

SRCC I-35 Redesign Briefing

Yorgos Economos

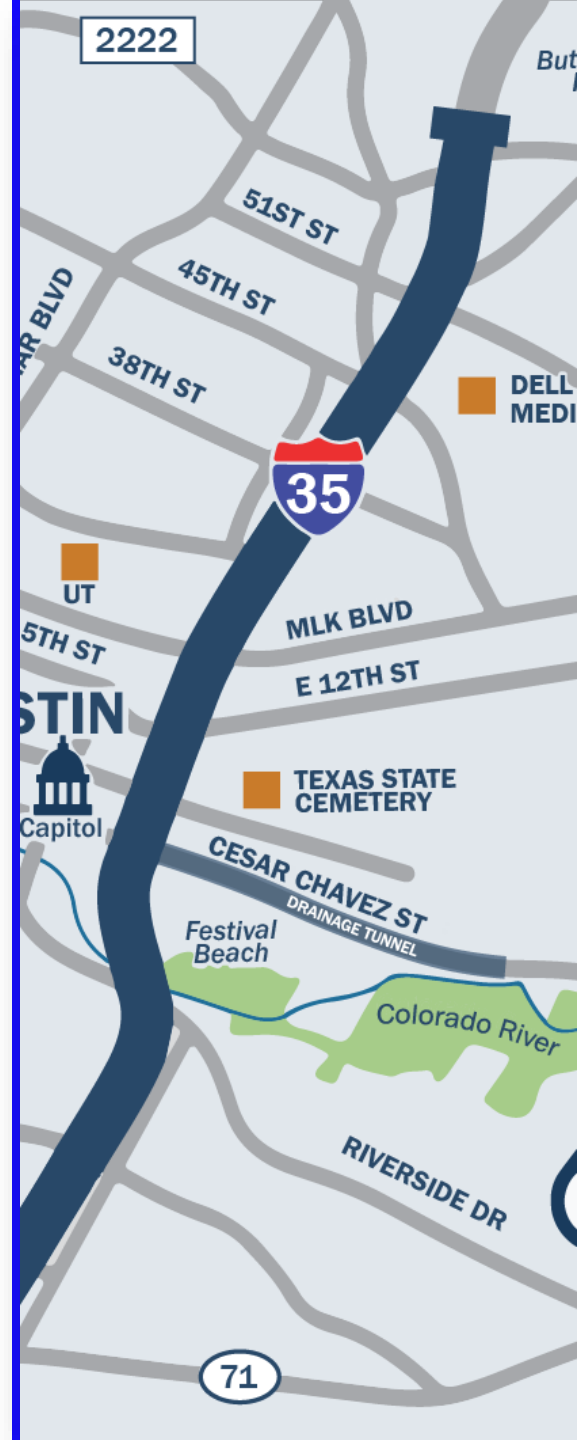
Mobility Volunteer, SRCC

2/21/23



SRCC I-35 Briefing

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Project Status.

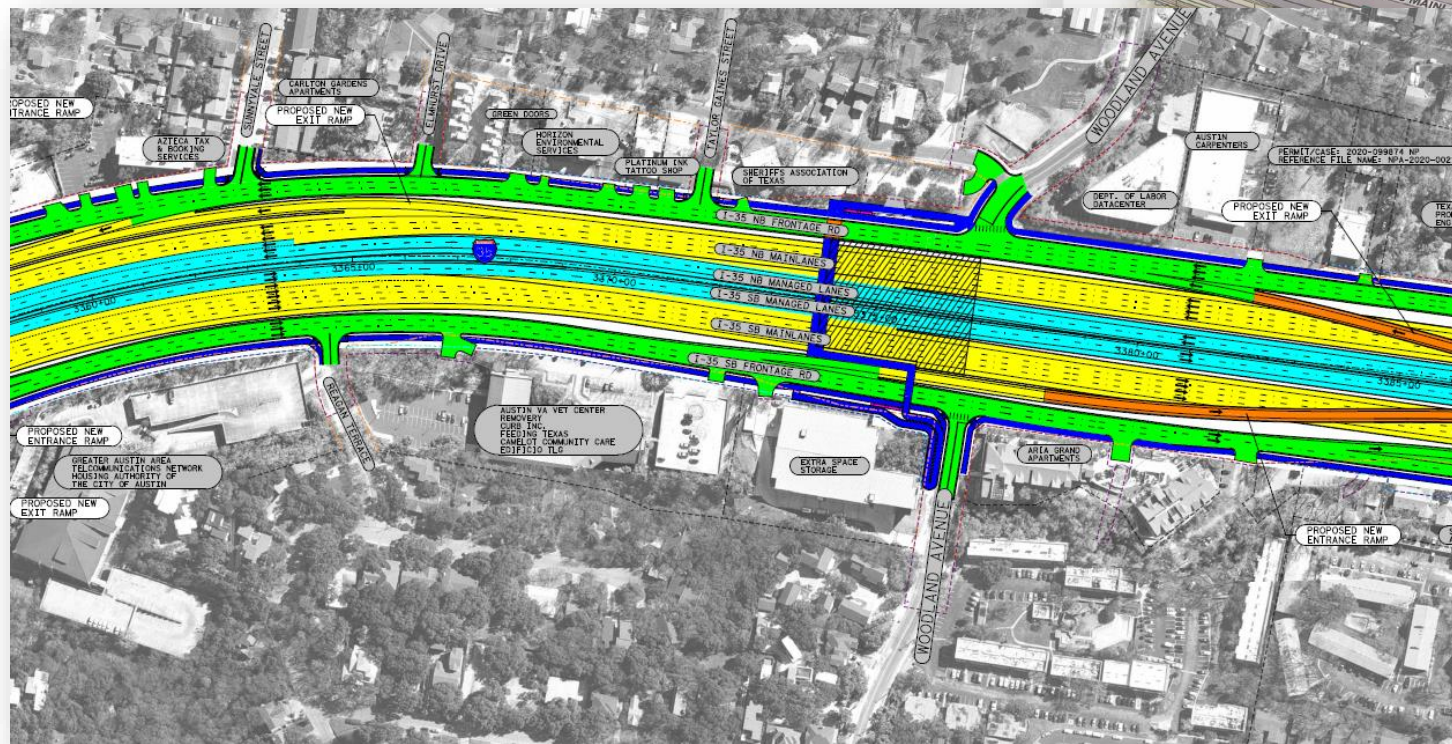
Project Status

TxDot identified a preferred design just in the last month.



Project Status

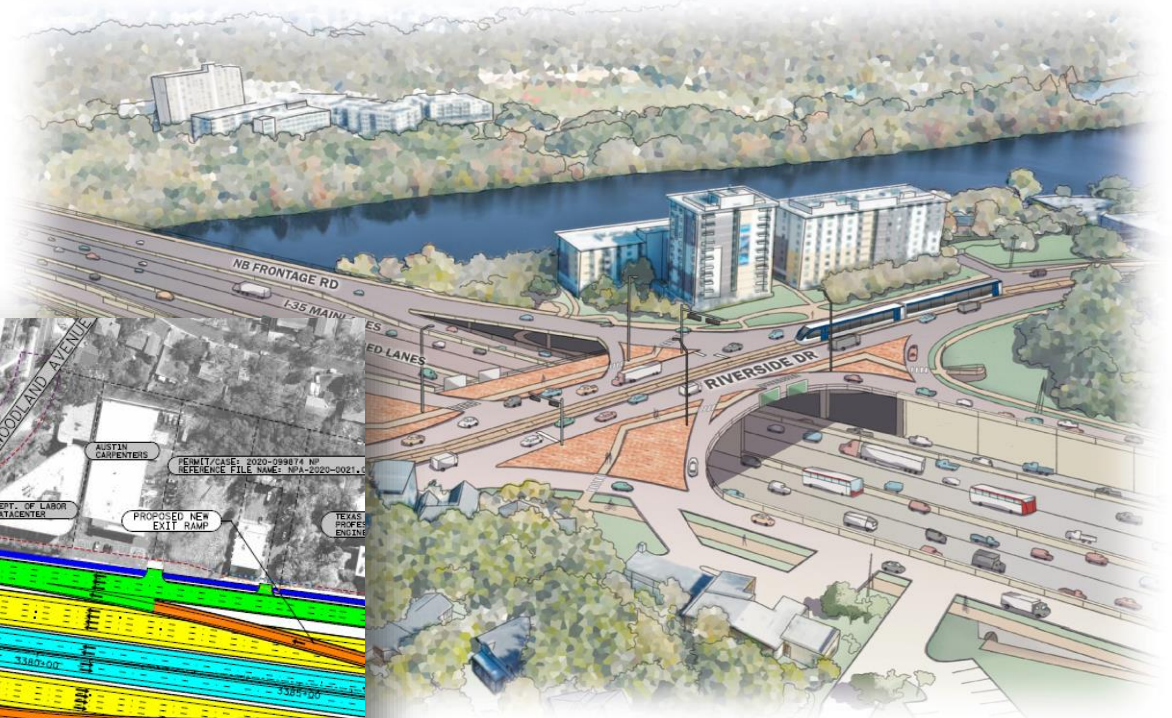
The preferred design is virtually indistinguishable south of Town Lake from when they began this process in 2021, except they added a SPUI design on Riverside and removed a crossing at Woodland.



Envision I-35 at Riverside Drive

Modified Alternative 3 – Looking Northeast

This rendering is a concept only. Further analysis and coordination are required. All features are subject to change. (January 2022)



The new highway would be about 20-22 lanes, depending on how you count ramps and frontage roads.

Impacts of Expansion.

Impacts of Expansion

Induced Demand and Why Highway Expansions Don't Work

The Katy Freeway in Houston is the poster child of why highway expansions don't work

- The highway was widened to 23 lanes, including HOV lanes like what TxDot is proposing in Austin
- After completion, commutes were **19 minutes longer** by car (a 40% increase)
- Behaviors quickly change with road users using the new highway.
- Commuters might switch from transit or change their route to use the highway.

Source: <https://cityobservatory.org/reducing-congestion-katy-didnt/>



Impacts of Expansion

Health Effects

- 2017 research found evidence that living near highways is associated with a higher incidence of cognitive decline and dementia.
- Living near highways producing noise pollution is tied to a greater risk of cardiac issues and heart attacks.
- A Danish study found that long-term exposure to air pollution may increase the risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Traffic pollution has been tied to increased asthma attacks in children and may cause a wide range of other effects including the onset of childhood asthma, impaired lung function, premature death and death from cardiovascular diseases and cardiovascular morbidity.
- The areas most affected, they concluded, was roughly the band within 0.2 to 0.3 miles (300 to 500 meters) of the highway.
- Another study found an increase in the risk of heart attacks from being in traffic.



Do We Need to Do This?

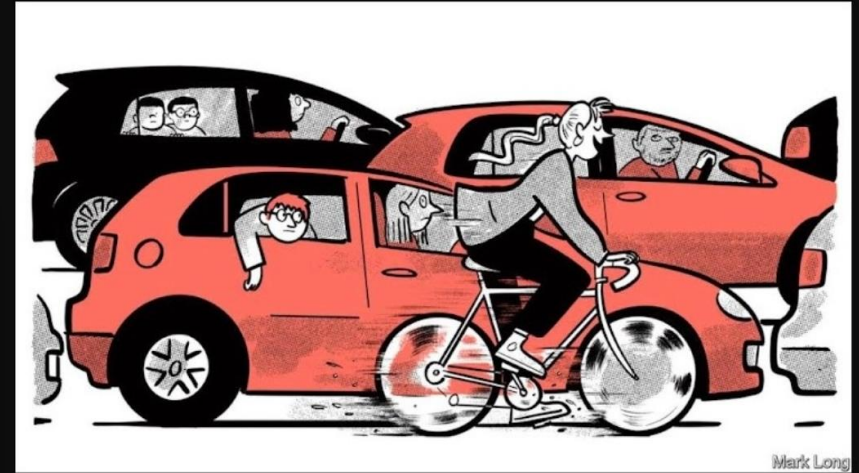
Trends

In the news



<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/06/us/widen-highways-traffic.html>

Top stories



International

Throughout the rich world,
the young are falling out of
love with cars

That could have big political ramifications

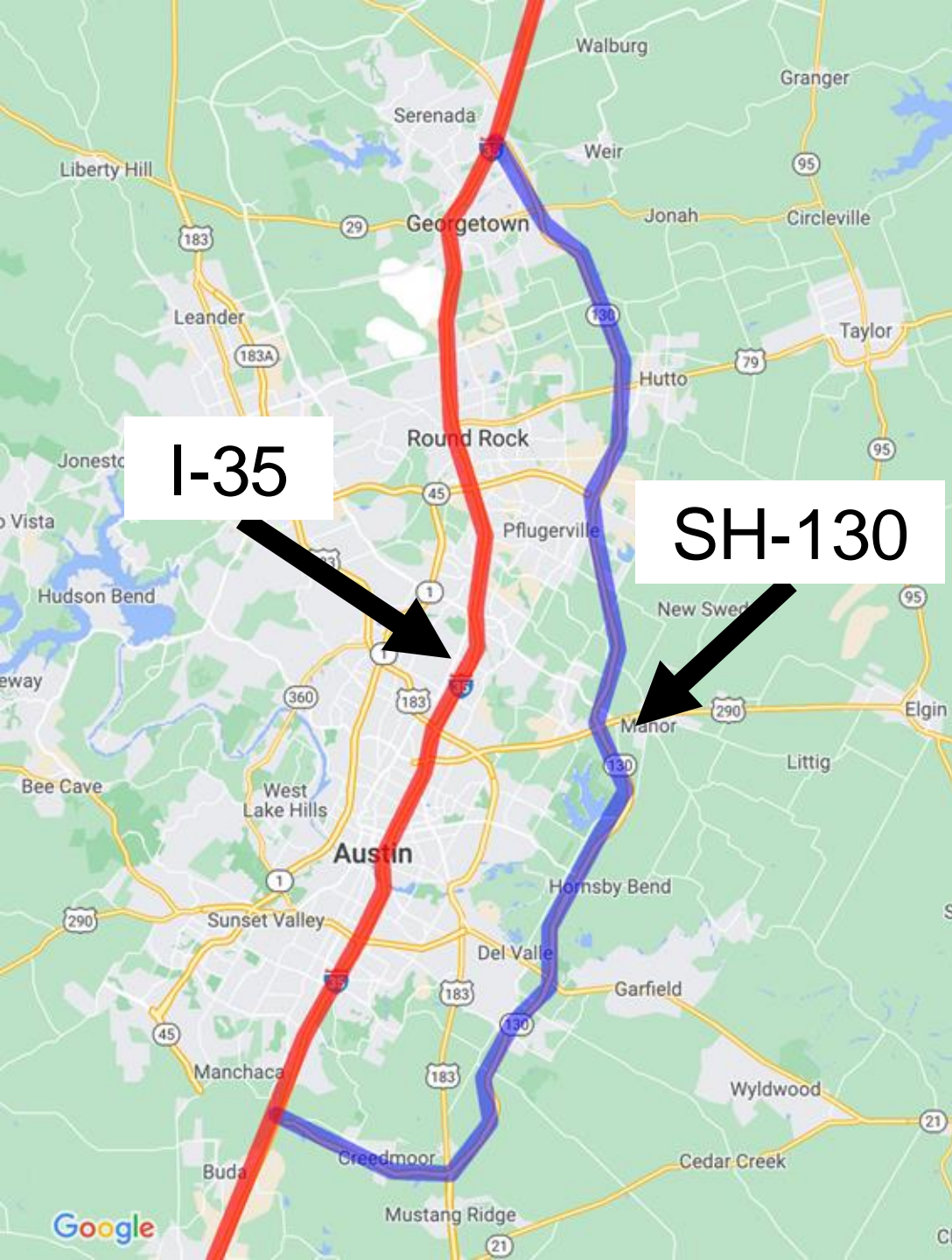
<https://www.economist.com/international/2023/02/16/throughout-the-rich-world-the-young-are-falling-out-of-love-with-cars>



Nearly 55% of Austinites want to get around in a way other than driving

In 2020, Austinites overwhelming voted for over \$7bn for public transportation, walking, and bicycling

Potential Improvements.



Reroute Vehicle Traffic Around Austin Rather than Through It

“Just as I-35 today goes around many cities, it could similarly go around central Austin, and its current path could be redesigned as a business route.”

- Chris Riley, Op-Ed, Austin American Statesman

Bury a business I-35 parkway and cap it with frontage roads and greenspace





Add a new greenway where I-35 is currently



Seoul, Korea was able to add an entire pedestrian promenade and creek where a highway once was.





After rerouting traffic, anything is possible for the 40+ acres of space formerly taken up by vehicles.

Reimagination + Inspiration.

An aerial photograph of a multi-lane highway with heavy traffic, showing cars and trucks moving along the road. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.









Oakland, CA



Milwaukee, WI





What you can do.

Email TxDot before 3/7

capexcentral@txdot.gov

Demand reforms to designs for south of Town Lake such as:

1. Lowering and capping (or tunneling) the highway to prevent noise, air, and light pollution.
2. Ask for traffic calming measures along the frontage roads and cross streets, so cars are not speeding on cross streets; remove the SPUI at I-35 so Riverside isn't turned into a highway.
3. Restore street crossings at Woodland Ave for cars, bikes, and pedestrians.
4. Reroute all interstate truck and car travel that does not have a destination in the core of Austin around the city on 130 and 183 (including redesignating 130 as I-35)
5. Ensure that no businesses and housing are acquired along I-35 for a highway expansion
6. Ask for new chain of greenspace over a capped or tunneled highway.
7. Reduce I-35 highway speeds to a maximum of 50 mph on I-35 from Ben White Blvd to Koenig Ln.
8. Reduce frontage road speeds to 30 mph and even lower in proximity to Travis High School.
9. Provide right of way for vehicles from I-35 to park and ride at the planned Project Connect Orange Line at Ben White Blvd-South Congress.
10. Redevelop reclaimed land along I-35 for new teacher housing, grocery, and park amenities.

Contact Your Councilmember by 2/22

On 2/23, the Austin City Council is voting on the first-ever resolution outlining concerns with TxDot's I-35 expansion plan.

Contact Information

D9 (Zo Qadri): 512-978-2109

D3 (Jose Velasquez): 512-978-2103



Sign the Rethink35 Petition

You can stay up-to-date on the growing movement against expansion and get involved in the push for alternative solutions.

This organization is pushing for a study of alternatives.

Rethink35.com

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/rethink35>



Thank you!

Yorgos Economos

Questions? Reach me at: mygreekfrd@gmail.com