

September 21, 2021

To: TxDOT I-35 Cap Ex Central Project Team

From: Austin Outside

Re: I-35 Cap Ex Central Feedback

The mission of Austin Outside is to champion outdoor places for all throughout Greater Austin. We're a coalition of nonprofits and businesses who believe in the power of our collective impact.

In this capacity, we offer the following feedback on I-35 Cap Ex Central:

- The highway footprint should be no higher and no wider, and narrowed to the greatest extent possible to reduce the barrier it creates and to shorten crossing distances, particularly for those traveling via active transportation modes.
- The I-35 corridor should be supportive of all transportation modes, with careful attention paid to active transportation. The bikeways and sidewalks along and across I-35 should be comfortable, safe, continuous, fully connected to Austin's active transportation networks, and projected from traffic.
- The surface level of I-35 should include as many crossings, for all modes of travel, as possible.
- Any surface level frontage roads should be designed to city standards and function as city streets, and significantly improve safety for vulnerable road users.
- We appreciate the 20 ft. buffer now shown between the active transportation paths and vehicular traffic on most bridges. Please ensure that these facilities are as safe and comfortable as possible and provide this same level of consideration for the bikeways and sidewalks along the edges of frontage roads.
- Street trees should be provided between the roadway and the active transportation paths.
- The I-35 corridor should be as safe as possible for vulnerable road users. This includes all crossings of any surface level roads.
- Austin's parks and open spaces are a vital part of our culture and quality of life. Please ensure that any parks directly impacted, including the Town Lake Metropolitan Park, Waller Beach, Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach and Palm Park, and any urban trails directly impacted, including the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail and the Red Line Parkway, have improved access and usability with this project.

With the advocacy efforts of Austin Outside, our city has overwhelmingly passed bond measures that support the design and construction of a robust active transportation network. That network includes: all ages and abilities bike network, sidewalks, safe routes to schools, safe crossings, and urban trails. Generational improvements to our active transportation network are being planned and constructed right now. Any designs for I-35 should enhance our growing active transportation networks.