



26           **WHEREAS**, the I-35 Capital Express North and I-35 Capital Express South  
27 Projects do not add any new street crossings, and the I-35 Capital Express Central  
28 Project will either have the same number of east-west street crossings or reduce the  
29 number of east-west street crossings; and

30           **WHEREAS**, such long distances between east-west street crossings  
31 disconnects communities, encourages speeding, increases pollution, and increases  
32 congestion at the remaining intersections, pushing more cars into fewer  
33 intersections forces drivers to take more turns than they would have taken if they  
34 could drive straight through, creating more conflict with pedestrians, bikes, and  
35 other vehicles; and

36           **WHEREAS**, although some new bike and pedestrian bridges and trails are  
37 proposed, in most cases the additional bridges and trail crossings will require  
38 people to go up long ramps and offer a much more difficult connection than a  
39 normal street crossing; and

40           **WHEREAS**, the existing distance between east-west crossings is almost  
41 two miles in some places, including between William Cannon Drive and Slaughter  
42 Lane, forcing many residents living on or near the frontage road to take up to a  
43 four mile loop to go to destinations less than half a mile away; and

44           **WHEREAS**, the removal of Woodland Avenue as a full crossing in the  
45 Capital Express Central Project creates a division in the city of more than a mile  
46 between the Riverside Drive and Oltorf Street crossings; and

47           **WHEREAS**, the portions of the I-35 Capital Express Projects that are not  
48 being capped do very little to improve connectivity or mitigate the pollution, noise,  
49 and other negative impacts of United States Interstate Highway 35 on surrounding  
50 neighborhoods, and by adding more lanes, including new elevated lanes in South

51 Austin, the United States Interstate Highway 35 expansion threatens to worsen  
52 those impacts; and

53 **WHEREAS**, lowering and capping highways provides significant  
54 environmental benefits, including reduced noise, air pollution, and heat island  
55 impact; and

56 **WHEREAS**, many other Texas and United States cities have chosen to  
57 lower and cover their highways; and

58 **WHEREAS**, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) capped a  
59 quarter mile section of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway in downtown Dallas and  
60 created a successful urban park that has become an extremely popular destination,  
61 and the project was so successful that construction has already started on another  
62 cap in Dallas - the Southern Gateway on United States Interstate Highway 35E in  
63 the Oak Cliff neighborhood close to the Dallas Zoo; and

64 **WHEREAS**, the City's Corridor Program Office has been working with  
65 TxDOT to identify opportunities to create caps over the United States Interstate  
66 Highway 35 as well as widened bridges that accommodate improved safety and  
67 multimodal connectivity; and

68 **WHEREAS**, United States Interstate Highway 35 is an international  
69 roadway that carries traffic all the way from Mexico to Canada, including a large  
70 volume of 18-wheel trucks, and a single 18-wheel truck produces a much greater  
71 amount of pollution, noise, and traffic than a single passenger vehicle, and is  
72 considerably more deadly in a crash; and

73 **WHEREAS**, design choices including speed limits, lane widths, and other  
74 factors can have a significant impact on the safety of the United States Interstate

75 Highway 35 frontage road, and the Austin Transportation Department staff have  
76 made many useful suggestions and comments on how the I-35 Capital Express  
77 Projects can be improved; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

78 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

79 Austin City Council offers the following comments to be included as official  
80 comments from the Council as part of public comment on the Draft Environmental  
81 Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-35 Capital Express Central Project:

82 1. The I-35 Capital Express Central Project should add more full east-  
83 west crossings for all users including cars, bikes, and pedestrians. As it is currently  
84 proposed, the preferred alternative would have one less full east-west crossing than  
85 currently exists. The I-35 Capital Express Project should aim to have a full east-  
86 west crossing that works for all users around every 1/4th of a mile, and should not  
87 have any span between full east-west crossings greater than 1/2 mile.

88 2. The I-35 Capital Express Central Project should create new  
89 opportunities and amenities for residents by lowering and covering as much of  
90 United States Interstate Highway 35 as possible. The locations of caps should be  
91 prioritized to maximize value to the public, including making new land available  
92 for development that could fund caps through Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone,  
93 Tax Increment Financing, and similar funding mechanisms.

94 3. The I-35 Capital Express Central Project should ensure that I-35 is  
95 designed and built in a way that does not preclude adding additional caps and  
96 connections in the future. In particular, Council urges TxDOT to evaluate the  
97 removal, reconfiguration, or relocation of ramps, including managed lane ramps, to  
98 expand the potential for capping and provide additional east-west crossings.

99 4. Encourage TxDOT, the Austin Transportation Department, and other  
100 City departments to continue to collaborate and prioritize reducing the  
101 environmental, traffic, and safety impacts of United States Interstate Highway 35,  
102 especially the frontage roads. Frontage roads and east-west crossings should  
103 prioritize service to the local street network.

104 5. Minimize the number of properties impacted by eminent domain and  
105 provide as much mitigation as possible for the impacted businesses and residents.

106 6. In order to reduce the substantial impact of 18-wheelers on  
107 congestion, air quality, and road safety, incentives should be provided to reroute  
108 18-wheeler traffic that is passing through Austin to Texas State Highway 130.

109 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

110 Austin City Council expresses its desire to see more improvements to the  
111 North Capital Express Central and South Capital Express Projects, specifically:

112 1. The I-35 Capital Express South and I-35 Capital Express North  
113 Projects should add more full east-west crossings for all users including cars,  
114 bikes, and pedestrians. As they are currently planned, no new full east-west  
115 crossings are added, and the average distance between crossings is more than 1  
116 mile. The Projects should aim to have a full east-west crossing that works for all  
117 users around every 1/2 mile, and should not have any span between full east-west  
118 crossings greater than 1 mile.

