



I-35 Capital Express Central Project
Attn: Project Team
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September 21, 2021

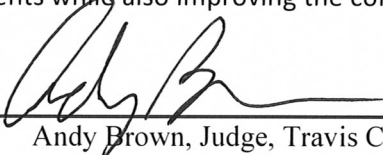
The Travis County Commissioners Court wishes to submit the following comments on the I-35 Capital Express Central Project build alternatives as official comments for consideration.

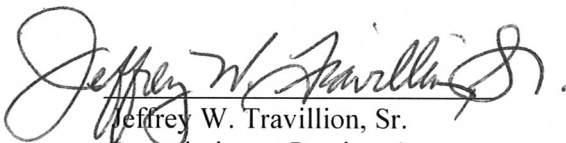
- The Commissioners Court recognizes the need to improve the I-35 Capital Express Central section and supported funding for such as members of the Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Transportation Policy Board.
- The Commissioners Court supports the Travis County State of Texas delegation's goals presented in their I-35 Capital Express Central (CEC) letter (September 17, 2021) that states:
 - "Now we are presented with two very similar plans that, unfortunately, do not emphasize the need to prioritize transit, safety, or fully unite East and West Austin....As you move forward with future plans for I-35, we would encourage your thoughtful further review of a significantly different alternative from the two presented, as the need is great to right the wrongs of an unsafe and divided I-35."
- The Court generally supports the following City of Austin goals for the Project:
 - The I-35 replacement should seek to maximize the safe movement of people, goods, and services on the corridor.
 - The I-35 replacement should seek to maximize east-west access across the facility for all modes of travel.
 - The I-35 rebuild should increase the safety for people by designing frontage roads to urban arterial standards and speeds.
 - The I-35 replacement should seek to operate within the existing footprint wherever possible.
 - New capacity should be managed to provide prioritization of transit and higher occupancy vehicles to minimize the increase in vehicle miles of travel (VMT).
 - Any additional lanes within the existing footprint should specifically address access and egress movements, merging movements, or address documented bottlenecks and/or safety issues caused by geometric features.
 - Avoid, minimize, and mitigate negative environmental impacts of freeway reconstruction.



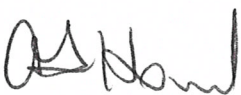
- Assure a thorough public process that meets both the spirit and letter of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- The Commissioners Court acknowledges that TxDOT Alternatives 2 and 3 offer improvement over existing conditions and are good potential starting points to meet the City's project goals; however, more work needs to be done to further align the project with the City's goals.
- The Commissioners Court encourages TxDOT to operate within the narrowest footprint possible. TxDOT should design a highway footprint that serves all modes of transportation within the narrowest right-of-way possible.
- The Commissioners Court recognizes that some components of the Community Concepts are incorporated into the proposed Alternatives.
- The Commissioners Court encourages TxDOT to support healing the historical east/west divide within the City that was exacerbated by the current design of I-35 and requests TxDOT further evaluate the following objectives from the Community Concepts: 1) design the project to first eliminate or minimize displacements, 2) increase east/west multimodal connectivity, 3) minimize the crossing distance for bicyclists and pedestrians, and 4) provide access for all ages and abilities.
- The Travis County Commissioners Court encourages TxDOT to continue to strive to meet or exceed the objectives of the Community Concepts, the goals of the City of Austin and the Travis County State Delegation to the extent possible while improving and maintaining regional mobility and local access.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and for offering the region the opportunity to substantially improve I-35, the transportation backbone of Travis County and the region. The Commissioners Court is confident that TxDOT and the region working together can realize significant mobility and access improvements while also improving the community fabric along the I-35 corridor.


Andy Brown, Judge, Travis County


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