



CTX

CONGRESS
FOR THE NEW
URBANISM
CENTRAL TEXAS
CHAPTER

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May 17, 2013

Ms. Stacey Benningfield
IH-35 Project Manager
Texas Department of Transportation – Austin District
P.O. Box 15426
Austin, Texas 78761-5425

Via E-mail (Stacey.Benningfield@txdot.gov) and US Mail

Dear Ms. Benningfield:

CNU-CTX strongly urges TxDOT, and the Mobility 35 team, to carefully evaluate the “Reconnect Austin” IH-35 Cut and Cap Concept, by including this Concept as the fourth alternative proposed for the urban core (Lady Bird Lake to MLK) segment of IH-35.

Central Texas is home to an active chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism. CNU-CTX is actively involved in crafting and implementing *Imagine Austin*, Austin’s Comprehensive Plan, which sets the long-range vision and planning goals for the City of Austin. In that document you will find repeated emphasis on the concepts of compact and connected. The City of Austin gathered extensive community input and built consensus for the *Imagine Austin* vision, including the need to integrate land-use and economic development goals into all transportation planning.

The first of the six core concepts in *Imagine Austin* is: “Grow as a compact, connected city.”

The full text can be found at

[ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/web_IACP_full_reduced.pdf](http://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/web_IACP_full_reduced.pdf)

The “Reconnect Austin” IH-35 Cut and Cap Concept can implement Austin’s community-wide policy direction of compact and connected. Any proposal for IH-35 that passes through the urban core of our City should both address and adhere to that community vision.

IH-35 has historically functioned as a social, economic, cultural, and racial barrier in our City. It is time to remove that barrier and allow Austin to be both more compact and more connected.

The “Reconnect Austin” Cut and Cap Concept considers land use, urban design, community goals, economic development, and sustainability, as well as traffic. The benefits of this concept are many, including those that address CNU-CTX’s concerns: Reconnecting East and West Austin, restoring our urban grid, creating an urban space that is designed for the pedestrian, bicyclist and transit as well as the car, mitigating harmful environmental damage from the highway, helping the Waller Creek District realize its future potential, and above all creating a compact and connected city.

On a national scale The Congress for New Urbanism advocates for:

“the restructuring of public policy and development practices to support the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.”

Thank you for your attention to including the IH-35 Cut and Cap concept as the fourth alternative for the urban core segment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cid Galindo", with a stylized, flowing script.

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

Cc: Federal Highway Administration, Texas Division
Council on Environmental Quality
Honorable Kirk Watson of the Texas Senate
Honorable Mayor and Council of the City of Austin
Black + Vernooy Architecture and Urban Design