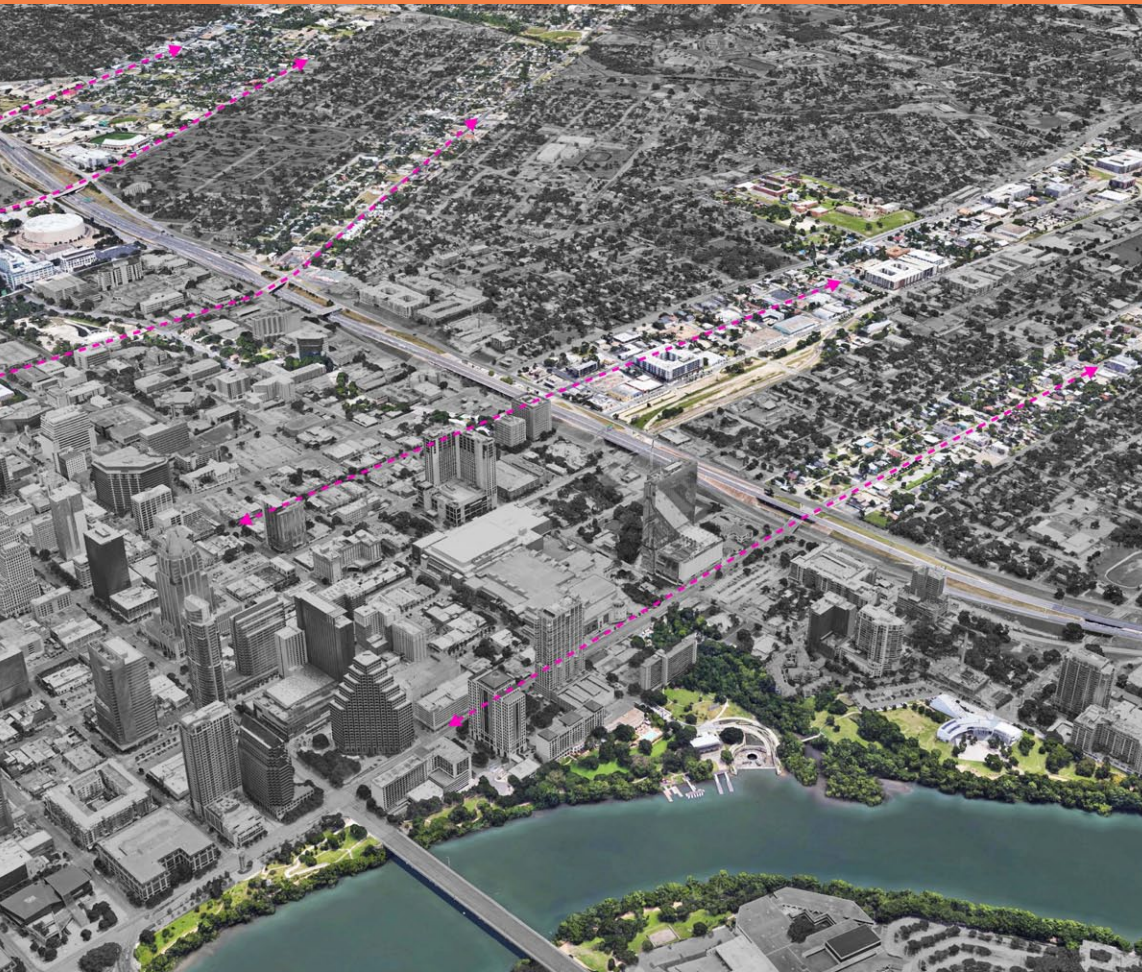


The I-35 Corridor Austin, Texas

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

February 23–28, 2020



ULI Urban Land
Institute
Advisory Services

The I-35 Corridor

Austin, Texas

Providing an Integrated Approach to Transportation Planning
and Managing Growth

A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report

February 23–28, 2020



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About the Urban Land Institute

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision-making is based on its members sharing expertise on a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2019 alone, more than 2,443 events were held in about 332 cities around the world.

Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled more than 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives, a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 100 key community representatives, and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics,

representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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A special thank you goes to Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette, president of Huston-Tillotson University, for her participation and for hosting the Friday presentation.

This panel would not have been possible without the extensive work by Melissa Barry, Andre Boudreaux, Casey Johnson Burack, Rebecca Hagler, Dana Hansen, Alex Martin, Vanessa Olson, Pam Power, and Emily Risenger. They prepared the briefing materials, tours, and interview invites and answered the panel's many, many questions. They also pulled together many interested parties to help shape the panel's questions as well as provide background and input to inform the panel's deliberations.

Thank you as well to ULI Austin and leadership provided by Paulette Gibbins.

Finally, the panel would like to thank the more than 100 residents, business and community leaders, and representatives who shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel during our week in Austin.

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Project Background and Key Recommendations

THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TXDOT) is poised to initiate a transformational project for the city of Austin. TxDOT is preparing for the schematic design and environmental review of an approximately 10-mile reconstruction project of Interstate 35, known as the Capital Express Central Project (I-35 project), through the heart of central downtown Austin. The project will include lowering about three miles of elevated highway through the city center as well as capacity and connectivity improvements to the south and north at the same time as the downtown segment.

In the 1950s, before the construction of I-35, the land on which it sits today was a green boulevard named East Avenue, with small frontage streets on either side providing access to single-family homes. Frequent cross streets offered continuity between east and west. Today it is a sea of pavement held up on robust concrete structures and earth berms, with multilevel changes in grade to incorporate frequent access ramps that connect to the city's arterial streets. The sidewalks along the few streets that pass under the highway are hazardous and unwelcoming.

The interstate is a barrier to the connectivity of city neighborhoods to the west and east, furthering the physical

separation of downtown from the African American and predominantly Mexican American communities on the east side. This divide was originally created as part of the city of Austin's 1928 Master Plan, which forced African American residents to live within a six-square-mile boundary to maintain segregationist policies. Mexican Americans were also forced to live east of East Avenue.

This project has been a long time in the making. For more than two decades, city officials and community leaders have offered proposals that would improve connectivity and reengage the districts located along the west and east sides of the broad interstate right-of-way (ROW). During its preparation for

DEFINING CAPS AND STITCHES

This report defines caps and stitches as follows.

Cap



Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, located over the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, is an example of a cap.

A *cap* is a structural cover over the highway right-of-way that may support green space, a park, crossing streets, and/or buildings. Caps can strategically link the neighborhoods that the highway separated or divided. The cap can offer opportunity for such alternative forms of movement as bicycles, walking, and vehicles traveling locally. If such a plan receives public approval, the cap may become a development site that also increases the value of adjoining properties.

Stitch



The Cap at Union Station in Columbus, Ohio, is an example of a stitch, enhancing North High Street as it crosses Interstate 670.

A *stitch* is an enhanced crossing over the right-of-way. Such crossings often include widened sidewalks, bike lanes, seating areas, and related open space to support more mobility, buildings, or green space. A wider stitch reduces sound pollution from the right-of-way and makes the crossing more inviting.

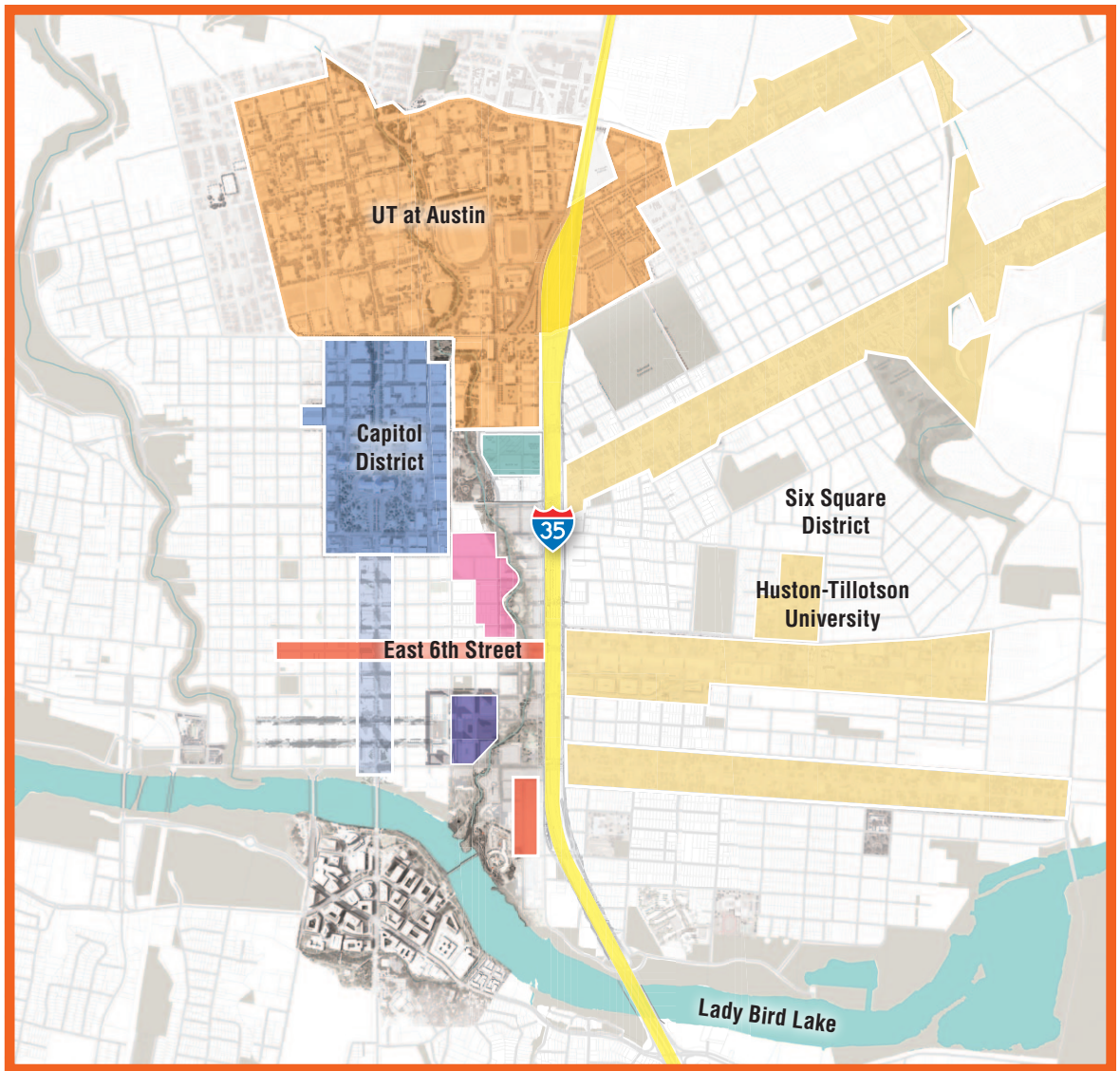
the I-35 project, TxDOT investigated a series of engineering alternatives for the improvement of I-35 to meet the needs of the future. These alternatives considered adding covers over depressed lanes of travel for cars, trucks, and buses and specifically identified local areas where “caps” and “stitches” might be added.

At the time of the panel, the state of Texas had allocated an estimated \$7.5 billion to upgrade the aging highway infrastructure and expected to begin construction in 2024 or 2025. This amount and the timing may change in response to the economic fallout since the panel took place, caused by both the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and turmoil in the oil markets. Funding had not yet been identified for the caps and stitches.

I-35 is critically important to the city and surrounding region. It is a key commercial corridor that spans 550 miles and connects

the United States to Mexico and Canada; an estimated 37 percent of all NAFTA trade through Texas is concentrated on the I-35 corridor. It also serves as a central transportation spine through downtown Austin, providing access to commercial centers including downtown, the Capitol district, and the University of Texas at Austin campus, as well as residential neighborhoods across the eastern and northern sections of the city. Each day, I-35 serves more than 200,000 vehicles with a split of about 70 percent local and 30 percent through traffic. Traffic congestion worsens every year; the growth in delay has reached more than 450 percent regionally since 1993.

The I-35 project will go through an extensive environmental review process that includes public input as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Currently, TxDOT anticipates the scoping phase of the NEPA process will begin in April or May 2020 before the fall open house. This presents



DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE; KELSEY JAMES-KAVANAUGH/ULI

Districts and campuses within the study area.

a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Austin community to organize around its vision for the future of the city and to leverage the scoping process to advocate for a design approach to the I-35 reconstruction that aligns with community goals and priorities. The need for action is urgent.

Questions for the Panel

The Downtown Austin Alliance convened the Future of the I-35 Task Force (I-35 Task Force) to prepare materials for this Advisory Services panel. This included a set of questions encompassing vision and connectivity, implementation and funding, and affordability and equity effects. The I-35 Task Force, consisting of many stakeholder groups, also identified precedents from across the United States. In particular, it

sought to understand the potential of capping the highway to create new at-grade connections between East Austin and the downtown. The key tasks for the panel included the following:

- Two or three design alternatives for the project that (a) the community can build upon through a through engagement process and (b) TxDOT can integrate into the I-35 project schematic design, which must include:
 - Direct transit access from the managed lanes into downtown and the University of Texas at Austin campus;
 - More green space; and
 - Enhanced multimodal mobility on the east–west connections;

- A public engagement process and road map that align with TxDOT's community engagement schedule for the I-35 project and result in a community-led vision and design; and
- A phased and actionable implementation and funding plan for the project with a focus on equitable development.

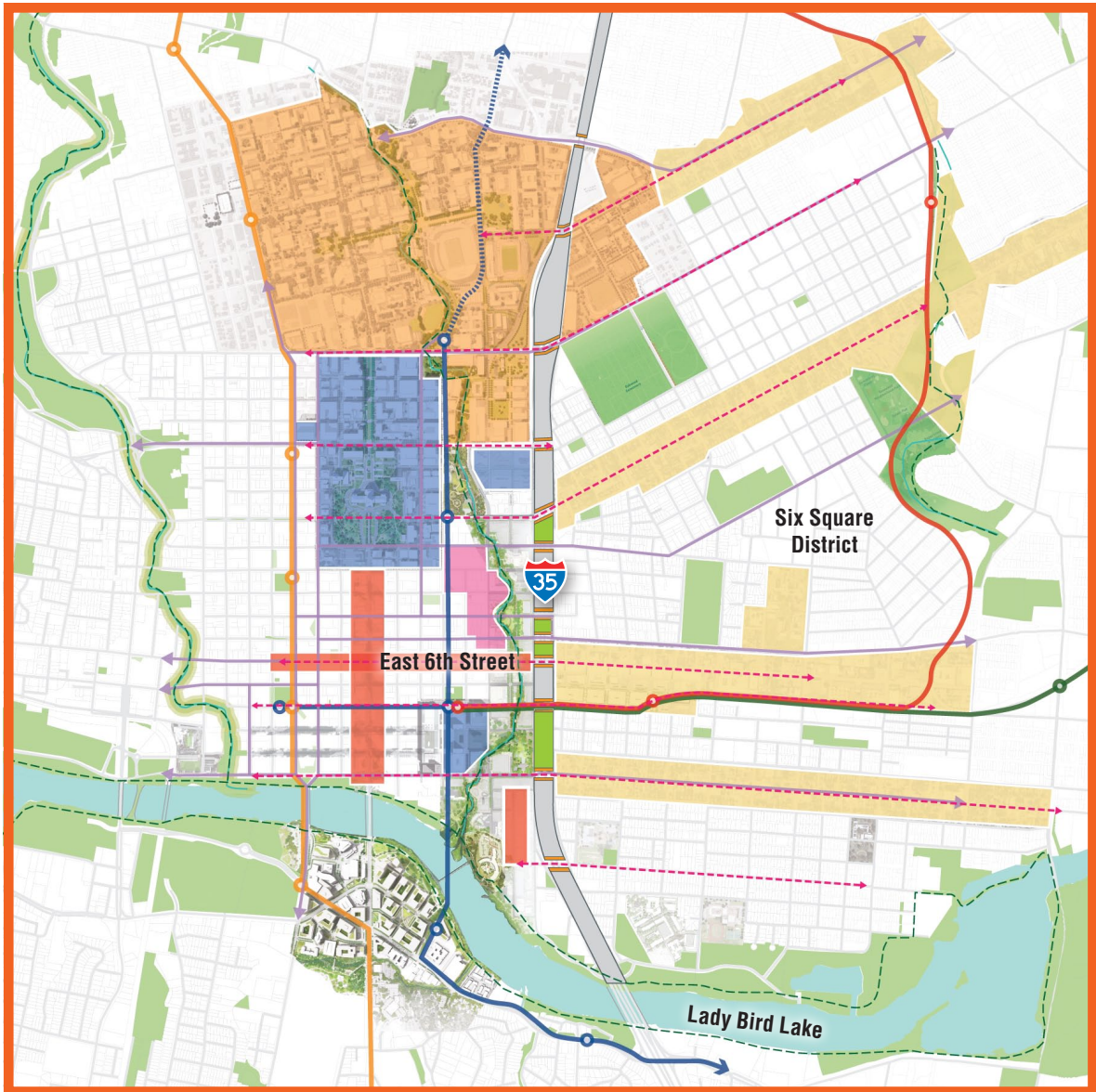
Key Recommendations

On the basis of briefing materials, tours, interviews, and analysis, the panel identified the following five key recommendations:

- 1. The time for setting Austin's future is now!** During the course of the panel, the state of Texas and TxDOT announced that the central segment of the I-35 reconstruction was being fully funded at \$3.4 billion; the northern and southern segments had been previously funded (total \$7.5 billion). This is a once-in-a-generation project that can be transformative.
- 2. The potential for this project is broad.** The city should take advantage of the opportunity to create a fully integrated I-35 corridor with a transformed network of mobility, link with a regional transit system, create development and investment opportunities for adjoining communities, and address some of the challenges of displacement, affordability, and inclusion.
- 3. The next six to 12 months are a critical time for idea exchange.** This time will inform the upcoming NEPA process that will include an environmental impact statement. The communities of Austin must move forward with a shared vision for the project. This will require a new inclusive approach to co-create the vision and principles that prepare Austin for equitable and sustainable growth while also increasing affordability for housing, retail/entertainment venues, and small businesses. Achieving the potential outcomes of the I-35

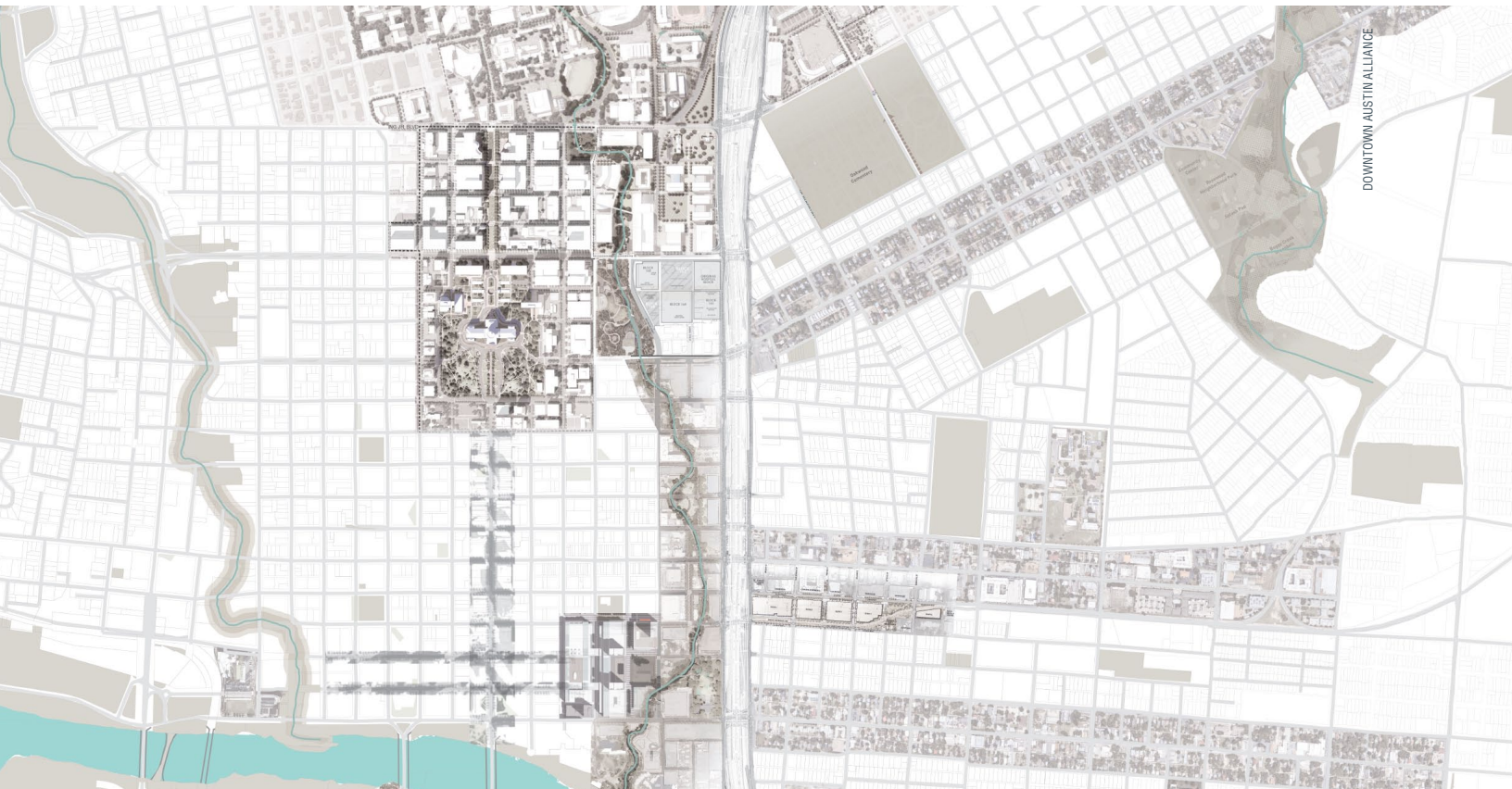
project and its design will depend upon an integrated mobility approach that better links the city and the region in a way that does not just create more congestion. It will also create the ability to knit back together the east and west sides of Austin as well as free up some of the proposed ROW for other uses such as affordable housing.

- 4. Successful implementation will require new forms of governance.** A Scoping Working Group should be formed as soon as possible to provide vision and stakeholder engagement. This group then will evolve into a Project Steering Committee to provide vision and policy direction for a newly formed, purpose-driven nonprofit development corporation and an I-35 Conservancy. Longer term, a new nonpartisan and independent entity should be formed to capture the benefits of the I-35 project and to realize a vision of growth and connectivity for the Austin region. Through this approach, Austin can achieve its objectives for equitable and sustainable growth built on the commitment and resources put into the I-35 project.
- 5. This project can be part of the solution—but not the whole solution.** Finally, and importantly, the panel heard repeatedly that I-35 has increased rather than diminished the division and entrenched inequities of East Austin. This transportation project will not solve all problems or remediate past injustices, but it can be an impetus for great change. Additional initiatives, policies, and programs will be required to advance a future that helps heal the trauma, pain, and inequities created in the past.



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The panel envisions that the I-35 project can create a more integrated approach to transportation and manage growth for the Austin region.



The Opportunity: A New Future for I-35

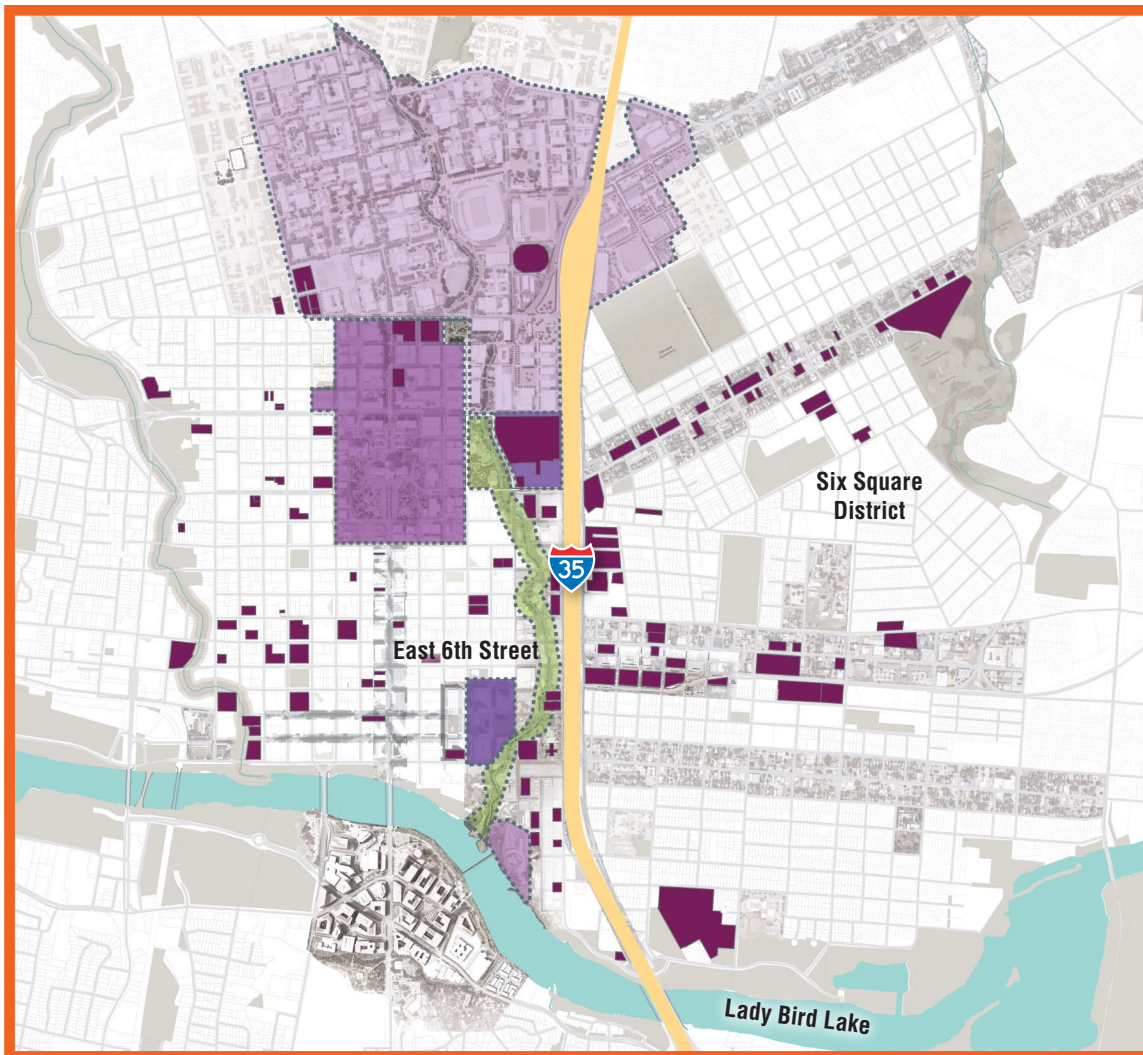
THE OPPORTUNITY REPRESENTED BY THE I-35 PROJECT must be viewed through the lens of Austin's past challenges, current opportunities, and goals for the future. The construction of I-35 in the 1950s reinforced existing patterns of racial and economic segregation in Austin, and the highway has become a physical manifestation of the divides that continue to exist today. The vision for the future of I-35 should acknowledge this community trauma and present opportunities for healing, for rebuilding trust and connections, and for capturing value for Austin community members who have historically been excluded.

Today, the reconstruction of I-35 presents an incredible opportunity to support the city's rapid growth and development. Austin has about 1 million people—making it the 11th-most-populous city in the United States—and the population is expected to grow by 45 percent by 2040. The city is one of the hottest real estate markets in the country and has a full pipeline of development projects. The city of Austin is making several key investments to support this growth.

Economic development initiatives include the planned expansion of the Convention Center, creation of a medical/innovation district at the former Brackenridge Hospital site and state-owned land near the state capitol, and Colony Park. Open-

space initiatives include Waterloo Greenway, Shoal Creek, and the Butler Trail at Lady Bird Lake. And perhaps most needed, given the city's growth trajectory, are the mobility and public transit initiatives like the multibillion-dollar Project Connect and Austin's Bicycle Master Plan.

To truly maximize the value of these other investments, the Austin community needs to play a role in shaping the redesign for I-35 so that the highway infrastructure connects with and supports these important city projects—and especially the other transportation improvements that are underway; these must be viewed as a single, interrelated system.



Projects proposed and under development within the I-35 corridor.

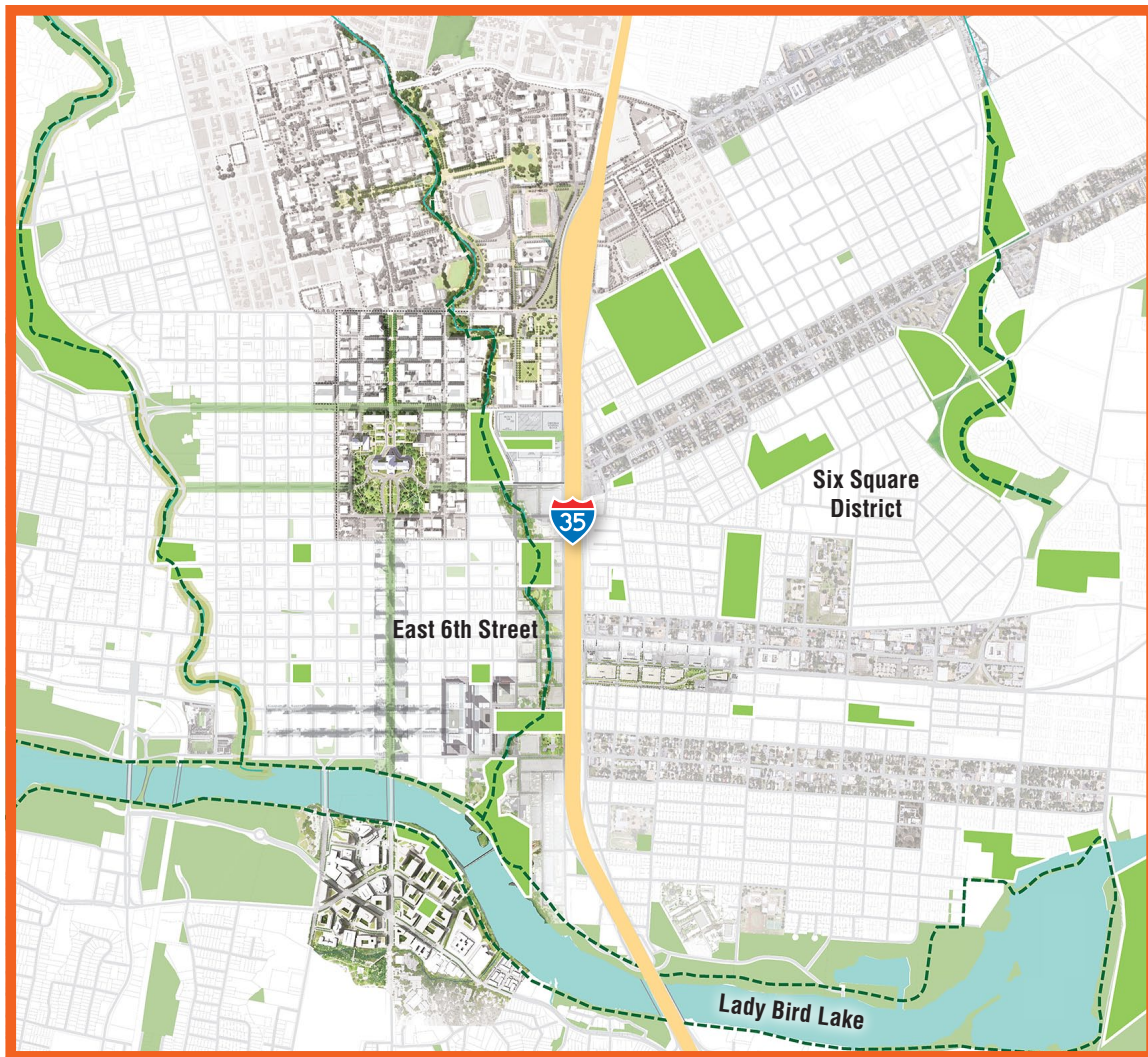
The Two Sides of Growth

Pros	Cons
11th-most-populous U.S. city and still growing	Need for 60,000 affordable housing units in next 10 years
Hottest U.S. job market (2018 and 2019)	Risk of displacement for 232,000 households
Fastest-rising apartment rents in Texas	Rapidly rising real estate taxes
Hotel room numbers that have increased 75 percent in past 10 years	Rising homelessness
Top-five growth market for global capital	Loss of child population, loss of schools

Source: ULI.

The city's rapid growth is envied by many communities around the nation that are seeing declining populations and economic activity. But with the growth come challenges. The state, city, and private sector should act more aggressively to better manage the negative sides of rapid growth. More affordable housing needs to be created and preserved, homelessness services need faster delivery, historical and cultural landmarks should be honored and acknowledged, and efforts to reduce inequality in the city along with anti-displacement policies should be more aggressively enacted or allowed by the state.

The goal of this report is to create a road map that will help Austinites take advantage of this opportunity to shape the redesign of I-35 in a way that supports the city's vision for the future. The I-35 project presents a way for the Austin community to lay the groundwork for sustained growth that reflects the city's values: growth that is inclusive and



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Austin is known for its setting in the Texas Hill Country, which shapes the regional landscape and directs the water flow to and through the city. Over the years many of these watercourses have become established routes for public rights-of-way, trails, and event spaces, frequently at the initiative of civic and community groups.

equitable and that builds on the promise of future innovation in technology and transportation.

This report organizes the panel’s findings and recommendations into the following sections:

- *Setting a Framework for Broad and Inclusive Community Engagement.* Given the role I-35 has played in the city’s history, and the imminent start of the environmental assessment for the I-35 project, the panel strongly recommends creating an inclusive community engagement process as the first priority. The Downtown Austin Alliance, the I-35 Task Force, and the East Austin Community Brain Trust have already initiated this effort. The panel outlines a

framework and principles for engagement that support the goal of developing a co-created vision for the I-35 project.

- *Designing for Connectivity and Mobility.* TxDOT’s proposed redesign of I-35 includes the depression of traffic lanes in certain sections of the highway, which would allow design interventions such as caps and stitches that enhance the public realm. The panel report outlines a design framework that illustrates different options as well as putting them into the context of the other modes of travel, including the Project Connect transit initiative.
- *Project Cost and Funding Opportunities.* Drawing on local and national precedents, the panel has analyzed the cost of potential public realm improvements and identified a range of potential financing tools.

- *Work Plan and Timeline for Engagement in TxDOT/NEPA Process.* With the TxDOT design process already underway, it will be critical for Austinites to organize quickly and prepare to participate in the upcoming scoping phase. The panel has outlined key milestones, inputs, and decision points.
- *Implementation and Governance.* This section considers key aspects of project implementation, including ownership, governance, and longer-term management/operations.



Setting a Framework for Broad and Inclusive Community Engagement

TO ENSURE THAT THE I-35 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS LIVES UP to its potential to create a catalytic and transformative project that embodies the needs and values of Austin, a comprehensive engagement plan is needed for community members and stakeholders to participate throughout the life of the project. Development professionals often recognize the need to involve citizens in decisions that affect the built environment but fail to do it effectively.

I-35 is infamous for being a marker of physical, racial, and economic divide. The legacy of racial segregation and economic inequity is still prevalent and shapes the way many Austinites view and experience the city. Using a strong engagement process can speak to the need for greater inclusion of marginalized voices in the future growth and development of the city. Community engagement can be a powerful vehicle for equity and inclusion, building opportunities for greater transparency, shared decision-making, and mutual accountability.

This is an important moment to bring stakeholders together to create a shared vision through an inclusive process that

can help shape the project. The engagement process for I-35 should leverage the democratic spirit of residents and learn from strong local examples of public participation. The city of Austin desires to be a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity. The I-35 project is a chance to demonstrate these values through the intentional practice of equitable development.

Key Actions and Outcomes

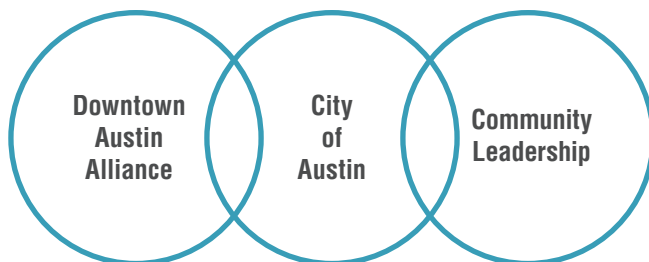
Based on the interviews the panel conducted and the many reports the panel read, the panel has identified the following as key outcomes for a community engagement process:

- *Co-create a vision for the future.* This vision should include an articulation of shared values, such as equity, as well as a commitment to incorporating these values across agencies, projects, and approaches.
- *Build trust among all stakeholders.* Historical injustices and exclusion, repeated attempts at updating I-35 with studies that did not result in change, and different growth priorities have led to distrust among stakeholder groups. It is critical that a community engagement process work to build trust as a precursor to building consensus (or agreement) on a path forward for the I-35 project. This can begin with naming and acknowledging past injustices that some stakeholder groups have experienced.
- *Create the Scoping Working Group.* This group will consist of representatives of the city of Austin, the Downtown Austin Alliance, and community leaders. Together, they will engage in the NEPA process.
- *Establish design principles.* These principles are intended to guide decision-making and the physical design for covering the highway.

Scoping Working Group

The Downtown Austin Alliance has made great strides in convening key partners through the creation of the I-35 Task Force and the East Austin Community Brain Trust. These groups should be considered the foundation for building the Scoping Working Group and expanding it to include stakeholder voices not currently represented. The leadership of the Scoping Working Group should be a joint effort by the Downtown Austin Alliance, the city of Austin, and selected community and neighborhood representatives.

The city of Austin has a critical part to play in this leadership structure because ultimately the city should have ownership of the caps and stitches. Although the Downtown Austin Alliance could potentially staff the Scoping Working Group, it would require additional funding for longer-term activities



This figure represents the Scoping Working Group leadership structure. Members of the group should build on the organizations that participated in the I-35 Task Force that developed questions for this panel report.

because some of the work is outside the bounds of its Public Improvement District boundaries. The panel believes that the Scoping Working Group would be a near-term activity over the next six to 12 months.

The panel recommends that the Scoping Working Group include representatives from local businesses, residential communities, nonprofits, institutional partners, merchants and small business owners, artists and civic and cultural groups, and individuals who have been displaced from historic communities of color along the development corridor. The group should be racially and economically diverse and consider how it will weigh the voices of those in power versus those who have been historically disenfranchised to balance institutional power and privilege within the group.

The panel recommends that the I-35 Task Force dissolve upon delivering and disseminating the panel's findings because that was its initial charge. However, some organizations that were a part of the I-35 Task Force could be included in the Scoping Working Group at the direction of this group's three-party leadership.

Participatory Design, Prototypes, and Delivery

People are already on the verge of engagement burnout, and a significant level of distrust arises from the history of redlining, the 1928 plan, and multiple past studies of I-35 that went nowhere. To achieve some of the goals (rebuild trust, help people imagine the future), it is important to come up with designs and deliver early tangible outcomes. Some ideas for early wins could be to do a no-car Sunday with a pop-up park on an off ramp; engage artists and put chalk on the underside of a ramp that invites people to draw their history. These activities can begin immediately and reflect the need to envision a future both with the threat from COVID-19 as well as when the threat lessens. To the extent possible, prototype ideas that have come from community meetings should state explicitly where the idea came from, and ask for feedback!

Design Principles and Tradeoffs

The panel recommends that one of the first community engagement exercises that should take place is to co-create design principles with stakeholders. The following framework for thinking about these design principles takes into account the tradeoff that they represent. These are themes that surfaced during interviews and research, but ultimately the Scoping Working Group should identify the main themes as well as

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

The panelists discussed COVID-19 as a topical concern during the panel week but not with the foresight that the World Health Organization would declare it a pandemic several weeks later. Many of the panel's recommendations related to community engagement require extensive person-to-person conversations, which is not advised according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on preventing the spread of infectious diseases. The panel commends Mayor Adler for his leadership in making the difficult but right call to suspend the South by Southwest (SXSW) conference and festivals and the shelter-in-place order on March 24. This is something that must have been difficult and is resulting in financial hardship for the city and the region.

However, COVID-19 should not be used as an excuse to not engage with the community. Instead, community engagement should be delivered in a more creative way. Some ideas suggested by the panel that are being explored by their own



The panel stopped at the Mr. Natural health-food grocery/vegetarian restaurant on the Monday tour. Small, local businesses need support during this time of social distancing.

organizations include having virtual town halls using Facebook Live, You Tube Live, or other social media platforms to reach more people who may not have access to do a traditional webinar.

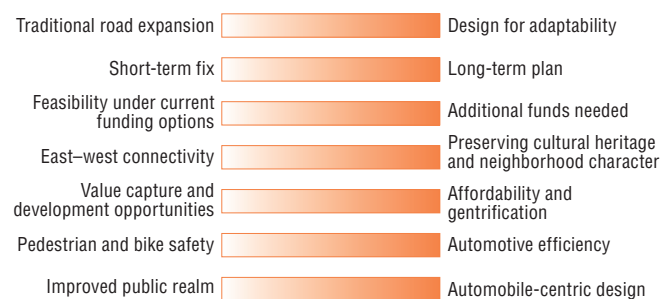
Especially because small businesses are getting hit very hard right now, one of these virtual town halls could be held "at" a certain business each week, where everyone who joins the virtual call buys a gift card to that restaurant as if they were buying a coffee or another item. They could rotate each time, so every week, other businesses receive support of the community. It could be an hour-long discussion on a certain topic related to economic development, the highway plan, or other topic and have a clear host who is asking/fielding questions.

Additional ideas include the following:

- Setting up a group chat or page where the Scoping Work Group can share updates and allow participants to have conversations with each other. This could be accomplished through open Slack channels or WhatsApp groups, for example.
- Neighborland (<https://neighborhoodland.com>) is a really good platform for community engagement on large-scale projects, and Imby (<https://imby.community/>), launched in Washington, D.C., is another platform to engage those that support development projects and to provide constructive feedback. This is also an opportunity to use SpeakUP Austin for this project.
- A final option could be to invite people to post things on social media with a shared hashtag in response to a particular question or idea. An example of this is the #RTEVirtualParade on Twitter that had a Virtual St. Paddy's Day Parade.

prioritize where on these gradients/tradeoffs the group wants to sit.

Thinking through these principles and tradeoffs early will enhance creation of a unified, co-created vision. The panel believes this project works best if the ambitions for what it involves and what it accomplishes are bigger: that is, about inclusivity not only of people but also of place. Then, these principles can be ready for the next steps in the process of defining, clarifying, and advancing the vision during design, construction, and opening.



Sample tradeoffs identified by the panel for development of the design principles.



Designing for Connectivity and Mobility

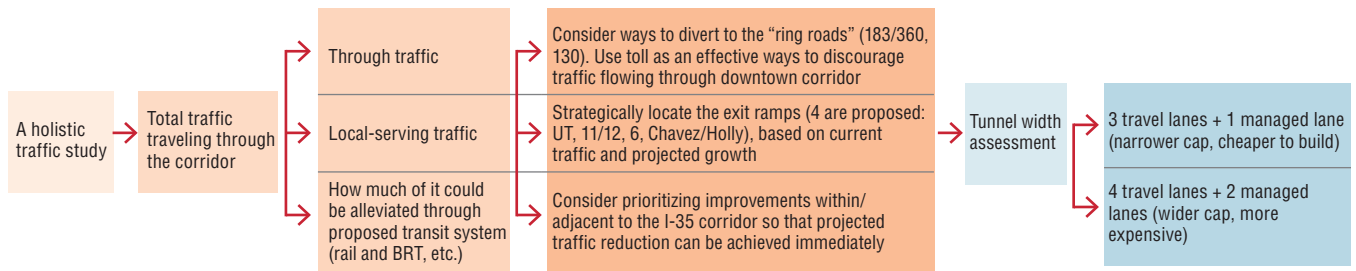
THINKING OF I-35 AS A LARGE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PROJECT—not just as an isolated highway project for downtown—is critical. This is a once-in-a-generation project that can be transformative to enhancing urban design and increasing connectivity and mobility for the Austin region.

I-35 is a multilane long-distance highway that slices north–south through the center city of Austin with little deference to the districts, universities, and communities it was designed to serve, while severing neighborhoods. Its many, many on and off ramps near the University of Texas at Austin and the Capitol district slow the speed of travel on I-35 to a virtual crawl at rush hours that start early and end late. Seventy percent of the vehicles traveling this route are bound to or from the downtown area, which also increases travel times for long-distance trucks and other travelers driving to regional, cross-state, and international destinations. Although drivers could choose to use higher-capacity tolled highways that skirt Austin to the east of the city, the panel heard that they prefer the straight, free route of I-35 because it takes a similar amount of time.

The I-35 ROW averages about 245 feet wide, and its travel lanes are frequently on structured berms and elevated viaducts, which together with the on and off ramps make crossing arduous and hazardous for pedestrians, bikers, scooters, and local traffic. The broad and varied ROW that I-35 travels through downtown Austin occupies an area of more than 116 acres, which is about the size of an urban 18-hole golf course. The nearby nine-hole Hancock Golf Course is 93 acres, and the 18-hole Lions Municipal Course is 141 acres.

The undergrounding of the highway creates a great opportunity to reconnect the districts and urban corridors that set the framework for East Austin and downtown. The project can become a catalyst for growth and prosperity for many Austin

An Integrated Approach to the I-35 Project



neighborhoods. It can also become the impetus for rethinking patterns of movement by vehicles and people in downtown.

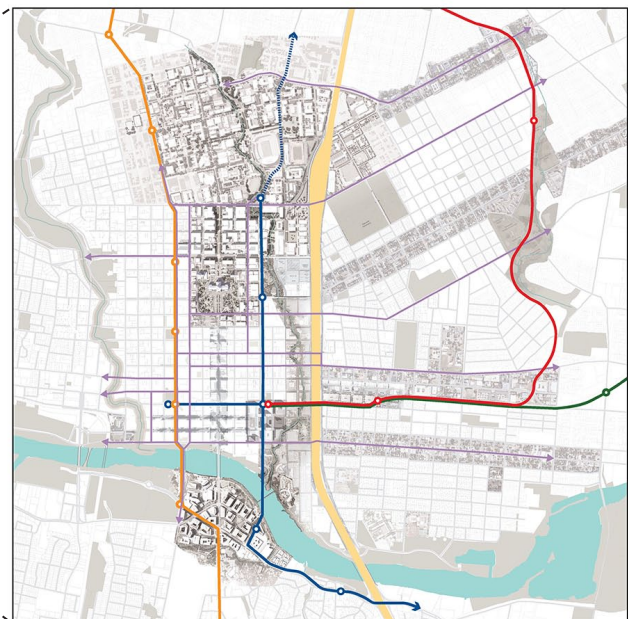
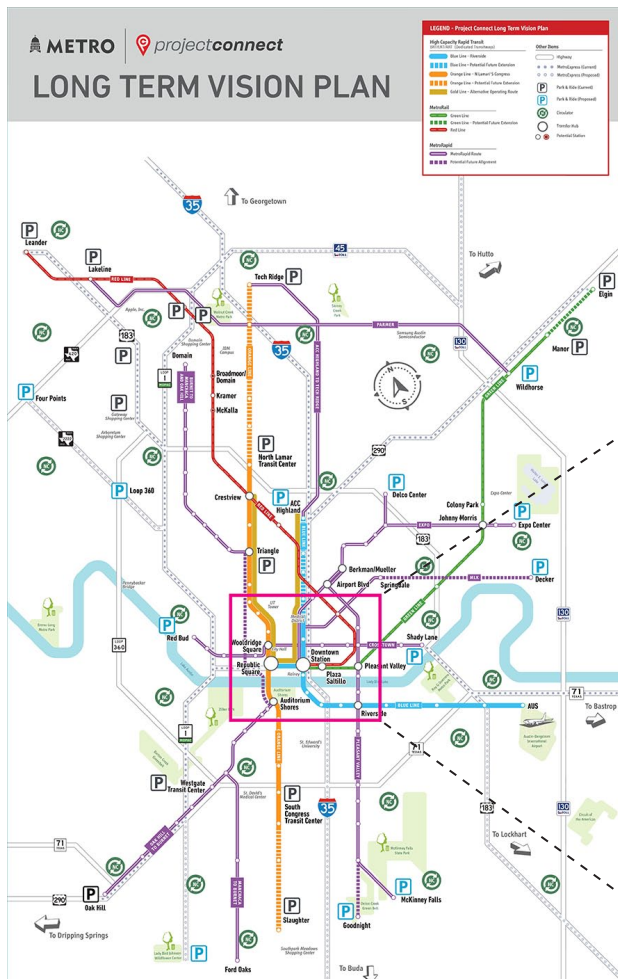
Creating an Integrated Approach to the I-35 Project

The future requirements for road capacity and use cannot be determined by looking only at this project. The design and use of the new I-35 must be closely interrelated with additionally proposed mobility projects and programs to achieve new ways

to accommodate all modes of travel, and to give drivers and riders access to a transportation network that can contribute toward the goals of improved air quality, decarbonization, greater transportation equity, and new choices about where to live and work as Austin continues to grow.

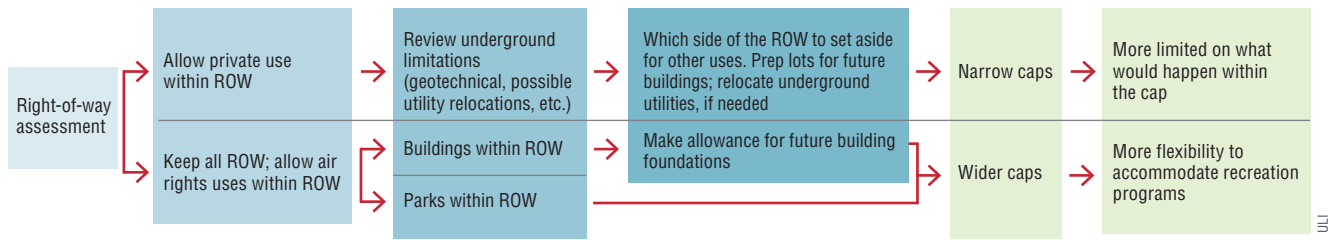
Considering the project more holistically and using a more integrated approach will enable critical decisions to shape the design. These include the following:

- Regional transportation decisions about encouraging more through traffic to use the I-35 alternative State Highway (SH) 130 or the other ring roads, SH 183 or SH 360.
- Determining whether all the proposed exit ramps are necessary. For example, the panel debated the necessity of the East Sixth Street interchange because those businesses adjoining this entertainment district would likely be better served by pedestrian and other nonvehicular traffic, which often spends more money over the course of a year than drivers do.



The I-35 corridor and study area in context with the Capital Metro Project Connect long-term vision.

Considerations in Designing the I-35 Project

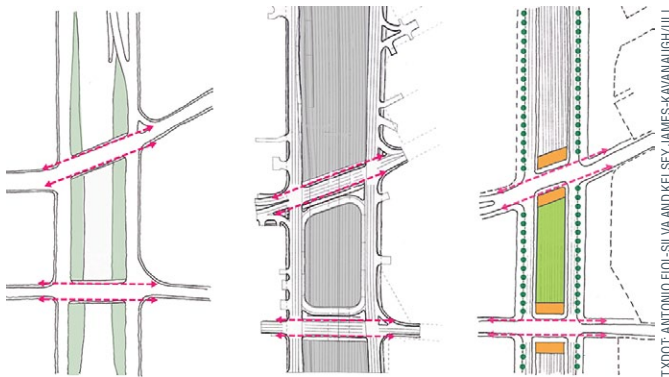


- How the I-35 project fits into the implementation of the Capital Metro–led Project Connect that creates additional north–south and east–west connections. Some of the local traffic could be diverted as part of this project and

would allow a combined I-35/Project Connect of between \$12 billion and \$17 billion in new regional transportation spending.

- How the community-driven engagement process and principles should be incorporated into the project scope.

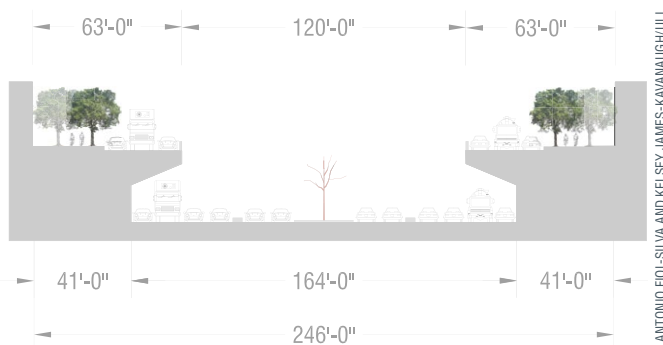
Some of these decisions have already been made, and others are more flexible. However, it is important to understand which decisions can be modified since they affect the overall cost. A smaller I-35 with three travel lanes plus one managed lane in each direction would be cheaper to build than the more expensive four travel lanes and two managed lanes currently proposed by TxDOT. Regardless, this change will affect the design of the project.



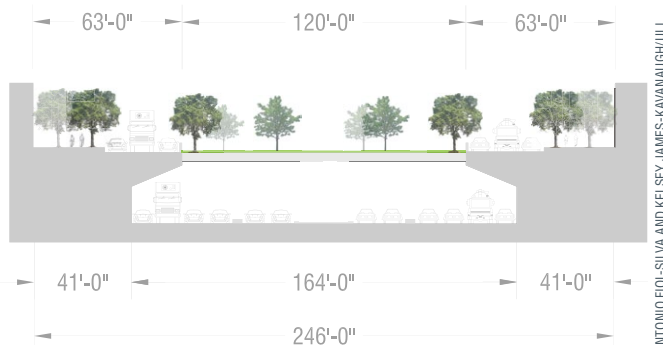
The existing I-35 (left), the TxDOT-proposed I-35 (center), and the panel-proposed I-35 at East 12th Street and East 11th Street.

Designing the I-35 Project

The I-35 project can create a distinctive new experience and an expanded public realm for the local community by reconnecting east and west Austin. The new spaces along this corridor should provide local communities and visitors with a beautiful, vibrant, urban environment. The project should introduce a mix of uses that complement the surrounding area, create opportunities for a range of new land uses along the I-35 frontages, and stimulate new public and private-sector investments throughout the entire study area.



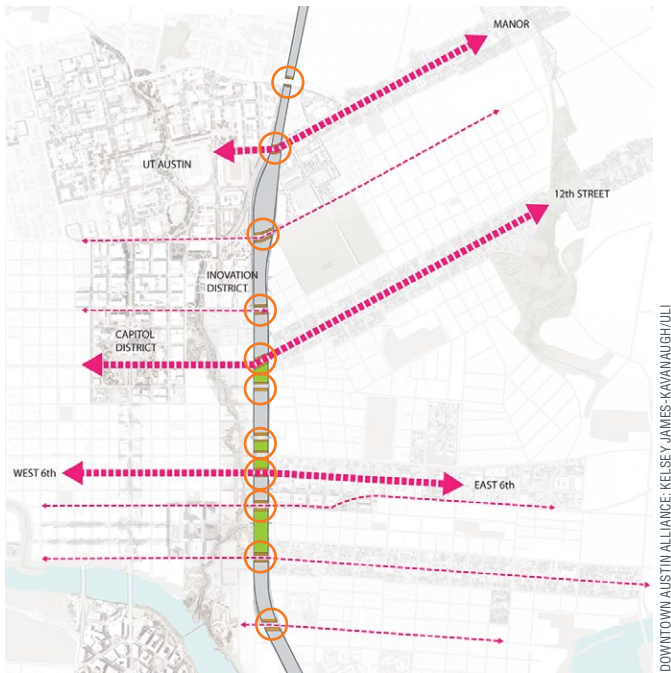
The proposed cross section. Art created by local artists to “keep Austin weird” could be incorporated into the median.



Proposed cross section with a cap.

Effective urban design strategies for the I-35 ROW should demonstrate an integrated approach by including a full range of travel modes, incorporating sustainable design principles and adopting innovative construction techniques. Successful design concepts for the public realm will be ones that celebrate Austin’s rich history, culture, and diversity as well as be designed to accommodate change over time and be built to support programming for long-term viability.

The panel’s initial design task was to analyze the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the new ROW proposed by TxDOT. Under existing conditions, the ROW is 245 feet wide with a center of 215 feet. The TxDOT proposal is for a depressed highway with a ROW that is enlarged to 360 feet wide and a center of 210 feet.



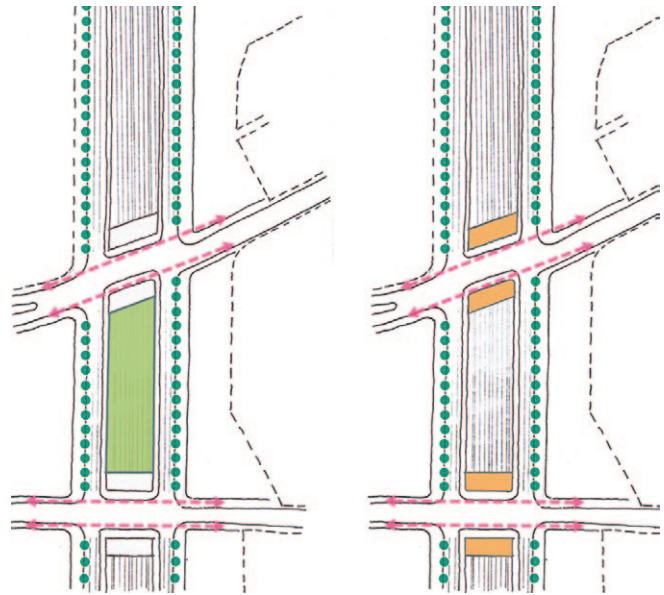
Proposed cap and stitch locations along the I-35 corridor. The orange circles represent stitches and green areas represent caps. The dashed lines are minor and major nonvehicular and public transit crossing points.

The panel suggests this dimension should be reconsidered through capacity studies that take into account the changes to use of private vehicles as well as the choices being offered by Project Connect and other at-grade transportation alternatives. The panel proposes that the same number of travel lanes and managed lanes as envisioned by TxDOT could be constructed with a ROW of 246 feet with a center of 120 feet while also allowing a surface-level boulevard split into one-way pairs with broad sidewalks on the west and east sides. The panel suggests that the same amount of travel and number of managed lanes envisioned by TxDOT could be constructed with very little widening of the ROW. By keeping the ROW proposed by TxDOT and using the panel's proposal, about 114 feet would be available for other uses such as housing.

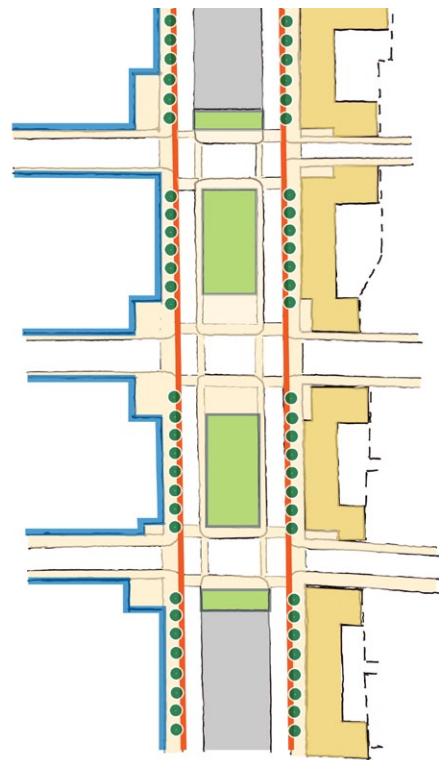
In some areas, such as near the University of Texas at Austin, the panel recognizes that this design might not be possible. The boulevard should run the entire I-35 project area—from Holly Street to at least Airport Boulevard.

Cap and Stitch Proposed Locations

For some advocates, a complete covering of the highway is the goal. The panel considered this option but also explored locations in which the caps and stitches would be most beneficial. TxDOT should construct the support structures as



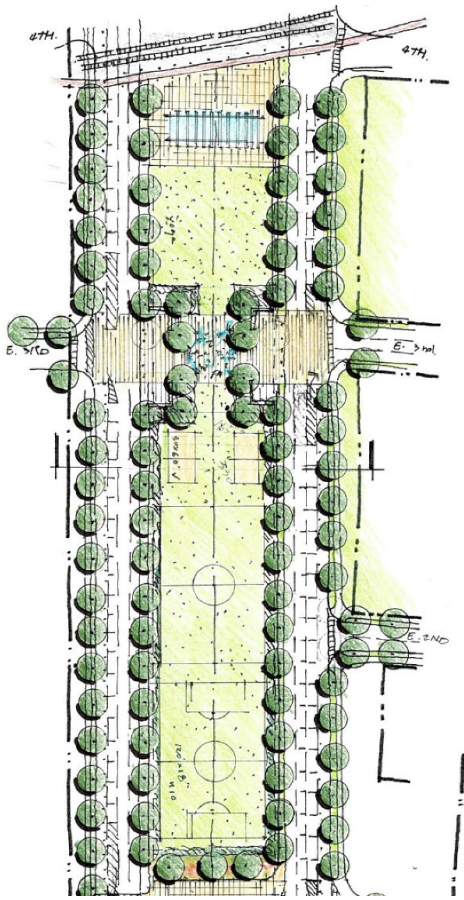
The proposed East 12th Street to 11th Street cap (left) and stitch (right).



The proposed East Eighth Street to East Sixth Street cap and stitch. The right-of-way shows how mixed-income housing could be built on state-owned land.

I-35 is rebuilt, and the caps and stitches should be built at one time. From north to south these are as follows:

- East 12th Street to East 11th Street;
- East Eighth Street to East Sixth Street; and
- East Fourth Street to East Cesar Chavez Street.



The proposed East Fourth Street to East Cesar Chavez Street cap and stitch.

CONNIE FAN/ULI

A cap in this location also connects to the commercial corridors within East Austin.

East Eighth Street to East Sixth Street

The panel recommends placing a cap between East Sixth Street and East Seventh Street and another cap between East Seventh Street and East Eighth Street. The panel also recommends placing stitches along the outer edges of Sixth and Eighth streets over the ROW to further extend this space. The area between East Eighth Street and East Sixth Street is a major center for Project Connect. In addition, strong commercial districts exist on both sides of I-35 along this stretch. This area is a key link between east and west Austin, making it well positioned for a series of caps and stitches.

The panel believes that the ROW can be better used to support the construction of mixed-income housing while still allowing for the proposed TxDOT travel and managed lanes. The housing would be constructed off the freeway cap, allowing cheaper construction and making it easier to finance since the structures would not have to depend on the life cycle of the cap.

East Fourth Street to East Cesar Chavez Street

The panel recommends placing a cap between East Fourth Street and East Cesar Chavez Street. This stretch of I-35 is directly adjacent to the historic Palm School—a landmark central to Austin’s Mexican American community and a reminder of downtown’s historical landscape. The cap would connect to the Cesar Chavez commercial corridor and draw visitors to the Sir Swante Palm Neighborhood park as well as Austin’s trail system.

The panel proposes that the recreational facilities be culturally appropriate and supportive to the nearby predominantly Mexican American community.

The panel did not recommend any particular caps north of East 12th Street, but significant safety improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, scooters, and the like should be implemented at each of the I-35 crossings within the study area. Stitches should be implemented, from north to south, at East Dean Keeton Street, Manor Road, East Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, East Fifth Street, and River Street. Pedestrian bridges should also be considered at the University of Texas at Austin campus and north of East 51st Street where pedestrians cross the freeway without any official crossings.

East 12th Street to East 11th Street

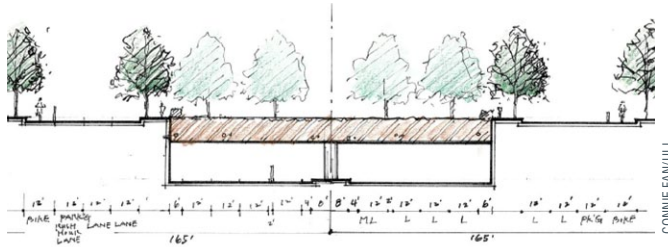
The panel recommends placing a cap and stitches between East 12th Street and East 11th Street. This section of I-35 is near the University of Texas at Austin’s planned Moody Center (basketball arena), and a cap and stitches will help facilitate east–west access to the University of Texas at Austin campus. This area can also serve as an entrance to the emerging Innovation District and the Dell Medical School, and can connect East Austin to Waterloo Park and Austin’s trail system.

Urban Design Considerations

Some additional design considerations include the following.

The Boulevard: East Avenue/Frontage Road

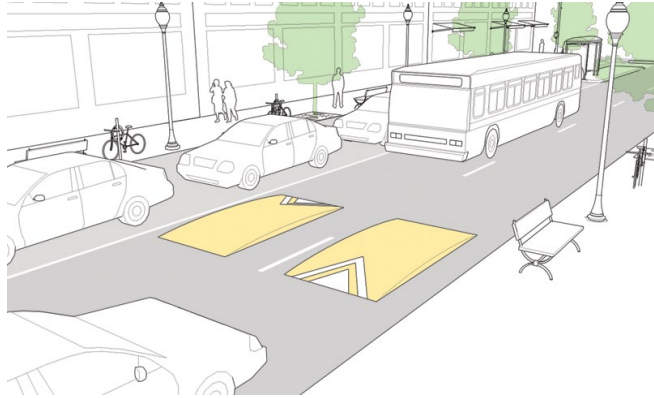
The streets are an important component of the public realm, serving both a transportation function and contributing to the overall urban character. The components that make up the existing Frontage Road should be designed and organized in a way that accommodates vehicular circulation while also providing an ample, welcoming, and inviting pedestrian environment. This includes significantly reduced speed



A proposed boulevard system that includes pedestrian, bike, and vehicular lanes as well three travel lanes and one managed lane in each direction. The highway proposal is an alternative to the TxDOT proposal.



New technologies such as autonomous vehicles provide the opportunity to create more people-focused design. More about this concept can be found here: urbanland.uli.org/planning-design/people-driven-design-planning-urban-future-autonomous-vehicles/.



Speed cushions encourage decreased vehicular speeds while allowing large vehicles like fire engines or buses to bypass.

limits and traffic calming elements such as speed cushions. Roadways should be sized to accommodate travel lanes and provide on-street parking lanes where possible.

Circulation and Pedestrian Routes

North-south connections should be provided. East-west connections should link downtown and East Austin neighborhoods. New internal streets should be designed as secondary streets, thereby allowing services (parking garage entrances and loading) to be removed from the perimeter of the site. These secondary streets should be designed as narrower streets reflecting a more pedestrian nature. Parking and loading access should not be located along Frontage Road. Frontage streets should be activated with building entrances and storefronts. Then, Fourth Street and 15th Street should be developed to support future planned transit on this corridor and activated with retail uses to enhance the pedestrian experience along the corridor.

Transportation Innovation and Technology

The transportation landscape is changing both at a macro level (automated vehicles for passengers and freight) and at the micro level (scooters and e-bikes). As the future of transportation

changes, steps should be taken during the design process to rethink how public space is dedicated to parking and driving, allowing pedestrians, bicycles, scooters, and autonomous vehicle traffic to safely intermingle. The caps and stitches—especially at East Sixth Street and East 12th Street because of their centrality in the Project Connect longer-term vision—could serve as mobility hubs that enable people and freight to seamlessly transfer between modes. Some of this could be built within the public ROW, but opportunities also exist to work with private partners to incorporate futuristic ideas into the I-35 project.

Other Elements of Good Urban Design

On-street parking should be provided to the extent possible to accommodate short-term visitors and retail customers, creating a buffer between pedestrian and vehicular traffic that will enhance the pedestrian experience. Spaces such as sidewalks, plazas, and parks, as well as buildings, should be designed to be usable by everyone. The needs of all potential users, regardless of ability, should be considered at an early stage of design to better ensure that barriers to access are eliminated and equitable use of all facilities and spaces is promoted. Many resources are available for examples of how to create good urban design that is sustainable and inclusive, including from the Urban Land Institute, Smart Growth America, the Project for Public Spaces, PolicyLink, and the World Resources Institute.



Project Cost and Funding Opportunities

LIKE MANY TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS across the United States and around the globe, the comprehensive I-35 project will likely require funding and financing from multiple programs and sources to achieve the multiple goals that the city and its communities want to achieve. Given the limits of public funding, such projects frequently turn to various financing vehicles that can attract significant private funding, financing, or both. These include tax increment financing (TIF), which uses the revenue gained from increasing property values as the basis for securing loans that can be repaid from these new revenues. This approach, already being used west of I-35, is a strong possibility for funding the caps and stitches that can reconstruct the long-missing east–west connections.

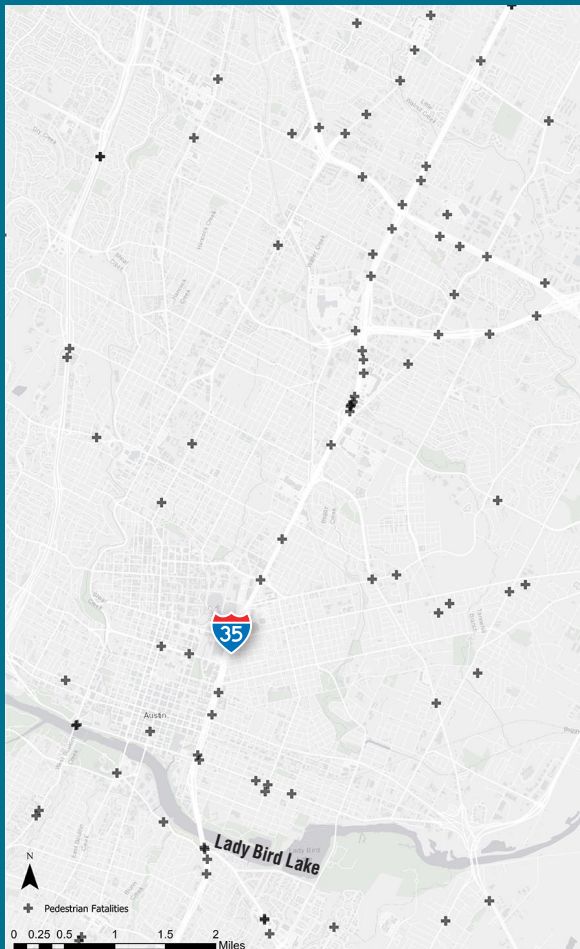
In the previous section of this report, the panel examined the design potential for caps at East Cesar Chavez, East Sixth Street to East Eighth Street, and East 11th Street to East 12th Street. These three locations were selected because each is tied to a district or neighborhood where private development and public investment are already planned or underway. Additional locations for caps can also be considered, particularly where institutions like the University of Texas at Austin need space to grow and where private investors see an opportunity for creditworthy development.

The panel's analysis begins with an estimation of the costs of the caps at these three locations, which include 11 acres of caps and two acres of stitches. The estimated capital cost is about \$260 million, which the panel bases on case studies of the completed Klyde Warren Park in Dallas and the planned Penn's Landing Park over I-95 in Philadelphia, which both were in the range of \$19 million to \$22 million per acre for the total capital costs for structures and for the park design. The panel estimates a rough cost of \$20 million per acre, on average. The panel also estimates operations and maintenance (O&M) of these facilities would amount to 10 percent of total capital

POTENTIAL CAP AND STITCH PROJECT BENEFITS

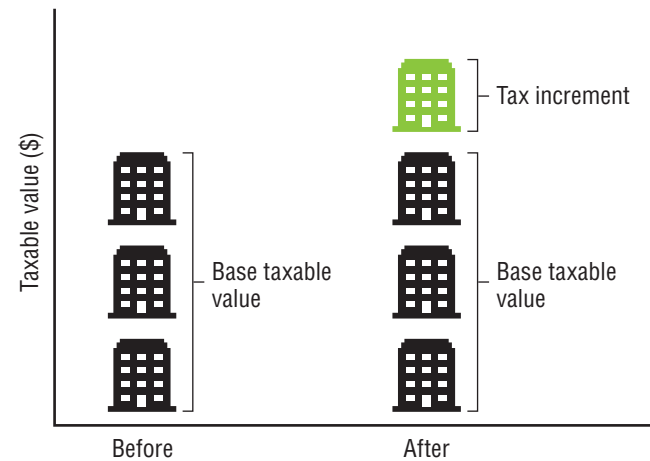
Potential project benefits include the following:

- Reduced surface road congestion for east–west trips;
- Reduced bus congestion on the arterial network;
- Reductions in injuries and fatalities at unsafe crossings;
- Additional mode-shift from auto to bicycle and pedestrian trips;
- Environmental benefits from stormwater mitigation and greenhouse gas reductions;
- Highway noise abatement;
- Air quality improvements and ensuing health benefits; and
- Open-space livability benefits to local residents.



Each cross represents a pedestrian fatality. Deaths are concentrated near the Capital Plaza north of East 51st Street, outside the panel's study area. However, the panel suggests that a pedestrian bridge be constructed there.

Diagram of Simplified TIF Mechanism



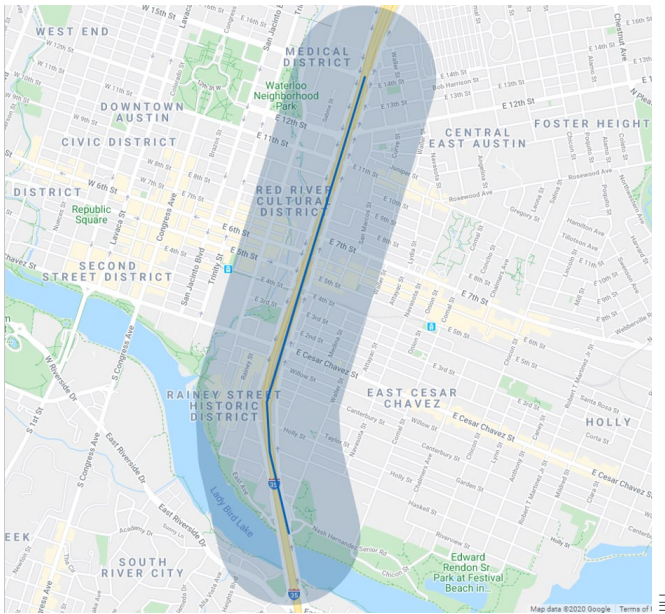
Source: ULI.

costs, or about \$26 million. When discounted over a 30-year life cycle, these O&M costs amount to about \$1.8 million per year, or a total \$53 million O&M in present value over 30 years.

The panel therefore estimates the total capital and O&M costs at about \$313 million over 30 years (present value 2020 dollars at 3 percent discount rate). These costs would likely be reduced if Austin were able to construct the caps and stitches simultaneously with the I-35 construction. A parallel construction project would yield cost efficiencies as well as reduce community costs of delay and construction burden.

The project benefits would certainly justify these costs. The connectivity would help connect residents traveling between East and West Austin, enhance the flow of public transportation, provide open space to residents, and enhance the livability of an area presently dominated by a major highway.

At the time the panel visited, TxDOT announced an estimated \$7.5 billion budget for the I-35 expansion project that provides (a) the capacity expansion to the highway; (b) the managed lanes; (c) certain improvements to access and egress; (d) pedestrian and bicycle improvements along the corridor; and (e) engineering the ROW to allow the city of Austin to subsequently build caps and stitches. The capital funding does not currently provide funds for the caps and stitches themselves. Those costs would be left to other entities, including the city, the county, Capital Metro, the business community, and philanthropic organizations.



The panel's proposed TIF district is a half-mile (10-minute walk) buffer around the I-35 project.

Existing Inventory and Estimated Property Value in Proposed TIF District

	Inventory	Estimated value
Office	1,021,985 sq ft	\$393.4 million
Retail	753,843 sq ft	\$313.0 million
Apartment	3,992 units	\$1.241 billion

Sources: CoStar; CBRE Inc., Q1 2020; ULI.

TIF Proposal

TIF is a commonly used mechanism to finance public infrastructure and other public works, and as shown in the figure, it is predicated on the fact that properties appreciate in value as a consequence of a project. This additional property value generation creates additional tax revenues for the city and county, and those additional revenues can be earmarked to fund the project. Moreover, the project would induce property development above what otherwise would have been

built, creating another funding stream that can pay for the infrastructure. It is important to understand that TIFs are not new taxes, and the panel believes that Austin still has room for additional TIF districts owing to its rapid growth.

The panel proposes a TIF district spanning a half-mile buffer (10-minute walk) along the I-35 corridor from Lady Bird Lake to East 15th Street. This district contains a significant supply of commercial real estate property. As of February 2020, the panel estimates that this TIF district contains 1.02 million square feet of office buildings, about 754,000 square feet of retail space, and almost 4,000 multifamily rental units. Due to data limitations, this analysis excludes hotel, industrial, and other commercial properties, although such commercial properties should be included as part of this TIF district. The panel intentionally excludes for-sale residential properties as exempt from the TIF revenue stream because of concerns about displacement caused by increasing property taxes.

Finally, the panel notes that a TIF (Waller Creek Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #17) already exists in part of this section; the panel's TIF proposal is for illustrative purposes. The panel believes it is possible to "layer" TIF districts; the exact boundaries will need to be modified if a TIF district is eventually used. This project may also be financed with many other mechanisms, including a special district or any funding mechanisms discussed later in this section that the state, local government, and community deem appropriate.

TIF Revenue Estimates

To estimate the revenues of a TIF district, the panel used current market information on rents, vacancies, and several modest assumptions about capitalization rates and rent growth. The panel assumes that commercial rents will grow 3 percent per year over a 30-year period based on an analysis of market conditions at the time of the panel.

Under the TIF scenario, the panel assumes that the cap and stitch facilities will provide a 15 percent property value

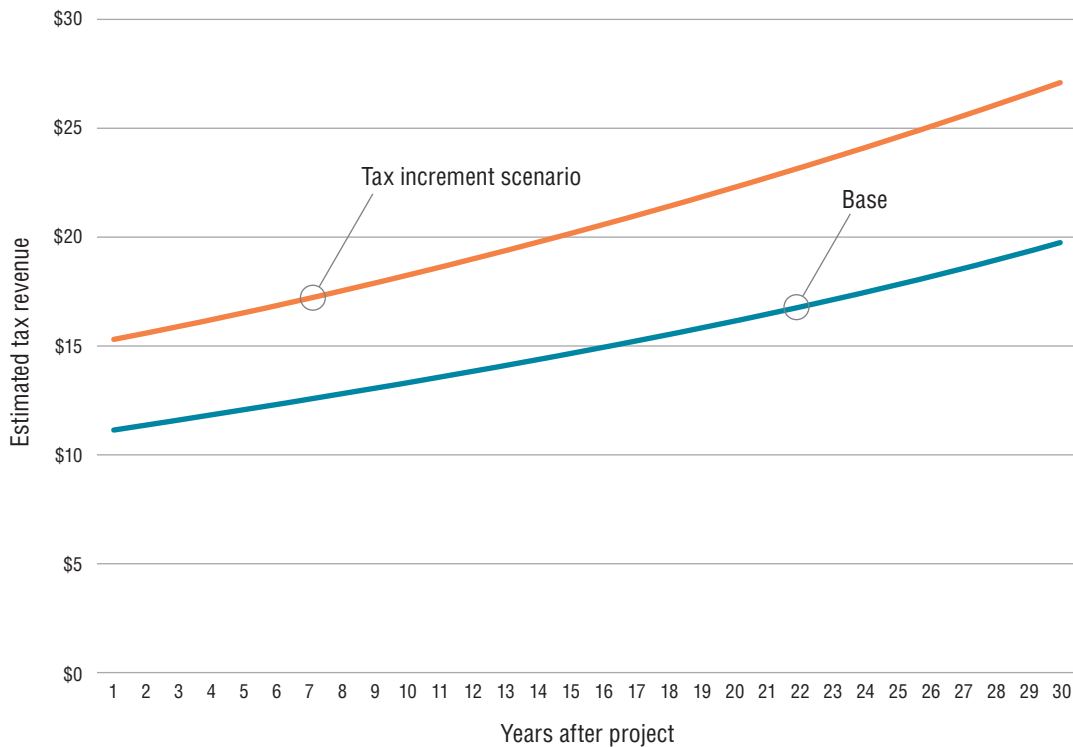
Estimated Tax Revenues for Baseline and Project Scenario

	Baseline (no build)	Project scenario	Difference
Existing properties and growth	\$449.3 million	\$516.7 million	\$67.4 million
New properties	0	\$103.3 million	\$103.3 million
Total	\$449.3 million	\$620.0 million	\$170.7 million

Sources: CoStar; CBRE Inc., Q1 2020; ULI.

Note: Dollar values expressed as 2020 dollars using a real 3 percent discount rate.

Timeline of TIF Revenue Streams



Sources: CoStar; CBRE Inc., Q1 2020; ULI.

Note: Dollar values expressed as 2020 dollars using a real 3 percent discount rate.

appreciation on these commercial properties in their first year, and those properties will continue to grow at 3 percent per year thereafter. This rate was determined based on a panel analysis of markets with similar cap and stitch projects across the nation. To identify the estimated commercial values, the panel used current market conditions that suggest base rents of \$34.22 per square foot for office; triple-net rents of \$36.91 per square foot for retail; and asking rents of \$2,303 per multifamily unit.

Against these revenue streams the panel assumes a 10 percent long-term vacancy rate and 25 percent expense ratio, and identified the market value using a cap rate of 6 percent. This cap rate is in line with observed commercial property transactions that range between 4 and 7 percent in the past five years for the combined central business district and East Austin submarkets.

The panel's TIF district analysis indicates that, over 30 years, the TIF mechanism would yield a revenue stream of about \$171 million in present value terms over a 30-year capital period. Of this amount, the panel anticipates that \$67 million would come from the tax increment on existing commercial properties, and

\$103 million would result from additional new development beyond the growth that otherwise would have occurred. These revenue estimates are conservative. The panel used relatively conservative office and retail rent estimates and was not able to estimate revenues from hotel, industrial, and other commercial uses because of data constraints. Therefore, a TIF district is likely to generate more revenue than what is indicated by the panel's analysis.

Finally, over the next 20 to 30 years, the panel fully expects urban growth to continue despite COVID-19. In the previous 20 years, the world has seen numerous terrorist attacks including 9/11, mass shootings across the nation, disease outbreaks like SARS and H1N1, as well as the Great Recession, but despite all this, urban growth has been unfazed around the world, including in Texas.

Addressing a Funding Gap

Even with \$171 million available from a TIF district, a funding gap still exists when considering an estimated \$313 million cost. In addition, there would be an ongoing funding gap for O&M and programming on top of the cap and stitch. The panel

ADDRESSING TRAFFIC CONGESTION

According to the Transportation for America report *The Congestion Con: How More Lanes and More Money Equals More Traffic*, the amount of freeway lane-miles grew 42 percent between 1993 and 2017 in the 100 largest urbanized areas in the United States. This increase outpaced the population growth during the same time frame (32 percent) and points to states taking on significant financial liability as they attempt to relieve traffic congestion. However, congestion increased by 144 percent during those same years. *The Congestion Con* shows that common congestion solutions like highway expansion can lead to greater delay and congestion.

The city of Austin can work to reduce congestion on the I-35 corridor by implementing policies that promote greater accessibility and mobility throughout the city with a focus on strengthening north–south and east–west connections. This

will reduce the need to access I-35 for travel within the city, thus helping relieve congestion.

Policy recommendations shown to address the underlying causes of congestion:

- Prioritize accessibility to locations rather than focusing on congestion alone;
- Stop devoting more resources to new roads rather than maintenance;
- Increase pedestrian safety and walkability;
- Manage driving demand;
- Remove pricing restrictions;
- Reward infill development; and
- Incentivize other modes of transportation.

Change in Population, Freeway Lane-Miles, and Delay

Urbanized area	Population growth	Freeway lane-miles growth	Growth in delay
Laredo	104%	1%	1,309%
Brownsville	73%	287%	1,230%
McAllen	186%	79%	510%
Austin	125%	98%	461%
Beaumont	40%	266%	332%
San Antonio	60%	37%	228%
Houston	77%	28%	221%
Corpus Christi	17%	17%	184%
El Paso	45%	102%	157%
Dallas	67%	42%	152%

Sources: Transportation for America; ULI.

Note: List includes Texas cities within top 100 U.S. urbanized areas, 1993–2017.

explored several possible federal, state, and local funding mechanisms and identified both an optimistic belief that plausible ways to fund this project exist and some warning that few existing funding sources are meant specifically for such a project.

Federal Funds

The following are federal funding opportunities.

BUILD grants. Because the project addresses mobility, safety, and quality of life, and it is on a major interstate ROW,

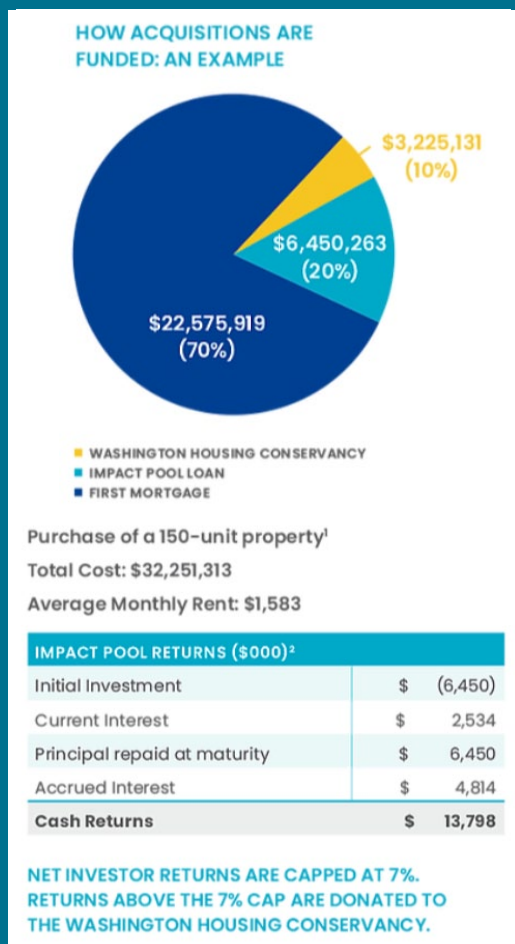
the project would be eligible to compete for federal BUILD grants, which allow for up to \$25 million in federal funds for transportation improvements. However, this is a very competitive program, and funding is not guaranteed.

FTA New Starts. This project proposes that the caps and stitches be integrated with the Capital Metro transit network, especially Project Connect improvements, which would use FTA New Starts funding. If properly integrated, these projects can be part of the ROW or transit improvements that Capital Metro

PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Rents are rising faster than incomes in the Washington, D.C., metro area, resulting in a growing burden to residents. To help address this issue, the Washington Housing Initiative was formed as a partnership by the real estate development company JBG Smith and the nonpartisan Federal City Council as a market-based approach to preserving and increasing housing affordability.

The initiative has two parts: the Washington Housing Conservancy, which acquires and develops affordable workforce housing; and the Impact Pool, which is a social impact fund that delivers after-tax returns similar to many traditional opportunity funds. More than \$100 million has been raised for this fund. This partnership is enabling housing affordability to be maintained and created near public transit lines throughout the region.



Illustrative pro forma for demonstrating how the impact fund can be leveraged to build and preserve affordable housing.

¹The example shown is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent an actual acquisition.

²Investor returns capped at 7% IRR. Returns above the 7% cap are donated to the Washington Housing Conservancy.

— Summary of Costs and Funding Sources —

Capital cost	\$260 million
O&M costs (30 years)	\$53 million
Total 30-year costs	\$313 million
TIF	\$171 million
Federal – BUILD Grant	\$0 to \$25 million
State/MPO	TBD
City/county	TBD
Capital Metro	TBD
Philanthropy	TBD
Toll revenues	TBD
Total funding sources	\$171 million to \$196 million
Funding gap	\$117 million to \$142 million

Source: ULI.

Note: O&M = operation and maintenance, TBD = to be determined.

will be constructing for its long-term vision for multimodal transportation in Austin.

Potential stimulus. Although not enacted, infrastructure-related funds may be available as part of new infrastructure funding from Congress. The Klyde Warren Park—built atop the Woodall Rodgers Freeway in Dallas, Texas—received \$16.7 million in stimulus funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

State Funds

The following are state funding opportunities.

Texas’s State Infrastructure Bank could be a possible financing mechanism for the TIF district. This could provide the upfront financing necessary to fund capital costs.

TxDOT’s Highway Bridge Program administers federal aid to improve the condition of highway bridges through replacement, rehabilitation, and preventive maintenance.

TxDOT Transportation Alternatives Setaside/Safe Routes to Schools-Infrastructure (SRTS) administers state and federal funds for locally sponsored bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects (through CAMPO in Austin). SRTS facilitates walking and biking to schools for projects within two miles of a school for kindergarten to eighth grade.

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) funds are federal aid and state funds administered through CAMPO for regional projects. Because this project enhances regional mobility, it can be considered regionally significant and a priority for TIP funds.

Toll Revenues

Although TxDOT presently plans the I-35 expansion through Austin with two “managed lanes” (HOV and bus access) in each direction, the agency does not intend to manage these lanes through pricing. However, pricing through tolling, especially variably priced tolling, would provide several benefits. It would more effectively manage congestion during the peak periods, and it would encourage additional mode shift to transit, biking, and walking. More important, portions of toll revenues could plausibly be set aside for mass transit improvements and to fund the cap and stitch projects.

The panel recognizes that tolling new capacity would require enabling legislation from the Texas State Legislature, but several reasons to consider such tolling exist beyond those previously mentioned. With existing toll technology, pricing can be used to divert through trucks and other through traffic away from I-35 to alternative north–south routes. Progressive tolling is also possible, such that toll discounts are provided to low-income families or for city residents.

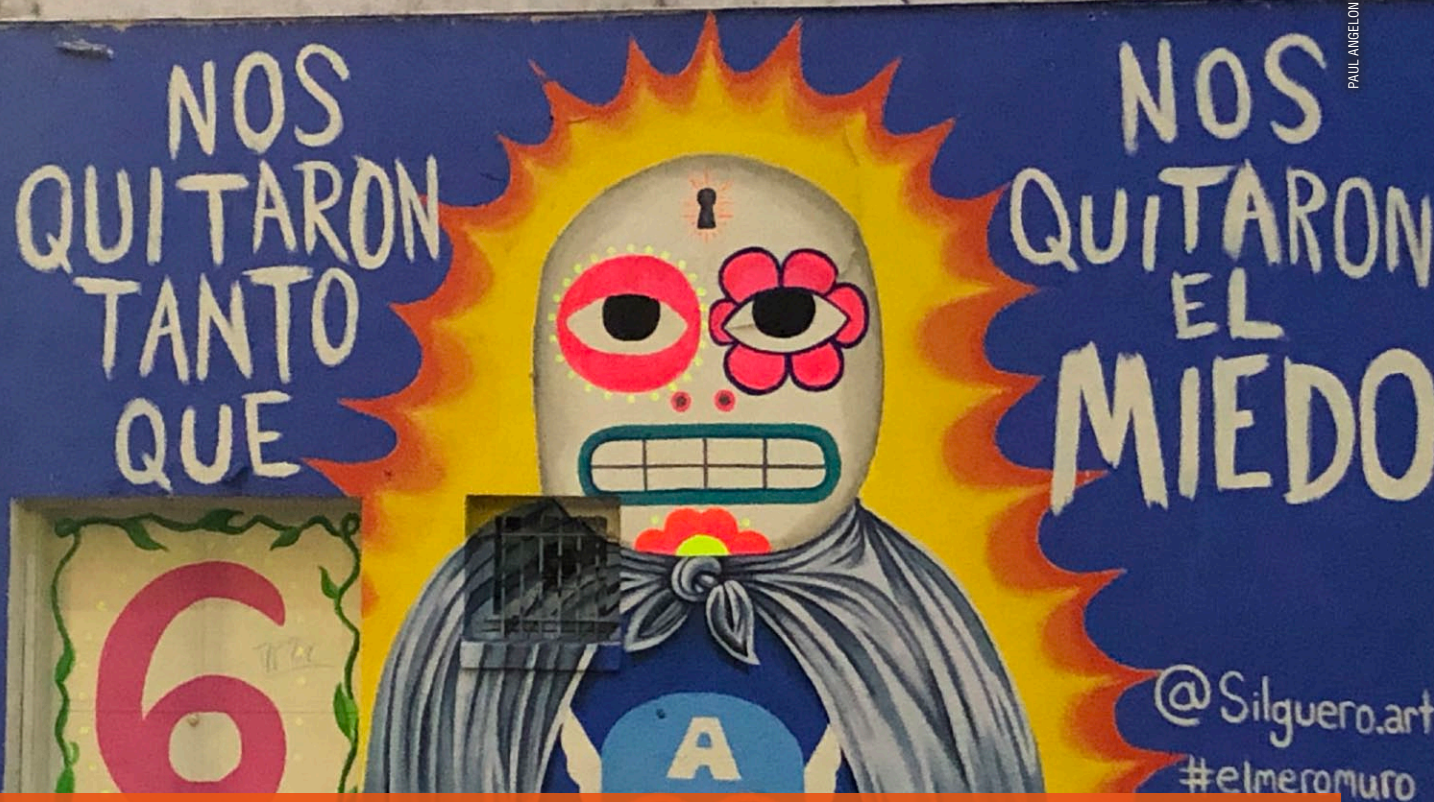
Additional Sources

Most of the funding gap would have to come from prioritizing traditional transportation funding sources at the state and local levels. Finally, local business and philanthropic organizations will need to be part of the funding solution to enhance livability in Austin’s core. Such combinations of funds would be required to overcome an estimated \$117 million to \$142 million funding gap, even if one assumes \$25 million in BUILD grants. In the context of the \$7.5 billion budgeted for the overall I-35 TxDOT project, this funding gap represents only 2 percent of the total I-35 project capital costs. This amount is less than what transportation agencies generally budget for project contingency.

Funding and Social Equity

Social equity is an important component of the project, and despite the identified funding gap, it is worth ensuring that this project contributes to local communities. First, the panel excluded noncommercial residential properties from the TIF district proposal so as to not add any additional tax burden on local homeowners.

Second, the panel proposes that a portion of the TIF revenue be set aside for Austin’s affordable housing fund. The Texas state tax code, section 311.008(4B), allows an agreement to “dedicate revenue from the tax increment fund to pay the costs of providing affordable housing or areas of public assembly in or out of the zone.” This could help the housing fund act as a revolving fund in a similar manner to the Washington Housing Initiative’s Impact Pool. Affordable housing production must be expanded to meet the need for more than 60,000 new units.



Work Plan and Timeline for the TxDOT/NEPA Process

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF REALIZING THE I-35 PROJECT is the approval process mandated by NEPA, the federal National Environmental Policy Act enacted in 1969. It is a process for reviewing potential environmental effects of projects designated to receive federal funding to help ensure that quality-of-life issues are not negatively affected by their implementation. The process includes several opportunities for the public to provide its input to influence the decisions that will ultimately determine final design of the project.

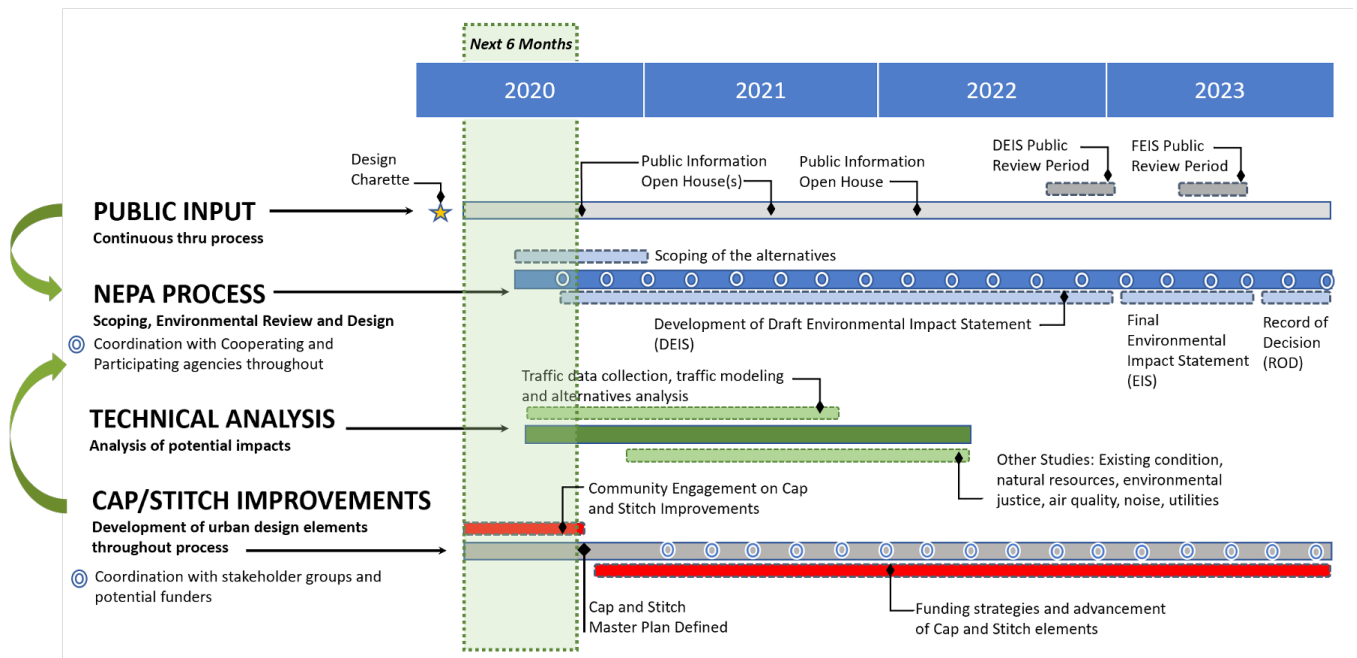
The impacts considered in the NEPA process include social, cultural, and economic effects, as well as impacts related to noise, traffic, and natural resources. In some cases, the federal government delegates NEPA authority to the state level to provide more local control of the process; Texas is one of these states with NEPA authority.

Broadly speaking, the NEPA analysis will propose project alternatives, identify the existence of environmental effects for each, and propose mitigation strategies to deal with the effects. Public review and comment are required throughout the process. Failure to adequately address environmental issues and public concerns or to comply with the prescribed process

could result in an extended NEPA review period, denial of project approval, or some subsequent legal action.

Depending on a project's expected level of impact, NEPA has three review options: categorical exclusion (CE), environmental assessment (EA), and environmental impact statement (EIS). For projects producing a minimal impact, the review process is a CE. Because the impacts are limited with a CE, it requires a limited level of impact analysis. If more significant concerns are raised during a CE analysis, a next-level review may be required.

The next-level review is an environmental assessment. An EA review requires a deeper level of analysis than a CE and is typically used when moderate concerns exist regarding



NEPA timeline developed by the panel during its visit, based on its understanding of current conditions. This schedule may shift later because of COVID-19 but would not change conceptually.

potential impacts. The final decision of an EA review may require monitoring of certain conditions, but if warranted, the third-level review and the most involved of the three options, an EIS, is required. An EIS is used when the project’s scope is broad enough that it could have negative effects on one or more environmental conditions. For the I-35 project, TxDOT is planning to perform an EIS review.

The target date for completion of the I-35 project’s EIS is late 2023. Over this almost three-year period, opportunities will be available for public input and public presentations to provide updates on design alternatives and keep the community informed on the progress of the environmental analysis. TxDOT is in the process of developing an EIS work plan for the project and contracting the team of engineers and consultants that will do the analysis and facilitate the public engagement. As the work plan is developed, specific information about the NEPA schedule and public engagement strategy will be published.

The next formal step in the public engagement process will be a public open house. The primary purpose of this open house is to gain input from the public on design alternatives that will be considered. The current schedule is for the open house to be held in fall 2020, but this schedule may change due to COVID-19. A virtual open house will be published on a TxDOT website, providing information about the process and the design alternatives. After the session, there will be a two-week comment period for the public to provide input.

KEY NEPA TAKEAWAYS

The panel believes the following five main points should be takeaways from this section.

- NEPA is a federally mandated process for reviewing potential community impacts of federally funded projects.
- The NEPA process dictates a public engagement process that provides the opportunity for the public to help shape the process.
- The public engagement process will formally start in fall 2020. It is critical that the community continue to convene conversations around a shared vision for the project in preparation.
- It is important to understand that the cap elements are not part of the TxDOT scope of work, but this is why it is so critical to propose the project as part of the scoping process.
- Though the NEPA focus is on the roadway improvements, the community should introduce urban design and quality-of-life goals into the process.

Note that the TxDOT NEPA analysis is focused only on the roadway project. It will analyze the effects of lowering the roadway, adding the managed lanes, and rebuilding the frontage roads. The caps proposed to cover portions of the depressed highway that could create open space connecting east to west are not included in the scope of the TxDOT work. That work will be paid for separately from the funding recently announced for the roadway improvements.

Although the NEPA analysis correctly focuses on the roadway improvements, perhaps more important, it also has the potential to address urban design improvements and community quality-of-life issues. The community has the opportunity to bring into the conversation issues concerning the symbolic and physical separation that was the result of previous design decisions creating the I-35 divide. Using the NEPA public engagement process to explore the possibilities and provide input on the cap and stitch elements will be critical in the early stages of NEPA public engagement. Establishing goals and objectives related to urban planning concepts will be part of the NEPA analysis if the community engages the conversation.

The recent commitment for funding the middle section of the I-35 project completes a major implementation milestone, though as mentioned in the “Background and Panel Assignment” section, this timeline—including the \$7.5 billion commitment from the state—may change because of current events. The public design charrette recently hosted by TxDOT suggests a positive public engagement process moving forward. It will be incumbent on the public stakeholders to stay vigilant in this process and ensure that previous design and funding commitments remain in place.

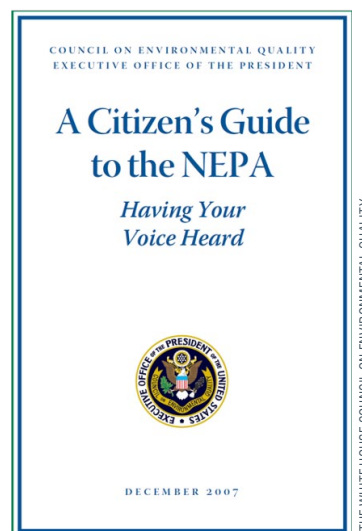
Public involvement is critical in the early stages of the NEPA process; the opportunity to shape the vision becomes more difficult once the design decisions are made. The NEPA process

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY AND DECISION POINT

The open house is an opportunity for the public to have direct contact with the TxDOT decision-makers and help shape the I-35 project vision. Continuing to convene conversations and develop consensus around a shared public vision for the project has to start now.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEPA PROCESS: A GUIDE

A website that describes the NEPA process in more detail and includes a helpful handbook—*A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard*—can be found here: https://ceq.doe.gov/get-involved/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html. The panel commends the I-35 Task Force on the work to date to make this an inclusive process and encourages making use of the opportunity to effect positive impact on the Austin community by participating in the NEPA process.



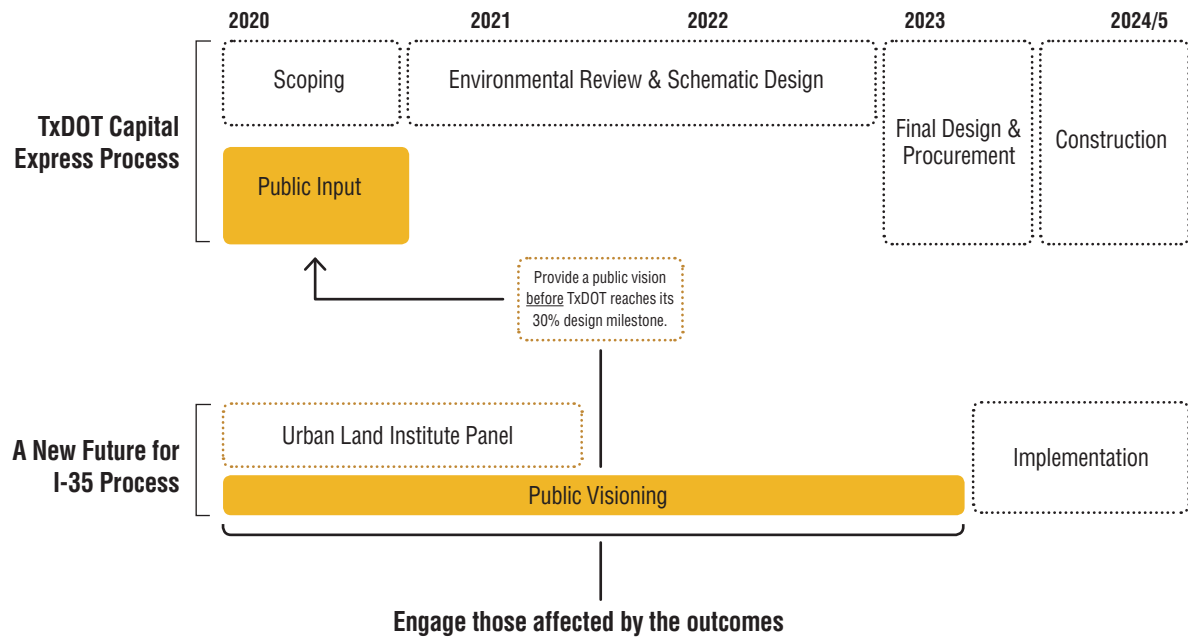
presents an opportunity to expand on TxDOT’s engagement of the public by bringing more voices to the conversation. The diversity of viewpoints and input will ultimately make for a better process and the best possible outcomes.

NEPA Engagement Opportunities and Organizational Structure

Opportunity for community engagement occurs in three distinct phases: pre-NEPA, implementation, and ongoing programming/governance. The next six months are a critical window for engagement to allow for community alignment of vision and strategy.

Phase One: Pre-NEPA

Key to the success of the I-35 project is an opportunity for stakeholders to voice feedback on concepts and designs as well as come to a level of consensus on what development principles



Timeline for key community engagement inputs.

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE: ULI

they would like to see incorporated. A critical next step in the project timeline for the TxDOT I-35 project is the scoping and environmental review process.

Stakeholders around the I-35 corridor must be prepared to engage in the NEPA process and provide alternatives that are representative of the community’s vision for the project. The first phase of a broader engagement strategy is to create a working group representative of those directly affected by the project to develop strategic feedback and identify design and concept recommendations that can be submitted as part of the NEPA scoping and review. Input during the process will be critical to TxDOT reviewing and incorporating any changes to the engineering and design that will enable future improvements such as bike lanes, improved pedestrian access, and future development on and around the caps, stitches, or boulevard concepts.

Given the expected timeline for the NEPA review, it is imperative that the Scoping Working Group come together quickly to begin convening, identify gaps in membership, and develop a community agreement for how group will engage in its work. This report provides grounding in the project’s scope and offers a framework for the working group to refine concepts and develop a strong, cohesive community vision that can shape the final decisions made through the NEPA process.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

These principles are a compilation of the experience, hard work, and lessons of many frontline communities, including those with whom the panel met during this process.

- *Meet people where they are.* Make an effort to consult with people who are in the field and community—not just those who attend meetings. Leverage the existing relationships the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Brain Trusts, and others already have with community groups to reach a diverse group of stakeholders.
- *Value transparency and clarity, especially with regard to decision-making.* Clearly various stakeholders want and are expecting different outcomes from this project, and the panel also heard that “this won’t solve all of our problems.” Setting expectations and being clear about what this project both will and will not achieve are critical to fostering trust among stakeholders.
- *Trust the wisdom of the crowd.* People are the experts of their own lived experience and neighborhoods: keep an open mind about where good ideas can come from.
- *Process is as important as product.*
- *People have a hard time seeing the future.* Humans are hardwired to not be able to engage with the future—consider experiential options to help people interact with the future, such as interactive design, virtual reality, and the like.

Phase Two: Implementation

As the parameters of the project take shape, ongoing engagement will be pivotal to ensuring implementation in concert with the original vision established by the Scoping Working Group. This group should evolve into a more permanent structure to enable strategic visioning and policy direction on project implementation representing the city of Austin and community members. The panel refers to this group as the Project Steering Committee, which should be formed in the mid-term (within six months to a year).

Phase Three: Programming/Governance

Community engagement should not end with approval of the scope and design but should continue over the life of the project, including implementation, governance, and programming. This requires a sustainable model to grow the Project Steering Committee to a structure that can follow through on the vision of a multiphased, multiyear implementation period, inform improvements/development on/around the project, monitor and evaluate project outcomes, and co-create a plan for ongoing engagement and communication, advocacy, and accountability.

DEVELOPMENT OF A NONPARTISAN PLANNING COLLABORATIVE

The panel was impressed by the immense work conducted before the panel week. Many meetings were held, engagements made, and relationships built by stakeholders who had not necessarily worked together on a common problem. The panel recommends that the nonpartisan work and energy that went into preparing the briefing materials—and then forming the basis of the Scoping Working Group and the Project Steering Committee—should be used to create a larger, independent regional planning and policy organization that engages the public sector, the private sector, and community stakeholders in proactive planning for equitable growth beyond the I-35 project. This entity could help bridge the political divide between the state and the city as well as build trust in a unique way since it would not have any statutory authority or responsibilities.

A good example of an organization similar to the type the panel proposes is the Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council, founded in 1934 to improve the city's housing tenements that did not have electricity or running water. More information about that organization can be found here: <https://www.metroplanning.org/about/>.



Implementation and Governance

THE OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT includes extensive community engagement, delivery of various capital projects, and long-term management and operations of the new (capital) amenities and management (and oversight) of new community-serving programs to ensure equitable economic impacts from the project. This will require the formation of a new purpose-driven nonprofit development corporation to deliver the capital projects as well as a new I-35 Conservancy to manage. Both of these entities should receive policy direction from the Project Steering Committee.

Implementation of Capital Projects

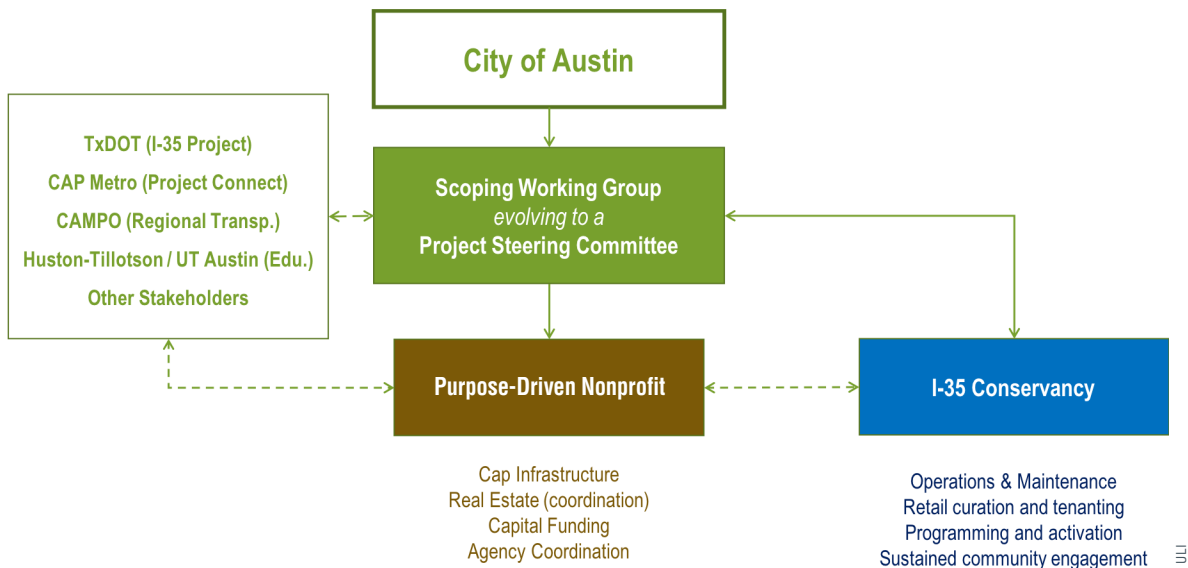
The panel suggests that a new purpose-driven nonprofit development corporation be established that would have technical and transactional capacity to implement the vision enunciated by the Project Steering Committee. The roles and responsibilities of the new purpose-driven nonprofit development corporation should include the following:

- Technical aspects of pre-development and planning;
- Oversight of infrastructure delivery;
- Management of funding, including funding from the TIF district proposed by the panel;

- Real estate and vertical development coordination;
- Multiagency coordination; and
- Establishment of partnerships.

Major Horizontal Infrastructure Components

The development corporation would need to work in close partnership with TxDOT and the city of Austin to design, fund, and construct horizontal infrastructure improvements along the I-35 corridor. This includes ensuring that the highway is depressed, ensuring proper placement of structure needed for caps and stitches, relocating ramps and utilities, and improving the frontage roads into boulevards. Then, the development



Implementation work plan for governance of creating a more integrated I-35 project.

corporation should design, fund, and construct improvements on top of the ROW to deliver caps, stitches, and other connections as well additional structures not previously built by TxDOT required for high-quality parks, buildings, and public realm to be built on top of the caps and stitches.

Finally, the development corporation should design, fund, and construct public realm improvements along east–west corridors and into the neighborhoods, such as delivery of complete streets, improved lighting, and landscaping.

Vertical Development Components

The vertical development components include the public amenities such as parks and community facilities, retail, and other development such as commercial offices and housing. As noted in the “Designing for Connectivity and Mobility” section, the panel recommends that parks, community facilities, and small retail be built physically on the cap. However, the development corporation should coordinate the development of commercial infill and affordable housing construction in the vicinity of the project. In some cases—like the East Eighth, Seventh, and Sixth Street caps—affordable housing could be built within the TxDOT ROW but not physically on the cap or stitches.

Operations and Management of Amenities and Programs

To manage the amenities to be built and programs to be offered, a new dedicated I-35 Conservancy should be established to create long-term capacity for management of the project.

The conservancy would program and engage the community. It would build on the existing park conservancies in Austin, working in partnership with the city, which should maintain ownership of the caps, stitches, and other infrastructure above I-35. An independent board and delegation of authority would be required but should be driven by the vision established by the Project Steering Committee. The roles and responsibilities for this entity would include the following:

- Participate in the pre-development and planning stages;
- Manage and program all public open space and related facilities (including retail); and
- Raise funds through philanthropy, earned revenues, and city resources for longer-term O&M.

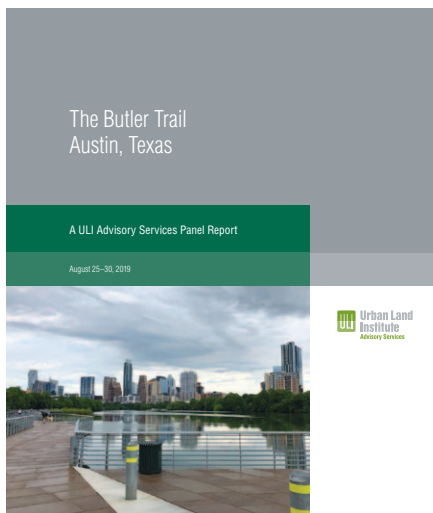
Potential Program Ideas

The proposed caps (East 12th Street to East 11th Street; East Eighth Street to East Sixth Street; East Fourth Street to East Cesar Chavez Street) and stitches (East Dean Keeton Street, Manor Road, East Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, East Fifth Street, and River Street) will create about 13 acres of new land. These new spaces should be programmed to serve all Austinites in ways that celebrate local communities.

One example is to incorporate the programming of the Palm School with new green space on the Fourth-to-Chavez cap, as is being done with the Frederick Douglass School in Leesburg, Virginia. Creating sports facilities and recreational areas on this cap that are responsive to the values of the local Mexican American community can work to celebrate the heritage of

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS AND GROWING CONSERVANCIES

In August 2019, the Urban Land Institute conducted a panel in Austin on the Butler Trail with the Trail Foundation and Austin's Parks and Recreation Department. That panel provided recommendations on forming a partnership with the city of Austin, programs focused on equity and prevention of displacement, and how a conservancy can better engage with the community and expand its funding and presence. Many of these recommendations would also apply to the proposed I-35 Conservancy. The full report can be found here: americas.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/ULI-Documents/ULI-ASP_Report_AustinTX_2019_Fin.pdf.



ULI

the Palm School and surrounding area. The caps to the north of Fourth Street should be programmed with similar design principles in mind. The Eighth-to-Sixth Street cap is uniquely positioned at a nexus of Project Connect, Austin's transit expansion initiative. Because of the possibility of increased accessibility, programming of this cap could consider connections to the Waterloo Greenway trail system as well as being a location of a mobility hub.

The 12th-to-11th Street cap can also consider how its program can interact with its surroundings. This cap will facilitate east-west connections for the University of Texas at Austin community and will be near the Waterloo Greenway trail system. Programming for bike parking, as done in a parking garage with 25,000 spaces in Utrecht, the Netherlands, could engage commuters, students, and trail users.



DANIELLE WALOUIST LYNCH/FLICKR

The Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston has a right-of-way similar to that proposed by the panel.

Heritage Retail

The panel encourages the I-35 Conservancy to ensure that any small-scale development on I-35's caps and stitches be programmed with what the panel calls heritage retail: a type of retail programming that prioritizes local businesses with historic ties to impacted communities. Such retail creates a destination for consumers and injects economic activity for businesses with ties to historically marginalized communities. It uses a mix of credit tenants that support the financing of any development and a specified setaside for businesses with local ties to Austin. This can include retail establishments already established in Austin and seeking to expand or move and retail startups founded by residents of the impacted communities.

The I-35 Conservancy in this case should work with the local business community to provide business coaching to help these small businesses find financing, develop effective marketing strategies, and thrive through successful operations. In



RONDO COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

The Selby Milton Victoria project in St. Paul, Minnesota, was developed by the Rondo Community Land Trust and the Community Housing Development Corporation to promote small, local, and minority-owned businesses. In addition to affordable housing at 30 to 60 percent of the area median income, 9,300 square feet of affordable commercial space was developed to ensure that local businesses are not displaced by new development in the neighborhood.

In addition, the city of Austin together with the I-35 Conservancy can prioritize the use of city-owned retail space for local businesses with historic ties to East Austin and the city as a whole.

Additional Governance Considerations

To implement the complex goals listed over the life of the projects described, stakeholders will need to identify and create an implementation framework that addresses the following elements.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR EQUITABLE GOVERNANCE

Equitable governance requires that the following questions be asked and answered:

- What is the decision-making structure? Who holds decision-making authority?
- How will institutional power and privilege be balanced?
- How will you co-create goals, metrics, and rules of engagement for the group?
- What is your ecosystem of stakeholder and assets? Who/what is missing?

Enhanced Capacity to Assume Complex Capital Construction and O&M

Implementation will require breadth and depth of capacity in both the delivery of a complex portfolio of capital projects and the ability to operate and manage various aspects of the new amenities created (particularly parks, community amenities, and public realm) over the long term. This will also include the ability to engage with the private sector in supporting infill development in the larger project area, as well as development and disposition of excess publicly owned land that could be used for affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing.

Ability to Harness Multiple Funding and Financing Sources

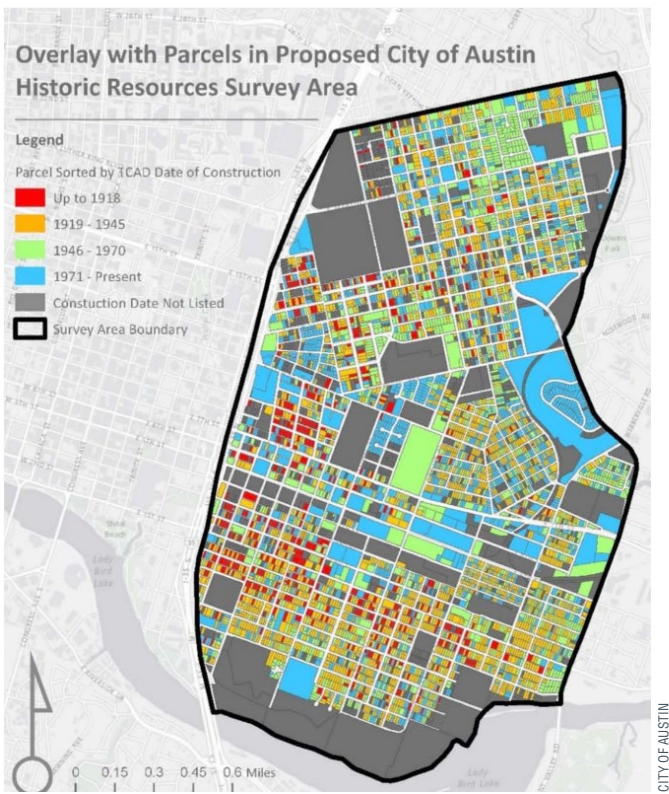
Projects of this nature typically require creative layering of multiple funding and financing sources. These may include value capture from TIF or assessments, state and federal sources, and philanthropic and private sources. In addition, sustained fundraising from various sources is often needed for long-term operation of project components. Governance mechanisms must allow for the implementing entity (or entities) to attract and manage the variety of resources required.

Policy Coordination and Advocacy

Successful implementation of the various project elements will require coordination and alignment of policy goals (and policies) of the multiple public stakeholders, and an implementing agency needs to ensure that these are coordinated. For example, the city of Austin will have jurisdiction over issues such as land use, local mobility/transportation, public safety, local funding, and policies around affordable housing, preservation of historical and cultural landmarks, addressing rising homelessness, and other community development objectives. Other stakeholders including the state and state agencies (TxDOT, Capitol, UT Austin) as well as the county, CAMPO, and Capital Metro will have additional project objectives and policy goals.

Creation and Sustainability of Partnerships

As demonstrated by similar projects across the country, the complexity and breadth of project implementation goals often mean that a single organization cannot lead or deliver all aspects. This requires the creation of strategic partnerships with public agencies, the nonprofit sector, community organizations, institutions, the private sector, and philanthropic institutions to deliver, fund, and even manage various aspects of the project over time.



Sites with historical significance but without a significant building or architectural resource should be considered in the historic preservation designation process. The intention of this practice is to ensure that the history of all city residents is honored and acknowledged—not as a way to block new development.



Conclusion

THE PANEL WAS INTRIGUED BY QUOTES throughout the week. One such quote was by Lady Bird Johnson in 1967 on the need to beautify the nation's highways:

The biggest decision of all concerns our highways, the greatest public works program of any civilization . . . our challenge is to see that these highways are not only superbly functional, but also in harmony with our landscape and a pleasant asset to our lives.

Much has changed in the more than 50 years since her words, and our communities have grown, evolved, and begun to acknowledge the harm that our nation's interstate system, urban policies, and automobile-centric planning have caused. However, she spoke at a time when the USDOT was still in its infancy, and only later did Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Chairwoman Nancy Hanks of the National Endowment for the Arts work together to create legislation specifically including "beautification" as a broadened role for USDOT. Lady Bird Johnson shows us all that inspiration and advocacy can challenge us in ways that create change for the better, enable more human governance, and improve our communities even in our greatest public works efforts.

Now, the panel believes that an opportunity once again exists to broaden the definition of what the I-35 project can be that better reflects the values and needs of Austinites today, including one that heals, increases safety and health, improves connectivity and mobility, enlarges opportunity, and enables co-creation of that vision. The communities and stakeholders of central Austin must engage now, or this opportunity to define the future will be lost and Austin will be defined by focus on a single corridor rather than the city as an integrated whole.

About the Panel

Marilyn Jordan Taylor

Panel Chair
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A professor of architecture and urban design, Taylor had a distinguished tenure as dean of the University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design from 2008 to 2016, having been a much-admired practitioner. She is recognized worldwide as a thought leader in urban design, as well as a woman pioneer in the fields of architecture, planning, and construction. Her global stature is complemented by her down-to-earth demeanor and proven ability to interact easily with constituencies across communities, government, industry, and academia, both locally and internationally. She is a leader who exudes not only intellectual breadth, but also deep enthusiasm and compassion in her dedication to enhancing the vitality of urban communities through design.

Taylor was partner in charge of the Urban Design and Planning practice at Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP and the first woman to serve as chairman of Skidmore Owings & Merrill; she is internationally known for her distinguished and passionate involvement in the design of large-scale urban projects and civic initiatives. Over a 35-year career with Skidmore Owings & Merrill, she led many of the firm's largest and most complex projects around the world. She was also both the first architect and the first woman to serve as chairman (2005–2007) of the Urban Land Institute, where she championed a renewed focus on cities, sustainable communities, and infrastructure investment.

An expert in using public space and infrastructure to shape urban districts and civic places, Taylor led the Urban Design and Planning practice in such projects as Columbia University's Manhattanville Master Plan, the East River Waterfront Master Plan, the reclamation of Con Ed's East River sites for mixed-use development, the new research building at Memorial Sloan-Kettering, and the new urban campus for John Jay College. She also founded and led Skidmore Owings & Merrill's Airports and Transportation practice, working on U.S. airport projects such as Terminal 4 at JFK, Continental Airlines at Newark, and the expansion of Washington, D.C.'s Dulles International Airport. Her international airport projects included SkyCity at Hong Kong International Airport and the Ben Gurion Airport in

Tel Aviv, as well as the new Terminal 3 at Singapore's Changi Airport.

Her transit work has been equally diverse, ranging from the award-winning Changi Airport Station in Singapore to the *Transit-Friendly Land Use Handbook* for New Jersey Transit. Her train projects include all 15 intercity rail stations from Washington, D.C., to Boston. She also led Skidmore Owings & Merrill's planning and transportation design for reuse of New York's Farley Post Office as the Moynihan Station.

Taylor is distinguished as well for her civic and professional leadership, having served as a member of the Partnership for New York City, president of the American Institute of Architects (NYC Chapter), visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and as one of the founding members of the New York New Visions Design and Planning Coalition, the design, planning, and real estate communities' unprecedented response to the events of 9/11. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Penn Institute for Urban Research.

She attended the MIT Graduate School of Architecture and received her M. Arch from the University of California, Berkeley. She received a prestigious David Rockefeller Fellowship from the Partnership for New York City in 1995.

Amitabh Bartakur

Los Angeles, California

Bartakur's core expertise is centered on economic evaluation of land use and environmental policy decisions. He assists developers and public agencies to balance land use strategies that are economically viable in the marketplace and fiscally sustainable in terms of their impact to public resources.

Throughout his career, he has led a wide range of projects in the area of land use economics, land use and environmental policy, strategic planning, tourism, and hospitality for a variety of public and private clients. In the United States his clients include the city of Los Angeles, the city of San Diego, the state of California, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, Credit Suisse First Boston, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, and Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport among others. Internationally Bartakur has

advised the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation in India, Economic Zones Company in Qatar, Khazanah Nasional Berhad in Malaysia, the City of Kunming in China, Reliance ADA Group and the DLF Group in India, and Ascendas and Grupo CIE in Mexico.

Before joining HR&A, Bartakur was a vice president with AECOM and served as regional director for the planning, design, and development business line, which included a multidisciplinary team of economists, planners, and designers, for AECOM in India. Prior to this, he led AECOM's economics practice in the US-West region, based in Los Angeles, and served as the Global Practice leader for the firm's Economic Planning and Real Estate market sector. Before joining AECOM, he was a principal with Economics Research Associates in Los Angeles, until the two firms merged in 2007.

Over the past few years, while with AECOM and Economics Research Associates, some of Bartakur's representative work has included an assessment of alternative futures for mixed-use centers and corridors in the South Bay region of Los Angeles addressing transportation constraints and travel behavior in the future, for the South Bay Council of Governments and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG); a real estate strategy for the redevelopment of the Jordan Downs public housing complex into a 1,500-plus-unit mixed-income/mixed-use community in Los Angeles with the Housing Authority of the city of Los Angeles; economic analysis to support the vision for the Crenshaw Corridor anchored by the Crenshaw-Exposition Transit Oriented Development along the Expo-Line light rail in Los Angeles; an economic assessment of the Park 101 District: a proposed freeway cap park bridging the 101 freeway in Downtown Los Angeles, improvements to the surrounding streetscape and neighborhood, and integration with proposed High Speed Rail at Union Station with SCAG; economic analysis to support the master plan and development strategy, for one of the first Free Economic Zones in Qatar with Economics Zones Company of Qatar; and economic analysis and implementation strategy for two investment regions along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor for Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation in India.

Bartakur is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, and Council of Architecture (India). Between 2010 and 2012 he served as a board member of the US-India Energy Cooperation Program (ECP) and headed the Energy Efficient Buildings working group under the ECP.

He holds a master's in urban planning with an emphasis in economic development and a master's in building science from the University of Southern California. He also holds a bachelor's of architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, India.

Eliza Edelsberg Datta

Boston, Massachusetts

Datta is president of E3 Development LLC, a real estate development company focused on delivering high-quality, innovative housing projects that create value and opportunity for local communities. She founded the company in 2018, building on a more than 20-year track record of developing affordable housing in markets throughout the Northeast. She has deep experience in Boston, where she has contributed to the permitting and execution of more than 2,000 housing units.

A creative developer with a successful track record of planning, financing, and executing a wide range of housing and community development projects, Datta previously directed development activities for the Community Builders (TCB), a national affordable housing developer, where she oversaw a \$1 billion pipeline of projects in the New England region. Before her work with TCB, she held senior development positions with New Boston Fund, a private equity real estate firm, and Phipps Houses, New York City's largest nonprofit housing developer.

She is a member of the Urban Land Institute Affordable and Workforce Housing Council, CREW Boston, and the Citizens Housing and Planning Association. Datta holds master of city planning and master of science in real estate development degrees from MIT and a BA in architecture from Yale.

Connie Fan

Tysons, Virginia

With training in both architecture and landscape architecture, Fan's design work focuses on placemaking that reflects the cultural, environmental, and architectural surroundings for the land. A frequent recipient of American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) awards, Fan's designs create beautiful, memorable places, as well as enhancing real estate value. Her work includes a wide variety of projects ranging from commercial, institutional, and planning projects to public streetscape revitalization. She brings energy and enthusiasm to all phases of every project, a dedicated approach with extensive benefits to the client. Fan is a LEED Accredited Professional with a focus on sustainable site initiatives and smart growth. She leads sustainable design efforts at LSG.

Fan holds a master of landscape architecture from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, as well as a degree from the School of Architecture at Southeast University, Nanking, and a certificate in Healthcare Garden Design from Chicago Botanical Gardens. In recent years, her engagement with community reflects her experience: she has served on juries and as a reviewer for AIA DC, ASLA, in academic settings such as George Washington University and University of Maryland, as well as serving on planning, zoning, and related committees in Fairfax County, Virginia. Her Tysons engagements have ranged from contributions to the Park System Master Plan Advisory Group to participation in the Tysons Partnership Urban Design Council and the Sustainability Council. Among her regional affiliations, Fan has been influential in the growth of the Greater Washington Asian American Architects and Engineers Professionals organization. She joined ULI in 2017; currently a Placemaking Committee member, she participated in several Washington ULI Technical Assistance Panels.

Fan's work with LSG has led to numerous ASLA awards, among them the St. Elizabeth Mitigation Project in the Capitol Hill area, Eliot on 4th residential development in the District of Columbia, and several awards for her work with the Howard

Hughes Medical Institute, Janelia Research Campus in Northern Virginia. Her work with HHMI has bridged the years from 2006 through the present, across many phases of development, construction, and expansion, and has achieved recognition through regional and Virginia and Maryland awards.

Antonio Fiol-Silva

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fiol-Silva is a nationally recognized leader in planning and design, and the founding principal of Philadelphia-based SITIO architecture + urbanism. His work has garnered numerous awards and recognition that include a ULI Global Award of Excellence for the SteelStacks Art and Cultural Campus; a U.S. Green Building Council Project of the Year Award for Paseo Verde, the nation's first LEED ND Platinum-certified project; and an AIA National Urban Design Award for the *U.S. House of Representatives Office Buildings & South Capitol Area Plan* in Washington, D.C.

He has served in the public sector, in Boston as one of the principal planners for the Boston Redevelopment Authority's Central Artery Air-Rights Redevelopment Plan and in his native San Juan, Puerto Rico, as the director of the city's Department of Planning and Urbanism. He has extensive experience in the planning and design of urban infrastructure on a wide range of projects, ranging from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania's Hoover-Mason Trestle linear park to San Juan's 17.2-kilometer/14-station Tren Urbano rapid-transit line.

Fiol-Silva serves as a global governing trustee of the Urban Land Institute. He has been chair of ULI Philadelphia, president of AIA Philadelphia, and president of the Center for Architecture + Design. He has served as commissioner of the Delaware River Port Authority, the Philadelphia Historical Commission, and the board of the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation. Fiol-Silva has a bachelor of architecture from Cornell University, a master of architecture in urban design from Harvard University, and was a Fulbright Fellow in Barcelona, Spain.

Kendra Jackson Freeman

Chicago, Illinois

Freeman joined the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) in 2016. With more than 20 years of experience in program development and operations, she held leadership positions in the private and nonprofit sectors with a focus on affordable housing and capacity building. As director of community development and engagement, she oversees MPC's housing policy and equitable transit-oriented development programs and guides the organization's approach to community engagement in research, policy advocacy, and technical assistance.

Before MPC, Freeman worked in affordable housing development and management, where she invested in people to improve the quality of life in their communities. As executive director of Holsten Human Capital Development, NFP, she oversaw the nonprofit's daily operations, including an annual budget of more than \$1.5 million and 25 staff serving more than 1,200 households living in subsidized housing.

She is a native Chicagoan and licensed real estate broker. She holds a bachelor's in sociology and a master's in public administration from DePaul University. Freeman serves as the co-chair of Elevated Chicago, is on the advisory committee for Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Greater Chicago, and is on the board of directors for Storycatchers Theatre.

Ilana Lipsett

Palo Alto, California

Lipsett is a senior program manager with the Institute for the Future where she works on a range of topics to create a more equitable and resilient future. She is a community design strategist and has worked at the intersection of policy, community engagement, and development.

Lipsett works with cities, real estate developers, businesses, nonprofits, international aid organizations, and creative communities around the globe to harness our collective

capacity to address the world's biggest challenges. She creates and activates spaces to catalyze community development through art, culture, dialogue, public input, and economic opportunity, using culture as a means for bridging divides and human-centered design as a guiding principle for economic development and urban planning. She cofounded [freespace], an initiative to temporarily transform vacant spaces into community, cultural, and arts hubs.

Michael Rodriguez

Washington, D.C.

Rodriguez is the leader for market research and insights for CBRE's Washington, D.C.–Baltimore region. As the area thought leader on market trends, economics, and data, he works closely with CBRE's research and marketing teams across all asset types. He has experience in public policy, urban planning, economics, land use, statistics, and geospatial methods.

Most recently, Rodriguez was director of research for the George Washington University Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis. While there, he cowrote major reports (with Christopher Leinberger) such as *The WalkUP Wake-Up Call: New York* (2017), and *Foot Traffic Ahead 2016: Measuring Walkability in America's Largest Metros*.

His broad professional background in real estate and infrastructure includes advising clients such as the World Bank's transport group, the California High Speed Rail Authority, and the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority. He is an expert in fiscal and economic impacts of real estate and infrastructure projects, having advised dozens of public agencies and private-sector clients on market trends, economic impacts, and cost/benefit analysis. At Smart Growth America, where he serves as visiting research director, he led the development of a nationally leading fiscal impact of development model for state and local governments.

Active in professional organizations, Rodriguez is an associate member of the Urban Land Institute in ULI Washington and a member of the ULI Professional Advisory Services Honorary

Association. He is a member of the American Planning Association and AICP certified planner. His activities with the Transportation Research Board include published and presented research ranging from the economics of car-sharing to statistical models of infrastructure and pedestrian fatalities and safety.

Rodriguez is pursuing a PhD in public policy and public administration at the George Washington University Trachtenberg School, where he focuses on urban policy. He holds an MS in urban and regional planning and an MPA from the University of Wisconsin–Madison La Follette School. Rodriguez is also the visiting research director at Smart Growth America.

David K. Scott

Atlanta, Georgia

As senior principal of DaVinci Development Collaborative LLC, Scott brings over 35 years of experience in program and construction management, as well as in design. He has a successful history leading major initiatives in metro Atlanta and throughout the Southeast. Throughout his career, he has led development teams on regionally significant initiatives, institutional programs, and real estate development projects from acquisition and planning to design and construction management. His technical knowledge, communication skills, and diplomatic style have earned him a stellar reputation with colleagues, industry leaders, and Atlanta decision-makers for managing quality, containing costs, and producing results.

Before joining DaVinci, Scott served as senior vice president, director of planning and development, at IntegralGude Program Management, where he led the execution of key projects including the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and the College Football Hall of Fame in downtown Atlanta. He also directed large public management projects including the Glynn County Public Schools and the Georgia Department of Transportation MMPT. Before IntegralGude, Scott served as president and chief executive officer of DKS Program Management. DKS provided real estate development consulting

services for urban development programs throughout the Southeast. He was a designer and construction administrator for transportation, institutional, commercial, and residential projects for a number of clients.

With previous experience as a project architect for 10 years, Scott brings a unique background to his role at DaVinci, leading teams in the areas of program management, construction management, and design. With an expertise in finding the best balance of form and function, he helps clients complete projects that exceed expectations. He is currently serving as project executive for a number of DaVinci projects including the Stitch in Atlanta and Seventh & Tryon in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Scott's roots are deeply imbedded in urban revitalization. He was first introduced to projects of regional scale while an architecture student at Georgia Institute of Technology. He enjoys volunteering his time with various local civic groups and serves on the board of directors for the Council for Quality Growth.



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