to US 290W, the MoPac Expressway (Loop 1) operates primarily with six lanes, three northbound and three southbound. While there is access to the highway along the stretch, the majority of parallel arterials are through residential areas that become congested during peak periods. Due to the residential and commercial development parallel to MoPac, the potential for future road widening is limited. Similar to traffic slowdowns on IH 35, MoPac experiences near equal speed reductions in both directions, with the heaviest during the evening rush.

- Segment Length: 11.9 miles
- Road Type: 6-Lane freeway
- Annual Hours of Delay: 3,363,000
- Texas Congestion Index: 1.92
- Commuter Stress Index: 2.37

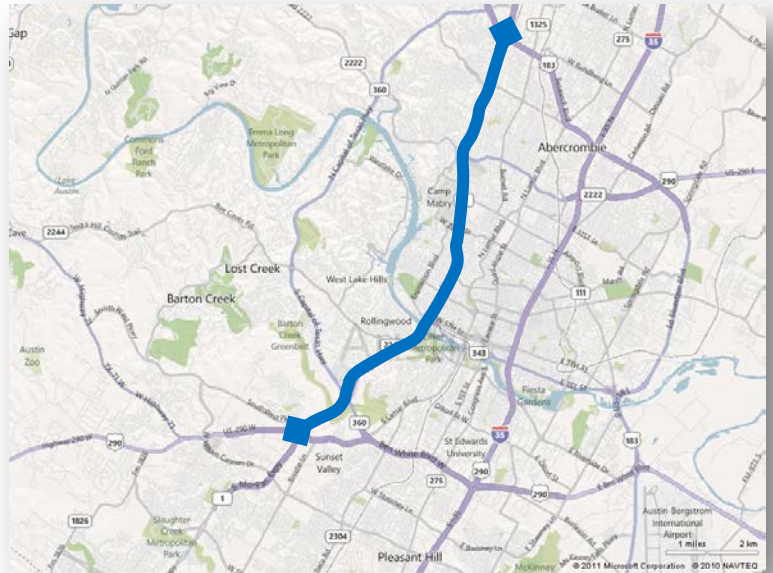
Possible Congestion Causes

MoPac was initially conceived of as part of the 1961 City of Austin Master Plan and Circulation Plan when only 160,000 people lived in Travis County. Since then, the city of Austin has experienced significant growth, and there are now over one million people in Travis County. Nearly 180,000 cars and trucks drive on MoPac every day. Due to the rapid growth and land use limitations, MoPac experiences heavy congestion on the main lanes as well as parallel arterials. Much of the congestion is unpredictable and is worsened by traffic collisions. Further, emergency vehicles have limited access due to congestion and lack of consistent emergency parking shoulders.

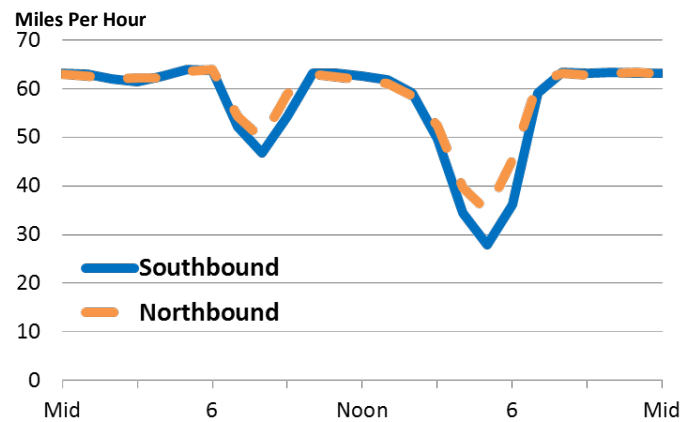
Projects in Progress or Completed

US 290/Loop 1 Interchange

Construction of the US 290 West/Loop 1 interchange was completed in the spring of 2012 (\$13 million).



2010 Rank: 39	2013 Rank: 27
Annual Hrs of Delay/Mile: 282,000	
Congestion Time: 5 Hours	
Annual Cost of Delay: \$64.1 Million	
Average Daily Traffic: 127,000 Vehicles	



Bottleneck Removal

Intersection improvements along Loop 360, which serves as an alternative to Loop 1, will address bottleneck issues at Westlake Drive, Cedar Street, and Courtyard and will be completed in 2014 (\$5 million).

Planning Efforts to Date

Express Lane Study

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) in partnership with TxDOT sponsored an environmental and preliminary engineering study to add northbound and southbound express lanes from FM 734 to the Cesar Chavez interchange.

CTRMA hired CH2M HILL to design and build express lanes on north MoPac from Lady Bird Lake to Parmer Lane. In addition to the express lanes, the MoPac Improvement Project will include aesthetic enhancements, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, plus the construction of sound walls to mitigate roadway noise. The express lanes will be constructed within the existing property limits, so no property acquisition will be necessary. The total cost of the project is expected to be just over \$253 million. Construction is expected to take place at night, over the period of two years.

The design is 30 percent complete, and construction should begin in December 2013. The construction contract is for 2½ years with the project being operational or mostly complete by September 2015.

MoPac South

Rider 42 funding contributed \$16.5 million for the project, and the consultant (Jacobs) is in the environmental and schematic phase for MoPac South. The next steps for MoPac South include a traffic and revenue analysis, an operations analysis, and final design. The South MoPac project, from Cesar Chavez south to Slaughter Lane, is estimated at \$290 million. The environmental assessment will be completed in 2016.

Transit Service Options

Capital Metro is planning enhanced bus service in conjunction with the express lanes project, adding express bus service, bus on shoulder options, and additional park-and-ride opportunities.

Project Connect is the latest project to be formed as a result of the visioning and planning efforts of CAMPO's Transit Working Group. The vision of Project Connect is to provide connectivity choices for a growing population that also provide for land use considerations. Transit choices include regional rail, bus rapid transit, urban rail, fixed route buses, vanpool, and carpool.

Travel Options Marketing

The Downtown Transportation Management Association (TMA) has initiated a demand management marketing program to reduce single occupancy vehicles on all congested corridors, including MoPac. The TMA, known as Movability Austin, will also assist with trip planning and travel coaching.

Public Engagement

The North Loop 1/MoPac improvement project is being jointly developed by TxDOT and CTRMA, with CTRMA taking the lead on public engagement activities. A comprehensive Public Outreach Plan has been drafted. Specific activities highlighted in the plan include:

- One-on-one meetings with neighbor leaders, businesses, and organizations in the corridor.
- One-on-one meetings with other community stakeholder groups that may be outside of the corridor.



MoPac Public Engagement



- Engagement of stakeholders previously opposed to MoPac improvements to proactively seek their input as new solutions are identified.
- Regular updates and presentations to boards and staff of other transportation agencies.
- Elected and community leader briefings.
- Education workshops to introduce unfamiliar concepts to key stakeholders.
- Targeted outreach to corridor users.
- Virtual open house meetings.
- Brown bag lunches for major employers.
- Variety of communication tools, including:
 - Project maps
 - Fact sheets
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - Multi-media demonstration
 - Virtual tour
 - E-newsletters
 - E-mail hotline
- Comprehensive website, including FAQs, maps, videos, history, and social media tools.

The above tools and techniques take advantage of technology to provide a comprehensive picture of the project and its potential solutions. Practices such as identifying and targeting

specific users will allow the messages to be tailored to particular audiences.

During the construction period, slated to begin in spring 2013, the agency will launch an extensive public outreach effort to ensure residents, the traveling public, and other stakeholders are kept informed of the construction process, planned closures, and locations of work zones.

For MoPac South, an enhanced public involvement plan has been drafted; and preparation of maps, fact sheets, and FAQs for newsletters and the website is underway. The agencies are working on a stakeholder list, and the first public scoping meeting is anticipated to be held in October 2013.

Next Steps

- The environmental assessment to add **northbound and southbound express lanes on Loop 1 South from the Cesar Chavez interchange to Slaughter Lane** is being conducted by Jacobs; approval is anticipated in 2016. The current activities to improve North and South Loop 1 by adding express lanes should be expanded to comprehensively examine general purpose lane operations in addition to express lanes, including strategies such as

ramp flow signals, acceleration/ deceleration lanes, and active traffic management.

- **Aggressive incident clearance will need to be implemented** in the development of the North and South Loop 1 projects. The AIMHigh program is a locally-sponsored effort that has identified tools and strategies for improving incident clearance; however, resources and support for implementation are required to advance the strategies. The AIMHigh program has identified the development of a pre-positioning plan for incident management equipment and preparation of incident diversion plans for Loop1 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 Loop 1 and other congested corridors in a seamless way under both recurring and non-recurring congestion. As a result, TxDOT is using \$800,000 to help fund the Integrated Traffic Management study to further examine the above items.
- **Long-term plans for addressing congestion in the corridor** have not been formulated. Given the limitations in right-of-way, multiple solutions will need to be considered, including:
 - Freight rail relocation.
 - Alternative modes.
 - Improvements to alternative routes, such as Loop 360 and Lamar.
- 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 Loop 1 for commuting), and State government (which employs over 24,000 people in the urban core).
- 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 Loop 1 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.