



February 20, 2020

Members of the City of Houston Planning Commission,

Our organization, Air Alliance Houston, is a nonprofit working to reduce the public health impacts of air pollution in the Houston region. We believe everyone has a right to breathe clean air and where you live should not determine your health. As such, Air Alliance Houston would like to express its support for the proposed Walkable Places and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) amendments.

Shifting Houston away from its historic car-centric paradigm is an essential step in improving air quality in the Houston region. On-road mobile emissions account for an increasing percentage of the total air pollutants that plague Houstonians' health today. As the region grows, this problem will only worsen unless extensive changes are made to our city's development patterns.

Beyond immediate air quality impacts that affect health, mobile emissions are a main driver behind climate change. The City of Houston's Climate Action Plan (CAP) shows that transportation-related emissions account for ~47% of greenhouse gas emissions in Houston, with a vast majority of those coming from passenger vehicles. The CAP's policy proposals call for extensive expansions of the Walkable Places and TOD programs to help address these issues and get cars off the road.

Programs such as Walkable Places and TOD are key to making these changes and developing neighborhoods that will encourage infill growth, facilitate multi-modal transportation use, and create a more equitable transportation system for all Houstonians.

While we are encouraged by these proposed amendments and feel that they are a step in the right direction, Air Alliance Houston strongly urges the Planning Commission to consider expanding some of the more narrowly tailored restrictions on the TOD amendments. While accounting for existing land use is commendable, we are concerned that the amendments will not have the desired effect on influencing development patterns if the applicability is too restrictive. Furthermore, we ask the Planning Commission to consider extending the TOD program to high-use bus lines and future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines in the future. As METRO implements transit improvements under METRONext, the City must work in conjunction to ensure that the additions are viable and effective.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this public comment. I can be reached by email at harrison@airalliancehouston.org or by phone at 832-452-8617.

Respectfully,

Harrison Humphreys
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Air Alliance Houston