

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Councils**  
**Joint Recommendations for I-35 Cap Ex Central**  
**Recommendation 20230221-006**

## **Preamble**

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Austin Bicycle Advisory Council (BAC) is to advise the City of Austin and other jurisdictions on all matters relating to the use of the bicycle, bicycle infrastructure, and individuals of all ages and abilities who utilize bicycles;

WHEREAS, the Austin Pedestrian Advisory Council (PAC) advises the City of Austin and other government entities on planning, policy, design, funding, education, and enforcement regarding creating, maintaining, and operating pedestrian facilities;

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (hereafter TxDOT) is responsible for the planning and execution of the I-35 Capital Express Central project (hereafter the/this project);

## **General**

WHEREAS, I-35 through Austin causes harms to the community on a daily basis, including by worsening air and noise pollution, inhibiting east-west travel, and reducing transportation choice;

WHEREAS, active transportation and transit projects are needed to improve safety for the most vulnerable users of our transportation network, to increase connectivity of our sidewalk, bicycle, and trail system, and to provide alternative transportation options than single occupancy vehicle trips;

WHEREAS, the project traverses the most valuable downtown real estate, and this land could be better used in the long term for producing housing, jobs, and tax revenues;

WHEREAS, in at least 14 other Texas towns and cities, I-35 runs around and not through those places central business districts, a practice common with highways across the US;

WHEREAS, all of the alternatives proposed by TxDOT, including the No-Build alternative, have significant externalities that will require extensive mitigation;

## **Alignment with City of Austin plans and NACTO/AASHTO guidance**

WHEREAS, TxDOT has an obligation to adhere to adopted key provisions in every major City of Austin plan, including the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, City of Austin Vision Zero goals, Austin Street Design Guide, City of Austin Great Streets Master Plan, and Austin Climate Equity Plan;

WHEREAS the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan includes:

- Public and private sectors work together to improve our air quality;
- Support public transit and a variety of transportation choices, while reducing sprawl, congestion, travel times, and negative impacts on existing neighborhoods;
- Safe bicycle and pedestrian access with well-designed routes that provide connectivity throughout the greater Austin area;
- Ensure that growth is both fiscally sound and environmentally sustainable;

WHEREAS the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP) includes:

- Mode split goals by: 50% drive alone, 16% transit, 14% telework, 11% carpool/taxicab/other, 5% bicycle, 4% walk;
- Reduce the amount of time workers spend traveling between home and work;
- Build a transportation network that encourages social interaction;
- Promote a balanced transportation network;
- Promote economic growth for individuals and the city through strategic investments in transportation networks;
- Lower the cost of traveling in Austin by providing affordable travel options;
- Lower the risk of travel-related injury and promoting public health;
- Draw inspiration from forward-looking cities around the world, change the way we think about what's possible, and set an example for the rest of the country;

WHEREAS the City of Austin Vision Zero goals include:

- Zero annual vehicular-related deaths and serious injuries within Austin city limits;
- Prioritize the protection of human life over all else in the planning, design, and operation of Austin's transportation network;
- Recognize the expanding needs of different users and modes on the transportation network;
- Manage for safe speeds;
- Minimize the safety risks of highways;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Vision Zero Action Plan includes:

- Intersection improvements;
- Raised crosswalks;
- Signal upgrades;
- Design modifications to major streets;

WHEREAS, the High Injury Network (HIN) identifies streets in Austin that are under City of Austin jurisdiction that has a relatively high number of serious injuries and fatal crashes, and 12 of the streets which cross this project corridor are included therein;

WHEREAS the City of Austin Climate Equity Plan includes:

- Reach net zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, equitably;
- Reduce the carbon and pollution impacts of vehicles by helping as many community members as possible to move around Austin without cars;
- Create low-carbon or people-powered options by increasing access to transit and improving our bicycle network, sidewalks, and street crossings;

- Protect our existing trees, identify opportunities for more tree plantings, and provide for our urban forest's long-term health and resilience;

WHEREAS, Austin City Council Resolution 20140410-024 calls for net zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050;

WHEREAS City of Austin Great Streets Master Plan includes:

- Create an environment that is safe, generous enough for multi-purpose use, and sheltered from the elements;
- Calm traffic movement in downtown; accommodate automobile traffic to downtown and discourage traffic through downtown;
- Recognize the primacy of the grid in the downtown and optimize its use;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan / ADA Transition Plan accounts for missing and broken sidewalks citywide, including significant very high priority missing and broken sidewalks along the project corridor and TxDOT has adopted a renewed focus on sidewalks and building an inclusive, accessible transportation system for all users;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin 2014 Bicycle Master Plan envisions a core network of safe facilities suitable for people of all ages and abilities, and approximately three quarters of the streets that cross this project corridor have been identified as being in the Bicycle Priority Network;

WHEREAS Austin Street Design Guide includes:

- All project elements that are not controlled access facilities should be designed as safe, multimodal facilities with target, posted, and design speeds of 35 mph or less;
- NACTO guides, such as the Urban Street Design Guide, should also be used as additional design guidance for all elements of the project that are not controlled access facilities;
- All controlled access facilities should be designed with similar up to date design guidance, including the most recent AASHTO Green Book, with sufficiently low target, posted, and design speeds for a dense urban context and to allow seamless and safe integration with a safe, multimodal urban street grid;

WHEREAS, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines for all ages & abilities bicycle facilities state bicycles should be separated from pedestrians where significant volume of either mode is present and American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines state "segregation of pedestrians from wheeled (e.g. bicyclists) users may be appropriate";

## Safety

WHEREAS, each year approximately a quarter of all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries in Austin city limits occur in the I-35 corridor;

WHEREAS, many of the deaths and serious injuries in the project corridor involve people who were walking or riding bicycles or micromobility devices;

WHEREAS, CapMetro's transit service currently releases passengers near I-35 frontage roads, leaving them to make east-west connections across IH-35 or along the frontage road via whatever means of transport they have available, most often by foot or bicycle;

WHEREAS, the Purpose and Need document of the TxDOT I-35 Capital Express Central Project clearly stated, there is a need to provide safer and more continuous accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians within the project corridor;

WHEREAS, the first stated goal of the TxDOT I-35 Capital Express Central Project was to enhance safety, however, significantly more energy and materials within the Virtual Public Meeting from 11/12/20 was spent describing current travel time issues than current safety issues, despite safety issues resulting in a profound loss of life;

WHEREAS, there will be high enough pedestrian volume throughout the project corridor to warrant that the walkway and bikeway are separate from each other per NACTO and AASHTO recommendations;

WHEREAS, the Red Line Trail and Parkway are projected to have over 10,000 daily users at both crossings of I-35 upon completion circa 2030;

WHEREAS, the project Alternatives Evaluation Criteria included the annual cost of delay but did not include the annual cost of traffic crashes;

WHEREAS, TxDOT's environmental and design process could have been an opportunity to incorporate the most up to date safe design approach including incorporating the following elements:

- TxDOT has begun reconsidering the 85th percentile method of assigning speed limits;
- The Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan calls for determining target speeds based upon context and using that target speed for design speed and posted speed;
- Any elements of the project that are not controlled access freeways should be designed as safe multimodal urban streets that assume pedestrians will be present;
- The City of Austin speed management program includes safety proposals to use speed limits and design speeds appropriate to context;

WHEREAS, TxDOT states that “the purpose of the proposed project is to...enhance safety within the corridor”;

## Climate

WHEREAS, transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gasses (GHG) in Austin;

WHEREAS, the RMI SHIFT (State Highway Frequency of Induced Travel) Calculator shows that the number of highway lane miles added with this project, 45 lane miles per TxDOT, will significantly contribute to an unfolding global climate crisis by generating 273 to 409 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) annually, generating millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide;

WHEREAS, the project Alternatives Evaluation Criteria did not include climate change, even when transportation is the largest sector of greenhouse gas emissions; (Citation: [Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions | US EPA](#))

WHEREAS, TxDOT's environmental considerations and alternatives evaluation criteria did not include air quality, and oversimplified the evaluation of noise pollution;

## Equity

WHEREAS, the impact of serious injuries and fatalities in this project corridor have been inequitable, disproportionately affecting people of color, individuals experiencing homelessness, and other marginalized communities;

WHEREAS, the BAC and PAC recognize I-35's origins as reflecting racially discriminatory practices, impacts that continue to have disproportionate impacts on communities of color;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin, Travis County, TxDOT, and the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) have an obligation to consider past inequities and potential disproportionate impacts of project alternatives and mitigate negative impacts through equitable planning processes and outcomes;

WHEREAS, under the I-35 Capital Express Central project, TxDOT's proposals to expand I-35 will cause significant displacement of existing homes and local business; (Quote from DEIS: "Modified Build Alternative 3 would require the acquisition of approximately 41.7 acres of additional ROW, 18 resulting in 107 displacements to 69 commercial properties, 26 residential properties, 12 vacant properties, 19 and 90 displacements located in EJ Census geographies")

WHEREAS, property values are slated to increase in proximity to the corridor as well as improvement to the crossings, and would increase the probabilities of displacement, racial displacement, and homelessness due to said improvements;

WHEREAS, this project will further entrench a car culture that disproportionately burdens low income communities of color; socially isolates community members; perpetuates car-centric land use, practical, and cultural systems in which car ownership is necessary to fully access opportunities;

WHEREAS, the quality of ADA access needs to be evaluated and prioritized;

WHEREAS, transformative measures must be taken to address the multiple ways I-35 harms the local community;

## **Induced Demand**

WHEREAS, in 2014, four years after TxDOT had widened Houston's Katy Freeway to 23 lanes at a cost of \$2.8 billion, \$1.63 billion more than the original estimate of \$1.17 billion, afternoon commutes had increased by 55%;

WHEREAS, Transportation For America's Congestion Con report states We added 30,511 new freeway lane-miles in the largest 100 urbanized areas between 1993 and 2017, an increase of 42 percent. That rate of expansion significantly outstripped the 32 percent growth in population in those regions over the same time period. Yet this strategy has utterly failed to solve congestion... We are spending billions to widen roads and seeing unimpressive, unpredictable results in return;

WHEREAS, many studies, including Transportation For America's Congestion Con report, affirm that widening highways merely induces more driving and offsets short term congestion gains while impacting safety, air quality, noise, and other environmental and quality of life aspects and is therefore not an effective transportation measure;

WHEREAS, TxDOT staff, in a public briefing to Austin's City Council on 8/30/2021, clearly stated that they know this project will not relieve congestion;

WHEREAS, TxDOT included a presumption of increased travel time and already projected for expansion, which negates the commitments to reduce travel time, the Road to Zero Initiative, and Vision Zero;

WHEREAS, TxDOT has stated 86% of the vehicles on I-35 are local travelers;

WHEREAS, adding more motor vehicle traffic to state and local streets in Central and South Austin, will result in:

- A poorer experience for all road users & residents, including those driving, walking, bicycling, taking transit, living at home, working at offices, living out-and-about, and others;
- A less safe experience for those walking and bicycling on those streets;

## Project history, process, engagement, and methodology

WHEREAS, in early 2020, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) considered other category 7 projects for deferral in order to fund this project even though the other projects comprised only 1-2% of the estimated \$7.5 billion total cost estimated for this project, and the subset of these category 7 projects which focused on active transportation and transit comprised less than 1% of that total estimate;

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2020, the BAC recommended CAMPO maintain funding for already-approved active transportation projects and transit projects, including but not limited to, the construction of a bike and pedestrian path at Northern Walnut Creek Trail and design work for a Red Line Commuter Rail bridge or underpass at North Lamar;

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2020, CAMPO voted to divert \$633 million from already-approved category 7 regional projects, including active transportation projects and transit projects, to instead fund this project;

WHEREAS, the first I-35 Capital Express Central Virtual Public Scoping Meeting for public review and comment was held between November 12, 2020 to December 31, 2020;

WHEREAS, on December 15, 2020, the BAC and PAC formally recommended to TxDOT all of the following:

- Safety for all road users be prioritized above all other considerations during the design and implementation of the I-35 Capital Express Central Project, and language reflecting this be added explicitly to the Purpose and Need clearly indicated as a higher priority than congestion;
- Prioritize safe, all ages and abilities east-west connectivity across and along the I-35 corridor;
- Implementation of protected all ages & abilities high comfort bikeways which are separated from both motor vehicle lanes and pedestrian sidewalks along the entire project corridor;
- Project elements (aside from the controlled access facilities) should be designed and operated as multimodal city streets using target speeds, design speeds, and posted speeds of 30 mph or less in accordance with NACTO and City of Austin design guidelines, including sufficient safety lighting for all users;
- All controlled access facilities should be designed with modern design guidance, including the most recent AASHTO Green Book, using target speeds, design speeds, and posted speeds appropriate for a dense urban context and to allow seamless and safe integration with a safe, multimodal urban street grid;
- Commit to a full and honest consideration of alternatives to the current proposed design, up to and including fully burying the highway through downtown or dismantling and re-designating I-35 along another existing highway, e.g. US 183 or SH 130, to enable the City of Austin to reconnect its street grid and repair the divide that presently separates it;
- Consider alternatives proposed by Our Future 35, Reconnect Austin, and Rethink35 in furtherance of this goal;
- Minimal implementation of slip lanes and that any slip lanes in this corridor should be designed with tight tolerances and clear sight lines to crossing walkways and bikeways that slow right turns to improve safety for people crossing those slip lanes, and that crossings be raised;
- Any I-35 roadway lanes, i.e. both main lanes and frontage road lanes (street lanes), go below the Red Line Parkway at both Red Line crossings, i.e. next to 4th St. and near 43rd St;
- The Airport Blvd. Intersection configuration take into consideration a future Hancock transit station for the Gold Line and/or the Red Line by creating a superior pedestrian and bicycling crossing, including putting the

intersection of Airport Blvd. and I-35 frontage road (street lanes) underground and providing plaza, park, and buildings opportunities on the surface;

- TxDOT and the City of Austin mutually pursue an interlocal agreement for implementation of surface-level improvements that are not within the direct purview of TxDOT, e.g. caps and real estate value capture;
- Consider utilizing pedestrian scramble phases at intersections with high pedestrian volumes;
- Allow 90 days of public input after the publication of technical reports and other relevant project documentation for all public comment periods for the remainder of the environmental process;
- Provide \$500 million for pedestrian and bicycling improvements to local streets and trails within 3-5 miles of the project in order to mitigate the negative consequences of additional motor vehicle traffic on local streets caused by any additional motor vehicle capacity of the proposed project;
- Provide \$650 million for facilitating construction of affordable housing and support programs for people experiencing homelessness on I-35 and Austinites displaced, or in danger of being displaced along the corridor;
- Adds to the Project Purpose and Need to align with local plans and goals, including, but not limited to, the Austin Strategic Mobility Plan, Street Design Guide, City of Austin Vision Zero goals, Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, and the Austin Climate Equity plan;
- Design bike-ped crossings to be safe for vulnerable road users, especially in areas where a drivers' attention is primarily focused on merging with traffic;
- Create effective wayfinding systems to provide well-structured directions for people walking and biking. These would have distances to key destinations, as well as estimated time to bike or walk to those destinations;
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure like street furniture, water fountains, and tree plantings to increase economic activity, improve environmental quality, and provide shade. Trees should be between fast-moving cars and people to add safety and comfort for vulnerable road users;

WHEREAS, TxDOT never provided a formal response to the December 2020 recommendation made by the BAC and PAC;

WHEREAS, TxDOT received over 2,300 comments in December 2020, from the general public, several working groups, neighborhood groups, local non-profits, Austin City Council, and City of Austin staff as a result of presentations to the public;

WHEREAS, the second project scoping meeting for public review and comment was held between March 11, 2021 to April 9 2021;

WHEREAS, TxDOT amended the Project Purpose and Need Statement to emphasize enhancing safety within the corridor;

WHEREAS, TxDOT recognized the "local and regional importance of the proposed I-35 Capital Express Central Project," and espoused to "encourage the participation of all interested stakeholders," but the originally proposed 30 day deadline for public comments on the Draft coordination plan and schedule, Draft project purpose and need, and the Draft range of alternatives was unduly inadequate for many interested stakeholder groups which convene only once per month;

WHEREAS, TxDOT did not include meaningful design alternatives that would fully bury or dismantle the highway through downtown, despite plentiful data on adverse impacts on pedestrian and cyclist safety, as well as how highways have been used for segregation;

WHEREAS, on April 5, 2021, the PAC and BAC formally recommended to TxDOT the following:

- Coordination Plan and Schedule:

- Actively collaborate with academics from Texas universities, such as Dr. Andrea Roberts at Texas A&M, with expertise in the reduction of racial impacts, destruction of historic properties, archeological sites, and cemeteries;
- Continue to work with the PAC and BAC on the project, including its more detailed aspects;
- Project Purpose and Need;
  - Rewrite the Project Purpose & Need to realize its commitments to the Road to Zero, Vision Zero, and ASMP plans implemented by the City of Austin, recognizing the need to reduce local usage, which comprises 86% of traffic on I-35;
  - Rewrite the Project Purpose & Need to state that every aspect of the project is designed and built with an inclusive access philosophy seeking to maximize safe, convenient, and enjoyable access for people with disabilities, while complying with state and federal requirements to ensure ADA access;
  - Include urban streetscape and human-centric design needs within the Project Purpose and Need. Design approaches should include, but are not limited to:
    - Make use of the dead pocket spaces in and around the highway and under the bridges;
    - Convert these non-functional spaces into quality and functional urban spaces;
    - For smaller dead areas, add landscaping and for slightly bigger ones, create pocket parks that add facilities to pedestrians or bicyclists like bike parking, benches to rest, water fountains, wayfinding signs, dog waste stations;
    - Separate pedestrians paths from bikeways, instead of implementing shared-use paths, since pedestrian and bicycle traffic volume warrant separation both for north-south and east-west travel throughout the geographic scope of this project;
    - For cases where there is extra space around the frontage roads, instead of widening the street's width, add landscape or use space to protect the shared use paths;
    - Plant trees every 20 ft. back of curb to protect vulnerable road users on shared use paths and provide shade;
    - Create safe pedestrian crossings every 1/4 mile;
    - Minimize driveways that cross the shared use paths and combine existing driveway access where possible to help achieve this;
    - All turning movements should be designed to slow vehicles and maximize the visibility and safety of vulnerable road users. Do not use slip lanes;
    - Install raised pedestrian crossings;
    - Use leading pedestrian/bike intervals at every traffic light;
    - Use pedestrian hybrid beacons to create signalized crossings of frontage roads mid-block;
- Range of Alternatives:
  - Commit to a full and honest consideration of alternatives to the current proposed design, up to and including fully burying the highway through downtown or dismantling and redesignating I-35 along another existing highway, e.g. US 183 or SH 130, to enable the City of Austin to reconnect its street grid and repair the divide that presently separates it;
  - Fully consider, and conduct engineering reviews for, alternatives proposed by Our Future 35, Reconnect Austin, and Rethink35 in furtherance of this goal;
  - Provide alternatives that preserve all existing street crossings plus restore or create new east-west street crossings, including, but not limited to, at 46th St. to Bentwood Rd., 41st St. to Wilshire Blvd., Concordia Ave., 9th St., 5th St., 3rd St., 2nd St., Driskill St. to Willow St., Holly St., East Ave. (just north of Colorado River), Reagan Terrace, Taylor Gaines St., and Mariposa Dr;
  - Provide alternatives that include car-free crossings (i.e. all motor vehicles travel lanes go below the surface) at the Red Line rail & trail at 4th St., the Red Line rail & trail near 43rd St., and at Airport Blvd;



- Use city streets design standards based upon a maximum of 35 mph design speed, and no higher than connecting urban streets, and that any feeder lanes or boulevards contain no more than two through lanes in each direction;
- Prioritize minimizing the horizontal right of way of any roadway, and use tunnels and depressed roadways for controlled access lanes as much as possible;
- Any new lanes be dynamically tolled, which will help fund ongoing maintenance for this project, and result in higher utilization than the proposed HOV lanes, as well as fewer law enforcement officers needed to monitor compliance;
- How Alternatives will be Analyzed:
  - Assign the highest weights to these alternative evaluation criteria:
    - Safety, especially for the most vulnerable users of the road, such as pedestrians and cyclists;
    - Enhancing bicycle, pedestrian and transit options;
    - Improving east-west connectivity and compatibility with existing neighborhoods;
    - Minimizing the disparate impact of highways on the built environment;
  - Assign the lowest weights to these alternative evaluation criteria:
    - Increasing capacity for single occupancy motor vehicles;
    - Decreasing travel time for single occupancy motor vehicles;
    - Minimizing construction costs in avoidance of any of the high priority criteria above;
  - Recognize climate change is a critical component of public safety, and the reduction of single occupancy motor vehicle traffic is necessary to mitigate climate change, and the range of alternatives and the alternatives evaluation criteria should maximize opportunities to reduce single occupancy vehicle use and to increase other modes like transit, bicycling, and walking;
  - All criteria used to measure displacement be transparent and available to the public in a timely manner;
  - Design all projects to allow for controlled access facilities to be designed with modern design guidance, including the most recent AASHTO Green Book, using target speeds, design speeds, and posted speeds appropriate for a dense urban context and to allow seamless and safe integration with a safe, multimodal urban street grid;
  - Include the annual cost of traffic crashes in the alternatives evaluation criteria;
  - Include an assessment of the extensive mitigation needed for each of the alternatives proposed by TxDOT, including the No Build alternative, to address significant externalities, e.g. environmental, racial justice, additional motor vehicle traffic induced onto local streets, public health, traffic injuries and fatalities, conversion of rural agricultural and natural land to developed land;
  - Evaluate the alternatives based on the quality of ADA access, with the understanding that any alternative must meet minimum ADA access federal and state minimums;
  - If the No-Build option is chosen, that TxDOT implement complete ADA access through the project corridor;

WHEREAS, TxDOT never provided a formal response to the April 2021 recommendation made by the BAC and PAC;

WHEREAS, on September 7, 2021, in resolution number 20210907-02A, the City of Austin Urban Transportation Commission (UTC) urged TxDOT in the strongest possible way to abandon the I-35 Capital Express project;

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2022 TxDOT released design changes to I-35 Cap Ex Central referred to as Modified Alternative 3;

WHEREAS, Modified Alternative 3 made substantive changes to the project, much of that in response to over 9,000 public comments which TxDOT received during Scoping, including robust feedback from the BAC and PAC during all three public comment periods;

WHEREAS, no public comment period was provided after Modified Alternative 3 was developed and before TxDOT determined it as the preferred alternative;

WHEREAS, on February 15 2022, the BAC and PAC reiterated all previous project recommendations to TxDOT (publicly posted on City of Austin BAC and PAC webpages for December 2020 <https://tinyurl.com/5cy3vbkv>, April 2021 <https://tinyurl.com/449xh7ck>, and August 2021 <https://tinyurl.com/3z4vayb6>);

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2022, the BAC and PAC formally recommended to TxDOT the following changes to the modified Alternative 3, but emphasized such recommendations were in no way intend to suggest approval of any expansion of single occupant vehicle lane miles:

- Create a continuous boulevard, designed to NACTO Urban Street guidelines, from Cesar Chavez to Airport Blvd;
- Redesign all elements of this project, including bridges, intersections, crossings, caps, and stitches, based on that continuous boulevard;
- Vehicle travel lanes on all surface streets, including frontage roads and boulevards in urban areas, should be no wider than 11 ft. (as allowed in TxDOT's Roadway Design Manual (RDM));
- Where there is complete highway corridor reconstruction, crossings for people walking, biking, and using personal mobility devices must be at-grade, safe, ADA compliant, and comfortable in all areas;
- Where there is partial highway corridor reconstruction, e.g. north of 51st Street, bike/ped bridges should be added for safety;
- Connect all infrastructure for people walking, biking, and using personal mobility devices into the larger City of Austin connected active mobility network, such as allowing direct active travel between Willow and Spence street to the proposed shared-use path;
- Design fully protected intersections for people walking, biking, and using personal mobility devices, including: raised pedestrian tables, street trees, curb ramps, leading pedestrian/bike intervals, and bike signals at intersections;
- Identify a design alternative to the Single-Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) which better balances the needs of all roads users, putting less emphasis on high-speed vehicular movements and more priority on people walking, biking, and using personal mobility devices;
- Put the intersection of Airport Blvd. and the I-35 boulevard lanes (frontage road) below grade, in order to facilitate an at-grade pedestrian, bicycle, and urban friendly crossing and experience;
- Do not use free right turns along frontage roads or urban boulevards. There are alternative solutions that should be implemented, for large truck requiring radii, which are safer for people walking, biking, and using personal mobility devices;
- Plant street trees to provide shade and comfort, protect people from moving vehicles, and mitigate air pollution;
- Implement a roadway victims memorial along I-35, in consultation with the families of traffic victims;
- Provide mitigation funding to be used for active transportation projects nearby but away from the project corridor, in order to mitigate the increased motor vehicle volume resulting from the project;
- Continue to include car-free crossings for the Red Line Parkway at both locations (4th St. and near 43rd St.);
- Do not use clear zones along frontage roads or urban boulevards at the surface;
- Design all surface elements of the project as multimodal urban streets matching the design speed of connecting City of Austin streets, including 25 mph for all; sections of the Cap Ex central project;

- Work with Austin City Council and City staff to fully evaluate the community alternative to I-35 expansion, including Reconnect Austin and Rethink35;

WHEREAS, TxDOT never provided a formal response to the February 2022 recommendation made by the BAC and PAC;

WHEREAS, on February 15, 2022, the BAC and PAC also requested from TxDOT their detailed plans to reroute traffic during construction, before a final design is identified;

WHEREAS on June 6, 2022, three organizations, Rethink35, Texas Public Interest Research Group, and Environment Texas filed a lawsuit seeking injunctive relief to halt this project;

WHEREAS, comments received from the public were heavily reframed by TxDOT and responded to en masse via a “Comment Response Matrix”;

WHEREAS, TxDOT’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement considers no modal shift away from single-occupancy vehicles when calculating travel times and demand;

WHEREAS, the criteria used to evaluate the impact of alternatives on pedestrian and bicyclist safety at intersections and crossings is not sufficient or aligned with recommended methodologies;

WHEREAS, the current Modified Alternative 3 designs present serious concerns for the safety and mobility of non-vehicular network users, including:

- Poor east-west mobility, crossings, and access to caps;
- Slip lanes proposed at a number of intersections that see high pedestrian and bicyclist traffic;
- Single Point Urban Intersections (at Riverside and Airport) are designed so that pedestrians have to cross in underground tunnels;
- Extensive curb cuts where instead at-grade driveway crossings and contiguous sidewalk treatments are generally recommended;
- No indication of plans for pedestrian-leading intervals at all signalized intersections;
- No physical barriers planned between high-speed facilities and proposed Shared-Use Paths;
- Design speeds for the highway lanes, frontage roads, and boulevard are too high. We recommend design speeds for highway lanes should be no higher than 50 mph, and frontage roads and boulevard no higher than 25 mph;

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation is currently seeking input on their Draft Environmental Impact Statement for I-35 Capital Express Central, and the comment period ends March 7, 2023;

WHEREAS, TxDOT’s preferred alternative for I-35 Capital Express Central is Modified Alternative 3, which proposes 20 lanes of highway traffic through Austin’s most urbanized neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, any project built through the urban core of Austin will have an enormous and critical impact on the city for the next 70 years and current planning represents a once in a generation opportunity to create a project that benefits all of modes of transportation and all members of the community;

WHEREAS, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Councils (BACPAC) sent three letters of recommendation during Scoping for this project in December 2020, April 2021, and August 2021, all of which were forwarded to TxDOT and posted on the City of Austin BACPAC webpages, and TxDOT has never responded directly to these detailed recommendations;

WHEREAS, the BACPAC met with TxDOT October 3, 2022 and put forward specific questions which TxDOT agreed to answer in a follow up to that meeting and have not done so;

## Recommendations

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The BAC and PAC do not support any alternative currently proposed by TxDOT. The BAC and PAC remain open to collaborating with TxDOT to find designs and solutions that address the Councils' concerns enumerated above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Until TxDOT offers a proposed alternative and sufficient design detail to demonstrate that the project will provide truly safe, high-quality active transportation facilities and connections to a complete network, the BAC and PAC do not support moving forward with any of TxDOT's proposed alternatives for I-35 Cap-Ex Central.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the BAC and PAC request that TxDOT respond to each of the specific concerns outlined in the above "WHEREAS" clauses and that TxDOT outline how it plans to respond to concerns raised during the public comment.

Date of Approval: February 21<sup>st</sup> 2023

Vote: Unanimously approved by voting members of the PAC and BAC

PAC: Tetyana Samiliv, Daniel Kavelman, Hayden Black Walker, Priya Patel

BAC: Les Case, Spencer Schumacher, Russell Taylor, Christopher Heathcott, Lansing Pugh, Curtis Rogers

Attest: Les Case, Chair, Bicycle Advisory Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Les Case', is positioned at the bottom left of the page.