



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 proposed 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 proposed 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 proposal 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: Commissioner Susan Somers

Seconded by: Commissioner Spencer Schumacher

Date of Approval: March 4, 2025

Record of the vote: 7-0

Attest:



(Staff or board member can sign)