

## 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 between MoPac and RM 2244 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 from MoPac to RM 2244. Proposed solutions include:



Removal of the traffic signals from the Loop 360 mainlanes at the southern entrance to Barton Creek Square, Walsh Tarlton Lane, Westbank Drive, Las Cimas Parkway and Lost Creek Boulevard.



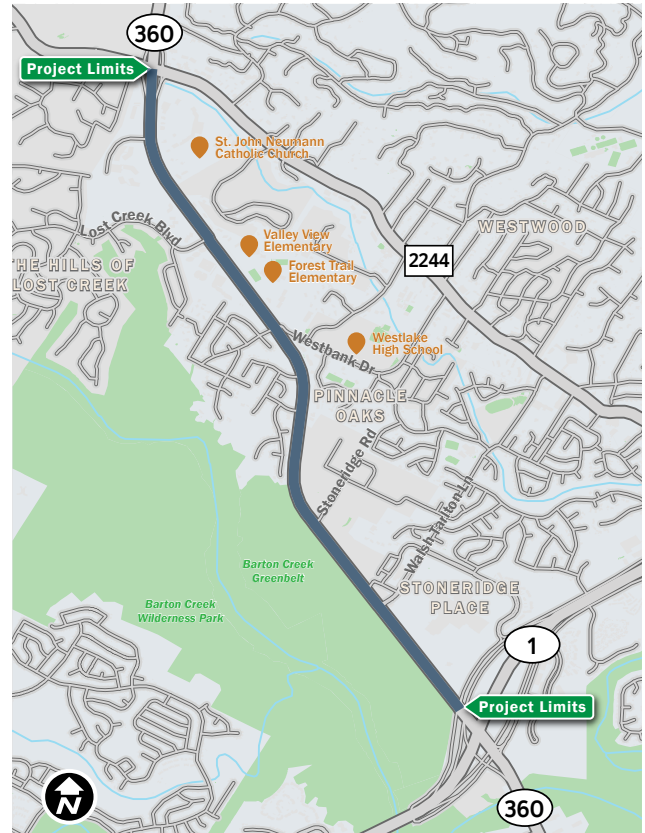
Construction of an overpass at Walsh Tarlton Lane and Lost Creek Boulevard, and either an overpass or an underpass at Westbank Drive, with non-signalized U-turns in both directions.



Construction of continuous one-way northbound and southbound frontage roads throughout the project limits to improve local connectivity.



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



### Details and Timeline

Environmental work began in fall 2019 and will incorporate input collected at upcoming public meetings.

Construction is anticipated to begin in mid-2025.

**PROJECT PROCESS** | The Loop 360 from MoPac to RM 2244 project 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



**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)

**WE ARE HERE**

**STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH**



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – MoPac to RM 2244 Project

### 1. What types of improvements will be considered?

- Replacing the existing traffic signals on Loop 360 at Walsh Tarlton Lane and Lost Creek Boulevard with overpasses (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go over the cross street), including non-signalized U-turns in both directions.
- Replacing the traffic signals on Loop 360 at Westbank Drive with either an overpass or an underpass (where the Loop 360 mainlanes go under the cross street), including non-signalized U-turns in both directions.
- Removing the mainlane traffic signal at Las Cimas Parkway and adding a signal on the new northbound frontage road.
- Removing the traffic signals at the southern entrance to Barton Creek Square and removing existing crossovers.
- Adding a north-to-south U-turn at RM 2244.
- Constructing continuous one-way north and southbound frontage roads throughout the project limits.
- Adding shared-use paths and sidewalks within the project limits to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

### 2. Why is the Walsh Tarlton Lane project now combined with the Westbank Drive/Lost Creek Boulevard project?

The Loop 360 from MoPac to RM 2244 project is a new project that combines improvements for Walsh Tarlton Lane, Westbank Drive and Lost Creek Boulevard. Rolling these intersections into a single project will help ensure safe access to businesses and homes along that stretch of the corridor and streamline the environmental process. TxDOT will include feedback from the August 2019 Walsh Tarlton Lane workshop in the new project moving forward.

### 3. Why isn't additional work at RM 2244 part of the project?

The RM 2244 intersection will be included in the MoPac to RM 2244 project environmental process; however, final design and construction will move forward separately.

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

At the beginning of any environmental study, the community is invited to help define the problem we are trying to solve. Option(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 analysis to identify the best option, 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?**

Environmental coordination for the project began in late 2019. During the environmental process TxDOT will: identify the purpose and need, perform environmental analysis of alternatives, review draft documentation, finalize documentation and come to an environmental decision. After the environmental process and design phase, the project will transition into right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation, typically lasting one year each. The project is expected to proceed to construction in mid-2025. The construction process is projected to take 2-3 years.

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

Prior to starting construction, projects must go through a rigorous environmental study dictated by the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The program team is working to move through the projects as efficiently and quickly as possible given these guidelines and limitations. The project has to also be designed and refined to come up with the best engineering solution based upon feedback from the public.

**7. Are there improvements planned for the Las Cimas Parkway intersection?**

At this time, the current project does not propose adding an overpass or underpass at Las Cimas Parkway. The project proposes removing the traffic signal and crossover from the Loop 360 mainlanes at that intersection, and adding a traffic signal on the new northbound frontage road to accommodate the traffic entering and exiting the Village at Westlake shopping center (where the H-E-B is located). Additional improvements at the intersection may be considered in the future, potentially as part of a separate project.

**8. With the removal of the signal at Las Cimas Parkway, what are the anticipated travel times?**

During morning peak hours:

Today, drivers leaving the Village at Westlake shopping center (where the H-E-B is located) can wait over five minutes at the signal. When improvements are complete, drivers wishing to access southbound Loop 360, or reach destinations on the other side of Loop 360, will turn right and travel approximately half a mile to make a non-signalized U-turn at RM 2244. This is anticipated to take three to four minutes during morning peak periods.

Drivers leaving the office buildings on the west side of Loop 360 do not currently experience significant delays during morning peak times.

During afternoon peak hours:

Today, drivers leaving the Village at Westlake shopping center can wait up to two minutes at the signal. In the future, drivers wishing to access southbound Loop 360, or reach destinations on the other side of Loop 360, will turn right and travel approximately half a mile to make a non-signalized U-turn at RM 2244. This is anticipated to take approximately four minutes during afternoon peak periods.

Today, drivers leaving the office buildings on the west side of Loop 360 can wait up to two minutes at the signal. In the future, drivers wishing to access northbound Loop 360, or reach destinations on the other side of Loop 360, will turn right and travel approximately

half a mile to make a non-signalized U-turn at Lost Creek Boulevard. This is anticipated to take three to four minutes during peak periods.

**9. Are there any improvements planned for the MoPac intersection?**

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

**10. Will the MoPac to RM 2244 project impact Barton Creek Greenbelt or the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves?**

No.

**11. How will I access MoPac from southbound Loop 360?**

To access northbound MoPac, drivers will remain on the southbound Loop 360 mainlanes, go through the existing traffic light at the MoPac intersection, and turn left.

To access southbound MoPac, drivers will exit north of Walsh Tarlton Lane and pass through the signalized intersection at Walsh Tarlton Lane. Then, drivers in both lanes will proceed down the frontage road to access southbound MoPac.

**12. How will I get to Westlake High School?**

Drivers heading southbound on Loop 360 will exit north of Las Cimas Parkway and will pass through the signalized intersection at Lost Creek Boulevard. They will continue to Westbank Drive and turn left to access the high school.

Drivers heading northbound on Loop 360 will exit north of Walsh Tarlton Lane, proceed to Westbank Drive and turn right in the dedicated lane to access the high school.

**13. How will I get to Forest Trail and Valley View Elementary Schools?**

Drivers heading southbound on Loop 360 will take the Lost Creek/Westbank exit (south of RM 2244), proceed to Lost Creek Boulevard and turn left to access the elementary schools.

Drivers heading northbound on Loop 360 will take the Lost Creek/Westbank exit (north of Walsh Tarlton Lane) and will pass through the signalized intersection at Westbank Drive. They will enter the divided right-turn lane and turn right just south of Lost Creek Boulevard to access the elementary schools.

**14. How will I get to Barton Creek Square?**

Drivers heading southbound on Loop 360 will exit north of Walsh Tarlton Lane to the frontage road and turn left at the signalized intersection at Walsh Tarlton Lane. They will turn right to enter the mall through the driveway on Walsh Tarlton Lane.

Drivers heading northbound on Loop 360 will exit south of Walsh Tarlton Lane and may enter the mall using its northern driveway on the new Loop 360 frontage road, or may proceed to Walsh Tarlton Lane and turn right to enter the driveway on Walsh Tarlton Lane.

**15. How does TxDOT 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 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.

**16. Does TxDOT require additional right of way for the MoPac to RM 2244 project?**

This project may require small amounts of additional right of way. TxDOT is working with property owners regarding the potential right-of-way impacts to their properties. If you have questions or would like more information, visit <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/right-of-way.html>.

**17. How are the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations being added to the MoPac to RM 2244 project?**

From RM 2244 to Lost Creek Boulevard, the current design includes a 10-foot wide shared-use path (SUP) along the northbound (east) side of Loop 360, and a 6-foot wide sidewalk along the southbound (west) side. At Lost Creek Boulevard, the SUP switches over to the west side of Loop 360 to connect with the existing SUP on MoPac, and the sidewalk continues on the east side.

## FACT SHEET

### About Loop 360

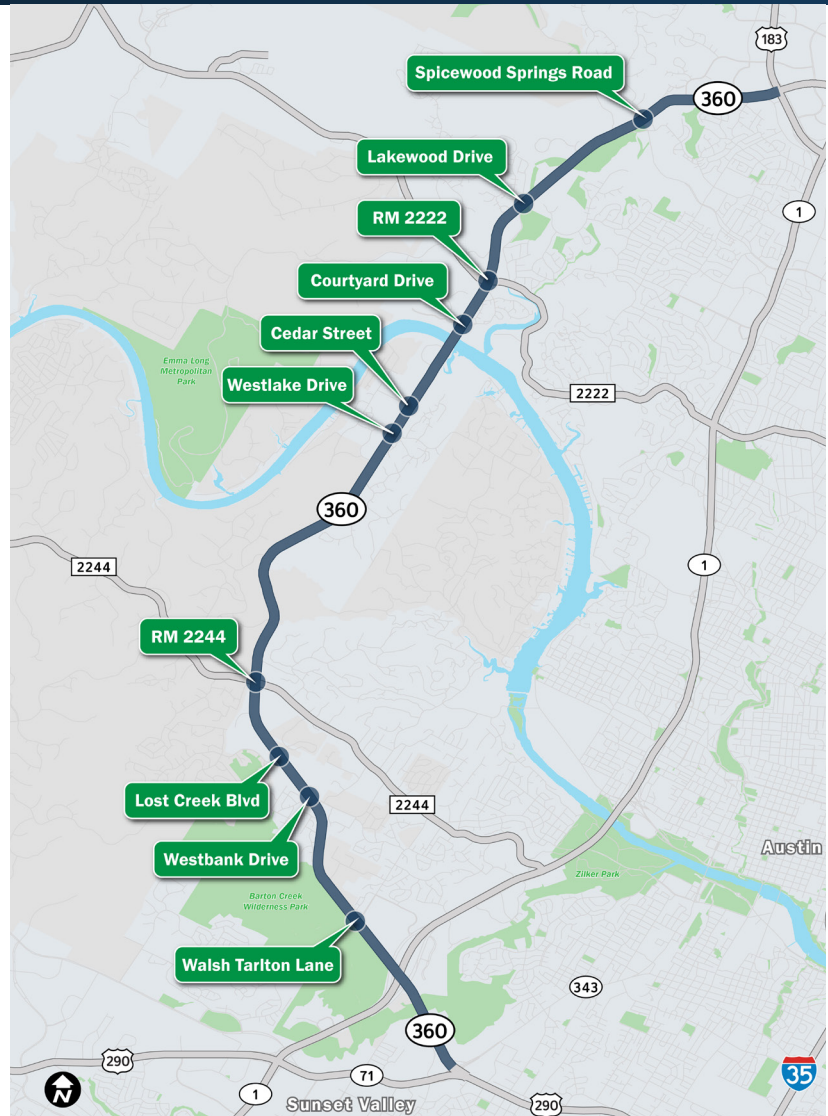
Loop 360 is a major north/south transportation corridor for the capital area region, acting as a thoroughfare and commuter route for residents in west Austin as well as those passing through. The natural beauty and unique Hill Country environmental features along Loop 360 draw regional, national and 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)  
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**Purpose and Need**  
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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 in to 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. A Diverging Diamond Intersection will likely be built at RM 2222. Visit [Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm](http://Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm) to learn more about Diverging Diamond Intersections.

**8. Why aren't improvements at other intersections along the corridor included in the Loop 360 Program?**

The Loop 360 program uses an incremental approach based on cost-effectiveness. TxDOT is using limited funds to have the greatest impact on mitigating traffic congestion and increasing safety between US 183 and south MoPac. Currently, the program includes improvements at several signalized intersections along the corridor. Improvements to the remaining intersections are not currently planned or funded, but may still be considered as part of future projects as the program moves forward.

**9. Why aren't improvements at Loop 360 at US 183 or Loop 360 at south MoPac included in the Loop 360 Program?**

Traffic forecasts predict near-capacity demand during peak hours at both US 183 and south MoPac even after the planned improvements to both highways are complete. While flyovers from Loop 360 would help during off peak hours, 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 flyovers to US 183 and south MoPac.

**10. Why is TxDOT adding shared-use paths along Loop 360?**

TxDOT is working to build a safe and reliable transportation network for all Texans. This is why TxDOT looks to include shared-use paths in new construction projects, accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians. This not only expands access to communities, but can improve quality of life.

When developing a project that is federally funded, TxDOT is required to follow guidelines mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These guidelines require transportation agencies to make bicycle and pedestrian accommodations a "routine part of their planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance activities" and to make accommodations for persons with disabilities in accordance with civil rights mandates, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which prohibit agencies from doing so.

Guidelines must be followed in order to ensure federal project funding. Visit [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/guidance/design.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/design.cfm) to review the FHWA requirements.

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

Based on the results of the Loop 360 feasibility study, priority was given to the most congested intersections. The Loop 360 at Westlake Drive/Cedar Street project will move into construction first, followed by the Lakewood Drive/Spicewood Springs Road, Courtyard Drive/RM 2222 and MoPac to



RM 2244 projects. The City of Austin included funding for projects at Westlake Drive, Lakewood Drive, Spicewood Springs Road and Courtyard Drive in their 2016 Mobility Bond because they were the most congested. Improvements for the RM 2244 intersection are still under development, and TxDOT continues to study the remaining intersections along the Loop 360 corridor.

**12. Why isn't TxDOT 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 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.

**13. 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. The Pennybacker Bridge is currently undergoing routine maintenance work.

**14. 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.

**15. 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, Courtyard Drive, Lakewood Drive, and Spicewood Springs Road.

**16. 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.

**17. 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. Visit [Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm](http://Loop360Project.com/divergingdiamond.htm) to learn more about DDIs.

**18. 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](#). 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.

**19. How does TxDOT respond to stakeholder comments and inquiries?**

The Loop 360 project team values stakeholder feedback and typically responds to all stakeholder questions and comments within a 24-hour period. The exception to this is during the official 15-day comment period for a public workshop, open house or hearing. Any comments received during the 15-day period are included in the comment/response matrix for each public meeting summary. This allows the team to consider all comments and concerns, evaluate any potential changes to the project, and offer consistent responses to stakeholder concerns. The meeting summary is typically posted on our website 3-6 months after a public meeting.

**20. Why can't TxDOT 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.

**21. What is Dark-Sky lighting and will the Loop 360 projects include it?**

Dark-Sky lighting is a design approach that preserves and protects the nighttime environment by using properly-shielded outdoor lighting equipment that reduces light pollution outside of right of way.

The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is the recognized authority on light pollution worldwide and is the entity who determines whether a certain area qualifies as a "Dark-Sky Place." There are currently only three Dark-Sky Places located near Austin, including the town of Dripping Springs, and the River Hills and Lost Creek neighborhoods.

In the fall of 2018, the Loop 360 project team began to gather public input on Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) for the corridor. CSS is a collaborative approach to developing roadways that fit within their surroundings, and it includes components such as lighting. Although the lighting specifications under consideration for Loop 360 may not meet International Dark-Sky standards, TxDOT is partnering with the City of Austin to add lighting features that will preserve the natural look of the night skies along Loop 360. The Loop 360 projects must include lighting on ramps and at intersections to ensure safety and security. Lighting options are still being evaluated, but might include low-level, LED lighting that focuses lighting downward, prevents glare, and preserves the nighttime aesthetic of the community.

