May 7, 2024

Transportation Policy Board
Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
8303 N Mopac Expressway Suit A210
Austin, TX 78757

Marc Williams
Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear CAMPO Transportation Board Members and Mr. Williams,

On September 26, 2023, the Travis County Commissioners Court unanimously approved a letter to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) expressing concern about the proposed environmental impacts of the I-35 Capital Express Central and the lack of response to comments submitted by the court on February 28, 2023. The majority of concerns raised by the Court, in both the February and September letters, remain unaddressed and should be addressed before this project moves forward.

Subsequent to this letter, the City of Austin approved City Council Resolution 20231019-045, expressing concern about the total increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the project. The City's Resolution acknowledges that I-35 is a "generational project, and its design should not be finalized until informed by the timely regional GHG-reduction planning initiatives" are completed that would inform necessary mitigation efforts to address this project's impacts on the Austin/Travis County region.

The Travis County Commissioners Court joins the City of Austin in asking that the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) complete the CAMPO Regional Mobile Emission Reduction Plan. The Commissioners Court further requests that the CAMPO Transportation Policy Board provide an opportunity for local jurisdictions, including Travis County, to consider its findings and recommendations prior to the final approval of funding for the construction of I-35 Central in the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

Additionally, on February 7, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized standards for fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). PM2.5 poses serious environmental and public health risks, especially in environmental justice populations with high incidence of chronic respiratory conditions, such as the neighborhoods along the I-35 corridor. In forecasts issued by the EPA, Travis County is in nonattainment and the impact of this roadway is likely to worsen these conditions. In Travis County Commissioners Court's letter to TxDOT dated February 28, 2023, a number of concerns regarding PM2.5 are outlined, as well as the Court's requested actions to be taken by TxDOT. Those concerns remain unaddressed and actions not taken. Since that letter the EPA's strengthening of the NAAQS for PM2.5 has been finalized "to protect millions of Americans from harmful and costly health impacts, such as heart attacks and premature death" (EPA).

The Travis County Commissioners Court also requests that impacts of the new EPA regulations be fully vetted and assessed by CAMPO and the other jurisdictions throughout the CAMPO area prior to the release of funding for I-35.

Respectfully,

Travis County Commissioners Court