

I-35 SCOPING WORKING GROUP

Feedback Summary Report

Provided by Life Anew Restorative Justice
December 2020

INTRODUCTION

Our diverse coalition of community leaders known as "**Our Future 35**" and the "I-35 Scoping Working Group" has been working together for over a year to articulate desired community outcomes for the I-35 reconstruction effort.

Led by Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette and Ms. Linda Guerrero, the **I-35 Scoping Working Group represents over 50 organizations in the Austin community** who've met four times since November 2020 to co-produce this report.

Members of the I-35 Scoping Working Group participated in onboarding sessions to understand the three-step Restorative Justice approach that **Life Anew** would use in this process to create spaces for all voices to be heard.

1. Cultivate a culture of empathy.
2. Create a space for radical inclusion.
3. Co-produce sustained equitable outcomes and a sense of well-being.

The following report summarizes Scoping Working Group Member breakout group questions and conversations as they collectively reviewed and responded to TxDOT's virtual scoping documents.

- A. "What are the **Issues**?"
- B. "**Who** is Affected?"
- C. "What are the **Impacts**?"
- D. "What are the **Alternatives** to Address the Issues?"
- E. "What are the **Measures of Success**?"

“WHAT ARE THE **ISSUES?**” KEY TAKEAWAYS

Repair the Past/Do not Repeat Same Mistakes

- Heal the division

Safe Access & Connectivity

- Restrictions due to construction
- Existing & new parks, playgrounds, and public spaces
- Connect East & West Austin safely for pedestrians, bikes, & disabled
- Transit options

Impact on Businesses on the East Corridor

- Need more detailed information of the plan and it's impact

Housing

- Affordability
- Displacement
- Right to Return
- Homelessness

“WHO IS AFFECTED?” KEY TAKEAWAYS

Residents of East Austin & I-35 Corridor

- People of Color
- People of Color who have been affected by gentrification
- Mexican American Community
- Lower income communities
- People who have been displaced
- Homeless

Businesses of East Austin & I-35 Corridor

- Business owners
- Businesses community 11th Street, 12th Street Merchants Association
- Employees of businesses
- Patrons of businesses
- 12th Street, Cesar Chavez, Manor, South Congress, & Red River Merchants Associations

Pedestrians

- Everyone not in a car trying to use or move through the corridor.
- Safe right of way is needed

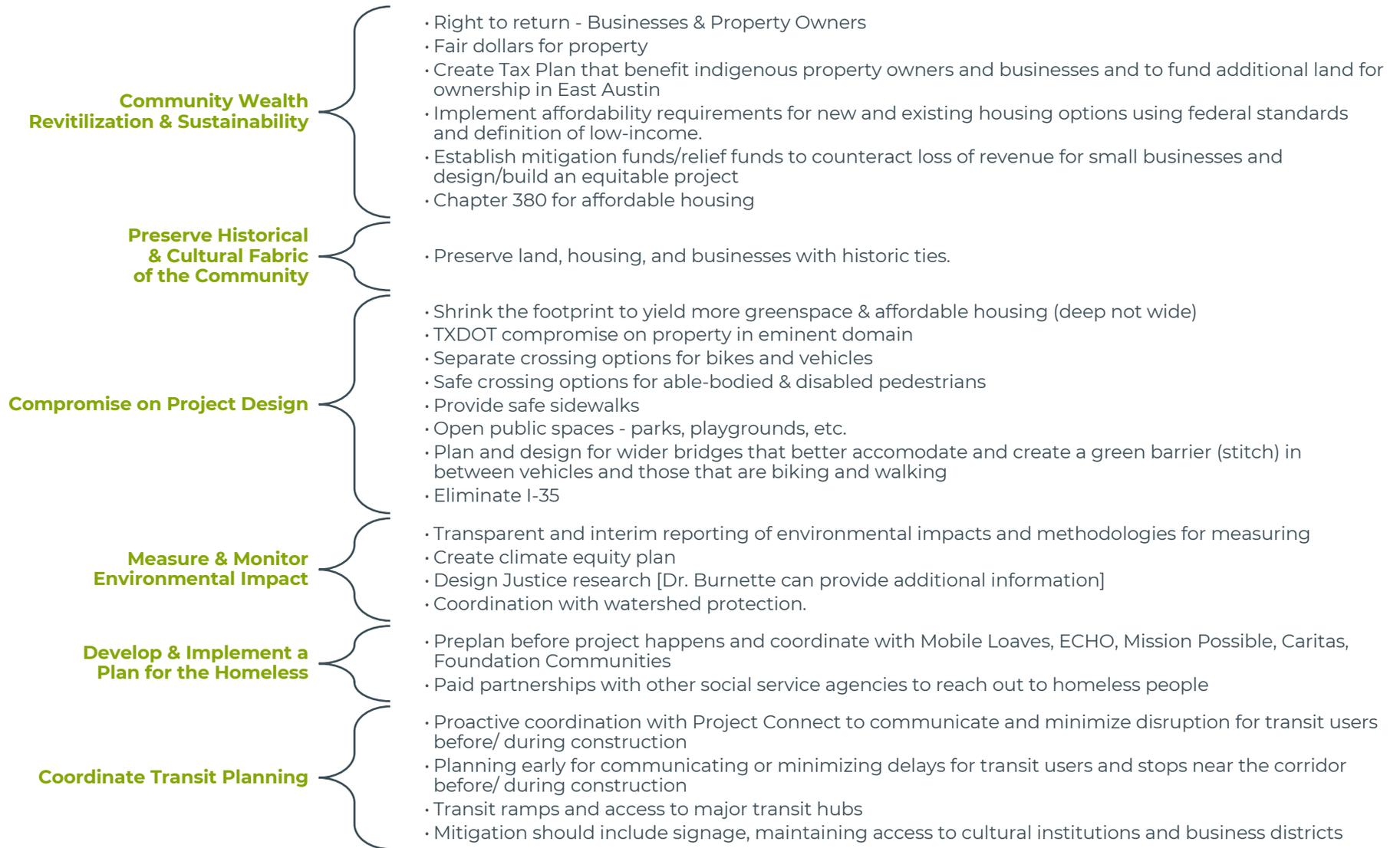
Students

- AISD & students
- College students & college campuses

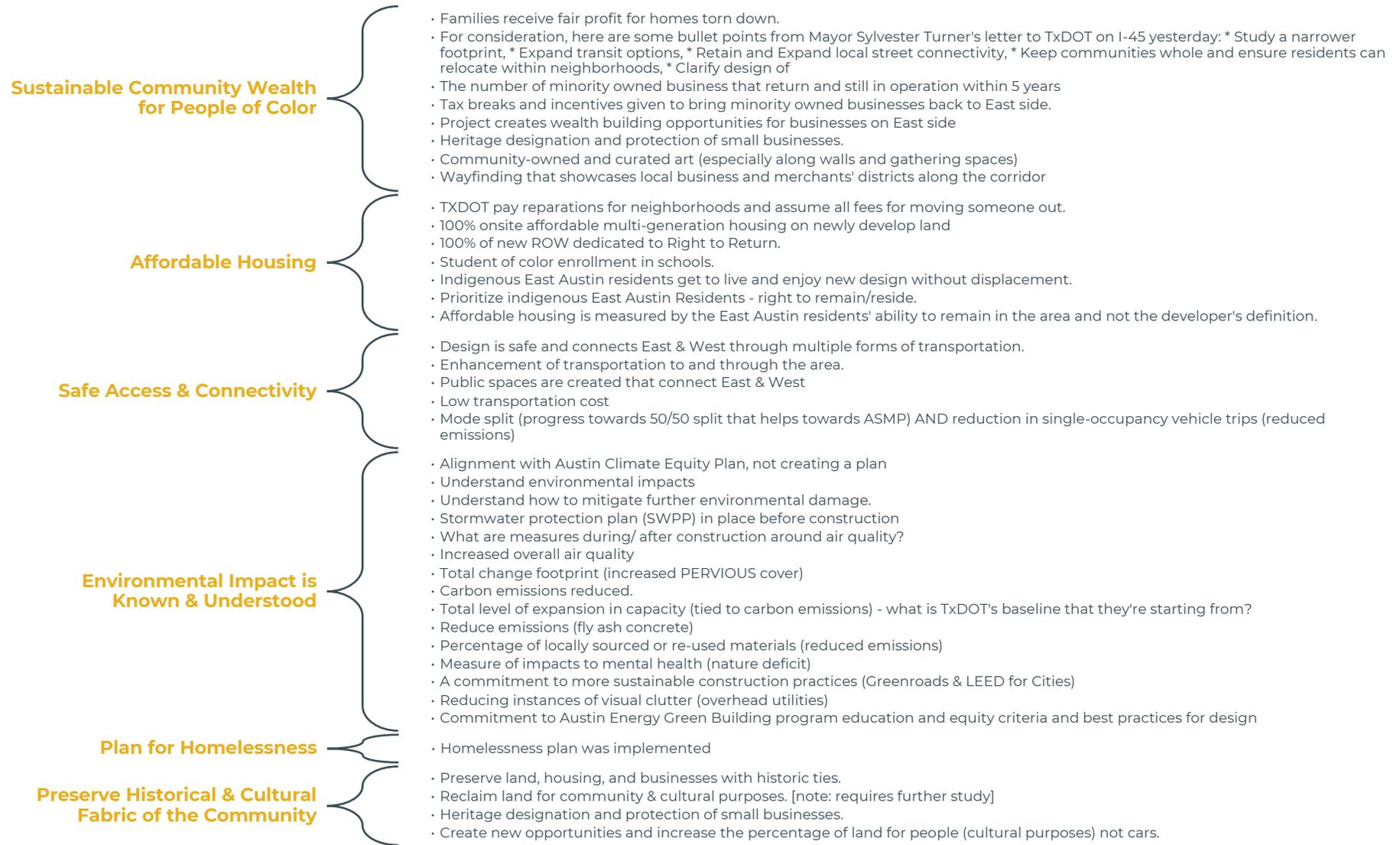
“WHAT ARE THE **IMPACTS?**” KEY TAKEAWAYS



“WHAT ARE THE **ALTERNATIVES TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES?**” KEY TAKEAWAYS



“WHAT ARE THE MEASURES OF SUCCESS?” KEY TAKEAWAYS



APPENDIX

DETAILED COMMENTS FROM EACH BREAKOUT GROUP

“WHAT ARE THE **ISSUES?**”

Environmental Vulnerability and Environmental Justice

- How can this project repair the past?

Community Wealth Building & Public Space

- Community needs more details regarding the plan and the impact on the businesses on the East Austin Corridor.
- Access to public spaces, sidewalks, and parks are restricted due to construction.
- The community can not move North, South, East and West with ease.
- New parks and public spaces are needed in East Austin.

Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return

- Affordability
- Right to Return
- Homelessness

Access: Mobility Justice & Transportation

- Safe access to the West side of I-35 for pedestrians, bikes, and disabled people.
- Access to transit options for commuters.
- How does bridges and on/off ramps affect access?
- Construction process will displace people.
- Heal the division caused by municipalities.

“WHO IS AFFECTED?”

Environmental Vulnerability & Environmental Justice

- East Austin
- Edward Rendon Sr. Metropolitan Park at Festival Beach
- African American Cultural Heritage District= Six Square
- Residents of E Austin affected: all people who live along I 35 through Austin are affected - not to discount the increased impact of people of color, 6th and 7th street
- Businesses on Cesar Chavez as well are being affected
- Businesses on 11th/12th/ Manor Road
- elderly, youth more broadly, and health vulnerable populations
- People of Color
- Lower Income Communities
- Pedestrians
- AISD and students
- College students and campuses

Community Wealth Building & Public Space

- People of Color
- Blackland CDC
- African American Cultural Heritage District= Six Square
- Businesses on Cesar Chavez as well are being affected
- Businesses on 11th/12th/ Manor Road
- commercial and retail tenants who do not own the property
- Business Owners
- Patrons of businesses
- Employees of East Austin Businesses
- East Austin Homeowners

Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return

- People living along I-35 corridor
- African American Cultural Heritage District= Six Square
- Businesses on Cesar Chavez as well are being affected
- Businesses on 11th/12th/ Manor Road
- Business along I-35 corridor
- People who have been displaced
- Homeless who live along I-35 corridor.
- Everyone not in a car trying to use or move through the corridor.

Access: Mobility Justice & Transportation

- People on the East side
- African American Cultural Heritage District= Six Square
- Businesses on Cesar Chavez as well are being affected
- Business on 11th/12th/ Manor Road
- Mexican American community
- Black & Brown people that have already been affected by gentrification.
- 12th Street Merchants Association
- Businesses on 6th & 7th streets.
- Downtown and university (both UT and HTU) service and office workers, staff, residents, students and visitors as well.
- integration with city street network

“WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?”

Environmental Vulnerability & Environmental Justice

- As a part of water runoff, is calling out flash flooding/extreme weather events specifically
- Heat island effects
- E 11th/Manor/others to call out of business corridors
- Residents in East Austin impacted
- Water runoff
- Air Quality
- Wildlife endangered and killed crossing I-35.
- Sound/noise
- Public health (mental/physical)
- Pollutants
- Construction disturbance
- Traffic flow
- Flooding, erosion, sediment downstream from construction of the corridor
- Storing of construction equipment

Community Wealth Building & Public Space

- Multi-modal access for corridor businesses, workers, residents and visitors
- E 11th/Manor/others to call out of business corridors
- Residents in East Austin impacted
- Palm Park & Mexican American Cultural Center being disconnected and underutilized by the community.
- Cultural Institutions
- Loss of minority owned businesses
- Loss of small businesses
- Loss of community wealth
- Fewer crossings which impedes access and impacts safety and environmental health.
- Impact on the overall community & Residential neighborhoods (African American District, St. John Community, Cultural land around Town Lake & churches)
- Downtown homeless

Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return

- Increased costs of living, property taxes for individuals and businesses.
- Disruption of the legacy of Black, Mexican American, and Latino cultures.
- Disruption of small businesses.
- Fear hopelessness, mental and physical health issues due to the disruption
- Homeless will have no place to go.
- Fatalities or serious injuries (at risk populations such as those experiencing homelessness along I-35)
- Residents in East Austin

Access: Mobility Justice & Transportation

- Suburban real estate developers will realize higher \$ return on their investments, thus able to contribute more to future statewide election campaigns
- Destruction of farmland and natural lands on the edge of the city to build to new housing that will be served by an expanded I-35.
- Higher transportation costs. (Automobiles are the most expensive transportation option for households.)
- Higher motor vehicle traffic volumes on local streets within several miles of the corridor.
- The proposed 3rd St overpass is of particular concern to the ECC neighborhood
- Concern for new overpasses that will increase traffic in the neighborhoods.
- Multi-modal access for corridor businesses, workers, residents and visitors
- ALL vulnerable road users (it's everyone, people walking, people cycling, people in wheelchairs, etc.
- Residents in East Austin Impacted
- A major impact of I-35 is that the existing or expanded highway is one of Austin's major contributors to displacing 1.2 billion people worldwide by 2050. This is a massive Environmental Justice and Mobility Justice issue. I don't see it consistently addressed in those categories. We also don't see it locally, so I think it's really easy to forget how massive of a problem this is and will become for so many among the most vulnerable in our world.
- On future generations
- On other cities
- Neighborhood safety
- On vehicle and pedestrian traffic

“WHAT ARE THE **ALTERNATIVES** TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES?”

Environmental Vulnerability & Environmental Justice

- Eliminate I-35I
- Locally sourced materials to conduct a life cycle analysis of materials
- Adherence to City of Austin Climate Equity Plan
- Acknowledge and respect long-term revitalization efforts and build on/improve their impacts
- Using concrete that traps carbon emissions
- Integrating with needed electric vehicle infrastructure
- Full Environmental Equity Analysis
- Health Impact Analysis to document existing and future impacts and guide mitigation.
- Include existing air quality (the Austin census tracts with the worst air quality TODAY are along I-35).
- TxDOT should adhere to and follow the COA Climate Equity Plan (not create a new one).
- Align with Austin Climate Equity Plan, not creating a plan
- Measure and monitor environmental impact of I-35
- Create a climate equity plan
- Research design justice
- Provide housing and sidewalks
- Coordination with watershed protection.
- Consider alternative that will capture carbon
- Preserve land with housing and black owned businesses with historic ties, please add other minority owned businesses as well in with the vision zero plan
- Active public spaces are created

Community Wealth Building & Public Space

- Right to return - businesses (create space for businesses/co-ops)
- compromise on property in eminent domain?
- preserve the longtime Mexican Families & Businesses
- Fair dollar for property but avoid taking property of all types
- Consult previous TxDOT and COA, County historic studies
- Right to return (Property ownership)
- Fair dollars for property.
- Community wealth revitalization (black & brown business owners)
- Smallest highway footprint (deep not wide)
- Open public spaces (i.e. playgrounds)
- Preserve cultural/historical fabric of community
- Accountability of TxDOT & City
- Wider bridges for stitches
- The deep infrastructure of tunnel is not safe & healthy for the East Austin residents, this needs to be placed in the UT area of 38th St

Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return

- Develop and implement a plan to take care of the homeless that will be displaced.
- Establish land trusts (Reference: <https://t4america.org/2020/12/07/four-recommendations-to-undo-the-damage-of-urban-renewal/>)
- Small business relief fund for loss revenue during construction.
- Preserve land with housing and black owned businesses with historic ties.
- Fair price for all property, but
- Tax abatements for small icon businesses.
- Implement affordability requirements for new property.
- Maintain low intensity on new projects.
- Chapter 380 for affordable housing.
- Paid partnerships with other social service agencies to reach out to homeless people
- Consider alternatives that will capture carbon
- "TxDOT compromise on property in Eminent Domain"
- Align with vision zero plan
- Preserve all land with housing, businesses and civic uses

Access: Mobility Justice & Transportation

- Mitigation funds to not repeat mistakes of the past I35 projects.
- East Austin Leaders, East Austin Residents, East Austin Businesses are in opposition of placing a Tunnel in our area
- Create high quality crossing separate for bikes and vehicles.
- TxDOT compromise on property in Eminent domain
- Keep Community Housing projects as affordable housing or create plan to relocate residents to affordable housing within East Austin if Community Housing Projects will be torn down.
- Shrink the footprint of the freeway to yield more greenspace or affordable housing.
- New tax base to fund additional land space in East Austin for public ownership.
- Create opportunity for Black & Brown people to return.
- TxDOT educate community, so accurate feedback on alternatives can be given.
- Planning early for communicating or minimizing delays for transit users and stops near the corridor before/ during construction
- Transit ramps and access to major transit hubs

“WHAT ARE THE MEASURES OF SUCCESS?”

Environmental Vulnerability & Environmental Justice

- Minimize detrimental impacts and overall have a positively impact
- Environmental alternatives/measures we also discussed ensuring modeling that includes sufficient future impacts from climate change are necessary when modeling future effects
- Restore land, don't take it and reclaim it for community and cultural purposes
- Overarching measure of success = people in East Austin view the project as largely positive
- Understand environmental impacts
- Understand how to mitigate further environmental damage.
- Stormwater protection plan (SWPP) in place before construction
- What are measures during/ after construction around air quality?
- Increased overall air quality
- Total change footprint (increased PERVIOUS cover)
- Carbon emissions reduced.
- Total level of expansion in capacity (tied to carbon emissions) - what is TXDOT's baseline that they're starting from?
- Reduce emissions (fly ash concrete)
- Percentage of locally sourced or re-used materials (reduced emissions)
- Measure of impacts to mental health (nature deficit)
- A commitment to more sustainable construction practices (Greenroads & LEED for Cities)
- Reducing instances of visual clutter (overhead utilities)
- Commitment to Austin Energy Green Building program education and equity criteria and best practices for design

Community Wealth Building & Public Space

- Overarching measure of success = people in East Austin view the project as largely positive
- Retention of existing structures of all types---housing, business, civic and #s on land still owned by residents, business owners,cdcs, churches, etc
- Families receive fair profit for homes torn down.
- Public spaces are created (playgrounds, parks, spaces that connect East & West)
- The project creates wealth building opportunities for existing businesses.
- Incentives are given to bring minority owned businesses back to the East side.
- Community is enhanced as a result of the project and some of the wrongs from the original I-35 project are rectified.
- TXDOT pay reparations for neighborhoods and assume all fees for moving someone out.
- Community-owned and curated art (especially along walls and gathering spaces)
- Wayfinding that showcases local business and merchants' districts along the corridor
- Dedicated land for community & cultural purposes.
- Support access to small-businesses along the 11th and 12th street corridors
- Percentage of local and diverse businesses hired (H/W/MBE) - specifically those businesses impacted by construction
- No greenspace lost, no reduced access to existing parks, percentage land for open space

Affordable Housing, Homelessness & Right to Return

- Avoid suggesting reparations for involuntary displacement is preferable to simply avoiding displacement
- East Austin residents remain not just in the area but in their desired neighborhoods, their homes
- Overarching measure of success = people in East Austin view the project as largely positive
- Heritage designation and protection of small businesses.
- 100% onsite affordable multi-generation housing on newly develop land
- 100% of new ROW dedicated to Right to Return.
- The number of Black, Mexican-American, and Latino businesses that are still running in 5 years and receiving tax breaks.
- The number of businesses that return to the community
- Student of color enrollment in schools.
- Fair market value established by neighborhood comparables NOT adjacent to highway - otherwise the highway itself depresses community wealth
- Displacement is avoided
- Heritage designation and protection of small businesses.
- 100% onsite affordable multi-generation housing on newly develop land
- 100% of new ROW dedicated to Right to Return.
- The number of Black, Mexican-American, and Latino businesses that are still running in 5 years and receiving tax breaks.
- The number of businesses that return to the community
- Student of color enrollment in schools

Access: Mobility Justice & Transportation

- Reduce lanes & protect our buffer zone we have longtime residents & businesses
- Overarching measure of success = people in East Austin view the project as largely positive
- Design is integrated with local City street system and provides safe multi-modal access for local residents and workers
- Design is safe and connects East & West through multiple forms of transportation.
- Enhancement of transportation to and through the area.
- If indigenous East Austin residents get to live and enjoy new design without displacement.
- Prioritize indigenous East Austin Residents - right to remain/reside.
- Taxes for 100% of indigenous East Austin residents should be grandfathered, exempted, capped, and/or subsidized for those who are homesteaded.
- Low transportation cost
- Affordable housing is measured by the East Austin residents' ability to remain in the area and not the developer's definition.
- Mode split (progress towards 50/50 split that helps towards ASMP) AND reduction in single-occupancy vehicle trips (reduced emissions)
- Access to jobs
- Achievement of Vision Zero, slower design speeds

IMPORTANT NOTES & ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

From Susan Benz : The East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan Contact Team would like to make sure that TxDOT does indeed come back to us to talk about the specific impacts as our neighborhood is directly impacted. TxDOT did come to us a few years ago but we have not heard from them directly since then. Others that might speak about what ,the neighborhood, or expects are not speaking on our behalf.

From Bertha Delgado : East Town Lake Citizen Neighborhood Association would like to recommend our longtime residents would like a presentation so the tax payers to be able to weigh in for future discussions TX Dot ~ Thank you President ETLCNA

East Austin Leaders, East Austin Residents, East Austin Businesses are in opposition of placing a Tunnel in our area

Study a narrower footprint

Expand transit options

Retain and expand local street connectivity

Keep communities whole and ensure residents can relocate within neighborhoods

Clarify design of frontage roads

Reduce visual impacts [along green space]