



FEDERAL ISSUES AGENDA

2010-2015 Surface Transportation Reauthorization & 2011 Appropriations

***Priority Projects:
Bexar County
City of San Antonio
Port San Antonio
VIA Metropolitan Transit***

***SA-DC Trip
March 21-24, 2010***

***Hosted by: Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and the
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce***

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ISSUE PAPER**

Downtown Streetcar Circulator System

FY 2011 Appropriations

TITLE: Downtown Streetcar Circulator System using technology to efficiently provide access while easing congestion and stimulating economic development

BACKGROUND: San Antonio is the largest city in the U.S. without a high capacity transit option. VIA has been experiencing significant transit ridership growth over the last decade. Additionally, with the growth of the region and increased congestion, there has been heightened interest in the need for a high-capacity transit option beyond the conventional bus service.

VIA is currently conducting a Long Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan, SmartWaySA, to identify corridors within the VIA service area that are viable candidates for high-capacity transit. Slated for completion in Summer 2010, this initiative will prioritize those corridors that are candidates for high capacity transit.

Demographic data indicates that growth in the San Antonio/Bexar County area will increase over the next several years. From 2005 to 2015, population growth is expected to increase 14.6%. Over the next 30 years, Bexar County will experience a 41% increase in population and a 56% increase in employment. This growth, coupled with congestion on high capacity corridors, calls for different modes of transit and an attractive transportation option for commuters.

As part of SmartWaySA, VIA is pursuing a downtown streetcar circulator system. Elements for a downtown circulator system using modern, historic, or replica streetcar vehicles have been identified. Additionally, corridors providing geographic equity within the central business district have been proposed. The VIA Board of Trustees established a Commission on Intra-City Rail and Streetcar to provide guidance and a community perspective regarding the development of a modern streetcar service. A technical advisory committee, comprised of various planning agencies within Bexar County, has also provided skilled insight and expertise.

The Downtown Streetcar Circulator System will connect employment and activity centers along the identified corridors, as well as other existing and planned transit facilities. The Robert Thompson Transit Station (RTTS), an existing transit facility on the near East Side, as well as other major community and city assets, will be linked by this proposed system. Additionally, the starter line of this project will be 2.2 miles, connecting to bus rapid transit and the fixed-route bus system, improving circulation and reducing traffic congestion within the central business district. This modern streetcar service will provide the connectivity necessary to move people efficiently and safely.

OBJECTIVE: For FY2011 Appropriations funding cycle, obtain \$5,000,000 to initiate conceptual and preliminary design for the starter route of a downtown streetcar circulator system. VIA will also pursue an FTA Discretionary Program Grant for Urban Circulator Systems for the Downtown Streetcar Circulator System.

BENEFITS:

- Economic Development – Modern streetcars can serve as catalysts for economic development, allowing for the creation of efficient land use patterns and transit-oriented development. Additionally, a streetcar system can provide an opportunity for revitalizing business districts that have been neglected and increase land values. As an example, the Memphis Streetcar Madison Street route saw

property values along the corridor increase after the route became operational in 2003. Residential properties near the Madison Street route increased in aggregate value over 780 percent for the period between 2002, before the streetcar opening, and 2008.

- Energy Efficiency – Modern streetcars carry more passengers and utilize environmentally friendly technology thus reducing greenhouse gases and air pollutants.
- Efficient Mobility – Modern streetcars reduce travel time due to frequency of service and utilization of transit corridors developed specifically to accommodate rail transit. Streetcars can be designed to be part of a larger transit network, connecting rail to bus rapid transit and bus service, providing an affordable, safe and seamless trip to the customer.
- Economic Benefits – Modern streetcars can provide an affordable, safe and convenient alternative to the automobile. With fluctuating fuel prices and costs associated with owning and operating an automobile, riding public transit can lower household expenses.

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BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

SAFETEA-LU Re-Authorization and FY 2011 Appropriations

TITLE: The Fredericksburg Road Bus Rapid Transit, VIA PRIMO, is the first corridor in VIA's system wide BRT plan. Fredericksburg Road is the first of three planned BRT corridors, and LEED Certification will be pursued for this corridor to emphasize the sustainability benefits of BRT.

BACKGROUND: The Fredericksburg Road corridor connects two of San Antonio's major employment centers - the Central Business District and the Medical Center - with the University of Texas at San Antonio and USAA, a regional employer. Bus Rapid Transit would include the following features: enhanced boarding stations, ITS applications (real-time bus arrival information), signal priority, queue jumps, and frequent service (headways of every 10 minutes or better during peak hours) creating a more attractive transit service. The overall objective of the BRT system is to reduce travel time and delays, increase schedule adherence, expand market share, and ultimately increase ridership of the transit system.

The BRT project on Fredericksburg Road is an element of VIA Metropolitan Transit's Long Range Comprehensive Service Plan, which calls for a redesign of VIA services to include high-capacity transit options along major corridors. *This project is authorized in SAFETEA-LU. The FY2008 transportation appropriations bill included \$4.9 million for Bus Rapid Transit.*

OBJECTIVE: Obtain \$53,000,000 in the SAFETEA-LU re-authorization legislation for Bus Rapid Transit. For the FY2011 appropriations funding cycle, obtain an appropriations earmark of \$10,000,000 for costs associated with final design and construction of the project. Additionally, VIA will be pursuing an FTA Discretionary Program Grant/Bus & Bus Facilities Livability for Fredericksburg Road Bus Rapid Transit – VIA PRIMO.

BENEFITS:

- **Efficient Mobility** – BRT offers an efficient mode of transportation that is affordable and is an appropriate fit for the Fredericksburg Road corridor. Provides efficient and affordable access for those employed in the area (approximately 26,000 employees) in addition to the 5 million patient visits annually.
- **Economic** – BRT offers a significant improvement in accessibility by linking the University of Texas at San Antonio with the two largest employment centers in the region (Central Business District to the Medical Center).
- **Energy Efficiency** – BRT offers efficiency through the use of hybrid vehicles and signal priority, whereby transit vehicles will experience shortened lag times.
- **Traffic Flow** – BRT offers signal optimization for transit, further mitigating congestion and, therefore, benefiting overall traffic flow and aiding energy efficiency.

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TRADE CORRIDOR

(Formerly 36th Street Extension Project)

OBJECTIVE: Secure \$12,000,000 in FY 2011 appropriations to complete the next phase of the Trade Corridor.

BACKGROUND: Port San Antonio is a political subdivision of the State of Texas with a Chairman and Board of Directors appointed by the City Council of San Antonio. Port San Antonio is a 2,000 acre transit-oriented, mixed-use development under the single ownership of the Port Authority of San Antonio. The Port has achieved significant success as an aerospace hub and international logistics platform with 76 customers employing about 14,000 people. The property is within five minutes of downtown San Antonio, which the seventh largest city in the country.

Since its inception, the public/private investment in the development of basic infrastructure, buildings, hangars, test cells, railroad tracks and connectivity issues totals almost \$400 Million. The economic impact of these activities to our region is \$3.3 billion and growing. Thirteen aerospace related companies at Port San Antonio such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Pratt & Whitney and Standard Aero employ over 4,300 highly skilled workers.

Port San Antonio is the largest commercial and industrial real estate development and management firm in the city. It is through the leasing of its buildings and land that the Port generates its revenue and is operationally self sustaining. No government funds are used in the operation of Port San Antonio. The profit that is created is re-invested in the property producing more equity in the Port's holdings.

Port San Antonio is strategically located at the center of an emerging transportation corridor – The Trade Corridor – connecting northwest San Antonio, the fastest growing sector of the city, and the southwest quadrant of Bexar County where several important new economic generators have been established: Toyota TMMC, a billion dollar truck manufacturing complex; Texas A&M University at San Antonio campus; and City South, a 60 square mile Defense Adjustment Management Authority and political subdivision of the State of Texas dedicated to economic development and job creation.

REQUESTED FUNDING: \$12,000,000 in FY 2011 appropriations to complete Segment IIIB of the Trade Corridor.

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT: Seeking support from the Bexar County Congressional delegation.

BENEFITS:

- Trade Development – The Trade Corridor will tie together four interstate highways that provide regional connectivity to the nearby Ports of Corpus Christi, Brownsville and the Mexican Ports of Lazaro Cardenas and Manzanillo.
- Job Creation - The Trade Corridor will efficiently connect densely populated areas in northwest San Antonio with new and growing job generators at the Port and southward stimulating further development investments and opportunities.
- Energy Efficiency – Workers will have easier and quicker access to growing and future employment clusters.

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**FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION:
ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINED FUNDING**

OBJECTIVE: Support action by the federal government to provide long-term sustainable funding for investment in the expansion, upgrade, and replacement of our nation's transit, highway, and rail infrastructure. With the nation's economic competitiveness, quality of life, and energy independence at stake, we urge Congress and the Administration to reach agreement on a 2010-2015 surface transportation reauthorization bill that will:

- 1) Substantially increase investment in highways, mass transit, commuter rail, and freight rail
- 2) Eliminate projected shortfalls in the Federal Highway Trust Fund
- 3) Provide additional funding to reconstruct and upgrade aging infrastructure
- 4) Continue to reduce disparities between donor and non-donor states
- 5) Implement an appropriate mix of funding sources including increasing/indexing the federal gasoline tax, user fees, and private sector investment
- 6) Consolidate existing federal programs and provide greater flexibility for state officials
- 7) Increase share of funding provided directly to urban MPO's, and
- 8) Continue efforts to streamline the NEPA process and expedite project delivery as outlined below.

We urge members of Congress and the Administration to implement the recommendations of the bi-partisan National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission as part of the next six-year transportation reauthorization bill with the goal of providing long-term, predictable, and sustainable funding for the nation's infrastructure needs.

BACKGROUND: The Federal Highway Trust Fund is expected to reach a negative balance by FY 2011 despite recent passage of a temporary one-year funding measure for FY 2010. During the past three years, federal rescissions of transportation funding have cost the State of Texas more than \$1.7 billion – an amount that effectively negates much of the impact of \$2.2 billion in federal stimulus funding (ARRA) awarded to Texas in 2009 for transportation projects.

With federal revenues trending downward, state and local transportation officials are making significant cutbacks in planned projects for the next decade and beyond. For example, in December 2009 the San Antonio-Bexar County MPO eliminated 51 projects totaling \$3.2 billion from their 2010-2035 transportation plan. The eliminated projects include future expansions of IH 410 and Loop 1604 on the east, west, and south sides of San Antonio, as well as any future improvements on Bandera Road.

Of the \$4.9 billion in projects that remain in the plan, roughly 89 percent are planned as future toll projects due to lack of alternative funding sources. The remaining 11 percent are to be funded from various one-time revenue infusions (ARRA, Proposition 12, etc.) Without additional federal and state investment, it will become even more challenging to provide non-toll options for added capacity transportation improvements.

In January 2008, a two-year study released by the bi-partisan National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission suggested that \$225 billion a year will be required over the next fifty years to upgrade and maintain the federal government's share of infrastructure costs. Currently, the nation is only investing about 40 percent of that amount. The Commission recommended a combination of approaches for addressing the shortfall, including an increase and/or indexing of the federal gasoline tax, higher state gasoline taxes, tolling, and private sector solutions.

A recent analysis by the National Chamber Foundation (NCF) indicates that by 2015, annual Highway Trust Fund (HTF) revenues will fall \$23 billion short of the federal share needed to maintain highway and transit systems (\$64 billion total) and \$48 billion short of the federal share needed to improve the system to a level that would enhance the nation's economic productivity (\$89 billion total).

Reauthorization of the federal transportation program should also focus on expedited project delivery. Specifically, there should be firm establishment of additional permitting approvals and continued progress in the delegation of environmental review to the states. In addition, federal law should contain provisions which expedite resolution of environmental disputes and allow all records of decisions for projects to be processed within a specific time frame. Specific examples:

- Require greater coordination among Federal agencies reviewing transportation projects by instituting performance criteria.
- Establish firm time limits for Federal review of transportation projects.
- Use Federal transportation funds to pay for regulatory staff to speed reviews and comply with time limits.
- Reauthorization should reduce the time authorized for the filing of lawsuits on environmental documents to sixty days and provide for binding arbitration to be invoked at the option of any party to the dispute.

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT: Seeking support from the San Antonio and Texas delegations.

REQUESTED FUNDING: Increase the federal motor fuels tax to a level that restores the fiscal integrity of the Federal Highway Trust Fund and provides adequate, long-term, and sustained funding for the federal government's share of providing and maintaining critical infrastructure improvements.

BENEFITS: Greater investment levels in our nation's transportation infrastructure will create jobs, promote economic competitiveness, improve air quality, enhance safety, and improve the quality of life of our nation's growing urban areas. Maintaining a positive balance in the Highway Trust Fund will enable the federal government to meet its transportation funding commitments and prevent further recessions of highway funding to the states.

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Harry Wurzbach – Rittiman to Loop 410

PROPOSAL

To secure funding for the design, environmental studies, utility locations, right of way evaluations and other preliminary work in preparation for eventual construction to widen Harry Wurzbach Highway from 800 feet south of Rittiman to the Loop 410.

The construction project (presently unfunded) will reconstruct and widen the existing roadway from four to five lanes with a continuous turn lane or raised median and will add bicycle lanes, sidewalks, drainage features and concrete curbing.

This project is needed to facilitate multi-modal transportation between Loop 410 and Fort Sam Houston and to support growth at the installation. Funding for this project will improve the quality of life for many of the citizens by reducing congestion, adding ADA compliant sidewalks, and increasing biking and pedestrian mobility.

The City of San Antonio is requesting \$4,500,000 at this time for anticipated design and design management, environmental studies and permitting, utility coordination and design and right-of-way coordination.

An additional \$25,500,000 would be needed to construct the project.

No matching city funding is identified at this time.

BACKGROUND

City funded traffic studies were conducted to examine the needs and impact of the Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) process in the areas around Fort Sam Houston. Several high-priority projects were placed onto the City's 2007-2012 Bond Program via the \$4 million "Fort Sam Transportation" project placeholder.

This project, the reconstruction and widening of Harry Wurzbach from Rittiman to Loop 410 is a continuation of the Harry Wurzbach- Fort Sam Gate to Rittiman, which was one of the specifically identified projects from that study. City staff views the extension of the project to Loop 410 to further benefit Fort Sam Houston, as well as a significant contribution to multi-modal traffic in the area.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City of San Antonio is requesting \$4,500,000 at this time for anticipated design and design management, environmental studies and permitting, utility coordination and design and right-of-way coordination.

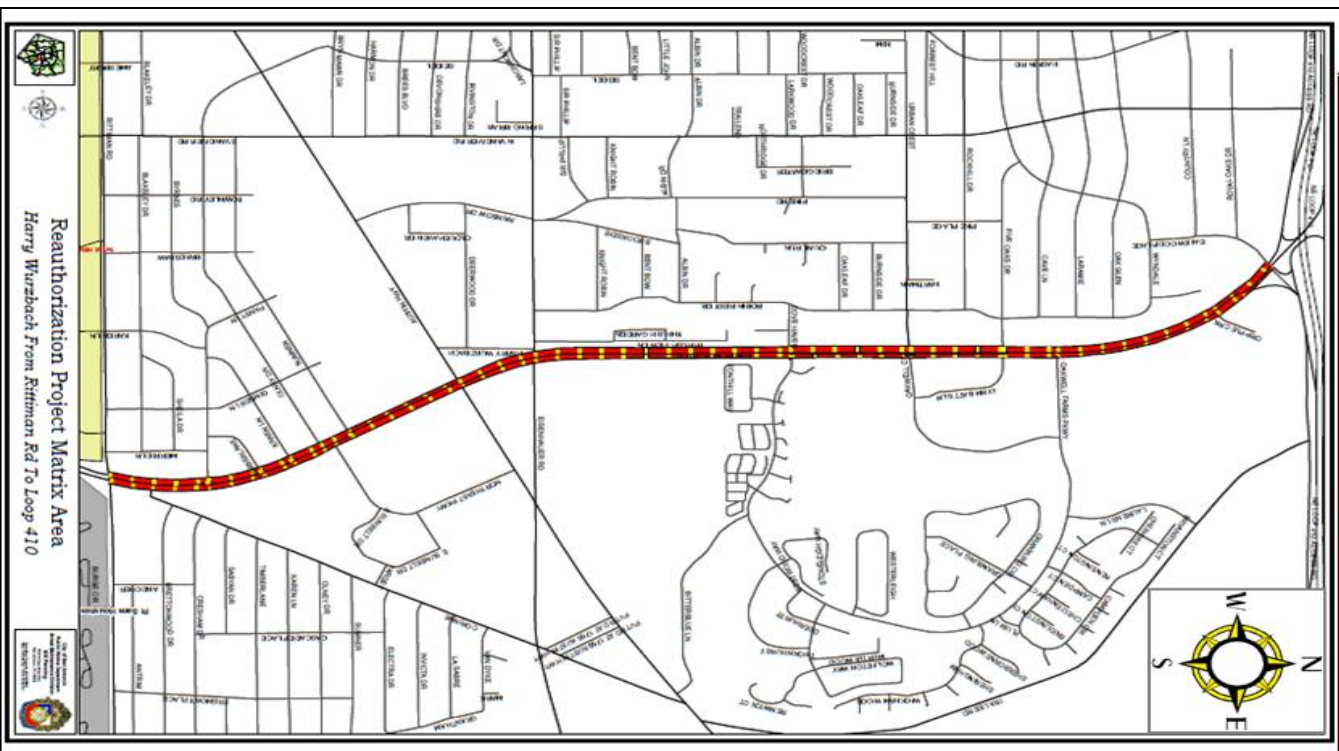
An additional \$25,500,000 would be needed to construct the project.

No matching city funding is identified at this time.

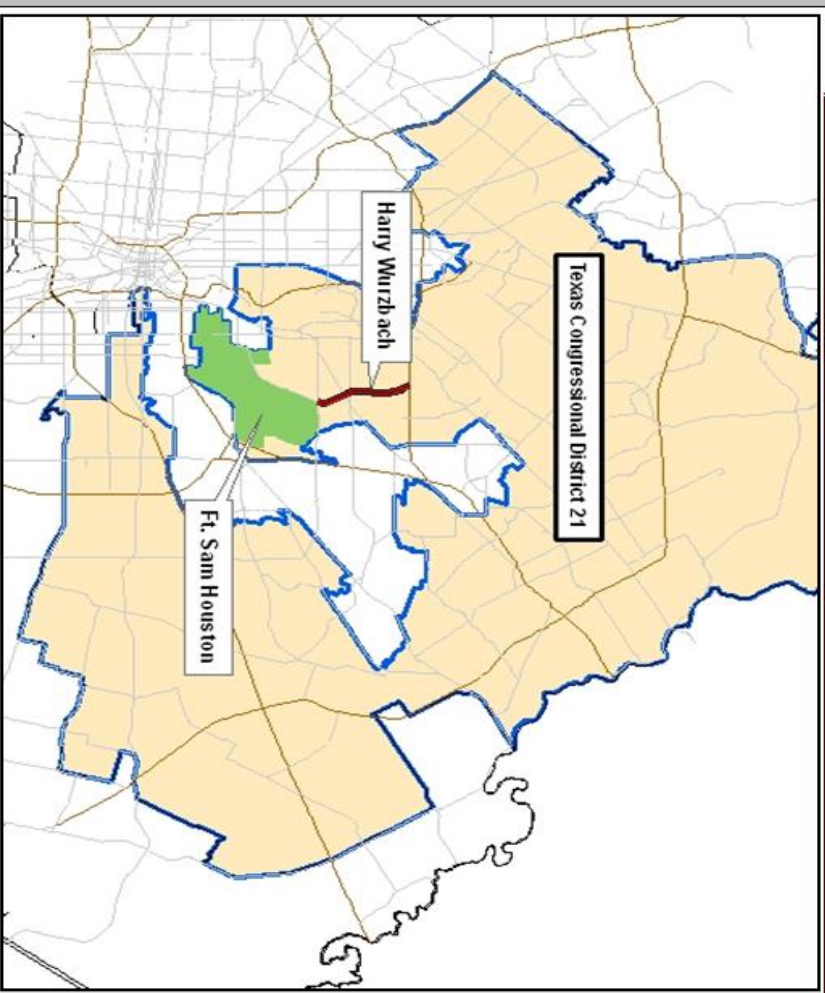
A map and project scope is attached.

Harry Wurzbach From Rittiman Road To Loop 410

City Council District 2 & 10



Congressional District 21



Project Details

- Limits: Rittiman Road. to Loop 410
- Scope: Widen Harry Wurzbach Highway to 5 lanes from 800' south of Rittiman Road. to Loop 410
- Cost: \$30 Million

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Harry Wurzbach – Rittiman to Fort Sam Houston Gate

PROPOSAL

To secure funding for the design, environmental studies, utility locations, right of way evaluations and other preliminary work in preparation for eventual construction to widen Harry Wurzbach Highway from 800 feet south of Rittiman to the Fort Sam Houston Harry Wurzbach East Access Control Point gate.

The construction project (presently unfunded) will reconstruct and widen the existing roadway from four to five lanes which include a center, reversible lane. In addition to roadway widening, this project will add bike lanes, sidewalks, and concrete curbing. An underground drainage system will be incorporated with the project to improve stormwater collection and reduce flooding.

This project is needed to address peak-hour travel to and from Fort Sam Houston to support growth at the installation. Funding for this project will improve the quality of life for many of the citizens by reducing congestion, adding ADA compliant sidewalks, and increasing biking and pedestrian mobility. It will also enhance traffic flow and increase safety for visitors and participants in the numerous funeral services conducted daily at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

The City of San Antonio is requesting \$4,442,000 at this time for anticipated design and design management, environmental studies and permitting, utility coordination and design and right-of-way coordination.

An additional \$25,058,000 would be needed to construct the project.

No matching city funding is identified at this time.

BACKGROUND

City funded traffic studies were conducted to examine the needs and impact of the Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) process in the areas around Fort Sam Houston. Several high-priority projects were placed onto the City's 2007-2012 Bond Program via the \$4 million "Fort Sam Transportation" project placeholder.

This project, the reconstruction and widening of Harry Wurzbach, was the highest priority project from the study that was not acted upon. This was primarily due to its high cost (\$29.48million total).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City of San Antonio is requesting \$4,442,000 at this time for anticipated design and design management, environmental studies and permitting, utility coordination and design and right-of-way coordination.

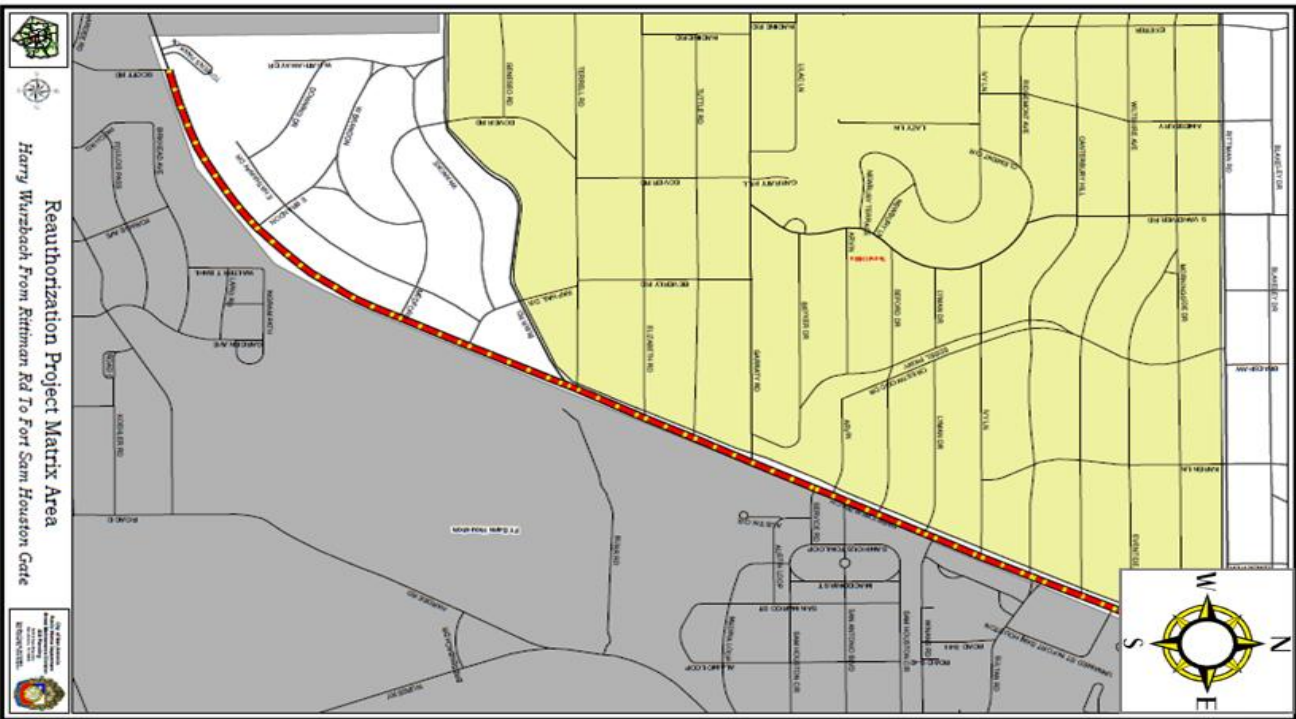
An additional \$25,058,000 would be needed to construct the project.

No matching city funding is identified at this time.

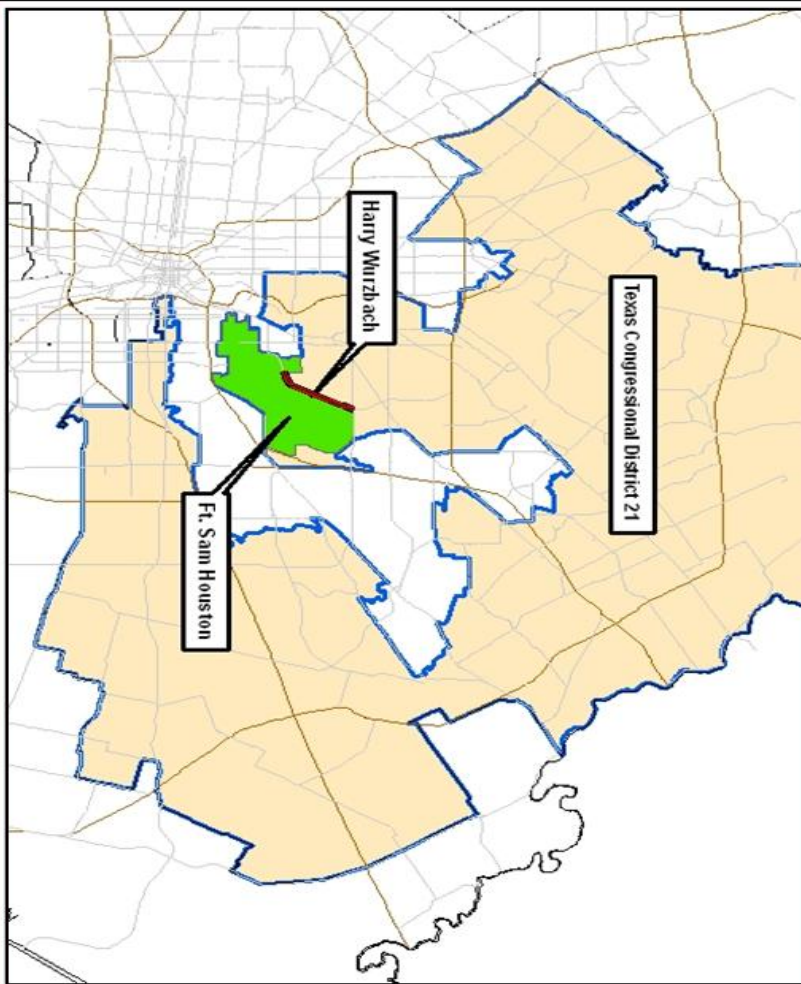
A map and project scope is attached.

Harry Wurzbach From Rittiman Rd To Fort Sam Houston Gate

City Council District 2



Congressional District 21



Project Details

- Limits: Rittiman to Fort Sam Houston Gate
- Scope: Widen Harry Wurzbach Highway to 5 lanes from 800' south of Rittiman To Harry Wurzbach East ACP gate and implement reversible lanes
- Cost: \$29.48 Million

