



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Urban Transportation Commission

Recommendation Number 20250304-005: I-35 Frontage Road Crossings and Pedestrian Crossings

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is considering an investment of over a billion dollars to create new public spaces covering portions of an expanded Interstate 35, through the Our Future 35 Cap and Stitch program; and

WHEREAS wide, fast moving, frontage roads create physical and mental barriers that would disincentivize visiting the caps and reduce economic development opportunities surrounding them; and

WHEREAS, TxDOT's current designs for the I-35 Capital Express Central Project include frontage roads with up to eight travel lanes that people walking and bicycling would need to cross to access the caps or cross the freeway; and

WHEREAS, most urban freeways in the United States are surrounded by city streets, not highway-grade frontage roads; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Texas Transportation Commission [acknowledged significant safety and efficiency concerns with frontage roads](#); and

WHEREAS, street parking protects people walking and bicycling on sidewalks and shared use paths and encourages the use of nearby public spaces;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Cap and Stitch project is modeled after successful highway caps such as Klyde Warren Park in Dallas and the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston; and

WHEREAS, the roads surrounding Klyde Warren Park and Rose Kennedy Greenway have two to four travel lanes in total (1-2 travel lanes in each direction) surrounding the caps, in contrast with the proposed frontage roads for the I-35 caps with up to eight travel lanes in some locations; and

WHEREAS, the width of the roads adjacent to Klyde Warren Park are 40 feet, and the widths of roads adjacent to the proposed caps for I-35 are up to 100 feet; and

WHEREAS, there is limited access to the northern cap due to the design of the frontage roads; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Urban Transportation Commission recommends that, throughout the length of the I-35 Capital Express Central Project, frontage roads should be designed as city streets per the following principles:

- Design should result in average speeds at or below safe urban speed limits, no higher than 30 miles per hour;
- The frontage roads should contain no more than 2 travel lanes in each direction throughout the length of the project;
- Lane widths should generally be 10 feet and no wider than 11 feet;
- Designs should include street trees along the entire corridor, generally on both sides of the roadway and wherever medians exist;
- There should be vehicle parking on both sides of the frontage roads;
- At a minimum, and if City of Austin Our Future 35 staff states that there is a need, any cap should be allowed entry access for service vehicles and emergency vehicles;
- Raised crosswalks and pedestrian bulb-outs should exist at every roadway intersection with the proposed East Avenue Trail, and there should be crosswalks on all east-west streets that have no more than one straight lane in each direction.

Motioned by: Chair Somers

Seconded by:

Date of Approval: 3/4/2025

Record of the vote:

Attest: _____

(Staff or board member can sign)