
Appendix A

Public Comments

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Appendix A – Public Comments

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS FOR THE 2021-2024 TIP

The public comment period for the Draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) began on February 28, 2020 and was scheduled to end on March 29, 2020. The deadline to submit a comment on the TIP was extended to April 15, 2020 on account of the public health emergency conditions caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus. Two public meetings were held at the Houston-Galveston Area Council on March 5, 2020 – at 1:30 pm and at 6:00 pm. During these meetings, H-GAC staff described the contents of the TIP and answered questions raised by meeting participants. The 2021-2024 TIP public meetings were broadcast on a live video stream to enable online viewing and facilitate virtual participation by members of the public.

In addition to the public meetings, legal notices, email contacts, social media outreach efforts, flyers, freeway dynamic message signs, and the H-GAC TIP website were used to communicate with the public and provide updated information on the 2021-2024 TIP development process. The H-GAC TIP website reports on the ongoing development and administration of the 2021-2024 TIP program and includes links to various TIP program resources. The TIP website may be viewed at <http://h-gac.com/transportation-improvement-program/default.aspx>.

Staff received as many as fifty-eight (58) comments from individuals and organizations during the Draft 2021-2024 TIP public comment period. Three (3) of these comments were on “Active Transportation,” fifteen (15) comments were about “Roadways,” four (4) comments were on “Transit” issues, thirty (30) comments concerned the “NHHIP,” while five (6) comments were classified as “General.” All the comments received were forwarded to the appropriate state or local agency for consideration.

The adoption of the 2021-2024 TIP was scheduled for the regular monthly meeting of the Transportation Policy Council (TPC) held on June 26, 2020. Staff received Sixty-eight (68) additional comments on the TIP at this meeting. Sixty-one (61) of these comments were on the “NHHIP, six (6) were on “Transit,” while one (1) comment was on “Roadways.”. The sections that follow contain a list of the public comments along with the official response, where available.

LIST OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

<i>Comment 1:</i>	Topic: Roadways	<i>Submitted by Thomas B</i>
Please upgrade all wire span traffic signal support systems to mast arm traffic signal supports. Some of these signals and wire span apparatuses are quite old and it shows.		
<i>Response: TXDOT</i>		
Thank you for your comment. Signal equipment is maintained regularly and evaluated for upgrade as needed. As projects such as widening and other major rehabilitation are performed, signal equipment also is updated.		

<i>Comment 2:</i>	Topic: Roadways	<i>Submitted by Thomas B</i>
As 1960 approaches 45 in both directions, there should be overhead signage and even possible pavement marking well in advance of the two inside lanes that become thru lanes for 1960 traffic and the two outside lanes that serve as frontage roads leading to the 45 frontage roads. Too often, unfamiliar commuters at the last second try to negotiate which lane they need to be in, and part of this is due to signage on the far right hand side of the roadway that can easily be missed alongside the visual clutter that makes up most of the 1960 thoroughfare.		
<i>Response: TXDOT</i>		
Thank you for your comment. We will evaluate the need for these improvements including improved signage and pavement markings/trailblazers as part of the FM 1960 ITS and access management projects.		

<i>Comment 3:</i>	Topic: Roadways	<i>Submitted by Thomas B</i>
As the right lane of the southbound 45 frontage road approaches 1960, this turn lane allows for traffic that is turning right to “keep moving,” as the merging sign states as the lane transitions from 45 southbound to 1960 westbound. What TXDOT did not consider with this configuration is that traffic that is coming westbound on the 1960 frontage road still has access to turn into the Exxon that is on the northwest corner of 1960 and 45, which cuts directly into the “keep moving” lane from the 45 southbound frontage road. I have witnessed many a missed call in regard to accidents because of people turning into Exxon from 1960, while right-turning frontage road traffic is told to “keep moving.” This has also caused road rage incidents because people are now yielding on the 45 southbound frontage road when they are supposed to “keep moving” because of the risk of having someone from 1960 turn right into Exxon and effectively cut off the “keep moving” lane. The easy fix for this is to block turning access from the westbound 1960 frontage road to that Exxon with those removable plastic barriers that will allow both the 1960 westbound frontage road traffic and turning traffic from the 45 southbound frontage road to remain in their designated lanes and proceed through the intersection.		

Response: TXDOT

Thank you for your comment. We will evaluate the need for these improvements including improved signage and pavement markings/trailblazers as part of the FM 1960 ITS projects.

Comment 4:

Topic: Roadways

Submitted by Thomas B

RE: MPOID 18019 | 18145

This roadway is lacking in right turn lanes throughout the corridor. There should be right turn lanes at Hufsmith-Kohrville (EB and WB), Dowdell (WB), greater lane capacity in all directions at the Grand Parkway, including dedicated right turn lanes to and from the frontage roads of the Grand Parkway and longer or dual left turn lane access from WB and EB 2920 onto the Grand Parkway, Stuebner Airline (EB), Alvin A Klein (EB and WB), TC Jester (EB), Kuykendahl (EB, as there already is a dedicated right turn lane from WB 2920 to NB Kuykendahl), Gosling (EB and WB), Rhodes (EB and WB), Falvel (EB and WB), as well as a re-designed lane configuration with appropriate signage that minimizes the weaving of traffic once Spring Cypress merges into 2920. Many vehicles from Spring Cypress are crossing lanes to get over to go northbound on 45, while vehicles from 2920 are crossing lanes to get over to go southbound on 45. This can be a mess and is a high accident area.

Response: TXDOT

Thank you for your comment. We will consider these recommendations as part of our phase I design for the FM 2920 Access Management project.

Comment 5:

Topic: Roadways

Submitted by Thomas B

The Houston region, which historically and present day has some of the worst traffic in the state, also has the least amount of permissive left turns at comparable intersections found throughout the rest of Texas. This is a region that has a very robust, yet ridiculously inefficient arterial thoroughfare network. The intersections along 2920 that should qualify for permissive left turns with the flashing yellow arrow signals include Hufsmith-Kohrville, Mahaffey, Dowdell, Emerald Mist, Alvin A Klein, Northcrest Village Way (which they just installed the signal for this intersection in late 2019 and I do not see why it is not allowed for permissive left turns onto northbound Northcrest Village, but at least mast arm supports were used), Gosling, Falvel, Meadow Hill, Hanover Woods, and Lexington. As a side note, the disconnected road segment of Stuebner Airline from the original Stuebner Airline should have permissive left turns as well, but this segment of Stuebner Airline that currently dead-ends at 2920 near the Hooks Airport is planned to be linked to Spring Stuebner at the Grand Parkway. These tow segments of Stuebner Airline will never connect, and it makes absolutely no sense to have two roads in the same area that have the same name yet are not and will never be connected

Response: TXDOT

Thank you for your comment. We will consider these recommendations as part of our phase I design for the FM 2920 Access Management project. We will also share your concerns with Harris County as many of the roadways mentioned are under their jurisdiction.

Comment 6:

Topic: Roadways

Submitted by Thomas B

Do us a favor and do yourselves a favor and simply widen this road from two lanes to six instead of just four. This road not only serves as an alternate road to the airport, it is also a main thoroughfare connecting 45 to 69 through the business district of Greenspoint or North Houston District or whatever it is being called now. This, in my opinion, is a microcosm example of reactive road planning versus proactive road planning throughout the Houston region. Please stop the practice of shortchanging our arterial road network and start building our roads right the first time, so that the same road doesn't constantly have to be revisited year after year, study after study, to update and rebuild a road that should have been built to a higher standard in the beginning.

Response: City of Houston

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your comment. Roadway planning is based on a variety of inputs, including traffic analyses. The planned improvements are based on traffic analyses which indicate an acceptable level of service for the next 20 years. The City of Houston is also accommodating multimodal uses of its right-of-way that will enable other forms of mobility such as transit, cycling and walking

Comment 7:

Topic: Roadways

Submitted by Thomas B

Hufsmith-Kohrville, along with Boudreaux Rd both east and west of its intersecting point with Hufsmith-Kohrville, are both in desperate need of widening. Today. The traffic in this area is certainly greater than the two-lane roads that service the area, and if there is any doubt in this assertion, ask the first responders that need to travel these roads during peak hours. In addition to widening Hufsmith-Kohrville from two to four lanes (really should be six lanes but we'll take what we can get at this point) there should be dedicated right turn lanes both NB and SB at 2920, NB right turn lane at Mahaffey with permissive left turn signals at this intersection, and SB right turn lane at Holderrieth while keeping the permissive left turn signal in place for NB left turns. The biggest issue on Hufsmith-Kohrville road between Spring Cypress and 2920 is its intersection with Boudreau. HELP!!! I do not know if there is some sort of bridge planned for Hufsmith-Kohrville or Boudreaux similar to Hufsmith-Kohrville and Hufsmith-Kuykendahl but due to the railroad tracks that intersect both Hufsmith-Kohrville and Boudreaux, the truck traffic from the industrial businesses that are in close proximity to this intersection, the multiple neighborhoods and elementary schools further south on Hufsmith-Kohrville, the new apartment complex just built and the under construction apartment complex currently being built next to it near Boudreaux Rd and the Grand Parkway, and the traffic from both 249 and the Grand Parkway that feed onto Boudreaux, all can make Hufsmith-Kohrville and Boudreaux a traffic nightmare at times. Whether realized by TXDOT or Harris County or not, with no frontage roads on the Grand Parkway between 249 and Gleannloch Forest Dr, Boudreaux Rd is functioning as the east and westbound frontage roads for Grand Parkway, and two lanes simply is not cutting it anymore. If no bridge is built for either

Hufsmith-Kohrville or Boudreaux and this intersection remains at-grade, there need to be right turn lanes in all directions, along with extended or dual left turn lanes for SB Hufsmith-Kohrville to EB Boudreau and for WB Boudreaux to SB Hufsmith-Kohrville. This is also a dangerous area for pedestrians and cyclists that may be travelling from their neighborhood or apartment complex to the corner store, as there is no street lights, no sidewalks, no shoulders and nowhere for these pedestrians and cyclists to be except either in the street or halfway down the roadside ditches.

*Response: **Harris County***

Harris County has initiated or completed projects along Hufsmith-Kohrville between FM 2929 and SH 99 to expand the roadway to four lanes with appropriate drainage. There is also an active project along Boudreaux which is not in the TIP. Your comments are timely and will be considered as these active projects progress.

Comment 8: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Thomas B*

Again, do us a favor and do yourselves a favor and simply widen this road from two lanes to six instead of just four. This road is parallel to Fry Rd east of 99, and you see the traffic mess that Fry Rd is with all of the developments on that road with its four-lane configuration and lack of permissive left turns, short left turn bays, and hardly any right turn lanes. Houston and Harris County are notorious for allowing just about any kind of development anywhere, and yet TXDOT, Houston, and Harris County are always working behind the developments to scramble and get the roads up to a standard that is commensurate with the traffic that THEY ALREADY KNOW will be generated by the developments. Can you all comprehend how frustrating this is for commuters, as this happens over and over and over again? RAPID OVERDEVELOPMENT AND LAGGING INFRASTRUCTURE DO NOT MIX, but it is still done anyway!

Get ahead of the traffic that you and I both know will eventually be on this road. In the DFW suburbs and even in Dallas proper, nearly all of their major arterial roads are built six lanes wide, even when there is no development around (see FM 1171 in Denton County as an example). That is called proactive planning because they have a template of how development patterns mature around the roads that are put in place. They do not worry about building a two-lane road, spending funds on a traffic count a year or two later, then going back out to the same road and perform construction AGAIN to make it a four-lane road (see Cane Island Pkwy south of 10 in Katy for this very example; completed as a two-lane road in 2018 and already needs to be widened to four), only to evaluate it a few years later and see that due to development, a six-lane road is now needed to accommodate the traffic volume.

My understanding is this exact same thing is about to happen with Tuckerton Rd from the Grand Parkway to Fry Rd; it is initially being built as a two-lane road...WHY?!? I don't get it. DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME AND BE DONE WITH IT! Again, I don't get it.

*Response: **Harris County***

Harris County has initiated or completed projects along Hufsmith-Kohrville between FM 2929 and SH 99 to expand the roadway to four lanes with appropriate drainage. There is also an active project along Boudreaux which is not in the TIP. Your comments are timely and will be considered as these active projects progress.

<i>Comment 9:</i>	Topic: Transit	<i>Submitted by Ricky Valdez The Woodlands Township</i>
<p>Add twelve (12) projects to the FY 2021-2024 TIP and minor revisions to two (2) projects to the 2045 RTP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 2022-Planning Expenditures for Public Transportation: FY 2019 • FY 2022 Capital Expenditures for Public Transportation: Capital Cost of Contracting: FY 2019 • FY 2022 Operation Expenditures for Public Transportation: FY 2019 • FY 2022-Bus Acquisition and Bus Facilities: FY 2019. • FY 2023-Planning Expenditures for Public Transportation: FY 2020. • FY 2023-Capital Expenditures for Public Transportation: Capital Cost of Contracting: FY 2020. • FY 2023-OPERATION EXPENDITURES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: FY 2020 • FY 2023-BUS ACQUISITION AND BUS FACILITIES: FY 2020 • FY 2024-PLANNING EXPENDITURES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: FY 2021. • FY 2024-CAPTIAL EXPENDITURES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: CAPITAL COST OF CONTRACTING: FY 2021. • FY 2024-OPERATION EXPENDITURES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: FY 2021. • FY 2024-BUS ACQUISITION AND BUS FACILITIES: FY 2021 		
<i>Response: H-GAC</i>		
<p>All submitted projects have been included in the Draft 2021-2024 TIP.</p>		

<i>Comment 10:</i>	Topic: Transit	<i>Submitted by Ricky Valdez The Woodlands Township</i>
<p>FY 2033 - CONSTRUCT A NEW 12' CONCRETE PATH ON FM 242 (COLLEGE PARK DR) WITH RR CROSSING WITH GATE ARMS AND PANELS, A DRAINAGE CULVERT AND LANDSCAPNG</p>		
<i>Response: H-GAC</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.</p>		

<i>Comment 11:</i>	Topic: Active Transportation	<i>Submitted by Ricky Valdez The Woodlands Township</i>
FY 2045-Safe School Access on Kuykehdaahl Road from Creekside Green drive to Timarron Drive, Lake Woodlands Drive to Research Forest Drive (Excluding Bridge Crossing); Heb (3601 FM 1488) to FM 1488; Panther Creek Drive from McCullough Junior High School to Spiral Vine Circle.		
<i>Response: H-GAC</i>		
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor and sponsor’s response is pending.		

<i>Comment 12:</i>	Topic: General	<i>Submitted by Jay Crossley</i>
Can I please have the information on projects in the proposed 2021 TIP presented in this online map in GIS shapefile form?		
https://h-gac.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=603c774abba745c69b0de5c68b659dc1		
In many previous cases, H-GAC made shapefiles available for all without needing to ask like this for such data (which is clearly based on a shapefile), so I really hope that H-GAC will have a consistent policy of transparency of always publishing important maps like this in a format that people can download the data and do their own analysis		
Similarly, I wish that H-GAC would adopt a policy of always providing easy access to spreadsheets like these as actual spreadsheets (basically the excel file), instead of only publishing them in the less accessible pdf format.		
http://h-gac.com/transportation-improvement-program/documents/2021-2024/Draft-TIP-New-Projects.pdf http://h-gac.com/transportation-improvement-program/documents/2021-2024/Draft-TIP-Project-Listing.pdf		
These documents were clearly created as spreadsheets, so that actual form of the document should be public, as it is much more useful for independent analysis. In the past, I have reverse engineered a spreadsheet document out of a pdf like this, but its annoying and H-GAC should work hard to make it very easy for anyone to have access to such important data.		
<i>Response: H-GAC</i>		
Thank you for your comment. H-GAC is happy to send you the files directly and will consider your recommendations for future TIP related web postings		

Comment 13:

Topic: NHHIP

*Submitted by Jonathan Brooks
Link Houston*

The following are LINK Houston’s comments regarding the Houston-Galveston Area Council’s (H-GAC) draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). LINK Houston advocates for a robust and equitable transportation network so that all people can reach opportunity. LINK Houston provides these comments as a member of the H-GAC Technical Advisory Committee, as a member of the Make I-45 Better Coalition, and in support of the many people and communities in Houston who rely on walking, biking, and riding transit to access opportunity.

The Transportation Improvement Program is where the rubber meets the road in transportation. It is the actual list of projects from the regional call-for-projects/regional transportation plan that the region is putting forth for actual funding and construction in the next few years.

Local and State Policy Change is Needed – and Resources to Go with It

We understand the TIP process is a routine mechanism to program lists of projects of all types, including for people walking, biking, and transit. If the transportation process were a pipeline the TIP is the water coming out of the spigot. The most significant opportunity to change what comes out of the pipeline is to change where the water is put in. LINK Houston is concerned that the proposed TIP generally continues to invest in roadway expansion, whether highways or major local streets, instead of allocating more resources to projects that improve affordable, urban transportation to support walking, biking, riding transit. Voter support for METRONext (68% percent), civic engagement around the North Houston Highway Improvement Project, the 2045 Active Transportation Plan, and the work of the H-GAC High Capacity Transit Task Force all demonstrate strong and growing support for doing things differently in Houston and the region.

While there is a growing and clear local support for local and high-capacity transit in Harris County and the region, the State of Texas provides no state funds for such projects in metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000 people. There is a clear need for advocacy directed towards state officials to change policy and allocate resources.

We exhort H-GAC and its stakeholders to communicate these changing expectations to state officials to pursue policy changes that unlock State of Texas funds for multi-modal projects in metropolitan areas.

Too Much Money for Roadway Expansion – Out of Line with Public Goals and Interest

As documented in Table 2-1, the proposed TIP allocates about \$8.6 billion toward roadway focused projects (admittedly there are some that include transit, sidewalks, and bikeways) and only \$1.2 billion to transit focused projects (that also include sidewalks, bikeways). The TIP funds the North Houston Highway Improvement Program (NHHIP or I-45 N expansion) Segment 3 and parts of Segment 2, despite the project having serious, ongoing civic engagement to address fundamental goals and proposed design.

Projects with a federal funding role focus heavily on highways, perhaps underutilizing their general flexibility, which is complicated by the State of Texas recategorizing federal funds to a variety of pools. ...

- Projects using federal highway dollars are the vast majority of the total \$7.7 billion, \$1.4 billion of which is state money.

[The \$1.4 billion from state sources. Some of these projects include small transit, walk/bike, and city street elements.]

- Projects using federal transit dollars are \$0.8 billion – literally 1/10th that for highways and regional arterial roadways.

[The State of Texas allocates zero (\$0) state dollars to support metropolitan transit projects. The amount of federal money for transit projects has grown gradually over the decades but remains far less than for highways. Both conditions require and need policy changes.]

Projects using only local money still focus heavily on highways and major streets, in part as a result of local jurisdictions proposing projects under an old paradigm of roadway expansion...

- Projects using only local highway funds are \$1.5 billion.

[Zero (\$0) from state sources. Some of these projects also include small transit, walk/bike, and city street elements.]

- Projects using only local transit funds are \$0.13 billion – literally 1/12th that for local highways.

[Zero (\$0) from state sources. Some of these projects include walk/bike and city street elements.]

We need a better pipeline of projects in the region – one driven by the actual goals of the Regional Transportation Plan and that more heavily centers transit and complete streets.

Texas Department of Transportation Must Do Better at Estimating Cost and Takes Advantage of H-GAC Processes and Traditions

Government stakeholders involved in H-GAC’s regionally significant transportation work understand that sometimes the unforeseen arises, policy changes, public priorities change, or etc. and that such occurrences may change the cost of a transportation project. It happens. What should not happen is the largest single stakeholder in a region, in terms of project dollars, comes to decisionmakers to request support for large cost increases – routinely.

In the draft TIP most of the projects with increased costs are from TxDOT. TxDOT’s request is 25 percent higher cost than originally planned during the call-for-projects just last year. Why is our state’s Department of Transportation the worst at estimating costs? If the increased cost is legitimate, such as to mitigate for climate impacts and flooding, perhaps the planned project should be adapted to reduce its impact. Mitigation need not mean more land for more water detention, necessitating right-of-way takings and displacement. Regardless of the reason, H-GAC and stakeholders should hold each other accountable to stay within budget. The budgeted amount from the call-for-projects was used to rank and select projects in that process. Frequently and routinely accommodating significant increases in cost indicates underlying transparency and accountability issues and inequities in the transportation planning and programming process.

Conclusion

This letter related LINK Houston’s comments and concerns on the draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program.

- There is a growing and clear local support for local and high-capacity transit in Harris County and region but the State of Texas provides no state funds for such projects in metropolitan areas with populations over 200,000 people – there is a clear need for advocacy and education to state officials to change policy and allocate resources.
- The proposed TIP continues the historical trend of spending multiples more on roadway expansion than on facilities for people walking, biking, and riding transit in existing communities. The TIP is the end of a pipeline that needs better, more equitable projects going into the pipe through the next Call-for-Projects and amendment to the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan.
- H-GAC and stakeholders should hold each other more accountable to stay within budget. The budgeted amount from the call-for-projects was used to rank and select projects in that process. Frequently and routinely accommodating significant increases in cost indicates underlying issues and inequities in the transportation planning and programming process.

LINK Houston provides these comments based on our own organization’s mission to advocate for a robust and equitable transportation network so that all people can reach opportunity. We believe every major infrastructure project using taxpayer dollars is an opportunity to improve the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhoods. Many of the region’s residents are non-drivers or walk, bike, and use transit because they want or need to. Transportation infrastructure will continue to influence access to opportunity and quality of life, including health and wellness in Harris County. We hope that as time progresses H-GAC, its stakeholders, and public will converge on improving transportation for people who need it most in existing communities

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 14:

Topic: Roadways

Submitted by Roberto Mascardo

Develop a schematic option: a route that parallels Northpark behind the businesses along north side of Northpark. It will begin at Woodridge Parkway, squeeze between the back side of Saint Martha’s church and the baseball/soccer/football fields (accessed from Hidden Pines). The route continues along the Bens branch drainage easement all the way to IH 69. This route would allow, not just an overpass at railroad, but also a DIRECT CONNECTOR tying into freeway. Develop the pros & cons (compared to the current alignment) and PLEASE present it as an option to the public. You can call the option; Northpark Bypass Option.

*Response: **Ralph DeLeon - Lake Houston Redevelopment Authority***

Mr. Mascardo:

We have been forwarded your TIP Comment originally sent to HGAC on 3/4/2020, and related to the Lake Houston Redevelopment Authority’s (“Authority”) Northpark Drive Reconstruction (T-1014) Project (the “Project”).

The HGAC TIP funded Project limits run from Russell Palmer Road on the west to approximately 1,000 feet east of Woodland Hills Drive on the east. Additionally, the HGAC TIP funding is limited to construction cost. That is any public utility costs, right-of-way acquisition costs or another preparatory costs related to the Project must be funded solely by the Authority.

Early schematics for the Project were developed as part of a greater Kingwood Sub-Regional Mobility Study published in 2015. The Study was commissioned in 2013 jointly by the Authority and the City of Houston. These early Northpark Drive schematics were used for as the basis for the TIP Application and originally provided to HGAC in 2018. This Project, also described as the eastern phase is currently scheduled for funding in 2023; as such we are soon to retain a Project engineering team to design the Project. As such, we are some years past the alternative options stage.

With regards to your comments. Several items. First, much of the limits of the Option you describe are outside the limits of the HGAC TIP funded Project. In some instances over a mile west of our projects furthest western limits. Additionally, due to funding, we are limited to the existing right-of-way Northpark Drive. Further, the Authority does not have eminent domain powers, or the ability to unilaterally affect the facilities or operations of other entities (i.e. TxDOT or Union Pacific Rail Road). In addition, much of the property described in your preferred alignment is privately owned and/or in some cases within the limits of the floodway, as such, it would be outside our ability to fund such an Option.

Finally, the Lake Houston Authority projects are funded through tax increments. Due to State Laws governing the use of tax increments <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/TX/htm/TX.311.htm>, we can only fund projects within the limits of the boundaries of Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Number Ten, City of Houston. As such we wouldn't be able to participate in a project that followed the limits of the alignment described in your preferred Option as it is outside our jurisdictional boundary.

We appreciate your interest.

Comment 15:

Topic: Transit

Submitted by David Noffsinger

Park and Ride. How about after rush hour. Buses come to park & ride every hour. I rode a bus from park & ride for over 10 years. It was great. I think this would help people that want to visit downtown. A smaller bus might work at first. Thank you.

Response: METRO

Mr. Noffsinger:

Thank you for your comment. METRO typically offers service before and after peak hours services serving most Park & Ride facilities currently in the system. Under the METRONext plan, METRO is proposing adding more service to serve Park & Ride facilities during off peak hours and also on the weekends. For more information, visit: www.metronext.org.

<i>Comment 16:</i>	Topic: Active Transportation	<i>Submitted by Amin Esmaily</i>
<p>(1) With the increase in B-Cycle throughout 3rd Ward, Midtown, Downtown, and The Heights, it will be more important than ever to prioritize construction of continuous, inter-connected bike lanes throughout these areas to increase biker safety and minimize use of pedestrian sidewalks by bikers.</p> <p>(2) Use of electronic signage at METRO bus and rail stops detailing arrival/departure times and delays. Almost every major city in Western Europe (and now New York and San Francisco) have electronic signage at their bus and rail stops that detail arrival/departure times and delays. Houston is far far behind in use of technology to improve commuter transportation and experience,</p> <p>(3) North and South MacGregor streets coming into UH are in terrible condition and have been for over a decade. We really need to redo those streets as they get a high level of traffic and are continuing to deteriorate.</p>		
<i>Response: METRO</i>		
<p>Mr. Esmaily:</p> <p>Thank you for your comments. METRO recognizes the importance of connecting transit to the bicycle network; as part of METRONext projects, METRO evaluates opportunities to include meaningful first and last mile (pedestrian and bicycle) connections to transit. Regarding digital signage METRO is planning on beginning implementation of digital signage along some bus routes and Transit Centers beginning on FY 2020. If you are interested in more information, you may watch the METRO Board Administration Committee Meeting “Digital Signage” presentation on September 18th, 2019 at: https://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/BoardMeetingsAndNotices.aspx</p>		

<i>Comment 17:</i>	Topic: General	<i>Submitted by Ruth Henshall</i>
<p>I support the recommendations</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Our sincere thanks for your participation and support of the planning process.</p>		

<i>Comment 18:</i>	Topic: Roadways	<i>Submitted by Jeanie Miller</i>
<p>How about fixing the streets in need of much repair before adding to an already exasperated road problem. We don’t need bike lanes. We need more transit buses and routes. The trains that we have already aren’t being used.</p> <p>You want to make Houston like New York or LA. We need to make Houston in its own image! We’re unique and not a cookie cutter place to live. Though Mayor Turner wants us to be liberal California!! Wake up Democrats!! Democrats are not the party of the old guard of the bygone years.</p>		

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 19:</i>	Topic: General	<i>Submitted by Ramon & Rosie Vargas</i>
<p>Good morning. I wish ya'll would think about the people that are afraid of driving on the super high bridges. I have to maneuver myself and go a different route just to avoid driving on these bridges. There's also a lot elderly folks that still drive! Thank you and have a blessed day.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.		

<i>Comment 20:</i>	Topic: Transit	<i>Submitted by Michael Moritz</i>
<p>Hi HGAC.</p> <p>Overall, the last three years I have driven most of the greater Houston area, and am a regular transit user in town as well. SH 99 in Katy does back up during rush hour, but it doesn't need to have additional lanes!! Time and time again project that increase number of lanes only create more traffic (induced demand). More data is needed on the origins and destinations of those motorists. Perhaps many of them are going from jobs in the energy corridor to homes in Katy and Sugarland. We need buses on Grand Parkway! Energy corridor to Cinco Ranch, Energy Corridor to Seven Lakes HS area, Energy Corridor to New Territory, Pecan Grove, Sugarland, Etc. SH 242 in The Woodlands has a lot of use, but even during rush hour there isn't debilitating traffic on the College Park Dr. stretch. Please don't spend the money to widen that road! When are we going to see these billions of dollars of state funds go towards state high speed rail@ when Texans travel to other Texas cities, they frequently go to one are of the visited city and stay there. They don't need a car once they are there. I frequently travel from Houston to Austin, and from Houston to San Antonio, primarily to visit family. I would use rail every time if I could. I love the Westheimer signature bus service, and the 290 HOV lanes to allow busses to get back into town during rush hour to better serve park and riders. Please appropriate more money to transit and pedestrian safety! Thank you.</p> <p>Michael.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.		

Comment 21: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Jackie Pontello*

I have been asking officials (TXDOT, COH) a question about what a paragraph on Page 5-57 of the Final Community Impacts Draft means for four months now—and no one can explain it! It is the source of much community upset and ill will for the project as well as for H-GAC. There is reference to a design change made due to community input. It is unclear what the design change is from the plain language of the final ECIS Report.

Here is the paragraph, which has internal contradictions.

“I-610 eastbound and westbound access to Fulton Street/Irvington Boulevard: The redesign reversed the proposed Airline Drive entrance ramp and the Fulton Street exit ramp. This would allow eastbound traffic on the I-610 mainlanes and frontage road west of I-45 to access the I-610 mainlanes and/or frontage road on the east side of I-45. The Collector-Distributor system allows for I-610 eastbound mainlane traffic to queue for exiting the eastbound Fulton Street exit ramp without interfering with through-traffic on the I-610 mainlanes.”

Any suggestions as to who could decipher? I am trying to do all involved a kindness.

Response: HNTB (TXDOT Consultant)

Today, traffic Eastbound on I-610 from Main Street cannot access Fulton. This traffic can exit Irvington Blvd. Between N. Main Street and Irvington Blvd you must use the local street network and there is no direct routes.

For the proposed layout, the direct connectors from I-45 to and from I-610 are too close to Irvington Blvd to also keep the existing entrance ramp westbound toward I-45 and the existing exit ramp eastbound. However, for the eastbound direction the exit ramp has been moved to just west of Fulton Street allowing an exit movement to access Fulton Street or pass through a signalized intersection on the frontage road to access Irvington Street. Traffic coming from N. Main Street will have three options to exit for Fulton and Irvington Street:

1. Traffic eastbound on the mainlanes of I-610 would exit before I-45 to a separate roadway that is between the mainlanes and the new frontage road. This parallel separate roadway is called a collector-distributor. Traffic would continue on the collector-distributor to pass over the I-45 frontage roads and then exit from the collector-distributor roadway to the I-610 frontage road just before Fulton Street providing an option to turn on Fulton Street or continue straight through that intersection to get to Irvington Blvd.
2. Traffic from N. Main Street would go straight on the I-610 eastbound frontage road and cross Airline Drive and then take an entrance to the Collector-Distributor roadway. Once on the Collector-Distributor roadway, traffic would pass over the I-45 frontage roads and then have an option to enter directly to the I-610 mainlanes to the left or exit to the right to Fulton/Irvington Street. This is the same exit described above for the mainlane traffic from I-610 eastbound.
3. Traffic from N. Main Street also can continue on the I-45 frontage past Airline Drive and stay on a new section of frontage road that provides connection to I-45 frontage roads north and

south or traffic can continue on the new frontage road to go to Fulton Street and Irvington Street.

This separates mainlane movements and local movements with three roadways: the I-610 mainlanes; a parallel and separate Collector-Distributor roadway between Airline Drive and Fulton Street; and a new continuous I-610 frontage road.
 [Map Attached]

Comment 22: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Ed Thompson*

Thank you for the important work The Houston-Galveston Area Council is doing to promote adequate transportation infrastructure in our continually growing region of the state. I appreciate the opportunity to Provide public comments and voice my support for the projects within House District 29. While our community has benefitted from significant growth in industrial, commercial, retail, and residential areas, the traffic congestion and safety concerns this growth has created must be addressed in a timely manner. Rapid growth naturally creates a strain on funding, and in such an environment, certain project must be prioritized above others.

Some projects in our region require a more immediate solution than others, and it is my belief that the project planned for County Road 64 should be funded prior to the project planned for County Road 63 for two main reasons.

First, Alvin Independent School District will soon begin building its fourth high school in the Iowa Colony community. This new high school's location will require that students be transported across State Highway 288. In order to do so safely, improvements to CR 64 must be made. Second, several multi-family residential facilities are under construction in this same area. The completion of these facilities will cause both safety and congestion concerns that can be alleviated by the CR64 project.

Safety and mobility are of utmost importance to the businesses and families in District 29, and the successful completion of these projects will insure our infrastructure keeps pace with the tremendous growth in the region.

Thank you for your assistance in bringing state and federal tax dollars to our region. I appreciate your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (512) 463-0707 or by email at Ed.Thompson@house.texas.gov.

Sincerely,
 Ed Thompson
 District 29

CC:
 U.S. Congressman Pete Olson
 Texas Senator Larry Taylor
 Brazoria County, Commissioner David Linder
 Brazoria County, Commissioner Ryan Cade
 City of Iowa Colony, Mayor Michael Byrum-Bratsen
 City of Alvin, Mayor Paul Horn
 Alvin Independent School District, Superintendent Carol Nelson
 Alvin-Manvel Chamber of Commerce, President Johanna McWilliams
 Brazoria County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, President Gina Aguirre-Adams
 Pearland Chamber of Commerce, President Carol Artz-Bucek

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 23:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Mary Schulz</i>
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It's reported in the Chronicle article that only 11.8% of the funds being planned in this TIP are designated for TRANSIT. Is HGAC aware that 67% of Houston voters said they want METRO Next, that they favor transit? Also, the huge majority of Houstonians surveyed by Huitl-Zollars for preferences in renovation for I-45 NHHIP voted against continuing the car-centric, climate polluting plans designed for I-45 by TxDOT. The projects listed for I-10E and TX-35 alternate are not what citizens have said they want. All of these plans, as names at this time (I-45, I-10, TX 35) contradict the climate action plan. The informed people of Houston want HGAC to put thought, planning and money into TRANSIT, not highways.

<i>Response:</i>

In order to address the challenges this region faces concerning transportation and continued population growth, it takes multiple modes of transportation alternatives. This will need to include transit, highways, and local street network improvement options. We support increased transit and the pursuit of available dollars to fund these improvements. However, we need to take advantage of all funding types available that address the various modes. These funding types also come with certain restrictions on how they can be spent. Funding from the state and federal highway trust funds are dedicated and restricted by law to highway improvements. Similarly, there are federal transit dollars and other funding mechanisms that we believe should be maximized to leverage the options and choices and enhance connectivity among the modal alternatives. It takes all modes effectively working together to adequately address our region's transportation demands and challenges.

Note that the I-10, SH 35, and I-45 NHHIP are all funded with state and federal highway trust fund dollars. These projects are designed to work together with transit options where practical. For instance, the I-45 NHHIP northern segments specifically add four managed express lanes (MAX lanes) to increase capacity and provide continuous 24-hour two-way managed (MAX) lane operations. These MAX lanes enhance transit opportunities with increased capacity for bus and high occupancy vehicle usage. TxDOT is also coordinating with METRO and the City of Houston on how these facilities might connect to transit hubs and other transit modes which cannot be funded with dedicated highway dollars. This is a way TxDOT is maximizing use of these dollars and leveraging highway improvements that will work together with increased transit funding when it can be secured.

The state highway funding includes a mix of various funding types including traditional gas tax dollars and funds made available from Proposition 1 and 7. Proposition 7 was a constitutional amendment passed by 83% of Texas voters on November 3, 2015, which authorized a constitutional amendment dedicating certain sales and use tax revenue and motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue to the state highway fund to provide funding for non-tolled roads. Proposition 1 was passed by 80% of Texas voters on November 4, 2014, which authorized a constitutional amendment for transportation funding. Under the amendment, a portion of existing oil and natural gas production taxes (also known as severance taxes) would be divided evenly between the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF) and the State Highway

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Fund (SHF). Pursuant to Section 49-g(c), Article III, Texas Constitution, the funds may only be used for constructing, maintaining, and acquiring rights-of-way for public roadways other than toll roads.

We appreciate your comment and agree that additional transit options should be pursued in addition to the enhancement of all modes to maximize transportation alternatives and regional connectivity.”

Comment 24:

Topic: General

*Submitted by Beth White
Houston Parks Board*

Given the current Novel Coronavirus crisis and restrictions in place ordered by Judge Hidalgo, HPB urges the TPC to extend the TIP comment period beyond March 29, 2020. The TIP list is complex and reflects billions of dollars in spending. It requires careful consideration. However, the minds of the public and public officials are understandably focused elsewhere and have been for most of the public comment period (February 28 – March 29, 2020).

We ask that you please provide all the time needed for the public to properly focus on the Draft 2021-2024 TIP.

Thank you for your consideration, and for all your hard work on the Transportation Improvement Program. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (713) 942-8500.

Sincerely,
Beth White
Houston Parks Board

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Comment 25:

Topic: NHHIP

*Submitted by Erik Erikson
Stop TxDOT I-45*

Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

<i>Comment 26:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Erik Erikson Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities</p>		

<i>Comment 27:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Erik Erikson Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR</p> <p>The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p> <p>Stop TxDot I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties. • Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why • Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency. • Limit authority to a determined time period. • Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization. 		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 28:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Iona Buckner Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 29:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Iona Buckner Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 30:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Iona Buckner Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p> <p>Stop TxDOT I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties. 		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency. • Limit authority to a determined time period. • Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization.
<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

<i>Comment 31:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Susan Graham Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.		
<i>Response:</i>		
Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.		

<i>Comment 32:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Susan Graham Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.		
Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.		
Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.		

<i>Comment 33:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Susan Graham Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?		

This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.

Stop TxDOT I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority:

- Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties.
- Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency.
- Limit authority to a determined time period.
- Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

<i>Comment 34:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Molly Cook Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
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Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

<i>Comment 35:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Molly Cook Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
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Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

<i>Comment 36:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Molly Cook Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p>		
<p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop TxDot I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority: • Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties. • Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency. • Limit authority to a determined time period. • Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization. 		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 37</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Eleanor Hildreth Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 38</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Eleanor Hildreth Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 39</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Eleanor Hildreth Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop TxDot I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority: • Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties. • Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency. • Limit authority to a determined time period. • Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization. 		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

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<i>Comment 40:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Bill Wilson Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 41:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Bill Wilson Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 42:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Bill Wilson Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. 2%.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 43:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Todd Crocken</i>
<p>The i45 expansion is not tied to any metrics or facts that make sense. More roads lead to more congestion. 3-5 years of construction of the only major thoroughfare out of Galveston County and Brazoria county is a time bomb. Millennials do not want to live in suburbs. Zoomers don't want to live in suburbs. The current Covid-10 crisis shows that many people could work from home and that highway use is a thing of the past. Do not build this plan, it will destroy neighborhoods and only benefit the richest white developers in Midtown and the west side.</p>		
<i>Response: TXDOT</i>		
<p>TxDOT uses data from a variety of sources and different traffic models to assist planners and designers in enhancing the roadways that connect residents to homes, businesses, and recreational facilities throughout the Houston region. TxDOT is also concerned with the traffic that passes through our region since Houston is at the center of a vibrant coastal economic region. We are working with urban and regional planners to better understand sociodemographic, socioeconomic, and development needs in the region so we can balance the needs of regional mobility and local quality of life.</p>		

<i>Comment 44:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by JR Tyson</i>
<p>H-GAC should not build new roads for developers that flood others... AND block major floodways. Alvin SH 6 and SH 35 RR underpasses flood every time we have storm rain. Why do folks elected today tax the public and not understand loss of life and property by flooding will kill far more than any virus in the next 10 years. For Brazoria Co focus on evacuation routes and stop building in floodways</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.</p>		

<i>Comment 45:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Patrick Hubbell Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 46:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Patrick Hubbell Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 47:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Patrick Hubbell Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop TxDOT I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority: • Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties. • Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why • Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency. • Limit authority to a determined time period. • Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization. 		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 48:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Nancy Edwards Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization requests that the March 27th meeting be cancelled and rescheduled due to the current COVID-19 Public Health Emergency until the "stay at home" order has been lifted and large groups are again allowed to gather.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 49:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Nancy Edwards Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>Our organization also requests that the March 29, 2020 deadline for public comment on the 2021-2024 TIP funding be extended. This funding includes Segment 3 of the NHHIP which continues to be controversial. The residents most affected by this project are currently focusing on their basic needs. To take advantage of this crisis to move forward is at best disingenuous.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.</p>		

<i>Comment 50:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Nancy Edwards Stop TxDOT I-45</i>
<p>POTENTIAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION – LIMITED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO TPC OFFICERS AND MPO DIRECTOR The proposed authorization seeks very broad authority without clear definitions or time limitations. While we understand that this type of authorization will ease some administrative barriers, our coalition is concerned with the lack of clarity on what types of projects and decisions this authority will be used for. Who would decide what is or is not a disaster is unclear. Does this require a Disaster Declaration from Harris County Commissioner’s Court or other Governmental entity? Or just a disaster determined by the TPC?</p> <p>This is seemingly a major administrative change during a Public Health Emergency when the public’s attention is understandably elsewhere. All normalities in daily lives are gone. We are adjusting to new and uncertain times. We are working from home if we are lucky to have a job, taking care of our children while doing so. We are watching our retirement saving bottom, and what was once a routine trip to the grocery store feels like an event. Some are caring for sick family and friends. This is all emotionally and physically exhausting. Due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, our coalition would like clarification and assurances on a few specific points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop TxDOT I-45 requests the following amendments to the Delegation and Authorization of Authority: 		

- Define a disaster as one declared by the Harris County Commissioners Court or other governmental bodies in surrounding counties.
- Define what types of decisions would be made using this expanded authority and why
- Limit to a declared disaster, in this case the current COVID 19 Public Health Emergency.
- Limit authority to a determined time period.
- Decisions regarding major projects such as the NHHIP to be excluded from this authorization.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

Comment 51: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Marlisa Briggs North Houston Association*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment for the Draft 2021-2024 TIP. We appreciate the comment extension deadline in light of the current COVID-19 Crisis.

The North Houston Association (NHA), by mission, focuses on regional issues in the north Houston region (north Harris County and all of Montgomery County) that impact the business environment. As such, mobility is one of the primary areas of focus for NHA, and we advocate for transportation projects that will enhance regional mobility in our service area. One advocacy and educational tool we use is our Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP). The purpose of the plan is to identify mobility projects which need financial, political, and public support. Projects were ranked and chosen based on the following issues: mobility, safety, economic development impact, and achievability. Our process is described in detail in the document.

To start, we would like to thank you for including two of our key projects in the Draft 2021-2024 TIP: the Old Conroe Magnolia Rd. Extension and the widening of SH 105. These projects will support the rapid growth of their respective areas, as well as improve safety and mobility.

We also would like to thank you for your support of the North Houston Highway Improvement Project. NHA has been an advocate of this key initiative for years, and we were happy to testify in support of the project in a TPC meeting last year. Although technically out of our service area, the completed project will provide relief northward, especially for the numerous commuters who reside in the north part of the region. Additionally, it will flow into the current I-45 N PEL, of which NHA is participating as a stakeholder.

Related to the I-45 N PEL, one of the top-ranking projects on our SMP is the Robinson Road project (Project P on our SMP). The PEL has its sights on the I-45 N interchange with Robinson Rd., but more is needed that is outside the scope of the PEL. We recommend widening Robinson Rd. to four lanes and realigning the road over the railroad crossing. Currently there are three projected phases of “The Robinson Road” project. Phase 1 is the overpass at IH-45 and Patsy Lane, which has begun construction and is considered a county project. Phase 2 of the project is the realignment of Robinson at Hanna/UPRR tracks and phase 3 is the section connecting phases 1 and 2

The entire segment of Robinson Road between I-45 and the UPRR railroad track is extremely congested, and the City of Oak Ridge's business park is east of the railroad. This has a large negative impact of the

potential success of the business park, due to difficult accessibility. This project scored extremely high for us due to the impact on safety, mobility and economic development.

The other two projects we would like to see included in the TIP are construction of the remaining direct connectors at I-45 & SH 99 as well as those at I-69 & SH 99. The Grand Parkway has resulted in improved mobility and has boosted economic development along the route. We ask that funding be provided to finish the project by completing these connectors, so as not to increase congestion at these interchanges and to improve safety.

We at NHA appreciate H-GAC's partnership and commitment to the good of the region. We have a long history of jointly working on regional issues, and we look forward to our continued work together.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 52:</i>	Topic: General	<i>Submitted by Harrison Humphreys Air Alliance</i>
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Air Alliance Houston appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2021-24 Transportation Improvement Program.

While we appreciate the attention paid to air quality and environmental justice issues both in the TIP and other MPO planning documents, the projects within the TIP represent a continuation of the paradigm that leads to poor air quality and infringement on vulnerable communities. Too much of our federal and state transportation dollars are being used for roadway expansion projects in our region, purportedly to mitigate congestion and improve level of service. As we have commented previously on other planning documents, the region needs to move away from a paradigm of continued expansion that only promotes sprawl and worsens the congestion issues it sets out to fix. We know this model does not work, and is ultimately costlier for the region in the long run.

The MPO must adopt funding priorities that support maintenance of our current infrastructure and expansion of multimodal options, instead of continuing to rely on the notion that we expanding highways will fix our region's growing pains. We must move away from a funding structure that relies solely on Level of Service metrics, which only measures how we can best move cars, and develop formulas that will fund projects that best move people. Improving on existing infrastructure and expanding alternative modes are more equitable and environmentally sustainable uses of our region's transportation funds.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

*Comment 53***Topic: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION***Submitted by Beth White
Houston Parks Board*

RE: 2021-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (TIP) – DRAFT LISTINGS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Dear Transportation Policy Council (TPC),

The following are Houston Parks Board's (HPB) comments regarding the 2021-2024 TIP Project List.

Extension of the public comment period

Given the current novel coronavirus crisis and restrictions in place ordered by Judge Hidalgo and Mayor Turner, HPB appreciates that the TPC extended the TIP comment period beyond March 29, 2020.

HGAC should independently consider the appropriateness of excessive highway funding

A significant amount of the proposed projects are those sponsored by TXDOT and are on-system projects. This body should consider as a matter of policy whether local road funding should be used for on-system highway projects, especially in light of the very significant funding received directly by TXDOT for these projects. Local roads, in contrast, have no other significant options for federal funding, which is especially significant in light of the stress on local road budgets.

Active transportation projects generally are underfunded

Active transportation grants fall short of the percentage allowed in prior calls. HPB believes the funding pattern reflected in the proposed grants undervalue active transportation as a matter of regional policy and is inconsistent with HGAC's stated goals for quality of life and regional development. We strongly urge at least matching this list's level and sources of active transportation funding to those in prior calls. The amount of applications in the current call show clear demand for substantially increasing the relative investment in active transportation. If we are learning one lesson from the current crisis, it is the underlying value to society of active transportation in meeting peoples' most basic needs and desires.

Specific projects HPB recommends

HPB supports all projects on the list that provide active transportation and that provide meaningful safe bikeways, sidewalks, and other pedestrian facilities in conjunction with road projects. All road projects should provide such facilities. HPB also generally supports public transit projects. HPB specifically recommends projects on the list that complement Bayou Greenways and Beyond the Bayous including:

- 18030: Sims Bayou Bridge making safer the Sims Bayou Greenway.
- 18146: Memorial Park Connector helping connect White Oak Bayou Greenway to Memorial Park.
- 17103: Memorial Park to San Felipe over Buffalo Bayou which ties into the CenterPoint ROW leading to Sims Bayou Greenway
- 18018: Connecting the MKT Trail to White Oak Bayou Greenway via Rutland Detention Basin
- 7814: Spring Creek Hike and Bike Trail connecting Spring and Cypress Creek trails to San Jacinto Greenway and Kingwood trails.
- 13200: Uptown Connections from the west side of 610 to Memorial Park, then south along the CenterPoint ROW to Richmond and north over I-10. However, once again, in citing these specific recommendations, the list of active transportation projects could include so much more. The Little White Oak Bayou Greenway TIP submission offers particular value in connecting low to moderate income areas to Downtown Houston and the existing Bayou Greenway system. HPB's Port to Port application links the Port of Houston with Hobby Airport as well as Buffalo, Brays, and Sims Bayou Greenways. This application serves a multiplier effect identified in Beyond the Bayous by making north-south connections and linking to established east-west connections.

HPB’s Westside/Westpark Connector Greenway application links Brays Bayou Greenway along a CenterPoint easement to the Uptown trail (MPOID# 13200 recommended above) and Memorial Park. The Westside/Westpark project would further connect west to the Bellaire Uptown Transit Center and the Hillcroft Park and Ride.

Thank you for your consideration and your dedication to improving transportation in the H-GAC region.

Yours truly,
Beth White – President & CEO

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 54: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by BJ Simon- Baytown W. Chambers Co. Econ. Dev. Found.*

The Baytown West Chambers County Economic Development Foundation (EDF) is in full support of the City of Baytown funding request for the Garth Road Widening Project (MPO Project 17096). Garth Road is the City’s most significant retail corridor and the project, as presented, represents a significant opportunity to enhance safety, economic development and quality of life, while increasing transportation capacity and throughput.

The project directly meets the goals of the H-GAC and the GCEDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) vis-à-vis mobility and diversified economic vitality in one of the region’s fastest growing and integrated economies.

The EDF strongly supports the project and its transformational potential for the region. If questions should arise or you require additional information, please contact me at 281.420.2961 or bjsimon@baytownedf.org. Your consideration is sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 55: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Brandon Capetillo Mayor City of Baytown*

Greetings,

I want to reach out and express our extreme gratitude for the past support of H-GAC and the TPC in funding critical transportation needs. In particular we believe there is an opportunity to address a sorely needed project (Garth Road Widening/Reconstruction) that would benefit the Baytown region as this major thoroughfare connects State Highway 146 to Interstate 10. This project will entail full reconstruction and address related drainage needs. If completed, the Garth Road project will help reduce traffic congestion and greatly improve traffic safety. The project will also improve urban mobility to the adjacent commercial and residential areas. All of these aspects make this project a high-priority for the

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS

region, especially considering the critical community infrastructure along the corridor, including Houston Methodist Baytown, Fire Station 1, San Jacinto Marketplace, future development, and a key Harris County Transit route. I respectfully ask for your consideration of funding of this significant and very justified regional transportation project. I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Best Regards,
 Brandon Capetillo, Mayor City of Baytown

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 56: **Topic: General** *Submitted by Oscar Slotboom*

The TIP should emphasize road and highway improvements, and cost-effective public transit improvements for bus service. (Light rail is not cost effective and I oppose light rail). The proposed TIP is generally consistent with those goals, and I support it.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 57: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Oscar Slotboom*

North Houston Highway Improvement Project I support the inclusion of NHHIP projects 155, 7428, 16337, 16329, 16336 and 16330 in the plan.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 58: **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Oscar Slotboom*

I would have liked to see at least some of the projects north of downtown included in the plan.
 H-GAC should include additional projects in a future TIP plan as soon as possible. (Projects 16328, 16332, 16327, 16333)

SH 35 Projects 202, 209 and 210

I support inclusion of these projects. This will improve accessibility to the University of Houston.

Hardy Toll Road Downtown Connector, project 15208

I support this project. It will improve access to downtown and provide an alternate route during construction of the NHHIP. This project has been excessively delayed, and it should definitely proceed to construction as scheduled in the TIP (9/15/2020)

Grand Parkway between IH-10 West and Westpark Tollway, project 18021 and 18022

The full section between IH-10 and the Westpark tollway should be widened to 8 main lanes (4 each way). Widening to 6 lanes will not be sufficient for long-term needs.

SH 225/BW 8 Interchange Improvements, Project 16340

I would like to see all 8 direct connectors included in this project.

West Loop

The West Loop is the #1 most congested highway segment in the state of Texas. I would like to see new capacity for the West Loop included in the TIP. This could be express lanes or managed lanes between IH-69 and IH-10. H-GAC should resume planning efforts to add capacity to the West Loop in a future TIP.

Inner Katy BRT, project 11473

This project should be planned in conjunction with adding four managed lanes (two in each direction) to the Inner Katy Corridor. The managed lanes will connect the existing managed lanes outside Loop 610 and the NHHIP planned managed lanes downtown.

Fort Bend Parkway section B-2

According to the official project web site, <http://www.fbctra.com/segment-b2/> "Construction of the overpass and roadway is scheduled to begin in 2021 and will take 16 to 20 months to complete."

This project does not appear to be included in the online documents. Why is it missing?

Grand Parkway sections B and C

I would like to see at least some of this project included in the plan. As the planning process proceeds, it should be added to a future TIP as soon as possible.

Metro Project 16345, "SIGNING AND RESTRIPE GENERAL PURPOSE LANE FOR OFF-PEAK HOV LANE"

This project should not proceed until there is congestion in the off-peak direction. I think it can be delayed to be after 2024.

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM TPC MEETING – JUNE 2020

<i>Comment 1:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Nina Culotta</i>
<p>Transportation Policy Council members: I oppose the approval of funding for the North Houston Highway Improvement Project, Segment 3, in the 2021-2024 TIP. The Texas Department of Transportation has not committed to mitigating adverse impacts of this project, such as displacement, flooding, and air quality, and should not receive the green light to bulldoze, disconnect, and dismantle historic Black and Latinx communities along the project corridor. I urge TPC to withhold funding for this project unless and until TxDOT addresses these issues in an equitable way for the benefit of all of our city's residents, especially those most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of the proposed highway expansion</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 2:</i>	Topic: Transit	<i>Submitted by David Blomstrom</i>
<p>Could you please make sure the Amtrak station is joined to the new station for Highspeed rail to Dallas and also is directly connected to local rail and transit services. Should be a new station befitting of Houston's stature in the world today. I am a frequent Amtrak customer and enjoy my trains and wish for more access and more train options soon.</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.</p>		

<i>Comment 3:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Thomas E Marsh</i>
<p>Comments to Transportation Policy Council (TPC) June 26 meeting - Segment 3 of the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP):</p> <p>The North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) must include integration of area transportation modes.</p> <p>The project as proposed envisions major changes to the Union Pacific Railroad mainline that serves Houston's Amtrak station that probably will require relocating the rail passenger station. This should be done as part of a coordinated effort to integrate surface transportation facilities in the area.</p>		

The project should result in integration of Houston's Amtrak station into Metro's transit system (whether BRT or LRT), to include direct connections to downtown and the future Texas Central Railway terminal near Metro's Northwest Transit Center.

Modern, attractive, welcoming station facilities sized for future growth of environmentally friendly passenger rail service should be built, including convenient access to such amenities as dining, shopping and secure overnight parking, as befits a key gateway to our nation's fourth largest city

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 4:

Topic: TRANSIT

Submitted by Tom Compson

To the TPC:

I understand that there is a proposal to relocate a portion of Union Pacific's Terminal Subdivision west and north of downtown Houston in conjunction with the North Houston Highway Improvement Project. Such relocation would include the passenger main and would most likely also require relocation of the existing Houston Amtrak station (HOS) located adjacent to the City of Houston permitting center at the east end of Washington Street. Regardless of the ultimate location of HOS, the following goals should guide any changes to the existing station or a new, relocated station:

1. Integration of HOS into Metro's transit system (whether BRT or LRT), to include direct connections to Downtown and the future Texas Central Railway terminal near Metro's Northwest Transit Center.
2. Modern, attractive, welcoming station facilities, including convenient access to such amenities as dining, shopping and secure overnight parking, as befits a key gateway to our nation's fourth largest city.
3. A station sized for future growth of intercity passenger rail service in Houston. Amtrak currently serves Houston with thrice-weekly train service on the Sunset Limited, which runs from New Orleans to Los Angeles, and a daily bus connection to the Texas Eagle in Longview, which runs from San Antonio to Chicago. RPA has an ongoing campaign to increase service on the Sunset Limited to daily, and long-term aspirations to add more passenger rail service in Houston.

A world class city deserves world-class passenger rail service, and a station to match.

Tom Compson
RPA Member

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 5:

Topic: TRANSIT

Submitted by Lee Reaves

Please consider these points in relocating the Houston Amtrak station:

1. Integration of HOS into Metro's transit system (whether BRT or LRT), to include direct connections to Downtown and the future Texas Central Railway terminal near Metro's Northwest Transit Center.
2. Modern, attractive, welcoming station facilities, including convenient access to such amenities as dining, shopping and secure overnight parking, as befits a key gateway to our nation's fourth largest city.
3. A station sized for future growth of intercity passenger rail service in Houston. Amtrak currently serves Houston with thrice-weekly train service on the Sunset Limited, which runs from New Orleans to Los Angeles, and a daily bus connection to the Texas Eagle in Longview, which runs from San Antonio to Chicago.

Lee Reaves

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 6:

Topic: TRANSIT

Submitted by Mike Gonzales

Gentlemen:

My name is Mike Gonzales. I am a senior citizen and a native Houstonian. Railroading is a part of my life. I live and breathe railroading. My father worked at the T&N Railroad and the Southern Pacific Railroad for 30 years. Nothing would be more devastating to me and hundreds of others if railroad passenger service is sacrificed over highway upgrades.

Rail passenger service has been and continues to be a vital part of my family. Any plan to strike it from our daily life would be devastating, particularly seniors like myself. At the very least, the Project should take advantage what rail travel brings to highway travel.

Air travel and auto transportation is an option, yes, but for many us, traveling by train is the most agreeable mode of travel. In addition, train travel is more economical in view of our financial constraints living under social security. And weather conditions won't constrain our travel. I am confident I speak for many other rail passenger proponents. We need vigorous train service to complement our lives.

Over the last thirty years I, personally, have travelled on the Sunset Limited to Santa Barbara, California and other California cities. Eastbound, I have travelled to and from Jacksonville, Fl. (before Katrina intervened); and other routes into the nation’s capital across the middle South.

The Texas Eagle via Palestine, Texas and into Chicago is another one of my many past routes. From there I travelled to St. Louis and into Philadelphia, Pa. and returned via round trip from New York and the Great Lakes and to Houston, Texas. The point of all this, is to remind those that will control our lives with the I-45 Project that passenger travel is vital to, not just senior citizens, but also those with limited financial capital, and those in rural areas with limited rail service.

The NNHIP project, is probably well intentioned and probably has the city of Houston’s welfare in their hearts, but in moving forward with their project, their officials should take care that railroad service is not sacrificed in favor of the I-45 project. Nor should they ignore and cast aside a much-needed upgrade of a new Passenger Terminal. If it is to be moved, move it to a location accessible to ancillary services; taxi service, food courts, parking, Inter transit services, security, etc. An upgrade will most assuredly enhance rail travel.

Mike Gonzales
Houston, Texas

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 7:

Topic: TRANSIT

Submitted by David N Currey

Re: The Houston-Galveston Area Council's Transportation Policy Council (TPC) hearing on June 26

Dear Sirs:

I have comments I would like to see inputted into the proceedings. The planning being considered would affect the current Amtrak station, and would involve moving or eliminating the current railroad route through the north side of downtown Houston known historically as the "Passenger Main".

The route's main purpose was to serve the Southern Pacific's large Grand Central Station, though it did serve a large number of local businesses, none of which utilize rail access now as far as I know. The "Freight Main" splits from the Passenger Main west of downtown and runs straight to Union Pacific's Englewood [freight] Yard, an important yard practically adjacent to Settegast Yard, another major UP freight yard. I am a long-time train traveler in and around Houston, Texas, and the country. I rode trains before Amtrak came into existence. I also had a short 5-year career in train service with the Missouri Pacific/Union Pacific Railroad back in the early 1980s and keep abreast of railroad matters in the Houston area and across the country. I am qualified to make the following points:

- Amtrak's current station in Houston is frankly an embarrassment. It is in a seedy location; is too small for even the six trains a week it serves and is difficult to access. It is not much more than a glorified restroom facility.

- If the Amtrak station location is moved, it should be moved to a location that would be adjacent to or close by bus routes, light rail routes or future routes, freeways, and the Texas Central Railroad's proposed terminal near the Northwest Transit Center, though I have also heard that a location for the TC terminal at the old Northwest Mall location is unfortunately being considered.
- The new modern Amtrak facility should have a minimum of two tracks to ease track maintenance, plus a short private car track. This is nothing additional, as this is what the current Amtrak station has.
- The Railroad Passenger Association is pushing for an increase of the Sunset Limited to daily service (from tri-weekly), as well as for additional future service. So, while the above two platform tracks would be sufficient for current passenger service, the location needs to be large enough so as to be expandable to at least one more platform incorporating two additional tracks. The current Amtrak location is also expandable in that regard.
- The location of the new Amtrak station should take into consideration the location of nearby freeways as well, and nearby easy on-and-off access to at least one freeway is mandatory. Not adequately providing for the Amtrak facility's needs as outlined above could have costly repercussions in the future, not to mention hampering passenger service down the line.

David N. Currey

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

Comment 8:

Topic: TRANSIT

Submitted by David Ritter

The idea of removing the existing Amtrak station and passenger main in Houston is absolutely insane. There is no place to relocate it to! There is no location on the Union Pacific route through Houston with access to interstate routes or bus service. What is your suggestion, boarding at the next station in Beaumont or San Antonio?

The movement of I-45 onto the already overcrowded I69 is already totally illogical. Eliminating passenger rail service to Houston is one more poorly conceived concept. Houston needs improved passenger rail service and a much-improved station.

David Ritter

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

*Comment 9:***Topic: NHHIP***Submitted by Allyn West*

Dear Transportation Policy Council members,

The Texas Department of Transportation has not learned from the mistakes it has made in the past. More damning, though, is that the agency seems intent on repeating them. Houston is notorious as the deadliest region in the country for drivers and people on foot, on bikes and in wheelchairs. The agency claims the project will improve safety, reduce congestion and accommodate the region's projected growth. These claims are dubious. TxDOT has not shown how a wider I-45 would be different from a wider Katy Freeway. TranStar data first compiled by Houston Tomorrow and reported in City Observatory now more than 5 years ago show clearly that the very modest gains in average commute time the first few years have been completely nullified. Average commute times are now longer than they were before the freeway was widened. In other words: TxDOT spent \$2.8 billion only to get commuters back where they started: stuck behind the wheel.

TxDOT wants to spend \$7 billion more. Experts know that adding capacity does not reduce congestion. In 2017, Dr. Susan Handy, professor at the University of California at Davis and the director of the National Center for Sustainable Transportation, told me, "The freeway carries more vehicles, but it's very unlikely that you're doing anything to reduce congestion. Adding capacity is just about accommodating more traffic."

Increasing vehicle miles traveled by more than 100 percent and average speeds by about 24 miles per hour, as TxDOT claims the project will do, does not increase safety. As the urban designer and planner Jeff Speck wrote this year, "The single greatest predictor of a death in a car crash is vehicle speed." What's more concerning to me, even more than the flimsy rationale that the NHHIP is teetering on, is that TxDOT seems fully intent to ignore its own history of plowing through Houston's neighborhoods of color and low wealth. I am quoting directly from the agency's own impact assessments, published this December. They write: "The construction of I-45 through downtown Houston started in the 1950s, with the Pierce Elevated opening in 1967. This section of I-45 displaced nearly 560 residences and businesses through Downtown and parts of the Third Ward, in addition to causing widespread turnover of neighborhood land uses Most of the displaced residents in the Third Ward were renters with little legal power to contest the displacements."

Elsewhere, on page 44 of the Cumulative Impacts Technical Report, TxDOT acknowledges, "Multiple negative [impacts] ... would result from" the NHHIP. And: "The proposed project would result in numerous displacements, including residences of members of minority and lowincome communities, businesses, and community facilities that primarily serve Environmental Justice individuals/populations." Why did the acknowledgement of "multiple negative" impacts and "numerous displacements" not immediately trigger a redesign? Why did TxDOT decide that these lives don't matter enough to do better?

TxDOT, and supporters of this project, has claimed that it's necessary to accommodate the region's projected growth. That means that TxDOT is willing to sacrifice the jobs and the homes of people who already live here for people who may or may not someday move here in the future. It's a tough message to sell, isn't it? In Houston, you're replaceable. We displaced you in the '50s, and we're all set to do it again.

It should be alarming to all of you that the city had to assemble a task force that depended on the volunteer labor of hundreds of the very residents TxDOT sees as replaceable to improve the project that intends to displace them. These residents gave away hundreds of hours of their time over months in community workshops, meetings and online surveys to improve a design that was already nearly two decades in the making. How much money has already been wasted on a design the agency fully acknowledges, in hundreds of pages of its own assessments, will displace thousands of Houstonians, mostly residents of color and low wealth, require the relocation of thousands of jobs and cause the city to forfeit potentially \$313 million in combined property and sales tax revenue each and every year? I am quoting, again, directly from the assessments.

This is where we are at. TxDOT wants to spend \$7 billion to build a project experts know will not accomplish what the agency claims it will and will cause the negative impacts the agency fully acknowledges. Make them do better. It's a lot of money. For that same amount of money, together, you could fund:

- The entirety of the city's backlog of requests for new sidewalks (\$83 million)
- The city's Bike Plan (\$150 million), which has languished without funding since City Council approved it in 2015
- Two more brand-new Discovery Greens (\$250 million)
- 150 more miles of bayou greenways (\$220 million)
- All of Metro's MetroNext transit plan (\$3.5 billion)

And the region would still have left more than \$2.5 billion, which would allow us to build double the 237 flood-control projects that voters overwhelmingly approved in the bond referendum after Hurricane Harvey. It's a lot of money. If TxDOT can't commit in writing to starting over, right now, with the city's much-improved "Vision C," which was literally handed to them by hundreds of concerned residents who will be asked to live with the consequences of this project for a generation, then they should be considered an agency that has failed Texans.

Allyn West, Ph.D. (he/his)
Senior Communications Specialist

Response:

Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 10:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Bess Wilhelms</i>
<p>1-45 should not be expanded. At best it is a temporary stop gap measure until highway use surges. At a realistic level it furthers climate change, destroys mainly black neighborhoods and costs too much money. Highways are not the answer</p> <p>Bess Wilhelms</p>		

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 11:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Youseph Daniel Maguire</i>
<p>It is without dispute that freeway construction in the city of Houston is a historically racist endeavor. To borrow some words from the activists in 1970s Washington D.C., they have been white folks roads through Black folks bedrooms. This present endeavor to widen I-45 follows this trend of racist road building. This is also indisputable. I wish to make a secondary claim, and that is that the presently proposed plan, without revision, is positively stupid. It is stupid for multiple reasons.</p> <p>Principally, it is stupid because it is a massive investment of capital resources into a mistake. Folks will be stuck in traffic while it is under construction, worse traffic than existed before the pandemic, and then following the completion in God knows how many years because these projects are never on time or on budget, people will think the traffic has improved significantly, because they are comparing it to the traffic when the construction made everything much worse. And this significant bump will slowly be lost until traffic is actually worse than before and we've wasted tax dollars.</p> <p>Another reason it is stupid is that young people and creatives do not want to live in their car. In fact no one wants to live in their car except some strange hippies. And yet with the TxDOT view of the world everyone lives in their car and only briefly touches earth just long enough to spend money, then gets back in their car and continues driving. Driving is the end-all-be-all of life. Houses should not exist and that is why they will be destroyed to make way for people to live in their cars, perpetually driving in the modern purgatory of I-45, now with a new lane or two.</p> <p>Finally, it is a known fact the environment is deteriorating, and climate change is a real issue. Houston, a disproportionate contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, is also facing a disproportionate impact by the adverse effects of climate change. In order to build future-proof infrastructure that infrastructure must be built for more environmentally sustainable transportation methods. I hope these provide a small snippet about how the I-45 expansion in its present form is stupid and racist.</p> <p>Yoseph Daniel Maguire</p>		

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been forwarded to the project sponsor.

<i>Comment 12:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Michael Duckworth</i>
<p>The NHHIP represents one of the region’s largest investments and infrastructure projects in a generation. Since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the City of Houston has worked to drive a thorough public engagement process. Through this process, the City developed a number of</p>		

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS

recommendations as expressed in Mayor Turner’s, June 9, 2020, letter to the Texas Transportation Commission. However, the rationale for how these recommendations were derived has not been made available, and public discourse has grinded to a halt.

Prior to moving forward on a vote for funding or further authorization on the future of this project, it is recommended that the City of Houston provide the disposition of all responses received in the NHHIP Alternates Survey provided earlier this year, as it seems much of the rationale provided for the current opinion was derived from these results, and there appear to be large inconsistencies between how public responses were incorporated between Segments 1, 2, and 3. Further, as has been echoed in every public meeting since the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, the impacts to both residents and businesses by this potential project will certainly put unbearable pressures on their livelihood and success.

Again, I strongly recommend that these decisions be put on hold, if not for reasons of factual discovery, then for the livelihoods of the many who will be impacted by these decisions at a time when they are in the literal worst position to absorb them.

Michael Duckworth.

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 13:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Brandt Mannchen

I do not support providing any funding or support for the I-45 expansion (North Freeway Project) at this time. The City of Houston and many community groups and individuals have provided the Texas Department of Transportation with copious and significant comments about air quality, neighborhood and community fragmentation, environmental justice, park, flooding, and many other issues. TxDOT has not decided about or negotiated on these suggestions. TxDOT does not deserve support right now because it has not done its job and has not been responsible in getting public consensus. Just say no to funding or support for the I-45 expansion project!

Do the right thing.

Brandt Mannchen

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 14:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Amir Befroui</i>
<p>The current proposal for the expansion of I-45 is unacceptable. I demand that TXDOT do better for all of the people of Houston and our region. I ask that HGAC withhold support from that project until it is revised, resubmitted, and benefits all members of our community. We have the engineering talent to put men on the moon and women on the space station. We can and should do better.</p> <p>Amir Befroui</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 15:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Shaun Sharma</i>
<p>I'm a Long-time resident of the heights, and I currently live in Lindale Park. I own a business in the heights, and I own two businesses downtown. I am excited for the i-45 expansion to take place. I'm certain I will be frustrated during the process, but I think it is necessary for the city of Houston. I was especially impressed by the drawings that put a green space across the freeway and connected parts of the more traditional heights with some of the parts on the east side of i45.</p> <p>Shaun Sharma</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 16:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by William Wilson</i>
<p>There is a proposal to relocate portions of Union Pacific Railroad's Terminal Subdivision west and north of downtown in conjunction with the NHHIP. This proposed relocation would include the Passenger Main and would most likely require relocating the Amtrak station also. The NHHIP would also impact Metro's HOV lanes that currently enter downtown just east of the Amtrak station on Franklin Street. The following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the Amtrak station into Metro's transit system (whether BRT or LRT), to include direct connections to Downtown and the future Texas Central Railway terminal near Metro's Northwest Transit Center. • Modern, attractive, welcoming station facilities, including convenient access to such amenities as dining, shopping and secure overnight parking, as befits a key gateway to our nation's fourth largest city. 		

- A station sized for future growth of intercity passenger rail service in Houston. Amtrak currently serves Houston with thrice-weekly train service on the Sunset Limited, which runs from New Orleans to Los Angeles, and a daily bus connection to the Texas Eagle in Longview, which runs from San Antonio to Chicago.

Re: Segment 3 of the NHHIP

Segment 3 funding should not be included in the Transportation Improvement Program funding and should be voted on separately. The MOU holds TxDOT accountable to the demands of the City and should work to ensure equity, environmental and social justice, and livability for Houstonians as the project develops. Thousands of downtown jobs may be permanently eliminated. Do we really want to be expanding highway capacity that may never be needed for commuters?

William Wilson

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 17:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Kyle Shelton

I write today about your consideration of an MOU between TxDOT and local jurisdictions around the next steps in the NNHIP project. I ask that as a body you act to ensure that any MOU requires that TxDOT directly respond in writing about how it will incorporate the requests of Mayor Turner, Judge Hidalgo, and the thousands of residents who have voiced concerns about the project both through the city's official engagement and outside of it. The agency must ensure that concerns are not just heard, but that they are directly incorporated into the plan. An MOU should also make clear that future funding considerations should be tied to whether or not the agency meaningfully incorporates mitigation strategies and works to dramatically lessen impacts. Public input and statements from Mayor Turner, Judge Hidalgo, and other local officials have called for the project to minimize displacement and reduce or remove negative impacts on the communities along the route.

Most of the communities likely hit by the current project have already experienced previous negative impacts from highway projects in the past. They should not continue to bear the brunt of infrastructure impacts. There are many excellent ideas about how to improve the proposal going forward in ways that can benefit regional mobility and quality of life. These same solutions can mitigate disruptions of thousands of residents' lives and prevent more folks from being exposed to environmental pollution. Greater investments in public transit, steps to reduce displacements and ensure all those displaced have a home to relocate too, and steps to reduce flooding and air quality issues must all be incorporated into the project formally. TxDOT should commit to concrete steps to address publicly raised concerns and improve the project before any other funding is considered. The MOU should reflect this need.

Kyle Shelton

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 18:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Kathryn Earle</i>
<p>On June 26 you will make a decision about Section 3 of the North Houston Improvement Project that will have long term implications on many communities of color that in the past have not had a voice to stand up for their rights. These communities along I45 have long provided a rich cultural component for Houston. At a time where the nation is rising up to defend the rights of all people to be treated equally this move to eliminate not only housing for low income families but historic buildings. As a real estate agent, I have seen many low income and racially diverse neighborhoods destroyed in the name of progress.</p> <p>This freeway expansion as proposed would not benefit Houston as one of the most diverse cities in the United States. There have been many proposals made to modify this project to make it less destructive both to displacement of people, flooding issues and air quality issues. I do not believe this recommendation have been fully reviewed and considered and I do not believe that the project should move forward until full discussions have been had on these concerns and that TxDOT demonstrates progress in addressing these concerns.</p> <p>I AM ASKING THAT THE DECISION ON MOVING FORWARD ON THIS PROJECT BE POSTPONED UNTIL ALL OF THESE ISSUES CAN BE MEDIATED BETWEEN THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES, THE CITY OF HOUSTON AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration Kathryn Earle</p>		

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 19:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Betsy Taylor</i>
<p>The benefits claimed by TXDOT with this I-45 expansion are very much in doubt and we should not allow bureaucratic momentum to push this plan through This is an opportunity for Houston to get out from under its reputation as a driver-focused city. Let’s take the wider view and build in different ways to reduce congestion, not just more highways and wider highways, but transit lanes and incentives to ride-share or leave the car outside the downtown area. One thing seems clear in this debate and is proven through experience. If you build bigger highways you attract more drivers and the congestion builds back up again in a few years. I don’t want you to destroy important parts of our city and waste billions of dollars in this pursuit.</p>		

Betsy Taylor
<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 20:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Allison Yelvington</i>
<p>I am writing to express my concerns about the NHHIP. I am writing to ask that a memorandum of understanding is developed that will hold TxDOT accountable for the numerous impacts of the highway expansion project. My concern about this project began over two years ago, when I, as a student at Rice University, interned at Air Alliance Houston and saw first-hand the process of performing a Health Impact Assessment on NHHIP. It quickly became clear to me the negative impact on air quality the project would have, in addition to impacts on mobility, resilience, climate, and equity. In this current moment where racial justice is rightly at the forefront,</p> <p>I am deeply concerned about a project that will disproportionately displace communities of color and increase air pollution, which also disproportionately impacts communities of color. Any MOU must continue to engage the public and work to decrease or eliminate the negative impacts of this project. I ask that you withhold or halt funding unless significant progress in addressing these concerns is made by TXDOT.</p> <p>I appreciate comments, such as those by the Mayor, that wish to decrease the negative impacts of this project, but we need to see accountability to ensure racial and environmental justice. I love Houston, I live in Houston, and I plan for it to be my home for years to come. This project will impact our city for years to come. I want to live in a Houston that is just, that is resilient, and that has clean air to breathe. Please hold TxDOT accountable for the impacts of this project so that I can live in that kind of city.</p> <p>Allison Yelvington</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
Comment has been received for consideration.		

<i>Comment 21:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Susan Graham</i>
<p>I'd like to begin by thanking the Houston Endowment Fund for donating the money necessary to conduct the City of Houston's thorough and very effective community engagement process conducted by Huitt-Zollars and the UH Design Center. This process was in sharp contrast to TxDot's woefully inadequate process. Hundreds of people all along the I-45 corridor showed up. They were asked what they wanted and were listened to. 72 % said they wanted the freeway to stay within the current right away, and most said they wanted public transit that also served their neighborhoods. They said they wanted high comfort bike lanes, sidewalks, noise reduction, and not to be cut off from other neighborhoods and downtown.</p>		

The data collected was used to create 2 alternative design plans, which were presented to the Mayor and the Mayor's Steering Committee. They selected the design that supported what most Houstonian's were asking for. Mayor Turner wrote a very detailed letter to Comm Ryan outlining his requests. County Judge, Lina Hidalgo wrote a letter in support of the Mayor along with six City of Houston Council Members, Commissioner Garcia, State Representatives, Eastman and Morales, State Senator Alvarado and U.S. House of Representatives Lee. The City of Houston has spoken and it doesn't support the NHHIP in its current design. So why are we here today voting again on funding for Segment 3?

Let's not pretend that it's because this project t will reduce congestion, I know you're smarter than that. Let's not pretend that this is progress, this way of thinking is older than I am. Let's not pretend that this is in anyway innovative, Jeff Speck is innovative and this doesn't even come close. Let's not pretend that you care about the displacement of primarily low income black and brown people and the systemic racism embedded in this project. If you did wouldn't support a project that burdens minority communities for the benefit of their white counterparts.

Let's not pretend that you are concerned about climate change, vehicle miles traveled, reserving a car centric paradigm or liveable/walkable cities. So, let's not pretend that voting for funding for Segment 3 will benefit the Houston-Galveston area, the state of Texas or the world.

So, if we quit pretending that these things are true what are we left with? I can't answer that. There is no reason that I can't think of as to why you would vote for this project that clearly has no benefit when measured against the harm done to our communities, our city and the world as a whole. So, I ask that you the minimum today. I ask that you vote to remove Segment 3 funding from the TIP until TxDot commits in writing that it will honor the requests of the City of Houston. I also request that the proposed Memorandum of Understanding, include monetary incentives for TxDot to comply with Mayor Turner's requests.

The draft MOU included in our materials isn't worth the paper it's written on. It will be quickly be disregarded by TxDot once they have the 3 million dollars, and a certified FEIS and a Record of Decision and you will be powerless to intervene. And I know you know this. If you vote to give TxDot the 3 million and approve an ineffective MOU you will be sending a clear message to the residents of Houston that you don't care what they want, even though they will bear all the negative impacts of this expansion. You will send a clear message to low - income communities of color that they don't matter either, that they are dispensable and disposable. You will also be sending a clear message that money and a faster trip from the burbs, in your single occupancy vehicle, is more important than the resident's of Houston quality of life. I find this despicable.

Susan Graham, Co-Founder, Stop TxDot I-45

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 22:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Ann Kennedy</i>
<p>Please halt this process until the important issues have been resolved. Future-oriented cities are taking the opposite approach than TXDOT. No more expanded highways – data shows repeatedly that bigger highways breed more drivers, not fewer as the public wants. Destroying thousands of minorities’ homes and businesses – and neighborhoods, as has been done repeatedly in the past, is unconscionable. TX-DOT has enjoyed free range, and first dibs at the Legislature’s \$\$ for far too long. We need to put Houston and its future first.</p> <p>Ann Kennedy</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 23:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Katherine Webber</i>
<p>I am a resident of Houston, Texas and have been one for the past 5 years. I am very excited about the chance we have to create a better transportation system for Houston. Months ago before COVID I attended a community event where the public was able to give comments on some proposals and there was a large turnout, with overwhelming support for increased public transit, green and bike/pedestrian spaces, and bus lanes.</p> <p>However, I am very concerned about how the current plans for the project will displace many homes of Houstonians, especially in Black and Latino communities. I think that we should pause for some time until TXDOT can more fully address the environmental and displacement concerns of the communities being impacted.</p> <p>Katherine Webber</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 24:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Anna Willits</i>
<p>I am a resident of District E in Houston, and I strongly oppose the proposed expansion plan of I-45. It is unconscionable to continue expanding highways by displacing largely black and brown communities. This proposal as it currently stands in UNACCEPTABLE.</p> <p>Additionally, it is irresponsible to continue to spend so much money on highway construction and expansion projects which are not a sustainable way to handle population growth. Instead of spending</p>		

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 27:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Anthony Mak

I am a resident of District E in Houston, and I strongly oppose the proposed expansion plan of I45. It is unconscionable to continue expanding highways by displacing large communities of predominantly Black and Brown people. This proposal, as it currently stands, is **UNACCEPTABLE**. Additionally, it is irresponsible to continue to spend so much money on highway construction and expansion projects when there are not a sustainable way to maintain transportation needs resulting from population growth. Instead of spending money on highway expansion, the funds need to be invested in creating more public transportation options for the residents of Houston.

Anthony Mak

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 28:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Kaarthika Thakker

As a Rice student, I chose to attend my university because of the diverse and beautiful city of Houston. During my weekends, I often travel between the Third Ward, Midtown, and Museum District (where I live) (both by car and bike). I believe that the TxDOT proposals for segment 3 will inhibit my ability to engage with these areas of the city without increased traffic and danger. I also worry more broadly that this project will negatively affect the vibrant communities that drew me to Houston in the first place. The construction of segment 3, as it stands, will primarily affect those in the Second and Third ward and displace hundreds of people. I ask that TPC keep TxDOT accountable for the community concerns before voting to secure the funding to build this section of the project.

Kaarthika Thakker

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 29:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Renae DeLucia

My name is Renae and I am writing from Houston, TX. I am writing because I'm concerned about the proposed expansion of I-45. This project cannot move ahead without serious reckoning with displacement, increased flooding, among other things. As a city, as a state, as a country we need to be

investing in public transportation. Expanding highways and freeways has not shown to decrease traffic or contribute to residents' quality of life. How is this going to help our society? What can we do instead?

Rena DeLucia

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 30: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Dominic Mazoch*

My comments for the HGAC TPC Meeting 06.26.2020. Agenda Item 5.

I agree with Mayor Sylvester Turner's concerns in his letter to TXDOT. I agree with the proposed MOU draft, with the following suggestions: Last Paragraph, page 3: Freight, both truck and rail. Intercity Amtrak service. Update the TAC, the TPC, and BOD of METRO, and appropriate committees thereof.

Disruption and other issues with all houses of belief/worship. Agenda Item 6. The Shepherd/Durham Corridor is becoming highly used from the Shepherd Curve at IH45N to just north of Astrodome/NRG Park. The following METRO buses use this corridor, all or in part:

- 03 W Little York
- 27 Shepherd Frequent Network
- 30 Clinton/Ella
- 32 Renwick/San Felipe
- 36 Kempwood
- 40 Telephone/Heights
- 41 Kirby Polk
- 44 Acres Homes
- 45 Tidewell
- 59 Aldine Mail Route
- 64 Lincoln City Circulator
- 96 Veterans Memorial Local
- 99 Ella/FM 1960 108 Veterans Memorial Express
- 212 Seton Lake vis N Shepherd Park and Ride
- 344 Acres Homes Community Connector

All these buses have some sort of operational issues during rush hour. The 27 has it the worse because it is routed the longest on the corridor. Also, with METRONext, there is planned a Shepherd/Durham connection with the Inner Katy Bus lanes. That would help with connections and a speedup of service. Lastly, there needs to be grade separation at Shepherd/Durham and the UP Houston Terminal Division just north of Washington Ave. Trains upset the traffic flow of all cars, trucks, and buses, including METRO.

Dominic Mazoch

entrances to I-45 and 610 in the area. Furthermore, this expansion blocks the Near Northside’s view of downtown, cuts off bike trails (endangering bikers and pedestrians), creates undesirable retention ponds, and cuts off access to the Heights, downtown, and nearby shopping through the loss of the North Avenue bridge.

More broadly, the expansion threatens to displace thousands of residents across Houston, most of whom are already low-income or otherwise vulnerable, and it further segments Black and Brown communities. It also increases flood risk, which Houston quite simply cannot afford. This project does not prioritize the safety and vitality of Houston communities and should not be approved. I hope you will seriously consider this comment and meaningfully address displacement and other negative impacts of the I-45 expansion before moving forward with the project. Thank you.

Sarah Berton
Rice University Class of 2020

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 36:</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Linda Shead</i>
<p>In these times, we can no longer continue doing “business as usual,” whether that’s in how we interact with people of different persuasions, races, beliefs, or economic status; how we respond to a global pandemic; or how we plan and conduct major public works projects, such as the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) – IH-45 Expansion.</p> <p>While I recognize that TxDOT has incorporated more meetings with the public than usual with the NHHIP, and some extra opportunities for comment, I have yet to see any significant changes in the project design that reflect addressing community concerns in any meaningful way. As Mayor Turner has noted, “The NHHIP is a potentially transformative project.” As currently planned, that transformation will have the disastrous impacts of similar projects in the past: neighborhood, community, and small business destruction; seriously impacted air quality for families and for students in nearby schools; significantly increased danger to those using forms of transportation other than individual automobiles; continuing flooding and water quality impacts to area streams; and generally impaired quality of life to surrounding residences, businesses, and recreationists; with the only major benefits accruing to those users passing through the project area on I-45.</p> <p>Alternatively, the NHHIP could be transformative in all the positive ways that the times demand: respect and support for communities of color, as well as communities with a long history in the region; improved safety for people traveling through the project area by any means; incorporation of flood reduction and water quality improvement features to mitigate both new and long-standing impacts of this stretch of highway; reducing or mitigating air quality impacts from transportation in the project area; preserving business and community resources that support the neighborhoods adjacent to the project; increased collaboration with other transportation planning to enhance multi-modal transportation; and many other potential opportunities to enhance the quality of life for Houstonians with this project. Adopting</p>		

and implementing Vision C is one way to achieve a transformative project of which we can all be proud – current residents and those of the future.

Linda Shead

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 37:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Syed Muhammad Ishtiaq

I strongly urge you to reconsider your expansion plans for I-45. The solution to Houston's traffic problems is not wider roads. It is PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Syed Muhammad Ishtiaq

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 38:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Silas J. Ralston

I can't measure the annoyance I've built up over the years, traveling on IH-45 through Houston. It gets congested, it floods, it smells like a gas station. I also know that no annoyance is worth depriving my neighbors of housing, clean air, safety, or their culture and history. Our city's infrastructure exists to serve the people who live here. If improving infrastructure significantly reduces the quality of life for real human people, that's bad infrastructure.

To that end, the memorandum of understanding between the Texas Department of Transportation and the City of Houston must hold TxDOT accountable for the displacement of Houston residents that will be caused by the proposed Segment 3 expansion of IH-45. Numerous comments to TxDOT, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and Mayor Turner demonstrate that significant concerns about the IH-45 expansion have not been addressed. They must be addressed before this project proceeds. Any memorandum of understanding must include input from and communication with the public who will be affected by the project. Displacement and other significant impacts (flooding, air quality, cultural and historic preservation) must be addressed by TxDOT before they proceed. Until TxDOT demonstrates that they are addressing these concerns, funding should be halted.

Mr. Silas J. Ralston

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 39: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Christina Tan*

As a long-time resident of Houston (since 2003), I am seriously concerned about this proposal. I think it requires more investigation into the neighborhoods that it would affect, specifically by the highway itself. In addition, I would ask the City of Houston to consider funding alternative projects that would more sustainably reduce the use of highways overall. These include protected bike lanes (of which there are very, very few), bike lanes in general, expansion of the MetroRAIL project and increased reliability of the METRO system. More highway is not the way to go -- Houston will have traffic regardless of how wide our highways are. We need to begin reducing the actual use of the roads.

Christina Tan

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 40: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Kunal Shinde*

I am writing this email to submit formal opposition to the proposed expansion plan since the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has not committed to mitigating adverse impacts such as displacement, flooding, and air quality in the proposed NHHIP and so this project should not receive the green light to bulldoze, disconnect, and dismantle historic Black and Latinx communities along the project corridor.

At the Transportation Advisory Committee’s (TAC) June 17 meeting, the precursor review of the TPC agenda, LINK’s Executive Director Oni K. Blair opposed funding for the NHHIP by reminding fellow voting members, “America is grappling with racial tensions and the real impacts of systemic racism. Every person on the TAC must understand that a vote on this project continues those very systems of oppression, disparity, and racial inequities.” Considering TxDOT’s projections that the project will displace over 1,000 homes in predominantly Black and Latinx communities, she called on the committee members to push for “real commitments to improve the NHHIP or to halt the project until it can satisfactorily address” community concerns. I stand by her request and formally submit by dissension against the proposed expansion of IH-45.

Kunal Shinde

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 41: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Rebecca Francis*

I am a resident of Houston and I am writing to express my opposition to funding for the NHHIP. I am disappointed in the Texas Department of Transportation's lack of commitment to mitigating adverse impacts in the proposed NHHIP such as displacement, flooding, and air quality. The funding should not move forward until these problems are adequately addressed. As it stands, the proposed NHHIP threatens to displace and disconnect predominantly Black and Latinx communities that have historically lived in the project corridor. This is unacceptable, especially given the moment we find ourselves. I urge the council to consider ways to mitigate the harm done to these communities before moving this project forward.

Rebecca Francis

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 42: **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Carolina English*

My name is Carolina English, a Houston resident. I am concerned about the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Numerous comments to TxDOT, H-GAC, and Mayor Turner show significant concerns haven't been addressed. I am calling for the future MOU to hold TxDOT accountable for addressing the negative impacts of the project or, if TxDOT further fails the community, that H-GAC halt funding until TxDOT addresses these concerns.

I am concerned that TxDOT is getting the green light to move forward with the IH-45 project without a meaningful commitment to address displacement, flooding, air quality, cultural and historic preservation, and a number of other concerns residents raised over the years. In TxDOT's December 2019 updated Draft Community Impacts Assessment, the agency expects to displace 1,079 housing units (Table 5-2, page 54) in Segment 3. This is an increase from previous impact assessments. Instead of working to minimize impacts, TxDOT seems to work to increase them. These impacts will be concentrated in mostly Black and Latinx neighborhoods, continuing to perpetuate historic racial and environmental injustices. This is unacceptable!

Any MOU between the parties must include ongoing engagement with the public; elimination or significant efforts to address displacement and other negative impacts; and a consequence of halting the funding until TxDOT demonstrates progress in addressing these concerns.

Carolina English

Do any of the 25 council members think interstates are pleasing to the eye? Does Houston need more eye sore cuts through our dynamic city? It is time to stop TXDOT from hitting copy and paste on another highway expansion project. The I-10 expansion proved induced demand will lead to further congestion just a few years after completion. This is a once in a generation opportunity to put our money where our mouth is on improving air quality and prioritizing Vision Zero initiatives. Please, for the sake of Texas, for the sake of Houston, do what is right. Stop the I-45 expansion. Propose the Mayor's Vision C design or stop the expansion altogether.

Michael Moritz

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 45:

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Alberto Careaga

I write to you today as a concerned Houston resident and urging you to have TxDOT revise and resubmit North Houston Highway Improvement Project because as it stands now, the expansion would result in mass displacement, especially for residents in affordable housing, increased air pollution and more flooding. Furthermore, I'm requesting Segment 3 funding to not be included in the Transportation Improvement Program funding and be voted on separately. I'm also asking that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) holds TxDOT accountable to the demands of the City and work to ensure equity, environmental and social justice, and livability for Houstonians as the project develops.

Alberto Careaga

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 46

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Nancy Edwards

My views on I-45 Expansion are very similar to those of Mayor Turner and the Houston Chronicle Editorial Board. The I-45 expansion design needs considerable revision, especially Segment 3 which traverses a densely populated area, in order to relocate the current residents and businesses in a manner acceptable to them. To amplify my other concerns, see the quotations below:

***Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston
Transportation Advocacy Group (TAG) State of Mobility 2020***

“The Interstate 45, the North Houston Highway Project [sic] is the project of a generation. Not just of a decade, but of a generation. I created an engagement process unlike any Houston has seen before. And as a result of that year-long process, I sent a letter to TxDOT identifying

my goals, the City’s goals for this project, goals that will transform - and I underscore the word transform - the project into a benefit to the city and to the region. TxDOT, I’m pleased to say, is listening and I look forward to working with them as we move forward to join forces and the goals that we have put forth. And these goals for all of the Segments - 1, 2, and 3 - for all the segments, include: strengthening Houston’s economy; reduce flooding on and off the freeway; make travel safer for all road users; provide long term capacity for all users of the road, including automobile, freight, and transit; serve and preserve the neighborhoods along the corridor while enhancing connectivity between the neighborhoods; mitigate impacts to existing parks and green space while creating additional opportunities for green space; and limit the right-of-way to the extent necessary to meet the project goals, including reducing the footprint of the original proposed plan; and ensure accessible evacuation routes. And if we can mutually agree, based on these goals I’ve outlined, transportation will truly shape the City of Houston for decades to come and this will be a transformational project that all of us - all of us will be extremely proud of."

Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston
Letter to the H-GAC Transportation Policy Council on July 25, 2019, RE: NHHIP

“Numerous concerns raised by the City and by affected communities remain unresolved, including flooding, air quality, multi-modal connectivity, and the amount of land acquired for right-of-way. It is imperative that TxDOT continue to listen and address these concerns as early in the design process as possible. There are future decision points at which the Transportation Policy Council will again evaluate the project for funding, including a major definitive funding decision next spring. It is my expectation that TxDOT will resolve many of the pressing outstanding issues before then. It is TxDOT’s responsibility to design a project with positive impacts for the community, the City of Houston, and the greater region. We will, without hesitation, not support the funding decision in the spring if these items are not accomplished.”
 There will be no opportunity for a do-over, so please get it right the first time.

Nancy Edwards
 Climate Change Campaigner

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 47

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Rose Kantorczyk

My name is Rose Kantorczyk and I live in Houston. I am writing to express my concern that the Transportation Policy Council will vote to approve the 2021-2024 TIP without stipulating that TxDOT be held accountable to community concerns about the harms of the I-45 expansion project

. According to the agenda for tomorrow's TPC meeting, a memorandum of 27 understanding between the City of Houston and TxDOT will be discussed. The many negative impacts of the North Houston Highway Improvement Project cannot be left out of this memorandum. This project has the potential to

further segment the city in a way that cuts off historically Black and Latinx communities in the 2nd and 3rd wards, and has the potential to displace over 1,000 people from their homes.

Rose Kantorczyk

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 48

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Zoabe Hafeez

My name is Zoabe Hafeez, I live in the 77002 zip code, and I'm a pediatrician in the Texas Medical Center. I appreciate the communication and the thought that has occurred between HGAC, The City of Houston, and TxDOT regarding the North Highway Improvement Project and hope for a resolution that truly serves the health and well-being of Harris County residents.

I was born in Houston and hope to raise my children here. Given that, I have three concerns about continuing to subsidize exurban expansion at the expense of the health, land, and prosperity of urban communities. First, if we expand the highway footprint to accommodate more commuting vehicles, we will worsen the health of children in the urban core. It doesn't take a physician to know that increasing the number of vehicles that can drive at a high speed through our city will increase the noise, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and automobile crashes that the next generation of Houston children will be exposed to. Automobiles are the most common cause of injury and death of children and something I've seen in both my personal and professional life. The children who get hurt or die by motor vehicles not only see their own lives ruined but they negatively affect a family, neighborhood, and community for generations. I've had the misfortune of seeing it play out repeatedly in our city. Increased motor vehicles are also associated with decreased pediatric IQ, increased preterm birth in pregnant women, increased pediatric asthma, and limits to pediatric final height. We're at risk of contributing to all of these metrics if we continue to allow for increased motor vehicle lanes as a tool to accommodate projected population growth.

Second, the children of the new exurbs that this expanded highway will subsidize will also be poorly served. They are at risk of being victims of the increasing loneliness epidemic, which I believe will be the great pediatric public health fight of our generation. The way we design our communities significantly contributes to loneliness. Simply put, these exurbs will create a generation of kids who will experience their communities from the backseat of their car as they will exist only because of the highway expansion and need the motor vehicle to survive. This will subsidize childhoods who will suffer from physical inactivity, lack of easily accessible gathering places, increased risk of automobile injury, and a decreased number of human interactions compared to most childhoods throughout human history. I've seen the effects loneliness has on kids through pediatric psychiatric emergencies in my practice. We should take this increasing phenomenon and think long and hard about communities built around the highway.

Finally, we're doing all of this by degrading the integrity of multiple strong communities that children can thrive in. Older communities such as Independence Heights will be worsened, most notably through the destruction of multiple businesses and a church that has been a community pillar for over 100 years. Newer urban communities will also be worsened. EaDo has organically developed into a walkable place

centered around St. Emanuel St. in a city where such places are rare. The opportunity cost of destroying half the street will have negative consequences in terms of potential property tax revenue, community public health, and will decrease faith that if our communities build great, walkable streets, they won't be destroyed by the next highway expansion.

I believe that if HGAC advocates for keeping the same number of motor vehicle lanes, keeping the same highway footprint, and prioritizing safe inter-neighborhood, non-automobile travel across the highways, it will maximize the potential public health for the majority of Harris County residents going into the next generation.

Zoabe Hafeez

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 49

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Mary Schultz

TXDOT should not rebuild I-45 without major changes to improve Transit, Flooding, and both preservation of and connections among neighborhood communities. Since TXDOT has made no commitment to include in its planning, the officially submitted expectations of Houston's Mayor, more than a dozen elected officials and hundreds of public comments, Funding for Segment 3 of NHHIP must be separated from the 2021-2024 TIP until a later date and after TXDOT makes official, written commitment to alter its original designs.

Stephen Klineberg, renowned professor, researcher from Rice University and the Kinder Institute for Urban Studies, provided a 2-page essay about his research conclusions in last Sunday's Houston Chronicle that I think relate to our hugely important discussion about the future of freeways in the Houston area. He says, "...respondents" (to his systematic surveys) "have been expressing significantly more support ...for policies to reduce the inequalities and address the needs of the poor; they have been calling for more... stringent controls on development to reduce the region's flooding and enhance its quality- of- life attributes."

Mary Schultz

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 50</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Kashmere Gardens Council - Superneighborhood #52</i>
<p>Displacing residents and businesses along the I-45 corridor will be a financial disruption to local businesses. Many minority residents have few options when one is speaking of relocation. These residents will be at a disadvantage. This project will affect the historical significance and value of their communities.</p> <p>Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood Council #52</p>		
<i>Response:</i>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 51</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Peggy Robinson</i>
<p>I am writing to you on behalf of the Montie Beach Civic Club. Our neighborhood, Brooke Smith, is bounded by I-45 to our east, N. Main, Airline, and Link Road. We have been actively involved for years advocating for a solution to the NHHIP that incorporates not only our concerns, but those of our neighboring Downtown and North Houston communities. We are quite concerned that with today's vote you may be funding TxDOT without requiring that there is a mechanism to insure that community concerns are mitigated. Hence, we are asking you to create a Memorandum of Understanding (or similar document) that will require TxDOT to mitigate our concerns for Segments 1 and 2. As stated ably in Mayor Turner's Letter to Commissioner Ryan, "<i>we need specific exceptions linked to TAC/TPC decisions to halt or withdraw funding should the project fail to address our concerns.</i>"</p> <p>Given that we are at an inflection point following the murder of George Floyd, it is imperative that NHHIP not perpetuate centuries of structural racism, such as continuing and/or exacerbating the 20th century construction of interstates and highways through neighborhoods of color. This project must stay as much as possible within the current I-45 footprint rather than displacing homes and businesses belonging to people of color throughout Segment 3.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>The NHHIP is a potentially transformative project...I believe we can all agree that this is a once in-a-generation investment that will shape the City of Houston for decades to come. This is our chance to rise to the challenge and chart a new course for transportation in the region. It is crucial that every opportunity is taken to design and construct the best possible project."</i></p> <p>Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston Letter to Texas Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan, May 12, 2020 https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/nhhip/docs_pdfs/Commissioner%20Ryan%20-%20NHHIP%20-%20Letter%20&%20Technical%20Appendix.pdf</p> <p>We in Brooke Smith/Montie Beach concur with Mayor Turner's goals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Houston's economy. • Reduce flooding on and off the freeway. 		

- Make travel safer for all road users.
- Provide long term capacity for all users of the roadway, including automobile, freight and transit.
- Serve and preserve the neighborhoods along the corridor while enhancing connectivity between neighborhoods.
- Mitigate impacts to existing parks and greenspace while creating additional opportunity for green space.
- Limit right-of-way to the extent necessary to meet project goals, i.e., reduce the current footprint of the proposed plan.

In fact, Mayor Turner said in his July 2019 letter to TPC:

“There are future decision points at which the Transportation Policy Council will again evaluate the project for funding, including a major definitive funding decision next spring. It is my expectation that TxDOT will resolve many of the pressing outstanding issues before then. It is TxDOT’s responsibility to design a project with positive impacts for the community, the City of Houston, and the greater region. We will, without hesitation, not support the funding decision in the spring if these items are not accomplished.”

Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston Letter to the H-GAC Transportation Policy Council on July 25, 2019, RE: NHHIP <https://www.houstontx.gov/govtrelations/turner-letter-tpc-nhhip-20190725.pdf>

Thank you
 Peggy Robinson,
 President Montie Beach Civic Club

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 52

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Alec Tobin

I call on you to **reject** funding for segment 3 of the I-45 Expansion. This proposal, which has already received broad criticism, threatens violence on our communities and financial folly for our city.

Multiple studies have shown that this segment of the expansion will displace Black and Latinx people in Houston. George Floyd's death brought Americans together to demand an end to violence against Black Americans. The displacement of Black communities that Segment 3 will cause is another kind of violence our cities must think about. Floyd's death marked the beginning of a new era in race relations (see the latest Time cover from July 6, 2020). Houston holds an opportunity here, in this vote, to begin working toward racial equity in step with this change. A vote against this funding is a vote to preserve and value our residents in a way that we have not historically.

Secondly, we know from top transportation experts (including Christoff Spieler, former member of the Houston METRO board of directors and my former professor at Rice) that induced demand is real. When we build more lanes and expand the capacity of highways, more cars come, increasing congestion.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Winning, superstar cities, as urbanist Richard Florida would call them, have tended to decrease their highway capacity over the past 50 years. San Francisco removed its Embarcadero highway and unlocked millions of dollars in real estate potential. Houston has had opportunities to do the same, but it has historically done the opposite. This is a chance for Houston to turn this trajectory around and divert this money to transit infrastructure that will benefit a broader range of Houstonians, such as public transit.

I sincerely hope that the Houston-Galveston Area Council will consider these points and reject funding for Segment 3 of the I-45 expansion.

Alec Tobin

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 53

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by John Metz

I know there's an upcoming vote on the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that plans to expand I-45 in hopes of reducing traffic. Yet some of the consequences of that expansion would be: displacing over 1000 homes and many businesses predominately in Black and Latinx communities, destroying green space, and not improving public transit and bike infrastructure. After the murder of George Floyd and the important discussions about systemic racism, Houston should not displace minority communities, especially with a project that has so many flaws and does nothing to help those communities.

If the goal is to reduce traffic, why build more highways? That's putting a band-aid on the problem instead of addressing the underlying cause—people are driving too much in single occupancy vehicles and there isn't proper infrastructure or incentives to do otherwise. There aren't enough safe bike routes and infrastructure or public transportation. Look at cities around the country and the world that have successfully reduced their traffic and beautified their city. We should spend money on infrastructure in alignment with the Houston Climate Action Plan and community goals. Let's put those words, and those dollars, into actions that benefit the communities, the environment, and the people of Houston.

Jordin Metz

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 54

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Kay Warhol

My comments are with regard to your agenda item 5: Developing a Memorandum of Understanding for the future coordination on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP).

I am writing in support of Mayor Sylvester Turner’s vision for the NHHIP and to urge this Council to 1) approve development of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and 2) ensure that the Memorandum includes specific requirements for TxDOT to demonstrate progress in addressing the concerns spelled out in the Mayor’s May 12, 2020 letter on the NHHIP as a condition of continued funding for the project.

As a native Houstonian and lifelong resident of the city, I am deeply concerned about Houston’s future – how we make the most of opportunities as well as tackle challenges to the benefit of all Houstonians. To that end, I have devoted significant time over the last decade active on the boards of my civic association and my Super Neighborhood as well as advocating for improved neighborhood-oriented transit. As Mayor Turner has said, “The NHHIP is a potentially transformative project...” It will have a huge impact on the city for decades to come. I hope that the project will be one that contributes to the vitality and livability of the city and helps the city tackle some of its major challenges. For that to be the case, TxDOT must seriously respond to the City’s vision and address concerns of displacement, flooding, air quality, cultural and historic preservation, and other concerns that have been raised by residents during the City’s extensive project review process. While TxDOT has indicated an intention to continue working with the City on the design and development of the project, it has clearly not addressed specific concerns as yet. The Memorandum of Understanding must hold TxDOT accountable for doing so and must include a provision to stop further funding if the agency fails to do so.

Kay Warhol

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 55

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Daniela Castillo

My name is Daniela Castillo, I am a student immersed in the world of cities, the built environment, design, and planning. I was raised outside of Houston, and made my home in City Council District C. There's a lot to unearth and unpack with the inherent racism embedded in the history of American cities, and with a global reckoning and righteous uprisings calling for the dismantling and abolition of a racist carceral system taking place today, it's an important history at that.

We can learn so much by just driving around and observing our cities, there are decades of disinvestment and purposeful planning and policy that bred much of the inequities we witness today. Which is why I'm submitting a public comment speaking against the proposed I-45 expansion, which I wholeheartedly believe is simply following in the footsteps of, and further reinforcing, systemic racism in transportation planning that has historically allowed entire communities to be torn down and divided by highways, all in the name of "infrastructural improvements".

As has been investigated, the plan to expand and merge I-45 (Segment 3 specifically), would result in the displacement of 919 homes, while also producing a larger effect on the health, stability, culture, economics, and general well-being of many of Houston’s historic African American and Latinx neighborhoods. Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D., social psychiatrist and professor of Urban Policy and

Health, has extensively studied and written about the detrimental effects of displacement and destruction on communities through a phenomenon she has named "root shock". There's proof that tearing up neighborhoods and communities produces not just physical harm, but also mental and emotional damage on families. The proposed expansion also, of course, has the potential of being an environmental catastrophe, as it would exacerbate air pollution for communities impacted, and produce more flooding.

If Mayor Turner claims that ... "This is our chance to rise to the challenge and chart a new course for transportation in the region. It is crucial that every opportunity is taken to design and construct the best possible project..." then I sincerely urge against funding Segment 3 of the NHHIP. There are various concerns that have yet to be addressed in regards to the "disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations", and the TPC can play an incredibly important role in urging TxDOT to address the negative consequences of the expansion.

In this incredibly significant and historic time, with this very grave environmental justice issue at hand with this proposed expansion, I urge you all to move against funding Segment 3, and consider what it means to practice justice in planning today.

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 56

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Amanda Mireles

As a voting constituent on the 77009 zip code I urge to postpone the vote for the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has not committed to mitigating adverse impacts such as displacement, flooding, and air quality in the proposed NHHIP and should not receive the green light to bulldoze, disconnect, and dismantle historic Black and Latinx communities along the project corridor. 34 The Segment 3 funding for I-45 project will displace over 1,000 homes in predominantly Black and Latinx communities, committee members need to push for "real commitments to improve the NHHIP or to halt the project until it can satisfactorily address community concerns. I oppose this project to move forward.

Amada Mireles

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 57</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Zoe Middleton</i>
<p>My Name is Zoe Middleton and I am the Houston and SE Texas Co-Director of Texas Housers. Texas Housers is a policy advocacy organization that believes in the right of every Texan to have a healthy, affordable home in a quality neighborhood of their choice.</p> <p>I request that the following be read into the record and that every member of the TPC be provided a copy of the letter attached to this email. In almost every American city, highway projects are racist monuments disguised as public infrastructure. Their legacy is as pernicious, if less obvious, than Confederate generals or redlining.</p> <p>Segment 3 of the NHHIP has 916 residential displacements total, including the entirety of Clayton Homes, part of Kelly Village, Midtown Terrace suites and a huge amount of so-called “naturally occurring affordable housing stock”. The draft Community Impacts assessment clearly states that disproportionately will cause high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.</p> <p>We believe that there must be an MOU between the County, the City, and TxDOT and other regional governing bodies so that our demands, recommendations, expectations in the letter can be guaranteed. The recommendations enumerated in our letter fall under the following categories and will be published on our blog in detail shortly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. Long-term, plentiful, 3. and deeply affordable housing 4. 5. 6. Community oversight and 7. transparency 8. 9. 10. Accessibility and flexibility 11. 12. 13. Historic preservation 14. and economic development 35 15. 16. 17. Equitable treatment 18. <p>Zoe Middleton (she/her) Houston and Southeast Texas Co-Director</p>		
<p><i>Response:</i></p>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 58</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Nicholas Cody</i>
<p>The Houston area does not need I-45 widened. A global climate emergency is happening now and this project would just inflict more damage to the planet. Also the communities living by the existing interstate don't need their neighborhoods torn up and worsened by more lanes of freeway.</p> <p>Nicholas Cody, lifelong Houstonian</p>		
<p><i>Response:</i></p>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 59</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Cooke Kelsey</i>
<p>Dear TPC Members, I support Harris County's and local officials' and residents' requests for funding of Segment 3 but not Segments 1-2 of NHHIP for the time being.</p> <p>I respectfully ask that you state your positions on the record. The "livestreamed" hearings do not provide video. While I appreciate the many staff comments, they won't have any effect without a clear and explicit statement by this body.</p> <p>The TIP will reshape the center of the city of Houston for generations, and whether it will have a center comparable to other major cities. This is not a decision that should be made in secrecy or in silence.</p> <p>Cooke Kelsey</p>		
<p><i>Response:</i></p>		
<p>Comment has been received for consideration.</p>		

<i>Comment 60</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Yasmeeen Davila</i>
<p>I am writing to express my concerns on the expansion of IH-45 when the problem Houston has on transportation is less on the availability and number of highways than on the lack of a reliable and expanded public transportation system. An expansion on IH-45 would negatively affect the communities living right under and next to its passage. Communities that are predominantly Black and of spanish speaking descent. All and every move to make this expansion a possibility is a threat to the livelihood, health, and environment of in-the-loop inhabitants along the greater 3rd ward and east end. Again, Black and Brown communities will be negatively affected by the expansion of a highway. To move forward with the expansion is to declare the disposability of Black and Brown Houstonians for the convenience of a few.</p>		

Instead of wasting money, on the expansion of a highway we don't need, I propose an in depth plan of the construction of a public transportation system that expands past the loop and into the cities to its proximity.

Yasmeen Davila

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 61

Topic: NHHIP

*Submitted by Aaron Balderas
Mary Beth Balderas*

My name is Aaron Balderas. My wife Mary Beth and I reside in 77012. We both frequent the neighborhoods that surround the I-45 segment 3 of the NHHIP. We would both like to see a separate vote be taken on the NHHIP and the rest of the TIP projects. While we are in favor of progress for the city and southeast Texas, we believe that the NHHIP and in this specific instance, Segment 3, as it stands does not meet the standard necessary for not only improving transportation but actively working against the structural racism that exists because of choices transportation, municipal, and state officials have made in the past. The NHHIP (as it stands) continues that legacy of design and construction that benefits those that are well off and casts aside those with less means, in many cases Black and Latinx communities and their neighborhood "micro-environments".

The NHHIP does have the potential to position Houston as a leader in equitable, socially conscious, and environmentally responsible design. The right design, influenced by the right and numerous stakeholders, can be something that we can hang our hats on as a city and region for the next half century or more. It is possible to improve air quality, reduce flooding, not displace people, and yes, provide smoother transportation for the affluent suburbs, but all these things should not be at the expense of the communities along the way. As a native Houstonian and southeast Texan who loves the damn city, I urge the Transportation Policy Council to make the right choice. Contamos con ustedes.

Aaron & Mary Beth Balderas

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 62

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Jay Crossley

Thank you to all Policy Board members and to TXDOT Houston staff and leadership for all the listening that is required to develop a project of this scale.

I hope that you will continue to ground your work in this area around these principles:

1. Crashes are a much bigger problem than congestion in the Houston region, and reducing travel time for long distance trips is not actually an important regionally significant goal.

The first priority for fixing transportation in this corridor must be safety of all users and people along the corridor. The outdated design standards proposed in the DEIS need to be updated to modern safe design using context sensitive design speed appropriate for an urban project like this. Following current national standards, including the AASHTO Green Book, would mean designing any limited access lanes to 50 or 55 mph design speed and any surface elements to 25 to 35 mph design speed. All surface elements should be designed as city streets integrated into a grid network of multimodal access.

2. There is no need to destroy so many existing homes, businesses, churches, or other fabric of existing communities for expansion of Right Of Way to achieve the needs of the public in this project.

Using safe design speed will allow the safer options of narrower lanes, and prioritizing multimodal access will allow optimizing all facilities for transit and other modes rather than all of us being forced to drive alone in a car, eliminating the perceived need for car priority lane expansions. All vehicle counters within the study area for segments 1, 2, and 3 – except the furthest north counters at BW8 – have shown steady decline in vehicle counts over the last 15 years. Houstonians are changing the way they access jobs, schools, shopping, and civic life, and are driving less than they did in the past. The perceived need for car priority lane expansions is based upon the seriously flawed regional growth forecasts, the seriously flawed travel demand models, and inequitable goals, metrics, and scoping for this project.

3. The transportation systems in this corridor are desperately failing and need to be fixed.

Transportation systems in this area continue to kill and seriously injure large amounts of people, and this needs to be fixed. Transportation systems in this area have divided communities and left many people with less access east and west than they had had before the introduction of the freeway concept. Transportation systems in this area also needlessly encourage increased vehicle miles traveled, sprawl development, and long distance local travel. These things can be fixed if you use modern safe design standards optimized for safe design speeds and multimodal transportation for all elements of the project, and end the reliance upon clearly flawed travel demand models.

Jay Crossley

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 63

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Randall Baxley

This is not a time to be moving forward with Phase 3 as the water both downstream and upstream as well as the damage to our park and so much more have not been addressed.

Randall Baxley

<i>Response:</i>
Comment has been received for consideration.

<i>Comment 64</i>	Topic: NHHIP	<i>Submitted by Bakeyah Nelson</i>
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June 26, 2020

Dear Transportation Policy Council members,

My name is Bakeyah Nelson. I am the Executive Director of Air Alliance Houston - a local nonprofit working to reduce the public health impacts of air pollution and advance environmental justice in the Houston Region. Air Alliance Houston believes that everyone has a right to breathe clean air and where you live, work, learn, and play should not determine your health.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my concerns about the vote that will likely take place today. First, I would like to recognize the efforts by the City of Houston and Harris County to more closely examine the issues that have been raised about this project and taking steps toward mitigating some of those issues.

While we at Air Alliance Houston acknowledge that improvements to I-45 are needed, we strongly believe and ask you today to keep NHHIP in the broader Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) but remove it from the TIP funding window (2021-2024) until a fair and equitable path forward can be defined in partnership with residents and delineated in writing. To be clear, the vote to support funding for Segment 3 at this juncture will cement systemic racism into transportation planning for another generation. Furthermore, without written commitments to address the adverse and disparate impacts that are well documented in the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) draft environmental impact statement and community impact report, TxDOT is making known its discriminatory intent.

For some of you this request may seem extreme however, TxDOT has given us no reason to believe or trust that it will act on the express desires of residents or the City of Houston more broadly. For example, after a number of meetings with TxDOT where staff have made verbal commitments, Air Alliance Houston has yet to receive any document, in writing, outlining TxDOT’s plans to mitigate the increased exposure to air pollution for children who attend schools within 500 feet of the highway.

The same is true for the City of Houston. TxDOT has offered nothing in writing to assure anyone on this committee that it will comply with the desires of local elected officials and the communities they are supposed to represent. It is my understanding that the Transportation Policy Council has the legal authority to make a motion to remove or defer the vote for funding the NHHIP at this time. With your vote, you can let your constituents know that TxDOT’s “shoot now, ask questions later” approach to transportation planning is unacceptable.

This is a historic moment in time, a time when many across the country and throughout the world have shown leadership by taking immediate actions that demonstrate they can no longer be silent on racial injustice. It speaks volumes that the metropolitan planning organization serving one of the most diverse region’s in the country has remained silent about the current state of reckoning with systemic racism.

Even more troubling is that the representatives on this committee are choosing not to pause and reflect on this massive project that will perpetuate the disregard of communities of color for decades to come.

In the absence of taking a stand for communities by making a motion to remove NHHIP from the TIP 2021-2024 window, it is critical the TPC move forward to establish a MOU that includes an explicit mechanism that prevents future funding from TxDOT unless TxDOT complies with the terms outlined in the MOU. Moreover, the MOU should include a requirement that TxDOT conduct a social impact assessment to determine how the project will disrupt social cohesion and to identify steps that can be taken to minimize the impact to residents.

I implore each of you to vote with courage and conscience rather than tradition. Thank you.

Respectfully,
 Bakeyah Nelson
 Executive Director – Air Alliance

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 65

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Iris Gonzales

June 25, 2020
 Houston-Galveston Area Council
 Transportation Policy Council (TPC)
publiccomments@h-gac.com

Re: Vote on 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program & proposed segment 3 for NNHIP

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments. CEER is a unique advocacy collaborative of 25 different organizations that come from three main sectors: environmental justice, social justice, and conservation. CEER’s mission is to raise awareness of the connection between pollution, place and the public’s health. We are providing written and spoken comments on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP), specifically the funding for Segment 3 of the highway expansion and the proposed memorandum of understanding up for discussion at the June 26th, 2020 TPC meeting.

CEER and our members work with neighborhoods all along the proposed segment 3 of the NNHIP, many of which are environmental justice neighborhoods. We stand in solidarity with these impacted communities who have clearly indicated that what they want is to not see the expansion move forward as planned. We also stand with our CEER members LINK Houston and Air Alliance Houston, who advocate for equitable policies and practices that break away from “business as usual” thinking. Now is the time to listen to community and act differently to produce a different outcome.

We urge you to **vote against including funding for Segment 3 of the NHHIP** in the 2021-2024 TIP because numerous comments to TxDOT, H-GAC, and Mayor Turner show significant concerns haven’t yet been addressed. The conversation needs to continue and communities deserve more time. An MOU to

put agreements in writing with multiple stakeholders is important. We urge you to remember the most important stakeholder in that agreement: the people who have to live with this decision and will be impacted by it. Any MOU between the parties must include ongoing engagement with the public, elimination or significant efforts to address displacement and other negative impacts, and a consequence of halting the funding until TxDOT demonstrates progress in addressing these concerns.

CEER members are concerned that TxDOT is getting the green light to move forward with the IH-45 project without a meaningful commitment to address displacement, flooding, air quality, cultural and historic preservation, and a number of other concerns residents raised over the last several years. CEER urges you to take on a climate justice lens when making this decision, which will have impacts for future generations. Climate Justice refers to the movement whose ultimate goal is to achieve Climate Equity. The fight for Climate Justice raises ethical and political concerns about who exacerbates climate change and who suffers the immediate, short-term, and long-term impacts. Climate Justice calls on those who have benefited from climate change to share resources with frontline communities in order to rectify damages and create conditions where negative impacts are not concentrated on marginalized communities.

You have an important choice to make. Do not repeat history and the racist policies and practices that have brought us to this moment. Vote to delay this project so we can do right by the communities that have spoken against it and are demanding better.

Thank you,

Iris Gonzalez (she/her/hers)
 Coalition Director
 Coalition for Environment, Equity & Resilience (CEER)

Response:

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 66

Topic: NHHIP

Submitted by Laura Ryan

Commissioner Laura Ryan
 Texas Transportation Commissioner
 125 E. 11th Street
 Austin, TX 78701

Sent via email: laura.ryan@txdot.gov
 Mayor Sylvester Turner
 City of Houston
 PO Box 1562
 Houston, TX 77251-1562

Re: North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) relocation

Dear Commissioner Ryan and Mayor Turner:

Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) cannot go forward as planned without significant improvements in the way the agency plans to treat the over 1,200 families who are displaced and the neighborhoods they live in. (1). The project, which will expand I-45 and reorient the highways that travel around downtown will have an outsized effect on the health, stability, culture, economics, and general well being of many of Houston’s historic African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods. The disparate racial impact of the pending action compounds the widely acknowledged injustice that TxDOT inflicted upon Houston African-American neighborhoods when TxDOT first constructed the interstate highway system 50 years ago. As TxDOT demonstrates at length in its technical documents, this project will once again have a disproportionately devastating impact on African-American, Hispanic, and low-income communities.

In one instance, the Draft Cumulative Impacts Technical Report (CITR) indicates, “the project area largely comprises minority and/or low-income communities.” The need for affordable housing is also (2) well documented, “there are only 18 affordable rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households in Houston.” While the Draft CITR cites the historic harms to the Third, Fourth, and (3) Fifth Wards as a result of disinvestment and highway construction, it does not in any meaningful way suggest that TxDOT intends to remedy the historic destruction and division of homes, economic centers, and community resources, even though TxDOT is supposed to “mitigate cumulative effects.” (4)

We support Mayor Turner’s suggestions for TxDOT to limit the right-of-way in Segments 1 and 2, as well as guarantee greater benefits for people who will be displaced. However, the Mayor has suggested that TxDOT go forward with Segment 3 as planned. Segment 3 alone will displace at least 916 families and tear through several of the Mayor’s Complete Communities, including Second Ward, Third Ward, Near Northside and Acres Home. (5)

So far, TxDOT and the City of Houston have failed to make adequate information available to the residents of the impacted communities for them to meaningfully participate in public discussion. Their reports, presentations, and surveys are hard to understand and rarely available in any languages other than English. TxDOT has not made clear the specifics of how it will treat the people the project will displace.

We represent over tens of thousands of people from numerous neighborhoods in Houston and Texas and we believe that the Uniform Relocation Act, which TxDOT is required to follow, does not go far enough to protect the people who will be displaced by the NHHIP. Furthermore, TxDOT does not plan to adequately mitigate the profound cumulative effects of highways to the region. As Mayor Turner has said, “This project must leave residents and communities whole.” This is why we expect firm and (6) binding commitments from both TxDOT and Mayor Turner to ensure the following:

1. Long-term, plentiful, and deeply affordable housing

“We need affordable housing. We need single family homes. We also need rental housing. Housing for all... We need to have options.”

- *Jessica Hulsey, Historic Second Ward resident and community leader.*

- TxDOT should do everything possible to keep people in their homes. It should not increase the right-of-way.

- As Mayor Turner writes, TxDOT should ensure that the availability of housing in all neighborhoods affected remains the same by funding the construction of replacement housing before the highway construction begins. (7)
- TxDOT should compensate for the historic loss of affordable housing from the original highway constructions in the mid-1900s.
- Replacement housing should be affordable to populations making below 60% and 30% AMI.
- TxDOT should ensure the one-to-one replacement of pre-Hurricane Harvey public housing units. Displaced public housing residents should have the option to stay in the same neighborhood or move to a different one if they choose.
- The architecture and design of the replacement housing should match the historic architecture of the neighborhood.

2. Community oversight and transparency

TxDOT and HHA should “Talk to people at least once a month to update us on what’s going on because right now, I’m living out of boxes. A lot of us have been living out of boxes since the summer of last year.”

- *anonymous Clayton Homes tenant*

- TxDOT should consult the undersigned groups and individuals to create a community advisory board made up of displaced residents to oversee the relocation process. They should meet publicly with TxDOT on a regular basis.
- A separate community advisory board should be established for Houston Housing Authority (HHA) properties.
- TxDOT and HHA should produce quarterly public reports on the relocation process beginning now.
- TxDOT should contract for an independent report on the relocation process after the project is complete.

3. Accessibility and flexibility

- As suggested by Mayor Turner, “Affected residents should be clearly notified of their rights, options and responsibilities, at least 180 days in advance” and additionally, (8) residents should not be required to move during the school year.
- As Mayor Turner has suggested, security deposits, first/last month’s rent, rental applications, and other out-of-pocket expenses should be covered by TxDOT. This (9) amount should total to a lump sum of at least \$3,000 per displaced family in addition to the comparable value and moving costs guaranteed under the Uniform Relocation Act.
- Displaced residents should be able to receive some financial compensation up front so that they can pay for expenses like security deposit and rental applications.
- TxDOT should provide case managers, social workers, or peoples’ advocates to represent and counsel displaced people as they navigate the acquisition and relocation processes.
- People should be provided, free of charge, the service of a real estate agent and apartment relocation service to permit them to choose the neighborhood and home that best meets their families’ needs.
- Homeowners and renters should be eligible to receive a just value for their homes whether or not they buy or rent a new home.
- TxDOT should ensure that the advisory services listed in the Draft Community Impact Assessment are made free and widely available and are well advertised.

4. Historic preservation and economic development

“To keep the historic look of the community would be to build a home that’s not straight up, like those high rises. To keep the schools open. To keep the culture of the community. The culture of the community is the village mindset... When people come back, it shouldn’t feel like a totally new neighborhood.”

– Kendra London, *Our Afrikan Family*

- TxDOT should consult at length with a wide array of residents from communities such as Greater Fifth Ward, Greater Third Ward, Second Ward, Greater Greenspoint, Hidden Valley, Acres Home, Northside/Northline, Independence Heights, and Near Northside to ask how they want to preserve their communities’ histories. TxDOT should fund these initiatives.
- TxDOT should finance repairs, soundproofing and air quality protection for all homes within 1,000 feet of the new right-of-way.
- TxDOT should fund economic development initiatives designed by residents in environmental justice communities that will be impacted by this project.

5. Equitable treatment

I want to “have the freedom of choosing the property that I want to live in... security is number one, the cleanness, the neighbors... the facility for the handicap...”

– Mike Ahamandi, *Clayton Homes tenant*

- All relocation benefits available to displaced U.S. citizens should be made available to undocumented people.
- Property appraisals must account for rising home prices and gentrification.
- Displaced people should be compensated to an extent that they have the option to move to a different neighborhood if they choose.
- A “comparable” replacement home should be defined in the eyes of the person who is displaced.
- All written materials provided by TxDOT should be translated into all the languages spoken by community members along the route of the project or in determined areas of impact.
- All relocation staff should be culturally competent, demographically reflective of the communities they are working with, and speak the languages most comfortable for the displaced people.
- HHA must provide mobility counseling for HUD tenants administered by a qualified and experienced third party.
- Section 8 vouchers should be guaranteed up to 140% of fair market rate (FMR) to afford choice of housing and neighborhoods.
- The investment initiatives and mitigation being discussed for Independence Heights should be provided for all environmental justice neighborhoods in Houston.

All of these services and benefits are necessary to ensure that families who are displaced are given the financial resources and the right to emerge from their involuntary displacement in a sound financial position and in a home and neighborhood of their choice in which their family can flourish. The overwhelming number of affected persons are people of color. As those who suffered injustice in previous highway expansion projects, we demand that the City of Houston and TxDOT intervene so that these same racial injustices are not perpetuated or further entrenched. These requests we make in this letter are essential to ensure racial justice.

“How much longer will housing discrimination exist? This is just a small demand or request of what has existed for the past 70, 80 years.”

- Reverend James Caldwell, *Coalition of Community Organizations*

The recent experience of the relocation of the Hillcrest community in Corpus Christi, while not perfect, represents a TxDOT freeway relocation plan that achieves many of these goals. The Mayor should insist that TxDOT at least model its treatment of Houstonians similarly. We will have a virtual roundtable in the next few weeks to discuss this letter and invite the Mayor and Commissioner to join us.

Sincerely,

Our Afrikan Family

Coalition of Community Organizations

Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy

Dr. Robert D. Bullard, National Black Environmental Justice Network

Joetta Stevenson, Greater Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood #55

Jessica Hulseley, Historic Second Ward resident and community leader

Mike Ahamandi, Clayton Homes resident

Mardie Paige, Independence Heights Super Neighborhood

Texas Housers

LINK Houston

Texas Campaign for the Environment

Air Alliance Houston

Raven Douglas, MOVE Texas Action Fund

Stop TxDOT I-45

Indivisible Houston

Sunrise Houston

West Street Recovery

Turtle Island Restoration Network

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Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 67 **Topic: Roadways** *Submitted by Brian Babin*

Mr. Alan Clark
 Director
 Houston-Galveston Area Council
 PO Box 22777
 Houston TX 77227-2777

Dear Mr. Clark and Members of the Transportation Policy Council

As the member of Congress that represents the City of Baytown, I am writing in support of the City’s request for additional federal funding as part of its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project to improve Garth Road. It is my understanding that the City is requesting additional federal funding to complete Phases A and B of its Garth Road project.

Garth Road is a congested critical arterial roadway within Baytown. The Garth Road corridor is home to the San Jacinto Mall, a project undergoing a \$100 million revitalization. Houston Methodist Hospital – Baytown on Garth Road serves as a regional medical hub. Garth Road is also home to many retail and small businesses. As it sits today, Garth Road needs additional improvements to meet current traffic demands. As the east side of Harris County and Baytown grow, the demand will increase.

According to the City, the project will completely reconstruct Garth Road from I-10 to Baker Road, add an extra travel lane in each direction, add a 10-foot trail on the east side of the road, improve drainage, add access management techniques to improve safety, improve water and wastewater utilities, and clean up the electrical and telecommunications utilities along the corridor.

The City of Baytown’s has my enthusiastic support and I strongly urge (H-GAC) the Transportation Policy Council to give it all due consideration.

Sincerely,
 Brian Babin, DDS
 Member of Congress

cc. The Honorable Brandon Capetillo, Mayor of Baytown

Comment has been received for consideration.

Comment 68 **Topic: NHHIP** *Submitted by Trevor Reichman*

June 25, 2020
Trevor Reichman
401 Quitman St
Houston, TX 77009

Dear Members of the Transportation Policy Council,

It was Houston's bold move towards multi-modality and away from the car-centric suburbia that I grew up in, that wooed me back to Houston a couple of years ago. After living in the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit friendly city of Portland, Oregon and also getting spoiled spending time in America's most human centric cities such as New York and Washington D.C., Houston was never a city I thought I would return to, even though most of my family still resides here.

However, in 2018, I was surprised to re-discover a very different Houston than the one I grew up in. Houston's triumphant and ongoing efforts to re-centralize and re-densify the urban core, along with the extensive bicycle highway network and rail expansion, are the urban attributes that cinched the deal for my partner and I to relocate and buy a house in the Near Northside neighborhood in Central Houston. In the past 2 years, I have left my car almost permanently parked at home, and use the train and the bicycle highway daily as my primary sources for commuting. In those 2 short years, I have seen the user ship increase exponentially. On a sunny weekend, or during rush hours, I literally pass hundreds of other cyclists and pedestrians on the White Oak Bayou and MKT trails. On the Red Line train, which comes every 6 minutes during the day, the Texas stigma against mass transit is quickly fading, and the ethnic and income diversity of its growing ridership base is inspiring. Houston Metro is the most convenient, affordable, and reliable mass transit system I have personally have ever had access to. In other cities, I had been priced out of the urban core. These multi modal infrastructure investments represents the future of Houston, a stark contrast from its past.

I was extremely disheartened to learn about the plans to excessively expand the I-45 to the detriment of the urban core, and the historic and ethnic communities that will be displaced and further marginalized. We live a couple of blocks from the existing I-45, and although we won't be displaced, the expansion will turn my pocket neighborhood into a giant access road. After attending multiple meetings to find out those details, and with an open mind, I only have more skepticism and more questions that have not been answered. Mostly, why is this even needed, when demand for personal car use is trending down. We are in a prime window of opportunity to re-imagine transit in our city and the effects and footprint of that transit in an increasingly toxic and crowded world. At one meeting, as a primary selling point, the TXDot officiates promised to increase the speed of traffic on I-45 by 5 mph...yes billions of dollars and decade of central city residents living in the midst of a construction zone, to increase the speed of suburban commuters by 5 mph, when in fact, it is in the central city where we want traffic to SLOW DOWN. Being that an increase in speed and the adding of lanes is proportional to the increase of deaths, this is counter to Houston's Vision Zero goal.

As we plan for the future of Houston, let's not perpetuate the car culture that has literally choked our city for decades. Let's rather continue to densify the Urban Core, thus keeping it affordable and incentivizing those who work in Central Houston to live in Central Houston too. Let's rather invest in Boulevards, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, mixed use initiatives, mass transit, and yes, let's also fix the streets and highways in a way that preserves and enhances our inner city, and bridges our neighborhoods and communities rather than divide them. Build it and they will come. It is up to us to all of us decide what to build and what will come. Let's not allow what we don't want to come, to be forced onto us by entities that don't live in our community, but only stand to profit from it.

Major concerns that are in my own backyard, which is only small segment of this massive project:

- *The implications for the watershed, bayou flood zone, and White Oak Bayou bicycle trail and park.*

- *The viewshed of Downtown Houston from the Near Northside neighborhood and bayou green space and trail network. The view of the city is one of the most celebrated and valuable assets of the Near Northside neighborhood.*
- *What happens to North Street, the local bridge between the neighborhood communities of The Woodland Heights and Near Northside? We need to add more local connectors, not take them away.*
- *What happens to the highway exit and entrance for Main Street (North of the I-10)? If this is removed, all that traffic will be dumped onto Quitman Street (my street). Quitman is slated for a road diet with pedestrian improvements and bicycle lanes in the next year or two. The traffic on Quitman is also often interrupted by the Red Line Train, which stops at Quitman and Main every 6 minutes in each direction. Quitman is not where we want the traffic from Main and I-45 to be rerouted to!*
- *Will the bicycle paths be interrupted during construction? These are not just recreational. These are the bicycle highways for thousands of bicycle commuters and there is no temporary redirect that is viable and safe.*
- *Who will be displaced? Who will live closer to more noise and more pollution? Who will see their neighborhoods cut off and overrun by cars?*

Thanks for accepting public input, being that this is all funded by that public. With sincere regard for my community and this planet, Thanks for the opportunity to comment,

Trevor Reichman

Comment has been received for consideration.

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