

## FACT SHEET

### Why Improvements Are Needed

Loop 360 is a major transportation corridor for the capital area region, acting as a thoroughfare and commuter route for residents in west Austin and those passing through. The 14-mile corridor runs from US 183 on the north end to US 290/SH 71 on the south end.

Increased traffic congestion at Lakewood Drive, Spicewood Springs Road and along Loop 360 has resulted in a lack of mobility and increased safety concerns. Unless something is done, traffic conditions will worsen as our population grows.

### Project Overview

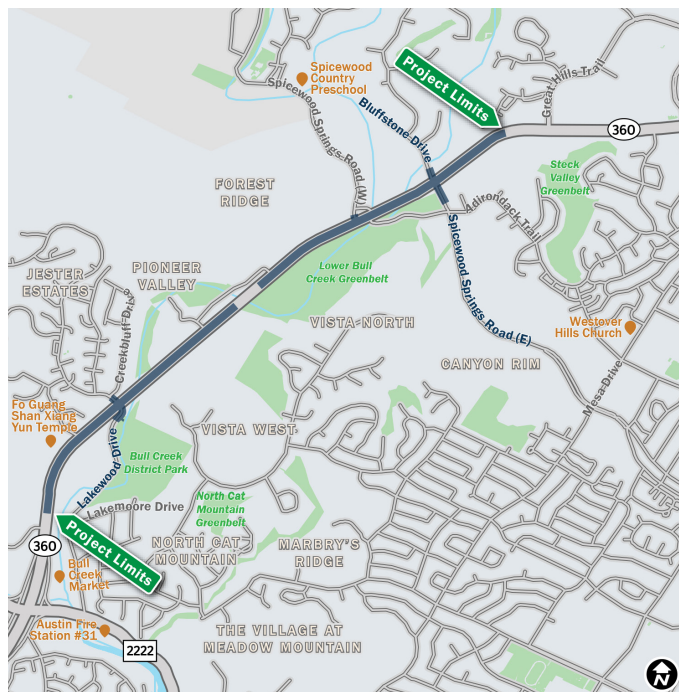
The purpose of the project is to improve mobility and safety on Loop 360 at Lakewood Drive, Spicewood Springs Road (W) and Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive.

The City of Austin is also evaluating improvements on Spicewood Springs Road. For more information, visit [www.austintexas.gov/SpicewoodSpringsRd](http://www.austintexas.gov/SpicewoodSpringsRd)

### Details and Timeline

Environmental work began in summer 2018 and will continue to incorporate public input.

The environmental stages are currently anticipated to be complete in early 2021.



### Proposed solutions include:



Removal of the traffic signals from the Loop 360 mainlanes at Lakewood Drive, Spicewood Springs Road (W), and Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive.



Construction of overpasses at Lakewood Drive and Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive including non-signalized U-turns in both directions.



Addition of a shared-use path and sidewalks within the project limits to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

**PROJECT PROCESS** | The Loop 360 at Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road project will be conducted using a multi-step process that engages stakeholders on an ongoing basis.



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# LOOP 360 AT LAKEWOOD DRIVE/ SPICEWOOD SPRINGS ROAD PROJECT



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – LAKEWOOD DRIVE/SPICEWOOD SPRINGS ROAD

### 1. What types of improvements will be considered in the project?

This project consists of removing the traffic signals from the Loop 360 mainlanes at Lakewood Drive, Spicewood Springs Road (W) and Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive. Overpasses (where the mainlanes go over the cross street) with non-signalized U-turns in both directions will be constructed at Lakewood Drive and Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive. The project also includes a shared-use path (SUP) and sidewalks within the project limits to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

### 2. Why is the environmental work for the Spicewood Springs Road and Lakewood Drive projects combined?

Due to their proximity and similar environmental considerations, TxDOT has combined the environmental process for the Lakewood Drive and the Spicewood Springs Road projects. This streamlines the environmental process, preserving financial resources and reducing duplicate federal consultation efforts. Any previous comments received on the Spicewood Springs Road project will be included in the documentation for the combined project.

### 3. What updates have been made to the design since the November 2018 workshop?

Based on public input, and preliminary traffic analysis, the design team has made changes to the lane configuration at the Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive intersection. Changes include the following:

- The dedicated right-turn lane on eastbound Bluffstone Drive has been removed to ensure the project can be built within existing right of way. The current lane configuration includes one shared right-turn/through lane and one shared left-turn/through lane
- There are now two left-turn lanes for traffic turning from southbound Loop 360 onto eastbound Spicewood Springs Road (E)
- Turn lanes and dedicated U-turn lanes have been lengthened based on the results of the preliminary traffic analysis for the northbound and southbound connector roads

Additionally, the interim U-turn proposed for use during construction between Spicewood Springs Road (W) and Lakewood Drive has been eliminated to increase safety. Traffic signals will remain in place during construction to assist with traffic flow.

### 4. How does TxDOT decide what changes will be made to the concept?

At the beginning of any environmental study, the community is invited to help define the problem we are trying to solve. Concept(s) are developed to help solve that problem, and the community is invited to provide additional input on the development and evaluation of all proposed improvements. A "no build," or "do nothing," alternative will be carried through the process and used as a baseline for comparison.

Public feedback is then combined with engineering feasibility, social, economic and environmental analyses to identify the best concept, ultimately leading to the identification of a preferred alternative. As the environmental study nears completion, a preferred alternative will be presented to the public.

**5. What is the project timeline? Will the combination for the environmental work impact the timeline?**

The Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road project will include an environmental and design phase lasting approximately 2-4 years. During the environmental phase, TxDOT will: identify the purpose and need, perform environmental analysis of alternatives, review draft documentation, finalize documentation and come to an environmental decision.

Environmental work for the project is expected to conclude in early 2021. The project will then enter the utility relocation phase, typically lasting one year, and then will proceed to construction. The construction process may be phased, and is projected to take 2-3 years. Combining the environmental work for the two projects streamlines the process.

**6. Why can't we move faster/build it now?**

Prior to starting construction, projects must go through several processes, including a rigorous environmental study dictated by the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), roadway design, utility relocation and a construction bidding process. During the environmental process, the project design will continually be modified based on engineering feasibility, traffic analyses and public input. Area utilities, including those placed underground, must also be relocated to allow space to construct the project. Once a construction contractor is selected, construction can begin. The program team is working to move through the projects as efficiently and quickly as possible given these guidelines.

**7. Are there any improvements planned for the intersection of Loop 360 at Great Hills Trail?**

At this time, improvements at Great Hills Trail are not included in the Loop 360 program. Improvements at the intersection may be considered as part of a separate project.

**8. Will the Spicewood Springs Road project impact Bull Creek or Bull Creek Trail?**

No.

**9. How will I access northbound Loop 360 from eastbound Spicewood Springs Road (W)?**

Drivers headed from Spicewood Springs (W) will turn right to head south on Loop 360, proceed to Lakewood Drive, and then turn around using the non-signalized U-turn at Lakewood Drive.

**10. How will I access Spicewood Springs Road (W) from northbound Loop 360?**

Drivers headed northbound on Loop 360 will take the exit for Spicewood Springs Road(E)/Bluffstone Drive, turn around via the non-signalized U-turn at Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive, and proceed southbound on the connector road to reach the intersection of Loop 360 at Spicewood Springs Road (W).

**11. How will drivers coming from the east side of Loop 360 access neighborhoods on the west side?**

Drivers headed from neighborhoods east of Loop 360 to neighborhoods on the west side of the corridor may travel under the new overpass at Spicewood Springs Road (E)/Bluffstone Drive. A southbound connector road will allow drivers to travel from Spicewood (E)/Bluffstone to Spicewood Springs Road (W). Drivers will no longer have to wait for through traffic, as it will be diverted onto the Loop 360 mainlanes.

**12. How do you plan to address noise?**

A noise analysis is currently underway as part of the environmental study. The analysis considers the current level of noise at many locations throughout the study area, calculates existing and projected future traffic noise levels and considers noise reduction measures. Noise reduction measures are only proposed if the predicted future noise levels exceed acceptable levels for surrounding properties. The results of that analysis will be made available at future public meetings and will be included as part of the environmental study.

The most common noise reduction measure is the construction of noise barriers or sound walls. If the noise analysis shows that noise levels exceed acceptable standards in a particular area, the project will provide sound walls if they are determined to be feasible, reasonable and acceptable to the adjacent property owners. Feasibility considers whether a substantial noise reduction can be achieved and whether the noise barrier will cause a reduction in safety. Reasonableness considers, among other factors, cost effectiveness, expected noise levels and land use. Acceptability considers the opinions of the residents that live adjacent to the proposed wall.

**13. Does TxDOT require additional right of way for the Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road project?**

At this time, the proposed improvements would not require additional right of way.

## FACT SHEET

### About Loop 360

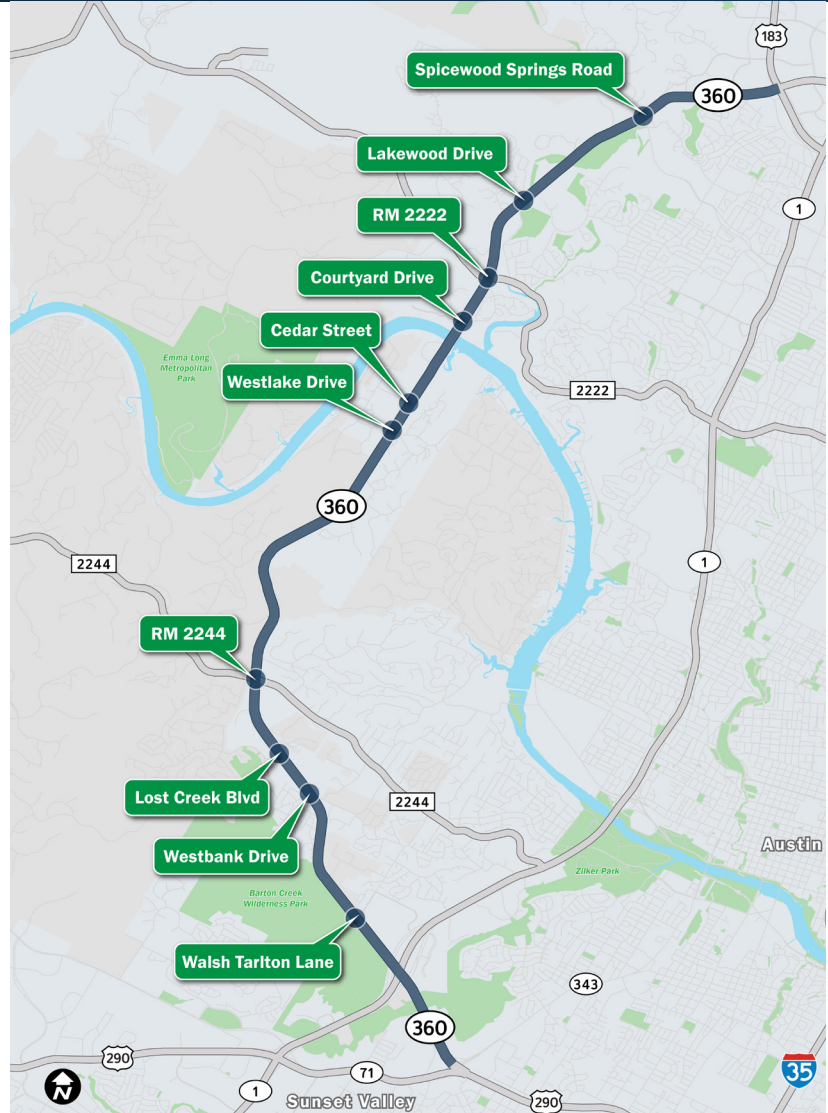
Loop 360 is a major north/south transportation corridor for the capital area region, acting as a thoroughfare and commuter route for residents in west Austin as well as those passing through. The natural beauty and unique Hill Country environmental features along Loop 360 draw regional, national and even international visitors to the area.

Loop 360 has severe traffic congestion, causing both mobility and safety concerns. We can expect traffic congestion to worsen as our population grows. More than two million people live in the Austin area today, and that number is expected to double by 2040.

### Program Details

The Loop 360 program will upgrade multiple intersections along the roadway. Improvements include removing traffic signals from the Loop 360 mainlanes and constructing overpasses or underpasses at several intersections along the corridor. Diverging diamond intersections will likely be built at RM 2222 and RM 2244.

Projects include: Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road, Courtyard Drive/RM 2222, Westlake Drive/Cedar Street, RM 2244, Westbank Drive/Lost Creek Boulevard and Walsh Tarlton Lane.



**PROGRAM PROCESS** | The Loop 360 program will be conducted using a multi-step process that engages stakeholders on an ongoing basis.



**Feasibility Study**  
(1-2 years)  
COMPLETE



**Purpose and Need**  
Identify the problem we are trying to solve



**Environmental Analysis of Alternatives**  
Thoroughly analyze alternatives for potential impacts

**WE ARE HERE**



**Draft Documentation/ Public Involvement**  
The draft environmental document is prepared and reviewed



**Final Documentation Review**  
The final environmental document is completed



**Environmental Decision**  
Either the preferred build alternative or the no build alternative



**Utility Relocation**  
(Approximately 1 year)



**Construction**  
(2-3 years, depending on project)

**STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH**



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – OVERALL PROGRAM

### 1. What is the purpose of the Loop 360 program?

Loop 360 is a major transportation corridor for the capital area region, serving as a north/south route and functioning as a connector between US 183 and US 290/SH 71. The 14-mile corridor acts as a commuter route and a local thoroughfare for residents and businesses. Loop 360 also provides access for other citizens, including bicyclists, photographers, geologists, hikers, and visitors to Lake Austin. The purpose of the Loop 360 program is to upgrade multiple intersections along the corridor. The program team will involve stakeholders throughout the community in selecting the best option for each intersection to improve safety and mobility along the Loop 360 corridor.

### 2. Why are improvements needed?

Increased traffic congestion along Loop 360 has resulted in a lack of mobility and increased safety concerns. Three sections of the corridor are listed on the state's Most Congested Roadways list. Unless something is done, traffic conditions along Loop 360 will worsen as our population grows. More than two million people live in the Austin area today, and that number is expected to double by 2040.

### 3. Who will benefit from the projects?

Ultimately, we hope that all residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, businesses, commuters, and others who use and rely on Loop 360 will benefit. The goal of the program is to work with stakeholders to identify solutions that optimize safety and mobility, while balancing local accessibility and corridor-wide mobility, bike/pedestrian/transit use, environmental impacts, 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.

### 4. Will the projects consider pedestrian, bicycle and transit needs?

Yes. The projects 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 is coordinating with representatives from the bicycling community, Capital Metro and local neighborhoods to identify these needs and opportunities for alternative transportation improvements within the corridor.

### 5. What is the program timeline?

The Loop 360 program began in summer 2018 and is comprised of separate projects, each with their own timeline. Each project will include an environmental, design, and construction phase estimated to take seven to ten years to complete.

### 6. What is CAMPO and how does it impact the planning process?

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson counties. MPOs are federally required throughout the country in areas with a population of 50,000 or more and are required to produce a 20+ year transportation plan, called a

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and a four-year planning document called the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

A 20-member Transportation Policy Board made up of 18 elected officials and representatives from TxDOT and Capital Metro governs CAMPO.

For a project to move forward into the environmental phase, CAMPO includes the project in the RTP and TIP, and the agency sponsor, in this case TxDOT, chooses to move forward into environmental phase.

**7. What types of improvements will be considered in the projects?**

Improvements will vary by intersection. Overpasses (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go over the cross streets) or underpasses (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go under the cross streets) will likely be constructed at eight of the intersections along the corridor. Diverging diamond intersections will likely be built at RM 2222 and RM 2244 where overpasses already exist.

**8. How did you decide in what order intersections were being improved?**

Based on the results of the Loop 360 feasibility study, the first projects to move forward will be Westlake Drive/Cedar Street, Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road and RM 2222/Courtyard Drive. The City of Austin decided to include these intersections in their 2016 Mobility Bond because they were the most congested. Whereas the other projects in the program (RM 2244, Lost Creek Boulevard/Westbank Drive and Walsh Tarlton Lane) are also funded, improvements for those intersections are still under development. TxDOT continues to study the remaining intersections along Loop 360.

**9. Why aren't we adding lanes or widening Loop 360 or the Pennybacker Bridge?**

TxDOT looked at options for additional lanes as part of our Loop 360 feasibility study, which ended in 2016. The study found that adding lanes would be beneficial, but would significantly increase the cost of the project. More benefit would be gained if signals on the mainlanes were first removed and replaced by overpasses (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go over the cross street) or underpasses (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go under the cross street). Once these improvements are complete, future projects may include adding an additional pair of lanes to Loop 360, which could be connected directly via flyovers to US 183 and south MoPac.

**10. Will the projects impact the Pennybacker Bridge?**

No. The bridge will remain intact as built. The bridge can accommodate six continuous lanes, but the current projects do not include these improvements. In summer 2019, TxDOT has plans for routine maintenance work on the bridge.

**11. How will selected improvements be financed?**

The improvements in the Loop 360 program are funded by TxDOT. The City of Austin will contribute \$46 million in funds from the 2016 Mobility Bond.

**12. What intersection improvements are funded by the 2016 Mobility Bond?**

The 2016 Mobility Bond includes \$46 million to improve four Loop 360 corridor intersections. Those intersections are Westlake Drive, Spicewood Springs Road,

Courtyard Drive and Lakewood Drive. TxDOT is also investing \$204 million to improve these intersections and six other intersections along Loop 360.

**13. How will TxDOT ensure that the beauty of Loop 360 is maintained?**

We have heard a clear message that the community wants to maintain the beauty and character of Loop 360, regardless of which improvements are ultimately identified for the corridor. The project team will consider this important factor in its analysis of all proposed improvements. We will share any potential visual impacts associated with each scenario as part of this project. Aesthetics will continue to be an important factor as Loop 360 improvements move through the project development process.

**14. What is a diverging diamond intersection?**

Diverging diamond intersections (DDIs) are proposed for intersections with a high volume of left-turning traffic. DDIs allow vehicles to travel more quickly through an intersection by temporarily shifting traffic to the left side of the road. This allows through-traffic and left-turning traffic to proceed through the intersection simultaneously, eliminating the need for a left-turn arrow. To help drivers navigate, DDIs are designed with overhead signs, pavement markings and traffic signals. Learn more about DDIs by visiting [Loop360Project.com](http://Loop360Project.com) and checking out our FAQs page.

**15. How is stakeholder input being incorporated into the program, and how can I get involved?**

Stakeholder involvement not only helps identify the issues experienced by Loop 360 users, but helps shape the solutions and potential visual, economic, environmental and community impacts. Input received to date has helped the program team evaluate and refine the originally proposed scenarios, identify new scenarios to be studied, and refine the criteria by which all scenarios will be evaluated. Ongoing stakeholder involvement is necessary to support and promote solutions for the corridor. Throughout the process there will continue to be opportunities to provide feedback, concerns and ideas. Comments are welcome at any time, and may be submitted through the online comment form at [www.Loop360Project.com](http://www.Loop360Project.com). TxDOT will also meet with stakeholder groups along the corridor, in addition to other interested stakeholders throughout the greater Austin area, to discuss both local and corridor-wide issues.

**16. Why can't we just synchronize the traffic lights along the corridor?**

Improving traffic signal synchronization will help, but not solve, the congestion issue on Loop 360. Currently, the corridor's traffic signals are manually configured and do not "talk" to each other. Therefore, any timing tweaks must be made on-site to each individual signal, and any tweaks to one signal do not affect any other signals along the corridor. The program team is currently working to identify potential signal upgrades and timing improvements that would provide some relief in light to moderate traffic conditions. However, such improvements would have little to no effect during peak traffic times unless they are accompanied by more significant design and/or capacity improvements – there are simply too many cars trying to move through each intersection to avoid sitting through multiple signals. All proposed improvements, including intersection and additional capacity improvements, will assume that traffic signals will be upgraded and synchronized to the greatest extent possible.





# LOOP 360 AT LAKEWOOD DRIVE/ SPICEWOOD SPRINGS ROAD PROJECT



**YOU CAN ALSO VISIT US ONLINE AT OUR VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**

**[www.Loop360Project.com](http://www.Loop360Project.com)  
from June 6 to June 21, 2019**

Download and review meeting materials



Provide your comments or ask questions



Give feedback on Context Sensitive Solutions for the corridor



Sign up for email updates

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ONLINE!**



For more information or to provide input until June 21, 2019, visit [www.Loop360Project.com](http://www.Loop360Project.com) or contact TxDOT Public Information Officer Brad Wheelis via email at [Bradley.Wheelis@txdot.gov](mailto:Bradley.Wheelis@txdot.gov) or via phone at 512.832.7060.