

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
AGENDA SUMMARY FORM**

DEPARTMENT: Mayor & Council

AGENDA DATE: March 15, 2022

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:
City Representative Peter Svarzbein, 915.212.1002

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All Districts

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goal 4 - Enhance El Paso's Quality of Life through Recreational, Cultural and Educational Environments

SUBJECT:

APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include \$ amount if applicable.

Discussion and action on a resolution formally requesting Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) consider an alternative design for Segment 2 (Downtown) of the Reimagine I-10 Project which considers the urban context of the location where the improvements are proposed and supports the City's successful RAISE grant application.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?

In 2019, TxDOT announced its plans to improve I-10 through its Reimagine I-10 project. As part of this, TxDOT broke the project into four segments in order to analyze the corridor, one of which is identified as the Downtown segment. After initial analysis, in 2021 TxDOT presented three design alternatives for Downtown, none of which are satisfactory to the City Council for reasons which are outlined in the resolution.

Given the historical context of highways and interstates in which they were used as a tool for slum clearance and the promotion and reinforcement of racial segregation in our City and across the country, the City Council has an opportunity to shape and influence the design of this segment to help restore the urban fabric that was destroyed when the highways was originally built in the 1960s. Through the promotion of context-sensitive design that contemplates the surrounding urban setting, the design considerations presented as part of this resolution present the greatest opportunity for a mutually-beneficial project for both the residents of El Paso and for TxDOT engineers seeking to address connectivity and congestion issues along this segment of the corridor.

Furthermore, the recommendations included in this resolution support the City's efforts to determine the feasibility and design of a deck that resulted in a successful RAISE grant application from the federal Department of Transportation. The careful design of the right-of-way which abut the proposed deck are critical to the success of this project and therefore we implore TxDOT to consider the recommendations of this resolution.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one? N/a

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

How will this item be funded? N/A Has the item been budgeted? N/A If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer? N/A

*******REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*******

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in 1968, Interstate-10 was completed in El Paso; and

WHEREAS, in order to facilitate the construction of the freeway, entire neighborhoods were destroyed which had the effect of physically detaching thriving urban neighborhoods from our Downtown; and

WHEREAS, the ultimate location of the freeway and the neighborhoods it adversely affected were disproportionately those that were previously redlined on the basis of race and ethnicity and their status as being minorities in this country; and

WHEREAS, such actions had the effect of reinforcing and strengthening existing patterns of racial segregation and disinvestment in our downtown and throughout our City and others across the country; and

WHEREAS, the City's Comprehensive Plan, *Plan El Paso*, identified as a priority the reimagining of the freeway as it traverses through downtown; and

WHEREAS, *Connecting El Paso*, the precursor to *Plan El Paso*, identified capping the freeway as vital to the success of downtown redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, *Plan El Paso* calls for reducing the overreliance on the automobile as a preferred mode of travel; and

WHEREAS, the City's *Street Design Manual* calls for the appropriate context-sensitive design of roadways by differentiating the design elements of roads located in urban, suburban and rural contexts; and

WHEREAS, the location of the freeway's proposed frontage roads in Downtown should consider its contextual surroundings by incorporating design elements that promote slower travel speeds and make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists using the roads for travel and to cross them; and

WHEREAS, to mitigate the physical and visual impacts of the freeway's location through downtown, the freeway should be capped in order to physically reconnect the surrounding historic and adjacent urban neighborhoods that were destroyed when the freeway was initially constructed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed deck plaza is a viable method to achieve this through the concept's demonstrated success in cities across the country, including Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, Texas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

THAT in order to promote appropriate urban design to support and enhance our vibrant Downtown and to reconnect the urban fabric currently separated by Interstate 10, the following design consideration be considered in the final design alternative for the Downtown segment of Re-Imagine I-10:

- a. The elimination of frontage roads as currently conceived through Downtown to be replaced with urban-context streets in alignment with the City's Street Design Manual;
- b. The removal of any "u-turns" through the downtown segment which present a safety hazard for pedestrians and cyclists;
- c. The new appropriately-scaled frontage roads should prioritize the safe passage of pedestrians and cyclists over the movement of freight and vehicles by reducing the width of the right-of-way to allow for safe crossing;
- d. Reduce design speeds of frontage roads to maintain the current 30 mph speed limit on Yandell Dr and Wyoming Ave;
- e. Reduce the right-of-way width on the frontage roads to two lanes of vehicular travel and one lane of on-street parking;
- f. Enhance and support the existing downtown aesthetic through the provision of street trees in the adjacent parkways;
- g. Retain north-south connections of Oregon, Stanton and Campbell Streets;
- h. Maintain existing connections and enhance pedestrian and cyclist access to downtown from surrounding historic and adjacent urban neighborhoods;
- i. Enhance structural supports and extend utility infrastructure to support future development on the deck including but not limited to parks and buildings;

j. Permit development to span the deck in order to physically reconnect Downtown and uptown.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2022.

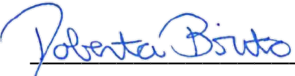
CITY OF EL PASO:

Oscar Leeser
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Roberta Brito
Assistant City Attorney



ALTERNATIVE H



DOWNTOWN BETWEEN PROSPECT ST & OREGON ST



KEY FEATURES

- 1 BIKE/PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION TO PROSPECT ST
- 2 RELOCATED FRs TO CREATE SPACE ALONG CORRIDOR
- 3 WIDE SIDEWALK AND CYCLE TRACKS ALONG FRs
- 4 ENHANCED CROSSINGS AT INTERSECTIONS
- 5 OREGON ST BRIDGE FOR STREETCAR, BIKE/PED/BUS ONLY

REIMAGINE I-10



10:06 58°

Visual shown is a work in progress for illustration purposes only.





