



ALMA DRIVE FACT SHEET

On July 14, Allen City Council awarded an Engineering design contract for the Alma Drive Improvement project. Traffic congestion is addressed regionally, and both the City and Collin County see this project as a necessary to relieve current and future traffic concerns. Traffic demands will continue to increase as the city continues to develop, particularly along SH 121.

The scope of this project generally includes the improvement of Alma Drive to six-lanes in areas where a current five-lane or four-lane section exists. This expansion will be accomplished by adding two lanes to the center of the roadway in the area south of Ridgeview Drive and two outside lanes north of Ridgeview. As a result, various other improvements and modifications to existing infrastructure will be necessary including landscaping improvements, signal enhancements, turn lane additions, and street lighting placement/replacement. Except for potential enhancements for ADA accessibility, the existing sidewalks along Alma will not be affected.

Below are additional details about the project provided by the City of Allen Engineering Department:

- **Safety Concerns**

Adding more lanes to Alma Drive will improve safety.

Roadways within the city of Allen are always designed with safety in mind. Speed limits in Allen are justified by a speed study, undertaken by our Traffic Division. The 85th percentile of measured traffic speed within a defined period of time is used to establish a maximum safe speed. The speed limit of Alma Drive will be in accordance with the design standards set by the Federal Highway Administration. In addition, all signalized intersections along the Alma Drive corridor are timed to facilitate safe crosswalk access for all pedestrian traffic.

More lanes does not guarantee faster speed limits.

There is no plan to increase speed limits beyond what is justified, normal and customary through prudent engineering analysis to maintain safety standards throughout the corridor.

Adding lanes to Alma Drive will address increasing traffic coming to the area.

Over the last several years, traffic along Alma Drive has increased creating greater congestion at intersections. Escalating traffic counts in Allen, McKinney and Plano demonstrate a growing traffic congestion concern. Widening Alma Drive at this time will help us stay ahead of expected traffic congestion along the corridor by providing additional capacity sooner rather than later.

Additional lanes will promote safety by preventing driver “refuge” in median gaps when turning left from neighborhood side streets.

Wider medians with turn gaps along roadways in Allen are not intended to create a safe place or refuge area for traffic wanting to turn left from a neighborhood side street. The practice of using wider median turn gaps to make a “two-step” left turn from a side street can be dangerous. Crossing one side of traffic going in the opposite direction, then sitting in the median gap and

waiting to cross the other lanes of traffic creates both a physical and line-of-sight obstacle for directional traffic making turns or u-turns. Narrowing the overall median and turn gaps will eliminate this potentially dangerous practice and provide safe sight distances for drivers to better negotiate left turn movements. Also, adding lanes to Alma Drive will provide additional capacity that creates smaller groupings of traffic traveling along the corridor. These smaller groupings of traffic will create additional travel space for left turns to be made more frequently and safer from the neighborhood side streets.

- **Aesthetic and Neighborhood Impact**

The additional lanes fit within the existing and customary right-of-way, avoiding impact to backyards.

Current roadway standards require six-lane arterial roadways to have a minimum of 120-foot right-of-way width. However, over the course of decades, many of our six-lane arterial roadways exist within a narrower right-of-way like Exchange Parkway, Bethany Drive, Greenville Avenue and Custer Road. This occurrence is quite common due to the age of existing development in relation to evolving code-related requirements. The 110 foot width is not only sufficient, but a common width throughout this region in order to accommodate a six-lane roadway. The existing right-of-way width for six lanes of traffic was planned from the beginning of neighborhood construction along Alma Drive. Using the median to add lanes to the center of the roadway was always part of the plan to improve this roadway as the traffic demand required. For this reason, the roadway curb will be no closer to any home than it is today.

The Alma Drive improvement project will include aesthetic enhancements for landscaping and lighting for the new medians.

Although the roadway improvement will remove some mature trees located within the median area of Alma Drive between McDermott Drive and Exchange Parkway, using an approach that is fiscally responsible and visually appealing to the public, the City of Allen plans to put significant time, effort and funding into new landscaping in the median area. From a longevity standpoint, many of the existing trees are short-lived Bradford Pears, which are nearing the end of their expected life. The median enhancements will be designed by landscape architects and certified arborists, resulting in a better species selection to provide visual appeal for a much longer period of time.

- **Funding and Planning**

Project funding leverages local dollars in order to provide more improvements with less total investment.

As indicated by increased traffic flow on Alma Drive over the past decade, the roadway will require additional lanes in the near future. Collin County has also seen this need and as a result, has agreed to use their funds to match City funds dollar-for-dollar in order to support design and construction of the estimated \$5.5 million dollar roadway improvement. County funds are taxpayer revenues that County Commissioners have agreed to reinvest in our community. This was a funding request submitted by the City of Allen to leverage County funds with City funds, ultimately saving the local taxpayers money, which makes excellent fiscal sense. Consequently,

the recommended timing to improve Alma Drive is now, especially given the cost will only increase with time. Postponing the improvements to a time when traffic volume are even higher will result in a more expensive project that will impact more traffic and result in greater inconvenience and congestion during construction.

The City of Allen has planned for this roadway improvement project since 1977.

Since 1977 and through each subsequent update, Alma Drive has been identified on the Master Thoroughfare Plan to be a six-lane divided roadway. A public meeting was held on June 18, 2015, for this project to promote transparency. Notices for this meeting were given to each HOA along the Alma Drive corridor weeks in advance of the meeting date. The purpose of this public meeting was to provide more detailed information and answer any questions. The meeting presentation can be found at CityofAllen.org/AlmaImprovement.

For more information or to ask any questions, please contact:

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