

I-35 Capital Express Central Project

Community Connectors – Question and Answer

General

- **How will corridor users be impacted during construction?**
 - TxDOT will establish construction and traffic control plans to minimize disruption as much as possible. We intend to maintain three traveling lanes along I-35 in both directions during construction activities. While full closures or lane reductions are expected as a part of the project, these impacts will typically happen overnight, as needed.
 - In addition to maintaining three travel lanes in both directions, TxDOT is committed to:
 - Providing safe and efficient connections to and around neighborhoods during construction for existing modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.
 - Providing advanced notice of temporary road closures and traffic detours.
 - Maintaining access to properties during construction.
- **What will access for local residents look like during construction? What are the anticipated lane closures?**
 - Traffic control plans will be developed as part of the project process. The project team will work closely with adjacent homes and businesses to limit impacts and will provide construction information community wide through various sources, such as the media, social media and online.
- **How does TxDOT notify the residents or business owners about construction impacts/closures near/at their properties?**
 - Project team members will contact property owners, residents or business owners directly about impacts to their properties, including driveway closures or changes in access to construction activities. This outreach occurs in advance of closures/detours being implemented, to gather feedback and ensure that TxDOT is being a good neighbor during construction activities.
- **How will construction impact the Redline/Cap Metro?**

- TxDOT anticipates some disruptions to CapMetro bus and rail routes during construction. In close coordination with CapMetro, temporary bus stops will be installed as close a possible to their existing locations. Riders will be notified of location changes.
- During the construction of the rail bridge at Airport Boulevard and I-35, a temporary track will be constructed to maintain train operations. Portions of the track will be elevated to allow for the excavation work.
- **What are the plans for air quality monitoring during construction?**
 - TxDOT will visually monitor dust levels at the project site and along the corridor during construction. If excessive dust is detected, the contractor will be directed to implement additional dust control measures.
- **Why is TxDOT implementing 11-foot lanes instead of 12-foot lanes?**
 - One of TxDOT's priorities during the design of the I-35 Capital Express Central project was to minimize right-of-way impacts to businesses and residents along the corridor. Similar to lane widths on neighboring highways, e.g. US 183, MoPac, narrowing the lanes ensures an efficient use of the corridor by maximizing roadway space, while minimizing impacts.
- **Where will dirt from construction be transported?**
 - Once excavated from the project site, TxDOT works with the community to identify locations that the dirt can be repurposed for development and/or environmentally approved green fields.
- **What are the projects being constructed in the Cherrywood neighborhood area?**
 - The I-35 Capital Express Central project consists of various segments that will be constructed throughout the corridor. The Drainage Tunnel and University (US 290 East to MLK Blvd) segments will be constructed in the Cherrywood neighborhood area.
- **Where can I get the latest construction information and connect with the project team?**
 - The following resources are available for individuals interested in learning more about construction of the I-35 Capital Express Central project construction:
 - Website – www.mymobility35.com

- Email – CapExCentral@txdot.gov
- Call – 512.766.3472
- **Where will construction workers park their cars in this area?**
 - Contractors are encouraged to use TxDOT right of way to store equipment and park vehicles.

Drainage Tunnel and Pump Station Segment

The Drainage Tunnel and Pump Station segment of the I-35 Capital Express Central project will enhance water treatment in Austin. This segment will collect, move and treat water to accommodate the lowered I-35 mainlanes, while benefiting the greater community.

Building tunnels will create noise and vibration in the surrounding areas. This is particularly true in and around portals and drop shafts. Ground movements will be continuously monitored with instrumentation throughout tunnel construction. The project team will work closely with adjacent homes and businesses to limit impacts as much as possible. Contractors may be asked to work during certain times, limit activities on holidays or large business days and use specialized equipment. These details will be available as projects move closer to construction.

- **What construction methods will be implemented to construct the drainage tunnel?**
 - The tunnel will be built using a Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), which is a large machine that grinds through rock. As the TBM advances, it constructs a finished concrete tunnel.
- **What is a drop shaft?**
 - Drop shafts will be constructed along I-35 during construction of the Drainage Tunnel segment that offer locations for dirt and debris to be removed during construction and provide a point for maintenance access post-construction.
- **How will the drop shaft be constructed/excavated?**
 - The contractor will decide how to excavate the drop shafts to tunnel depths, which may involve a variety of methods, including jackhammers or excavators.

- **What fencing, security measures will be implemented around the drainage tunnel and drop shaft?**
 - The drop shaft site at Edgewood will be secured with a 20-foot temporary noise barrier, which will also serve to increase safety. Additional security measures like cameras and guards may be utilized.
- **What maintenance is required once construction is complete and how will TxDOT use the space?**
 - Once complete, TxDOT will perform ongoing maintenance through a surface-level, locked access hatch. Maintenance activities may include inspections and/or debris removal.
 - These activities will be as-needed and will not require permanent storage or facilities at the drop shaft location.
- **Is there a risk of water backing up into the community, if the drainage system becomes clogged?**
 - The risk of water backing up into the community is very low. The overall benefit of the Drainage Tunnel segment will improve water quality and flow along the I-35 project corridor. Additionally, the project will reduce more than 178 acres of runoff currently flowing into Waller Creek watershed and provide 350 acres of reduced floodplain east of I-35.
- **Has this type of drainage system been used successfully in other locations (particularly other metropolitan areas)?**
 - The planned drainage tunnel system is similar to other tunnels built throughout the United States, including:
 - City of Austin – Waller Creek Tunnel
 - City of San Antonio – San Antonio River & San Pedro Creek Tunnels
 - Arizona DOT – I-10 in Phoenix Drainage Tunnel (this has a cap)
 - City of Dallas – Mill Creek Tunnel
 - Washington DC Water - Potomac River Tunnel
 - Indianapolis - Dig Indy Tunnel System
 - Chicago Tunnel and Reservoir Plan
- **When will construction of the drainage tunnel and drop shaft begin?**

- The Drainage Tunnel segment is expected to break ground in mid-2025. Detailed phasing of the project will be available in early 2025.

University Segment

The University segment of the I-35 Capital Express Central project is between US 290 East and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The project will add two high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) managed lanes in both directions along I-35. In addition, the project will reconstruct east-west crossings (bridges) at: Manor Road, Dean Keeton Street, 32nd Street, 38 1/2 Street and Wilshire Boulevard, and reconstruct the Airport Boulevard intersection and add a pedestrian-only bridge at Capital Plaza.

- **When will the upper decks begin to be taken down?**
 - The removal of the upper decks is anticipated to begin in 2027 and is expected to be complete by 2032.
- **What is the construction traffic plan for the University segment?**
 - Traffic control plans and phasing for construction of the University segment in development and expected to be complete by mid-2027.
- **Will there be impacts to the Red Line?**
 - The University project will construct a new Red Line bridge at Airport Boulevard.
 - To construct these improvements, disruptions to service may occur. TxDOT will work closely with CapMetro to limit disruptions as much as possible. Riders will be notified in advance of any service changes or interruptions.

Noise walls

- **Will there be sound walls built along the Cherrywood NA? If so, where will they be?**
 - A noise analysis was conducted as part of the environmental study. The analysis considered the current level of noise at many locations throughout the study area, calculated existing and projected traffic noise levels, and considered noise reduction measures, such as sound walls. The results of this analysis indicated there is the potential for a sound wall along the northbound I-35 frontage road between 30th Street and 38 1/2 Streets.

- The potential noise barrier along the Cherrywood NA is going through final design to determine whether the barrier is constructable considering safety and utility impacts.
- If the proposed wall is constructable, TxDOT will host a traffic noise workshop for property owners immediately adjacent to or benefitted by the proposed noise barrier to vote on whether the wall will be included in the project.
- The construction of a sound wall would happen as part of the University segment.

Corridor Preparations

TxDOT begins the acquisition and demolition process early to ensure that all properties are cleared prior to construction. This allows for the efficient facilitation of utility relocation and construction ahead of roadway work.

- **What is the status of the underground tanks at the four acquired gas station properties?**
 - Below is a detailed list of each property and its current status in the acquisition and demolition process:
 - **3807 North Interstate 35 (Formally Gulf Gas):** Petroleum storage tanks were removed in November 2024. Soil is being tested for contamination, and cleanup will be done if needed before construction.
 - **3735 North Interstate 35 (Formally Chevron):** Petroleum storage tanks were removed in November 2024. Soil is being tested for contamination, and cleanup will be done if needed before construction.
 - **3828 North Interstate 35 (Formally Shell):** Petroleum storage tanks were removed in November 2024. Soil is being tested for contamination, and cleanup will be done if needed before construction.
 - **3810 North Interstate 35 (Formally Dura Tune Inc.):** Petroleum storage tanks were removed and no contamination is expected at this property.