



Dear Chair Clark and Members of the Transportation Policy Council,

I want to start off by thanking the City for undertaking such a comprehensive community engagement process. Last year, affected residents, community groups, and stakeholders made it abundantly clear that TxDOT's NHHIP design was unacceptable. The City of Houston and TxDOT could do better than relying on outdated, ineffectual transportation policies. Displacing hundreds of residents and businesses by expanding a freeway in an attempt to mitigate congestion issues is inadmissible, particularly when we know that adding lanes does not achieve the desired effect. Moreover, the NHHIP design put forth by TxDOT would continue a long history of environmental injustice associated with the building of highways - ensuring that the adverse impacts would fall disproportionately on communities of color and low-income neighborhoods adjacent to the project corridor.

The city heard these outcries and responded. The planning department, along with Huitt-Zollars and the University of Houston CRDC, undertook an admirable effort to understand what kind of project would best serve the most affected residents. After months of community engagement and deliberation with a facilitation team, the City has decided to pursue Vision C - a comprehensive redesign process that will value interconnectivity, accessibility, and resiliency over possibly improving travel times for suburban commuters. Through public engagement and intensive deliberation, the City's team found that not only is it possible to simultaneously address our congestion, flooding, and environmental sustainability issues all while not displacing residents and businesses, it's the preferred option by the City and its residents.

Our organization, Air Alliance Houston, strongly supports an encompassing redesign process like the one that will be outlined today. A redesign like Vision C, which would include expansive transit infrastructure that stays within the current highway footprint, is the exact type of 'paradigm shift' in transportation planning Mayor Turner has been calling for. We can build a project that meets our transportation needs but that is also equitable and sustainable in nature. This is our opportunity to do so. We'd like to ask the TPC to follow the City's lead on this process moving forward and accept this community-driven vision.

One other thing I would like to note is that these meetings continue to be difficult for the public to access and participate in. The software used and public comment process can both be confusing and inaccessible for people without internet access. I recognize the NHHIP item being presented is informational and that no formal action is being taken today. Going forward, though, we ask that the TPC be conscious of the public's limited access and refrain from taking any action on this contentious project until the public can fully participate in these meetings and the immediate danger of the coronavirus has subsided.

Thank you,

Harrison Humphreys