



**DOWNTOWN  
DALLAS INC**

June 27, 2022

Texas Department of Transportation  
Attn: Grace Lo, P.E.  
4777 E. Highway 80  
Mesquite, Texas 75150

RE: Downtown Dallas, Inc. Comments on I-345 Feasibility Study and  
“Refined Hybrid” Design

Dear Ms. Lo,

On behalf of the Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI) Mobility Committee, we are pleased to present the attached comments regarding the I-345 Feasibility Study as presented at the May 26, 2022, public meeting.

The DDI Mobility Committee, comprised of a diverse group of technical experts, stakeholders, and residents, has reviewed the “Refined Hybrid” recommended design alternative, and provided feedback that has influenced the comments in the attached document. The Committee is encouraged by the progress made over the past year to determine a recommended approach to replace the I-345 corridor in Downtown Dallas. However, further refinements are needed to ensure that the “Refined Hybrid” design appropriately meets the urban design guidelines of the *360 Plan* and the City’s Complete Streets strategies. Specifically, the Committee recommends seven priorities as TxDOT moves into further project development, with particular focus on restitching the urban fabric between Downtown and Deep Ellum through enhanced pedestrian amenities, multi-modal connections, and improved mobility.

We look forward to our continued partnership as TxDOT moves into further development of the “Refined Hybrid” design and we welcome further discussion of the priorities presented in the attached document. Should you have any questions regarding the attached comments, please contact Jacob Browning, DDI’s director of urban planning, at (214) 744-1270 or [browning@downtowndallas.com](mailto:browning@downtowndallas.com).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Scripps  
President and CEO

Allan Zreet, FAIA  
Chair, DDI Mobility Committee



**Downtown Dallas, Inc. Mobility Committee  
Comments for Consideration Regarding I-345 Design Scenarios  
as Presented at the May 26, 2022, Public Meeting**

The Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI) Mobility Committee has reviewed the “Refined Hybrid” recommended alternative as presented at the May 26, 2022, public meeting. The Committee is encouraged by the progress made since last summer, and urges TxDOT to address the following refinements prior to moving into advanced design phases:

**1. Prioritize pedestrian movements across the depressed I-345 main lanes.**

Utilize Complete Streets strategies (see [City of Dallas Complete Streets Design Manual](#)) to prioritize pedestrian movement along the reconstructed street grid, with designs incorporating wide sidewalks, bike/micromobility lanes, high guardrails, landscaping, removal of “flying” right turns, and other elements to ensure a safe, comfortable crossing of the I-345 corridor. Specifically, this infrastructure should minimize pedestrians’ perception of crossing over a multi-lane highway. Particular elements include:

- Designs for the Elm, Main, Commerce, and Pacific bridges should incorporate enhanced sidewalks with structural accommodations for physical separation from the adjacent travel lanes via vertical planters, pedestrian lighting, and other amenities. The design should also accommodate sufficient width and structural capacity to allow for landscape and a physical buffer and pedestrian amenities between the pedestrian and the bridge guardrail. For example, a 20’ sidewalk incorporating a 5’ amenity zone, 10’ clear sidewalk pathway, and a 5’ amenity buffer to the edge of the bridge/guardrail would allow for sufficient pedestrian safety. An example of this concept would be the 5<sup>th</sup> Street NW crossing of I-85/I-75 in Atlanta, Georgia, that connects the main campus of Georgia Tech to commercial, conference, and hotel facilities on the other side of the freeway.
- Avoid infrastructure that prioritizes vehicular movement over pedestrian safety, such as the “flying” right movements from westbound Pacific onto northbound Cesar Chavez and from Ross onto the north- and southbound frontage roads.

**2. Ensure the appropriate infrastructure is installed to support all future decking opportunities.**

Infrastructure – piers, load-bearing walls, etc. – that allows for decking over I-345 shall be incorporated into final designs, especially along the corridor between Live Oak and Canton Streets, upon which the majority of potential surplus right-of-way that can sustain future development is located. We advocate for the inclusion of infrastructure that will support commercial development similar to that found on the North High Street cap crossing of I-670 in Columbus, Ohio, or additional plazas or green space similar to that noted above for 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Atlanta, Georgia. We also understand that developing decks is the sole responsibility of the private sector (or through a public-private partnership involving the City of Dallas); however, the TxDOT-provided infrastructure will allow for decking opportunities that provide greater comfort for those crossing I-345, especially those on foot or bicycle, while also working to reknit the Downtown and Deep Ellum neighborhoods.



### **3. Accommodate multi-modal connections across the I-345 corridor.**

New bridge infrastructure over the depressed I-345 facility should reasonably accommodate multiple transportation modes to better connect Downtown Dallas with Deep Ellum. The design should accommodate potential streetcar expansion – with the Main, Elm, Commerce, and Ross bridges rated to sustain the appropriate streetcar infrastructure – and high-frequency bus routes while balancing pedestrian and vehicular movements.

### **4. Minimize impacts to Carpenter Park.**

Opened in May 2022, Carpenter Park is now Downtown’s largest public space and contains several amenities – a pavilion, dog park, basketball court, and a revered public art piece – underneath the current I-345 overhead infrastructure, which will all be affected by the construction of the proposed design. Alternatives should be explored that utilize the existing right-of-way to shift the I-345 main lane and Cesar Chavez alignments eastward to lessen, to the full extent possible, the construction impacts to Carpenter Park by allowing for the preservation of existing park structures, amenities, and the eastern section of the Portal Slice sculpture during construction (also see number 5 below). Upon completion of construction, TxDOT must ensure that all park amenities are reconstructed and/or replaced to the condition they were at the time of removal – in deference to the more than \$25 million invested to make this a vibrant public space.

### **5. Improve geometries of the Cesar Chavez Boulevard and Live Oak Street intersection and ramps.**

Circulation along Cesar Chavez Boulevard, especially near its intersection with Live Oak Street, should be realigned to better improve traffic maneuvers along this stretch of the I-345 corridor. The geometry and overall width of the Cesar Chavez north-south couplet (between Pacific and Live Oak) could be reduced, forcing most of this segment to the eastern edge of the I-345 facility, occupying real estate made available by the current facility’s removal. This realignment will provide a more pleasant experience for those visiting Carpenter Park, while also allowing for less construction-related impacts to existing park structures. This item will necessitate a re-examination of traffic movement at the intersection of Cesar Chavez with Live Oak and Hawkins.

### **6. Avoid dead-end or disconnected surface streets and/or sidewalks.**

Dead-end streets fail to provide a consistent and well-connected pedestrian and vehicular network. Improved connections should be considered to improve the traffic and pedestrian flow along and through the I-345 corridor; examples include:

- Extend Florence to Cesar Chavez
- Connect Swiss to Pacific
- Where vehicular connections are not feasible, consider providing sidewalk and pedestrian connections to produce connections that create typical four-sided development blocks, with an emphasis on surface connections between Canton and Live Oak.



**7. The design scenarios shall incorporate the appropriate elements found within the *360 Plan* and *CityMAP*.**

Adopted by City Council in December 2017, the *360 Plan* envisions a complete and connected City Center (a 2.5-mile area around Downtown), calling for better freeway integration into the local context, including the enhancement of pedestrian crossings, closure of certain interchanges and ramps, and reconstruction of particular segments of roadway. *CityMAP* provides several scenarios for freeway reconstruction opportunities in and around Downtown, specifically particular segments of I-345. *CityMAP* does provide valuable information and recommendations regarding land use, economic and housing development, and traffic impacts to the Downtown area.