



Good morning committee members, staff. My name is Harrison Humphreys and I work for Air Alliance Houston. I'll be commenting on the region's funding priorities for the next year.

There's been extensive discussion of funding allocations recently, as we approach a new TIP cycle and staff develops call for projects criteria. Concurrently, it seems most everyone in the region and state is preparing for opportunities to use the incoming federal funds from the recent legislation. Our organization appreciates the vigor of the conversations on regional priorities up to this point, and are excited by the possibilities of what can be accomplished with these infrastructure dollars.

That being said, I'd like to remind the TPC that these federal infrastructure funds now come with explicit guidance to use these funds on projects that will address issues like safety, climate change, and environmental injustice. The Federal Highway Administration released a memo in December outlining how these funds are intended to be used, stating (quote) "prioritizing the repair, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and maintenance of *existing* transportation infrastructure, especially the incorporation of safety, accessibility, multimodal, and resilience features" (end quote). The memo explicitly highlights that projects receiving federal funding should "address environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions"; "improve safety for all road users; and "reconnect communities divided by previous infrastructure projects." In addition to these goals, the memo specifically warns against pursuing general lane expansion projects. Air Alliance Houston appreciates the guidance on this issue in particular; we've all seen this design strategy employed time and time again and fail to produce adequate results while simultaneously harming communities.

Beyond adapting to federal guidelines, though, the TPC must implement policy changes as good stewards of the region. Climate change will continue battering our region, and it will only get worse as we continue to miss emissions targets. A recent report released by our state climatologist explains that the average annual temperature in Texas will climb to unsustainable levels through the next twenty years. The number of 100-degree days is expected to nearly double compared with the last two decades. By 2036, we can expect massive heatwaves, enhanced droughts, larger hurricanes, all of which will strain our infrastructure beyond its limits. Our region can expect to feel the full brunt of these impacts if we do not begin addressing climate change now.

While improving safety is an explicit goal within the H-GAC's Regional Transportation Plan, mitigating climate change and remediating transportation inequities are not. Furthermore, despite safety being a goal in nearly every H-GAC planning document produced, the TPC has consistently failed to implement policy to achieve safety improvements, as we see our regional

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safety targets exceeded annually. This is all to say that meeting federal guidance and doing the necessary work of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving public health and safety will require *actual* changes in planning and policy, in everything from long-term goals in the RTP to project scoring for Call for projects. To that end, Air Alliance Houston calls on the TPC to implement policies that reflect these urgent issues. To begin, climate change mitigation must become a regional goal within the RTP. As we move towards TIP development, we urge HGAC to develop carbon emissions scoring criteria that will value projects that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled.

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