



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2014

Following its recognition by Austin City Council as a stakeholder in the I-35 Capital Area Improvement Program (CAIP) process, the North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition 2 (NCINC2) announced today that it joins the City in calling upon TxDOT to develop a City-cosponsored stakeholder working group for Segment 4 of the Mobility35 Capital Area Improvement Plan (CAIP). NCINC2 has previously stated that such a working group should be composed of City officials, TxDOT, and representatives of businesses, organizations, institutions and neighborhoods that will be affected by changes proposed to I-35 between Airport Boulevard and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

NCINC2 is composed of representatives from participating neighborhoods east and west of I-35 in North Central Austin, including Blackland, Cherrywood, Delwood II, Eastwoods, Hancock, Mueller, Ridgetop, Rogers Washington/Holy Cross, Schieffer-Willowbrook, Wilshire Wood/Delwood I, and Windsor Park. The group formed earlier this year in response to several threatening proposals contained in initial TxDOT plans. Elements of NCINC2's stated mission include informing neighborhoods of proposed changes, sharing information, communicating with City officials and other authorities, and advocating for east-west connectivity and viable transportation alternatives.

The call for a Segment 4 stakeholder working group is an attempt to fill the gap created by the limited representation within the existing stakeholder working group for downtown Austin. With the assistance of Senator Kirk Watson's office, TxDOT invited various stakeholders to weigh in on the specific challenges in the downtown segment of the CAIP. That group has been meeting for over six months but excludes representatives from the neighborhoods, businesses and institutions in North Central Austin and does not discuss the project north of 15th Street.

Segment 4 contains equal if not more difficult engineering challenges, yet has not received such focused community attention. The right-of-way is highly constrained and the upper and lower deck split creates a noisy, dangerous and unsightly physical and psychological barrier between East and West Austin.

“Early in the process we identified the need for TxDOT to convene a true stakeholders working group in order to reach a plan that not only works for TxDOT but also one that works for the broad array of neighborhoods and significant institutions that abut I-35 through North-Central Austin,” said Mateo Barnstone, Chair of NCINC2. The coalition applauded the Council’s support for Item 90 at the Thursday, 26th City Council Agenda, attached below, that directs the City Manager to “have the City serve as a cosponsor and communicate to TxDOT the need for a stakeholder working group for Segment 4 of the CAIP to explore mobility improvements[.]”

Concerned residents near Segment 4 have had no organized forum to express dissatisfaction with TxDOT proposals such as the “Super Street” proposals that would have disrupted East-West access across the corridor and needlessly reinforced the barrier of I-35. “This has resulted in an ad hoc process of responding to issues only as they are spotted by watchful residents,” said Barnstone, “rather than taking a comprehensive and holistic look at the challenges and opportunities presented by reworking I-35 through this segment and discussing them as a community. A true stakeholder working group can provide the forum needed to have an open exchange of ideas and discussion of all elements the plan in a comprehensive way.”

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) is currently working on the I-35 Capital Area Improvement Program (CAIP) to develop short- and mid-term mobility improvements to I-35 between SH 130 and Posey Road; and

WHEREAS, TXDOT has been collecting stakeholder input through a variety of means, including a Downtown Stakeholder Working Group convened with the help of Senator Kirk Watson, to weigh in on the specific challenges of the downtown portion of the project, in Segment 5; and

WHEREAS, Segment 4, stretching from Airport Boulevard to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is also a complicated segment that is adjacent to a variety of major stakeholders, including the University of Texas, hospitals, and the Mueller development; and

WHEREAS, the North Central I-35 Neighborhoods Coalition 2 (NCINC-2) has formed, composed of representatives from Blackland, Cherrywood, Delwood II, Eastwoods, Mueller, Schieffer-Willowbrook, Wilshire Wood/Delwood, Ridgetop, and Windsor Park, in order to discuss and give input to TXDOT on the CAIP and have requested a stakeholder working group; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to have the City serve as a cosponsor and communicate to TxDOT the need for a stakeholder working group for Segment 4 of the CAIP to explore mobility improvements, and to report their response to Council by July 15, 2014.

ADOPTED: , 2014 **ATTEST:** _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk