

North Houston Highway Improvement Project

Comments from June Public Meetings



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

These comments were received on written cards at the public meetings co-hosted by TxDOT and the City of Houston in June. Comments written on the table maps will be shown on our interactive map which will be published soon.

These comments help us understand the needs of residents and businesses along the corridor. The City is reviewing them to find ways to improve TxDOT's project. Stay tuned to learn how your comments have been incorporated into the list of ideas submitted to Mayor Turner and his steering committee in September 2019.

Received on June 20, 2019:

- Removing 610 exit from 45 and no exit available until Hardy Toll Road. Going to increase traffic in Lindale because drivers will go through neighborhood. Neighborhood will have limited exits and no real way to exit Enclosing the neighborhood with no real viable ways to get out of neighborhood.
- Why are we going to do to I-45, after what has already been done to I-10. It took 4 1/2 years to get to where it is now. The data says it is worse than before the project. More lanes is not the answer.
- How are you going to keep my house and neighbors houses from flooding if you raise the elevation of the freeway. I-45 south of Main Street where water already collects and came close to the bottom of the North Street Bridge. Also, is it so loud and raising the level will increase the noise. Why can't you commit to sound walls? Please.
- Invest more on light rail and expand it to the Bush Airport, finish the Hardy Toll Road Connector to Downtown and, really, I looked at the impacts of flooding, you should continue to look at this and you should add an extra main lane in each direction. Yes, listen to the people ALWAYS!! Period.
- Out of consideration if this project goes forward, you should build a sound wall before construction starts.
- Replace public housing one-to-one and build new public housing around their current locations in areas of high opportunity. Benefits for renters: ensure renters got help paying for security deposits, utilities, rental applications. They should not need to pay more than 30% of their income for adequate, DSS housing in their area they live in. TXDOT should subsidize the rest.
- In business since 1981. We are a family owned business. Y'all are taking our entire property and putting us out of business.
- The city of Houston needs to stop the expansion of I-45 and the implementation of HCTRA Hardy Toll Road Connector. Both have negative impacts on City of Houston residents to benefit commuters from Montgomery County. TXDOT's math for traffic on I-45 never included Hardy Toll Project.
- We need more Q and A meetings for Segment 2 and 1.
- The Hardy Toll Road Connector Project is moving forward and is designed to relieve congestion on I-45 and I-69. If this is the case, why do we need the NHHIP? We already have a similar

project moving forward. I'm worried about loss of homes, businesses, and parklands. In addition, I don't understand why we're building more roads now that we know climate change is happening. TXDOT should be focusing on mass transit options, not accommodating more cars.

- Flood mitigation should be to 500 year level and comply with City of Houston's NEW rules
- Please keep Pierce elevated lanes for east-west access. We do not want to go north, west, and then south just to get from Lawndale area to Montrose.
- What will be done for properties (commercial) that have traffic reduced by 50%; therefore, value will be decreased? Why are you proposing a cul-de-sac at Werner Street? My property is at the corner of Werner and Witcher. This needs to remain open. The Witcher Street intersection will not allow for large vehicles to approach my property.
- Need clarification from TXDOT on the pump station outfall for segment 3 which is proposed at E288 into Brays Bayou. Need specific clarification on: Volumes of water to be displaced/pumped into Brays Bayou, Plans for pump operations during high water events in Brays Bayou given constraints of Project Brays-what are modeled impacts on downstream commuting, and Flood control sign off on planned pump station outfall at Brays Bayou.
- Family business since 1981. Only location. You are proposing taking our entire property, putting us out of business.
- Please have TXDOT and HC Toll Road authorities work together. We do not need both.
- Need to have exit ramp to north main closer to main street. Current schematic has the north main exit too far back. Close Cottage Street bridge if necessary. Big problems if traffic is diverted to Quitman.
- Moving Irvington entrance west of Helmers Street will cause major traffic concerns for residents who live on Helmers and school children going to elementary school Herrera on Helmers. Helmers has no sidewalks and the road is narrow with no traffic signals.
- Proposed retention pond at Airline and Victoria. Is this the largest area to be used? The Wooded lot
- I do not want to be a part of expansion
- If Mayor Turner won't pay our firefighters on a citizen approved vote, the project needs to stop. We must have a Q and A. The Mayor won't listen to us.
- Typical dog and pony show. Same TXDOT, same old B.S.
- No build. There is no funding for anything outside of downtown "parks". How is the presentation from Jeff Speck wrong? Until TXDOT adopts more comprehensive designs, they shouldn't be building roads. Overpass @ light rail (Fulton @ 610)
- The cost of this project is much more than \$7 billion. We should invest these dollars and the energy and talents into a more progressive future with shared cars vs. individual cars. We have learned time and again that building more lanes of highways do not sufficiently reduce traffic to value true investment worth it. Let's invest in the future and encourage/ redirect Houstonians.
- Bought building 5 years ago. We are a minority owned business. We support 180 employees. The building is not vacant. We spent 7.8 million dollars to renovate.
- More retention ponds are needed along the I-45 corridor between Gulf Bank and West road to handle water accumulating on the frontage road. I suggest a pond on the southbound side between Northville and Bluebell. There are some huge vacant lots there. Thank you!
- If I am on 610 and go south on I-45. I cannot get to North Main. North Main is a major thoroughfare and there is no access to it. Ridiculous. You must have north main exit on 45 Southbound. For example, you want to go to McDonalds on North Main. the only way to do that is to exit Quitman and drive through the neighborhood to get to McDonalds. Unacceptable not to have access from 45 to major thoroughfare.

- I want more main lanes. Less HOV/MAX lanes. I'm opposed this project. You build the solution 8 lanes both ways, but then you spend more money to build barriers and toll and remove two lanes! We need more, free unrestricted lanes. TXDOT is not improving traffic, but profiting off bad traffic. I oppose MAX lanes. btw-this is like I-10 Houston and MOPAC in Austin and it will fail like that. Don't waste taxpayer money.
- This project cuts off the East End from downtown, as it closes Polk. There are five east-west connectors from downtown to the East End communities. Traffic on Leeland has increased in the past 2 years, as have the number of accidents and average speed. This makes biking that much more unsafe. Flooding is a concern as TXDOT builds to only a 100 year flood event. More pollution. I vote no.
- Going south on 45, to reach Crosstimbers, I would have to exit traffic lights at Victoria, Airline before Crosstimbers. Why not start exit for just Crosstimbers? This road has too much traffic to add in traffic from Airline.
- I highly oppose this project. We know that it would have devastating impacts on the environment, local communities, air quality, flooding and more. I am close to graduating from Rice with my graduate degree and getting married. The implications of this project will affect whether Houston is seen as forward thinking or backward thinking and whether people want to raise their families here. It is not possible to build our way out of congestion. The traffic will come back. Please stop this project and spend the money on something else.
- North Street Bridge connects 2 historic neighborhoods. Please do not tear it down. It is a giant pedestrian friendly bridge.
- I like information mailed through the post office.
- Please no more air pollution. Should be light rail. No more vehicles on the road.
- 45 is a well thought out plan. Our area is in need of serious upgrades. Please do not let citizen "fright of change" delay or stop the project.
- My main concern is flooding-more flooding caused by expansion. I don't want the few homes between I-45 and Hardy Toll Road to become the retention /detention pond for 45. Those officials that were standing at the maps seemed to have little knowledge and expect to direct you to where the freeway would be. it would have been helpful if they knew more.
- This property will start construction this month for a low income senior housing complex. This is funded with 90% tax credits through TDNCA and \$5 M in TIRE funding from City of Houston. Land donated by Midtown Redevelopment. There lot bound by Cleburne, Hutchins, Barbie-Bastrop also has a planned Metro rail on Cleburne and rounding the corner to Hutchins with a station on Hutchins. The secondary seems unnecessary. taking up Hutchins will cut off Fire vehicle access to the property from Hutchins and the main entrance to the complex is on the corner of Cleburne and Hutchins. Please remove the secondary off ramp.
- The city is showing a proposed Bayou Park in Independence Heights, which is not part of TXDOT project or discussed or accepted by the community. The City needs to be more sensitive to low income/majority minority neighborhoods in these public meetings than showing a proposed design by a nonprofit group that does not represent the community it proposes a design for. It values those ideas over private property rights and discounts the people that live in that historic neighborhood. if the City wants public participation in these meetings, it should include the community impacted in the process not adopting or showcasing ideas not supported by the community that would have even more of an adverse impact in a low income community of color. Displacement by TXDOT will already claim 31 homes. This bayou park will claim 150+ homes and 30+ businesses that are above and beyond the scope of the TXDOT project. Please be more mindful.

Received on June 26, 2019:

- Preserve/enhance transit from Downtown to IAH. 2) Provide transit connection between Amtrak Station and NW Transit Center and proposed TCR Terminal, whether at existing Amtrak station location or relocated to Burnet Transit Center. 3) Build bike/ped trail along Little White Oak from Moody Park to Woodland Park. 4) Provide safe bike connections between Downtown and EADO. 5) Keep speeds DOWN on feeder roads.
- The freeway expansion is projected to come across my property. How will this expansion affect my property?? What kind of relocation plans will be offered to stay in this neighborhood? How soon will this project begin?
- More analysis is needed on the impact on city street traffic in Heights, Near Northside, Fifth Ward and Independence Heights due to change in number of places points and location of entrance and exit points from proposed I-45 and related freeway changes.
- Northbound feeder of 45 just north of Parker floods after every heavy rain. This needs to be fixed now by TXDOT. Don't wait until a new feeder is built. I am afraid of tunnel for 59 and 45 through Downtown east of GRB when we have a heavy rain.
- Rail to airport.
- Me and my neighbors on Idea and Embury Streets request a sound barrier wall or vegetation to mitigate sound and pollution from proposed feeder.
- Need zero impact on air quality first and foremost. Safety for pedestrian and bike traffic east and west across I-45, particularly school children north of I610.
- I work in Texas City six days a week. I use I-45 from Little York to I-45S to FM 1674. It takes some time- 2 hours to get back home. Leave I-45 as it is and make some sort of bypass off US 59 to avoid Downtown traffic both ways, north and south.
- I was astonished to see only 7 design changes highlighted in your handout. I am sure you have received thousands. This reinforces my belief that TXDOT is only giving us lip service to this process with the COH blessing.
- Flooding due to so called improvements is a major problem.
- Segment 3 between Alabama and Elgin and Interchange 59/288 (1 fo 2): 1) re-establish bridge from 288 to Midtown; 2) Decrease width of service roads and remove slip lanes at intersections, include bike lanes, make city streets rather than service roads, make service road going north from Alabama one lane, then two lanes at exit lane from 288 then three lanes at intersection of Eglin; 3) Find solutions for noise other than sound walls/noise barriers; 4) Maintain view over freeway from the properties on the 3300 and 3400 blocks of Saint Emanuel; 5) Find means to slow traffic on feeder roads and push them as far from properties as possible.
- Segment 3 between Alabama and Elgin and Interchange 59/288 (2 of 2): 6) Design freeway in this area so it can eventually be covered and made into a park similar to area near GRB; 7) Apparently Chartres Street/feeder road is now taking Downtown bound traffic. This traffic needs to be slowed in the neighborhood; 8) There shouldn't be service roads at all in this area. The freeway should be a depressed pass through just as the part in the better parts of town around Dunlavy, Woodhead, etc.; 9) Take off exit from 288 to Elgin.
- Engage early with the homeless population and the service providers that are in the affected area (i.e. Healthcare for the Homeless, St John's Downtown Bread of Life) by Pierce Elevated and SEARCH may want some money if it needs to relocate out of its brand new building east of 59 Downtown. Where are the homeless going to go to access services? Figure this out with these stakeholders ahead of time. Don't expect them to come to community meetings, but don't ignore them. Work with and through those who work with them.

- Proposed project will greatly disrupt METRO's light rail service from Wheeler Station especially. This is a huge part of commuter routing for citizens completely dependent on public transportation and who are most economically vulnerable. Does TxDOT's \$7 billion cover any damages and disruptions? This 'solution' seems more focused on appealing to single use cars/drivers as opposed to a better whole that would benefit multimodal interests.
- I don't think there's been enough outreach to the area west of Downtown that accesses 45 from Allen Parkway. How is this going to affect surface street flow? There's already backup to 45 on Allen Parkway after work. So now, it's all going to get funneled onto a spur to hook up to freeways north. If I want to go to I-45 south from North Montrose (i.e. the area around W. Gray and W. Dallas and Dunlavy that is going to be increased in density with Regent Square/Hanover, etc.) will I go around the north side of Downtown on the freeway, try to go through Midtown north to catch I_10 and then around the other side of Downtown? Ugh!! North Montrose wasn't considered an affected area. I beg to differ.
- Adding bike lanes to frontage roads- who will take responsibility for safety? TXDOT or COH? Neither government agency has historically demonstrated any care for the cycling culture or the safety of its citizens who prefer that mode of transportation (some by economic necessity). TXDOT is driver focused anyway and has no history of serving cycling infrastructure via design or cultural shift. Same with COH which has yet to place one single sign alerting drivers of 3' safe passing ordinance.
- Is Downtown I45 to be demolished? Can park cover east of GRB on highway 59/69 be extended further to the south? Is there a ramp up to street level from Highway 59/69?
- More meetings about segment 3 in those neighborhoods!! Maybe Saturday meetings but the day doesn't matter. Break down the current plan to the stakeholders local to that segment!!
- A \$7 billion waste to move I-45. Double deck Pierce. No additional main lane capacity. Increase of population and no increase of main lanes.
- At segment 3, typical section A-A: install 16' high barriers at top of main lanes like Belaire model with landscape buffers
- I was looking at the reroute of I45 through Downtown. My suggestion is to have it both ways. That way you don't have to demolish anything and you are giving drivers another option to get through traffic.
- The noise levels at over 300' away are +65 decibels. We want a 16+ foot high barrier on the main lanes with a large landscape barrier to protect the community from increased traffic noise and pollution. Like "Belaire model".
- There needs to be more meetings specifically about segment 3. It really seems as though TXDOT does not care about Houston, the people who live in the areas that would be affected by segment 3 or the small business owners there either. This is awful.
- My concern is drainage from BW 8 to north Shepherd northbound needs to be addressed. They currently flood. Is TXDOT prepared to correct the drainage to enhance freeway drainage for future?
- How will the proposed expansion keep flooding OUT of Acres homes? It has been our experience that as our sewer systems are 'optimized' the work necessary to mitigate flooding never happens. So, the infrastructure eventually collapses and the interest in fixing it is ignored because of cost. We demand follow through. Those narrow outlets under and around freeways are NOT enough without proper water pathways.
- I'm really concerned that the right-of-way threatens to cut through HCC. It was just built. Also, if the N. Shepherd ramp is expanded, Bank of America and Joe V's will be impacted.

- More MAIN LANES! Please serve needs of public not traffic policies. Any plan that does not include more main lanes is a waste of tax payer money.
- The frontage road going south after exiting Gulf Bank will be affected terribly if nothing is done to open up more pathways for rain water to drain because if it rains more than 15 minutes, a huge puddle of water collects causing drivers to switch lanes at the same time people are exiting the freeway. This causes back-ups, stalled vehicles, and crashes.
- N. Shepherd already floods at Little York on frontage at N. Shepherd from Tidwell to Gulf Band and beyond. You need to fix first things first. Fix the drainage, clean the bayou, turn our drainage over to the County.
- Improve drainage from I-45 on 249
- If 1-10 is an example of how well traffic is not facilitated, then it should be assumed there is a need to diminish traffic by having more mass transit in the form of busses and trains. We should consider charging people for driving into Downtown like in London England. The pollution should be addressed by planting massive amounts of trees along all freeways. Widening freeway through Near North and 6th Ward is destructive to the communities and only increases the pollution in the inner City.
- Flooding has increased as a result of new infrastructure. More streets flooding than usual. Flyover for Shepherd seemed to increase flooding. Lowered streets in Victory, put in median and reduced bayou. Keep drains clean. Also, Victory and Shepherd back up. Phasing of Segments is a concern: 288 isn't done. Finish one project at a time.
- Relocating older residents who may not want to move is an issue. Increased flooding due to right of way expansion is a problem. Elevate homes to reduce flooding from new infrastructure. Union members are moving. Seniors will die if moved in 1 year. Move physical home and homeowner within existing neighborhood. Need a robust relocation program.
- Currently the intersection of Little York and 45 (NE corner) floods every time it rains just a little. My business is already very high up and cars scrape under carriages when entering my business (McDonalds). How will you alleviate flooding without raising ground level? Will there be added drainage? Also, storm sewer inlets on my property cannot drain water because they are filled with dirt, soot and debris from Harvey and other storms. How will this be corrected?
- Will there be walls put up for the noise from the freeway? We are so close to the freeway at Glanburnes and East Janisch.
- Expand detention ponds and widen bayou behind us to accommodate 500 year flood and reduce neighborhood flooding.
- Please make sure the drainage for all the frontage roads is corrected. Are the citizens in the low flooding areas that remain going to be safe during the expansion? Metro riders need to have safe access while construction is being done. Are you working with Metro to ensure people can still reach their jobs, schools, and leisure activities during each section closure?
- I think 1 HOV lane in each direction would be enough.
- Stop getting people who don't live in our neighborhood to make these terrible decisions. I understand growth, but to spend \$7 billion that is not needed. We don't need 4 managed lanes. 2 is enough because going and coming isn't congested 24 hours a day. Three feeder lanes sounds crazy. Two is enough. This many people are not going to get on the already empty Metro buses. I rode HOV Metro to the Medical Center for 4 years. Make sure the detention ponds, seemingly a joke, work. Don't send water to Little White Oak. N. Shepherd overpass was a joke. Money spent for nothing. Don't go through with this unsavory plan. Save some money!
- Make incentives available to Downtown employers/employees to make Metro more attractive. Why in God's name would you lower a freeway? Maybe I didn't hear Mr. Singh correctly?

Everyone will not be in special cars (AV). TxDOT leaders should be present. Money was wasted on the Shepherd ramp. This would be another waste of money.