



December 9, 2020

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Texas Department of Transportation
Attention: Director of Project Development
PO Box 1386
Houston, TX 77251

RE: Public Comment Regarding Final Environmental Impact Statement on the
North Houston Highway Improvement Project

Dear Texas Department of Transportation,

Thank you for extending the comment period for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). The East End District encompasses sixteen square miles east of downtown to Port of Houston and includes approximately 75,000 residents and 3,500 businesses. As the NHHIP borders the District's western boundary, there is particular sensitivity to unintended consequences impacting thousands of residents and businesses.

As the management and business improvement district for the area, we want to express significant concern regarding the lack of planning for neighborhood impacts with the construction of the new highway. Specifically, mobility planning to allow for travel east to west between downtown from the East End. The District is concerned that the proposed street closures and changes to dead end streets (e.g. Nance, Runnels) coupled with dependence on street solutions with active freight rail (Commerce) are untenable for the movement of residents between neighborhoods. Of note, additional streets that could offer access (Canal and Preston) already dead end and do not offer current or planned access to Houston's downtown central business district. While access to downtown is critical for business and commerce, this access is also key for evacuation purposes as northbound access to Highway 59 requires connections to downtown Houston. When additional closures are put side-by-side with the removal of the Pierce Elevated and additional access restriction to downtown and midtown, it appears that the impact on this largely Hispanic low-income area is being diminished and overlooked.

We understand the process for the NHHIP is long and arduous and appreciate the opportunity for improvement. Our highway planning process should evolve from providing for response to minimum regulatory requirements, to a process that plans for the future of all of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Veronica Chapa Gorczynski".

Veronica Chapa Gorczynski