



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 23-3157, **Agenda Item #:** 40.

10/19/2023

### **Posting Language**

Approve a resolution authorizing negotiation and execution of an Advance Funding Agreement with the Texas Department of Transportation for the construction of the 300-ft wide deck structure at Woodland Avenue over IH-35, with the City's share of the costs estimated to be \$14,276,125 plus cost overruns.

### **Lead Department**

Transportation and Public Works Department

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding in the amount of \$14,276,125 is available in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Capital Budget of the Transportation and Public Works Department.

### **Prior Council Action:**

September 21, 2023 - Resolution No. 20230921-097 authorizing the submittal of a grant application to the United States Department of Transportation for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Notice of Funding Opportunity for construction of improvements associated with the I-35 Cap and Stitch Program, was approved on consent on an 11-0 vote.

September 21, 2023 - Resolution No. 20230921-098 authorizing negotiation and execution of a grant agreement with the United States Department of Transportation for \$1,120,000 for the Our Future 35: Connecting Austin Equitably Mobility Study was approved on an 11-0 vote.

February 23, 2023 - Resolution No. 20230223-044 regarding the IH-35 Capital Express Projects, including official comments from the City Council to the Texas Department of Transportation on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the IH-35 Capital Express Central Project was approved as amended by a 10-1 vote with Mayor Watson voting no.

September 28, 2022 - Resolution No. 20220929-059 authorizing the submittal of the Our Future 35: Connecting Equitably Study - Planning Grant as a candidate for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot program was approved on an 8-0 vote with Council Member Kelly abstaining, Council Member Harper-Madison off the dais, and Council Member Fuentes absent.

### **For More Information:**

Richard Mendoza, Interim Director, 512-974-2488; Michelle Marx, Acting Transportation Officer, 512-974-4357; Gilda Powers, Administrative Manager, 512-974-7092.

### **Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:**

September 28, 2023 - Briefing to the Mobility Committee.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

The roadway in this Advance Funding Agreement (AFA) was identified as a transportation improvement project by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The proposed AFA with TxDOT for the Woodland Avenue Stitch estimates the City's share of the costs to be \$14,276,125 for stitch structures to be paid to TxDOT by the end of 2023.

Consistent with Council direction to create new opportunities for caps and stitches along the IH-35 Central project rebuild, the Woodland Avenue Stitch AFA represents the first opportunity to reconnect communities and enhance multimodal connections and increase east-west connectivity for those traveling across the freeway, improve safety conditions at potential points of conflict between pedestrians or bicyclists and automobiles, and introduce community amenities that enhance the quality of life for all Austinites.

Executing this Advanced Funding Agreement will bring together the efforts of TxDOT and the City's Transportation and Public Works Department in the design and construction of Woodland Avenue Stitch to provide the most cost-effective construction delivery of the project while the rebuild is underway.

The TxDOT IH-35 Capital Express Central Project preferred alternative will remove the vehicular roadway crossing at Woodland Avenue. TxDOT has agreed to provide a widened bicycle and pedestrian crossing in this vicinity. The baseline TxDOT design provides a 70-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the freeway jogging north of Woodland Avenue. In exploring potential concept design options, the design team sought to create a more direct, straight-line connection for pedestrians and bicyclists travelling east/west on Woodland Avenue, as the TxDOT baseline design requires users to travel significantly out of their way. Additionally, the design team sought to align the potential cap visually and physically as much as possible with the adjacent roadway network to improve visibility and sense of security into and through the space.

This is the first "cap and stitch" opportunity afforded the City as construction for this portion of IH-35 is slated to commence soon. The State has maintained that betterment costs beyond the highway rebuild project are to be borne by the City when engineering design is underway. This stitch represents the first of many cap and stitch opportunities over Central IH-35, subject to funding availability.

The City's share of the costs estimated to be \$14,276,125 plus any cost overruns. The final amount of local government participation will be based on actual costs. Funding is available in the Transportation and Public Works Department (TPW) Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Capital Budget, specifically, the bicycle and sidewalks capital programs funded by 2020 voter approved Mobility Bonds of which approximately \$90 million remains unobligated. TPW plans to refund the two active mobility programs from the remaining TPW Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and Fiscal Year 2025-2026 fund balances so that the 2020 Mobility Bond program budget will remain whole and the completion timeline remains unaffected.

This stitch design project includes foundation and substructure required to support the deck structure including bent caps, columns, edge walls, prestressed concrete girders, reinforced concrete slabs, and deck railings. This agreement indicates the City is responsible for the engineering and construction costs for 225 feet of the stitch and the pedestrian bridge connection over the IH-35 northbound frontage road and Summit Street east of IH-35 to provide access to the stitch east of IH-35 from Woodland Avenue.

Installation of surface amenities (features that are above top of deck finish grade) such as illumination, planter boxes, landscaping, or other aesthetic elements may be part of future improvements performed by the City and not part of this Agreement.

The construction of the roadway improvement of IH-35 from Holly Street to SH 71/Ben White Boulevard is tentatively scheduled to start within six to eight months after the TxDOT letting process starts. The letting process is tentatively scheduled for March 2024.