

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – WESTLAKE DRIVE

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 Westlake Drive and Cedar Street and constructing an underpass (where the mainlanes go under the cross street) at both locations. Non-signalized U-turns will be added at Westlake Drive. The project also includes a shared-use path (SUP) and sidewalks within the project limits to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

2. What updates have been made to the design since the September 2018 workshop?

Based on public input, the design team has made changes to the lane configuration at the Westlake Drive and Cedar Street intersections.

Changes at Westlake Drive include:

- Added a dedicated U-turn lane on the Loop 360 connector roads in both directions
- Added dedicated right-turn lanes to and from the Loop 360 connector roads and Westlake Drive
- Added one lane in each direction on Westlake Drive east of Loop 360

Changes at Cedar Street include:

- Added a second left-turn lane from eastbound Cedar Street onto the northbound Loop 360 connector road

In addition, TxDOT partnered with Austin Transportation, Eanes ISD, and the Safe Routes to School Program to enhance bike and pedestrian accommodations, including:

- Added an SUP on the Cedar Street bridge to provide a safe crossing between the east and west sides of Loop 360
- Extended the sidewalk on the south side of Cedar Street to connect to Bridge Point Elementary School
- Extended the SUP on the north end of the project limits to connect with the Pennybacker Bridge

3. How does TxDOT decide what option to select or 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.

4. What is the project timeline?

The Westlake Drive 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. The project will then enter the utility relocation phase, typically lasting one year, and then will proceed to construction. Construction is projected to take 2-3 years. Construction on the Westlake Drive project is currently projected to begin in early 2022.

5. Will the Westlake Drive project impact the Pennybacker Bridge?

No. The bridge will remain intact as built. TxDOT has plans for routine maintenance work on the bridge in summer 2019.

6. Will the project impact the Loop 360 Boat Ramp that provides access to the Colorado River?

The Loop 360 Boat Ramp and access to the Colorado River will not be directly impacted. The project includes an SUP near the boat ramp that will connect with the existing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on the Pennybacker Bridge.

7. How do I access Westlake Drive and Cedar Street from Loop 360?

When traveling southbound on Loop 360, drivers will take a combined exit ramp located north of Cedar Street to access a connector road that leads to both intersections. When traveling northbound on Loop 360, drivers will take a combined exit ramp located south of Westlake Drive to access the connector road. Once at the Westlake Drive or Cedar Street intersections, drivers can turn either left or right onto the cross street.

8. 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 if the predicted future noise levels exceed acceptable noise levels for properties that surround the project. The results of that analysis will be made available 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.

9. Does TxDOT require additional right of way for the Westlake Drive project?

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