



Freight Rail Merger Survey Responses

Survey Dates: 10/4/22 to 10/14/22

Total Responses: 119

Zip codes with the most responses:

- 77003 (Second Ward/East End)
- 77009 (Near Northside)
- 77023 (Eastwood/East End)
- 77026 (Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens/Near Northside)
- 77020 (Fifth Ward)

These zip codes account for 55 out of 119 responses (46.2%)

Concerns: (Choose 3) What are your top concerns regarding the rail merger?

The most frequent concern was traffic delays, which includes emergency service delays, followed by emissions, ped/bike safety, and derailment. Noise was unfortunately missed on our list but was a frequently cited concern during many of our conversations with residents and in the Other section of the survey. There was also one comment regarding flooding stated as another concern.

| Options | Total Responses | Percent |
|---|-----------------|---------|
| Traffic delays (commutes, emergency services, evacuation) | 100 | 84% |
| More emissions | 70 | 59% |
| Pedestrian and bicyclist safety | 67 | 56% |
| Possibility for derailment and spills | 64 | 54% |
| Wear and tear on existing infrastructure | 34 | 29% |
| Other: Please specify | 8 | 7% |

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air.

a: 2520 Caroline Street, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77004 | p: 713.528.3779 | w: airalliancehouston.org

Mitigation: (Choose 5) The federal government can require the railroad companies in the merger to provide funding or plans to mitigate their impacts to communities. What specific mitigation would you like to see?

Funding planning, design and construction of alternate routes for drivers, cyclists and peds was the most chosen selection, closely followed by improving at-grade crossings/creating elevated crossings in high-traffic areas. Other mitigation options that received more than 50% of the responses included air monitor funding/install/maintenance; air filters for schools, healthcare facilities and public buildings; and training for city/county fire departments to respond to potential chemical spills.

| Options | Total Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------------|---------|
| Improve alternative traffic routes for all road users | 81 | 68% |
| Improve at-grade crossings, elevate crossings | 76 | 64% |
| Fund air monitoring equipment | 68 | 57% |
| Fund air filtration in schools, healthcare facilities and public buildings | 65 | 55% |
| Fund chemical spill response training | 59 | 50% |
| Improve monitoring of stalled trains | 57 | 48% |
| Fund air filtration systems in homes | 53 | 45% |
| Develop a fund for asthma-related health issues | 37 | 31% |
| Fund chemical spill transport emergency response training | 36 | 30% |
| Add visual warnings to improve warning signals | 26 | 22% |

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air.

a: 2520 Caroline Street, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77004 | p: 713.528.3779 | w: airalliancehouston.org

Other Ideas: Do you have any other ideas to help reduce the impacts of the rail merger?

1. Noise
 - 1.1. Create “quiet zones” in neighborhoods affected where conductors are not allowed to blow whistles to maintain or improve quality of life.
 - 1.2. Poll communities about noise pollution and proactively, where desired, create more quiet zones
 - 1.3. Fund the implementation of quiet zones
 - 1.4. Limit use of train horns.
 - 1.5. Reduce the noise at night. Trains run 24/7 and 2nd Ward is primarily a residential neighborhood and the conductors blare the horns for long periods of time between midnight- 5am when most people are sleeping
 - 1.6. Sound levels in these brown and black communities are too loud. These sounds are also blasted during the night hours. It is annoying that it seems it’s done purposely and with a racial power trip manner.
2. Route
 - 2.1. Take freight out of the city! And turn that rail into a commuter rail with a walking/biking path next to it! But also we need corporate responsibility for these communities that are being impacted by freight train pollution!
3. Traffic delay and safety
 - 3.1. There need to be specific windows during the day when it’s unacceptable for trains to cross through the city. We’re stopped during rush hours in the morning and afternoon every day sometimes for more than 30 minutes with no notice. I’ve seen emergency vehicles stuck behind trains multiple times. I’ve also come across completely dysfunctional train stops where the arms don’t come down and the lights are perpetually down. All train crossings should be elevated stops so that pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers do not have to directly encounter them.
 - 3.2. [TRAFFIC] Install AI or other tech to send alerts and reroute maps to traffic stopped at rail-crossings
 - 3.3. address existing issues caused by stalled trains before making an already difficult situation worse - insufficient alternate routes, delays for emergency services, pollution from idling cars, lack of safe pedestrian crossings
 - 3.4. These types of projects should consider the neighborhood they are passing through, if an overpass or underpass is considered, it should take into account the neighborhood's character, historic fabric and the impact

[Everyone has a right to breathe clean air.](#)

[a: 2520 Caroline Street, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77004](mailto:2520CarolineStreet,Suite100,Houston,TX77004) | [p: 713.528.3779](tel:713.528.3779) | [w: airalliancehouston.org](http://w:airalliancehouston.org)

this may create. In addition, these infrastructure projects should consider multiple uses, for example any overpass should be visualized to accommodate vehicles, bikes, pedestrians so that more than one issue is addressed.

- 3.5. In the past, an elevated crossing over the rail tracks was not allowed; this will change for all locations?
- 3.6. Build a bridge over the train track so cars won't have to wait until the train passes!
- 3.7. Having a set schedule for the trains and making the information easily available through a website.
- 3.8. Keep those trains from blocking traffic and school buses
4. Signage
 - 4.1. Digital signs at crossing notifying commuters of the approximate time of blockage and alternate routes
 - 4.2. Multilingual signage, community education as to the effects of trains to the environment
5. Chemical safety
 - 5.1. [CHEMICALS] Fund legislation/ordinance changes to ensure First Responders are told what's on a site before they enter it. They currently are not aware in the event of a disaster
6. Labor
 - 6.1. Agree to Union requests about staffing
7. Engagement
 - 7.1. Stay engaged with community leaders and community meetings
 - 7.2. Find out what communities are most impacted and provide needed funding to assist and offset the impact of these trains
 - 7.3. My hope is that they listen to our concerns and make necessary changes for the community of Houston. Especially around the low income brown and black communities who usually live within walking distance of these trains.
8. General comments
 - 8.1. Trains are a necessary part of our transportation system especially as we move to take more cars off the road. It's not the train itself that's bad, it's the lack of regulation.
 - 8.2. Agree with the options and focus on design AND funding requests on the front end of this potential merger.
 - 8.3. Many people walk alone and impact to pedestrian life; concern of pollution
 - 8.4. Limit trains, renewable energy

[Everyone has a right to breathe clean air.](#)

[a: 2520 Caroline Street, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77004](mailto:2520CarolineStreet@airalliancehouston.org) | [p: 713.528.3779](tel:713.528.3779) | w: airalliancehouston.org

- 8.5. No trains sitting in our burdened communities with hazardous waste on the railroad tracks
- 9. Oppose rail merger period:
 - 9.1. I oppose this rail merger. No more trains!
 - 9.2. Don't merge at all! The community is already suffering!
 - 9.3. Don't do it?

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air.

a: 2520 Caroline Street, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77004 | p: 713.528.3779 | w: airalliancehouston.org