



# Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** July 31, 2012

**Prepared By:** Charlie Watts **Phone #:** 854-7654

**Division Director/Manager:** Randy Nicholson, Planning Manager

**Department Head:** Steven M. Manilla, P.E., County Executive-TNR

**Sponsoring Court Member:** Commissioner Gomez, Precinct Four

**AGENDA LANGUAGE:** Consider and take appropriate action on a request to submit to CAMPO a plan amendment to the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan to include a new 4-lane divided arterial, Maha Loop Road from Pearce Lane to SH 71 E, in the "Financially Constrained Project List" and convert the segment of Maha Loop Road from FM 812 to Pearce Lane from the "Illustrative Project List" to the "Financially Constrained Project List" in Precinct Four.

## **BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

On July 18, 2012, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), issued a notification soliciting amendments to the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan and the CAMPO FYs 2013 – 2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The notification requests all participating agencies to provide CAMPO by August 10, 2012 any anticipated amendments. Failure to submit within this timeframe will delay approval of these amendments until the next amendment cycle in January 2013. If approved by the Travis County Commissioners Court, the plan amendment application will be submitted to CAMPO for consideration by the Technical Advisory Committee at its September 26, 2012 meeting and the Transportation Policy Board on October 8, 2012.

In April 2012, the developer of a commercial tract along SH 71 E east of Ross Road, Travis County TNR staff and City of Austin Transportation Department staff met to discuss the benefits of adding a new arterial to the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan that provides additional connectivity from Pearce Lane to SH 71 East (see label "A" on Attachment 1). During discussions with the developer, TNR and City of Austin staff identified additional opportunities to expand the request to improve future traffic flow in southeast Travis County, provide for additional access to the Del Valle ISD schools and facilities located along Ross Road and improve access to the Circuit of the America's (COTA) race track. By revising the alignment of future Maha Loop Road from Fagerquist Road to Pearce Lane (see label "B" on Attachment 1) and converting the segment as well as the segment from FM 812 to Fagerquist Road (see label "C" on Attachment 1) from an "Illustrative Arterial Project" to a "Financially Constrained Arterial Project", a continuous 4-lane divided

arterial including bike lanes and sidewalks would be included in the "Financially Constrained Project List" from FM 812 to SH 71 E. The benefit of including the segment in the financially constrained project list allows Travis County and the City of Austin the ability to apply for future federal funding for all or portions of the arterial.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends approval of the plan amendment to the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan to include a new 4-lane divided arterial, Maha Loop Road from Pearce Lane to SH 71 E, in the "Financially Constrained Project List" and convert the segment of Maha Loop Road from FM 812 to Pearce Lane from the "Illustrative Project List" to the "Financially Constrained Project List".

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

The new arterial between Pearce Lane and SH 71 East provides for an additional north/south alternative for traffic that is generated from the Del Valle ISD schools and facilities located along Ross Road. The developer has met with the Del Valle ISD Board and received their approval on the plan amendment. Additionally, the amendment to the plan will provide for additional and improved access to the east of the Circuit of Americas project allowing for a more direct and continuous alignment between FM 812 and SH 71 East.

A portion of this amendment will incorporate the Kellam Lane improvements being constructed between Elroy Road and Pearce Lane. In June 2012, Travis County and the Circuit of the Americas (COTA) developers entered into an agreement to reconstruct and extend existing Kellam Road to Pearce Lane as a three-lane divided collector. The COTA developer will fund and construct the improvements and Travis County will reimburse the developers the construction costs over time. These improvements will be incorporated into any future construction project of Maha Loop Road between Elroy Road and Pearce Lane.

Travis County uses the CAMPO long range transportation plan as its guide for transportation decision making. The CAMPO long range plan provides the basis to review for transportation needs in the land development process, development of capital improvement projects, identification of regional transportation policies, and identification of needs and connectivity between other jurisdictions and agencies. The approval of the long range plan in June 2010 allowed for a "financially constrained" plan; one where all transportation projects included in the financially constrained plan had to identify a revenue source and the year the project would be let or out for bid [year of expenditure(YOE)] over the life of the plan. Projects in the financially constrained plan are eligible for federal funds.

This change from previous long range plans required the elimination of many "unfunded" arterial projects. Since the county uses the CAMPO long range plan as

its transportation plan for development review and capital project planning and identified that the county's ability to preserve right-of-way (ROW) and require developer contributions during the subdivision process were in jeopardy, the county amended the long range plan to include Travis County's "Illustrative Project List". The Illustrative List identifies all arterial roadways in the unincorporated area of the county without regard to funding constraint or year of expenditure estimate.

Since Travis County is requesting this plan amendment be identified in the "Financially Constrained Project List", a revenue source or cost savings will be required to keep the plan financially constrained. The current cost estimate for the plan amendment is \$48.7 million with a YOE cost in 2020 for this project at \$66.7 million. Travis County reasonably expects these costs to be locally funded through possible future bond elections which would include private partnership revenues. Also, additional revenue could be accomplished through the use of road district financing, public improvement districts, or through unidentified revenue sources that may come to this region in future allocations not identified in the current long range plan.

Recent changes in the plan amendment process require the Transportation Policy Board to review this amendment under the Tier 2 public participation process. This process will allow for a public comment period from September 3, 2012 to October 5, 2012. Public meetings will be held during this period. Presentation of the amendment requests and a public hearing on the requests will occur at the Transportation Policy Board's meeting on September 10, 2012. The Transportation Policy Board will consider for approval the region's plan amendments at its October 8, 2012 meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

No fiscal impact on the County is associated with the plan amendment. No capital improvement project funding is being sought at this time. The CAMPO 2035 Plan has a 25 year planning horizon in which identified transportation projects are expected to be undertaken. However, by identifying these project's in the plan's "Financially Constrained Project List", this plan amendment will allow the County to apply for Federal funds in future applications to CAMPO.

**ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:**

Attachment 1: Maha Loop Road Plan Amendment Map

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

Cynthia McDonald	Financial Manager	TNR	854-4239
Steve Manilla	County Executive	TNR	854-9429
Anna Bowlin	Div. Dir. Development Services	TNR	854-7561

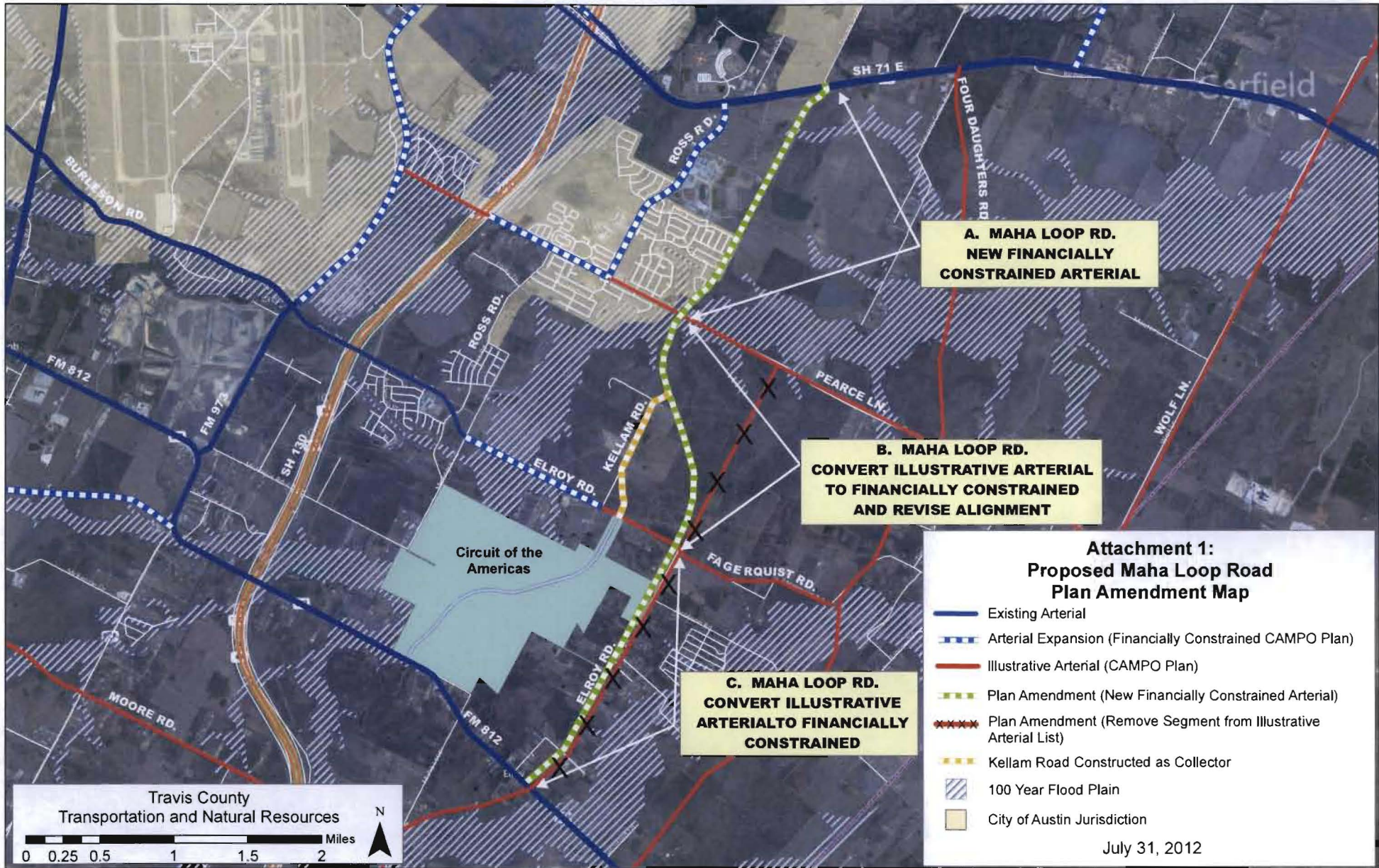
David Greear	Mgr., Traffic Safety	TNR	854-7650

**CC:**

Maureen McCoy	Director	CAMPO	974-2656
Teri McManus	Principle Planner	COA Transp. Dept.	974-6447
William Archer	Owner	William Archer	413-3556
Bill Meyers	Facilities Manager	Del Valle ISD	386-3125
Steve Elliott	Planner	COTA	394-3899
Aaron Nathan, P.E.	Engineer	Kimley Horn	972-770-1300

**SM:CW:cw**

**0501 - Comprehensive Planning - CAMPO**



**A. MAHA LOOP RD.  
NEW FINANCIALLY  
CONSTRAINED ARTERIAL**

**B. MAHA LOOP RD.  
CONVERT ILLUSTRATIVE ARTERIAL  
TO FINANCIALLY CONSTRAINED  
AND REVISE ALIGNMENT**

**C. MAHA LOOP RD.  
CONVERT ILLUSTRATIVE  
ARTERIAL TO FINANCIALLY  
CONSTRAINED**

- Attachment 1:  
Proposed Maha Loop Road  
Plan Amendment Map**
- Existing Arterial
  - - - Arterial Expansion (Financially Constrained CAMPO Plan)
  - Illustrative Arterial (CAMPO Plan)
  - - - Plan Amendment (New Financially Constrained Arterial)
  - x - x - Plan Amendment (Remove Segment from Illustrative Arterial List)
  - - - Kellam Road Constructed as Collector
  - 100 Year Flood Plain
  - City of Austin Jurisdiction

Travis County  
Transportation and Natural Resources

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

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July 31, 2012