

August 30, 2016

To: Chelsey Smith
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From: Jayne Nussbaum
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Thank you again for the opportunity to open a dialogue between the Mobility 35 consulting team and the residents of the Dellwood II, Wilshire Woods/Dellwood I, Willowbrook/Scheiffer, Mueller and Cherrywood neighborhoods regarding the impacts of Mobility 35 on our respective neighborhoods. Below are questions and design suggestions from the Dellwood II Neighborhood Association.

Dellwood II Neighborhood Association questions regarding Mobility 35

1. The NEPA process is considering two "build" designs for downtown--the Modified Existing and the Lowered options. Why is only a single "build" concept being studied through north central, despite stakeholder interest in other options?
2. In 2014, a Downtown Stakeholder Working Group was convened, including residents, businesses, institutions and City officials; This group's work led to the development of what is now called the Lowered Option. Why has a similar group not been convened in North Central to look at additional design options north of MLK Boulevard, despite repeated requests from neighborhood groups and the City of Austin? Will this group be convened?
3. Delwood 2 is a neighborhood with two full-access entries (on Airport Blvd) and two limited-access entries (on the northbound frontage road); the proposed ramp will eliminate full access on one of these entries. What is TxDOT doing to maintain current levels of access in and out of Delwood 2 for residents?
4. Diverging diamond interchanges have never been used in urban cores (only suburban roads); how has TxDOT studied the appropriateness of this design with regard to pedestrian/bicycle comfort and access in an urban residential area and its impact on access in and out of Delwood 2?
5. The new eastbound off-ramp from the northbound upper decks is being proposed because the existing ramp is said to not meet needed design speed standards; presumably, a new ramp will carry a higher design speed and invite higher speed traffic merging on Airport at the intersection of Rowood Road. What is being done to mitigate vehicle speed at that intersection?
6. Traffic speeds on Airport Blvd and the northbound frontage road are very high and TxDOT designs do not appear to include provisions to mitigate speed. How is TxDOT working with the City of Austin to mitigate vehicle speed on Airport Boulevard and on Delwood 2 neighborhood streets without negatively impacting local connectivity and neighborhood access and mobility?
7. With the new proposed northbound frontage road intersection connecting to Philomena, what will TxDOT do to mitigate traffic speeds of vehicles on Philomena along the Mueller Northwest Greenway?
8. What will TxDOT do to mitigate the increase in noise pollution from both the upper and lower decks with the anticipated increase in vehicle carrying capacity on IH35?
9. How will TxDOT measure the impacts on relevant NEPA criteria including public health and safety and quality of the human environment, specifically with regard to the residential populations and historic and cultural resources between MLK Boulevard and 51st Street?

Recommendation: Conduct a health impact assessment (not just an environmental impact assessment) to systematically assess health risks and benefits (identifying which people may be affected and how they may be affected) and develop practical recommendations to promote positive health effects or to minimize adverse health effects.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/health-impact-project/health-impact-assessment>

10. The Airport Blvd Corridor Plan is one of the corridors that would be partially funded by the current COA \$720mm bond initiative in November, but some elements of this Plan will be precluded by TxDOT design proposals including the diverging diamond and a proposed eastbound off-ramp from the upper decks. How will TxDOT work with the City of Austin to reconcile these conflicts?
11. Dallas has recently completed a holistic study called CityMAP that included the social, environmental and economic impacts of the IH35 corridor in addition to mobility metrics. Will TxDOT undertake a long-term visioning study for IH35 through central Austin and, if so, when?
12. Has TxDOT considered the viability and impact of re-designating the new TX-183/Bergstrom Expressway or SH130 as IH35 to reduce reliance on the current IH35?

Dellwood II Neighborhood Association suggested design options to consider:

1. Consider using a design similar to the one at South Lamar and Brodie Oaks shopping center (first intersection north of Ben White Blvd.) This design allows for cars to make u-turn and turn left. It has four lanes of traffic which allow for one of the lanes to take a left at separate time based on the light sequences. This concept could be used at the Aldrich light. It would allow us to get to our neighborhood safely and those who want to go to Mueller they could now have to lane to choose from that would turn onto Aldrich street.
2. Elevate the Airport exit ramp You could take the concept above and make the Airport exit ramp going E from IH35 elevated above Parkwood Rd and Rowood. This would allow neighborhoods to go under the elevated structure (i.e, go under ramp and take left onto Airport from DW2 or go right if in Wilshire/DW1 - see #5 below)
3. Remove the feeder road continuous lane that requires a car to yield to traffic coming off the interstate. This along with the interstate traffic never allows for a break in traffic in trying to go left from DW2 to go E on Airport and the same holds true for cars coming out of Wilshire/DW1 trying to go W on Airport.
4. Move the IH35 off ramp further back and have the traffic use the feeder road and go to a red light at Airport. At that point the traffic could either go across to the feeder road, take a left going W on Airport or take a right going E on Airport.
5. Create dedicated exits from Dellwood 2 two exits (Parkwood and Norwood) going E on Airport and from Wilshire/DW1 (Parkwood and Alley) going W on Airport. Design them so cars could not enter from Airport - if you want to get into DW2 you would need to go to the Aldrich light and make a u-turn then turn right onto Norwood or Parkwood. (Is this the U-Turn intersection design currently being considered by TxDOT at Aldridge and Airport?)
6. Eliminate I-35 Airport ramp and move all traffic to Barbara Jordan or 51st street off IH35. Based on improvements traffic could use Barbara Jordan to go into Mueller or take 51st round about to go back to Airport Blvd and then go E or W.