

Community Concepts Study Results

Community Concepts Feasibility Study



ASSESS

Independent 3rd Party **Assessment of Feasibility of Community Concepts**

RECONNECT
AUSTIN

RETHINK
35

DOWN
AUSTIN TOWN
ALLIANCE



EVALUATE

Feasibility of community concepts as standalone alternatives

Elements of the community concepts that are currently incorporated or could be **reasonably incorporated** into the proposed TxDOT build alternatives

Elements of the community concepts that require **further study and analysis**



CONSIDER

Anticipated growth in population and traffic volume

Design and constructability of community concepts and TxDOT build alternatives

Impacts of community concepts on city streets and highways in the area

Alignment with TxDOT's Purpose and Need for the project



METHODS

Literature and media **reviews**

Stakeholder **interviews**

Comparative **analysis**

Development parcel **analysis**

Travel demand **modeling**

Key Elements of Community Concepts

RECONNECT AUSTIN

Depress mainlanes of I-35

Create a continuous cap from Holly Street to MLK, Jr. Blvd.

Create 6-lane boulevard on cap

Narrow current footprint by removing frontage roads and allow development on reclaimed land in ROW

Restore east-west connectivity

Increase in multimodal travel

RETHINK 35

Redesignate SH 130 to I-35

Convert I-35 to urban boulevard

Provide dedicated bus lanes and future rail in center of boulevard

Through traffic uses other highways around central Austin

Restore east-west connectivity

Increase in multimodal travel

Use reclaimed ROW for specific city purposes

DOWN AUSTINTOWN ALLIANCE

Depress or lower mainlanes of I-35

Cap over some areas but not continuous

East-west connectivity with stitches

Decrease downtown entrances and exits

Cantilever frontage roads

Allow development on reclaimed land in ROW

Restore east-west connectivity

Increase in multimodal travel

FINDINGS Related to June 2021 TxDOT Alternatives Incorporated / Possible

Status	Element or Issue	Notes/Continued Analysis
<p>Already incorporated into one or more TxDOT alternatives</p>	<p>Freeway mainlanes below ground between Holly St and Airport Blvd.</p>	<p>Alternatives have lowered general purpose lanes removing high-speed roads from the surface and improved street network connectivity (east-west and north-south).</p>
	<p>Add street network connections (east-west and north-south).</p>	<p>5th Street connection being added on TxDOT alternatives</p>
	<p>Enhance multimodal mobility on the east-west connections.</p>	<p>TxDOT plans for east-west connectivity improvement, additional bike and pedestrian crossings, and transit provision on managed lanes and cross streets.</p>
	<p>Reduce vehicular-related deaths and maximize safety</p>	<p>TxDOT's Road to Zero Initiative</p>
	<p>Mitigate traffic spillover into neighboring streets and communities.</p>	<p>Community concepts reduce capacity on I-35 and increases traffic in neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Partially incorporated into one or more TxDOT alternatives</p>	<p>Match City of Austin guidelines for Vision Zero.</p>	<p>TxDOT's Road to Zero Initiative supports City of Austin's Vision Zero Initiative Engineering Actions.</p>
	<p>Boulevard can facilitate positive climate change impacts.</p>	<p>Facilities that support bus service, walking and biking are part of the TxDOT alternatives.</p>
	<p>Cantilever frontage roads to reduce footprint and ROW.</p>	<p>Cantilevered frontage roads do not allow entry/exit ramps. Cannot be the only design used.</p>
	<p>Use cap and stitch at various locations along and across I-35.</p>	<p>TxDOT alternatives allow for caps to be built; wider cross street bridges are being incorporated. Caps would be funded by others. Concept being studied with the City of Austin and Downtown Austin Alliance.</p>
<p>Could be incorporated into one or more TxDOT alternatives</p>	<p>Provide direct transit access from the managed lanes into downtown and the UT campus.</p>	<p>All build alternatives include a design option to study feasibility of direct transit access at Riverside and Dean Keeton in coordination with Capital Metro.</p>

FINDINGS Related to June 2021 TxDOT Alternatives

Not Feasible / Not Likely / TxDOT Can Participate in Discussions

Status	Element or Issue	Notes/Continued Analysis
Entire element is not compatible with TxDOT alternatives	Freeway mainlanes moved below ground. Build six lane urban boulevard on surface.	Requires full and continuous cap.
	Replace freeway with six lane boulevard.	A key element of the purpose and need is improving mobility. Model results show large increase in trips on city streets already over capacity.
	Use the rest of the ROW for affordable housing.	Housing is not feasible within TxDOT ROW
	Boulevard creates developable land within existing ROW.	Some of the developable land would be located between existing developments with direct access to frontage roads and the new boulevard. It is unclear how existing developments would be accommodated or impacts to them mitigated.
	Add rail transit to median.	Capital Metro's Project Connect does not include rail transit on I-35. The managed lanes provide a reliable route for transit.
	Redesignate SH 130 to I-35.	80% to 85% of truck traffic is destined for areas near I-35. If truck trips are pushed off I-35, they will use east-west city streets, some through neighborhoods, to get to their eventual destination.
	Increase dense, walkable, mixed-use, and equitable transit-oriented developments along I-35.	TxDOT alternatives include additional east-west connections, additional bike and pedestrian crossings, and provide a reliable route for transit on managed lanes.
Likely not feasible for any TxDOT alternatives	Divert trucks to SH 130 or other corridors.	Many trucks are destined for downtown/UT/ Capitol and East Austin.
Opportunity for TxDOT to participate in a discussion	Create affordable housing.	This is not within TxDOT's jurisdiction, but it could coordinate if/when initiatives are made by other agencies that are responsible for affordable housing.
	Direct new revenues to anti-displacement program.	This is not within TxDOT's jurisdiction, but it could coordinate if/when initiatives are made by other agencies that are responsible for revenue generation.
	Help build local wealth, enhance and protect historic and cultural resources, and prevent displacements by utilizing revenues from I-35.	This is not within TxDOT's jurisdiction, but as part of project planning and design, TxDOT is working in close collaboration with the city of Austin and other agencies.
	Maximize socially, economically, and environmentally beneficial land use; reform land use policies.	TxDOT does not have the ability to reform land use policies—City of Austin would have to lead.

2045 Evening Peak Volume Changes



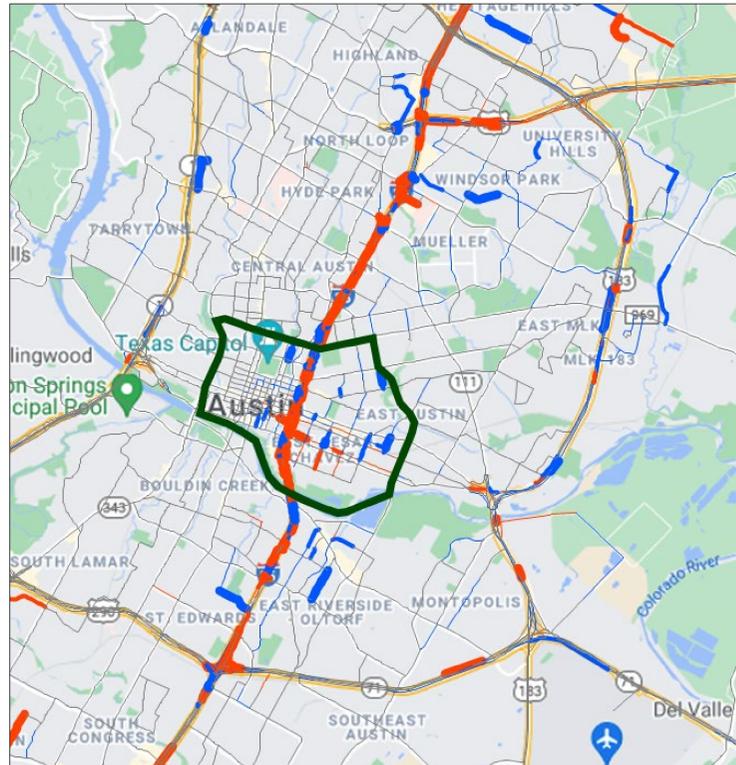
**TxDOT
Alternatives**

**RECONNECT
AUSTIN**

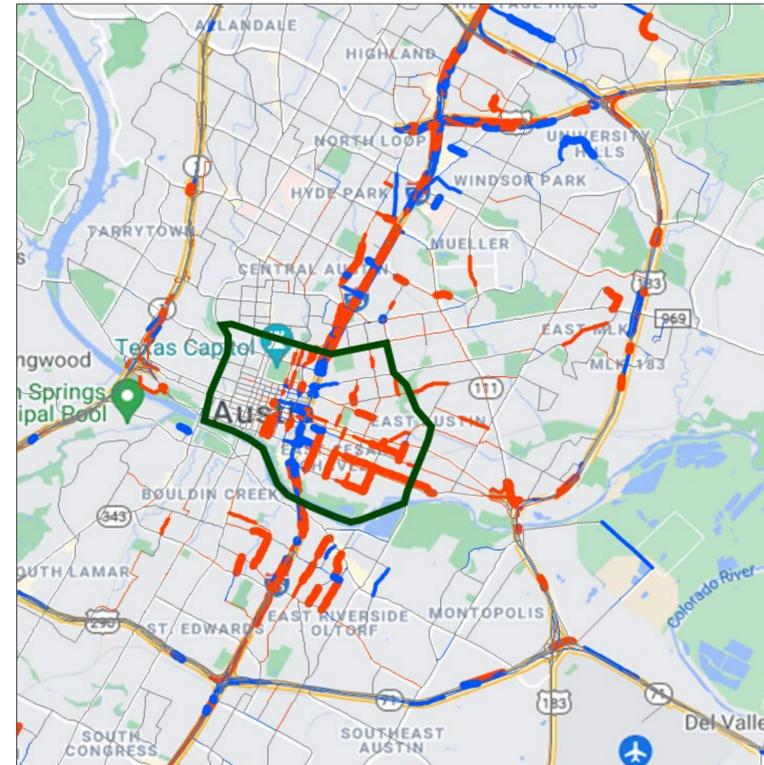
**RETHINK
35**

Legend

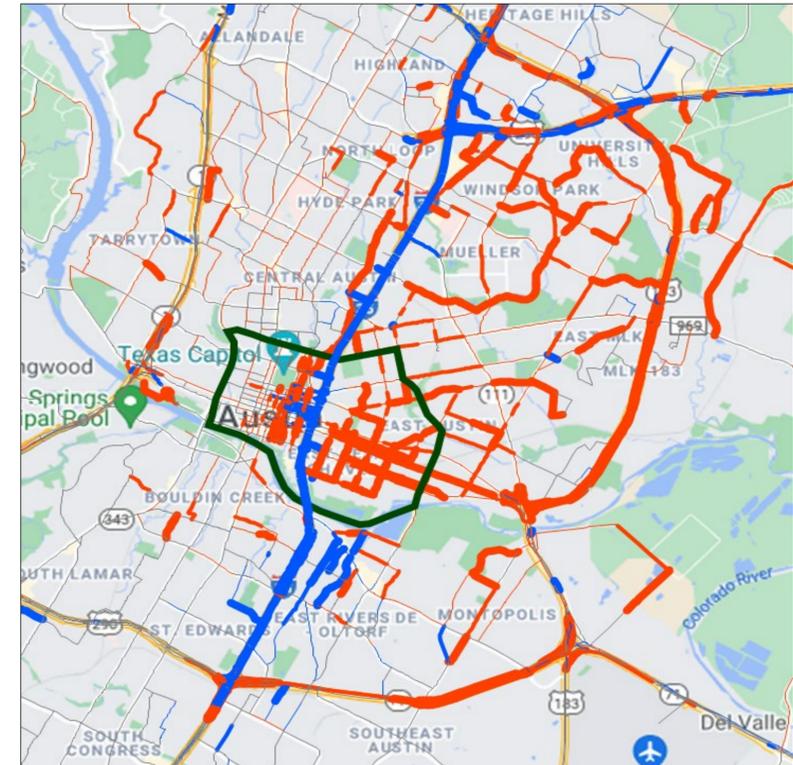
- █ 25% or more
- █ 15% to 25%
- █ 5% to 15%
- █ -5% to 5%
- █ -5% to -15%
- █ -15% to -25%
- █ -25% or more



TxDOT Alternatives
Volume increases on I-35 but decreases on city streets.



Reconnect Austin
Reduces entrance/exit ramps through downtown pushing traffic to city streets primarily in east Austin.



Rethink35
Converts I-35 to a boulevard and pushes traffic to city streets primarily in east Austin.

RED	Volume increases	GREY	Links with low volume (less than 100 trips) and small changes
BLUE	Volume decreases		

Limitations



State law prohibits
TxDOT from controlling
land use or
development code



State policy prohibits
TxDOT from funding
decks, caps or stitches

FHWA requires ROW
agreement for aerial
rights above interstates



Rail on I-35 not funded
in Project Connect
20-year plan

The expense of local enhancements that would be required

Capital Cost Estimates (in millions, rounded) Elements to be Purchased or Funded by Others	Reconnect Austin	Rethink35	DAA/ULI
	Continuous Cap of I-35 from Lady Bird Lake to MLK, Jr. Blvd.	Eliminate I-35. Replace with boulevard.	Build caps and stitches at various locations over I- 35.
Cap Construction ¹	\$497	- No Cap -	\$212
Right of Way ²	\$99	\$111	\$0
"Landlocked" Parcels ³	\$200	\$200	\$0
SH 130 Debt Payoff	\$0	Unknown cost to buy SH 130 debt	\$0
Total Capital Cost	\$796	\$311	\$212
Annual Cap Maintenance ⁴	\$8	\$0	\$2
1	1,326,000 sq. ft. * \$375/sq. ft.		566,280 sq. ft. * \$375/sq. ft.
2	1,040,000 sq. ft. * \$95/sq. ft.	1,117,000 sq. ft. * \$95/sq. ft.	
3	Estimated from TTI	Estimated by TTI	
4	Estimated from Advance Funding Agreement for Klyde Warren Park	Estimated from Advance Funding Agreement for Klyde Warren Park	Estimated from Advance Funding Agreement for Klyde Warren Park

Conclusions

The community concepts are not viable as standalone alternatives

Continuous cap requires significant 3rd party funding within a constrained timeframe

Opportunity to implement community concept elements including frontage road locations

Many elements of the community concepts are being incorporated into TxDOT alternatives

Lowered or tunneled mainlanes

Foundational support for caps with 3rd party funding

East-west multimodal connectivity

Transit access and multimodal enhancements