

North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) Health Impact Assessment

Aldine/Greenspoint Recommendations

CONCERN	IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Student Health	<p>The Aldine schools currently have the highest Vehicle Miles Travelled/square mile of any public school in HISD or AISD: 142,938 compared with the HISD/AISD average of 10,124.</p> <p>The expansion would double the width of the highway in some areas and add several more lanes, bringing at least 26 existing school campuses within 500 feet of the freeway.</p> <p>The increased volume of traffic anticipated will introduce more air and noise pollutants into the communities near the highway. These pollutants are linked to poorer student and community health (exacerbating heart disease, respiratory diseases like asthma, and cognitive function), causing more sick days from work and school, reduced academic performance, shorter lifespans, and lower quality of life. Furthermore, a number of traffic-related air pollutants – such as diesel particulate matter, benzene, 1,3 butadiene, and formaldehyde – are known to cause cancer.</p> <p>Asthma rates on the Aldine campus currently range from 4% to more than 6%, far exceeding the AISD/HISD average of 3.3%.</p> <p>Children attending schools near high traffic areas are some of the most exposed and vulnerable populations to traffic-related pollution due to their developing brain, lungs, heart, and circulatory systems. They receive even more exposure if they're active outside during high traffic times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Request that TxDOT fund sidewalks and the planting of street trees along the borders of the lots facing I-45 and along major streets within 500 ft of the freeway. – Request that TxDOT locate construction staging areas at least 500 ft from sensitive uses like schools, senior living, residences, and health care facilities. Encourage the use of low and zero-emission equipment and dust control during construction. – Request that TxDOT provide funding for the installation of air monitors at sensitive receptors like schools, parks, and playgrounds during and after project completion. – Request that schools implement “No-Idle Zones” around campus for carpools, school buses, and deliveries. – Request that TxDOT provide funding for the ongoing installation of HEPA (high efficiency) filters within buildings with sensitive occupants (such as schools, senior living, homes, and health care facilities) located within 500 ft of the freeway.
Environmental Justice	<p>Poverty rates along the freeway expansion in Aldine/Greenspoint are higher than the Houston average (11.6%, compared with 6.8% across the city).</p> <p>72.6% of residents near the Aldine campus identify as Hispanic, compared with 44.5% in Houston.</p> <p>Of the three segments, the affluent Segment 3 (Downtown) shows considerable differences in strategies for improving the project than the two segments north of I-10 in spite of the fact that negative impacts of the highway could disproportionately fall on low-income communities of color.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage TxDOT to work with the City of Houston and community organizations to improve the amenities provided along the northern segments of the project to mirror the investment going into Downtown.
Community Safety	<p>46% of Aldine 9th Graders walk to school, including a significant portion who must pass under I-45 and cross the dangerous intersection at I-45 and West Rd. to reach the campus. 56 pedestrian and bicycle crashes have occurred within a ½ mile of school since 2010, many of them at the West Rd/I-45 intersection and at the West Rd/Airline Dr intersection, both of which fall on preferred pedestrian routes to school. Furthermore, the carpool lane for Aldine 9th spills over into the highway feeder road. And, no school zone has been designated for any of the schools on the campus. The NHHIP design will increase the width of the freeway and the speed of cars traveling down the access road, increasing safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>The expansion will construct more impermeable concrete surfaces, which could increase flood risk and the urban heat island effect. The Aldine campus currently sits in both the 100-year and 500-year FEMA floodplain and is ranked among the top 20 percent of areas in Houston that are most likely to experience dangerous urban heat island effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Request that the Houston-Galveston Area Council provide more funding for transit and active transportation projects; remove the caps on funding for Alternative Mode and Air Quality projects; and, prioritize projects serving disadvantaged communities. – Request the Aldine ISD implement school zones in portions of streets with heavy pedestrian traffic. – Engage with METRO to support and provide feedback on the METRONext Plan and encourage fellow community members to vote in the upcoming bond elections to authorize funding for the expansions. – Request that TxDOT comply with the Harris County Flood Control design standard of 500-year flood events, rather than 100-year flood events and include parks, green spaces, and tree canopy in the NHHIP plan to increase permeable surfaces and encourage physical activity.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

There is still time to provide further input on the project! The best way to do so is to directly speak to your local officials. Here is a list of people to contact and events to attend for your community. Use the information from this flyer as talking points to frame your concerns.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Houston Mayor

Sylvester Turner: 713.837.0311 | mayor@houstontx.gov

Harris County Commissioners

Rodney Ellis, Precinct 1: (713) 274-1000

Adrian Garcia, Precinct 2: (713) 755-6220

Lina Hidalgo, County Judge: (713) 274-7000

District B City Council Member

Jerry Davis: 832.393.3009 | districtb@houstontx.gov,
City Hall Annex, 900 Bagby, First Floor, Houston, 77002

At-Large City Council Members

Mike Knox: 832.393.3014 | atlarge1@houstontx.gov

David Robinson: 832.393.3013 | atlarge2@houstontx.gov

Michael Kubosh: 832.393.3005 | atlarge3@houstontx.gov

Amanda Edwards: 832.393.3012 | atlarge4@houstontx.gov

Jack Christie: 832.393.3017 | atlarge5@houstontx.gov

SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Aldine ISD Superintendent

Dr. LaTonya Goffney: @drgoffney (Twitter)

Houston ISD Trustees

District I, Elizabeth Santos: Elizabeth.Santos@houstonisd.org

District II, Rhonda Skillern-Jones: rskille2@houstonisd.org

Aldine ISD School Board President

Steve Mead: smead@board.aldineisd.org

State Board of Education, District 4

Mr. Lawrence A. Allen Jr.:

713-203-1355 | sboesupport@tea.texas.gov

OTHER

Harris County Public Health Executive Director, Umair Shah:
(713) 439-6016 | Umair.Shah@phs.hctx.net, @ushahmd (Twitter)

Houston-Galveston Area Council Director of Transportation Planning, Alan Clark:
Alan.Clark@h-gac.com | PublicComments@h-gac.com

METRO Next: <http://www.metronext.org/>

Submit a comment: <https://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/METRONext.aspx>

State Senator, District 6 Carol Alvarado:

512-463-0106 | carol.alvarado@house.texas.gov

State Representative Armando Walle:

512-463-0924 | Armando.Walle@house.texas.gov

State Representative Senfronia Thompson:

512-463-0720 | Senfronia.Thompson@house.texas.gov

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

If you are concerned about being displaced due to the expansion, please contact the following resources:

LONE STAR LEGAL AID

Kimberly Brown: 713-652-0077 | KBrown@lonestarlegal.org
www.lonestarlegal.org

TEXAS HOUSERS

Sophie Dulberg: 346-291-6262 | sophie+i45@texashousing.org
<https://texashousers.net>

EVENTS

Houston City Council Public Comment Sessions (Every Tuesday 1:30 PM; Schedule: www.houstontx.gov/citysec/calendar.pdf)

2nd floor of City Hall, 901 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002. Sign up to speak: 832.393.1100, citysecretary@houstontx.gov, or by coming by the office.

City Council Transportation, Technology, and Infrastructure Committee Meetings (April 4th; May 2nd | Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

City Hall Council Chambers, 901 Bagby, Houston 77002. Schedule: <http://www.houstontx.gov/council/committees/tti.html>

Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation Policy Council (April 5th | 9:30 AM)

TxDOT Houston District Auditorium, 7600 Washington Ave, Houston, TX 77002. Schedule: <http://www.h-gac.com/transportation-policy-council/>

Harris County Commissioner's Court (Tuesday, April 9th, 10:00 AM; Schedule: <https://agenda.harriscountytexas.gov/>)

1001 Preston Street, Suite 934, Houston, TX 77002. Request an appearance: <https://appearancerequest.harriscountytexas.gov/>.

Houston ISD Board Meetings (Thursday, April 11th, 5:00 PM)

Board Auditorium, Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center; 4400 W 18th St, Houston, TX 77092. Sign up in advance to speak: www.houstonisd.org/Page/32478.

Aldine ISD Board Meeting (Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 PM)

Donaldson Administration Building, 2520 W. W. Thorne Blvd, Houston, TX 77073. Trustees allow three minutes for each public comment.

Texas Transportation (TX DOT) Commission Meeting (Thursday, April 25, 9:00 AM)

125 East 11th St, Austin, TX 78701. Sign up to speak: 512-305-9509; <https://www.txdot.gov/contact-us/form.html?id=transcom-email>

Air Alliance Houston believes everyone has a right to breathe clean air and where you live, work, learn, and play should not determine your health. Learn more: <http://airalliancehouston.org>. 713.528.3779.

