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To: Texas Transportation Commission (TTC)  
From: Melissa Beeler, Transportation Justice Coordinator at Air Alliance Houston  
Date: April 20, 2022

**Subject: Public Comments**

Good morning Chair Bugg and members of the Texas Transportation Commission. My name is Melissa Beeler and I am with Air Alliance Houston, an organization that envisions healthy communities with clean air, every day, for everyone.

I'm here to support my fellow Texans in Houston, San Antonio, and El Paso to ask TxDOT to allow our cities to have streets safe for all users and less air pollution in our communities.

According to TxDOT's vision statement, TxDOT aspires to be a "forward thinking leader" for mobility. But how can TxDOT expect to get there when they are stuck in decades-old notions of adding more vehicle lanes to reduce congestion?

This obsession with congestion is not compatible with TxDOT's commitment to end all traffic-related fatalities by 2050. Designing for higher speeds (that is, reducing congestion) does not equate to safer streets. For our communities to be safer, healthier places to live, cities must be able to reconfigure streets to make it easier to walk, bike and take transit. TxDOT's takeover of Broadway Street has serious ramifications for our other Texas communities with state roads in serious need of a redesign to prioritize people's safety, such as Westheimer in Houston or Mesa Street in El Paso.

TxDOT's obsession with congestion contributes to more people being killed on our roads. It contributes to our cities having some of the highest ozone levels and motor vehicle emissions in the country. It contributes to my neighbors and their children developing asthma and damage to their developing brains, lungs, hearts, and circulatory systems.

I urge TxDOT and TTC commissioners to stop this obsession with congestion, to stop impeding progress. Texans everywhere can live safer, healthier lives if TxDOT were an active partner in cities' and counties' efforts to build dynamic transportation systems.