

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 16, 2020

TO Honorable Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

SUBJECT **Regional Transportation Council I-35 Capital Express Resolution**

On March 12, 2020, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) adopted a resolution related to the I-35 Capital Express Central Project in Austin.

At the March 24, 2020 Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting, staff will be seeking the Committee's direction on a Dallas City Council resolution of support for the RTC's resolution.

Background

Each year, the Texas Transportation Commission (Commission) approves a Unified Transportation Plan (UTP), which is used by the Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) as a 10-year plan to guide transportation project development. The 2020 UTP was approved on September 1, 2019.

On February 27, 2020, TxDOT briefed the Commission on proposed updates to the 2020 UTP to address a \$4.3 billion funding gap for the IH-35 Capital Express Central Project in Austin. As proposed, this project adds two non-tolled managed lanes in each direction from US 290E to US 290W/SH 171. The February 27th proposal recommended allocating \$3.4 billion from unallocated 2020 Commission funds, re-prioritizing \$600 million in existing TxDOT funds from other projects in the Austin area, and including \$300 million for the project in the 2021 UTP. As proposed, some of the \$4.3 billion funding gap would come from funds that are allocated, or will be allocated, to the DFW area.

On March 12, 2020 the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) adopted a resolution asking the Commission to consider an alternative method of funding the IH-35 Capital Express Central Project. The RTC strongly supports the Commission's efforts to advance this much-needed major capital improvement to the IH-35 corridor in the central Austin area. However, due to the funding impact to the DFW area, the RTC is requesting the Commission consider an alternative method to close the project's funding gap.

The RTC's resolution requests the Commission review successful managed lanes projects (IH-635 and the North Tarrant Express) implemented by TxDOT in the Dallas-Fort Worth region as examples of projects that leveraged public-sector funds to build major transportation projects. These projects utilize tolled express lanes to partially fund the project costs.

The RTC is concerned that using \$3.4 billion in unallocated 2020 Commission Funds and committing another \$300 million from the 2021 UTP jeopardizes other important projects

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in the State. Doing so may redirect more than \$1 billion from projects in the DFW metroplex to this project in Austin.

There is not enough money to fund all the infrastructure needs in the State. As such, the DFW region and the Houston area have both successfully used tolled-managed lanes to help fund major highway construction projects. This is a model that should be considered by the Commission for the IH-35 Capital Express Central project.

For more information, please see this video by the North Central Texas Council of Governments: [NCTCOG Video](#).

The Commission will receive public comments on the proposed changes to the 2020 UTP online at [Transportation Commission Public Comments](#) from March 13 through April 13. A public hearing will be held on April 7th and the Commission will take action at their regular meeting on April 30th.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.



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Assistant City Manager

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