

**Memorandum of Understanding for the  
North Houston Highway Improvement Project**

**Public Comments from the Listening Session  
October 22, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

*\*This is not an exact transcription of the Listening Session. Filler words and words that didn't fit within the context of a sentence were not transcribed for ease of understanding the thought. The recoding is posted on the H-GAC's North Houston Highway Improvement Project [Website](#).*

44:40: Harrison Humphreys

Thank you. I appreciate you holding this listening session. I want to make a quick comment and ask a quick question. I do think it's important to clarify the turning point the record of decision is. After that, TxDOT can begin construction in earnest and the public and the public and various entities the city and the county have little recourse to force TxDOT to change the project. Along those lines, the purpose section of this document says that the MOU is supposed to establish mutual accountability. But there doesn't seem to be any real accountability mechanisms contained within the document. What can the city or the county or the TPC do should TxDOT fail to sufficiently give important to the asks by the city and the public made through Sylvester Turner, the Mayor's, letter.

(Responder) Carol Lewis: So Let me say that this is a listening session. So we're here tonight to listen. I do think there's an important point to be made here. The TPC is the body that will make decisions about future funding. When TxDOT gets ready for funding for sections for 2 and 1, they will come to the TPC. I'm just saying that as a point of information about what the TPC does and why the TPC is asking for this MOU. But I want to make it clear we will not answer questions tonight. This is a listening session. If I could please get you to tell us what you'd like to know, we will listen to you. But we're not going to start trying to answer questions tonight.

Harrison Humphreys: That's fair. Then I guess my comment would be the concern that there aren't really any firmly outlined accountability measures in the document.

47:08: Ben Peters

Hi everyone, this is Ben Peters. I just want to talk about in the scope of this Memorandum of Understanding and specifically talking about TxDOT, I would say that in terms of having meaningful engagement with the public and committing it to incorporating comments into that final environmental impact statement, TxDOT is already not honoring the commitments that are outlined in this memorandum. The fact that they put just a 30-day review for the public to review the entire FEIS and provide comment, in the middle of a pandemic, that we're still going through. I really appreciate the work that the TPC and the City of Houston and Harris county have been doing to give us an opportunity to listen and provide comment. But I am very, very concerned about how TxDOT is currently responding. Like we said, once the record of decision is made, my understating is that they're not by law, like, they can't, they're not required by law to incorporate mitigations that aren't in the FEIS. I am very concerned that critical and important mitigations to a lot of the things that various community groups and the city and the county have been talking about, won't make it into the FEIS. And for the record of decision, there's nothing that's going to stop this project from going through and having those effects. I guess I'm encouraging and asking that the TPC consider what measures are going to be available if TxDOT remains unresponsive to public comment. Thank you.

49:33: Michael Tolch, resident of Houston Texas in the Montrose area

I've called in to a few of these meetings like this where people have called in to give their opinion, and overwhelmingly I hear people saying, "Please, stop, TxDOT don't do this project. Cut it out. We do not want this. Here are all the reasons why this is bad for us. Here are all the reasons why we should not do this." I echo the previous comment about the commitment from TxDOT to meaningful public engagement. Thus far, nothing meaningful has taken place. Nothing meaningful has come from this other than the up rise of people trying to end this project. That is the only meaningful thing that has come out of this project. I ask that you please just listen to everyone. I feel like people will continue to say the same things to do not do this project. This is bad for us. The department of transportation does not honor what they say. Thank you for your time.

51:40: Neal Ehardt

I want to thank the whole committee for coming together and talking about the hard stuff. I especially want to recognize Chair Carol Lewis for giving such wise and informed leadership on this deeply important issue. So, the question is, what do we do with the money? TxDOT is about to get approval for a \$7 billion rebuild of the I-45 corridor. So how do we want TxDOT to spend the money? I'm pleased that all the parties have made commitments to walkability and transit. If you look at a map of Houston from before the 1940s when I-45, the Gulf Freeway, was built, it's apparent that we had a walkable street grid. We could have used more bridges across the bayous and railways, but besides those uncommon obstacles, our neighborhoods were built in grids. The walkable connections flowed smoothly from one to the next. Then the freeways were built, and the city was cut into slides. The MOU also contains a commitment to add automobile capacity. It is surprisingly expensive to build a freeway with regular walkabout crossings. The Pierce elevated is a rare example of a freeway with good walkability. It's easy to walk between midtown and downtown. But that freeway was very expensive and TxDOT doesn't want to maintain it anymore. The NHHIP plans to add more automobiles at the expense of walkability. A fragmented grid will burden all but the wealthiest neighborhoods along the project corridor. So how should we spend the \$7 billion dollars? We should not add automobile capacity. We should instead commit to having fewer single occupant vehicles on the I-45 corridor. If we have fewer cars, we can buy walkability and transit. This is a start to delivering justice to the communities that were ravaged by these freeways in the past. Please let's keep this thing within budget and please let's improve the air quality by committing to fewer single occupant vehicles. Thank you, everyone. Have a good night.

54:54: Zoe Middleton

I'm the Southeast Texas co-director of Texas Housers. We're a fair housing policy advocacy organization. We submitted comments on the draft EIS knowing that the FEIS was a bit performative and this is our last chance to give meaningful feedback, so I hope you all take a look at our comments again to the draft EIS. But I wanted to first ask that the listening session, that the questions brought up during the listening session, which I understand we are not responding so as to not drag this out until midnight, but I do hope they are responded to in a publicly accessible version and posted in at least English and Spanish. I know you don't want to run afoul of open meetings act, by veering too far... I'm sorry, I'm sitting on the sidewalk, so if you hear any background noise. I do want to point to a few facts that have been alluded to in other formal comments that were given to this group. So, you know over the last seven months the vehicle capacity and traffic has been reduced, and so, I want to know if this project is suppose to be forward looking and future looking where more people are working from home and enjoying flexibility, walking, and biking. How is this going to be reflected in this project, because I don't think this project is very forward looking. I also want to echo what previous speakers have said about this being a mechanism of dispossession, especially dispossession of black communities in the Houston area. I don't think that in any good faith that this body can sign on to or approve TxDOTs actions and efforts to build

more highways with less accountability. To that end, I would ask that the MOU include actual enforcement mechanisms that will satisfy the needs of these communities that will be dispossessed, yet again, if this project has to go forward.

57:27: Molly Cook, Nurse

Hey guys. I want to say thank you to Chair Carol Lewis and this committee. I know it's been a lot of work, incorporating comments, being willing to do this, and it feels like hope, democracy at work. I'm out in the community, on the streets, asking and talking to people that own their home that they've paid off and were \$70K, and that they will never be able to relocate in the same area now that houses are \$250K and up. It breaks my heart to hear these stories, and I am glad you are working on this. My concern is, I echo Neal's comment, it still says increased capacity for cars. We, in this room, are all aware we need to be at zero carbon emissions. That this is a crisis. And it is going to affect me; if I have children, it will affect my children. And I want to be in Houston forever. I don't want it to be a city of freeways and I don't want it to be under water and I don't want to be a climate refugee. We have to take this seriously. We have to be bold. And while the MOU is obviously a huge, huge piece of progress for this project, we have to think bigger I understand there is freight. I understand there is flooding. I understand there are things that need fixing. But increasing capacity for cars is mind-blowing. People are not doing this around the globe. Advanced societies are not doing this. I'm also hung up on the fact that the MOU mentions increased capacity. I'm from The Woodlands, I did this, I mean, drove up and down this freeway I did not realize had been destroyed. The people in the suburbs don't need their cars for the day to park in a garage, work in an office building and drive back home. My dad lamented that he could never take a bus or trains. So, I really encourage y'all to rethink whether the suburbs support this. We need to be thinking more boldly. I am also concerned that TxDOT is not a good faith partner. The fact that they have not readily extended the 30 day waiting period, and the fact they refused to answer questions when we asked them, and the fact that they are already procuring early acquisition. It just demonstrates they are not committed to working with y'all, to working with me. I am concerned they are not a good faith partner in the MOU and that they are not going to be held accountable, because the mechanisms for that are invisible to the public

1:00:34: Mary Schultz

Thanks to everybody for your patience and continuing your efforts to continue to deal with public comments. What I'd like to do now is call everyone's attention to the headline article in today's Houston Chronicle, "TxDOT gets creative as real estate runs out – transportation projects shift focus from wider freeways to managed lanes." It also quotes James Koch, the Houston district planning director for TxDOT, "We are obviously not going to double the size of the facilities that we have so what can we do with the space we have?" The content of the whole article outlines how transportation officials are now planning major projects using managed lanes along key freeways that encourage transit and carpool use with possibilities for new types of transportation instead of continuing Houston's history of more concrete and wider freeways. So, I'm wondering why this rationale and focus in planning for the movement of Houston's increasing population does not seem to be applied to the NHHIP project. The quote "preferred alternative design", according to TxDOT, for the 1-45 expansion is absolutely an expansion. It calls for increasing lanes from 8 to 16 with double-size access roads in some stretches of the project. This will enormously increase the footprint of the project and over the residences of hundreds of people and tax paying businesses. Instead of making creative use of the "space we have", like in the Pierce elevated – the design chosen for I-45 the project swallows huge amounts of acreage in EaDo and Midtown, demolishing newly created entertainment, recreational, and even government properties. Informed professionals in Houston, Huitt Zollars, and U of H have already suggested options for using the space we have and employing managed care lanes but it seems like those suggestions have

been put aside. It seems to contrast with the stated rationale and procedure of TXDOT at the present time. Is this because the I-45 project planning started long before TxDOT shifted its focus? I would just like to ask the MOU members to pay attention to today's Houston Chronicle article and work to save the homes, the health and the livelihoods of so many people subject to TxDOT's takings in the current plan. Thank you for listening.

1:04:05: Gabriella B

My name is Gabriella, and I oppose the NHHIP because of the disparate impacts the project would have on black and Latinx communities in our city and because it would future entrench the destructive single occupancy vehicle car centric paradigm that has plagued our city's transportation policy for too long. This project, as it currently stands, is in direct conflict of the City of Houston's Vision Zero and climate action plan. Increasing air pollution and adding concrete to a flood prone neighborhood is a dangerous legacy to leave for future generations that will already be facing more severe climate impacts like natural disasters, flooding and urban heat. The technical difficulties created by having the wrong link on H-GAC's website is a poetic encapsulation of many people's concerns with this group's stated commitment to good faith community engagement. For an event titled listening session, it's really concerning that people are being directed to an incorrect Zoom room, even as an honest mistake. This kind of unfortunate, even accidental, obstacle is the kind of dissuasion that prevents community members from participating in the process. I'm even concerned that the presentation portion itself was not available in Spanish. I'm glad to hear translators available on the call for comments, but on the website, there was no mention of Spanish availability. Many impacted families are primarily Spanish speaking and they should have equal access to engagement. I urge this working group to center the voices and perspectives of those in the path of displacement to create policy that works for public transit riders as much as it does for single occupancy drivers and to fight to protect the rich historic and cultural legacies of neighborhoods such as Fifth Ward, Independence Heights, and EaDo. Our region deserves better than more concrete. Thank you.

1:06:00: William Lyons

Hello, my name is William Lyons. I'm a resident in Houston, Texas. My comments are related to the displacement of the homeless, or people facing homelessness, due to the I-45 expansion. Currently the city does not have a working, comprehensive plan to address the homeless population that will be displaced due to this construction, and my concern is what services and resources will be dedicated to ensuring that not only are people protected who don't have a stable place to live, but also hoping to connect them to resources for stable housing. In addition, I want to echo the comments earlier made about how the current plan doesn't align with both international, national, and local plans to reduce pollution in our cities and how we can have a pivotal shift in our understanding to help those commitments align by reducing pollution and cars on our freeways. Thank you.

1:07:20: Shawn Murphy

Hi there. I'd just like to compliment all the speakers before me. They all did a very good job, and it sounded like everyone had nice, prepared statements as well. I don't have a prepared statement, but I would like to add a level of nuance. I know there are some city officials on the line. You can hear all these very well put together statements, but what I don't know you can hear is the desperation behind some of these statements. Everyone's got a lot to lose here and not a lot to gain, it sounds like, and so far, everyone on the call has been opposed to this project. I am very opposed to this project. It's designing backwards, not designing forward. As our own mayor has said a few times, we are to be designing forward for our future. This is clearly going to take us backward. One can only look at I-10 to see that expansion was a complete disaster, and here we are about to do another one. It's just

shameful. I think our elected politicians need to put themselves in the path of this to stop it. We'll look back on this time, if this goes through as planned, with great regret. How could we have done this to our communities of color? How could we have done this to the people that can't speak English that can't represent themselves on this call? How dare TxDOT. I really want to encourage our politicians to stand up for us and not let this happen. This is very wrong. Thank you.

1:09:23: Oscar Slopeton

My name is Oscar Slopeton. I'm a web and software developer and I work in the Greenspoint district. I've never had any relationship with TxDOT or any highway construction entity. I support the TxDOT plan as proposed. In my comments I will spotlight the harmful and counterproductive [actions] that the City of Houston requests. The TxDOT plan was developed over a ten-year period and is an integrated plan for the entire corridor, and stripping out lanes or elements as advocated by the city of Houston that will break the carefully developed lane balance to achieve optimal mobility benefits. Creating bottlenecks north of downtown will compromise the benefits of the entire project including segment 3. The city of Houston request would entirely remove lanes for HOV lanes. This will force carpools and rideshares into the main lanes, worsening congestion, and also reducing incentive to carpool. This is a very harmful feature of the city of Houston request. The city of Houston request will eliminate the managed lane and would limit opportunities for integration of mobility technologies of the future, such as automated vehicles. Consider aesthetics, this corridor is among the most unattractive of Houston, speaking of segments of 1 and 2, and this is unfortunate because it is a main route to Bush-Intercontinental Airport. The city of Houston plan would result in segment 1 being paved with concrete from edge to edge, and conceptual depictions show an elevated BRT structure with potential bus stations on platforms above the freeway. This would make today's unattractive freeway even more ugly. The TxDOT plan includes space between the frontage roads and main lanes which can be used for landscaping including a forest of trees similar to the trees between the west loop and Bellaire. The FEIS reports that 58 billboards will be displaced by TxDOT plans and this will be a substantial aesthetic improvement for the corridor. With no right of way acquisition, as advocated by the city of Houston, most of those billboards in segment 1 and 2 would remain in place. The city of Houston plan will also adversely affect constructability and increase the inconvenience to the public during construction. While the need for acquisition is unfortunate, we need to recognize that the overwhelming majority of affected properties in segment 1 are lower tier properties such as car lots, industrial facilities, fast food restaurants, motels, and warehouses. These businesses can and will relocate. Residential displacement is relatively low for a project of this length. Some residential properties such as the apartments at the 5100 block look old and very decrepit. We also need to recognize that a similar right of way acquisition took place on the Katy Freeway and the corridor and has seen an ongoing boom with the project completion in 2008 with two new buildings for headquarters for Marathon Oil and Crown Castle currently under construction. So, I would take issue with one caller that said it was a disaster. I would say it's a huge success. It's carrying vastly more people and it's also generating tremendous economic activity. In conclusion, the city of Houston request is a poorly prepared document without any consideration of the logic of their request. The TxDOT plan meets the needs of the corridor and the region and provides far better opportunities for the region for aesthetic improvement and carpooling. Thank you.

1:12:58: Susan Graham

Hi. This is Susan Graham with Stop TxDOT 1-45, and I'd like to thank the TPC for voting to create the MOU and the MOU workgroup. I would like to thank the members of the MOU workgroup for all their tireless efforts, time, and energy they have put into this process, especially Chair Carol Lewis and our Harris County and Houston representatives in this group. I have a lot of concerns about this document. Under the purpose it says, "establish mutual accountability amongst the parties to cooperatively work

together in advancing the planning of implementation of the NHHIP.” Under the scope of work, it says all parties commit to collaborating on the following SOW, and each agency has submitted a list of commitments they are willing to commit to. However, the thing I find lacking in this document is any way that this is going to happen. Chair Lewis said that would be the purview of the TPC in her earlier comments, and that there would be quarterly reports. But I don’t see any mechanism for people to meet and for these agencies to discuss these issues. I have many concerns about TxDOT coming forward and being an equal partner to this agreement. I see nothing in this agreement that prevents TxDOT, once they get the approval for the record of decision Record of Decision from proceeding forward with what they say is their preferred alternative. And as much as I want to believe in this document and this process, I ask this group to detail in writing how this will be accomplished and who will be responsible for that and what mechanism will be put in place in case TxDOT does not come to the table. I attended all of the workgroup meetings and TxDOT was very reluctant to commit to anything besides the FEIS. During the community engagement meeting that we had on Tuesday night, they wouldn’t even answer a question. So, many concerns whether I don’t want this document to end up with dust on someone’s shelf. I want it to be an active, working document and for this workgroup to continue to move and sit together as a group and work to establish mutual accountability amongst the parties to cooperatively work together in advancing the plan and implementation of the NHHIP. I share all of the concerns of the prior callers, with the exception of one, about this process. I also knock on doors and talk to people who’ve been in their homes for 25 years, some of them renters. Some of them with cancer. Some of them have had strokes. And they will not be able to relocate. They will not be able to go somewhere where there will be transit. They will not be able to be close to their doctors. They will not be able to be close to their families. And these people in my opinion have more weight than more vehicles on a freeway that in four to five years will be just as congested as it was before. So, I ask that you take the request of our mayor and our county judge seriously and put them equal to TxDOT’s request for the NHHIP. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak and thank you for your time.

1:17:26: Bridget Lois

My name is Bridget Lois Jensen, a resident of Houston. I’m going to echo a lot of what has been said before. I don’t really have anything well-prepared, but I just wanted to say that this feels very much like at the national level the supreme court nomination hearings and vote, that things are being rushed through with this project. Things are technically going according to the rules, but again, this is rushing through it. I’m thinking of the deadline of November 9<sup>th</sup> for having all the comments come in on the FEIS. Why can’t that be extended and what is going to happen with all the comments? It’s going to be exactly like it’s been. Thank you very much for your comments; then TxDOT will just proceed. I’m afraid that the parties of this MOU are going to be in a similar situation to what we as residents here in Houston have felt, that you’re going to be saying these things, but the answers from TxDOT are going to be just thank you very much, and they are just going to go about their way. There’s no real accountability. It just seems we’re putting the cart before the horse in some of this. Part of the things we’re agreeing to is to say we’re going to be developing mutually agreeable project goals, but, you know, I think that needs to happen before they have any kind of record of decision made. How can we be assured before that record of decision is adopted that a lot of these things are going to be addressed? And as it was previously stated, it just seems that everything is kind of happening kind of backwards. That we have no assurance that what you may be bringing to the table is going to be thought about. I find that even though the final FEIS is long and hard to go through, but from what has been pointed out in some cases there are some incomplete things and there are still some lacking commitments or are vague commitments. How do we get those things nailed down first before things proceed to the next phase? I think there’s a lot lacking in this document, but we need more time, and I hope you all get more time to go through this. Sorry for my rather incoherent comments, but thank you

all for the work that you're doing, for listening to us tonight, and for doing that work. And again, for the comments about all of this being very car/truck-centric is not very forward thinking or in alignment with the city of Houston and addressing our sustainability and climate issues that we're trying to work on. So, thank you very much.

1:21:34: Chloe Cook

Hi. This is Chloe Cook. I'm with Stop TxDOT I-45 and would like to echo previous comments and thank you for having this meeting and providing opportunity for this comment. I would also like to echo sentiments of many in saying that TxDOT is not a good faith partner in this project and the MOU reflects that. Their commitments reflected in this MOU are weak. Committing to have meaningful engagement, I have also knocked on a lot of doors and spoken with a lot of residents, even residents that will be directly displaced have not heard of this project. And that is from a lack of effort on TxDOT's part, not on theirs. I've spoke with three families that only spoke Swahili. They had never heard of this project. They are going to be displaced. They will lose their home. So we know that TxDOT is not having meaningful engagement with the public. We are talking to residents who have heard of the project from TxDOT and convinced there's nothing to be done, so we're lacking in city and county engagement. Voters, people who are paying taxes for this project, what avenues do they have to fight back? We are truly lacking in public information on this, and it has been quite a learning experience to learn so much about a large and expensive project that is happening in our backyard. I would also like to echo some of the sentiments in the chat that we do not get to decide when someone else's home is ugly enough to be torn down. There are people who have been living in these homes for 50+ years who are not ready to leave or are not ready to be living on a feeder road. We have schools that are staples in their community that are not ready to have all their children breathing smog during recess. This project has been pushed forward. Again to echo some of the sentiments in the chat, this plan is so old that it's already outdated and it hasn't even started. To imagine that in 12 years construction may be complete and we will be 10 billion dollars less is abhorrent to think that the project will be wrong before it's started. And also, to bring back that there are plenty of parts of our highway that TxDOT no longer wants to maintain and that's why they'd like to rebuild it. It's difficult to think in the not too distant future this project will too be too difficult to maintain and have to be rebuilt to maintain. So I appreciate that there have been avenues for community, but unfortunately in our online-centric time because of COVID, there are a huge number of directly and indirectly impacted communities who will never know what is going on and any process to actually meaningful engage with them is not reflected in this MOU. Thank you.

#### **1:24:53 – 1<sup>st</sup> round of comments concluded**

1:29:40: Paul Benz

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I reside in First Ward, and I've made comments in this venue before. One of the things about the MOU and the whole structure of this project is that there are some decisions that won't be made until much later; and while I can appreciate TxDOT's earnestness in being willing to listen, I think it's also important to have a mechanism for citizens to be able to participate in that process in a little bit more formal way by giving the citizens standing with the MOU. In other words, the citizens would actually have a non-leveraged legal standing that's built into this MOU. Thank you.

1:30:50: Tanya DuBois

Good evening, everyone. I am Tanya DuBois, and I'm mostly known for my work in Independence Heights, which is the first black incorporated city in the state of Texas. And so, I just want to thank this council as well as the working groups that are working hard to make sure the public's voice is heard. I do

want to go on record acknowledging the fact that in our meetings with TxDOT ,we wanted to make sure that the cultural and historical assets which lie within many of the communities that are going to be touched by this massive project are very important to the people that live there. And by allowing public comment in this listening session, we also want to make sure that anything that's done, any decisions that are made at the table, any further MOUs that are signed, that you always keep in mind there are people, little bitty people at that table that have deep, deep roots in those communities, and those deep roots bare our identities. Because of the history of African Americans and brown people in this nation, only 8% of what is on the national register of historic places represents people of color. The continued erasure of our communities by displacing our people only hurts the fabric of America and the diversity of America and the make-up of America. So as you move forward, as you sign documents, receive funding, sign checks for funding, and as you do your work, think about those people whose identities lie in those places and how important it is for Houston and Harris County to remain a preservation and culturally friendly place. Thank you so much.

1:31:57: Jeff Trevino

My name is Jeff Trevino. I live on I-45, and I would just like to express my frustration. I know I hear the word listening, and you've given us an opportunity to speak, and you say you're listening. We've gone through plenty of meetings over the last couple of years. I have volunteered hundreds of hours and gone to all kinds of meetings that TxDOT hosted and the city of Houston hosted. We've done demonstrations, door knocking, signs, showed up downtown for different meetings, had the police called on us, but we're not being heard. Yes, you are physically hearing our voices, but there is no listening. We are not being heard. You keep marching forward. There's an enormous amount of frustration by myself and the rest of the group. We're telling you. You're listening, but you're not hearing – we don't want this project. And I just want to say that one more time. The Mayor has sent a letter. There are county officials that are asking to slow this down. This is not what the taxpayers want, and with that I'll stop.

1:35:12 Eliza Paul, TxDOT

I want to thank H-GAC, Chuck, and Patrick. I also want to thank Chair Lewis and all the MOU committee members and also everyone that showed up tonight to provide comments. This has been a great listening session, and we hear you. We've heard what the public has said in these comments, and we also have read the article that was in the paper this morning. We're looking at this project, and we are doing everything that is possible to make it a collaborative process. We have been working with the city of Houston, we've been working with METRO and also Harris County and Harris County Flood Control on a lot of the items on this project throughout the entire course from the beginning to now. So, I just want to thank everybody. We definitely hear you. We're here to listen. And we'll take all your comments into consideration. Thank you.

1:36:00: Sylvia Cavasos

I'm with Super Neighborhood 51, Lyndell Park Civic Club, and the Hardy Tiers 21, all within the loop here in the near northside. And, you know, I also once had a great job promoting the City of Houston. I traveled the world for the City of Houston, promoting the city of Houston and saw the competition that we have with other countries, and I know that transportation is crucial for this area in order for us to compete in a world market, not only for business and commerce, but also for everything that comes into the city. As I continue to work here with the grass roots initiatives that we have in the near northside concerning this project, I have to give respect to someone like Jeff Trevino who is also in Super Neighborhood 51. We're part of the leadership team there, because this area is going to be totally affected. And it's going to be affected by the school areas, but also the homes in Independence Heights.



Everything is going to affect us here inside the loop. And we're frustrated, because we go to so many of these events. We talk, and we express ourselves, and yet we feel that there is no solution for us or there isn't a strategy that can open up people's minds as to what Houston will become in the future and what we're looking for in the future. Even though you have these articles in the Houston Chronicle, not many people probably read it. Not that many people understand what's going on and the trends of growth here in this city. So I think that in order for everyone to be able to accept what is the inevitable, because it is the inevitable. As far as I can see, and how I've seen other cities grow and compete amongst each other, we have no other choice other than to increase our transportation needs and work on that level, but also be able to meet the needs of the people that are going to be totally affected. So I stand with the people here in the Near Northside, Lindell Park, and Super Neighborhood 51, because we're going to be drastically affected. I think that TxDOT needs to really come into the Near Northside and into the areas that are going to be affected. I know you say you have outreach, but it's a whole other thing to reach those who are going to be affected and bring them into moving the city forward and into its growth and its trends and to what the world look is, even though it's not going to affect them in the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years directly, it will affect our families and it will affect how the city grows and completes for business. I just think there is a miscommunication. I think there is a gap there that keeps people frustrated, because TxDOT doesn't listen to what our needs are, and then TxDOT has to then see what is going on trend wise, traffic wise, how it's growing and how it will continue to grow years on end. If we're able to communicate a lot of this information to the people that are going to be affected, maybe we can get through this together in a peaceful way. Those are my comments, and I appreciate the forum.