

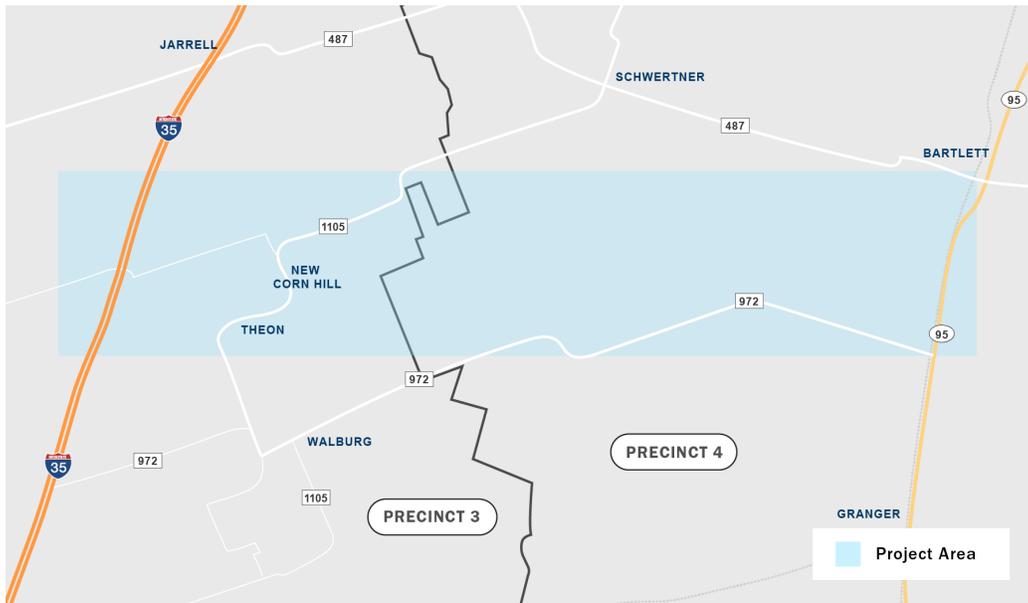
RONALD REAGAN EXTENSION PLANNING & PRESERVATION STUDY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated June 2020

1. What is the Ronald Reagan Extension Planning & Preservation Study?

Williamson County is conducting the Ronald Reagan Extension Planning & Preservation Study, also referred to as Corridor D on the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), to plan for future growth and set the right of way (ROW) footprint. The road will be built as growth occurs to create a connection between IH 35 and SH 95 to maintain connectivity and mobility.



2. Why is the County conducting this study now?

County governments are responsible for planning effective transportation systems. Williamson County has experienced immense growth in recent years and current population projections predict that this growth will continue. In this area, the population of Jarrell has grown 175% in less than 20 years, from 614 in 2000 to 1,692 people in 2018. Additionally, the job market in Jarrell is predicted to grow by 51.5% in the next ten years. That's 18% higher than the national average.

It is the County's responsibility to plan for current and future transportation needs in order to keep pace with the anticipated increased number of residents and vehicles. This high level of growth is inevitable and requires extensive planning and development that will ultimately protect their quality of life.

Preserving the corridor for a future road, before development occurs, allows the County to be fiscally responsible by working with willing sellers and developers before land is developed and as it's sold. This also minimizes impacts to businesses and homes because the corridor is preserved before more structures are built.

3. What is the timeline for the Ronald Reagan Extension Planning & Preservation Study?

The County has hired an engineering firm to identify environmental constraints, gather public input, and identify alignment options. The study team is in the process of evaluating different alignments based on environmental factors and feedback from property owners in the study area. Although there is no construction funding at this time, ROW acquisition from willing sellers could begin once the ROW footprint is set. Early preservation of ROW enables the County to phase in the construction of the road and build as it is needed.

4. What is the study process for the Ronald Reagan Extension?

The process for this study involves evaluating many factors including, but not limited to:

- Social & community impacts
- Public input
- Impacts to homes & businesses
- Water resources
- Traffic Impact Analysis
- Threatened & endangered species
- Vegetation & wildlife
- Land use & parkland
- Archaeological & historic resources
- Hazardous materials
- ROW analysis & land cost
- Engineering analysis

5. A preliminary route was previously presented to property owners. Why is the County evaluating other alignments?

Identifying the best way to extend Ronald Reagan Boulevard east of IH 35 is a complex process that involves engineering and environmental analyses, as well as feedback from the community. If the County does not preserve land now, before development occurs, then residents' quality of life will decrease due to increased traffic congestion, or be forced to make expensive and even more painful decisions in the future. The study team looks at many different factors in determining the best route, then works with the community to refine and make the route better.

In recent discussions with the community, many suggested a more direct route over to SH 95. Those comments were taken seriously, and the study team dug into the constraints that had previously precluded a route in that area. Most of CR 111 is still not feasible because dozens of homes are built close to the road. However, other constraints that were previously identified by the study team were re-evaluated and reprioritized to develop a more direct route to the east from IH 35. The project team will again work with property owners to refine the route and make improvements. While this extension of Ronald Regan Boulevard will only be built as growth in the area occurs, preserving the corridor now allows those affected property owners to adequately plan for the future. Most of the property owners can continue living and/or farming, as they are now, for many years. However, as property in the area is developed, those affected property owners will also know for certain where a future road will be built and can plan accordingly.

6. Is the County going to hold a large public meeting?

The County wants to work directly with property owners to discuss their concerns and ensure they are being heard. Additionally, due to the current public health concerns, large gatherings are not recommended.

7. How is the study being funded?

The Ronald Reagan Extension Planning & Preservation Study is being funded through the 2013 Williamson County Road Bond Program. Funding for construction of transportation projects can come from many sources; the most common are bonds, tolling and partnerships between federal, state, county, and city governments. Construction funding sources have not yet been identified; however, at this time, the corridor is not being planned as a toll road.

8. What is the Williamson County LRTP?

The Williamson County Commissioners Court adopted the LRTP in October 2009. The plan is regularly updated based on current needs, population projections, and anticipated future mobility and safety needs in Williamson County. The planning process to develop the LRTP involves working with the public, cities, neighboring counties, and transportation and planning agencies to gather input and coordinate connectivity and mobility.

The most recent amendments to the LRTP outline a network of roadways that will improve safety and mobility across the County, and include a map of potential controlled access facilities and potential arterial roadways. These potential roadways are conceptual only to show general locations and connections needed. To learn more about the LRTP, click [here](#).

9. What is a controlled access facility?

A controlled access facility is a roadway with main lanes that have entrance and exit ramps and frontage roads. The main lanes provide mobility for through traffic and the frontage roads provide local access to abutting properties.

10. Will the Ronald Reagan Extension be a controlled access facility?

The Ronald Reagan Extension is being planned as a controlled access facility; however, the first phase of the road will most likely be a two to three lane road: one lane in each direction, potentially with a center turn lane. As growth occurs and funding becomes available, the second frontage would be built, then finally the main lanes. Building the ultimate Ronald Reagan Extension will most likely take several decades.

11. Will there be noise barriers?

Once construction funding is available, the first phase of this project will be a two to three lane road: one lane in each direction, potentially with a center turn lane. Future phases of construction will include a second frontage road, which will create divided lanes for each direction, and main lanes will be added if the County continues to grow and the need arises. Please note, the main lanes might not be built for ten or more year as it depends on funding and growth. Noise impacts will be analyzed and addressed during the design phase of the main lanes, which would determine the need for noise barriers.

12. How much ROW will be needed and how will I be compensated for it?

The project team is in the process of gathering input to identify an alignment. In 2021, the ROW footprint is expected to be set. If someone is a willing seller, then the County may move forward with acquisition. This is a formal process that involves independent appraisals and a negotiation process between the property owner and the County. The County will also talk to property owners as land is developed. If and when construction funding is secured, the County will approach property owners to acquire the land.

13. Why isn't the County doing anything to improve our current roads?

Maintaining current road and transportation infrastructure is a great priority for the County. However, there are finite resources, and the County's responsibility is to ensure those dollars are used in the most efficient and responsible manner possible in addressing today's needs, while preparing for the future.

The County has not forgotten about the issues that are arising today, but one of those issues is the rapid growth that is occurring. The County needs to plan ahead to best coordinate with property owners, businesses, and the community, in order to safely and efficiently accommodate existing and future transportation needs.

14. How can I get involved in the Ronald Reagan Extension Planning & Preservation Study?

The County wants to understand more details about property, how it is currently used, and what is planned for the future. In addition, the County wants to better understand what the community values and needs. If you have input, questions, or wish to be added to the email updates list, you may contact the County:

- Phone: (512) 943-1195 (leave a message for a call back within 48 hours)
- Email: roads@wilco.org (include “Ronald Reagan Extension” in the subject line)

Please visit www.wilco.org/RonaldReaganExtension for more information.