



CAROL ALVARADO

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 6

May 5, 2020

Commissioner Laura Ryan
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th St.
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Ryan:

Thank you for your extensive participation in the oversight of the proposed North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). Over the years, I have heard from concerned residents and organizations in my district about this project. The proposed NHHIP project is important to this region, as it will have a significant impact on the adjacent communities and on our region as a whole with respect to flood control and air quality.

I have been closely monitoring the work of the City of Houston's (COH) Planning Department, including the community engagement process the city initiated one year ago. My staff and I have attended meetings conducted in my district and were impressed at the unprecedented levels of community participation. Thank you for sending TxDOT personnel to attend these meetings and for TxDOT's participation in Mayor Turner's evaluation process.

I understand the COH has developed a vision that would significantly improve the IH-45 corridor while keeping the infrastructure within its current footprint. The guiding principles are contained in "Vision C" and its basic principles are articulated in the attached document from the COH's Planning Department on April 13th. I believe that this new alternative offers the best path forward for Houston and our region. I support an alternative that conclusively delivers these improvements to communities who live along the entirety of the project:

- Allows residents and businesses to remain in place by minimizing displacement;
- Protects historical and cultural sites identified by community residents;
- Erects two direction transit lanes;
- Installs BRT stations along the route of I-45;
- Brings IH-45 North up to current safety design standards;
- Designs two-lane frontage roads as city streets;
- Improves drainage on Little White Oak and Halls Bayous;
- Substantially mitigates flooding in Independence Heights;
- Saves costs to taxpayers; and
- Improves bicycle and pedestrian safety, especially at crossings over and under I-45.

As communicated to TxDOT in prior communications, many more details require resolution before this project should proceed. These considerations include:

- Details on intersection designs where feeder roads cross city streets to ensure safety for all road users.
- Areas and exact locations where sound barriers should be installed.
- Impacts on public parks and greenways, especially the greenway along White Oak Bayou.
- Air quality mitigation measures at the many schools in close proximity to I-45.
- Measures to ensure that water quality from highway trash and debris do not pollute Houston's bayous and storm water systems.

Thank you for your personal involvement in moving the NHHIP in a more positive direction. I believe that if this project is to proceed, a new vision that remains within the footprint of the existing highway, will be better suited for my constituents and the region. I stand ready to work with you and others at TxDOT to continue to improve this project.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if we can be of service to you in this matter.

Sincerely,



Carol Alvarado
State Senator, District 6

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