



CONGRESS  
FOR THE NEW  
URBANISM  
CENTRAL TEXAS  
CHAPTER

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August 16, 2013

The Honorable Sheryl Cole  
The Honorable Chris Riley  
City of Austin  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin, TX 78767

Dear Mayor Pro Tem Cole and Council Member Riley:

Thank you for supporting further study of the economic benefits of Reconnect Austin. The economic study of this proposal is crucial to understanding its true benefits and costs. **We respectfully request that the City of Austin Economic Study clearly identify the opportunities to create direct economic benefits to the City of Austin.** This should include a detailed cost/benefit analysis that compares the current TxDOT proposal to the Reconnect Austin proposal.

The Congress for the New Urbanism - Central Texas Chapter is partnering with Reconnect Austin to advocate for the study of this important project. The goals reflected in Reconnect Austin's proposal align with CNU's Charter: "We stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions...." CNU is a national thought-leader in strategies for the successful repurposing of highways, transforming them into assets that restore the urban fabric and add value to communities. Together we are asking that the upcoming economic analysis provide clear tools to further the community conversation about how I-35 should be rebuilt though the urban core of our city. To continue that conversation we need the ability to compare the two proposals that have emerged:

TxDOT's current proposal for depressed main lanes with 3 ½ partial caps and high speed frontage roads,

vs.

Reconnect Austin's current proposal for depressed main lanes with a continuous cap and a city boulevard that connects to the grid and provides transportation options, as well additional access into downtown Austin.

We believe it is vital to carefully consider the important taxpayer investments we have already made along the I-35 corridor. These include the Waller Creek flood control tunnel, the City-owned police station site, the 11 acres owned by Capital Metro along 5<sup>th</sup> Street, the E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, the public investments in the new Medical District, and the future growth of the University of Texas campus. These present a tremendous opportunity not available to other communities in Central Texas. Reconnect Austin offers a viable approach to leverage these assets, and provides a long-term solution generating multiple sources of recurring revenue.

With the vintage I-35 now requiring a major make-over, Reconnect Austin presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It will benefit all aspects of the City of Austin - not just

transportation - by creating recurring new property tax revenues, sales taxes, housing stock, employment and corporate recruitment opportunities and other quality of life benefits.

Again, we thank you for supporting further study of the economic benefits of Reconnect Austin. Please ensure that the study includes the detailed cost/benefit analysis needed for a well-informed community conversation. With so much at stake, we cannot afford to go part way in addressing what could be a truly sustainable, long-term solution for Austin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cid Galindo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cid" being more prominent than the last name "Galindo".

Cid Galindo, President  
The Congress for New Urbanism, Central Texas Chapter

cc: Honorable Lee Leffingwell, Mayor, City of Austin  
Honorable Mike Martinez, Council Member, City of Austin  
Honorable Kathie Tovo, Council Member, City of Austin  
Honorable Laura Morrison, Council Member, City of Austin  
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Robert Goode Assistant City Manager, City of Austin  
Rob Spillar, Director of Transportation, City of Austin  
Greg Canally, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, City of Austin  
Jon Hockenyos, President, TXP