

Our Future 35 is an engagement series intended to kick-start the process of co-creating a community vision for the I-35 corridor. TxDOT is focused on reconstructing I-35 – the actual roadway. That project is called I-35 Capital Express Central. Our Future 35 is focused on how to guide and leverage this major investment to achieve positive outcomes for the Austin community.

**INFO
GUIDE**
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8/8

Community Conversation

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ULI

Urban Land Institute Report takeaways

What is the history of I-35? And how was the project of Our Future 35 made?

In 1928, East Avenue became the dividing line between People of Color and Whites through the adoption of the 1928 Plan and establishing racist governing policies in OUR city. In the 50s, this dividing line, once a place of community gatherings of all kinds and colors, became I-35, a physical barrier solidifying the racial and economic practices and systems that have plagued Austin's evolution. Now that we are one of the most racially and economically segregated large cities in the country, with one of the most congested highways through the center of it, it's time to dismantle the systems, and infrastructure, that got us here.

As a first step in the process to create a shared community vision for the future of the corridor, the Downtown Austin Alliance engaged the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) national advisory services. ULI brought a panel of diverse experts to Austin in February 2020, where they talked and worked with the community, gathering input and ideas, and presented preliminary recommendations for the future of I-35 at Huston-Tillotson University.

What have been the conclusions of the Urban Land Institute report?

Based on the interviews the panel conducted and the many reports the panel read, the panel recommended the following for our new community process.

- **Co-create a vision for the future.** This 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 many stakeholder groups have experienced.
- **Create the Scoping Working Group.** This would be a direct outgrowth of the work of the I-35 Task Force formed for the creation of the briefing materials, panel week, and follow-up work required following publication of this report to engage in the NEPA process.
- **Establish Values + Principles.** These principles are intended to guide decision-making of community coalition and the physical design for covering the highway.

EPISODE 1

8/22

Healing
+ Futures
Thinking

WE ARE HERE
EPISODE 2

9/26

Co-Creation:
Establishing
Our Values

EPISODE 3

10/24

Resilience:
Values to
Actions

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Can you explain some of the conversations and episodes you've had?

We now have a roadmap and direction from ULI to create a new future for I-35 – but it is up to the community to be specific about what we want. The many perspectives on what should happen to I-35 do not need to mutually exclusive. Rather than having separate conversations, it's time for everyone to gather around the same table to learn about each other's experiences. Let's foster shared understanding, mutual respect and empathy around each other's challenges and aspirations for the future of I-35. A roadway project of this scale can take 5-8 years from schematic design to breaking ground, but the community needs to work together in advance of TxDOT's process, which kicks off in the fall of 2020. Can we co-create a new process that confronts the racist, unjust policies of our past and centers our community's power to determine our own future? Can we come to a shared community vision that serves our needs first?

Agreements for Co-Creation

- Acknowledge the past and address the pain
- Create shared understanding of community
- Make agreements around responsibilities, roles, and participation
- Recognize there will be differing priorities. Commit to understanding the core needs underlying these.
- De-colonize the process: de-center the voices who have been making decisions and center the people, communities, voices who have been left out and most negatively impacted by past decisions.

What are the next episodes about? And how can we participate and get involved?

This episode starts the conversation of co-creating the values of our community to help shape principles that are intended to guide decision-making process of a community coalition and the physical design for covering the highway.

Examples of questions for community conversation:

- What are some events or movements that have shaped the community (physically, socially, geographically)?
- What values do those represent?
- Which of these values do you want to hold onto and have them help drive and define your next 30 years
- Which do you want to leave behind?

Workshops + Breakout Sessions

(below are ideas and are not set in stone)

- Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return
- History + Native Land
- Mobility Justice
- Equity as a Foundation
- Transportation
- The Aging & Future of Infrastructure
- Economic Development + Small Businesses + Community Wealth Building
- Preservation, Public Space, and Community
- Environmental Vulnerability & Sustainability
- New Governance and a New Model of Ownership

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