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May 13, 2009

Judge Samuel Briscoe
Travis County Commissioners Court
14 West 11th St., Suite 520
Austin, Texas

Re: SH45 Alternative Report

Judge Briscoe:

I would like to offer a short discussion of substantial alternatives to SH45 construction.

Background: Traffic volume growth trends in Austin, based on existing traffic counts reflect national lifestyle demographics. Vehicle miles traveled per person have stabilized or dropped, not continued to increase. Demographics also reveal that in fast growing areas like Austin these demographics are enhanced, and specifically as described by Frey, et. al., in Austin (1). National vehicle miles traveled have significantly declined in three years (2) and the rate of increase is also in significant decline in the last fifteen years (3). Lifestyle demographics, new data on the Barton Springs salamander, ongoing research on the Barton Springs salamander, a better understanding of the issues involving impervious cover and nonpoint source pollution, an better understanding of the relationship between road building and overall watershed impervious cover, ongoing research analyzing the impacts of nonpoint source pollution over the Barton Springs Recharge Zone, and time to construction for congestion and safety relief projects should all be considered in planning for our transportation future. A faster solution to transportation issues in the Travis / Hays County FM1626 growth corridor is presented below.

Brodie Lane: Construction of SH45 is the longest route to relief of congestion and safety issues in the Brodie Lane / Shady Hollow area. The fastest relief for this area comes in the form of City / County improvements to Brodie lane and SH1626 between Bliss Spillar Road and Manchaca Road. Minor widening and restriping of Brodie for left turn bays at specific intersections and lengthening of the left turn bay at Slaughter Lane will alleviate the majority of congestion on Brodie Lane. These improvements can be done for relatively insignificant costs, relatively quickly compared to the construction of SH45.

FM1626: Improvements to FM1626 between Bliss Spillar Road and Manchaca Road, similar to the improvements scheduled to begin construction on FM1626 south of Bliss Spillar in 2011, can be done for the 1.5 miles length for approximately \$13 million (based on the 3.6 miles of improvements for FM1626B in Hays County Bonds approved for 3.6 miles at \$32 million). This project would have a shorter construction time than that required or SH45.

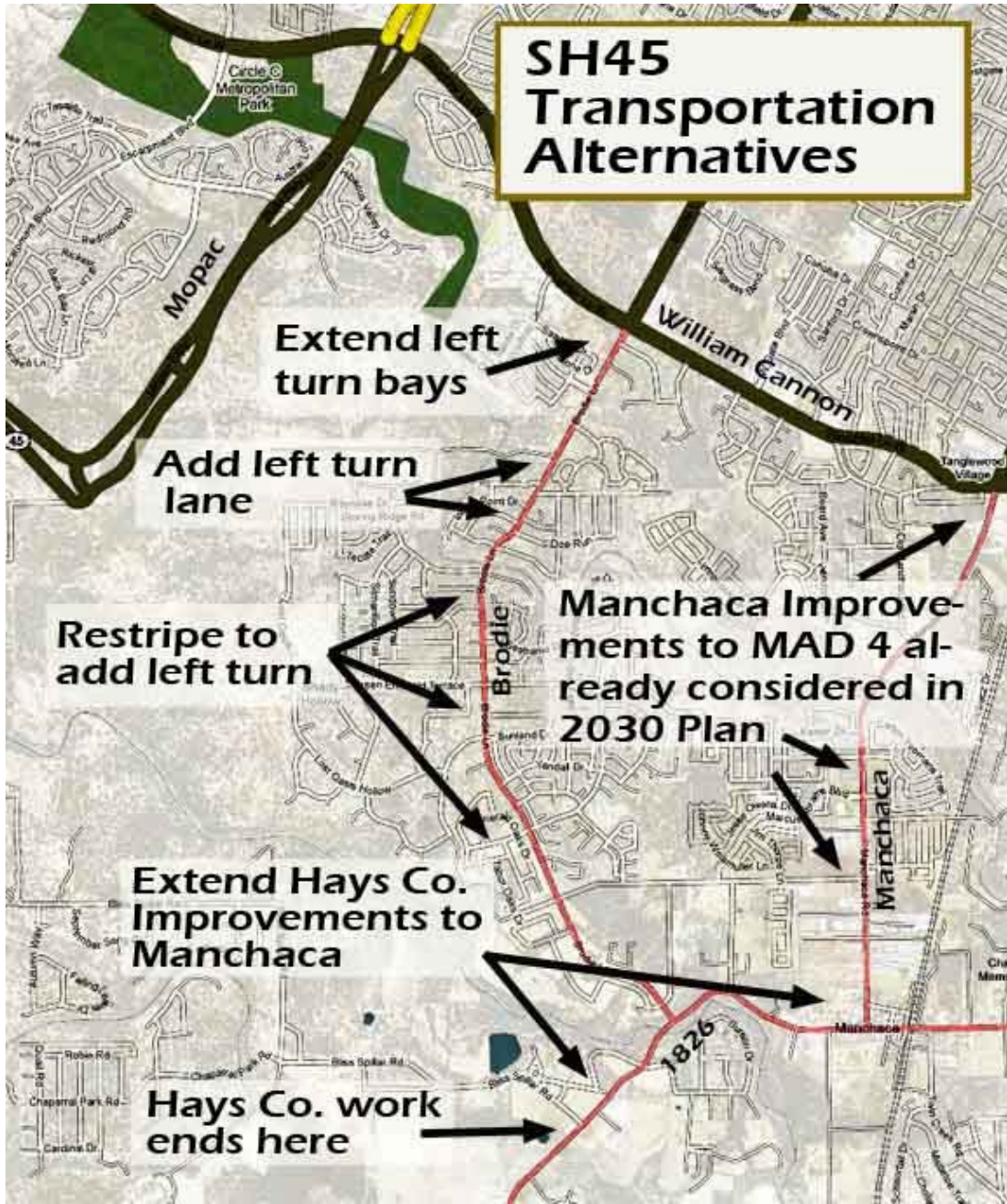
Using data from the CAMPO memo to Council Woman Kim from October 2007 (4), without the construction of SH45, the V/C ratio for Manchaca road is a respectable 0.86 in 2030.

Manchaca Road: Manchaca Road is already slated for completion to MAD 4 by 2015 as per the CAMPO 2030 Plan, therefore no funding is needed.

Thank you for your time,

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References:

1. Frey, et. al., Getting Current: Recent Demographic Trends in Metropolitan America, The Brookings Institution metropolitan Policy Program, March 2009.
2. Traffic Volume Trends, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Highway policy Information, February 2009.
3. Reference: Federal Highway Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, National VMT Trends Frey,

http://www.bts.gov/publications/journal_of_transportation_and_statistics/volume_08_number_03/html/paper_03/figure_03_02.html

4. CAMPO Response to Council Member Kim's Questions (Revised Response 10/4/07)