

# SUPERNEIGHBORHOOD 22

## WASHINGTON AVENUE COALITION - MEMORIAL PARK

December 12, 2013

To: Director of Project Development, Texas Department of Transportation

The Washington Avenue Coalition Memorial Park Super Neighborhood Council (SN22) submits the following comments in response to TxDOT's IH45 expansion plans.

The "alternatives" as presented are not truly alternatives at all. They are simply variations on the same failed concept of attempting to remedy congestion with roadway expansion. True alternatives would include options that incorporate methods with potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled, actually decrease vehicular traffic volume, improve safety for all roadway users, and focus on moving people instead of accommodating their personal automobiles.

TxDOT must stop acting as a highway department mired in mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century thinking and begin functioning as an innovative agency that more equitably and wisely invests taxpayer funds in multi-modal transportation options that will better serve the needs of the future population. Expansion plans catering to facilitation of vehicular movement for suburban commuters and through traffic to the detriment of quality of place and life in the urban core are no longer acceptable.

TxDOT, it appears, has ignored sustainable highway practice and failed to include livability initiatives as supported by the Federal Highway Administration. We encourage TxDOT to look to the success of other major cities where urban centers are being revitalized through the abandonment and elimination of intrusive roadway structures.

As we work to accommodate increased density in urban Houston and endeavor to make urban living more appealing for the growing number of people who choose to minimize their commutes and lessen automobile dependency, it is counterproductive and environmentally unjust to add visual, noise, and air pollution sources to those core areas by constructing ever wider and higher roadway elevations, flyovers, or interchanges.

The public has not been presented with adequate details to make valid and informed decisions on any of the presented variations. No connector flyovers, interchange designs, or 3D renderings to illustrate the full impact of the expansion have been presented. Section cuts included are not sufficient to represent all impacted areas. This is of immediate concern to SN22, which is bordered by the IH45 expansion project.

All publicly preferred options for Segment 3 have been eliminated, discounted, or changed, and the newly presented replacements have not been adequately vetted. To further inform affected community stakeholders and act on to their concerns, the SN22 Council urges TxDOT to hold an additional public meeting prior to moving the design process forward.

Additionally, SN22 supports the recommendations of the I-45 Coalition, and with respect for social and environmental justice, requests that TxDOT assure that it's decisions reflect the desires of the stakeholders immediately impacted by the results.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,



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SN22 Council President  
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Copies to:  
State Representative, Jessica Farrar  
State Senator, John Whitmire  
Houston City Council Member, Ellen Cohen  
Houston City Council Member, Ed Gonzalez  
I-45 Coalition, Jim Weston  
Citizens' Transportation Coalition, Dexter Handy