



Mayor Steve Ader
Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo
Council Member Ora Houston
Council Member Delia Garza
Council Member Sabino Renteria
Council Member Gregorio Casar

Council Member Ann Kitchen
Council Member Don Zimmerman
Council Member Leslie Pool
Council Member Ellen Troxclair
Council Member Sheri Gallo

December 1, 2015

Dear Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem and Members of Council,

On behalf the Member Neighborhoods of the North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition 2 (NCINC2), I am writing to voice our support for a long-range vision plan for the Interregional Highway 35 (IH35) Upper Decks through North Central Austin that seriously assesses their removal, and to share our opposition to the current TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks in the absence of such a plan.

As you are likely aware, the Texas Department of Transportation has announced a \$4.3 billion 10-year plan ("Mobility 35") that includes adding an auxiliary lane to the Upper Decks and retrofitting support beams to handle additional weight (the "TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks").

We are concerned that the current TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks reinforces a cycle of auto-dependency and commits significant tax dollars to expanding the life of the Upper Decks without having studied long-term alternatives. We believe that any investment in the Upper Decks must be done in concert with and in support of a long-range plan for the future of the Upper Decks; therefore, **we do not support the TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks without it being part of a City of Austin-led, funded plan on a comprehensive vision for the Upper Decks that includes an analysis of the social, environmental and economic benefits to the City that might be derived by their removal.**

There are several factors that contribute to our support of such a study and concern regarding the existing Plan for the Upper Decks:

- Nationally and internationally, cities are removing large, outdated transportation infrastructure at an unprecedented rate and seeing tangible benefits to economic development, mobility and quality of life. The TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks runs contrary to that trend and investment in the Upper Decks without a long-term plan will delay that process for Austin.
- The TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks should support the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and its principles of a Healthy, Sustainable and Compact & Connected City. The Upper Decks are currently a visual, physical, economic and psychological obstacle that discourages pedestrian and bicycle mobility, disconnects neighborhoods, depresses property values and economic development and subjects nearby residential and commercial areas to elevated noise, air and water pollution.
- Other projects in the Mobility35 Plans, such as the decision to eliminate “super streets” and the most recent plan to depress IH35 through Downtown to allow for future capping of the interstate, have benefitted greatly from public input, particularly through stakeholders focused on improving connectivity across IH35, while the Plan for the Upper Decks has received no such input.
- The physical distance between on- and off-ramps on the upper decks all but ensures that the auxiliary lanes will have the effect of induced demand—adding additional carrying capacity, traffic generation and traffic volumes on the Upper Decks—and, with such, will not be a sustainable or demonstrative improvement upon local and regional mobility.
- The TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks includes no provisions to encourage any mode of transportation other than the personal automobile and does not plan sufficiently for, or contribute to, alternative mobility modes in the future.

This resolution comes on behalf of Member Neighborhoods in Council Districts 1, 4 and 9, and with the support of the Cherrywood, Delwood II, Holy Cross, Schieffer-Willowbrook, Wilshire Wood/Delwood I and Windsor Park Neighborhood Associations.

We call on the City of Austin to take a stronger, more visionary role in the future of IH35 and believe a long-term plan for the Upper Decks is an essential piece of this proactive local leadership. Therefore, we ask for your support in advancing a City of Austin Resolution on a funded plan on a comprehensive vision for the Upper Decks, and we look forward to working together toward this plan.

Sincerely yours,



Brendan Wittstruck, Chair

On behalf of the Member Neighborhoods of the North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition 2

att: Resolution in Support of a Long-Term Vision for the IH35 Upper Decks

cc: Marc Ott, City of Austin City Manager
Rob Spillar, City of Austin Transportation Department
Senator Kirk Watson
Rep. Dawwna Dukes, District 46
Rep. Elliott Naishtat, District 49
Ashby Johnson, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Phillip Tindall, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Mike Heiligenstein, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority
Joe Webber, Texas Department of Transportation
Marc Williams, Texas Department of Transportation
Karen Lorenzini, Texas Department of Transportation
Greg Malatek, Texas Department of Transportation
Steve Miller, HNTB Corporation
Hillary Calavitta, HNTB Corporation
Dustin Elliott, HNTB Corporation
Beverly Silas, Beverly Silas & Associates
Greg Fenves, University of Texas
Richard Rhodes, Austin Community College

21 November 2015

NCINC2 Resolution Supporting a Long-Range Vision for IH35 without Upper Decks

WHEREAS the Texas Department of Transportation has announced a \$4.3 billion 10-year plan (“Mobility 35”) for Interregional Highway 35 (IH35) that includes adding an auxiliary lane to the Upper Decks through North Central Austin and retrofitting support beams to handle additional weight (the “TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks”) and which reinforces a cycle of auto-dependency in committing significant tax dollars to expanding the life of the Upper Decks without a long-range vision for IH35 without the Upper Decks; and

WHEREAS the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan calls for a Healthy, Sustainable and Compact & Connected City and the City of Austin should take a leadership role in decision-making regarding proposals for IH35, advocating for principles consistent with the Imagine Austin Plan; and

WHEREAS the Upper Decks are a visual, physical, economic and psychological obstacle that discourages pedestrian and bicycle mobility, disconnects neighborhoods, depresses property values and economic development and subjects nearby residential and commercial areas to elevated noise, air and water pollution; and

WHEREAS the North Central I-35 Neighborhood Coalition 2 (NCINC2) has been recognized as a stakeholder in the Mobility35 planning process by City Council Resolution 20140626-090, and NCINC2 and the City have repeatedly asked for TxDOT to convene a true stakeholder’s working group to discuss the various solutions that might be explored in this segment of the Mobility 35 Plan; and

WHEREAS other proposals within the Mobility35 planning process have benefitted significantly from iterative revision through public stakeholder input, especially when that input has supported the tenets of the Imagine Austin Plan, while the TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks has not yet received sufficient input from the citizens of Austin; and

WHEREAS NCINC2 requires a long-term comprehensive independent study before it can support a significant investment into expanding the capacity and life of the Upper Decks; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that in absence of such a long-term comprehensive study, NCINC2 opposes the TxDOT Plan for the Upper Decks and requests that the City of Austin fund a plan for a comprehensive vision for the Upper Decks that includes an analysis of the social, environmental and economic benefits to the City that might be derived by their eventual removal.

ADOPTED 21 Nov. 2015

ATTEST Marty Hood
Marty Hood, NCINC2 Secretary