

Loop 360 Improvement Study

FACT SHEET



Why Improvements Are Needed

Loop 360 is a major transportation corridor for the city of Austin and Travis County. It provides primary access to far west Austin for residents and commuters who live and work near and along the highway. In 2014, it was ranked as the 98th most congested roadway in Texas with 155,792 annual hours of delay per mile. It is particularly congested during “rush hour,” taking over 60% longer to travel during peak travel periods than during normal, free-flow conditions.

Study Purpose

The purpose of the Loop 360 Improvement Study is to identify problems, define potential short-term solutions, and develop a long-term vision for Loop 360 from North MoPac to US 290/SH 71, a distance of 14.5 miles. The Texas Department of Transportation will involve stakeholders throughout the study to determine needs and receive feedback about potential safety and mobility improvements within the Loop 360 corridor.

Study Details and Timeline

The study will be conducted in a four-step process:

1. **Identify** - Engage stakeholders in identifying problems and defining goals for improvements.
2. **Evaluate** - Form stakeholder working groups to evaluate potential solutions.
3. **Refine** - Refine potential solutions, disseminate them to stakeholders, and solicit feedback.
4. **Present** - Present study results and identify next steps.

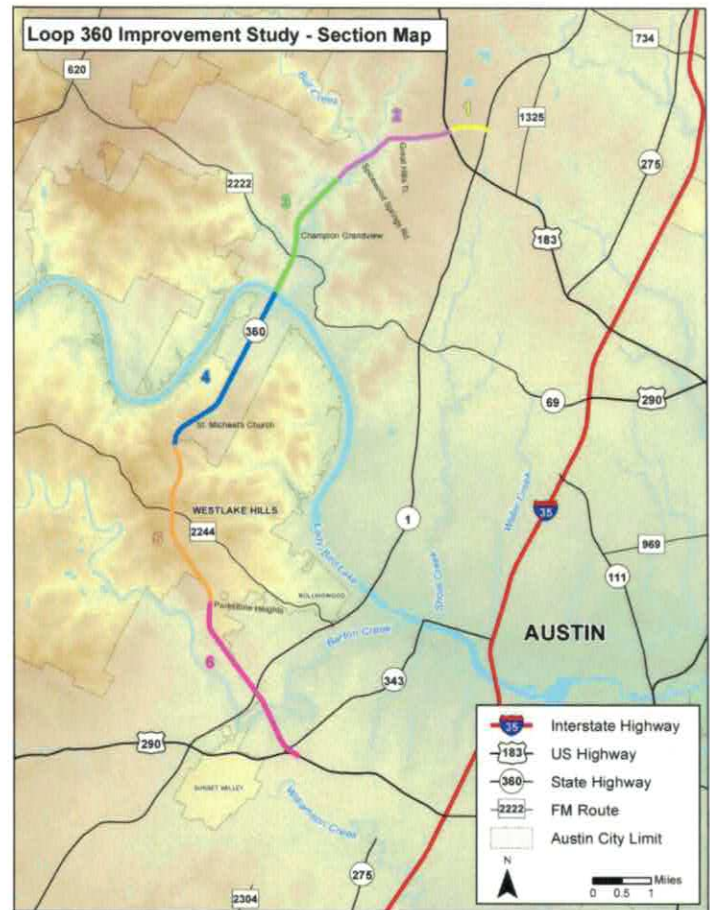
TxDOT will gather input from neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and other groups located in six corridor sections, as well as from stakeholders who work along or pass through the corridor. The goal is to maximize safety and mobility, while balancing competing stakeholder interests. The study will initially look at intersection and operational improvements. Then, it will analyze the cumulative impact on corridor congestion as if all these individual improvements could be funded and constructed. Lastly, the study will examine the impact of major corridor-wide solutions such as removing traffic signals on through-traffic. The 12 to 15 month study is estimated to be complete by early 2016. Currently, funding for any proposed Loop 360 improvements has not yet been identified.

Contact Information

For additional study information, please contact:
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For more information, visit www.Loop360Study.com or scan the QR image above.



Loop 360 Improvement Study Frequently Asked Questions



What is the purpose of the Loop 360 Improvement Study?

The purpose of this study is to involve stakeholders throughout the community in identifying safety and mobility problems along the Loop 360 corridor and recommend potential improvements. Ideas and feedback gathered from stakeholders will guide the development of short-term solutions, as well as a long-term vision for the corridor.

How does this study differ from previous Loop 360 efforts?

Previous efforts to improve Loop 360, including a 2004 proposal to add tolled grade-separated lanes and a 2011 proposal to implement innovative intersections, were not well-received by the community. Although some intersection improvements resulted from these efforts, most of the transportation issues at which they were aimed remain largely unaddressed, and continue to increase.

TxDOT initiated the current improvement study as a fresh start to addressing the ongoing transportation issues along and across Loop 360. Lessons learned from previous efforts have led to a different approach that actively engages the public throughout the planning process. The study will not be a continuation of previous efforts. It will be a community-driven effort to identify problems and develop options to address them in both the short and long term.

Why are improvements needed?

Loop 360 provides primary access to far west Austin, acting as a thoroughfare for residents and as a commuter route for those living and working along the highway and those passing through. It provides access to a major Lake Austin boat ramp as well as Travis County greenbelts. This scenic highway is also a popular recreational bike route. The section from RM 2244 to US 290/SH 71 is currently ranked as the 98th most congested road in Texas. Although its relative congestion ranking compared to other Texas roadways dropped from 64th the previous year, its annual hours of delay per mile increased from 141,000 in 2013 to 155,792 in 2014.

Traffic conditions along Loop 360 vary a great deal throughout the day, with congestion increasing significantly during peak travel periods, such as morning and afternoon "rush hours." The same section of Loop 360 from RM 2244 to US 290/SH 71 currently ranks 26th out of 100 for its Texas Congestion Index (TCI). The TCI is a measure that describes how much longer a trip takes during peak periods vs. off-peak (or free-flow) traffic periods. Currently, it takes over 60 percent longer to travel on Loop 360 during peak periods than during free-flow conditions.

Who are the Loop 360 stakeholders?

Loop 360 stakeholders include, but are not limited to all residents, neighborhood groups, businesses, commuters, bicyclists, and pedestrians who travel on or across Loop 360 or have origins/destinations within the Loop 360 corridor.

Who will benefit from the study?

Ultimately, we hope that all residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, businesses, commuters, and others who use and rely on Loop 360 will perceive a benefit. The goal of the study is to work with stakeholders to identify potential solutions that optimize safety and mobility while balancing local accessibility and corridor-wide mobility, bike/pedestrian/transit use, environmental impacts, affordability, and other important issues for all Loop 360 users. Specific benefits for each user group will depend on the solutions that are recommended for further development.

Will the study consider pedestrian, bicycle and transit needs?

Yes. The study will consider a wide range of transportation modes. The degree to which alternative modes are incorporated into proposed solutions will depend largely on the initial needs identified through stakeholder input and technical analysis. TxDOT will coordinate with representatives from the bicycling community, Capital Metro, and local neighborhoods to identify these needs and opportunities for alternative mode improvements within the corridor.

What is the study timeline?

The 12- to 15-month study began in October 2014 and will be a stakeholder-focused process:

1. **Identify** – Engage stakeholders in identifying problems and defining goals for improvements.
2. **Evaluate** – Form stakeholder working groups to evaluate potential solutions.
3. **Refine** – Refine potential solutions, disseminate them to stakeholders, and solicit feedback.
4. **Present** – Present study results and identify next steps.

Stakeholders will be involved throughout each step of the study, and are encouraged to provide input at any time. The study is estimated to be complete by early 2016.

What will the outcome be?

The study will identify potential short-term, community-supported transportation improvements to enhance safety and mobility while maintaining viable access to neighborhoods and properties along the Loop 360 corridor. It will also define a vision for feasible long-term improvements for the corridor. The study will complete the first phase (conceptual planning) of the overall project development process, and is an important step towards making Loop 360 improvements a reality.

How will selected improvements be financed?

No funding has been identified for improvements at this time. Completion of the improvement study is a necessary step towards identifying and securing potential funding sources, as it will help define the scope and estimated costs of proposed improvements. Technical data and public input on the costs and benefits of various improvement options will be incorporated into the study's results.

How will stakeholder input be incorporated into the study, and how can I get involved?

Stakeholder involvement will be a key component of the study. It will not only help identify the problems that Loop 360 users experience on a daily basis, but also the issues that should be considered as solutions are being developed, including potential visual, economic, environmental, and community impacts. Stakeholders will also be involved in identifying and refining potential solutions for the corridor.

Throughout the process there will be opportunities to provide feedback, concerns and ideas to project staff. Comments are welcome at any time, and may be submitted through the online comment form or mailed to: Bruce Byron, Project Manager, 360/620 Corridor Improvement Studies; Texas Department of Transportation - Austin District; P.O. Box 15426; Austin, TX 78761-5426. All questions related to the Loop 360 Improvement Study may be directed to Bruce Byron at (512) 832-7107.

TxDOT will also meet with stakeholder groups located in six corridor sections, in addition to other interested stakeholders throughout the greater Austin area, to discuss both local and corridor-wide issues. Additionally, a public survey is available to gather input from all Loop 360 users.

Visit www.loop360study.com for more information and study updates, and to access the public survey, submit comments, request a meeting with the Loop 360 study team, and/or sign up for the mailing list to receive updates on important study milestones and public input opportunities.