

March 15, 2022

Dear Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Fraser,

Thank you for presenting to our AIA Austin Advocacy Roundtable on February 28th. Our members care deeply about the built and natural environment, and the urban fabric of Austin in which we all live, work, and play. Therefore, we feel strongly that the I-35 Cap Ex Central project should be an exemplary design that will serve citizens (traveling in all modes) well for generations to come.

We appreciate the modifications to Alternative 3 in response to community feedback. It is encouraging to see/hear that:

- Twenty fewer private properties will be condemned
- Frontage roads have been paired to form a more intuitively useful boulevard
- There are more opportunities for widened bridges
- There are more opportunities for full caps at street level
- Removed flyovers and upper decks
- Narrowed at Woodland to save affordable housing apartments
- Worked to incorporate transit accommodations

We have outstanding questions and concerns regarding:

- How many total private properties are still slated for condemnation?
- Why does the frontage road boulevard change from the west side to the east side?
- Could the frontage road boulevard concept be extended further North?
- What is the total width of the typical widened bridge?
- Do the two significant caps shown count as tunnels and therefore require the more expensive life-safety measures that were mentioned?
- What can TxDOT do to ensure the caps and enhanced bridges get funded and built as they are central to the improvements that were presented and must happen in their best possible form for this project to be considered an asset worth the expense and years of disruption

We request that TxDOT explore solutions that seek to:

- Lessen impact on private property owners
- Reduce walled off landscaping spaces ("enhanced aesthetic opportunities"). These types of spaces don't belong in the urban fabric as they kill the vibrancy with dead space and remove "eyes from the street" that help ensure the safety of an area. Instead consider offering this leftover ROW back to impacted

property owners with first right of refusal or to the City of Austin with a low-cost, long-term lease that could facilitate an active public use

- The ability to build two and three story buildings on the caps (and stitches where possible) to maintain a vibrant street, enhancing the experience of crossing over the Interstate
- More Intuitive pedestrian crossings (these should be something that a 10-year-old could understand).
- Ensure caps and stitches are fully funded
- Removing even more non-signalized U-turns
- Reduce proposed boulevard / frontage road speeds to below or at 30mph, as there is the need to create a ped-friendly environment that aligns with Vision Zero goals (zero deaths). Speeds below 30mph ensure that outcome
- Incorporate creative solutions with technical knowledge from professionals such as urban designers, architects, landscape architects; in addition to the engineered-focus solutions proposed to date

We look forward to actively participating in the upcoming VOICE meeting to provide direct feedback toward better designed pedestrian crossings (especially at Riverside Drive and Airport Boulevard), widened bridges, and shared use paths.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Camille Jobe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Camille Jobe, AIA
President, AIA Austin