



Legislation Text

File #: 20-689, **Version:** 1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Mobility Solutions, Infrastructure, and Sustainability
AGENDA DATE: April 8, 2020
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): All
DEPARTMENT: Department of Transportation
EXECUTIVE: Majed Al-Ghafry

SUBJECT

Authorize a resolution **(1)** supporting the Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) March 12, 2020 "Resolution on the Texas Transportation Commission's Proposed Updates to the 2020 Unified Transportation Program,"; and **(2)** authorizing the City of Dallas RTC members to provide comments on the proposed revisions to the 2020 Unified Transportation Program during the open comment period and at public meetings and public hearings on behalf of the City Council - Financing: No cost consideration to the City

BACKGROUND

This item supports a resolution passed by the RTC asking the Texas Transportation Commission to consider an alternative method of funding the Interstate Highway (IH) 35 Capital Express Central Project in Austin.

Each year, the Commission approves the Unified Transportation Plan (UTP). The UTP is used by the Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) as TxDOT's 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; reprioritizing \$600 million in existing TxDOT funds from other projects in the Austin area; and including \$300 million for the project in the 2021 UTP.

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. 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 in the State. Specifically, there is concern that 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. 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.

PRIOR ACTION/REVIEW (COUNCIL, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS)

This item has no prior action.

FISCAL INFORMATION

No cost consideration to the City.

MAP

Attached