

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Re: 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Amendments

Dear H-GAC- Planning and Projects Committees,

We are the elected leadership team of the Cottage Grove Civic Association and would like to provide comments on behalf of the neighborhood and its residents. For those unfamiliar, Cottage Grove is adjacent to I-10 on the north and south, generally centered at T.C. Jester. Cottage Grove is home to approximately 5,500 residents as of the 2019 American Community Survey.

After review of the Inner Katy Managed Lanes preliminary concepts and associated materials, we strongly oppose all options listed. Each concept has substantial potential impact on our community in the form of road-noise, right of way (ROW) acquisition, or traffic pollution. Cottage Grove, as well as many other neighborhoods in this corridor, were established before the construction of I-10 and have become some of Houston's most densely populated areas. All options, most especially concepts C and A would have unacceptable impact and will be met with extreme neighborhood opposition.

We recommend H-GAC reconsider their support of the project and review alternatives that will be less impactful to the adjacent neighborhoods. TxDOT has created similar 2-Lane managed lanes further west on I-10 and other freeways. We believe TxDOT would accomplish many of its goals with this design and with minimal neighborhood impact.

The residents of Cottage Grove have assessed each option and discussed concerns during a neighborhood meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Detailed comments are shown on the following pages. We look forward to providing more input in the future.

Regards

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Ian Fortney

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DocuSigned by:

Ian Fortney

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Drew Wiley, Vice President of the Cottage Grove Civic Association

DocuSigned by:

Katie Niemann

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Katie Niemann, Secretary of the Cottage Grove Civic Association

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Robert Burke

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Rob Burke, Treasurer of the Cottage Grove Civic Association

4/26/2021

Date

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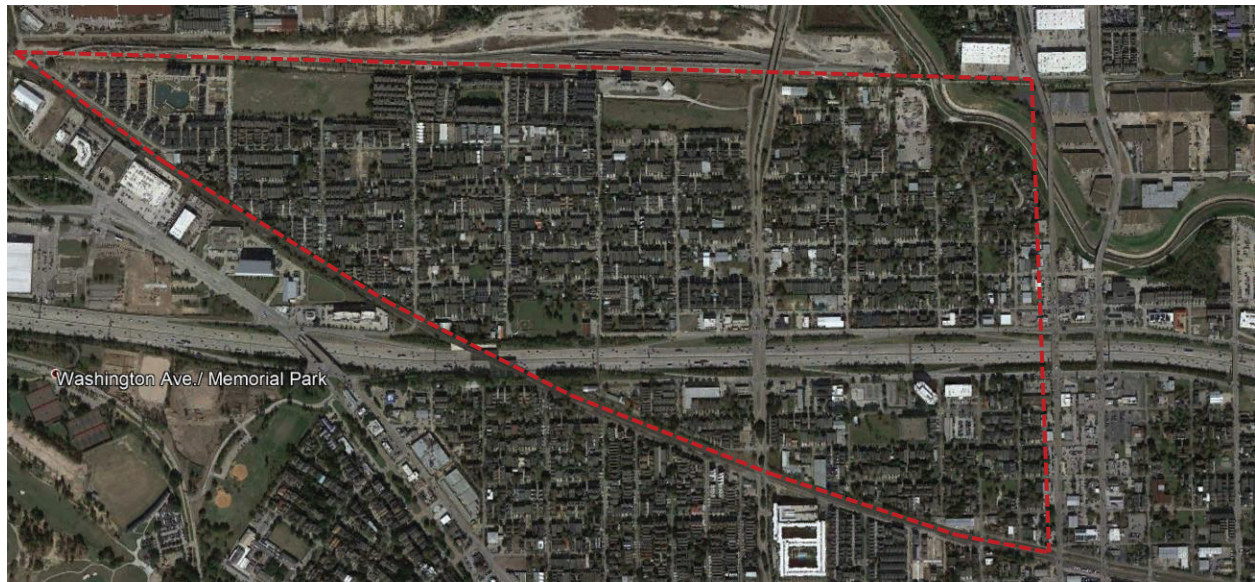
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### Cottage Grove Boundaries



### Concept A

Today, Cottage Grove is separated from I-10 with an approximately 75-foot wide green space buffer. This buffer is populated by dense tall trees which reduce freeway sound and allow residents at Cottage Grove Park to enjoy a view of nature.

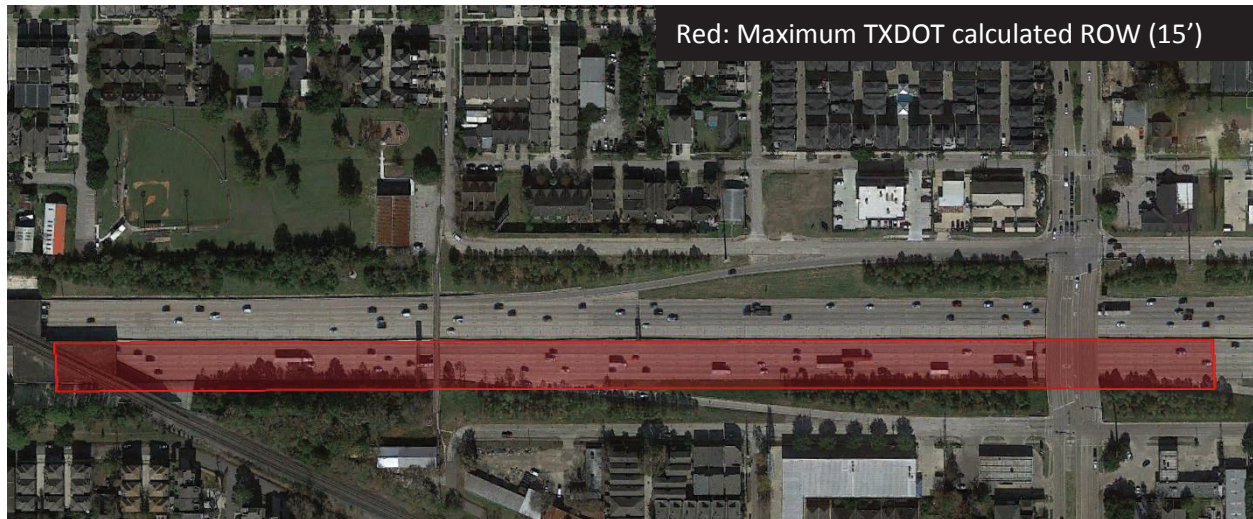
The potential right of way acquisition associated with Concept A is the largest concern of the residents. Concept A appears to, at a minimum, remove this green buffer and bring the neighborhood in direct contact with I-10. If the full right of way is utilized (115 feet) then it appears that Cottage Grove Park and even some homes will be consumed by the project. TxDOT sound barriers have questionable effectiveness and with the threat of losing our precious greenspace, we strongly oppose this concept.





### **Concept B**

This concept has the most impact on the Cottage Grove residents south of I-10. Rather than a depressed section of freeway, residents will now be faced with an elevated deck of lanes. To avoid the railroad these lanes will need to be elevated high in the air. This will create a considerable amount of traffic noise and pollution that did not previously exist. The residents are deeply concerned that mitigation strategies will not solve the issues created by this proposed concept.



### **Concept C**

This concept takes the worst elements of Concepts A and B and is the most opposed by the residents of Cottage Grove. The previously mentioned green buffer is now completely removed and replaced with elevated managed lanes. Homes along the corridor and residents visiting the park will now be faced with elevated decks. The noise and pollution concerns will be immediately adjacent to homes rather than offset like Concept B. The railroad will force the freeway lanes high into the air allowing the noise and pollution to be projected across the neighborhood. The residents are deeply concerned that mitigation strategies will not solve the issues created by this proposed concept.



**Proposed Alternatives:**

In TxDOT's presentation to Super Neighborhood 22 on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Cottage Grove residents proposed several alternatives that would have substantially less impact on the adjacent neighborhoods. TxDOT expressed concerns of their own to these alternatives which we will address below.

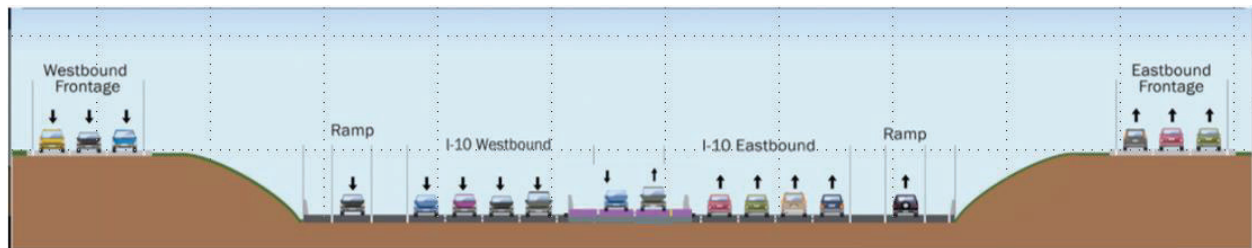
As a reminder, TxDOT's **Project Purpose**: *The purpose of the proposed project is to improve multimodal mobility and connectivity along I-10 by developing managed lanes to move people and goods in a manner that incentives transit and reduces reliance on single occupancy vehicles.*

**Alternative 1:** Convert existing main lanes into managed lanes.

TxDOT's stated purpose is to improve multimodal mobility and reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles. By converting two main lanes TxDOT would demonstrate its commitment to this goal. Commuters would be incentivized to utilize these lanes by either riding with additional passengers or taking public transit. This would substantially increase the number of people/hour the lane is able to serve and accomplish all of TxDOT's goals.

TxDOT Concerns: The higher capacity of the managed lanes is dependent on travelers switching to alternative forms of transit than single occupancy vehicles.

- This is the stated purpose of the project and TxDOT's response is unclear.



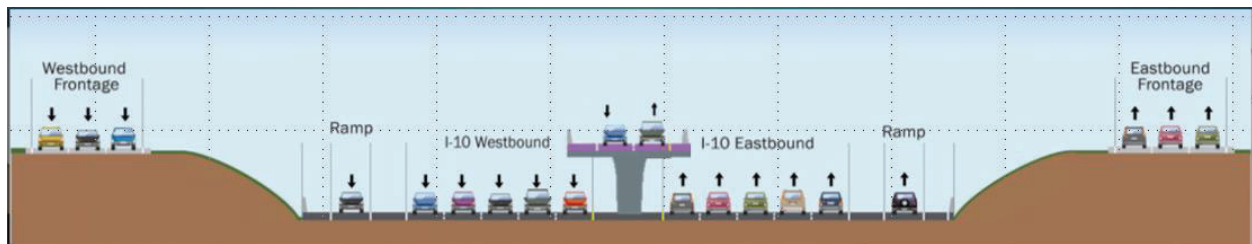
**Alternative 1**

**Alternative 2:** Install two elevated managed lanes in the center of I-10.

This alternative improves on Alternative 1 by leaving the main lanes unchanged but adds the additional capacity in a manner that minimizes impact to the neighborhoods. Central 2-Lane managed lanes are already installed on several freeways around Houston.

TxDOT Concerns: A single managed lane in each direction has the potential for vehicles to breakdown or have accidents and stop the flow of traffic.

- A semi-truck is 8.5 feet wide. TxDOT should explore elevated structures capable of supporting the two lanes with necessary shoulder requirements. If support columns exceed the available space in the current 20 foot wide median then a single managed lane with alternating directions should be considered.



**Alternative 2**