

1 City of Houston, alternate voting member.

2 **MR. MILLICAN:** Larry Millican, City of  
3 League City, voting member.

4 **MR. MANN:** Bruce Mann, Port Houston,  
5 non-voting member.

6 **MR. BROWN:** Craig Brown, city council  
7 member Galveston, voting member.

8 **MR. ALLEN:** Quincy Allen, TxDOT, voting  
9 member.

10 **MS. RYAN:** Laura Ryan, Texas  
11 Transportation Commission, non-voting.

12 **MR. REID:** Tom Reid, Mayor of City of  
13 Pearland, voting member.

14 **MR. ROBINSON:** David Robinson, Houston  
15 City Council, voting member.

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I'm Ken Clark, county  
17 commissioner of Galveston, voting member.

18 What we're going to do now is, without  
19 objection, I would like to move Item 8 up and Item 9.  
20 We'll take Item 8 first.

21 We have three color comment cards. We are  
22 going to take Approval of Resolution Affirming Funding  
23 for Partnership of Segment 2 of the North Houston  
24 Highway Improvement Program and Mitigation of Adverse  
25 Community Impacts. We'll take that first.

1                   What we're going to do is, we're going to  
2 hear the presentation from TxDOT. And then we will open  
3 it up to public comment on this issue.

4                   Alan, what color card do they need to fill  
5 out if they're going to comment on -- on Item Number 8?

6                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** The yellow comment card.

7                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** The yellow comment card.

8                   So if you would like to speak on this  
9 issue, please fill out a yellow comment card, which will  
10 be over here to my left, to your right. Fill one of  
11 those out. And we will get you in on public comment.  
12 And you'll have three minutes. Please avail yourself of  
13 that opportunity if you'd like to do that.

14                   And with that, I will open it up to Quincy  
15 Allen with TxDOT to introduce his presentation.

16                   **MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, Chairman Clark.

17                   At this time, I'd like to call on Patrick  
18 Gant, one of our engineering leads, to make the  
19 presentation.

20                   **MR. GANT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, TPC  
21 members.

22                   For the record, my name is Patrick Gant  
23 with the TxDOT Houston District. And I'll be presenting  
24 the action item for the request for MPO funding  
25 commitment on the North Houston Highway Improvement

1 Project, Segment 2 within the 2020 Unified  
2 Transportation Program.

3           So what is the Unified Transportation  
4 Program or UTP for short? The UTP is similar to  
5 planning documents that the MPO prepares, like the  
6 recently adopted 2045 Regional Transportation Plan,  
7 which is our long-range plan, as well as the short-range  
8 TIP.

9           The UTP is in between those two documents  
10 and is the statewide ten-year program. The UTP, through  
11 our Transportation Commission, allocates construction  
12 funding in to 12 funding categories. And this is  
13 significant in that this is the first planning document  
14 that combines transportation dollars with transportation  
15 projects, which authorizes TxDOT to go in to detailed  
16 engineering design. The draft 2020 UTP is currently out  
17 for public comment and will be adopted by the  
18 Transportation Commission at the August commission  
19 meeting.

20           So within the draft UTP, the commission is  
21 proposing to allocate a significant amount of the  
22 commission's discretionary, as well as the special Texas  
23 Clear Lanes' funds for the advancement of North Houston  
24 Highway Improvement Project Segment 2.

25           Now, this comes with a specific request

1 that the MPO participate in the funding for this  
2 project. And you can see on the screen that this  
3 request is for \$100 million to leverage a \$1.2 billion  
4 project.

5                   Drilling down to the specifics of  
6 Segment 2 itself, this is the three-mile segment of I-45  
7 from Loop 610 to I-10 just north of Downtown Houston.  
8 It also includes the reconstruction of the 610/45  
9 interchange.

10                   As you may recall, this existing  
11 interchange is one of the oldest interchanges on our  
12 system in our region. The project would alleviate some  
13 of the issues with the current interchange, such as the  
14 left-handed entrance and exit ramps and the deficient  
15 lengths of merging and sight distance within the  
16 interchange.

17                   Moving south from the interchange itself,  
18 the proposed plan would reconstruct 45 to upgrade the  
19 facility to current design standards. But it also  
20 includes the managed lanes. And the managed lanes that  
21 you can see on the screen here truly are the  
22 transit-oriented component of this project. The managed  
23 lanes would replace the existing reversible single-lane  
24 HOV lane with four managed lanes in the middle, two in  
25 each direction, non-tolled for 24/7 operation. You can

1 also see with this slide here that within Segment 2  
2 itself, there is the proposal in and around North Main  
3 to minimize the right-of-way footprint such that the  
4 frontage roads would be on structure above the main  
5 lanes.

6 Now, concerning Segment 2 specifically, I  
7 want to share with the TPC some feedback and concerns  
8 that TxDOT has received and how TxDOT is addressing  
9 these concerns.

10 So let me begin with safety. Safety is  
11 always paramount in what we do. Our current projections  
12 show a 30 percent reduction in the amount of crashes  
13 along the corridor. And within Segment 2, we're working  
14 to provide a safe facility for pedestrians, cyclists,  
15 and vehicles alike.

16 Turning to bike and ped, TxDOT has worked  
17 with the City of Houston to ingrate high-comfort  
18 elements into the bike and pedestrian realm within  
19 Segment 3 around Downtown Houston. And what we're  
20 proposing to do is extend that in to Segment 2 itself.

21 Concerning flooding, TxDOT is using the  
22 latest information from the three major flooding events  
23 that impacted our region -- the Tax Day, Memorial Day,  
24 and, of course, Harvey -- to calibrate our models and to  
25 begin our detailed hydraulic design. And this effort is

1 using the new rainfall intensity data from the Atlas 1,  
2 which is a nationwide initiative.

3 In addition, TxDOT is partnering with the  
4 Harris County Flood Control District and the City of  
5 Houston in studying the bayou network. This effort is  
6 looking into things like the North Canal along Buffalo  
7 Bayou. It could potentially lower the water shelter  
8 elevations upstream along White Oak Bayou, as well as  
9 Little White Oak Bayou.

10 Drilling down to Segment 2, we've already  
11 identified detention pond locations that are adjacent to  
12 45 and Little White Oak Bayou. And we'll be conducting  
13 additional hydraulic studies to size pipes and size  
14 culverts within the corridor to mitigate flooding  
15 concerns. Without the project, the existing aging  
16 infrastructure remains.

17 Concerning air quality, this is a key  
18 component of our region's air conformity determination.  
19 The proposed project reduces the time spent idling and  
20 works to reduce air emissions. I would like to point  
21 out that the transit elements that the managed lanes add  
22 to the project would reduce the -- the use of the  
23 single-occupancy vehicles in the corridor.

24 Directly concerning the schools,  
25 Houston -- or HISD is working with TxDOT on Jefferson

1 Elementary School, which is adjacent to the 45 corridor.  
2 We're working to consider a mitigation strategy, such as  
3 the implementation of HEPA air filters, vegetative  
4 screens, and sealing windows at the school itself.  
5 TxDOT is also going to work with HISD on the potential  
6 for a pilot program for electric buses and/or natural  
7 gas buses.

8           And, again, working with the schools  
9 directly will aim to limit the disruptions during the  
10 statewide testing at those schools.

11           Turning to displacements, Segment 2 is  
12 showing significantly reduced footprint, but,  
13 unfortunately, there are displacements with the project,  
14 primarily near the I-610 interchange.

15           Acquisition of real property and damages  
16 would follow federal and state guidelines with the  
17 intention to get people whole again. In addition to  
18 that, TxDOT has a relocation assistance program for  
19 owners, renters, and lessees that pays for relocation  
20 costs and reestablishment costs.

21           Noise. TxDOT is currently out in the  
22 community conducting special noise meetings to gather  
23 feedback. We're presenting strategies for noise walls,  
24 as well as aesthetic walls potentially that could not --  
25 or not necessarily noise walls in general. But TxDOT is

1 also committing to the use of longitudinal tining on the  
2 concrete pavement itself. That's been shown to reduce  
3 the noise that emanates from the tire-pavement  
4 interaction.

5 And, finally, turning to access, we've  
6 minimized the footprint of Segment 2 so much so that you  
7 saw in our -- our slide before that the -- we were not  
8 able to put in ramps to the North Main area with the  
9 proposed project. But through dialogue with the  
10 community, we're seeing that if we can fit those  
11 additional access ramps in, then this needs additional  
12 study.

13 So moving forward, TxDOT is committed to  
14 community engagement. And over the next several weeks,  
15 TxDOT will be conducting more community-focused meetings  
16 to increase that dialogue. These comments will be  
17 incorporated in the final Environmental Impact  
18 Statement. And as we move forward into more detailed  
19 engineering design, we'll be better able to address  
20 specific issues and make changes.

21 TPC funding action today would not  
22 preclude changes from being incorporated in to  
23 Segment 2, but would rather provide the firm foundation  
24 for TxDOT to continue that engineering and design.

25 So with that --

1                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Mr. Chairman, if I may,  
2 I'll just briefly summarize the action we've proposed  
3 before the policy council. And then we'll invite public  
4 comment for the benefit of your discussion.

5                   So today for this item, you have before  
6 you Resolution 2019-19. There are several components to  
7 this. So I wanted to make -- make sure it was clear  
8 what we were asking you to consider.

9                   It begins by recognizing both the  
10 importance of this project, but the importance of the  
11 concerns that have been raised during the environmental  
12 process that you've heard described by Patrick and heard  
13 Patrick describe some of the current and ongoing  
14 activities to determine better ways to mitigate those.

15                  Patrick also mentioned something that we  
16 are -- is one of the bullet points in our resolution,  
17 which is, in some cases, to fully identify what can be  
18 done, exactly what mitigation is possible, and to what  
19 extent the concerns can be addressed.

20                  TxDOT needs the ability to move this  
21 project forward into the next phase of work, which often  
22 involves -- which involved -- would involve, among other  
23 things, being able to develop detailed design plans  
24 and -- and drawings.

25                  And then it affirms our interest in

1 developing a community-based plan in -- within this  
2 segment so that we can also, in addition, supplement the  
3 work that TxDOT is now doing and have a process working  
4 with the City of Houston, Harris County, with METRO, and  
5 with those communities to sort of look at it from their  
6 side. What are the priorities, steps and measures which  
7 could be taken to best mitigate any adverse impact to  
8 their communities and pre- -- and -- and try to  
9 improve -- preserve and improve the cohesion of them?

10 Third, we have a recommendation for a  
11 reserve of funding for additional mitigation activities.  
12 So in short, our resolution would commit \$100 million to  
13 the Texas Department of Transportation of funds that  
14 have been sub-allocated to our area for projects on the  
15 state system to advance Segment 2, to authorize  
16 one-and-a-half-million dollars in planning activity to  
17 continue to support the ongoing dialogue with the  
18 communities and identify priorities for additional  
19 mitigation, and then if needed, a reserve of \$50 million  
20 to help to partner with TxDOT to help advance some of  
21 those mitigation measures.

22 Why are we suggesting reserving some  
23 funding? Because we are early in the process of  
24 identifying the specific mitigation measures. Some of  
25 them may not be on system roads. Some of them may be

1 not necessarily as related to a direct impact to the  
2 project, but still very important to that community and  
3 a way to help mitigate its impacts on them.

4 So that is the essence of our  
5 recommendation to you in the resolution before you,  
6 which was considered by the Technical Advisory Committee  
7 this month and passed by them as a recommendation to  
8 you.

9 So with that, Mr. Chairman, I believe we  
10 are ready to invite those who have signed up to speak to  
11 the committee this morning and provide their public  
12 comment.

13 **MR. ADRIAN GARCIA:** Mr. Chairman, Adrian  
14 Garcia. I just want the record to reflect that I'll be  
15 the voting alternate member for Harris County.

16 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** So, Mr. Chairman, if --  
17 with the pleasure of the committee, I will invite  
18 elected officials to speak first and then those who have  
19 signed up in the order they have signed up on our sheet.

20 **MR. MILLICAN:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to  
21 go ahead and -- and make a motion to approve the  
22 \$100 million and -- and move forward with Segment 2 of  
23 the project and delay the other activities because of  
24 the concern of identifying those projects with all the  
25 public comments that's going to be moving forward.

1                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** We have a motion. Is  
2 there a second?

3                   **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Second.

4                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** We have a motion and  
5 second.

6                   We're -- we're going -- we're going to go  
7 to public comment now. We're not voting on this yet.  
8 We've got a motion on the table. So now we'll go to  
9 public comment.

10                   (Inaudible crosstalk.)

11                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Can you clarify  
12 the motion, please?

13                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** The -- the motion --  
14 please, Mr. Millican, go ahead and clarify.

15                   **MR. MILLICAN:** Yeah. The motion on the  
16 floor is to approve the \$100 million for Segment 2 and  
17 to delay any action on the other items in the  
18 recommendation -- that would be Items Number 2, 3, and  
19 4 -- and delay any motion on those until after further  
20 discussion and investigation of those.

21                   **MS. PATMAN:** Point of order --

22                   (Inaudible crosstalk.)

23                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Please, please. We're  
24 going to -- we're going to start public comment. And  
25 then after public comment, we'll have -- we'll have

1 further discussion on this item.

2 We have a motion and second on the floor.

3 We'll be able to amend it. We'll be able to change it.

4 So let's go ahead and move forward with public comment.

5 Yes?

6 **MS. PATMAN:** Mr. Chair --

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Chairman --

8 **MS. PATMAN:** -- is it appropriate for the  
9 motion to be made before we've had public comment?

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Exactly.

11 **MS. PATMAN:** You know, I just wonder if  
12 this -- I'm just raising a point of order. And I am not  
13 a parliamentarian, so I don't know the answer. But I'm  
14 surprised that a motion has been made that's contrary to  
15 the way of what I think the public comment is going to  
16 be before we've even considered the public comment.

17 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

18 **MR. GARCIA:** Mr. Chairman, that would be  
19 my -- my concern as well. Typically, we hear public  
20 comment before we take any action from the --

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Exactly.

22 **MR. GARCIA:** -- from the board.

23 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** And, Mr. Chairman, I'm  
24 here patiently, but I do want to make -- make sure. I  
25 would like to offer a substitute motion. So I would

1 like the opportunity to offer my substitute motion  
2 before we vote on this motion. And I would like to wait  
3 until public comment is made before I offer my  
4 substitute motion. But I just don't want to be  
5 railroaded on this or --

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Nobody is going to  
7 get railroaded.

8 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Go ahead, Alan.

10 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** First, I'd like to invite  
11 council member Dwight Boykins.

12 **MR. BOYKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
13 Uh-oh.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the  
15 board, thank you so much. Under Mayor Annise Parker, I  
16 had an opportunity to serve as a voting member on this  
17 commission, one of the best experiences I've had serving  
18 as a public servant, having an opportunity to talk about  
19 regional transportation needs throughout our city and  
20 our state. I learned a lot. I also learned it was  
21 important that we worked very closely with the areas  
22 that will be impacted by the decisions we made.

23 Chairman Clark, let me tell you, I have  
24 known you for a while. You have always, always been a  
25 person of reason, a person that care about the community

1 up in the Galve- -- I mean, the Galveston area. And I  
2 know that you're going to do what's right.

3 In my district, this Segment 2 will have a  
4 major, major impact on the businesses and the residents  
5 of my community. I know Tomaro Bell will be speaking in  
6 just a few minutes. But there is a -- just an example,  
7 there is a dry cleaners that called me -- that's off of  
8 I-45 and Alemda called me, and the gentleman asked the  
9 question. He said, "Council Member, I have a five-year  
10 two op- -- two renewal option lease contract remaining.  
11 Am I obligated to pay the note?" I said, "Man, my  
12 advice is to get with your lawyer and see how you can  
13 work this thing out because I'm certain when you signed  
14 that contract, that wasn't in the deal that they were  
15 going to come in and take the property." My deputy  
16 chief of staff father's church is in the Kennedy Heights  
17 area, 114 years old, being told they have to be removed.

18 We -- I just think this thing here is --  
19 is -- is being rushed. I mean, the motion on the floor  
20 today pretty much dictated that they're trying to move  
21 this thing without going through the community.

22 What I ask you to do, Mr. Chairman and  
23 board members, consider this, not delaying it, but let's  
24 withdraw it and start over with the design team and make  
25 certain the design team have an opportunity to -- make

1 certain that the design team have an opportunity to get  
2 on the bus and ride the proposed area so they could  
3 physically see and not make a decision in this room, the  
4 impact it would have on the communities.

5 In the Kennedy Heights area, I found it  
6 very interesting, the black and brown side of the  
7 community is what's being impacted to the other side,  
8 Mr. Chairman. And I would encourage you to go and take  
9 a look at it. And whoever designed it -- I'm sure one  
10 of the best engineering firms in -- in town and I will  
11 support the effort once it's done right -- apparently  
12 has not had the opportunity to go and look at the impact  
13 it's going to have on minority communities.

14 So I ask you -- and in -- and, again, in  
15 my district, it's having a drastic impact. As our city  
16 continue to grow, let me be clear about this. We have  
17 to address reasonable mobility because our city is  
18 growing. Everybody want to come here. It's a great  
19 city. But we want to be sensitive to the schools, to  
20 the businesses, to the local churches in our community,  
21 and just the community as a whole before we make this  
22 decision.

23 So my ask today would be that you withdraw  
24 this -- withdraw it, not delay it. Delaying it gives it  
25 an opportunity to come back at the same rate it was.

1 And I know you're talking about offering amendments --  
2 and go and take a look. Then come back with community  
3 input. That's my request, Mr. Chairman.

4 Thank you-all again for volunteering  
5 your -- I know y'all get paid a lot of money to sit  
6 around this table. But thank you so much for your  
7 volunteerism. And let's do what's right by -- by the  
8 people in this city. Thank you so much for allowing me  
9 to speak.

10 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

11 Next, we'll have Rhonda Jones with board  
12 of -- member of the Houston Independent School District.

13 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** And just so everybody  
14 knows, we've got a light here that shows green, yellow,  
15 and red for your three minutes. So please be cognizant  
16 of that.

17 **MS. SKILLERN-JONES:** Thank you for that.  
18 I'm not often on the -- this side having to be limited  
19 to three -- three minutes. So I'm going to try.

20 Good morning, members. Thank you for  
21 allowing me to have a bit of your time. Again, I'm  
22 Rhonda Skillern-Jones of the Houston Independent School  
23 District, but more importantly, I am a resident of the  
24 Northside that will be affected by this area. So it's  
25 not just constituency, but it's also my family and

1 friends and myself who are affected by this.

2 I am requesting strongly that you delay  
3 this vote until such time that TxDOT can pause to  
4 conduct reasonable studies to mitigate the  
5 disproportionate and adverse impact of this project on  
6 communities of color, residents in poverty, and most  
7 importantly our children.

8 The project -- to highlight the disparity  
9 and the impact of this environmental -- of the  
10 environmental justice of this project on the most  
11 vulnerable populations, since there was little to no  
12 inclusion on the design phase of the project with the  
13 community or the school district, the goal can now only  
14 be to mitigate the adverse impacts. The project  
15 requires 458 acres of new right-of-way to be taken by  
16 eminent domain. It removes 27 acres of open and green  
17 space in parks and Bayou Greenway. The project will  
18 displace 168 single-family homes, 1,067 multifamily home  
19 units, 368 low income in that number, and 60 homeless  
20 veteran homes. In addition, 331 businesses employing  
21 24,870 people will be displaced.

22 A few of these impacted residents and  
23 attendees were at the meetings that have been held. And  
24 they have not been engaged. The properties have been  
25 identified. They have not been notified. Their

1 landlords have. The current plan is to provide these  
2 households with only 90-day notice. Residents of means  
3 would be pressed to move in 90 days. Those in poverty  
4 cannot.

5 In particular, the removal of families in  
6 Clayton -- Clayton Homes and Kelly Village effect a  
7 higher-than-average poverty population, least able to  
8 afford housing disruption. The percentage of persons of  
9 color is much higher in these neighborhoods than Houston  
10 as a whole.

11 Of the three segments of the project, the  
12 affluent segment is what we call it, downtown area, has  
13 considerably different strategies in mitigating the  
14 effects of the project than the other two. The funding  
15 will likely also be inequitable. The result will be  
16 negative impacts of highway expansion disproportionately  
17 falling on low economic communities of color.

18 When questioning TxDOT's subcontractors,  
19 they could not answer the following questions: Who  
20 determines what meets the parameters for safe  
21 relocation, decent and sanitary? Does accessible to  
22 employment include their current employment or any  
23 employment? Will there be consideration for  
24 differentials in current market rental rates and what  
25 the residents now pay? For residents who have no

1 current deposits, will that be included in relocation  
2 costs? Will moving costs and utility transfer fees be  
3 covered? Will residents be able to choose new housing  
4 in the same geographic area proximity regardless of  
5 cost? They had no answers for that.

6 There was zero collaboration with the  
7 school district during the design phase of the project  
8 and little consultation regarding implementation. The  
9 project -- this project comes to the property line of  
10 two of our schools, the playground of one of them. That  
11 is disproportionately putting those children at risk for  
12 health, safety, and academics.

13 In those schools, they already have  
14 higher-than-average asthma because of the current  
15 traffic that moves through there. They will be  
16 disproportionately affected and exposed to higher risk  
17 of decreased cognitive function, reduced attendance,  
18 lower academic performance, more absentees, and less  
19 time outside for physical play. Displacing of children  
20 in these affected homes from their local schools will  
21 create mobility fallout. Research proves that when a  
22 student changes schools --

23 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Ms. Jones?

24 MS. SKILLERN-JONES: -- we adversely  
25 impact -- I'm sorry.

1                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Sorry. Your three  
2 minutes was about a minute ago.

3                   **MS. SKILLERN-JONES:** They are adversely  
4 impacted when snatched out of their schools in the  
5 middle of the year.

6                   Thank you.

7                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

8                   Next, I'd like to invite Dominic Mazoch.

9                   **MR. MAZOCH:** I know I have three minutes.  
10                   And at the end of the Great Storm of 1900  
11 on the Island of Galveston, they did something very  
12 amazing. They raised the island and under the watchful  
13 eye of Colonel Roberts, who also wrote Robert's Rules of  
14 Order, at the sea wall.

15                   I think there's a lesson that can be  
16 learned from this. We've had flooding with Carla and  
17 with the three hurricanes we've had in the past three  
18 years, much less a rainstorm.

19                   I think the problem is, we're going to  
20 have to build our infrastructure up whether we like it  
21 or not. I-45 needs to be open, whether we like it or  
22 not, for transportation at any time because we don't  
23 know when we're going to get hit with a hurricane or  
24 with a natural disaster or terrorism. It has to be  
25 open. However, who came up with this plan reminds me

1 of, who came up with this? Wile E. Coyote. I think  
2 this whole thing needs to be scratched and start over.

3 I've been on the high-capacity transit  
4 group of this organization. And one of the things I  
5 pushed on that -- and that -- that high-capacity -- the  
6 management of part of this high-capacity project for  
7 METRO, TxDOT, Houston-Galveston Area Council is that  
8 high-capacity transit has to be resilient for anything.  
9 And that includes the weather, and that includes any --  
10 any human-made disaster that could happen.

11 And the other thing is, I also have some  
12 worries about social justice. I live just north of  
13 there between a certain person wearing an Astros uniform  
14 and the North Shepherd Park & Ride lot. And so -- and  
15 I've watched this freeway being rebuilt. I mean, I saw  
16 this freeway being built 60 years ago. So I'm a native  
17 Houstonian.

18 This freeway is at the point it has to be  
19 replaced. I understand that. But the thing is, it  
20 seems like this group of people have been hit with three  
21 things -- three or four things. They're going to be hit  
22 with this. They were hit with the extension of the Red  
23 Line of METRO. They're now being hit with the Hardy  
24 Street extension. And, see, years ago, they widened 69.  
25 I mean, how -- how much can a community take?

1 I just think with all that's going on here  
2 and with all the stuff, particularly with flooding, we  
3 have to make our freeways bulletproof. Stop this, start  
4 over, have a clean sheet of paper, and do it right.

5 Thank you.

6 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Dominic.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next will be -- and I  
8 apologize for misspelling anyone's name. Bakeyah  
9 Nelson.

10 **DR. NELSON:** Good morning. Thank you for  
11 the opportunity to speak. My name is Dr. Bakeyah  
12 Nelson. I am the executive director of Air Alliance  
13 Houston. Air Alliance Houston believes everyone has the  
14 right to breathe clean air and where you live should not  
15 determine your health. I am here today to ask that  
16 members of the TPC delay the vote on the Agenda Item  
17 Number 8.

18 Houston now ranks ninth for ozone  
19 pollution, and the majority of our emissions are now  
20 from mobile sources. We are also leading the country  
21 with our greenhouse gas emissions. And this expansion  
22 will only facil- -- facilitate the perpetuation on cars  
23 as the dominant mode of travel for our region.

24 Yesterday, the City of Houston unveiled  
25 the first draft of its Climate Action Plan, which calls

1 for a 20 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled.  
2 Among a variety of other issues, this project undermines  
3 the ability for this city to achieve that goal.

4           There are multiple reasons why this vote  
5 should not move forward today as planned; however,  
6 today, I would like to focus on just two of those  
7 reasons.

8           Research studies have shown that children  
9 going to school within 500 feet of a high-traffic  
10 roadway have increased risks of asthma, impaired lung  
11 development, and childhood leukemia, among other  
12 illnesses. The expansion design would widen the highway  
13 width by as much as 70 percent in some areas, bringing  
14 at least 26 existing schools and daycare campuses within  
15 500 feet of the highway. Many of these schools along  
16 the I-45 corridor already have higher asthma rates  
17 compared to other schools in their districts.

18           We ask that you prioritize the health of  
19 children in this process and delay the vote until 2020  
20 to ensure that if this project moves forward, it can be  
21 resigned in such a way that it does not compromise the  
22 health of children at these campuses.

23           Second, it is troubling that our leaders  
24 exploit the rich diversity of our city by making  
25 decisions that minimize -- that minimize the humanity of

1 these same communities. I have heard the tag line used  
2 on many occasions that Houston is the most diverse city  
3 in the United States. However, these very same leaders  
4 turn their backs when it's time to stand up for these  
5 very same communities. Likewise, I often hear the  
6 phrase that some communities don't have a voice at the  
7 decision-making table. I think you all have heard the  
8 community loud and clear, but some have selective  
9 hearing.

10           Segments 1 and 2 of the expansion have a  
11 higher poverty rate and higher percentage of people of  
12 color than Segment 3. Coincidentally, these are the  
13 segments that will suffer the greatest cost with the  
14 least amount of benefits from the expansion, ranging  
15 from the destruction of their social networks to the  
16 loss of employment, along with the forced removal from  
17 their very own communities.

18           Today I ask you to consider how you would  
19 feel if one day the government came to your door and  
20 told you, you have to move from your home and your  
21 community. I ask today that you delay the vote to  
22 demonstrate that members of the TPC recognize that the  
23 diversity of our communities is much more than the  
24 selling point when convenient. These are real people  
25 with real lives that deserve what any one of you would

1 expect in the United States of America, the opportunity  
2 for your voice to be heard in the decisions that impact  
3 you and your community.

4 Again, I ask that you delay the vote.

5 Thank you.

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Dr. Nelson.

8 Next, I would invite Jeff Trevino.

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Who?

10 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Jeff Trevino.

11 **MR. TREVINO:** Wow, this is scary. My  
12 name is Jeff Trevino. I live in District H.

13 There's a -- there's a saying, "Anything  
14 that is important should not be rushed, and anything  
15 rushed is not important." Thank you for the opportunity  
16 today to express my thoughts and feelings about this  
17 project.

18 We have enough concrete already poured and  
19 ready to go running from north to south and then back  
20 again. We have a mostly vacant thoroughfare, the Hardy  
21 Toll Road, that is sitting there underutilized. If you  
22 don't believe me, I invite -- invite all of you to take  
23 a little field trip. Go see for yourself. Check out  
24 the traffic during these peak travel times. Harris  
25 County Toll Road Authority is already expanding Hardy

1 Toll Road from 610 to the new proposed Segment 3 where  
2 59, I-10, and I-45 will converge.

3 The way this plan sits now, TxDOT has just  
4 designed a massive traffic funnel. Please reconsider.  
5 Please redesign this project. Again, anything that is  
6 important should not be rushed, and anything rushed is  
7 not important.

8 We have wonderful colleges and  
9 universities in Hous- -- in Houston. There's Texas  
10 Southern, U of H, Rice University, Houston Baptist  
11 University, and the University of Downtown. Texas A&M  
12 is right down the road.

13 Let's get input from the generation  
14 capable of finding the solutions to the problems and  
15 challenges that our genera- -- that our generation is  
16 going to leave them. Combine Hardy Toll Road and the  
17 I-45 project. Please delay -- delay the vote. Do not  
18 fund this project today.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Trevino.  
21 Next, I would like to invite Jim  
22 McIngvale.

23 **MR. MCINGVALE:** I'd like to thank H-GAC  
24 for allowing me the chance to speak this morning.

25 Houston has always been, as everybody in

1 the room knows, a city of innovation, willing to take  
2 bold, new steps to solve problems and move the city,  
3 state, and region forward. Wildcatters like Hugh Roy  
4 Cullen, who discovered the Tom O'Connor Oil Field;  
5 incredible physicians like Dr. Michael DeBakey and  
6 Dr. Denton Cooley, who pioneered open heart surgery and  
7 helped build the world famous Texas Medical Center.  
8 Barbara Jordan went to Wheatley High School and Texas  
9 Southern University and became one of the leaders of the  
10 Civil Rights Movement. Barbara Jordan was a  
11 game-changer.

12 Today, we are here to discuss the I-45  
13 project or as I call it the \$7 billion boondoggle. The  
14 \$7 billion boondoggle, I believe, will do irreparable  
15 harm to the city -- citizens of Houston and the citizens  
16 of Texas; more pollution, more deaths on the highway,  
17 more congestion just like Katy Freeway.

18 This past week, all of us as Houstonians  
19 and Texans proudly celebrated Neil Armstrong stepping on  
20 the moon July 20th, 1969, one giant leap for mankind,  
21 bold, innovative, game-changing. That's what  
22 Houstonians and Texans do. We do things that are bold,  
23 innovative -- innovative, and game-changing.

24 Okay. "Houston, we've had a problem,"  
25 said Jack Swigert on Apollo 13. The date was April 13,

1 1970. Saturday, August 26th, 2017, Hurricane Harvey hit  
2 Houston, and the flooding was a problem of biblical  
3 proportions. Let's solve the flooding problem with  
4 these \$7 billion because if another storm like Harvey  
5 hits Houston, our very survival as a city will be at  
6 stake.

7 I respectfully ask the H-GAC  
8 Transportation Council to not fund the I-45 project and  
9 instead seek bold, innovative, game-changing solutions  
10 to the flooding and transportation problems in Houston.

11 To borrow some verbiage from William  
12 Jennings Bryan, you shall not press down upon the brow  
13 of Houstonians this crown of thorns. You shall not  
14 crucify our people on a cross of concrete. Please  
15 reject this \$7 billion boondoggle.

16 Thank you.

17 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you,  
18 Mr. McIngvale.

19 Next, I would like to invite Jeremy  
20 Copeland.

21 **MR. COPELAND:** Good morning. My name is  
22 Jeremy Copeland. I live in District H. I've lived  
23 there for --

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible). We  
25 can't hear you.

1                   **MR. COPELAND:** Good morning. My name is  
2 Jeremy Copeland. I am a resident of District H. Thank  
3 you.

4                   I have been blessed to have traveled the  
5 world in my life. I was born in Houston, raised pretty  
6 much every corner of the United States. Since getting  
7 out of college, I've had the blessing to travel  
8 extensively throughout the world.

9                   In those travels, I've seen cities as wide  
10 as Houston that have embraced public transport. Look at  
11 Sydney, Australia, for example; 4.7 million people  
12 connected greatly by water ferries, trains, high-speed  
13 trains, trams. Just visiting one doesn't even require a  
14 vehicle. They can go from the bay to the downtown city  
15 harbor to the airport and all around.

16                   When my wife and I decided to put roots  
17 down three years ago, we saw progress being made towards  
18 a workable city; downtown METRO connections, park  
19 revitalizations, bus redistribution. Houston currently  
20 is in the making of becoming a true tourist attraction  
21 at the beginning of a great Texas road. Houston brings  
22 you to the back roads; Austin, Hill Country. The world  
23 views Houston as a great port to not only stop at and go  
24 on, but to now remain and visit.

25                   So please take a step back as a city, not

1 as a highway department, withdraw and put our collective  
2 thinking caps on to strategize what we as Houstonians  
3 truly want this city to be on the world stage.

4 Thank you for your time.

5 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Copeland.

6 Next, I will invite Desiree Alejandro.

7 **MS. ALEJANDRO:** Hello. My name is  
8 Desiree Alejandro, and I live in the Lawndale/Wayside  
9 neighborhood. My council member is Robert Gallegos.

10 I am here to ask the Houston-Galveston  
11 Area Council make a motion to delay the vote for funding  
12 Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement  
13 Project until 2020.

14 The negative effects of the I-45 expansion  
15 far outweigh TxDOT's commitment to moving automobiles a  
16 little faster through our city. The NHHIP will wreck  
17 Houston's bayou parks, worsen flooding, increase  
18 traffic-related fatalities, worsen the quality of air we  
19 breathe, eliminate jobs, displace thousands, and tear  
20 communities apart. When the expansion is complete, the  
21 innovative city of the future that everyone was promised  
22 will never have stood a chance in the face of such a  
23 fiscally and morally irresponsible project.

24 Houston proudly wears the badge of being  
25 the nation's most diverse city, yet does little to

1 acknowledge its perpetual residential segregation. For  
2 decades, Houston highways have been deliberately  
3 divisive, creating barriers and unspoken division  
4 between communities. Prioritizing moving cars quickly  
5 is at odds with caring for communities because highways  
6 divide communities.

7 331 businesses will be lost, and 24,873  
8 Houston residents will find their jobs in jeopardy as a  
9 result of this project. Furthermore, 5,000 Houstonians  
10 will be forced from their home in a city that is  
11 actively facing an affordable housing crisis.

12 Mayor Turner says that at its core, this  
13 project is about easing congestion, yet we've already  
14 witnessed how widening freeways does little to ease  
15 congestion.

16 TxDOT claims that the NHHIP is an  
17 innovative and exciting opportunity for Houston. There  
18 is nothing innovative about doubling the size of a  
19 freeway and bulldozing through impoverished communities.

20 What would require innovation is figuring  
21 out how to solve the existing infrastructure problems  
22 without taking additional right-of-way, keep roads  
23 within the existing footprint.

24 Houstonians need leadership that is  
25 unafraid to speak truth to power and fight for the best

1 interest of the city that we all love. Invest in our  
2 city, in our residents rather than a multibillion-dollar  
3 boondoggle that will result in the loss of millions of  
4 dollars in revenue. This project is bad for Houston.  
5 It's bad for business.

6 Houston will not emerge as a leader in the  
7 nation, but rather a cautionary tale of an urban city  
8 who refused to learn from its past and actively  
9 destroyed the lives of its residents. With all due  
10 respect, TxDOT is not a city planner.

11 Give Houstonians the voice they deserve  
12 and delay the vote for funding Segment 2 of the North  
13 Houston Highway Improvement Project.

14 Thank you.

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you,  
16 Ms. Alejandro.

17 Next, I would like to invite Dr. Inge  
18 Ford.

19 **DR. FORD:** Good morning. Thank you for  
20 the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Dr. Inge  
21 Ford. I am a resident of District D, as well as the  
22 education director with Bike Houston.

23 First of all, I'd like to ask this council  
24 to think compassionately and delay the vote for the  
25 Agenda Item Number 8. Be mindful as public safety that

1 public safety is for everyone. It's not selected for  
2 those who can afford to drive vehicles. We actually  
3 have to be the innovative city that we claim to be. And  
4 at this day and time in the 21st century, one car/one  
5 person is not the way to go.

6 I do recognize, as a native Houstonian,  
7 that we are a very car-centric culture. But if we are  
8 truly innovative, having this type of transportation  
9 mobility as our sole way of getting around besides the  
10 ancillary rail, as well as buses, is not progressive.  
11 There are a lot of people moving into our community,  
12 into our city for obvious reasons, and they are used to  
13 coming to cities that -- or coming from cities that have  
14 multimodal options.

15 It is with dignity and equity that we ask  
16 you to think about not ripping up the social networks or  
17 social fabrics of these communities.

18 Also, as -- this council has a  
19 responsibility to not only think more global than just  
20 this one way of getting around, that we have to be  
21 progressive in our initiatives and to find more options  
22 to move masses safely and efficiently. Houston and  
23 surrounding areas, Greater Houston, has the highest  
24 crash rates in the state. This has got to change. We  
25 can certainly do better. We can certainly do better.

1 I know that all of these learned, educated  
2 people around the table understand that. And you have  
3 had the responsibility, because you've chosen to be  
4 servants of the community, to do the right thing. Go  
5 back to the drawing board, rethink this, have community  
6 responses from the beginning, not as an afterthought.

7 So, again, in the words of Barbara Jordan,  
8 if the society today allows wrongs to go unchallenged,  
9 the impre- -- the repercussion is created that those  
10 wrongs have the approval of the majority. The  
11 impression is that we approve this. You are not the  
12 majority. You are not representing the majority.

13 Thank you.

14 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Dr. Ford.

15 Next, we'll have Greg Broyles.

16 **MR. BROYLES:** Hi, my name is Greg  
17 Broyles. I'm a voter in District H and Precinct 1.  
18 Thank you for listening to my comments.

19 Everyone knows we need to delay this vote.  
20 The Katy Freeway cost more than twice what we were told.  
21 Today it is as congested (inaudible) correcting for  
22 growth as it was before the project. Whatever this  
23 project really costs, we know it will bring more  
24 flooding, more (inaudible), and it ultimately fails as a  
25 solution for transportation ways.

1           The (inaudible) would bear the greatest  
2 weight. Please delay this boondoggle. Please delay  
3 your vote. Please use this historic opportunity to  
4 avoid a failed strategy. Let's plan for the future and  
5 not the past.

6           This statement is from a single mom who  
7 has to work today rather than be here.

8           "Dear Transportation Policy Council, my  
9 name is Jessica Caprot, and I'm a current resident of  
10 District C. I am writing you today to share my concerns  
11 about the environmental impact of expanding 45. And I  
12 ask you to delay the vote for 180 until 2020 when more  
13 complete environmental studies can be done.

14           "As a Houston resident, mother, and nurse,  
15 I am concerned about the impact and increased pollution  
16 it will have on communities arising near the freeway.  
17 In fact, I am so concerned about the health risks  
18 associated with this that I recently pulled out of a  
19 USDA contract to buy a house in the Northridge  
20 neighborhood east of the Heights. The house on  
21 Terrydale Street has everything I need in a home for  
22 myself and my six-year-old; just enough room, close to  
23 the medical center and my son's school, a great yard,  
24 located close to Light Rail.

25           "I envisioned reducing our drive time and

1 spending hours outside while my son played. However,  
2 the more I looked into the plans to expand 45, the more  
3 worried I became.

4 "As a nurse, I made a living. Within  
5 close proximity to busy roads increases the risk of  
6 asthma, heart disease, and cancer. 45 is already big  
7 enough. I pulled out of the contract because as a  
8 mother living next to it, after four lanes are added is  
9 terrifying and too big a risk to take with my child. I  
10 work with cancer patients every day. I don't want to be  
11 one. I don't want my child to become one.

12 "We lost out on what we could -- what  
13 could have been the perfect home due to this. Instead,  
14 we will move a bit further out and continue to drive in,  
15 sadly adding to the problems facing Houston today.

16 "Having already completed inspections, I  
17 lost some money on this deal. I also forfeited an  
18 option fee. Still, I have the ability to make a choice  
19 for my son and myself. Many people are already  
20 established residents of these neighborhoods and cannot  
21 do the same. The children already living in the area or  
22 attending any of the 26 schools or day cares that will  
23 be within 500 feet of the highway aren't being given  
24 this choice. These kids deserve clean air to breathe,  
25 too. To do this, Houston should be looking for ways to

1 take cars off the road by expanding -- expanding transit  
2 and Light Rail, not expanding freeways that will soon  
3 fill up with more cars.

4 "Thank you, Jessica Caprot, RN,  
5 MD Anderson, in District C Houston."

6 Thank you for listening.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Broyles.

8 Next, I will invite Dwight Jefferson. And  
9 he will be followed by Janet Roe.

10 **MR. JEFFERSON:** Good morning. First of  
11 all, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity  
12 to come and speak before the council today.

13 My name is Dwight Jefferson. I am a  
14 former voting member of the Transportation Policy  
15 Council, a former member of the METRO Board of  
16 Directors, a former member and counsel to the Gulf Coast  
17 Rail District, a former State district judge, and a  
18 resident of inner city Houston.

19 It is in that capacity that I return to  
20 this body to express my opposition to the plan to  
21 relocate Interstate 45. This plan is not a good plan  
22 for the city of Houston. And it represents the past and  
23 not the future of transportation in Houston.

24 Many inner city neighborhoods have been  
25 sacrificed for the past expansion of interstate highways

1 through our city. And the time has come to say, no  
2 more. No more communities dissected, no more families  
3 displaced, no more businesses sacrificed.

4 The money earmark for this project should  
5 be reallocated for more progressive projects, such as  
6 developing rail by using the existing tracks that are  
7 owned by BNSF and Union Pacific Railroad.

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

9 **MR. JEFFERSON:** They work --

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

11 **MR. JEFFERSON:** -- with other communities  
12 for -- for commuter rail. They don't work with our  
13 community for commuter rail.

14 These funds should be used for  
15 contributing to METRO for expanding the Light Rail and  
16 developing bus rapid transit.

17 The days of ever expanding freeways  
18 cutting through the heart of our cities are over. Other  
19 alternatives exist. And this body must take the lead in  
20 making these changes a reality for the sake of our  
21 communities, for the sake of our air quality, for the  
22 sake of the quality of life for our city.

23 Thank you very much for the time.

24 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you,  
25 Mr. Jefferson.

1                   Next, I would invite Janet Roe, followed  
2 by Michael Blackwell.

3                   **MS. BLACKWELL:** It is Michelle.  
4 Michelle.

5                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Michelle. I'm sorry.  
6 Michelle Blackwell.

7                   **MS. ROE:** My name is -- can you hear me?  
8 Can you hear me now?

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

10                  **MS. ROE:** My name is Janet Roe.

11                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Wait. You turned  
12 it off. You turned your microphone off.

13                  **MS. ROE:** Can you hear me now?

14                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

15                  **MS. ROE:** Okay. My name is Janet Roe. I  
16 live in the Near Northside. I ask that you delay the  
17 vote until 2020 on TxDOT's \$100 million request for the  
18 I-45 expansion.

19                         I am a cofounder of the Stop TxDOT I-45  
20 organization. Stop TxDOT I-45 asked time on the agenda  
21 to present a formal rebuttal to TxDOT's represent- --  
22 presentation given last month. TxDOT presented many  
23 inaccuracies. We were not given the opportunity to  
24 respond.

25                         Today TxDOT is given another opportunity

1 without rebuttal, relegating us to three-minute talks  
2 rather than giving us the opportunity to present a  
3 formal, prepared presentation. On par with TxDOT cannot  
4 sell your conscience. Evidently, this body is willing  
5 to proceed only upon TxDOT's word and without formally  
6 hearing about the cruel effects of the project and about  
7 TxDOT's inaccuracies.

8           An inordinate amount of time and work has  
9 been done. Countless hours have been spent asking TxDOT  
10 to fix the many problems with this project. We would be  
11 here for days to present all that is wrong and all that  
12 has been suggested to TxDOT. TxDOT either makes no  
13 promises or walks back with ones that it does make.  
14 TxDOT does not offer money to fix the many problems it  
15 will create. Who will pay?

16           The I-45 expansion as currently proposed  
17 will cause immense injustice and considerable harm to  
18 the people of Houston and Harris County. And TxDOT  
19 knows it. It is well-documented.

20           If you vote for this project in its  
21 current form by approving for money for Segment 2, you  
22 ignore its cruel effects and all those who have tried so  
23 far to work with TxDOT to no avail. If you vote for the  
24 project in its current form, you side with the moneyed  
25 interests who will benefit from the project to the

1 detriment of the minority, low-income neighborhoods,  
2 businesses, and general population of Houston and Harris  
3 County. If you vote for this project in its current  
4 form, shame on you. Delay the vote.

5 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Roe.

6 Next will be Michelle Blackwell, followed  
7 by Susan Graham.

8 **MS. BLACKWELL:** Okay. Good morning. My  
9 name is Ms. Blackwell. And I'm a resident of the Near  
10 Northside area. And I'm in District H, council member  
11 Karla Cisneros.

12 I am requesting of this council to delay  
13 the vote. The reason why I am requesting for this is  
14 because this project is going to cause a disruption in  
15 the lives of those that are in the schools, the  
16 businesses, the churches, the communities, etcetera. It  
17 will create problems such as displacement.

18 I just feel like in a lot of the  
19 neighborhoods where -- it's like it's going to cause us  
20 to shrink. And I feel like I love to see the growth.  
21 And if -- I feel like the communities are like family.  
22 When displacement occurs, it's like -- I feel like  
23 family has, you know, gone.

24 And then when it comes to flooding, that  
25 problem will -- it's going to cause more problems.

1 Well, when another -- when another flood or something  
2 comes around, it's like we're not going to have any  
3 options to evacuate or try to get out safely, you know,  
4 for the whole entire city.

5 And also for the safety. I had my  
6 experience when they were building on the rail and  
7 different things downtown where you see the -- you see  
8 the construction. You see the -- the machines and  
9 stuff. And it's in the way. And it's like you're  
10 trying to get hit or it sounds like you're walking in  
11 big holes in the ground because they're digging and  
12 doing all this construction. I feel like safety would  
13 be an issue.

14 So with this council, I really would -- I  
15 am really requesting that you think this through because  
16 I don't -- really don't feel like this -- this project  
17 is good for Houston.

18 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you,  
19 Ms. Blackwell.

20 Next will be Susan Graham, followed by  
21 Vanessa -- I'll have to get Vanessa's last name.

22 **MS. GRAHAM:** I think Medrano, but anyway.  
23 Hi. I am Susan Graham. And thank you for  
24 your time today. I live in the Near Northside in City  
25 Council District H, and Karla Cisneros is my council

1 member.

2 I'm here today to ask you to delay the  
3 vote on the 100 million in funding being requested by  
4 TxDOT for Segment 2 for the I-45 expansion until 2020.

5 Both TxDOT and the City of Houston have  
6 held the obligatory community outreach meetings. But  
7 have we felt heard? No, I don't think so.

8 In my community, neither TxDOT nor the  
9 City of Houston is trusted to have our backs. How can  
10 we feel heard when a hundred-year-old church is being  
11 displaced in Independence Heights so our freeway can be  
12 straightened so cars can go faster? How can we feel  
13 heard when all the diligent work done by the Make I-45  
14 Better Coalition, other community groups, and residents  
15 hasn't even warranted a written response? How can we  
16 feel heard when TxDOT says displaced residents will be  
17 rehoused within their community, when we know that  
18 affordable housing in the city of Houston is  
19 nonexistent? How can we be heard when TxDOT's design is  
20 using outdated flood maps? How can we feel heard when  
21 TxDOT reports a positive gain in air quality when we  
22 know that will not be true in our neighborhoods?

23 I think it's clear who's being heard. The  
24 developers with deep pockets are being heard. I hope  
25 you prove me wrong today that the new City of Houston

1 Community Outreach to begin in March is just another  
2 attempt to put lipstick on a pig. I hope you prove me  
3 wrong today that primarily low-income people of color  
4 don't matter. I hope you prove me wrong today that  
5 black and brown history in the city of Houston is not  
6 important. I hope you prove me wrong today that the  
7 health and safety of residents along the I-45 expansion  
8 doesn't need to be protected. I hope you prove me wrong  
9 today by voting to delay the funding until 2020.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Graham.

12 Next is Vanessa Medrane, if I'm -- I'm  
13 sure I'm mispronouncing that.

14 **MS. MEDRANO:** It's Medrano.

15 Good morning. My name is Vanessa Medrano.  
16 I live in the Northside community. I am here  
17 representing the organization -- organizations such as  
18 the Known Accuracy of Community Engineer Leaders, the  
19 Millennial's Youth Fest, and a handful of other  
20 organizations. I am also here on behalf of the  
21 generation that Mr. Jeffrey spoke about. We have a  
22 voice too.

23 I ask that the funding for the I-45  
24 project to be on hold until 2020. The I-45 Segment 2  
25 expansion will impact my home and my area. In my

1 opinion, there are other projects that can use this  
2 funding. The fund could cover potholes repairs in the  
3 Houston area and also upgrade our flooding and drainage  
4 system. I just don't want to wake up some day after a  
5 stormy night and find myself waking up next to a fish or  
6 a sea creature.

7 Thank you for listening to my comment.

8 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

9 Next, we have Sonia Noyola, followed by  
10 Oscar Slotboom.

11 **MR. NOYOLA:** Hello. My name is Dr. Sonia  
12 Adriana Noyola. Thank you for this opportunity.

13 I am a worker in the Near Northside  
14 community and a mother of a student who attends the  
15 Houston Independent School Districts. And I am speaking  
16 with those voices as an individual today.

17 Whenever I am speaking before people that  
18 I care about, about issues that I care about, the first  
19 thing I like to do is make sure that we understand we  
20 all are on the same page with a common core. Our common  
21 core here today, every single member of the audience and  
22 every single person on the board loves the state of  
23 Texas, loves Houston, and we want what's best for it.  
24 So today, after listening to the TxDOT transportation, I  
25 want to make sure that all of us are on the same page

1 putting Tex- -- the state of Texas first.

2 TxDOT right now is very lucky. The very  
3 beginning of its name is our glorious state, Texas.  
4 TxDOT, Texas Department of Transportation, unfortunately  
5 right now has turned into TxNOT. TxNOT listening to its  
6 citizens. TxNOT carrying about a great deal of  
7 information that has been presented to you today. TxNOT  
8 understanding the voices of the community that are  
9 actually trying to move us forward together in unison as  
10 we truly all want deep down inside.

11 So today I would appreciate if the members  
12 of the board would please take some time to make sure  
13 that our beloved TxDOT become something greater. It can  
14 become not just the Texas Department of Transportation.  
15 It can become the Texas Department of Transformation,  
16 making sure that we all move forward together instead of  
17 becoming the Texas department that turns into TxNOT,  
18 Texas Neglecting Others Thoughts. And that's what we've  
19 had here today. You've heard some of the hisses, some  
20 of the boos when people feel like they're not being  
21 listened to.

22 So what I am going to do is, I am going to  
23 listen to those members of the community, and I am going  
24 to be asking that you also delay this vote so that TxDOT  
25 is our Texas Department of Transformation and does not

1 become TxNOT, Texas Neglecting Others Thoughts.

2 Thank you very much.

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

4 Next speaker is Oscar Slatboom, followed  
5 by Erin Ericson.

6 **MR. SLATBOOM:** Thanks for the opportunity  
7 to speak. I am here to speak in favor of approval of  
8 (inaudible) committing 100 million to Segment 2 of the  
9 North Highway Improvement Project.

10 The overall North Houston Highway  
11 Improvement Project is a vital and critical element of  
12 transportation improvements in Houston. And approval of  
13 this funding will ensure inclusion of tentative funding  
14 by TxDOT in the 2020 UTP.

15 Segment 2, in the middle of the overall  
16 project, is crucial to realizing all the project-wide  
17 benefits. The main feature of Segment 2 is the addition  
18 of four managed lanes. These managed lanes are a  
19 crucial part of future bidirectional managed lane  
20 networking for Houston which will provide enhanced  
21 public transit opportunities and mobility for motorists.  
22 In addition, it will be a key link in potential future  
23 high-speed service to Bush Airport.

24 As you know, METRONext has identified  
25 airport service as an item of interest by the public.

1 As you also know, Light Rail is ridiculously slow and  
2 expensive with existing METRO routes averaging 14 miles  
3 per hour and the most recent extensions costing around  
4 150 million per mile. With a complete managed lane  
5 facility on the North Freeway, the airport and transit  
6 service can be delivered at a much higher speed, at a  
7 much lower cost.

8 Now, some speakers have talked about the  
9 past and the future. Well, the future is going to be  
10 automated vehicles. And these are going to need  
11 additional highway capacity. The future is not going to  
12 be 150 mile -- \$150 million mile Light Rail which  
13 carries minimal or negligible passenger trips.

14 Now, speaking specifically to Segment 2,  
15 the existing freeway and Loop 610 interchange were  
16 opened in July 1962 and have received only minimal  
17 improvements since its opening. It does not meet modern  
18 standards particularly for bridge clearances, interior  
19 shoulders, and interchange design at the Loop 610  
20 interchange. To put the 47-year-old freeway age in  
21 perspective, the metro area population of Houston in  
22 1960 was 1.2 million, and the current population is 7  
23 million. We need an improved facility to meet today's  
24 needs and safety standards.

25 Now, what happens if you don't add

1 capacity? Well, we can go two miles away on the West  
2 Loop and see what happens. It is the number one most  
3 congested freeway in Texas by a significant margin, we  
4 may add. Tens of thousands of people are suffering  
5 needlessly in traffic on the West Loop because of a  
6 decision made in the early 1990s not to add capacity.

7 So we have a choice. Is Houston going to  
8 be a better place if it turns into the West Loop or if  
9 we get managed lanes and an improved facility to meet  
10 today's needs?

11 I urge the RTP to approve the 100 million  
12 for Segment 2 to continue progress on the North Houston  
13 Highway Improvement Project so Houston can realize the  
14 huge benefits this project will provide.

15 Thank you.

16 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Sir, can you state your  
17 name for the record?

18 **MR. SLOTBOOM:** Yeah. Oscar Slotboom.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Where do you live?

20 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next will be Erin  
21 Ericson, followed by Jessica Holsey.

22 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** What's the next --

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I don't think the  
25 (inaudible) heard.

1                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'm sorry. The next  
2 speaker, Erin Ericson.

3                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Please don't tap  
4 this thing. And please --

5                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Chairman.

6                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- don't talk too  
7 fast. Just take it easy.

8                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, sir.

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Chairman, I'd  
10 ask that we have a level of decorum for both sides so  
11 that we can respect one another so that we can hear the  
12 comments that are being given.

13                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, sir.

14                   **MS. ERICSON:** Good morning. My name is  
15 Erin Ericson. I live in the Heights in District C. My  
16 council member is Ellen Cohen, and Rodney Ellis is my  
17 county commissioner.

18                   I am a social worker having received my  
19 master's from UH, go Coogs. And I am a native  
20 Houstonian. I am here today to ask you to delay the  
21 vote for funding of Segment 2 of the North Houston  
22 Highway Improvement Project until 2020.

23                   As a social worker, the displacement of  
24 Houstonians is of particular concern to me. In Segment  
25 3 alone, the right-of-way will eradicate a major

1 corridor for homeless services and the afford housing  
2 complex, Clayton Homes, with 296 units. In totality,  
3 the proposed right-of-way will displace 168 family  
4 homes, 1,067 multifamily homes, including 368 low-income  
5 units, and 60 homeless Veterans units. And 331  
6 businesses that employ over 24,000 people will be  
7 displaced. This displacement would disproportionately  
8 affect people of color and low-income communities.

9 An assessment of the human costs and  
10 consequences of how this project will perpetuate  
11 inequality, exacerbate poverty, and erase community  
12 identity is needed. Our reason is still strained from  
13 the displacement following Harvey. A sustainable plan  
14 would holistically look at how this project includes  
15 those affected who live and work within the proposed  
16 right-of-ways. Our infrastructure is important to  
17 Houston's vitality. And people and communities are a  
18 part of that infrastructure as well.

19 What will be the long-term effects of  
20 displacement? An innovative solution includes factoring  
21 in the social and human costs and making sure that  
22 effective communities have a say and a seat at the  
23 table. Building over communities should not be the  
24 answer.

25 Again, I ask that the vote be postponed on

1 funding for Segment 2 until 2020. Thank you for your  
2 time.

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Ericson.  
4 Jessica Holsey, followed by Jonathan Ross.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I don't think she  
6 heard you.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'm sorry. Jessica  
8 Holesly, please -- Holsey.

9 **MS. HOLSEY:** Good morning. I'm Jessica  
10 Holsey, a resident of District H, Second Ward. Thank  
11 you for this opportunity.

12 But I'm here to speak about a very  
13 important item. It's about families. It's very sad  
14 that -- if that's no consideration about our families.  
15 This project will affect a very -- will have a very  
16 negative effect in displacing our families. We're  
17 already suffering from lack of affordable housing. I --  
18 I just don't understand.

19 To all members here of -- today, elected  
20 officials that represent our neighborhoods, please think  
21 about our families. We're struggling. We're enduring  
22 already so much in the Second Ward. We just do not have  
23 access to affordable homes, affordable housing. So this  
24 project will affect -- in a way, will displace, will  
25 create homele- -- homeless -- homelessness. It's very

1 clear that this will create -- displacing this family  
2 will create more people homeless.

3 So, therefore, I am here to plea with each  
4 and everyone here today, delay the vote. Think about  
5 our children. Think about our families. Instead  
6 utilize all that money to create housing -- affordable  
7 housing, because we cannot afford \$400,000, \$300,000  
8 town homes. For us, the working families, it's about  
9 affordable housing, single-family homes.

10 So please, please come with me today to  
11 vote families first. Delay the vote until 2020. If we  
12 cannot stop the vote, if we cannot stop this project,  
13 then delay it until 2020. Give us a seat on the table.  
14 Let's talk because in the Second Ward, nobody knows.  
15 There's no meetings there. There's no meetings  
16 happening. So we need to have a more clear, transparent  
17 conversation. Let's meet. Let's talk.

18 Thank you-all so very much for your  
19 patience. Thank you.

20 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

21 Next, Jonathan Ross, followed by Stella  
22 Walters.

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Chairman and  
24 the gentleman before he begins with his comments, it is  
25 my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that there's several

1 folks in the audience that would like to speak; however,  
2 they were denied the opportunity because H-GAC does not  
3 provide translation services. These folks are  
4 principally Spanish-speakers. And so I would like to  
5 ask that there's some alt- -- some -- some option for  
6 them or simply just to allow them to speak, and maybe I  
7 and a couple others will do our best to help communicate  
8 the sentiments of their remarks.

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, we'll take that up  
10 after we get through the list and see how we'll address  
11 that.

12 **MR. ROSS:** Good morning, council members.  
13 My name is --

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Sorry, sir. You're out  
16 of order with public comment.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Ask your question  
18 (inaudible).

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

20 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** No, sir. You're not --  
21 we're in public comment.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You're violating  
23 the civil rights by depriving the people that don't  
24 speak (inaudible).

25 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Sir, we're not going to

1 deprive anybody of their rights. We're -- we're in a  
2 process, sir. Please -- please let us get through the  
3 process.

4 Mister -- Mr. Ross.

5 **MR. ROSS:** Good morning. My name is  
6 Jonathan Ross. I am president of the board of Air  
7 Alliance Houston. And I appreciate the opportunity to  
8 speak to y'all this morning.

9 Dr. Nelson addressed the substance of our  
10 concerns, as have many of the speakers today. I am  
11 going to address concerns regarding the process.

12 We appreciate today's opportunity for the  
13 community to be heard, but that is not enough. We want  
14 our concerns to be effectively considered by this  
15 council, by TxDOT, and by all the decision-makers as we  
16 move forward. And that takes time. And that is why we  
17 are asking for a delay in signing over \$100 million.

18 Now, in my day job, I'm a lawyer. And in  
19 doing my work, we negotiate first. Then we write the  
20 check.

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's right.

22 **MR. ROSS:** And we think we have it a  
23 little bit backwards here. There hasn't been sufficient  
24 time before TxDOT gets the approval of this council, the  
25 money in hand that they're seeking so that they will go

1 forward with this project.

2 It's only human nature that once TxDOT  
3 has -- effectively has the money that they will no  
4 longer feel the need or the necessity of listening to  
5 this council's concerns or the community's.

6 Y'all are the stewards of all of our  
7 communities. And I believe you owe your highest duty to  
8 those who are being asked to sacrifice for the benefit  
9 of others. That is what is happening. That is what  
10 needs to be taken into account. I truly believe that a  
11 delay will not jeopardize TxDOT's interest in this  
12 project. But it will allow these voices to be  
13 effectively considered as opposed to just being heard.  
14 And I urge you to grant the delay that will allow that  
15 to happen.

16 Thank you.

17 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Ross.

18 Now we'd like to invite Stella Walters,  
19 followed by Peggy Robinson.

20 **MS. WALTERS:** Good morning to every  
21 member of the council today. My name is Stella Mireles  
22 Walters. And I am the founder of Safe Walk Home  
23 Northside.

24 Safe Walk Home Northside is a grassroots  
25 organization that trains members to use their voice in

1 reporting suspicious activity and safety issues that can  
2 harm our students as they walk to and from school. It  
3 was organized after a tragic loss that happened in 2016  
4 in this community as a student was walking home from  
5 school. So Safe Walk Home is dedicated in the memory of  
6 this student.

7 It is for this reason that I use my voice  
8 this morning to bring your attention to safety concerns  
9 that will be created with this project.

10 Did you know, council members, that  
11 Jefferson Elementary will be 500 yards away from the  
12 completed expansion as planned?

13 I use my voice also about the concerns  
14 that the students will have when they're walking through  
15 the construction area in order to get to school and how  
16 this creates a high safety issue. The project managers  
17 have not identified this as an issue.

18 I use my voice to express the concerns  
19 about the students walking through an extra feeder lane  
20 in order to get to school after the construction is  
21 completed. Again, the project managers have not  
22 identified this as an issue.

23 These are real issues to our families in  
24 this community. And we do not want to lose any of our  
25 precious students to a project that has not been well

1 planned and has not included our community concerns.

2 Safe Walk Home is asking that the  
3 Houston-Galveston Area Council, Transportation Policy  
4 Council to delay approving \$100 million requested by  
5 TxDOT. This will allow TxDOT to address our safety  
6 concerns and look into alternative designs.

7 So I leave with one question today to  
8 every council member here. If this was your child or  
9 your grandchild walking to school through these  
10 conditions, how would you vote today?

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Walters.

12 **MS. WALTERS:** Thank you.

13 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'd like to invite Peggy  
14 Robinson, followed by Robert Holley.

15 **MS. ROBINSON:** Good morning. My name is  
16 Peggy Robinson, and I am the president of the Montie  
17 Beach Civic Association -- Civic Club.

18 On behalf of the Montie Beach Civic Club,  
19 I'm asking you to please delay the vote on the 100  
20 million funding request by TxDOT for Segment 2 of the  
21 North Houston Highway Improvement Project.

22 Montie Beach Civic Club is named for our  
23 city park, but our neighborhood encompasses the Brooke  
24 Smith neighborhood in the city of Houston District H and  
25 Harris County Precinct 2. Our boundaries are I-45,

1 North Main, Airline, and Link Road. So we represent  
2 roughly one-half of the western side of Segment 2. And  
3 we are one of those communities that has been mentioned  
4 over and over again this morning that is ethnically and  
5 economically diverse.

6 We have been following as a club the  
7 plannings of the I-45 expansion for many years. We've  
8 had two full meetings about this in the last year. And,  
9 additionally, we keep our members updated and our  
10 neighbors updated through social media.

11 The delay we request would allow TxDOT to  
12 address the concerns that we have raised. We  
13 participate in the Make I-45 Better Coalition, as well  
14 as we have been attending the City of Houston  
15 facilitate -- facilitation meetings.

16 Our concerns are the same as everyone else  
17 has expressed. We're worried about air quality and the  
18 negative effect of the increased density. We're worried  
19 about noise. The plan currently provides no provision  
20 for sound miti- -- mitigation laws. We're worried about  
21 flooding because I-45 is where our neighborhood waters  
22 go when we had Harvey and other events. And we're  
23 worried about safety and encouraging innovative 21st  
24 century designs for pedestrian and bicycle safety. And  
25 that all leads to connectivity.

1           So when I-45 was originally constructed,  
2     it bisected neighborhoods, as you've heard. So we have  
3     lost our connections with our neighbors in Lindale Park  
4     and Near Northside. The current plans would further  
5     affect our connectivity with our family members,  
6     neighbors, and services like the "Y" and the Red Line.

7           The City of Houston Planning Department  
8     has just hired -- the meeting was just last week -- for  
9     the first time Huitt-Zollars to work with us over the  
10    coming months to develop a scheme incorporating  
11    community goals and desired outcomes for Segments 2 and  
12    1.

13           Why the rush to fund a project that is not  
14    yet adequate -- adequately planned to incorporate our  
15    community's concerns? So I am asking you on behalf of  
16    myself -- I live within those 500 feet of I-45, and I  
17    garden and breathe that air. But also my community is  
18    wholeheartedly behind me. And I have a list of  
19    signatures, but, unfortunately, our next civic  
20    associ- -- club meeting is not until next week. So we  
21    would have many more.

22           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Robinson.

23           **MS. ROBINSON:** Thank you very much.

24           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, I'd invite Robert  
25    Holley, followed by Oni Blair.

1                   **MR. HOLLEY:** Good morning. My name is  
2 Robert Holley. I'm with the Fair Housing & Neighborhood  
3 Rights, also representing the Texas Organizing Project.  
4 I have done some outreach at Kelly Village, which is at  
5 I-10 and 59.

6                   And let's talk about devastation and  
7 deterioration of the neighborhoods. You have a school,  
8 first of all, that's Bruce Elementary that's less than  
9 200 yards away from that intersection. The noise that's  
10 coming off of I-10 and 59 is so phenomenal. I think  
11 it's quieter on JFK Boulevard.

12                   Also, businesses have gone. On one side  
13 of I-10, we have a lot of gentrification with the  
14 building of town homes and condos. There's no  
15 businesses. There's no eateries, except for one that's  
16 not too far away. There's no grocery stores, just  
17 convenience stores that sells alcohol. And this is  
18 affecting the black and brown communities. And when I'm  
19 talking about the devastation, also there's no more  
20 neighborhoods. People are displaced. People had to  
21 move. People are homeless.

22                   We need to think about going to our  
23 neighborhoods, including some of our housing units, and  
24 talking to the people to see what's best for them in  
25 keeping our families together, keeping our communities

1 together.

2 Thank you. I'm Robert Holley.

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Holley.

4 Now, please I'll invite Oni Blair,  
5 followed by -- followed by Mary Fillamore -- Fill- --  
6 Fillmore, I think. I'm not sure.

7 **MS. FILLEY:** Filley.

8 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Filley. Thank you.

9 **MS. BLAIR:** Good morning. My name is Oni  
10 Blair. And I am the executive director of LINK Houston.  
11 LINK Houston advocates for a robust and equitable  
12 transportation network so that all people can reach  
13 opportunity. I am also a member of the Technical  
14 Advisory Committee and have had the privilege of sitting  
15 at the same table that you are sitting at now and  
16 debating this issue on July 17th.

17 While the issue did pass at that time,  
18 there were two nay votes, and the discussion went on for  
19 over an hour. Many of the people who did vote in favor  
20 of it honestly had many concerns of which predominantly  
21 focused on the displacement issue. And I say that  
22 because that wasn't part of the update today. The H-GAC  
23 website has been down all week. And there are no  
24 minutes for us to share with you that provide that  
25 detail.

1           There are members of the TPC that are also  
2 members of the Technical Advisory Committee who can  
3 share what happened at that meeting and some of the  
4 discussion that took place.

5           I am here to also speak on Item Number 8  
6 and to ask you to delay this vote. I have been very  
7 clear on the concerns that we have that I share with the  
8 community members that have been here today,  
9 predominantly around the displacement, which is  
10 inequitable, as well as the flooding, the historical and  
11 cultural displacement, and the many other challenges  
12 that come with this project.

13           While I have been advised by many people  
14 to actually ask for the item to be removed, I am not  
15 asking you to do that today. I am coming here with  
16 confidence in the City of Houston's project that they  
17 are putting forward with TxDOT and with many other  
18 entities that is set to start in August in which they  
19 will consult with communities and work with them using  
20 the technical expertise of Huitt-Zollars and the  
21 University of Houston's Community Design Resource Center  
22 to put forward a schematic, a design that is understood  
23 by engineers and planners on all sides that reflects  
24 true mitigation, that addresses the concerns that people  
25 have put forward today.

1           The numbers that many of the people before  
2 me have cited -- I want to be clear -- come from the  
3 Draft Environmental Impact Study. They are not mock  
4 numbers that their individual committees made up. They  
5 are from the Draft DEIS.

6           And those include displacement of 168  
7 single-family homes, 1,067 multifamily homes, 331  
8 businesses that will be displaced, and by the estimates  
9 of the Draft Environmental Impact Study, 24,873 people's  
10 jobs who will be impacted.

11           These numbers pale -- or the numbers from  
12 previous projects pale in comparison to these. So, for  
13 instance, the Final Environmental Impact Study by TxDOT  
14 lists that project -- the 290 project displaced 360  
15 total housing units, and the I-10 Katy Freeway expansion  
16 displaced a total of 190 housing units according to the  
17 FEIS.

18           Those are important because I've been  
19 asked, how does this project compare to those? And the  
20 comparison is significant to note. This project is of  
21 concern more than any other project going on in our  
22 region because of that displacement. And that is why we  
23 are asking you to delay this vote so that the process  
24 that's going forward with TxDOT can consider how to  
25 adjust the right-of-way and limit the impact to people's

1 lives, particularly low-income and minority people who  
2 are identified in the current Draft Environmental Impact  
3 Study as being significantly and adversely impacted by  
4 this project.

5 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Blair.

6 Next will be Mary Filley, followed by  
7 Dexter Handy.

8 **MS. FILLEY:** Good morning. My name is  
9 Mary Filley. I am a resident of District D. I am in  
10 Segment 3, but I can tell you that residents in  
11 Segment 2 will be drastically affected. And I'm here on  
12 both their behalf, as well as others who use Light Rail  
13 to go from their homes in that segment to, say, jobs in  
14 the medical center, as well as other issues.

15 It has been easily and readily documented  
16 how this impacts people in their homes and also their  
17 ability to make a living and to get to work on time.  
18 And all of this connects that it will create major  
19 disruption. This is no small thing. It's even studied.  
20 A major corporation uses Maslow's theory of hierarchy to  
21 understand how people need to feel a basic level of  
22 security, not snowflake security. We're talking about  
23 you know where you live, you feel confident, you can do  
24 your job, you're a vital contributor to the Texas  
25 Medical Center, to schools, to your church, to your

1 community. That's the basic level. And if that's not  
2 satisfied, people do not advance.

3 I quote Abraham Maslow. He said, "I  
4 suppose it is tempting if the only tool you have is a  
5 hammer to treat everything as if it were a nail." And  
6 we are not nails. We do not want to be pounded by this.  
7 And in that metaphor, we ask you, of hammer and nails,  
8 to use your ingenuity. You're -- you're very smart  
9 people on this side of the -- of the lectern. Find some  
10 more tools in your toolbox to solve this problem.

11 I ask you to delay this vote not because  
12 I'm against advancement. It is the Texas Department of  
13 Transportation, not the Texas Department of Freeways.

14 I saw the emblem about bikes. And Council  
15 Member Robinson, you know we've been talking about this  
16 2015. We really don't have (inaudible) bike lanes on  
17 frontage roads. And we have not addressed the  
18 driver-centric culture and how they treat somebody on a  
19 bicycle. A driver sees a cyclist and says, that's a  
20 nail, and my car is a hammer.

21 We need this. Back up to rethink this. I  
22 encourage you, please, to go back to your toolbox, not  
23 just the comment cards, but please come and meet with us  
24 and talk and hear these things out; cup of coffee,  
25 whatever, a granola bar if it makes you feel better.

1 But, please, let's delay this vote maybe even past  
2 January of 2020 and start having real talk about  
3 multiple solutions that move us and not about loading  
4 more cars, single-driver occupancy cars on freeways, and  
5 take care of your citizens who use multiple transit  
6 options to get to the job so when you go to the medical  
7 center, when you go to your doctor's office and those  
8 people are working at \$10 an hour and they're single  
9 moms or whomever, that you get the best care possible  
10 and they're focused on you and -- and how they can take  
11 care of you, and then they can go home and take care of  
12 their families.

13 Thank you.

14 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Filley.  
15 Next, Dexter Handy, followed by Darren  
16 Wiler.

17 **MR. HANDY:** Good morning. My name is  
18 Dexter Handy, lieutenant colonel in the United States  
19 Air Force retired, and I'm the chair of the Greater  
20 Houston Coalition for Complete Streets, also chair of  
21 the Citizens Transportation Coalition.

22 The Citizens Transportation Coalition  
23 advocates transportation solutions which will approve --  
24 improve the quality of life. I live in Rice Military  
25 Division, which is located within City Council

1 District C.

2           The CTC, or Citizens Transportation  
3 Coalition, is guided by ten principles, and five of them  
4 apply to this project. Provide access for all, design  
5 Main Street to be safe for all people, provide passenger  
6 rail and mass transit, support creation of livable  
7 centers, increase the transparency and project  
8 accountability.

9           This project, in its current form,  
10 prevents serious concerns associated with these  
11 principles. I'll address the more visible ones this  
12 morning.

13           First, over 1,000 homes and 300 businesses  
14 will be affected. You've heard this already -- and I'm  
15 going to reiterate it -- displacing a vulnerable segment  
16 of our population and many of my fellow military  
17 Veterans.

18           As we do not see air quality measurement  
19 devices in this segment's geographic sector -- I go back  
20 to what happened in March -- this suggests that air  
21 quality has not been satisfactorily measured to  
22 establish a baseline for current air quality,  
23 construction phase air quality, and post-construction  
24 air quality in this area. How can we know how it's  
25 going to improve if we don't even have any measurement

1 devices there today, okay?

2 This project is supposed to produce  
3 pollution, but no measuring devices are in place and  
4 data available, if there is any, is not being made  
5 available to the public.

6 This project must be redesigned to  
7 mitigate new normals for flooding. You've heard that  
8 already. This project must be designed to accommodate,  
9 improve safety for all people, including folks with  
10 disabilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the new  
11 emerging micro-mobility vehicles; e-scooters, e-bikes,  
12 etcetera. The travel corridors must accommodate these  
13 mobility factors, all of them.

14 Finally, many of the public engagement  
15 sessions appear to suggest that TxDOT is exercising the  
16 illusion of inclusion. We feel like the public's  
17 concerns are being ignored and that pre-approved design  
18 will go forward with adverse effects to the environment  
19 and to the population.

20 Until these issues are satisfactorily  
21 addressed to this design, I ask that you-all delay this  
22 vote to fund Segment 2 of the North Highway Improvement  
23 Program until 2020.

24 Thank you very much.

25 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Handy.

1                   Next will be Harrison Humphreys, followed  
2 by Marlisa Briggs.

3                   **MR. HUMPHREYS:** Good morning, council  
4 members, staff. My name is Harrison Humphreys, and I'm  
5 a transportation policy advocate with Air Alliance  
6 Houston.

7                   This morning, though, I'm going to take  
8 off my Air Alliance hat and speak from my position as  
9 the co-lead of the Transportation Working Group for the  
10 City of Houston's Climate Action Plan.

11                  Just yesterday, the City unveiled the  
12 first complete draft of the plan. I'm proud to say that  
13 that was myself and many other experts, advocates,  
14 engineers, and concerned citizens invested into drafting  
15 a plan yielded a product worthy of admiration.

16                  The goals the plan lays out are ambitious,  
17 and they reflect the urgency warranted by the threat of  
18 climate change. In unveiling the draft plan, Mayor  
19 Turner clearly explained, quote, we can't fix the  
20 problem overnight, but if we take bold action to lead  
21 our city on a sustainable path, we'll leave a better  
22 Houston for future generations. The NHHIP in its  
23 current design runs contrary to the goals laid out by  
24 the major just yesterday. It is not bold, imaginative,  
25 nor sustainable.

1           First of all, one of the main tenets of  
2 the transportation portion of the Climate Action Plan  
3 calls on a mass reduction of vehicle miles traveled per  
4 capita by 2050. It would be counterproductive to spend  
5 the first 10 years of a 30-year time frame building a  
6 project that diametrically opposes the stated goals of  
7 the empty reduction.

8           Second, the CAP draft plan also calls on a  
9 drafted increase in transit ridership. As is pointed  
10 out in the last TAC meeting, there is no access points  
11 to METRO's Park & Ride for communities within Segment 2.  
12 So the arguments of the project will help transit  
13 ridership seem unfounded.

14           As one of the co-leads on the Climate  
15 Action Plan Transportation Working Group, as a lifelong  
16 Houstonian, but most importantly as a member of the  
17 first generation to experience the worst effects of the  
18 climate disaster, the short sidedness and lack of  
19 concern for how projects like this will affect future  
20 generations is frightening.

21           I've said it in this room and several  
22 others across the city. We cannot fix our congestion  
23 problem by continuing to do the same things that created  
24 the problems in the first place. We cannot build our  
25 way out of congestion. We cannot perpetually expand

1 highways. And we certainly will not achieve the Mayor's  
2 vision of a transportation paradigm shift or the lofty  
3 goals of the Climate Action Plan with projects like the  
4 NHHIP in its current form.

5 With that, I request that you move to  
6 delay the vote on funding the project until 2020.

7 Thank you.

8 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you,  
9 Mr. Humphreys.

10 Next, Marlisa Briggs, followed by Kevin  
11 Moore.

12 **MS. BRIGGS:** Good morning. I am Marlisa  
13 Briggs, executive director of the North Houston  
14 Association.

15 NHA is a regional organization that covers  
16 about 1300 square miles in North Harris County and  
17 Montgomery Counties. Our job and mission is to advocate  
18 for quality regional solutions that impact North  
19 Houston. We appreciate the opportunity today to speak  
20 on two agenda items. But right now, we'll speak on  
21 Agenda Item Number 8.

22 The North Houston Association urges  
23 passage of a resolution affirming the funding  
24 partnership for Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway  
25 Improvement Program and Mitigation of Adverse Community

1 Impacts. We have closely monitored this project for at  
2 least ten years. And we are confident that TxDOT is  
3 working to meet the expectations regarding public  
4 information and stakeholder engagement. In all, more  
5 than 270 public and stakeholder meetings have been held.  
6 And many project modifications have occurred as a  
7 result.

8 We're encouraged by the mitigation efforts  
9 outlined in the resolution and that we've heard spoken  
10 about today, which will result in improved air quality,  
11 public safety, aesthetics, and livability. We also  
12 support the ongoing public engagement of -- during the  
13 program. And we support the project as a whole.

14 Thank you.

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Briggs.

16 Next, I would invite Kevin Moore.

17 **MR. MOORE:** Hi. Good morning. Thank you  
18 for the opportunity to speak to you today.

19 I'm a 15-year resident in Eastwood,  
20 Houston's oldest planned community. I'm the president  
21 of the Eastwood Civic Association and (inaudible).  
22 We've represented a diverse community of about 2400  
23 homes in the Near East -- East Side.

24 Given our location, my residence will be  
25 primarily impacted by Segment 3. We are here, however,

1 to voice our support for those impacted by Segment 2,  
2 and we're requesting a delay in vote -- in the vote on  
3 Agenda Item 8.

4           Most of the points I intended to bring up  
5 today have already been shared by others, so I'm not  
6 going to rehash those. I do want to say that the  
7 impacts of the project others have shared flies in the  
8 face of everything Mayor Turner has said during his  
9 recent unveiling of the next phase of the Complete  
10 Communities Initiative. Based on that, we're a little  
11 bit disappointed in his support for the pro- -- for this  
12 vote.

13           It also goes counter to H-GAC's own  
14 Liveable Centers Programs of which our community is  
15 under study for participation in. We can't turn a blind  
16 eye to the values -- to these -- to those values by  
17 accepting this project as it stands.

18           Additionally, I want to point out that the  
19 mitigations we saw listed by TxDOT are almost all being  
20 assessed or will be considered. There is no firm  
21 commitment from them on any of these solutions, yet we  
22 are being asked to make a firm commitment to TxDOT.  
23 Until TxDOT can make firm commitments to resolving those  
24 issues, we should not make that firm commitment.

25           Again, I ask the council to delay the vote

1 until we can get a truly innovative solution that is in  
2 line with the values we claim to have as a city and  
3 community rather than the failure of imagination that is  
4 currently proposed.

5 Thank you.

6 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Moore.

7 Next will be Johnny Matz, followed by Bob  
8 Harvey.

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You mean Johnny --

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Johnny Potter?

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I may be -- may be  
12 mis- -- mispronouncing this. With the Greater  
13 Houston --

14 **MR. MATA:** That's me.

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** -- Coalition.

16 **MR. MATA:** A lot of people want to speak,  
17 so I -- you already have my -- the position that the  
18 Greater Houston Coalition for Justice has taken. The  
19 Greater Houston Coalition for Justice is a -- over 20  
20 civil rights organizations, national, state, and local.

21 I want to just kind of give you the -- the  
22 statement that you have that -- and ask you to follow  
23 your commitment that local government also initiates  
24 effort in anticipating and preventing problems.

25 And according to TexSTAR report itself --

1 I am not going to take the time, because you already  
2 heard about that report. And the report was real  
3 disenfranchising people of color, children, and -- and  
4 saying what the impact will be, you already heard it, so  
5 I don't want to be repetitious.

6 I just want to let you know that the  
7 community appeal of the organizations on our board has  
8 been to delay the scheduled vote. And you heard it with  
9 resounding voice.

10 What I did get today in this meeting is a  
11 chilling effect when the first thing off the bat, a  
12 motion to vote before hearing the people. And it gave  
13 me the impression of the fox guarding the henhouse.

14 Whether you are elected or an appointee,  
15 you're here to serve the community. I applaud all of  
16 these people that represent the community that have  
17 gotten you or others in office.

18 I will also say that I was disappointed  
19 with you, Mr. Chairman -- and this is not an attack.  
20 But Title VI of the Civil Rights Act wants to make sure,  
21 as a recipient of federal funds, all of you in your  
22 cities or wherever, in this agency, that you allow  
23 people to testify that don't speak English.

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's right.

25 **MR. MATA:** And you were denied -- they

1 were denied.

2 So with that, I will tell you, you've seen  
3 the numbers. And -- and if things don't go right -- I'm  
4 82 years old. I'm almost 50 years in the Civil Rights  
5 War. I'm a -- I was raised in Second Ward. I just got  
6 on -- on -- I was declared on remission from leukemia.  
7 In 204, I had prostate cancer. And living close to that  
8 industry and now we're about to plan more possibilities  
9 of more people being endangered environmental.

10 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

11 (Individuals speaking Spanish.)

12 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you, Johnny.

13 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Mr. Chairman, next is  
14 Delvin Dennis, followed by Randall Baxley.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I believe you  
16 had --

17 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'm sorry. Bob Harvey  
18 is next. My apologies.

19 **MR. HARVEY:** Thank you very much. Good  
20 morning, TPC members. Thank you for providing this time  
21 for community input.

22 I am Bob Harvey. I'm the president and  
23 CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership which advocates  
24 on behalf of the 11 county Greater Houston region.

25 As you-all know, the Houston metro is a

1 remarkably fast-growing and opportunity-rich region.  
2 We've added over a million to our population just since  
3 2010. Infrastructure is key to that continued growth  
4 and continued opportunity in Houston, as are great  
5 neighborhoods, green spaces, hike and bike trails, and  
6 all the other amenities that make Houston a great place  
7 to live and work.

8 I am here to speak in favor of the full  
9 resolution as presented by the staff on Item 8, which --

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

11 **MR. HARVEY:** -- would include and extend  
12 the funding partnership between the Transportation  
13 Policy Council and TxDOT for the implementation of  
14 Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway Improvement  
15 Program.

16 Approving the commitment of 100 million in  
17 Category 2 funds is important to demonstrate the  
18 region's desire to advance this critical infrastructure  
19 for the region and to leverage funding through TxDOT's  
20 2020 Unified Transportation Program, which as you've  
21 heard will be considered by the Texas Transportation  
22 Commission on August 29th.

23 We, the partnership, have been in  
24 discussions with Tex- -- TxDOT and others, and we  
25 understand that discussions between TxDOT, regional

1 partners, and impacted communities are ongoing and have  
2 been productive. We also understand that TxDOT is  
3 committed to address concerns in making appropriate  
4 adjustments, particularly as those concerns relate to  
5 right-of-way acquisition, noise and air pollution, flood  
6 mitigation, and mass transit.

7           The partnership believes that the North  
8 Houston Project is an important project that will  
9 enhance safety, mitigate congestion, decrease travel  
10 times through improved mobility and operational  
11 efficiency. It will also expand transit capacity and  
12 improve the image in economic development of our region.  
13 And it will do all this while maintaining effective  
14 evacuation routes.

15           Having the Transportation Policy Council  
16 as a local partner on this project will also allow for  
17 added project benefits, including additional funding for  
18 the implementation of important community identified  
19 measures that would mitigate potential adverse impacts.

20           For all these reasons, the partnership  
21 encourages you to approve the resolution as drafted by  
22 staff and presented as Item 8, committing 100 million in  
23 funding towards the implementation of Segment 2 of the  
24 North Houston Project.

25           Thank you very much for your time.

1                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Harvey.  
2                   Next will be Delvin Dennis, followed by  
3                   Randall Baxley.

4                   **MR. DENNIS:** Good morning, council  
5                   members. Yes, it is still morning.

6                   My name is Delvin Dennis. I am a vice  
7                   president with OTHON Engineering. I am here to speak in  
8                   unequivocal favor of this resolution put before you  
9                   today under Item 8 of your agenda packet.

10                  Also, I am here as -- my previous life, I  
11                  served 31 years for TxDOT all in the Houston District.  
12                  I retired as district engineer in 2011. And I'm here to  
13                  tell you that work on this project started before then,  
14                  okay? So this is not something that just started in the  
15                  last year or two.

16                  Earlier in my TxDOT career, I spent  
17                  significant time on Interstate 45 on the construction --  
18                  the initial construction on Interstate 45 from I-10 up  
19                  to Shepherd and then from Shepherd Drive up to Beltway 8  
20                  where the footprint of I-45 was widened, the  
21                  barrier-separated reversible HOV lane was put in place.  
22                  And I can guarantee it's carried millions of people and  
23                  vehicles since that time and has been a tremendous  
24                  benefit. So Interstate 45 in these limits has not seen  
25                  any reasonable increase in capacity for over 30 years.

1           Being a member of TPC is not an easy job,  
2 especially on days like today. I was an alternate  
3 voting member and a voting member of TPC for over  
4 13 years. So it has its moments. Each of you were  
5 selected by your county, by your city, by your interest  
6 organization to represent them on this important body.

7           The item before you is asking for  
8 a hundred-million to create a funding partnership with  
9 the Texas Department of Transportation for Segment 2. I  
10 heard comments this morning that talked about I-45 from  
11 Downtown Houston probably to halfway to Dallas. All  
12 we're talking about is Segment 2 from Interstate 10 to  
13 the North Loop. It's about four miles, okay?

14           And the Texas Transportation Commission  
15 has important action that will be before them in August  
16 with regard to an update to the Unified Transportation  
17 Program. All that information is in your -- is in your  
18 background information in your packet.

19           I am -- I am going to finish out by  
20 saying, I had the opportunity to work with County Judge  
21 Jim Yarbrough over the years. He's now Mayor Yarbrough  
22 for City of Galveston. But Judge Yarbrough had a  
23 favorite saying, and I think some of you around this  
24 table has probably already heard it. TxDOT is looking  
25 for partners --

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Point of order,  
2 Mr. Chairman.

3                   **MR. DENNIS:** -- not dependants.

4                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Dennis.

5                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We're quick to let  
6 the community know when their time is up. I think  
7 everybody should be subjected to the same rules.

8                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, sir, they are.

9                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you. We'll now  
10 invite Randall Baxley, followed by Andrea French.

11                   **MR. BAXLEY:** Hello. My name is Randall  
12 Baxley. I am a native Houstonian who lives in the Near  
13 Northside, which is part of the City Council District H,  
14 Harris County Precinct 2. And I rode the 700 and the 25  
15 to come here in morning, Ms. Patman.

16                   And I am asking you to delay the vote for  
17 funding of the NHHIP until TxDOT returns a complete  
18 plan, as well as an Environmental Impact Statement that  
19 answers the many comments made by our communities.

20                   The impact to our watersheds and marshes  
21 from Galveston Bay -- Galveston Bay, you here -- to the  
22 Brazos Valley -- Brazos Valley, are you here -- as well  
23 as in Hogg Park should not be ignored.

24                   This has been called a boondoggle because  
25 it is. It's been going for 20 years, and yet there's no

1 actual plan being presented to the community. 2500 or  
2 25,000 comments, pages and pages and pages and pages  
3 have been presented to TxDOT, yet TxDOT has not come  
4 with comments to the communities and to the  
5 representatives of these communities of which I am part.  
6 And that part being that part that is I-45 between 610  
7 and 10. We know where Segment 2 is. It's right there.  
8 It's right next door to Jefferson Elementary. It's  
9 right next door to Hogg Elementary. It's right next to  
10 25 other elementaries and schools that will be affected  
11 by this. And we know where it is. We do not want to be  
12 pan- -- pandered to as if we do not know where our  
13 freeway is.

14 I was born in this town. There were no  
15 freeways here when I was born. These freeways came  
16 through our neighborhoods. They destroyed our  
17 neighborhoods.

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

19 **MR. BAXLEY:** Thank you.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Good job. Good  
21 job.

22 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next will be Andrea  
23 French, followed by Stephanie Thomas.

24 **MS. FRENCH:** Good morning. I am Andrea  
25 French. I'm the executive director for the

1 Transportation Advocacy Group for the Houston Region,  
2 more commonly known as TAG. TAG's core mission is to  
3 attract additional funding for the Houston Region for  
4 the infrastructure needs that we have. We represent the  
5 eight county Houston Region. Our membership consists of  
6 over 140 companies, government agencies, management  
7 districts, nonprofits, community organizations, chambers  
8 of commerce, and individuals.

9 TAG Houston Region supports the approval  
10 of the H-GAC resolution affirming the funding  
11 partnership for Segment 2 of the North Houston Highway  
12 Improvement Program and the Mitigation of Adverse  
13 Community Impacts.

14 This project provides a solution to a  
15 critical component of our region's infrastructure  
16 challenges and is a result of many, many years of hard  
17 work and advocacy from our leaders and industry experts.  
18 We do you not want to risk losing this investment or  
19 sending a message to the State that this money should be  
20 utilized in other areas of the state. We have all  
21 worked much too hard.

22 TAG's core mission is funding  
23 infrastructure. We want funding for all modes and all  
24 projects designed to enhance and improve our  
25 connectivity and quality of life. We are extremely

1 sensitive to the concerns surrounding how this project  
2 can potentially impact communities, and we strongly  
3 support H-GAC's and the City of Houston's Planning and  
4 Development Department's efforts in promoting community  
5 involvement for this project.

6 We anticipate regular updates from TxDOT  
7 regarding mitigation of these concerns. We encourage  
8 continued public involvement that provides for  
9 meaningful cultural engagement to address community  
10 concerns. It is important to TAG to build public  
11 confidence in infrastructure projects, and we hope that  
12 effort is given its due importance now and in the  
13 future.

14 Thank you for your time.

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. French.

16 Next is Stephanie Thomas, followed by  
17 Jessica Wiggins.

18 **MS. THOMAS:** Good morning, Council. My  
19 name is Dr. Stephanie Thomas. And I work with an  
20 organization called Public Citizen. We are a public  
21 interest group. And here in Texas, we focus on energy,  
22 the environment, and ethics.

23 First, I'd like to say, thank you for  
24 allowing me this opportunity to speak because public  
25 participation is the lifeblood of democracy.

1           Second, I also want to acknowledge that I  
2 am here representing my organization, but I also reside  
3 in City Council District H, Karla Cisneros' district,  
4 and I'm part of Precinct 2. And about a mile from where  
5 I live is Bruce Elementary School.

6           So several schools through this project  
7 will be placed about -- about 500 feet within the  
8 proximity of the highway. And if you know about air  
9 quality, those schools will be more subject to greater  
10 amounts of air pollution, potentially impacting the  
11 health of students. And places like Bruce Elementary  
12 School already have high rates of asthma. So this is  
13 particularly detrimental to those students, to our  
14 youth.

15           And I also want to echo some of the  
16 comments that I heard earlier. I have also been part of  
17 the working groups around the City of Houston's Climate  
18 Action Plan. And one of the things that we really need  
19 to be focusing our attention on is getting people out of  
20 cars, finding other ways to move people around our area  
21 that do not pollute, that do not create harmful  
22 greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air  
23 pollutants that are impacting our -- our health, our  
24 livelihood, and could even threaten the region in much,  
25 much greater ways.

1 I've heard some of the people supporting  
2 this project as it stands talk about progress. But we  
3 have to ask the question, of whose progress? Are we  
4 building highways at the expense of our communities?  
5 Because if so, we need to rethink our plan. And I ask  
6 you to delay this vote because we need to have more  
7 answers before moving forward.

8 Thank you.

9 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

10 Next up will be Jessica Wiggins, followed  
11 by Simone Kern.

12 **MS. WIGGINS:** Hello. My name is Jessica  
13 Wiggins. I'm with the advocacy organization Bike  
14 Houston. I will cover two topics, safety and  
15 connectivity.

16 According to TxDOT's crash information  
17 system, there have been 424 crashes involving people on  
18 bikes and walking crossing I-45 or using the feeder road  
19 since 2010 in the city of Houston alone. 75 of those  
20 people involved in those crashes were killed. Despite  
21 the loss of life, TxDOT did not include any analysis of  
22 bike or pedestrian fatalities in their safety analysis  
23 or claims. If TxDOT is going to make claims of  
24 improving safety, we need to include all people and all  
25 road users.

1           On the basis of connectivity, TxDOT openly  
2 reports that direct impacts to mobility -- please listen  
3 to this -- may include restricted access to community  
4 facilities and businesses, increase cut-through traffic  
5 in residential areas, restricted access to pedestrian  
6 and bicycle routes, and reduction of transit services.  
7 That statement alone negates the concept and fundamental  
8 purpose of transportation investment entirely. It's  
9 like listening to a commercial for a new drug for  
10 headaches and learning that the side effects are worse  
11 headaches and death.

12           Bike Houston opposes this highway  
13 initiative on the basis of safety and connectivity. We  
14 need infrastructure investment desperately in our city,  
15 but will not accept a project that fundamentally  
16 disregards the local street network and puts our most  
17 vulnerable road users' lives in danger.

18           You have a responsibility to delay this  
19 vote and explore other options for safe and equitable  
20 mobility. Thank you.

21           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Now we'll hear from  
22 Simone Kern, followed by Molly Cook.

23           **MS. KERN:** Here we go. It's our turn.

24           All right. My name is Simone Kern. I'm a  
25 resident of Idylwood neighborhood. I've been here

1 entertaining a toddler through this very long meeting  
2 for her future and because we all need to think about  
3 the future of the children of this city and where we're  
4 going to be decades down the line because this project  
5 will impact our city for decades.

6 After Hurricane Harvey, the people of this  
7 city expected bold leadership to keep our city viable in  
8 the face of the climate change that is on our doorstep.  
9 I still live in a Harvey-damaged house. I'm seriously  
10 worried what the city will be like when Ramona is an  
11 adult. It may be uninhabitable because it's just  
12 completely under water or because it's unbearably hot  
13 during the summers. They get hotter and hotter every  
14 year.

15 \$7 billion for a wider highway is not the  
16 kind of bold, courageous leadership that we expect from  
17 our elected officials. A wider highway means more  
18 pollution, more dangerous roads, more suburban sprawl,  
19 which means more development, which means more flooding  
20 of our homes, and increasing the carbon emissions that  
21 are literally destroying life on Earth. Experts say it  
22 won't even reduce traffic. It'll be just like I-10.

23 So we know that this can only benefit the  
24 developers who stand to profit --

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

1           **MS. KERN:** -- off of more construction  
2 and any corrupt politicians who stand to get kickbacks  
3 from them.

4           We could use \$7 billion of which this 100  
5 million is the first drop to build a green public  
6 transit system to connect all the neighborhoods of  
7 Houston and truly make this a great city to live in. We  
8 can connect the city through greenways that will offset  
9 flooding and cool the city and absorb air pollution.

10           But \$7 billion for a wider highway is not  
11 it. This plan demonstrates a total lack of vision,  
12 imagination, or courage, dooming our city to a bleak  
13 future. We demand that you go back to the drawing board  
14 and come up with a much better plan for the future of  
15 our city. And if you're going to spend billions of  
16 Texan taxpayer dollars on a public works project, please  
17 show some vision and make it count.

18           Thank you.

19           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Kern.

20           Next will be Molly Cook, followed by Etie  
21 Parat.

22           **MS. COOK:** My name is Molly Cook. I live  
23 in District C in Montrose. I am an ER nurse in the  
24 Texas Medical Center. And I have a master's of public  
25 health.

1 I grew up in Spring and went to high  
2 school in The Woodlands. My parents have a home on Lake  
3 Conroe. I have a very vested interest in improving  
4 efficiency on 45. I grew up on it. And I urge you to  
5 delay the vote. I do not support the expansion of  
6 Interstate 45 and certainly not the plans as they stand  
7 today.

8 The project as it stands, we've discussed  
9 it. It's going to uproot families, tear apart  
10 communities, and destroy thousands of jobs. We know  
11 that change and progress come at a cost. But this is  
12 neither change nor progress. It's not even going to  
13 work for the main problem that it is saying that it's  
14 going to fix. We know that it does not solve  
15 congestion, and we know that it will only put more cars  
16 on the road to expand it. This is a repetition of our  
17 past mistakes. And there is no evidence that it will  
18 work.

19 Using the 100-year floodplain in the  
20 design is an insult to families and first responders who  
21 suffered and risked their lives during Harvey. We know  
22 better. Let's do better.

23 What are we doing? Freeway expansion is  
24 not the future of Houston. All of us driving alone in  
25 our cars is not the future of Houston. Yes, we do need

1 to get people around. Yes, we do need to improve carbon  
2 emissions. Idling is not worse for the environment.  
3 Moving cars quickly is worse for the environment. In  
4 addition, moving more cars more quickly is actually way  
5 more dangerous. So it can't -- it just doesn't make  
6 sense that it would improve safety or have positive  
7 effects in climate change and reducing carbon emissions  
8 with the plans as they stand today.

9 We in Houston want creative evidence-based  
10 equitable traffic solutions that prioritize improving  
11 environmental justice in Houston and mitigating the  
12 effects of climate change.

13 Thank you.

14 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Cook.

15 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we'll have at a  
16 Etie Parat, followed by Alejandro Perfair.

17 **MR. PEREZ:** Perez.

18 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Perfair -- thank you.  
19 Prevare [sic].

20 **MR. PARAT:** Good morning. Thank you for  
21 your attention. My name is Etie Parat. I live south of  
22 the Medical Center. So while we're all going to be  
23 impacted by this project, I'm not going to be directly  
24 in the way of the expansion, so I would like to offer my  
25 take.

1 I first came to Houston and the -- and the  
2 U.S. in the year 2000. Since then, I went -- I met my  
3 wife here. She's a native Houstonian. I graduated from  
4 the University of Houston studying civil and  
5 environmental engineering.

6 And I want to express two main concerns I  
7 have with this project. The first one is that the  
8 people that will be physically impacted by this, many of  
9 them are sitting here. They're not being heard. And I  
10 think that's obvious. That's why this crowd is here.

11 When I think of an equitable and  
12 transparent process of infrastructure investment, this  
13 is not it. I think people need to be heard. We need to  
14 take the time to address their concerns.

15 My second concern is with our strategies  
16 for developing as a region. We're about to -- we're  
17 proposing to invest massive amounts of public funding  
18 for a project that is essentially doomed to fail. We  
19 know this. Expanding highways don't work. We can look  
20 at the Katy Freeway and see that congestion has  
21 increased.

22 More than that, when -- as -- as a member  
23 of the young generation that will inherit this city with  
24 all its flaws, with all its potential, I want  
25 innovative -- I want to see innovative solutions to our

1 mobility needs. I don't want to see a region and a city  
2 that prioritizes roads over people. And I think we can  
3 do better.

4 Thank you.

5 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, Alejandro Prevare.

6 **MR. PEREZ:** Perez.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Perez. Thank you.

8 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

9 **MR. PEREZ:** Buenos dias, everybody. Good  
10 morning. Thank you guys for allowing me to speak here  
11 today.

12 There is different ways of getting around  
13 the city of Houston. One common bond that everybody  
14 probably has here is that we love this city. It was  
15 mentioned earlier that we love Texas. I love Texas too.  
16 And with that love for this city, what does the city  
17 have is diversity. Diversity is the core of what  
18 Houston is. And because of that, there is also -- those  
19 people, I think, who are diverse have different ways of  
20 getting around town, all right? Not everybody drives a  
21 car. Not everybody rides the bus or ride a bike or use  
22 Uber. I mean, all these different ways of getting  
23 around town is what this city needs. We do not need  
24 more concrete expansion projects to get cars through  
25 town and for people who don't -- really don't live here.

1           So, you know, I rode my bike today from  
2 here. And I live in District H up in Northline Commons.  
3 It took me an hour to get here, but I rode my bike  
4 because I know it's possible. And because it's  
5 possible -- not a lot of people feel that way. And I  
6 know there's a safety concern with that. You know, I  
7 have my lights. I have my helmet. And I'll make sure  
8 I'll be seen because that's the only thing I have for  
9 people who drive cars and know nothing but cars can kind  
10 of give me some sort of consideration, all right?  
11 Bright colors and all that. And, you know, this project  
12 the way it stands, it's -- it's -- it's addressing --  
13 not addressing connectivity.

14           My main issue was -- living in that area  
15 is how the 45 expansion is going to mitigate the issue  
16 of the Light Rail when they're putting feeders through  
17 that Light Rai; I've -- I've -- I've gone to meetings  
18 since 2017. This is when I first heard of it. And I --  
19 every time I go to these meetings, I ask the same  
20 question. I have not gotten any answers on that. And,  
21 I mean, what -- what -- I mean, it's been asked  
22 earlier -- or it's been mentioned earlier. This  
23 community has been submitting feedback. We have not  
24 heard any -- any responses to that feedback. And for  
25 this vote to go up today, you know, for more funding to

1 go ahead and move on without addressing what we've been  
2 concerned about is like -- you know, it's what's --  
3 what's next, right? I mean, if people vote for this  
4 today -- if you guys vote for this today, what would we  
5 be in the future with -- with connectivity? And people  
6 who want to move here and connect. I mean, it's an  
7 attractive city. People come here regardless of the --  
8 of the transportation infrastructure that's pretty bad.  
9 So, you know, why not make it better for them and the  
10 people who already live here?

11 Thank you.

12 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Perez.

13 Next, Laila Khalili, followed by Beth  
14 Lusto.

15 **MS. KHALILI:** Good morning. My name is  
16 Laila Khalili, and I work at Avenue.

17 I am here to ask that this body delay the  
18 vote to give \$100 million to fund Segment 2 of the  
19 NHHIP. This decision-making body is one that many  
20 people are not familiar with. People know who their  
21 council member is, and maybe they know about  
22 commissioners court. But most folks don't know that 28  
23 people from elected and appointed positions across a  
24 13-county region make major transit decisions that  
25 impact their quality of life.

1           In my work, I spend a lot of time with  
2 community members providing training, resources, and  
3 information on how they can get involved, how they can  
4 be heard, and how they can help make their community in  
5 Houston a better place to live.

6           At Avenue, we believe that communities  
7 know what they need to survive and to thrive and that  
8 residents are experts in what works for their  
9 neighborhoods. I'm sure many of you have heard the  
10 phrase, "The people who are closest to the payment are  
11 closest to the solutions." And I believe that is true  
12 here today.

13           Part of our (inaudible) work is to ensure  
14 that residents have the support and resources to create  
15 the neighborhoods they want and deserve. And that  
16 requires us to listen and then to act.

17           Today, many residents have shown up to  
18 advocate for their neighbors, their schools, and for  
19 their families. They took time off from work,  
20 carpoled, and prepared to come here perhaps for the  
21 very first time. For months and in some cases years,  
22 community leaders have been fighting to have their  
23 voices heard offering ideas, suggestions, and giving  
24 their time to do intentional community engagement around  
25 this project so that Houstonians know what is happening

1 to their communities. Please hear them. Listen to  
2 their concerns. For thousands of people, their homes,  
3 jobs, schools, health, and the very air they breathe are  
4 at risk.

5 Your power comes from your constituents,  
6 and they are doing everything they can to make a  
7 difference. Please delay the vote.

8 Thank you.

9 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you. Next, Beth  
10 Lusto, followed by Fabian Ramirez.

11 **MS. LUSTO:** Good morning. My name is  
12 Beth Lusto. I'm a resident of the Near Northside, which  
13 is in District H and, as you probably know, borders the  
14 east side of Segment 2.

15 There are -- we've heard quite a few  
16 speakers. I'll try not to duplicate the many points  
17 that have been raised and instead choose to focus on  
18 one. And that is connectivity.

19 But as we've all heard, the vast majority  
20 of speakers that you've heard today -- I wasn't  
21 counting -- but are urging you to delay the vote to  
22 2020. I've counted five so far who were -- were not in  
23 favor. I question whether any of those five people are  
24 directly impacted versus being employed and -- by  
25 entities that stand to benefit, but that don't reside in

1 the area.

2 Please, I urge you to listen to the  
3 residents, the impacted families over the voices of PR  
4 professionals. They're greatly outnumbered. There's a  
5 reason that -- I don't know -- 100 or more people took  
6 off half a day of work to be here desperate to have our  
7 voices heard. So I urge you to listen.

8 As I said, I'm going to speak to the  
9 connectivity issue. It's certainly not the most  
10 important. I mean, obviously, displacement, pollution,  
11 flooding, these are all giant issues.

12 But on the subject of connectivity, this  
13 plan, as planned, would create an almost mile-long  
14 barrier, spoke essentially that radiates from the north  
15 side of the fourth largest city, soon to be third, in  
16 the country, a wall -- an almost mile-long wall straight  
17 out of the north side of the city that is impassable.  
18 You have dense populations on both sides, and you've  
19 just built a wall through those populations with zero  
20 connectivity. It's -- I'm not an urban planning  
21 professional, but it doesn't take one to understand that  
22 that is a terrible idea.

23 Like many have spoken before, I just urge  
24 you to delay this vote. We've heard a lot of talk about  
25 mobility. Whose mobility? Not mine. And it's not a

1 coincidence that the wall that's going to be built is  
2 going to disproportionately negatively impact those on  
3 the east side, a population that has been historically  
4 underserved and will be further alienated and prevented  
5 from accessing amenities on the west side. And it's not  
6 a coincidence.

7 I urge you to delay the vote.

8 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you. Fabian  
9 Ramirez, followed by Phillip Salerno.

10 **MR. RAMIREZ:** Hello, everyone. My name  
11 is Fabian Ramirez. I'm here to ask the -- the  
12 Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation Policy to  
13 delay approving \$100 million --

14 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

15 **MR. RAMIREZ:** Yeah. I'm asking to -- the  
16 Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation to delay  
17 approving \$100 million for the NHHIP TxDOT until next  
18 year. This will allow TxDOT to address more concerns of  
19 the citizens from the communities that are here today.

20 One of the main reasons I wanted to ask  
21 for this is because as a native Houstonian who graduated  
22 from the University of Houston-Downtown as a structural  
23 engineer and also worked as a structural engineer for an  
24 oil and gas subsidy development, I know for a fact that  
25 no matter how old the drawings are, no matter how long

1 the project has been in development, when an error has  
2 been detected, it's an engineer's ethical responsibility  
3 to address those issues. And I think there's a lot of  
4 them here today. For that very same reason, I think  
5 this needs to be delayed. It doesn't make any sense.

6 From a sustainable -- sustainable point of  
7 view, Houston deserves to be an energy leading com- --  
8 city. I mean, there's all different types of man --  
9 mass transportation alternatives. This is not the way  
10 to go.

11 Thank you.

12 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Phillip Salerno will be  
13 our next speaker, followed by Mary Schultz -- Schultz.

14 **MR. SALERNO:** Good morning, members of  
15 the Houston-Galveston Area Council Transportation Policy  
16 Council. My name is Phillip Salerno, and I serve on the  
17 board of the Citizens Transportation Coalition as the  
18 treasurer. I live in the Forrest Lake Townhomes where I  
19 serve as vice president and treasurer, which is within  
20 City Council District C. And I also served on the H-GAC  
21 High Capacity Transit Task Force.

22 All highway and, for that matter, city  
23 street projects should include multimodal high-capacity  
24 transit at the beginning of each of these projects. No  
25 longer should residents of the city core sacrifice their

1 land, homes, places of worship, businesses, and  
2 communities for a shorter commute. The NHHIP, aka the  
3 I-45 project, will provide bidirectional HOV max lanes  
4 that will allow METRO the opportunity to provide bus  
5 rapid transit, BRT in the service corridor. But at what  
6 cost to the residents, businesses, and communities along  
7 that corridor? Should the taxes paid by the residents  
8 and businesses along this corridor be used to further  
9 isolate and divide these communities?

10 Remember, these aren't TxDOT's -- TxDOT  
11 dollars spent on this project. They are taxes paid by  
12 the people. Citizens across the city are asking, why is  
13 this project necessary? What will this project really  
14 do to improve their lives and their mobility?

15 TxDOT and the City of Houston need to  
16 continue and complete real community involvement in this  
17 project. The TPC recently formed a committee to review  
18 project selections -- project selection and its ranking  
19 criteria. The last call for projects was just completed  
20 a couple of months ago. The I-45 project has been in  
21 process for years, and yet TxDOT failed to submit the  
22 funding request during the recent call for projects.

23 For all of these reasons, I ask you to  
24 delay the vote to fund Segment 2 of the NHI -- NHHIP  
25 until 2020. Thank you for your time.

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Good job, Phillip.

2                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Now we invite Mary  
3 Schultz, followed by Carol Kern.

4                   **MS. SCHULTZ:** Good morning,  
5 transportation Policy Committee, and thank you for this  
6 opportunity.

7                   My name is Mary Schultz. I am a member of  
8 the Norhill Neighborhood Association in the Houston  
9 Heights and also of several organizations that are  
10 concerned about how climate change is threatening us in  
11 the city of Houston. I am in City Council District H  
12 under Karla Cisneros. And Rodney Ellis is my county  
13 commissioner.

14                   I'm here today to ask you to delay the  
15 vote until 2020 of the idea of funding the I-45 TxDOT  
16 plan. Actually, everything that I wanted to say has  
17 been very eloquently said already by a number of people,  
18 so I am not going to repeat it. I am just going to say  
19 one thing. Climate change is here, and it is  
20 accelerating. We are going to have more floods if we  
21 don't do serious work to take carbon emissions out of  
22 our atmosphere. By the middle of the century, we are  
23 going to have one-third of our days of the year under  
24 the heat index of 100 degrees plus. That's just a fact.

25                   So I think that the City of Houston knows

1 this. The Mayor knows this. And we've already heard  
2 about the excellent work being done on the Climate  
3 Action Plan. We know that there's been work done to  
4 connect a lot of communities with Complete Communities  
5 connecting them to resources and to each other.  
6 However, we're seeing also that the TxDOT plan for I-45  
7 unintentionally sabotages all of these goals to protect  
8 citizens from climate change and from the effects of  
9 climate change, which will increase.

10 So there are -- and also I want to say  
11 that it -- it is based on a process that is connected  
12 with the past. It's the same pattern of building roads  
13 is the only solution to moving people around. And that  
14 may have worked fairly well so far. But as younger  
15 members of our audience here today have said really  
16 well, we need to be thinking of the future. We want to  
17 be the outstanding city of the country. We already have  
18 a template in the Climate Action Plan.

19 So let's use this opportunity with TxDOT,  
20 delay the vote. Then give them a chance to build in  
21 more innovative ideas and to take -- and to not include  
22 covering our porous spaces with more cement to the  
23 extent that we're going to have more flooding.

24 Thank you.

25 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, let me invite

1 Carol Kern, followed by Nancy Saibara-Naritomi Tony.

2 **MS. KERN:** Good morning. I made it  
3 before the morning. So here I am. My name is Carol  
4 Kern, a con- -- a concerned citizen, taxpayer, and  
5 homeowner in the Near Northside. I represent North  
6 Lindale Civic Club. I -- my representative is in  
7 District H.

8 And I am here to ask the word of the day.  
9 The word of the day is value. We assign a value to  
10 anything that we buy. I want to ask you that -- to  
11 please delay the vote of \$100 million down payment on  
12 this massive infrastructure project.

13 TxDOT is still waiting for federal  
14 approval to move forward. Why is it a good business  
15 practice to put down a down payment when you don't have  
16 all the reports? I mean, seriously. It is -- I mean,  
17 nobody goes and buys a car and only three tires are on  
18 it. Where is the other tire, you know?

19 So it is my understanding that also you  
20 have not received the air quality study, which is due in  
21 January of 2020. What is the value that you put on your  
22 health?

23 All I am asking is, do not rush into a  
24 vote with all -- without all the facts. Why would you  
25 not consider the flooding issues, the displacement of

1 citizens in low-income areas to benefit commuters who  
2 have chosen to move out into the surrounding areas?

3 Let's review. This project was presented  
4 in 2003. Sixteen years later, our objectives have all  
5 changed. All the reports are now in -- not in yet, and  
6 we value -- we -- please help us weigh the value of one  
7 choice over another. I ask respectfully, choose today  
8 to delay this vote until 2020 when all the facts are in.  
9 Please do not put the cart before the horse.

10 Thank you.

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we have Nancy  
12 Saibara-Naritomi, followed by Sara Montelongo.

13 MS. SAIBARA-NARITOMI: Hello. My name is  
14 Nancy Saibara-Naritomi. I'm third-generation Japanese  
15 born and raised in Pasadena, Texas, about 13 blocks away  
16 from 225. I was coughing all the time I lived in  
17 Pasadena, but now I live in Sharpstown. And by chance,  
18 because I'm a volunteer at 90.1 FM KPFT Pacifica for ten  
19 years, a fellow board member told me, "Hey, Air Alliance  
20 is having a breakfast on Thursday morning. Would you  
21 like to go and find out about I-45 expansion?" I said,  
22 "I never heard about that," you know, because I'm always  
23 listening to the radio, KPFT, and I don't listen to  
24 television.

25 And I was shocked. And I was so

1 appreciative of Air Alliance for doing so much research,  
2 especially health -- the -- the impact on health and on  
3 the already challenged communities there that are living  
4 right there.

5           You've got to put yourself in those  
6 people's homes and how they're using air filters if they  
7 can afford it, but still coughing and -- and coming to  
8 Air Alliance breakfast meeting and with their weak voice  
9 trying to say, you know, they're -- they're worried  
10 about the future, about the children. Are y'all?

11           Okay. I lived 27 years in Japan. And  
12 they do not have the option to expand anything because  
13 70 percent of the country is mountains. So they just  
14 don't have the room. All the cemeteries are way up in  
15 the mountains. You know, it's very -- and then they  
16 don't -- they have like two or three oil companies. So  
17 they don't have cheap gasoline.

18           When I left in 2006, it was -- for one  
19 quart -- one liter -- one quart of gasoline was a dollar  
20 and 37 cents U.S. dollar. So you understand not too  
21 many cars and not -- a lot of bicycles, a lot of  
22 walking, subways, public transportation. It runs on  
23 time, not like in Houston. And you miss that -- you  
24 miss that bus or that bus driver goes a little bit too  
25 fast, and you've got to wait for 30 minutes to get the

1 next bus.

2 And so, anyway -- sorry. I -- I lost my  
3 car, my gas-guzzling car, and -- and I've been on public  
4 transportation now for -- since 2017. So you learn a  
5 lot of things.

6 There's a lot of improvements we can make.  
7 You know, when compared with Japan, everything is on  
8 time. And here it's awful. And we -- we -- Houston,  
9 we're in a fantastic city with so many people.  
10 Different thinking is coming in. We're the most -- what  
11 is it -- diverse city in the United States. Now we beat  
12 New York City. They can't have -- they can't brag that  
13 anymore. And guess what? The other big cities, they're  
14 dying. We are growing. We can be a template for the  
15 whole nation. Come on. Don't do this. Do something  
16 better.

17 Thank you.

18 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we'll have Sara  
19 Montelongo, followed by Monte Large.

20 **MS. MONTELONGO:** Good afternoon. My name  
21 is Sara Montelongo, and I am the district director for  
22 State Senator Carol Alvarado, who is an ex officio  
23 member of this council.

24 On her behalf, I would like to read the  
25 following letter that was sent to Commissioner Clark

1 earlier this week.

2 "Dear Commissioner Clark and members, I am  
3 writing to request that you postpone the scheduled vote  
4 of the H-GAC Transportation Policy Council regarding the  
5 \$100 million in funding for the current I-45 project.  
6 This is an important project, and we all want to see it  
7 done well.

8 "At this time, a vote to approve federal  
9 funds may be premature in light of the many concerns  
10 expressed by my constituents. I realize that TxDOT is  
11 working very hard to address our concerns; however,  
12 issues regarding flooding, bike and pedestrian  
13 crossings, air quality, and neighborhood history still  
14 remain. Postponing this vote would not only increase  
15 the level of trust of residents. It will enhance the  
16 overall outcome by increasing the likelihood of  
17 community support.

18 "I appreciate your consideration of my  
19 request.

20 "Sincerely, Carol Alvarado, State Senator  
21 District 6 and Ex Officio Member of the H-GAC TPC."

22 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Sara.

23 Next will be Monte Large, followed by  
24 Susan Chadwick.

25 **MR. LARGE:** Hello. Thank you for the

1 opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Monte  
2 Large. I am here with my wife and eight-month-old baby  
3 girl who -- I don't know where they went. They  
4 disappeared somewhere. But we live in the Near  
5 Northside just north of the U of H-Downtown where the  
6 proposed new highway interchange would move about a  
7 thousand feet closer to our house, covering or  
8 eliminating most or all the green space along White Oak  
9 Bayou next to where we live.

10 I am here to ask you today to delay the  
11 vote for \$100 million. Under the current plan, not only  
12 would our family lose our neighborhood park. It would  
13 bring the (inaudible) close to our house and within 500  
14 feet, a distance the EPA deemed the danger zone, of the  
15 schools our daughter will likely attend.

16 While losing precious green space to  
17 massive freeways would be devastating, our biggest  
18 concern is air quality. I am here to give voice to one  
19 of the often abstract effects of freeways in our  
20 communities. I grew up here in Houston a few blocks  
21 away from a freeway and was, unfortunately, one of those  
22 kids the statistics cite. As a young man, I was  
23 diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, and after a tough  
24 battle am luckily in remission now. Hodgkin's is a  
25 cancer associated with environmental factors such as air

1 pollution and particulate matter from freeways. And  
2 while my wife and I are certainly concerned about our  
3 own health, we are most concerned about our daughter who  
4 would be especially at risk.

5 Please delay the vote for the \$100 million  
6 and give TxDOT the time to address our concerns and the  
7 concerns raised by our neighbors, the people here, and  
8 those living in the other neighborhoods along the  
9 project corridor.

10 Thank you.

11 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Monte.

12 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

13 Susan Chadwick, followed by Reagan Lutter.

14 **MS. CHADWICK:** Good afternoon. My name  
15 is Susan Chadwick. I am president and executive  
16 director of Save Buffalo Bayou. We are a nonprofit  
17 organization advocating for people and the national  
18 environment, for modern flood management practice.  
19 Modern practice is based on understanding how nature  
20 works.

21 Through that advocacy, I've come to  
22 understand that streams are like highways. People think  
23 that if you just make streams bigger, deeper, and wider,  
24 it will solve our flooding. But it doesn't. It just  
25 makes flooding worse. Like building bigger highways, it

1 doesn't solve congestion. It just makes it worse.  
2 These are scientific facts. As members of the  
3 Transportation Policy Council, you are surely aware of  
4 these facts.

5 Others here today have spoken to you most  
6 eloquently about the overwhelming damage that this  
7 misguided project will cause to our city, to  
8 neighborhoods, businesses, homes, schools, and churches,  
9 to the physical and environmental health of our people,  
10 to our tax base and productivity, to our general future.

11 At this time, as the Houston-Galveston  
12 region is faced with the dire consequences of climate  
13 change in the form of increased and more frequent storms  
14 and more and more flooding threatening our very  
15 existence, this project is a particularly bad turn in  
16 the wrong direction; more cars on the road, more  
17 congestion, more flooding, more carbon emissions.

18 I am a native Houstonian. I grew up here.  
19 Our highways are never finished. They could never be  
20 big and wide enough. We are being buried in concrete.  
21 We need the option, the freedom to use our valuable time  
22 letting someone else drive, meeting and communicating  
23 with others from all walks of life on trains, buses, and  
24 sidewalks rather than sitting alone going nowhere in  
25 cars. Spend our tax dollars on mass transit.

1 I see no benefit from this backwards  
2 project except to the concrete companies, one of the  
3 most polluting industries on earth, to construction and  
4 engineering companies.

5 It's time to vote for the people. I urge  
6 you -- I urge you not to delay a vote on wasting 100  
7 million of the people's money on this destructive  
8 project. I urge you to reject it outright, just say no.

9 Thank you.

10 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next we'll hear from  
11 Reagan Lutter, followed by Diane Pfeifer.

12 **MS. LUTTER:** Good morning, Council. My  
13 name is Reagan Lutter, and I am a law student at the  
14 University of Houston. I am speaking today on behalf of  
15 Bayou City Waterkeeper, a local nonprofit organization  
16 that uses law, policy, and science to protect and  
17 restore waterways, preserve wetlands, and fight for  
18 resilience from flooding for communities in the Harris  
19 County and Greater Houston area.

20 Bayou City Waterkeeper joins the  
21 organizations and community members here today to  
22 request that the council delay its vote on this  
23 resolution. Respectfully, this vote is premature.  
24 TxDOT must take more time to address and problem-solve  
25 the many concerns raised by people living in

1 neighborhoods along the project corridor.

2           Along with the many concerns raised by the  
3 organizations and individuals before you today, TxDOT  
4 must account for how this project will worsen flooding.  
5 For instance, Segment 2 will convert up to 27 acres of  
6 much needed open space to impermeable concrete. Adding  
7 more concrete to this area will increase runoff into our  
8 already burdened drainage system and worsen both local  
9 and pass-through flooding in the area. Further, many of  
10 the schools along I-45 are already in areas ranked by  
11 FEMA as most prone to flooding. Through this project,  
12 TxDOT should address, not exacerbate, this flooding.

13           Using the more accurate data gathered  
14 after Hurricane Harvey, TxDOT must show this project  
15 will not worsen flooding for area communities. TxDOT  
16 must show that this project will not undermine local  
17 efforts to make the Greater Houston region more  
18 resilient to flooding, including Harris County's  
19 \$2.5 billion flood bond initiative.

20           This council should not vote on this  
21 resolution until TxDOT addresses these serious flooding  
22 concerns. This council also should not vote until TxDOT  
23 evaluates and accounts for how increased runoff from the  
24 expanded highway will degrade local water quality. As a  
25 result of this project, more floatables and more

1 pollutants will enter the TCEQ Section 303(d) impaired  
2 waters of Buffalo Bayou, White Oak Bayou, and Little Oak  
3 Bayou.

4 This project should leave us and future  
5 generations better off, not make our already impaired  
6 waters even more polluted. TxDOT must show this project  
7 will not undercut the City of Houston's recent  
8 \$2 billion commitment to improve water quality by  
9 repairing its wastewater infrastructure. Until TxDOT  
10 addresses these concerns about the impact of Segment 2  
11 on local water quality, this council's vote is  
12 premature. The TxDOT I-45 expansion seriously threatens  
13 flood resiliency and water quality.

14 We urge the council to delay its vote on  
15 this resolution to allow TxDOT more time to address the  
16 public's concerns.

17 Thank you for having me today.

18 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

19 Next will be Di- -- next will be Diane  
20 Pfeifer, followed by Abigail Cavenja.

21 **MS. PFEIFER:** Good afternoon. Wow.  
22 We've transitioned to the middle of the day here.

23 Thank you. I'm Diana Lerma Pfeifer. I  
24 live in Lindale Park, a current civic club president. I  
25 am a native Houstonian. And I've lived inside the Loop

1 my entire life. I work downtown, and so being inner  
2 city is special to me. But I am here to say that, of  
3 course, I'm asking for the delay. I'm wearing it on my  
4 chest because that's where I feel it the most, in my  
5 heart.

6 I saw on your website that you have a  
7 program that's called Our Great Region 2040. And in  
8 that, it states, "The plan will call to make us one of  
9 the greatest places to live, to work, and to succeed by  
10 2040."

11 Well, I'm here to tell you today, Friday,  
12 July the 26th of 2019, if you don't look at what we're  
13 doing today, there will be no future. There will be no  
14 success in 2040.

15 Right now today, we're making a decision  
16 that will cost us 24,000 jobs. I'm looking at each one  
17 of you wondering how long and hard you have worked for  
18 your community to get jobs, to get people to come there  
19 to work, to live. How many of you have built schools in  
20 your neighborhood? And now you want to take our  
21 schools, 26 schools, and make them within 500 feet of a  
22 freeway. How safe is that for our children? How --  
23 well, what is -- what about their well-being? That's  
24 our future. Our future in 2040 calls for those very  
25 children to be working in this city, be going to our

1 colleges, to becoming maybe someone like you. And if we  
2 take away that opportunity, what have we done today? So  
3 there is no way that you can possibly believe that you  
4 are looking to make a great region in 2040 and be  
5 considering this plan. There's just no way.

6 We're asking you to use your mind. If you  
7 won't use your heart, use your mind. Remember the  
8 numbers. They're huge. 24,000 jobs, over 5,000  
9 families being displaced, 26 elementary schools that  
10 will be affected directly by this. Look at the numbers.  
11 More concrete does not make a better way of life.

12 We live in a tremendous city with  
13 tremendous, brilliant minds. Please, please give us a  
14 chance. Give this community a chance to come to the  
15 table with some real solutions. Don't cut us short  
16 today.

17 And I do want to say to Tom Lambert at  
18 METRO, I surely hope that METRO will not support this  
19 plan. If they're going to come to the table and ask us  
20 for \$5 billion in November, they better be thinking  
21 about what they're doing when they decide whose side  
22 they're on.

23 Thank you very much.

24 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we'll invite  
25 Abigail Cavenja, followed by Daphne Scarbrough.

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We will prevail.

2                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

3                   (Inaudible crosstalk.)

4                   **MS. SCARBROUGH:** Mr. Clark --

5                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Yes.

6                   **MS. SCARBROUGH:** -- did you call me?

7                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Yes. I -- well, no. I  
8 said you're second.

9                   **MS. SCARBROUGH:** Second.

10                  **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'm sorry. First was  
11 Abigail -- I'm sorry if I can't pronounce the last name  
12 correctly -- Venja -- Cavenja.

13                  **MS. CAVENJA:** Hello. Thank you for your  
14 time today. My name is Abigail Cavenja. I was raised  
15 and currently reside in a neighborhood off the North 610  
16 Loop and Yale Street. So I live right next door to  
17 Independence Heights, which will be impacted by the I-45  
18 highway expansion. My city council member is Ms. Ellen  
19 Cohen.

20                               I believe TxDOT has chosen to expand I-45,  
21 including the additional HOV lanes, in the most  
22 disruptive way possible. I am requesting that the TPC  
23 delay the vote on dedicating funding to the I-45  
24 expansion project till 2020.

25                               TxDOT should consider installing the

1 additional HOV lanes without expanding the highway's  
2 footprint. TxDOT has previously constructed, for  
3 example, double-decker lanes on I-35 in Central Austin  
4 and also I-635 in Dallas to maximize space without  
5 widening the right-of-way.

6 By de- -- by delaying this vote, this  
7 provides TxDOT additional time to consider alternatives  
8 that are less harmful to the communities that will be  
9 impacted.

10 Also, currently, voting to go ahead and  
11 fund -- provide funding for the project will signal --  
12 will signal to TxDOT that the community approves of the  
13 current expansion design, when the community impacted by  
14 this project clearly does not.

15 Thank you.

16 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, I'll invite Daphne  
17 Scarbrough, followed by Joetta Stevenson.

18 **MS. SCARBROUGH:** Thank you. I am Daphne  
19 Scarbrough. I do live in District C. We would be  
20 affected by the southern end where the Southwest Freeway  
21 comes around from the Pierce Elevated.

22 And I am not going to repeat. They have  
23 had such good speakers. I am very logical about this.  
24 I am a near native Houstonian. I remembered when  
25 Bellaire got sliced by TxDOT. I'm on the board of the

1 Bellaire Historical Society. They have not forgiven you  
2 yet, TxDOT. They -- they still -- I was amazed. You --  
3 they are still upset. So -- and, of course, all you  
4 have to do is look at Emancipation Boulevard and all of  
5 the businesses that were devastated when 45 went  
6 through.

7 We do understand the need for  
8 transportation, but there is also a need for the  
9 neighborhoods, the businesses, and the jobs. And I  
10 would ask you to postpone this decision primarily on a  
11 logical viewpoint. I do not understand how you can make  
12 a designed decision. And Houston has the best in  
13 engineers. We have the best in construction. We have  
14 done more with less so many times. But how can you make  
15 a decision about going up or going down when you do not  
16 have current floodplain maps? That should be enough.

17 \$100 million could be used so many other  
18 places. Our Port of Houston is still vulnerable.  
19 Everyone who lives close to Buffalo Bayou, White Oak  
20 Bayou, Hayes Bayou, they are all in danger.

21 Here we are two years later. Nothing has  
22 really happened. You have an opportunity today to look  
23 at what you're doing with this amount of money and try  
24 to make it go further and be more productive. So as  
25 always, thank you for this opportunity.

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Ask Lawrence  
2 Battelle to come forward.

3                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'm taking people in  
4 order.

5                   Yes. Our next speaker, Joetta Steven- --  
6 Stevenson.

7                   **MS. STEVENSON:** Good evening, everyone.  
8 My name is Joetta Stevenson, and I'm the president of  
9 the Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood, and I also sit on the  
10 board of the Texas Organizing Project, Monus TOP.

11                   I ask this committee to please, please  
12 delay this vote. My historic community is under siege.  
13 It's a community that many people love to quote and love  
14 to bring up some of the most outstanding Americans, a  
15 Barbara Jordan, a Mickey Leland. Well, you know what?  
16 Being under siege is not a fun place. And that's not a  
17 fun place for their memories either.

18                   We're under siege basically because of  
19 decisions that are being made by persons who are usually  
20 given reports from entities like a TxDOT and what I call  
21 the usual list of money-driven suspects based on wall  
22 maps and computer-generated numbers, reports that either  
23 lack or shamefully minimize the human cost of massive  
24 family dislocation -- dis- -- I'm sorry -- displacement,  
25 loss of businesses, damaging effects on our community's

1 health, including clean air and the environment.

2 And if any of you know anything about  
3 Fifth Ward, we are a plethora. We are like a Petri dish  
4 for environmental issues.

5 Yes, I've attended many of the TxDOT  
6 meetings. As a matter of fact, over the last few  
7 months, they've gone into overdrive. They seem to be  
8 every other couple of days. But, basically, they have  
9 been more or less a dog and pony show. They basically  
10 have been more of a, quote, look what we've planned for  
11 you, unquote.

12 To this committee, collecting sign-in  
13 sheets from community members is not community  
14 engagement. We need to be meaningfully included in this  
15 project. There are far too many unanswered questions  
16 regarding this project to rush for a vote on this today.  
17 Listen to the people. Listen to a room filled with  
18 registered voters. Delay this vote. Please delay this  
19 vote.

20 Thank you.

21 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Our next speaker will be  
22 the Honorable Jew Don Boney, followed by Robin Holzer.

23 **HON. JEW DON BONEY:** Good morning. I  
24 want to thank you for the opportunity to share some  
25 brief remarks.

1 I -- it seems to me that you've already  
2 made up your mind, that this is an exercise that you're  
3 going through to let the community have a say. And I am  
4 going to offer a prophesy that once the public comment  
5 is over, you're going to vote to approve this.

6 We've seen this movie before. North 45  
7 destroyed Fifth Ward. 59 destroyed the other part of  
8 the (inaudible). The same thing happened in Fourth  
9 Ward. And now here you come again.

10 I'm sorry for that.

11 I served as a member of city council with  
12 Bob Lanier for two years, mayor pro tem under Lee Brown  
13 for four years. And I learned a few things. And I also  
14 worked with TxDOT. They've got some wonderful  
15 engineers.

16 They seem to -- whenever they build a new  
17 freeway, a new road, to cut through the minority  
18 communities and destroy. We've seen that over and over  
19 and over again in Houston. It's almost like you go to  
20 school to learn how to dissect the black, the brown, and  
21 the poor community because that's all that you've ever  
22 done.

23 Wonderful engineers, but they're not the  
24 only ones with blazing ideas.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

1                   **HON. JEW DON BONEY:** The other thing that  
2 you need to really fix is what you call civic  
3 engagement, public participation because it sucks.  
4 TxDOT has never known how to outreach into the  
5 community; not to just get input, but to make them  
6 partners as stakeholders in this vision that we're all  
7 trying to live.

8                   So I am just going to wrap it up and say,  
9 we've seen this movie before. Whatever community  
10 engagement you think you got has obviously been  
11 inadequate. As policymakers, we know we make better  
12 policy when we engage the people that we're there to try  
13 to serve and make life better for. But when we think  
14 we're so all wise that we can figure it out by  
15 ourselves, that the experts know better what we need in  
16 our community, we fail.

17                   I would ask that you would reject the  
18 proposal. Let's come back and put together a  
19 collaborative process and actually make the thing work.

20                   Thank you.

21                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Now we'll invite Robin  
22 Holzer, followed by Consuelo Cabrera.

23                   **MS. HOLZER:** I admit I'm more nervous  
24 about doing this than I've been in quite some time.

25                   My name is Robin Holzer. And the first

1 meeting I attended in this space dealing with  
2 transportation was 16 years ago. And the meeting looked  
3 nothing like this. There were a handful of people in  
4 the room. A few very smart, very heartfelt neighbors  
5 came to talk about a project that they had concerns  
6 over. But in the end, they had come too late. And the  
7 contracts had been let. And mostly they went home  
8 frustrated.

9           So the first thing I want to call to your  
10 attention today is that this room is very different than  
11 what happened with the Katy Corridor 16 and 17 years  
12 ago. These people have not come too late.

13           The second thing I want to say is that  
14 listening to the people on both sides of this lectern, I  
15 am struck that we hear the same project, but we're  
16 thinking about it very differently. For Billion Dollar  
17 Gary and Delvin Dennis and others here, the Katy  
18 Corridor -- the Katy Corridor Freeway Project is  
19 legitimately an amazing fete of engineering project  
20 management. It is an accomplishment that they can  
21 celebrate. But it is not a fete of city building. It  
22 is not a fete of economic development. It is not a fete  
23 of environmental justice. It ate up 95 percent of the  
24 commercial tax base of the city of Spring Valley. It  
25 was a deeply flawed project. It also had great things

1 we've heard about. The HOV lanes and the toll lanes  
2 work well for transit. So it's a very mixed bag  
3 depending on who you talk to in this room.

4 This -- this -- okay. What am I on?  
5 Number three?

6 Okay. So the third thing I want to say is  
7 that the people in the room have changed. When the Katy  
8 Corridor came, it was a handful of smart people. This  
9 I-45 project has garnered thousands of volunteer hours  
10 from some of our city's brightest urban planners, from  
11 its traffic engineers, from its economic development  
12 people, in -- and environmental justice leaders and  
13 organizers and neighbors and health experts and public  
14 health people, in addition to all of the investment that  
15 TxDOT has made.

16 So as you at the TPC decide what have I  
17 heard today and what's my role with it, I want to make  
18 sure you give proper value to the heavy weight of  
19 evidence that this representative group has brought to  
20 you.

21 Where I would end is the thing that  
22 concerns me most, and it's a final thing that's  
23 different with the Katy Corridor. At that time, we had  
24 checks and balances between the federal government, the  
25 National Environmental Policy Act, the EIS process that

1 captured concerns of the public and then required TxDOT  
2 and its consulting team to address them.

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, Ms. Holzer.

4 **MS. HOLZER:** The process is very  
5 different today with TxDOT self-certifying and with  
6 federal highway not at the table and with our EIS being  
7 incomplete. So I would ask you to delay the vote. And  
8 it is your turn now to hold the consulting team  
9 accountable for really delivering a great and complete  
10 and robust project that we all need for our region.

11 Thank you.

12 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

13 Now we'll invite Consuelo Cabrera followed  
14 by Tanya Debose.

15 I'm sorry. Is -- is Consuelo here?

16 **MS. CABRERA:** (Through Interpreter) Good  
17 morning. I am Consuelo Cabrera, and I reside in west --  
18 west side -- Northside. I am a community engineer in  
19 the community center. I am here to express a concern in  
20 communications with the Hispanic community about the  
21 expansion of 45 and north segment. Take into account  
22 that the Hispanic community is more than 60 percent of  
23 the total population.

24 They say they're concerned about the  
25 effect that this is going to cause. The -- the

1 construction will cause -- the construction will cause  
2 flooding when the time of flooding comes. We are also  
3 concerned about the air quality since there are not  
4 enough green spaces to balance off the pollution, to  
5 balance off affecting the population. That will -- that  
6 will give a bad air quality for the people. There is  
7 also concern about how the historical heritage is going  
8 to be preserved.

9 So then we are asking for the delay on the  
10 voting for the funding of Segment 2 till 2020 until all  
11 the concerns of the population that is being affected  
12 are being answered, and specifically the Hispanic  
13 community.

14 Thank you so much.

15 (Individuals speaking Spanish.)

16 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, I'd like to invite  
17 Tomaro Bell, followed by Todd Thurber.

18 **MS. BELL:** Good afternoon. First off,  
19 let me begin by saying that what just occurred is one of  
20 the main problems with the alleged transparency and  
21 participation that TxDOT claims they're giving. For  
22 over a year, they have been asking for bilingual  
23 notifications about this project, and they haven't done  
24 it one time. How is that inclusion when (inaudible) is  
25 one of the biggest parts of this project? They want --

1 I want to make sure I stay on my points.

2 Secondly, the gentleman got up and talked  
3 about how this project started in 2003. Everybody in  
4 this room want to know, in 2003, why they weren't at the  
5 table. They were at the table. They were the menu. We  
6 getting off today. That's why I'm here. We want to be  
7 a participant of this project. We don't want to be  
8 processed. We want to be at the -- be on the process,  
9 not processed. And that is a problem that you-all have.

10 There's only seven past chairmans of the  
11 Super Neighborhood Alliance. That goes from Clear Lake  
12 to Kingwood. I am one of those seven. I am here today  
13 though because I live where this project is affected.

14 Let me tell you-all something. What TxDOT  
15 did with 288, Third Ward still has not recovered. Now,  
16 288, as you-all know, is the detention pond for the  
17 Macgregor area. But because of the development that has  
18 occurred, now that detention pond is going into our  
19 area.

20 When they started doing this money-making  
21 new HOV lane down 288, they told us, "We don't mitigate  
22 flooding," okay? "We don't mitigate flooding." I said,  
23 "How can you not mitigate it? Hell, you're causing it.  
24 You took out \$9 million worth of trees that the federal  
25 government gave to help us so that you can make more

1 money." Like the gentleman said before, that's not  
2 TxDOT dollars. Them are our dollars. Those are  
3 taxpayer dollars. You have to include the public in  
4 this.

5 And let me tell you about this nail in the  
6 coffin, you-all trying to get to Houston. Yeah, we may  
7 have some growth. But the odds -- the lands of odds are  
8 whooping our butt. That's Pearland, Sugar Land,  
9 Woodlands. The people are moving out there and are the  
10 companies. Downtown should not be something you fly  
11 past. It should be a destination.

12 If you remove that I-45 Pierce Elevator,  
13 you can make a ramp so that those who are coming to  
14 downtown can land, not bypass. And you-all around  
15 looking. This is a ten-year project. We can lose Super  
16 Bowls, Olympics. We can lose all kind of conventions  
17 because don't nobody want to sit on 45 while you get  
18 done.

19 If you-all would pay attention, during  
20 Harvey, you saw the massive flooding that we had.  
21 Suppose we have to get the hell out of here. Go 45,  
22 down 59, down 10, down -- we stuck luck chuck. What is  
23 wrong with y'all? Pay attention.

24 And I'm going to tell you, some of these  
25 meetings you-all have had have been a waste. You come.

1 You listen. Oh, but you can't ask no questions.

2 We not your children. We are adults. We  
3 are grown adults who are participating in the money that  
4 we're contributing. We want you to listen. It's not  
5 that hard. Listen.

6 Even in their own documents, TxDOT shows a  
7 negative impact. You know how long it took for them to  
8 even look at the socioeconomic injustice, say  
9 (inaudible)? Oh, well, look, we don't give city  
10 \$90 million for those housing projects that we're going  
11 to take out. What they do with that money, we don't  
12 know.

13 Okay. How is that including and making  
14 sure these people can move back? Because let me tell  
15 you what I see this as. This project is the  
16 acceleration for gentrification that has made  
17 developers' dreams come true.

18 Thank you.

19 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next -- next, we'll  
20 invite Todd Thurber, followed by Tanya Debose.

21 **MR. THURBER:** Mr. Chairman and members of  
22 the policy council, thank you for allowing me to be here  
23 today. My name is Todd Thurber, and I'm a current board  
24 member of ACEC Houston. And I'm here representing ACEC  
25 Houston to express our support for this resolution,

1 which is the funding partnership for Segment 2 of the  
2 North Houston Highway Improvement Program and the  
3 Mitigation of Adverse Community Impacts.

4 As you-all know, public engagement is  
5 critical to developing a successful transportation  
6 project. For the NHIIP [sic], TxDOT has held numerous  
7 public and stakeholder meetings throughout this whole  
8 corridor with many project modifications having been  
9 made as a result.

10 ACEC Houston is encouraged by the  
11 additional mitigation efforts of TxDOT as outlined in  
12 the resolution, which will allow TxDOT and the community  
13 to continue to gather public input and to develop  
14 alternatives to minimize impacts to the adjacent  
15 communities in the region as a whole and to gain public  
16 consensus in order to move this very important project  
17 forward.

18 Therefore, ACEC Houston supports the  
19 leadership of this council, TPC, in proposing this  
20 resolution and supports the members approving this  
21 resolution in order to be able to allow this project to  
22 continue.

23 Thank you.

24 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we'll invite Tanya  
25 Debose, followed by Leticia Ablaza.

1                   **MR. JOHNSON:** Good morning. My name is  
2 Ashley Johnson. I'm the community affairs director with  
3 LINK Houston. Unfortunately, Ms. Debose, for a medical  
4 appointment, was not able to make it. She has asked me  
5 to speak on her behalf, if that would be permissible to  
6 the council.

7                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Go ahead.

8                   **MR. JOHNSON:** Thank you.

9                   With regards to the Independence Heights  
10 community of which Ms. Debose is the executive director  
11 for the Redevelopment Council, they particularly have  
12 been profiled as a community that has been not only  
13 adversely affected, but also has had a history of  
14 effects to this community in a number of different ways.

15                   The Independence Heights community  
16 particularly right now, even since the development of  
17 the north -- of the north area of 610, has seen  
18 residential displacement of communities, some of them  
19 being over 300 residences within that community in the  
20 last area of freeway construction that was going on  
21 there.

22                   Even now, you're seeing adverse impacts in  
23 regards to the Independence Heights community not only  
24 in -- in the displacement of -- of people residentially,  
25 but also affecting businesses that are also north of the

1 610 area there near the -- near the Crosstimbers area,  
2 but also in one of the most glaring areas -- one of the  
3 glaring parts of the project is the displacement of a  
4 114-year-old church, the Greater Mount Olive Missionary  
5 Baptist Church, which was -- which was -- which was  
6 destroyed during the Hurricane Ike in 2008-2009, which  
7 then the pastor came back and rebuilt with his own hands  
8 to rebuild that church then along the North 610 area.  
9 And now, unfortunately, the construction design of this  
10 project is now going to go and displace that  
11 community and -- displace that church again and its  
12 parishioners there.

13 The question in regards to the project --  
14 and I understand TxDOT has been involved in mitigation  
15 with them -- is, even if we really relocate those people  
16 to that community, where do you do it? And where do you  
17 do it so that it is comparable?

18 You're seeing a community, not only the  
19 community itself, but some of the -- some of the  
20 landmarks within that community that are being moved  
21 again, and people are being asked time and time again to  
22 accommodate progress. But what is the benefit within  
23 that community of this project as a whole? What is  
24 the -- what is the -- what is the benefit of a project  
25 like the NH -- NHHIP then to people when they see it

1 moving to the future?

2           They're always being asked to accommodate  
3 and accommodate and accommodate. But my question then  
4 to TxDOT then and to the members of the TPC is: When  
5 are -- when are these people within this community going  
6 to be allowed to have a fair shake and have a seat at  
7 the table from the beginning of the process?

8           And then even more so with the vote that's  
9 going on today is, how are you going to move and make an  
10 advance on a project right now when there are people who  
11 are still trying to understand the aspects and the  
12 impacts of it?

13           I can understand out front that you would  
14 need to move and -- move on this project expediently to  
15 see things moving forward. But you have to allow the  
16 community as a whole to be not only involved in it, but  
17 you need to allow the community at large to be aware.

18           There are many people on the TPC now who  
19 are geographically not near -- anywhere near Segment 2  
20 or Segment 1 or different areas. But this is a  
21 multigenerational project that not only affects Houston,  
22 but it affects Greater Houston. And everybody around  
23 the table today needs to be aware of that and understand  
24 that you need to be accountable in that process. You  
25 need to make sure that your charity and that your

1 benefit in regards to the city as a whole includes not  
2 only people within your geographic or in the  
3 constituencies that you represent, but it represents the  
4 region for all.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

7 Now I'd like to invite Leticia Ablaza,  
8 followed by Cesar Esperanza.

9 **MS. ABLAZA:** Hello. My name is Leticia  
10 Ablaza. I am with Air Alliance Houston. I am the  
11 community outreach director. I am here today to oppose  
12 the North -- the North Highway expansion.

13 And first of all, I would like to ask:  
14 Why didn't the H-GAC have translators ready and  
15 available? I was asked. And I would have been more  
16 than happy to, but I am not a certified translator.  
17 However, I think I can guess why. The Hispanic  
18 community was not properly informed in their language.

19 More importantly, I want to also come here  
20 and talk about the high number of childhood asthma rates  
21 in the area that are continuing to climb due to poor air  
22 quality. You would think that everyone here at this  
23 table would figure out a way to properly use \$7 billion  
24 and probably more to help our current mobility problems  
25 that contribute to these issues and many other health

1 issues in this area regarding emissions.

2           You would think that with all the flooding  
3 in the city and with pro- -- and with more projected to  
4 hit our city in the next decade, that this board here at  
5 this table making these decisions about our future and  
6 our health, our homes, and our investments, that you  
7 would be able to figure out how to use this billion  
8 dollars to hire some of the best urban and mobility  
9 planners in this nation to properly accommodate the city  
10 with -- without turning this into a sea of concrete as  
11 many have pointed out.

12           There is -- there are no real traffic  
13 mitigations in place. Funneling all these cars into the  
14 city to park where?

15           Council Member Robinson, I go to city  
16 council on a regular basis, and you yourself know the  
17 parking issues in the city are a huge problem. And  
18 there's always constraints. And there's no way to be  
19 able to fix that with funneling more cars into the city.  
20 You're basically going to have gridlock downtown -- in  
21 the downtown areas with more people idling waiting for a  
22 parking -- waiting for a parking space. Please explain  
23 to me how this is going to help.

24           My son attends Energy Institute High  
25 School. And he and his classmates have been on projects

1 building models on how to better reduce emissions in  
2 their city. And I promise you, promise you, that  
3 widening freeways was not a part of their many varied  
4 solutions. These are young kids that have better ideas  
5 and ways to help our problems and understand that doing  
6 the same things that haven't worked is a sign of  
7 insanity and, in my opinion, corruption at its best.

8 I'd like to remind you, METRO, that the  
9 bond initiative vote is coming. And these are the very  
10 same people here that you will be asking to support this  
11 bond, when clearly METRO, our public transit, from my  
12 understanding, has little to -- has had little  
13 involvement in the planning of this freeway expansion.

14 I want to thank my commissioner, Adrian  
15 Garcia, for helping our community and our county -- our  
16 county judge, Lina Hidalgo. You represent the community  
17 that's being impacted and what our community looks like.  
18 Your staff has been amazing. I can't say that for the  
19 rest of you.

20 And I would also like to ask: Who here  
21 was the one that asked for the motion to not allow  
22 public input before the vote? Who was the guy?

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you for your time.

24 **MS. ABLAZA:** No. I want to know. I --  
25 we need to know for the record, who is the one that

1 asked for the motion for the record?

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Nobody asked  
3 for --

4 **MS. ABLAZA:** Your name, please, sir.

5 **MR. MILLICAN:** Larry Millican.

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Larry Millican.

7 **MS. ABLAZA:** How do you spell your last  
8 name?

9 **MR. MILLICAN:** M-I-L-L-I-C-A-N.

10 **MS. ABLAZA:** Thank you, sir.

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next invite Cesar  
12 Espinoza, followed by Lawrence Battelle.

13 **MR. BATTELLE:** Good afternoon. My name  
14 is Lawrence Battelle. And I am here to give remarks on  
15 behalf of Harris County Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney  
16 Ellis.

17 I write you today to request that you  
18 delay your scheduled vote on Friday to allocate more  
19 than \$150 million towards the North Houston Highway  
20 Improvement Project I-45.

21 As a former member of the Transportation  
22 Committee in the Texas Senate, I understand the enormous  
23 responsibility of planning for the transportation needs  
24 of our growing region. However, it is very important to  
25 me that Houston-Galveston Area Council make the right

1 decision.

2 I represent communities in or very close  
3 to the entire 24-mile corridor of the proposed expansion  
4 of I-45. Residents have raised valid concerns about the  
5 potential negative impact on affordable housing,  
6 economic activity, and the environment, particularly for  
7 low-income residents and communities of color.

8 These concerns echo familiar historical  
9 patterns where highway projects in Houston and across  
10 the country decimated urban communities by eliminating  
11 housing and economic opportunity.

12 TxDOT must address these issues before  
13 moving forward. Holding a vote on Friday will be  
14 premature and undermine ongoing efforts to engage  
15 affected communities in the corridor. TxDOT and  
16 Houston-Galveston Area Council delaying the vote this  
17 week would signal to the community that their input is  
18 significant. We owe it to our communities to take the  
19 time necessary to ensure that this project is the best  
20 path forward for everyone in our region.

21 I urge you to simply delay this vote and  
22 give everyone more time to consider the full impact this  
23 project will have on the quality of life and economic  
24 opportunities of the people along I-45.

25 Thank you.

1                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

2                   And do we still have -- do we still have  
3 Cesar -- and maybe it's Esperson, the last name.

4                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Espinoza.

5                   **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you. Espinoza.  
6 Thank you. I wanted to make sure we said it right the  
7 first time.

8                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Mr. Espinoza, can you  
9 come forward, please?

10                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm going to see  
11 if he's outside.

12                  **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Thank you.

13                  **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Would you like me to  
14 invite the next speaker, Mr. Chairman?

15                  **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Please. We can go back  
16 to Mr. Espinoza.

17                  **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Yes. We'll return to  
18 him.

19                               Jay Blazek Crossley.

20                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I don't think  
21 Espinoza is here.

22                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Crossley is  
23 here. He's in the overflow.

24                  **MR. CROSSLEY:** Hi. I was in the overflow  
25 room.

1           Hi. My name is Jay Blazek Crossley, and  
2 I'm with a 501c3 nonprofit called Farm&City. I grew up  
3 here. I went to Lamar High School. But now I live in  
4 Austin. But my parents, my brother and sister-in-law,  
5 niece and nephew live here and use the Houston  
6 transportation system every day. And so I thank you-all  
7 for your service for all -- and for all that you do to  
8 improve the quality of life for all the people of the  
9 Houston region.

10           I'd like to make three main points that  
11 current trends and travel in our region do not merit the  
12 expansion of this freeway, that the current facility is  
13 horrible though and needs to be fixed, and that we can  
14 do better.

15           I have been spending a lot of time looking  
16 at vehicle miles traveled and traffic count data. And  
17 there's some really weird stuff going on in that data.  
18 If you'll look at the TxDOT VMT data from 2005 to 2014,  
19 the total amount of travel in the region basically  
20 stayed the same while we grew tremendously, which, if  
21 that's real, means that the VMT per capita has been  
22 reducing in Houston over that time at a rate of  
23 2.6 percent reduction every year. The people of Houston  
24 are driving less. Where our city is growing up, as it  
25 also is growing out, many people are finding ways to

1 walk and bike or just not drive as far. And that makes  
2 sense.

3 In spite of the TPC and TxDOT efforts to  
4 open up land for development, we have different patterns  
5 happening. Some Houstonians are moving in to  
6 car-dependent neighborhoods on top of our prairie and  
7 are forced to drive a bunch because that's the only  
8 option they have. But a lot of other Houstonians are  
9 driving less.

10 If you look at the traffic count data on  
11 I-45 specifically, you will see the total amount of  
12 vehicles that have -- driving on I-45 inside of Beltway  
13 8 have reduced -- have been going down in the last ten  
14 years. Every single traffic count inside of Beltway 8  
15 is on a downward trend; whereas every traffic counter  
16 outside Beltway 8 is going up because of the Grand  
17 Parkway. So I think the purpose of need of this  
18 proposed expansion is suspect.

19 And to my second point though, I think  
20 Quincy and the team at TxDOT are actually doing a great  
21 job given the flawed assumptions and flawed funding  
22 strategies for our state.

23 People die regularly on I-45. It is  
24 currently not a well-functioning facility. It needs to  
25 be fixed.

1           The safety improvements proposed, the flow  
2 improvements, the removal of the Pierce Elevated, the  
3 potential for a CAP, the proposal to upgrade four lanes  
4 to max lanes to carry more people, these are all great  
5 things that we need to do. We just don't need to add  
6 the lanes.

7           We should fix the freeway, use modern,  
8 safe design guidelines, keep 11-foot lanes, don't expand  
9 the lanes, and upgrade without expanding the  
10 right-of-way.

11           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

12           **MR. CROSSLEY:** Thank you very much.

13           And, please, this -- whenever you decide  
14 on \$100 million, do not waste our regionally  
15 discretionary money on expansion. Dedicate that money  
16 to safety, transit, walkable access for the people who  
17 live here.

18           Thank you.

19           **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next, we invite Assata  
20 Richards, followed by Evelyn Merz.

21           **DR. RICHARDS:** Good afternoon. As a  
22 third-generation Houstonian of the historic and  
23 culturally rich Third Ward community, I am so very proud  
24 of Houstonians today. It has been a rare occasion to be  
25 in a room with the private sector, the public sector,

1 nonprofits, residents, researchers, renters like myself,  
2 and homeowners who are speaking with a clear and clarion  
3 voice on behalf of what they want this city to be and  
4 what they want our region to become. And I'm very  
5 excited about that.

6           Again, my name is Dr. Assata Richards.  
7 And I'm the director of the Sankofa Research Institute.  
8 I am the board president of the Emancipation Economic  
9 Development Council. I'm the board president of the  
10 newly formed Houston Community Land Trust. I am a  
11 graduate of HISD. I am a graduate of the University of  
12 Houston. And I earned my Ph.D. from Penn State  
13 University, but I chose to come back here.

14           And as a professor, I want to tell you  
15 something which I think you figured out. Tex- -- TxDOT  
16 did not do their best work. They did not do you a  
17 service. They have been inadequate, and they have not  
18 given you what you need to make an informed decision.  
19 And they have prepared you not for a decision which is  
20 based on the input and the best thinking of this city.  
21 Rice University has weighed in on this. The University  
22 of Houston has weighed on -- in on this. Scholars from  
23 across the country have weighed in on this to say that  
24 this project should not move forward as designed.

25           And you owe it to yourself, and you owe it

1 to the organizations that you represent to vote and tell  
2 TxDOT, come back and give me a better deal, project,  
3 proposal to vote on, because if you don't, then you send  
4 a message that Houston and our region will not lead the  
5 nation, but will be continuing to do what we've done  
6 before.

7           They, in their presentation, should have  
8 told you about the 168 single-family homes. They should  
9 have told you about their thousand multifamily homes,  
10 368 which are deeply subsidized housing. We're  
11 hemorrhaging affordable housing in this city, and you  
12 know it. We cannot afford to lose a unit without a  
13 replacement strategy for those affordable housing units.  
14 You cannot go anywhere and tell anybody you're going to  
15 destroy 60 homeless Veteran units and be okay. You  
16 cannot tell anybody you're going to destroy 331 small  
17 businesses with no strategy to replace those businesses.

18           Saint Paul, Minnesota, got it right. They  
19 had a plan in place with the private/public  
20 philanthropic community to say how we're going to  
21 strategically bring those businesses back online  
22 stronger and better before.

23           You saw what METRO did in Second Ward. It  
24 was a mistake. And we do not have to repeat mistakes.  
25 We're better than that. You should not sign a document

1 that says this does not preclude. You know that's not  
2 good work. The documents say, it must stipulate.

3 They did not do their homework. Most  
4 importantly, they did not take community engagement  
5 seriously. And it shows, right? When you do it right,  
6 when you engage deeply, when you listen, and when you  
7 respond to what you hear, you bring the community here  
8 as your support and not your opposition. Until they do  
9 it right, tell them go back and bring it back to you  
10 again in 2020.

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next speaker will be  
12 Evelyn Merz.

13 **MS. MERZ:** Good afternoon. My name is  
14 Evelyn Merz. I am the conservation chair of the Houston  
15 Sierra Club and the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra  
16 Club. And I am here representing the Sierra Club today.

17 The Sierra Club does share the concerns  
18 about the displacement of residents and businesses and  
19 the injustices inherent in this project; however, today,  
20 I am going to focus my comments on air quality and flood  
21 risks, which are issues that the Sierra Club works on.

22 The staff recommendation for the  
23 low-emission zone is frankly a pitiful attempt to  
24 mitigate the air quality concerns that have been raised  
25 by this project. Do you really think that an electric

1 vehicle recharging facility and enhanced air quality  
2 monitoring after the fact is going to protect local  
3 residents and workers from particulates and the  
4 additional emissions from the expanded highway in this  
5 area? And how could it protect them from the tremendous  
6 amount of particulates and emissions that are going to  
7 result during construction and the inevitable traffic  
8 backups during this project? This is not mitigation.  
9 This is window dressing.

10           The -- the earlier presenter noted, when  
11 he made the initial presentation to you-all, that the  
12 recently released NOAA Atlas -- that's the National  
13 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Atlas 14.  
14 Rainfall frequency data was going to be used and  
15 included in this project. How is it going to be  
16 considered?

17           The Harris County Flood Control District  
18 is going to be remapping the 100-year floodplain as a  
19 result of the NOAA Atlas 14 for the entire county. And  
20 it is widely expected and unaccepted that what is  
21 currently mapped as a 500-year floodplain is going to be  
22 the 100-year floodplain after this (inaudible) county is  
23 remapped.

24           That is significant because NOAA Atlas 14  
25 changed what were the definition of the 24 of the

1 100-year rainfall event from 12 to 13 inches in a  
2 24-hour period to 17 to 18 inches of rainfall in a  
3 24-hour period. That is tremendous.

4 The -- exactly how is TxDOT going to  
5 account for this? It's a major expansion in the  
6 100-year floodplain. I have not heard that.

7 Standard procedure has been to treat  
8 close-in neighborhoods as sacrifice zones to enhance  
9 mobility for more distant and yet-to-be-built  
10 neighborhoods. But what is needed now is an opportunity  
11 to develop an alternative plan that protects the  
12 livability of neighborhoods, the health of the  
13 residents, and safety from expected increases in the  
14 amount and severity of rainfall.

15 And I do appreciate this opportunity to  
16 speak with you. Thank you very much. And we ask you to  
17 delay the vote.

18 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you.

19 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Next will be -- next  
20 speaker will be Arviele Fortia, followed by Robert  
21 Holley.

22 **MS. FORTIA:** Good afternoon.

23 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** We're nearing the very  
24 end of our list of speakers, Mr. Chairman.

25 **MS. FORTIA:** Okay. Good afternoon. My

1 name is Arviele Fortia. I am a resident of Kelly  
2 Village Apartments and a single parent. This is my son  
3 Corbin.

4 I am here today to contend that the 45  
5 expansion should be tabled until the relocation of every  
6 resident affected has occurred for the following  
7 reasons. There are three.

8 One, traffic is horrendous. It has been  
9 since the work began some -- quite some time ago. I  
10 believe a couple of years ago, two or three years. In  
11 any case, my son and I ride METRO to get to and from  
12 school and run errands, etcetera. And with the schedule  
13 being as it is, he has to get up -- we both have to get  
14 up at five a.m. every morning to be on time for school  
15 for eight due to, like I said, routing and scheduling of  
16 the -- the buses, the -- let me go back to my notes.

17 Okay. So with traffic and with the  
18 construction that's going on in this area, it makes the  
19 commute even longer than it already is. And because of  
20 that, my son has been late to school far too many times.  
21 And that's something that has already been taken care  
22 of. But moving on, it's -- it's just not fair to him or  
23 any other student that has to go through something like  
24 that just to get to school.

25 Subsidies are received by the schools in

1 reference to attendance. And lowered attendance means  
2 lower money for our children's education. They should  
3 be able to be their best, their brightest at any --  
4 every single day. In this situation, that's not  
5 occurring.

6 Second reason, a lot of people are being  
7 faced with wrongful eviction. I've been going back and  
8 forth with Kelly Village HHA, J. Allen Management in  
9 court for the past two to three years just to keep my  
10 residence.

11 In 2015, I believe, we were originally  
12 informed at that point that this TxDOT deal would  
13 basically be -- be taking place. There would be some  
14 time that lapsed where basically once the property was  
15 purchased, all the residents would have to be relocated.  
16 They would receive vouchers.

17 I attended a board meeting earlier this  
18 year, I believe, January, or December of last year. And  
19 I asked specifically what was the status as far as  
20 residents receiving vouchers due to this expansion. I  
21 was given an answer that that expansion was off the  
22 table, there had been no vouchers given. I know people  
23 who have received them.

24 The point is, there are several apartments  
25 in this area where this construction is to occur where

1 people are being displaced. And to assist J. Allen and  
2 all these other property managers and all these other  
3 government entities to move these people out of these  
4 areas -- people are being charged excess utilities.  
5 Their rent is being raised. And these are people who  
6 are low income. They're already in a situation where  
7 they're doing their best just to make ends meet. And  
8 what's happening here is, all these people are being  
9 moved around, kicked out to accommodate people who  
10 really, not to be ugly, can afford to live anywhere.

11 And there has been a reduction in the  
12 amount of properties that are available for these  
13 displaced residents to go to. That's the problem.

14 I personally feel as if -- since TxDOT is  
15 benefiting from this, they should also practice some  
16 social responsibility and help contribute to creating  
17 affordable housing for low-income persons who are doing  
18 their best to get their kids to and from school, get to  
19 work, pay their bills, who are contributing to society,  
20 taxpaying residents.

21 Okay. So we're asking you-all to -- I am  
22 asking for you-all to put the shoe on the other foot.  
23 If you were on this side of the table, if you had to go  
24 through some of the things that we -- I have had to  
25 chase buses with him in a stroller when he was younger.

1 I have now a bad hip, crack in my hip, crack in my  
2 elbow. I don't look like it, but I need a cane. And I  
3 can't keep running after METRO and -- and -- and the  
4 train because -- to get where we need to go due to this  
5 traffic.

6 They don't want to stop. They don't want  
7 to slow down. If there's traffic, there's chances there  
8 in some areas that there are homeless persons who kind  
9 of gather at these areas. And that causes the bus  
10 drivers not want -- not to want to stop. And that's a  
11 problem.

12 So moving -- moving on -- and I'm going to  
13 wrap this up because I know I'm being timed.

14 This wrongful eviction that's occurring  
15 here, it contributes to, as I said, the homeless  
16 population, which we've been trying to diminish in the  
17 past few years to accommodate tourism, businesses mostly  
18 central to Downtown Houston and the upper-middle class  
19 and the like. And, basically, it's making it harder for  
20 the money that's provided by taxpaying citizens to be  
21 efficiently used to close that gap.

22 Third, it's harassment incurred by  
23 residents from J. Allen. Precinct 6, HPD, they're  
24 constit- -- they're contractors of the constituents who  
25 are benefiting on the outskirts from this -- this

1 change.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you, ma'am.

4 **MS. FORTIA:** And thank you so much for  
5 listening. Just please put the shoe on the other foot.  
6 It could be you at any moment.

7 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Thank you.

8 We have one more presenter signed up,  
9 Robert Holley.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Mr. Chairman, just  
11 as a point of personal privilege, I just want to let the  
12 audience and the folks in the overflow know that we've  
13 got pizza coming. I know you guys have been hanging  
14 around, and I know people are probably getting hungry.  
15 Food is coming. We're going to make that available for  
16 y'all.

17 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Commissioner.  
18 Robert Holley spoke earlier.

19 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Oh, I'm sorry. He did.

20 **MR. HOLLEY:** That's okay. I was able to  
21 yield my time if I can. If I could say something, I  
22 will again.

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you, Mr. Holley.

24 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** I'd like to confirm that  
25 Cesar Espinoza is not present to speak. Is he still

1 available?

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

3 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Okay.

4 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to  
5 make my -- my alternate motion that I've been waiting --  
6 patiently waiting to make, if that's --

7 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay.

8 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- all right.

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Go ahead, Judge.

10 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Thank you, sir.

11 First, I -- I just want to highlight the  
12 reality is this body is being asked to provide seed  
13 funding essentially for a project that hasn't fully run  
14 down and that as it stands is deeply, deeply  
15 problematic.

16 I'm especially concerned about flooding.  
17 In Harris County, we just accelerated our drainage  
18 projects to a cost of \$60 million. We're trying to  
19 figure out the situation doing everything we possibly  
20 can. We raised our detention standards so new  
21 development doesn't increase flooding down streams.  
22 We've been working with all of your communities on  
23 gauges throughout our county where we're forming the way  
24 we do our office of emergency management communications.  
25 We're working to be as smart as we can.

1                   And highways should be held to the same  
2 standard. We have got to be smart. I can tell you with  
3 certainty, this project's impact on flooding has not  
4 been fully run down. My Harris County Flood Control  
5 District folks need six more months to finish  
6 discussions with TxDOT and understand what the impact  
7 will be. And I cannot, in good conscience, support a  
8 project until that has been run down, nor should we  
9 living as we have after Harvey, the Memorial Day Flood,  
10 the Tax Day Flood, and the Kingwood rains you-all saw  
11 and that I had to fight to make sure we got money from  
12 with our colleagues at the city council and -- Houston  
13 City Council and Fort Bend.

14                   We have a duty to seek answers to this.  
15 And if this feels wrong and it feels rushed, it's  
16 because it is wrong and it is rushed. I will make a  
17 pledge for innovation. As I've come into office, I've  
18 been meeting with business leaders from all sorts of  
19 companies. And I can tell you, they have trouble  
20 recruiting folks to come to our region because a lot of  
21 people are used to living in a place where there's  
22 different forms of transportation.

23                   As I mentioned last month, voting to fund  
24 this project before we fully understand its  
25 repercussions is akin to putting a down payment on a

1 house before we've seen it. It is only responsible to  
2 wait. And at best, we ought to work. We've got to be  
3 willing to accept, courageously say when something has  
4 not been fully run down and to say, hang on. Let me  
5 take a look at this.

6 So I move that we delay this vote until  
7 January 2020 in order to fully understand and assess the  
8 impact of this project on Harris County residents and  
9 our region's residents.

10 **MR. GARCIA:** Second.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Okay.

12 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, hold -- hold on  
13 just a moment.

14 Do we -- the challenge we have,  
15 Commissioner, is that you are Judge Hidalgo's alternate.

16 **MR. GARCIA:** According to the rules -- and  
17 we vetted these with Alan Clark -- I am a Harris County  
18 alternate -- alternate. Gary Trietsch is not here, and  
19 so I'm -- I'm -- I'm replacing his vote.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And that's the  
21 same case for alternate Martha Castex-Tatum with the  
22 City.

23 And I would like to, for the record,  
24 state, Mr. Chair, that the motion that currently is on  
25 the floor, with no exception to Judge Hidalgo, was not

1 vetted with all officers earlier. So I will tell you  
2 from the City of Houston's standpoint, that to proceed  
3 without the mitigating dollars is not acceptable.  
4 And --

5 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, we're -- we're in  
6 discussion --

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you. And  
8 that is my point of discussion.

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Well, I just  
10 wanted to clarify that because that issue is raised that  
11 you are Judge Hidalgo's alternate and that it's a  
12 different position. I just want to clarify that so if  
13 anybody questions it, we've had that discussion.

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Very good.

15 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So --

16 **MS. PATMAN:** Well --

17 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, Ms. Patman.

18 **MS. PATMAN:** I am confused about the  
19 process here --

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

21 **MS. PATMAN:** -- because in the ordinary  
22 course, it seems to me what would have happened is, the  
23 Houston-Galveston Area Council's motion, which we've all  
24 reviewed and evaluated and some thinks is sufficient and  
25 some don't, would be considered first in my view, not

1 being an expert on parliamentary procedure.

2 So what's happened here -- and then --  
3 then Judge Hidalgo could make a substitute motion to  
4 that motion. What's happened here is a completely new  
5 concept has been -- a motion has been made outside the  
6 course of -- you know, we weren't -- we were at public  
7 comments. And I'm not -- I'm not an expert on  
8 parliamentary procedure anyway, so I'm not --

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well --

10 **MS. PATMAN:** -- meaning to fuss at  
11 anybody. But I guess my question is: What -- what are  
12 we doing here?

13 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Until --

14 **MS. PATMAN:** There was no -- there was no  
15 floor in which to make a motion to strip the protections  
16 out of the Houston-Galveston Area Council motion. So  
17 now what we have is --

18 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, the  
19 Houston-Galveston -- the -- what -- what Alan stated was  
20 a recommendation by staff.

21 **MS. PATMAN:** Okay. But why --

22 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Council --

23 **MS. PATMAN:** -- was somebody allowed to  
24 make a motion --

25 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Councilman Millican made

1 a motion, and that was seconded by commissioner  
2 Beckendorff. And according to Robert's Rules of Order,  
3 which this body voted on years ago to follow, that  
4 states, "Until a motion is made and is stated by the  
5 chair, no discussion ends in order. The rule of motion  
6 before discussion serves as a valuable meeting time when  
7 you start off with the defined proposal that I move.  
8 Your group discusses the motion's merits and all the  
9 details necessary to make that decision."

10 So --

11 **MS. PATMAN:** Okay.

12 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- that is the proper  
13 way to do that. And we have not -- we have not  
14 necessarily followed that. And a lot of governing  
15 bodies don't necessarily follow that. But in an issue  
16 that is as important as this, I thought it was important  
17 that we follow Robert's Rules of Order so nobody can  
18 criticize the process.

19 **MS. PATMAN:** Okay. That makes sense.  
20 Well, thank you.

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So we have a motion on  
22 the floor --

23 **MS. PATMAN:** But what about the --

24 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So Judge Hidalgo is --  
25 is making either a substitute motion, or she's making an

1 amendment to Mr. Millican's motion. So what we'll do at  
2 this point is, she's got a motion to second. We'll  
3 discuss her amendment or substitute motion. We will  
4 vote on that. If that is successful, that, at that  
5 point, will become the main motion. If that is not  
6 successful, Councilman Millican's motion will be the  
7 main motion. And we can either have continued  
8 discussion, or there may be other amendments to that  
9 motion. Is that clear? Does everybody --

10 **MS. PATMAN:** So how --

11 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- understand that?

12 **MS. PATMAN:** That -- I appreciate the  
13 study you've given to this and your knowledge of it  
14 because I suspect you may be the only person in the room  
15 that fully, fully, fully understands Robert's Rules and  
16 their application to this proceeding. So thank you for  
17 that.

18 So what is the appropriate avenue with  
19 respect to the staff's recommendation because neither of  
20 these two motions embodies the staff's recommendation?

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** That's right because  
22 it's a staff recommendation. And it's our place to  
23 decide what we're going to do with their recommendation.  
24 Whether --

25 **MS. PATMAN:** Well, how does one consider

1 it --

2 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Whether --

3 **MS. PATMAN:** -- because I want to  
4 consider it --

5 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Whether we -- whether we  
6 accept it as -- as recommended or as Councilman Millican  
7 made the motion to change that, that is -- that is  
8 totally acceptable.

9 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** I just want to clarify,  
10 Mr. Chairman, and to Carrin. I believe the staff  
11 recommendation is an additional 50 million; is that  
12 right?

13 **MS. PATMAN:** 50 million plus  
14 one-and-a-half --

15 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Plus one-and-a-half for  
16 mitigation of community concerns.

17 My -- my motion -- my alternate substitute  
18 motion is to delay this vote on -- regardless of which  
19 one it is because 50 million is a drop in the bucket  
20 compared to 70 billion. And, again, you don't put a  
21 down payment on a house until you've seen it.

22 **MS. PATMAN:** No. I --

23 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** You don't write a check  
24 until -- you can't give the money and then say, hey,  
25 well, we'll take it back later.

1                   **MS. PATMAN:** No. I --

2                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** So I just wanted to make  
3 clear --

4                   **MS. PATMAN:** -- do understand your  
5 motion.

6                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- that, regardless, my  
7 motion is to delay the vote.

8                   **MS. PATMAN:** Yes, yes. I do -- I do  
9 understand that and respect your position, of course.  
10                   What I am trying to figure out is, what is  
11 the right procedural avenue to have the staff  
12 recommendation considered as a motion?

13                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, we have the main  
14 motion. Now we have a second to the amendment. So we  
15 would need to vote on the -- on the amendment. If the  
16 amendment was successful, then you could come back -- or  
17 defeated, you can come back and make the -- another  
18 amendment or substitute motion, and then we would vote  
19 on that.

20                   **MR. ROBINSON:** I sense there's room for  
21 discussion on the substitute amendment.

22                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Right. And we've got  
23 a -- we've got a question from Mayor Zimmerman.

24                   **MAYOR ZIMMERMAN:** Mr. Chairman, I am a  
25 little bit confused. So is the second by Commissioner

1 Garcia -- with all due respect, it was my understanding  
2 that the reason that we had -- the City of Houston had  
3 two members and Harris County had two members, there's a  
4 primary and there's an alternate. So because  
5 Commissioner Radack is not here, his alternate is not  
6 here, then I am not sure that's a legal second because  
7 he is -- Commissioner Garcia is the alternate for Judge  
8 Hidalgo. And I would like clarification on that  
9 particular issue.

10 **MR. ROBINSON:** Perhaps Mr. Clark can  
11 clarify that for us. It was our understanding that the  
12 City is at least different.

13 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Both Harris County and  
14 the City of Houston have more than one voting member on  
15 the policy council. And in our past practice, we have  
16 allowed the designated alternate from the City of  
17 Houston or from Harris County to serve as a voting  
18 member for any primary member that they had appointed.

19 That has not been -- that doesn't occur  
20 very often, obviously. But the bylaws of the  
21 organization states that you have -- to be a voting  
22 alternate member, you have to be nom- -- nominated in  
23 the same manner as the primary member, which the City of  
24 Houston and Harris County have done. So I believe  
25 that's within their purview to do so.

1                   **MR. MANN:** Point --

2                   **MAYOR ZIMMERMAN:** So you're saying --

3                   **MR. MANN:** Point of parliamentary  
4 procedure.

5                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Hold on -- hold on just  
6 a minute. I'd like to respond to that.

7                   And based on what Alan just said that that  
8 was part of the bylaws of the TPC, that's why I think  
9 his motion -- his second is in order. Under other  
10 organizations and under normal practices, that would be  
11 out of order because, as you stated, he's Judge  
12 Hidalgo's. But based on the bylaws, I believe that's in  
13 order.

14                   Yes, Mr. Mann, point of order.

15                   **MR. MANN:** So I don't think that it's an  
16 amendment. I think it's a motion to table, which is  
17 different because an amendment is a change. This is a  
18 motion to table.

19                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, she's doing a  
20 subs- -- she's doing a subs- --

21                   **MR. MANN:** It's --

22                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- substitute motion.

23                   **MR. MANN:** Well, it's not a substitute.  
24 It's a motion to table --

25                   **MS. PATMAN:** No, it isn't.

1                   **MR. MANN:** -- I believe. From a  
2 parliamentary --

3                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

4                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Well, also, if there's an  
5 issue with the second, then there may be another second  
6 that's separate --

7                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

8                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- from Commissioner --

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** There's not an  
10 issue with the second.

11                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Okay. Well, but just to  
12 say, you go do -- I can tell that --

13                   (Inaudible crosstalk.)

14                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I've already -- I've  
15 already ruled his second in order, so that's okay.

16                   Yes, Councilwoman?

17                   **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** Mr. Clark, I have some  
18 questions that -- I mean, this is an opportunity for us.  
19 We have, in the room now, the decision-makers, the  
20 people, the stakeholders, and also TxDOT. Before I make  
21 any decision, I think it's important and prudent of each  
22 of us to get all of our questions answered.

23                   There are lots of questions I'd like to  
24 pose of TxDOT so that we all can hear firsthand  
25 information because we're getting information from

1 several different sources; from letters, from e-mails,  
2 from phone calls, from briefings. I want to make my  
3 decision based on firsthand information from TxDOT.  
4 Regardless of whether it's the main motion, the  
5 substitute motion, the resolution from -- from the  
6 staff, I want to make a decision with firsthand  
7 information from TxDOT.

8 We rarely have an opportunity to have the  
9 stakeholders, the decision-makers, and TxDOT in a room.  
10 If we can take a deep breath, get our questions  
11 answered, I think we would all be in a better position  
12 to move forward.

13 Is there going to be an opportunity to ask  
14 questions of TxDOT on behalf of the stakeholders in the  
15 room?

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, ma'am, we will have  
17 full discussion on this issue.

18 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: Before we --

19 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, ma'am.

20 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: -- vote on any motion,  
21 any resolution?

22 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, let me -- let me  
23 re- -- re-clarify. We've got the main motion. Then  
24 we've got the substitute motion. We have a motion and a  
25 second. So now we're going to open it up for

1 discussion. So that would allow you or anybody else to  
2 ask any question they want in regards to -- to anything  
3 that was said in the public comment, to TxDOT, to Alan  
4 Clark, or anybody else. Now we can discuss the issue.

5 But being that there were procedural  
6 issues that were raised, I wanted to get those off of  
7 the table so we could get on with the discussion of  
8 whether we were going to move forward with this or are  
9 we going to move forward in a modified way, but just to  
10 begin the discussion.

11 So with that, I'll call on Trish to -- for  
12 her question.

13 **MS. POLLARD:** Not to beat a -- not to  
14 beat a dead horse, but I agree with Mayor Zimmerman with  
15 regard to Harris County's two -- two voters here  
16 present.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's a  
18 technicality.

19 **MS. POLLARD:** Will you please --

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We can't hear you.  
21 (Inaudible).

22 **MS. POLLARD:** Well, the microphone is on.

23 I agree with Mayor Zimmerman regarding the  
24 Harris County two voters here. Commissioner Garcia is  
25 an alternate for Judge Hidalgo. And Gary Trietsch was

1 the -- is the alternate for Steve Radack. He left. I  
2 don't think you can pick and choose and just say, oh,  
3 I'll be alternate for this guy that just left. I mean,  
4 either we follow the rules or we don't.

5 Can you please read me what -- out of the  
6 rules of procedure or our bylaws what allowed -- would  
7 allow him to vote?

8 **MS. LEWIS:** If I could, Mr. Chairman.

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, let's -- let's  
10 finish this here, Carol.

11 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** So --

12 **MS. LEWIS:** I kind of want to help --

13 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** -- my understanding of  
14 the --

15 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay.

16 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** -- Transportation Policy  
17 Council bylaws is that it identifies the voting  
18 membership and the process for the designation of --  
19 designation of alternates. The designation of  
20 alternates, we traditionally pair those with a member  
21 because normally -- normally, there is only one  
22 alternate per member.

23 **MS. POLLARD:** Right.

24 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** For the City of Houston,  
25 who has three votes on the policy council -- Harris

1 County has two -- they have, in fact, in the past  
2 allowed alternate members to -- to serve who are not  
3 necessarily shown as the alternate member for one  
4 particular representative. In our bylaws, it just  
5 simply says that the alternate members, to be eligible  
6 to vote, must be designated in the same way as the  
7 primary member. So we received a list of -- of -- of  
8 primary members and alternate members from the City of  
9 Houston and from -- and from Harris County.

10 I -- I will have to say, the bylaws are  
11 very -- relatively simple and straightforward here.  
12 There's not a lot of nuance to them. And based upon our  
13 past practice, we have allowed alternate members to  
14 serve for a primary member even if it wasn't necessarily  
15 the primary member they were shown in our directory as  
16 having been appointed to.

17 This is for the City and for the County.  
18 No other agency is in that position. And we also don't  
19 allow agencies to make a -- we can't allow the agency to  
20 say someone else today is going to serve as my  
21 alternate. It has to actually be -- go through their --  
22 their process for making those designations. But we  
23 have allowed that in the past.

24 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Carol.

25 **MS. POLLARD:** I still think it's out of

1 order.

2 **MS. LEWIS:** So, Mr. Chairman, my point  
3 was going to be, I appreciate your ruling and Alan's  
4 description. But since people are having a level of  
5 discomfort with this with Commissioner Garcia's  
6 approval -- concurrence, I guess I should say, I would  
7 second Judge Hidalgo's motion so that that removes that  
8 issue from --

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Thank you.

10 **MS. POLLARD:** Well, it doesn't -- it  
11 doesn't remove it if -- if he still intends to vote.

12 **MR. GARCIA:** Yeah. And that was going to  
13 be my point. If -- if the -- if my colleague will  
14 allow. So I just want to make sure that the record  
15 reflects that this -- this -- this body has set  
16 precedence on this matter before so that we can proceed  
17 with the rest of the dialogue.

18 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, that's why I went  
19 ahead and ruled as the chair that your motion was  
20 acceptable. And it's based on what Alan had said in  
21 the -- with the bylaws being fluid like that. Without a  
22 hard definitive yes or no, I'm going to -- I'm going to  
23 go ahead and allow his vote just because it's -- it's  
24 the right thing to do.

25 **MR. ROBINSON:** Pursuant to that, is there

1 a moment that I could inquire with TxDOT to please  
2 inform this body what you, Quincy, believe will be the  
3 impact of a delay?

4 **MR. ALLEN:** Thank you, council member.  
5 Before I start, I'd like to thank the folks that have  
6 come and stayed with us all day today, the comments  
7 they've offered, the time they've donated to us, and the  
8 thought and sincerity of -- of how they've been working  
9 with this. I appreciate it very much.

10 All righty. Our situation is -- is  
11 complex and -- but let me step through it with you.

12 And first off, the question is: Why is  
13 this important today? The funding for projects -- the  
14 construction for funding for projects for TxDOT is in  
15 something called a UTP. That's the Unified  
16 Transportation Program. It's a ten-year plan that's  
17 updated every year. And, typically, there's additions  
18 and subtractions to that plan. That's typically the  
19 update, all right? In our case, it would be an  
20 addition.

21 Also, in our case, the update is, it's  
22 going to be at the end of August. So it's important for  
23 us to get a decision made now so that a decision could  
24 be made on the update by the Transportation Commission.

25 Why is the Transportation Commission

1 important is because, in this case, they're prepared or  
2 planning to commit a significant amount of money to  
3 Segment 2 project, all right? In excess of  
4 \$700 million. And it was expected that our partners at  
5 the MPO would -- would also contribute a match if you  
6 will. And it was determined to be in the amount of  
7 \$100 million. That money, it comes under federal  
8 Category 2, which is municipal mobility. And those are  
9 the funds that are passed to the MPO to contribute to  
10 projects in -- in our area. This is not an unusual  
11 action. We've had many transfers like this on projects,  
12 whether on I-45, Gulf Freeway, North Freeway. I mean in  
13 many places.

14 The criticality of this is -- is -- is  
15 heightened when -- when we begin to look at the entire  
16 state of Texas. The transportation needs especially in  
17 the five metro areas are significant. And in Houston,  
18 we don't want to have this motion made to delay and send  
19 a message to the commission, hey, we're not ready, and  
20 then we get out of line on the funding for this very  
21 important project. Even though it's a ten-year plan,  
22 there's no telling when you would get back in line.

23 **MR. ROBINSON:** Well, with that point, I  
24 think you've begun with the word "typically." And I  
25 think, as clearly demonstrated by this morning's

1 discussion, these are extraordinary circumstances that  
2 require extraordinary performance from TxDOT. And I  
3 think, if my understanding is correct, the UTP is  
4 updated every year.

5 And in this case, were there to be a  
6 delay, I'd like to know what that impact might cause to  
7 occur.

8 **MR. ALLEN:** Council Member, there will be  
9 no guarantee when that money will be available again.

10 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Discussion?

12 **MR. GARCIA:** Quincy, the -- the last time  
13 that I -- this is sort of a bad penny or a reoccurring  
14 nightmare. I'm not sure which. But I was on city  
15 council when TxDOT last proposed to expand I-45. This  
16 was after Hurricane Rita.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

18 **MR. GARCIA:** And the argument was used --  
19 that we needed to expand 45 back then was because  
20 Hurricane Rita demonstrated the need to have more lanes  
21 available for evacuation. That was roughly twenty --  
22 two-thousand- --

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Five.

24 **MR. GARCIA:** -- -six or '5.

25 **MR. QUINCY:** Yeah.

1                   **MR. GARCIA:** And so the -- this  
2 conversation gives me confidence that although this is a  
3 difficult decision to make -- and I don't make it  
4 lightly -- that that experience -- today's ongoing  
5 dialogue related to the same project and the same idea  
6 of that particular project is that we will continue to  
7 be at this table.

8                   And I think it's imperative to understand  
9 that history to realize that we didn't have it right  
10 then. We still don't have it right today. Otherwise,  
11 these folks would be on board because they were part of  
12 that conversation back then as well.

13                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

14                   **MR. GARCIA:** And we just have not been  
15 able to move the needle in creating that public  
16 confidence on what this project is intended to provide.

17                   So I just want to share that history with  
18 my colleagues because, you know, there's some value in  
19 having a few gray hairs and having been at the table  
20 before. And that has been the experience on this  
21 particular matter.

22                   We've -- we've been there. We've had that  
23 conversation. TxDOT was told to go back and rethink it,  
24 figure it out because you wanted to acquire back then  
25 historical property and -- and we're right back here

1 with the same -- almost nothing has changed. And  
2 that's -- that's a little frustrating.

3 So I just wanted to share that -- that  
4 history with everybody.

5 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Any other further  
6 discussion? Carol?

7 **MS. PATMAN:** I'd -- I'd like to ask  
8 Quincy --

9 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Carrin, I hate to do  
10 this to you, but I recognized Carol in --

11 **MS. PATMAN:** Oh, I'm sorry, no. I  
12 thought you recognized me. Thank you.

13 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Sorry about that.

14 **MS. LEWIS:** That's okay. And I was -- I  
15 would have been okay with --

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I know. But I just want  
17 to try --

18 **MS. LEWIS:** -- going ahead -- okay.

19 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- to keep everybody in  
20 order.

21 **MS. LEWIS:** All right. Well --

22 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Then that way nobody  
23 gets upset if I -- I don't want to miss anybody.

24 **MS. LEWIS:** All right. Thank you.

25 So Carrin was actually about to ask Quincy

1 a question, so I would really like to let her ask it  
2 first if you don't mind --

3 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** All right.

4 **MS. LEWIS:** -- us swapping.

5 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** All right.

6 **MS. LEWIS:** And then I --

7 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Go right ahead.

8 **MS. PATMAN:** Quincy, assuming the  
9 ultimate decision for a moment, which is not at all to  
10 be assumed right now -- but assuming that the ultimate  
11 decision is to move forward with the project with the  
12 environmental mitigation funds and community funds in  
13 there, what is TxDOT going to do to involve the  
14 community and make sure that every single concern is  
15 taken into account, because some very serious concerns  
16 have been expressed here and to -- to many of us  
17 individually, as -- I mean, it's just very, very, very  
18 concerning.

19 And -- so what are you going to do -- if  
20 you are given the authority to put it in the Unified  
21 Transportation Plan, what are you going to do to make  
22 the community comfortable?

23 **MR. ALLEN:** Carrin, thank you for asking  
24 that question.

25 Right now, we are -- got several things

1 going on. We have take -- gone through a comment period  
2 on our Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It was  
3 mentioned here today that we received thousands of  
4 comments. And those are in order between two- and  
5 three-thousand comments. We're in the process right now  
6 of going through those comments and addressing them.  
7 How we address those comments will become part of the  
8 FEIS or the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

9 As we've been going through this process  
10 though, we have been getting comments, and we began --  
11 somebody mentioned TxDOT is having a meeting every  
12 night. We began a second level of public involvement.  
13 We have a partner in this. The City of Houston and  
14 mayor's facilitation team has worked with us. And we  
15 have gone out and we still are going out, receiving  
16 comments.

17 The -- with the FEIS, the process doesn't  
18 stop. We can change the project. We can modify it. We  
19 can improve it in any number of various ways. The D --  
20 the DEIS, though, it reaches the FEIS once we get a  
21 record of decision. In other words, in this case, the  
22 FHWA has delegated that to TxDOT's environmental  
23 division in Austin. They will review what's been done  
24 and make a determination, you know, whether we're --  
25 we've addressed it well enough or not and -- and so

1     forth.

2                     The record of decision is not expected  
3     till the very end of this calendar year or the first  
4     part of next year. The reason I'm laying this out for  
5     you is because our public involvement will continue.  
6     The issues mentioned here today, many of those are  
7     underway and being worked on right now. And even when  
8     the FEIS is determined an issue, that process can  
9     continue. The project can be modified, improved, or --  
10    or altered.

11                    And we've got examples of that. A recent  
12    one I would -- I would offer you is the work we did on  
13    US-290. We changed that project five years after the  
14    record of decision several times; the lane assignments,  
15    how we were going to accommodate METRO in your case in  
16    that corridor.

17                    And so I am trying to represent an agency  
18    who's listening, taking what we're hearing and acting on  
19    it. I think we're hamstrung a little bit where we are  
20    in the process because it has -- I'll just own it. We  
21    haven't communicated, I guess, as well as we needed to,  
22    to tell you what we've done.

23                    And I'll give you several examples. I  
24    mean, you guys have mentioned Clayton Homes.

25                    **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah.

1           **MR. QUINCY:** And we've taken great  
2 strides. And we are doing what basically has been  
3 asked. And that is work with the Housing Authority,  
4 find another facility very close by, keep the folks in  
5 their homes where they are now, get the other facility  
6 up and running, fully developed, and move our customers'  
7 wants.

8           **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** What about the  
9 schools?

10          **MR. QUINCY:** And we are going to -- the  
11 locations that we've identified are close enough to the  
12 existing location that -- and I say, "we." This is a  
13 partnership that we're working with, with Housing  
14 Authority.

15                 The effort is being made not to have to  
16 change the schools. So, I mean, get it close enough --  
17 get the replacement facility close enough that the  
18 schools don't have to change.

19                 Is that helpful?

20          **MS. PATMAN:** It -- it is. I think that  
21 what we all --

22                 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

23          **MS. PATMAN:** I think what we all really  
24 need to be reassured of is, I've still got all those  
25 buses, Quincy. We really need to --

1                   **MR. QUINCY:** Well, let me -- let me speak  
2 to that.

3                   **MS. PATMAN:** Let me -- we really need to  
4 be --

5                   **MR. QUINCY:** Okay.

6                   **MS. PATMAN:** -- reassured that un- --  
7 assuming that we vote today to allow it to go into the  
8 Unified Transportation Plan, because there's -- the  
9 dilemma is, there's a lot that benefits transit in this.  
10 And so, you know, we don't want to lose that money  
11 because we're always looking for money. As many of the  
12 speakers have said, there is -- there is woefully  
13 inadequate money for transit in the region.

14                   And I am familiar with the processes where  
15 you get in line. It's important to get in line to have  
16 any chance of getting the money; otherwise -- that's  
17 what's happened with Houston. For many, many years, our  
18 community was not united behind the need for transit in  
19 Houston. And as a result, other communities were able  
20 to build more robust systems with those same federal  
21 dollars because we weren't in line.

22                   So I am very familiar with the concept  
23 that you need to get in line. And I think what we're  
24 considering today in part is -- is making sure we get in  
25 line for these dollars. I'm familiar with that.

1 I just want to make sure that the concerns  
2 of the community have been heard loud and clear and  
3 you're going to redouble your efforts to make sure  
4 they're incorporated.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He's not.

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

8 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Could I get y'all in the  
9 back to just go ahead and listen? The -- the council  
10 listened to y'all when the -- when public comment was  
11 made. It makes it real challenging to hear everybody  
12 speaking when -- when people are making comments. So if  
13 you could refrain from doing that, I'd appreciate it.  
14 Thank you.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They're the one  
16 with the mic.

17 **MR. ALLEN:** Our -- our efforts have been  
18 doubled. And -- and we're also benefiting from the  
19 efforts the City of Houston is helping us with, with  
20 their facilitation team. The effort is extreme right  
21 now.

22 **MS. PATMAN:** And METRO will do anything  
23 to help as well.

24 **MR. ROBINSON:** Let me make a point on  
25 behalf of the City.

1           It is -- it is one thing -- and, Quincy, I  
2 know you and I have spoken about this. It's one thing  
3 to listen. And you have had so many meetings that we  
4 know you people are listening. But it's very important  
5 that we are responsive to those concerns that are being  
6 aired by the community.

7           (Inaudible crosstalk.)

8           **MR. ROBINSON:** And I -- while I may have  
9 confidence in your ability to respond, I think that is  
10 where the proof is in the pudding. And whether or not  
11 one is to delay or whether we are to move forward with  
12 this, there is a critical moment where the City  
13 maintains that it will be within our power that we will  
14 kill this at least in our interest. And we will not  
15 support a project that is not in the interest of our  
16 citizens and the City of Houston.

17           And I think that is something that you and  
18 I have spoken about. And if that needs to be  
19 memorialized in a memorandum of understanding, one would  
20 have to work on that very carefully. But I think with  
21 the current motion on the floor, to delay, I think we  
22 have a first order of business.

23           **JUDGE HIDALGO:** We all know that you  
24 don't get -- once you give money, you're not going to --

25           **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge --

1                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- take it back. We all  
2 know --

3                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge --

4                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- how government works.

5                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- could we --

6                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Yes.

7                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- go back to Carol real  
8 quick? And I'll come to you next.

9                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Oh, apologies, Carol.

10                  **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you.

11                  **JUDGE HIDALGO:** I thought -- I thought we  
12 moved on from that.

13                               I just -- I want us to be realistic. I  
14 mean, the people want to commit to vote for me in four  
15 years, and I promised to be great. I mean, that's --  
16 that's just not how it works.

17                   **MS. LEWIS:** But I would -- I would say, I  
18 do trust that you are going to be great for four years.

19                               But, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20                               You know, sitting here, I have -- I have  
21 two sides of me going on. I've got a head side, and  
22 I've got a heart side. And one of the things that we're  
23 hearing is that when we have public involvement, the  
24 most important thing is trust between the agencies and  
25 the citizens. And so we've got a gap there.

1           What I would say is that we're not going  
2 to fix that today. But we will fix it if we all agree  
3 that we're going to work toward it. And so that's what  
4 I would like to sort of say, you know, as we're  
5 listening to all the comments that have been made -- and  
6 I really want you to know that I appreciate every single  
7 person who came, every single person who made a comment.

8           I was offended when there was an  
9 insinuation that we weren't listening and that we  
10 weren't going to hear you because we absolutely -- many  
11 of us, I know, absolutely are listening, and we're very  
12 sensitive to what you have to say. And so I am glad  
13 that we sort of clarified why that happened in the first  
14 place was just trying to follow something  
15 parliamentarily, but not a reflection at all of our  
16 listening --

17           **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Carol, can you --

18           **MS. LEWIS:** -- to what you say --

19           **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- move the -- move the  
20 mic a little closer to you. People are having a problem  
21 hearing you.

22           **MS. LEWIS:** Okay. Thank you.

23           So, basically, my point is, I thank all of  
24 you, and we are listening to what you're saying and it's  
25 very important to us.

1                   And I said I've got kind of two saids --  
2 two sides, a head side and a heart side. My head side  
3 starts off with as a 40-year transportation  
4 professional -- I've been planning in this region for  
5 40 years. And one of the things I know is that if I ask  
6 myself in 2030 and I-45 is just like it is today, am I  
7 going to be happy? And I'm going to have to say the  
8 answer to that is no. It has been said that there are  
9 problems with that facility, and we need to address  
10 them.

11                   Now, Commissioner Garcia already mentioned  
12 that we remembered working on this in 2005-2006. So  
13 here we are 2019 and nothing has happened. And so --  
14 well, I shouldn't say nothing. But we're not there yet.  
15 And so the point is that we do have to keep moving  
16 forward.

17                   So the head side of me says, yes, we  
18 indeed need to go ahead today and move this \$100 million  
19 forward, as in the staff recommendation along with the  
20 1.5 million for community planning and the additional 50  
21 million to help with the mitigation. That's usually  
22 important.

23                   As long as I've been doing planning in  
24 this region, I don't ever remember the City of Houston  
25 putting resources, H-GAC putting resources combined with

1 TxDOT and METRO and Harris County to get something done  
2 right. So this is the first time I hear that being  
3 done. And I think it's important.

4 And so I just -- I don't want to take too  
5 much time because I know we've been here awhile. But I  
6 just also have to make a little point about some of the  
7 comments being made.

8 The idea that you can take money that was  
9 in a highway column and put it on transit or put it in  
10 flooding is an incorrect assumption. We can't. We'd  
11 have to go all the way to Washington. So I do have an  
12 advocacy that we start working with congress to make  
13 sure that the money comes to us not in silos and so we  
14 can make suggestions and recommendations where we need  
15 them. But to go away today thinking that we could take  
16 any of this money and put it on any other initiative is  
17 incorrect. So with that, I'll just wrap up.

18 And my heart side of that is that I am  
19 listening to you. My heart side would want to delay for  
20 the purposes of confirming to you that we're listening.  
21 But the head side of me also knows that that really  
22 doesn't mean that.

23 Okay. Thanks.

24 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge Sebesta.

25 **JUDGE SEBESTA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Quincy, it's been about four-and-a-half,  
2 five hours. But with the \$100 million commitment that  
3 we would make, what would the -- would Texas  
4 Transportation Commission put forth? Remind me. It's  
5 been a while.

6 **MR. ALLEN:** The construction costs would  
7 be 740 million, and they would also contribute stuff  
8 that's outside the UTP to bring the total project cost  
9 of this project to \$1.2 billion. So we put -- or the --  
10 the MPO puts in 100 million, and the project --

11 **JUDGE SEBESTA:** Is 1.1.

12 **MR. ALLEN:** -- 1.1 billion from -- from  
13 TxDOT.

14 **JUDGE SEBESTA:** Okay. I know over the  
15 years, we have discussed and discussed and discussed how  
16 this region has gotten less dollars than other regions  
17 throughout the state of Texas. Dallas has done better  
18 than us. San Antonio has done better than us. El Paso,  
19 they've done better in getting more dollars for  
20 vehicle -- for miles traveled, what have you.

21 If we do not approve this, that  
22 \$1.1 billion, Texas Transportation Commission, any idea  
23 where it might go? Is it going to come to Houston, this  
24 region for another project? Or is it going to be  
25 scattered around the rest of this very, very large state

1 with very many needs?

2 **MR. ALLEN:** A significant percentage of  
3 that money has been dedicated to addressing congested  
4 areas. And the focus has been on the metros; Dallas,  
5 Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston, all right?

6 But us sending a message that we're not  
7 ready basically or that could be interpreted that makes  
8 me a little bit nervous, that we get out of line and  
9 then -- Tucker, with all due respect, we'd be behind  
10 Austin. I'm messing with you.

11 But there's -- every metro has got a list  
12 of unfunded projects. And this money is not going to  
13 sit idle. So --

14 **JUDGE SEBESTA:** I understand. Thank you.

15 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Commissioner Garcia.

16 **MR. GARCIA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 On a couple of points, number one, on  
18 the -- on the community engagement, Quincy, you  
19 mentioned that about 2500 comments have been taken in on  
20 this.

21 **MR. ALLEN:** On the -- during the comment  
22 period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement,  
23 Commissioner, we received over 2500 comments. And now  
24 in the efforts, we're getting even more comments.

25 **MR. GARCIA:** Yeah.

1                   **MR. ALLEN:** The package I was talking  
2 about was what was originally received during the  
3 comment period on DEI's.

4                   **MR. GARCIA:** Got you.

5                   And to that end, you know, I met with you  
6 earlier. We talked about this. I attended one of the  
7 community meetings that you had in my precinct. And I  
8 appreciate that.

9                   And -- and so I've been just listening to  
10 the community and hearing what the feedback is from all  
11 these various meetings. And so you trust me to verify.  
12 And so I have launched an online survey. Many folks in  
13 this room have probably participated in that.

14                   (Inaudible crosstalk.)

15                   **MR. GARCIA:** But just in my small  
16 effort -- I didn't hire a communication firm. We  
17 just -- my staff put it together. We put it online.  
18 Just our effort in just recent days has netted nearly  
19 1,000 respondents. And that gives me a credible pause  
20 to compare my effort to the process and the effort of a  
21 behemoth organization known as TxDOT.

22                   And so I -- you know, the -- the -- I  
23 think it's very, very important that we, you know,  
24 number one take the input and -- and you've done that,  
25 and I've done that. But with the feedback that has been

1 provided, people are concerned, and many of them have  
2 spoken to the issue of neighborhood connectivity,  
3 flooding.

4                   And on the point of flooding, number one,  
5 I do appreciate that TxDOT is willing to incorporate the  
6 Atlas 14. But there's other areas along 45 that are  
7 great opportunities to further address -- address flood  
8 mitigation that we haven't even gotten to. We --  
9 there's been no conversation on.

10                   **MR. ALLEN:** Commissioner, I don't mean to  
11 interrupt you, but please allow me to come back to that  
12 point --

13                   **MR. GARCIA:** Yes.

14                   **MR. ALLEN:** -- when you're done.

15                   **MR. GARCIA:** Yes.

16                   And so -- so I want to make sure that we  
17 are taking the input and that we are effectively coming  
18 back to the community and demonstrating your -- this is  
19 the input you gave on these issues; these are the  
20 changes that the project has taken as a result of these  
21 changes.

22                   And -- and then, you know -- you know, you  
23 mentioned Austin. As bad as Austin is -- number one, my  
24 daughter lives there. But as bad as Austin is, it's  
25 interesting to see that Austin has split-level systems

1 to facilitate some -- some of their express traffic.

2 I think we -- we're looking at widening as  
3 the principal solution of this -- of this effort. And I  
4 just -- I just think that we have not yet really  
5 challenged ourselves to think of additional innovative  
6 approaches and solutions, whether they're from some part  
7 of the country, some part of Texas, or whether they're  
8 from other -- some other part of the world that we can  
9 incorporate to the issues of -- the young lady that  
10 spoke about Japan, you know, those -- I just have not --  
11 I am not comfortable that we have gotten out of the  
12 traditional TxDOT mode of addressing traffic congestion.  
13 And that is principally widening. And that is -- that's  
14 disheartening given the fact that that was the  
15 fundamental point of rejection in 2005.

16 **MR. ALLEN:** I was in East Harris in 2005.  
17 But I wasn't -- I was dealing with some other problems  
18 there. And I didn't follow the City of Houston/TxDOT  
19 interaction there. So I'm not sure what the proposed  
20 work on 45 was at that time. I can speak to what we're  
21 proposing now.

22 Commissioner, we are widening, but we're  
23 only adding three lanes. And that'll bring -- those  
24 lanes are for transit. And that'll bring a total of  
25 four lanes for transit. Right now when you go north and

1 south in that corridor, there is one lane. It is  
2 inbound in the morning. It is outbound in the  
3 afternoon. The plan we have, 24/7, two lanes each way.

4 **MR. GARCIA:** Okay.

5 **MR. ALLEN:** And those are based on  
6 modeling numbers that we use demographic data. The  
7 growth we have in Montgomery County is significant,  
8 obviously. But what our modeling is also showing us is  
9 that 50 percent of the traffic that comes to town wants  
10 to pass through, whether they're going -- if they're on  
11 45 going from north to -- to south to Galveston or  
12 U of H or Texas Southern, wherever it is.

13 And so the alignment and the  
14 configuration, how we did the lanes downtown was to  
15 accommodate that. Back to Segment 2, we're adding three  
16 lanes, okay? And that'll bring a total of four transit  
17 lanes in that corridor.

18 The question has been asked, will BRT work  
19 on this, bus rapid transit, which is a -- sort of a  
20 hybrid transit element between buses and rail, but more  
21 like buses? The answer is, yes.

22 Have we been in conversations detailed  
23 with METRO about Light Rail in that corridor? The  
24 answer is, yes. Tx- --

25 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

1           **MR. ALLEN:** What?

2           **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

3           **MR. ALLEN:** Okay. TxDOT has committed in  
4 writing not to -- to work with METRO, not to preclude  
5 them from space in the corridor. And we're having those  
6 conversations. There is a cost involved, obviously.

7                           And the other work we're doing on  
8 Segment 2 that's very important is the interchange with  
9 610, one of the oldest in the area. Certainly, it's got  
10 the oldest standards. If you travel that like I do, you  
11 know that when you get on, that big, yellow first sign  
12 you see is go slow because if you're in a big truck,  
13 you're going to dump over. If you go around the corner,  
14 you look up, you're in the left lane of 610. I mean,  
15 this is from another era, and we need -- we need to  
16 improve that.

17           **MR. GARCIA:** So a question just real  
18 quickly. Number one, I appreciate the feedback. And I  
19 think this is what folks are looking to do.

20                           But by the same token, the reference to  
21 the conversations with METRO are important. They're  
22 good. But the -- but they're conversations. There has  
23 been -- I have not heard yet that we are going to  
24 incorporate METRO strategies for mass -- mass transit  
25 into these. There's -- it sounds like there's

1 conversation. There's dialogue.

2 But I'd like to see that there is a  
3 commitment from both entities and ready to move forward  
4 on -- on this at the same time because having -- having  
5 the conversations I've had with a few engineers, I'm  
6 being told -- I'm not the engineer, but I trust their  
7 input -- that widening isn't entirely necessary. And so  
8 that's what has me having some pause in this regard to  
9 achieve the respective goals.

10 **MS. PATMAN:** Let me know if -- if -- if  
11 you want --

12 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Carrin --

13 **MS. PATMAN:** -- answers from METRO.

14 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. I'm sorry.

15 **MR. ALLEN:** Well --

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I didn't mean to  
17 interrupt. I just -- I don't -- I'm -- I'm keeping  
18 track of the order here, so I just --

19 **MS. PATMAN:** Sure. No, I just --

20 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I mean, I appreciate you  
21 responding right away because that way we --

22 **MS. PATMAN:** Just let me know.

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- can get it addressed.

24 Thank you.

25 **MR. ALLEN:** Commissioner, I'd be glad to

1 review the information with the engineers that are  
2 speaking to you in that I want you to know that when  
3 we're working with METRO, that we ask the engineers that  
4 are working on Segment 2 to do engineering high-level  
5 studies. How much space is needed? How much does it  
6 cost based on other numbers that come from previous  
7 projects, recent rail projects? So we're not just --  
8 it's more than a conversation. We're doing detailed --  
9 detailed work there.

10 The last thing I'd like to come back to  
11 and then I'll back up and yield the floor. And that  
12 would be flooding. You mentioned flooding. I'd like to  
13 inform you -- and that's one of the weaknesses of our  
14 process. It -- we are not able to communicate so  
15 clearly on -- in real time of what we're doing.

16 But the flooding is significant, the  
17 effort we have there. And we're working with the City  
18 of Houston and with Harris County Flood Control District  
19 on solutions that start down in the middle of the  
20 central business district and move north along White Oak  
21 Bayou for a short time and then Little White Oak. And  
22 as we get to 610, we have talked to the Independence  
23 Heights community. And I have tasked my folks to figure  
24 out a way to get an opening there under 610. And we've  
25 got sketches and preliminary designs on the drawing

1 board in my conference room.

2 Are we ready to publish yet? No. But for  
3 you guys to be -- you know, for us not to inform you as  
4 well as we should, that -- that -- that's painful for  
5 me, especially when we're working as hard as we are.

6 The last point I want to make on flooding  
7 is, it's not just downtown. We're going up Little White  
8 Oak Bayou, across 610. Now we're heading north toward  
9 Beltway 8.

10 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. No, no, no. I  
11 got order here.

12 Council Member Castex-Tatum, you're up.

13 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: Thank you very much.

14 Clearly, Mr. Allen, there has been a huge  
15 disconnect in our communication with the stakeholders.  
16 I think that we have some clear identified concerns with  
17 the project. I'd like to know from you a couple of  
18 things.

19 As far as process, it's my understanding  
20 that today, we were looking for a decision of record.  
21 What we were going to do today was to support a  
22 resolution that said that this region is supportive of  
23 this project.

24 Does us supporting this resolution,  
25 saying, as a region, we support this project prevent us

1 from addressing the concerns that have been raised  
2 today?

3           It's my understanding that there's a vote  
4 today, and there will be a vote in the spring. If  
5 between today and the vote in the spring there is no  
6 movement to address -- concretely address the concerns  
7 of the residents and the stakeholders that are here in  
8 this room that we have all heard from, there is an  
9 opportunity to kill the project. But I don't want us to  
10 miss an opportunity to get in line for the funds if we  
11 agree, as a region, that this project is a project we  
12 want to see happen. And I don't want us to do that at  
13 the risk of not hearing and making moves for the  
14 residents who are affected the most.

15           I think that there's still so many  
16 unanswered questions about the process and then about  
17 the people. But the most important "P" in the room is  
18 the people.

19           So I want to hear the process, and then I  
20 want to hear, have we had a conversation with HISD? Are  
21 the -- is this highway right next to the school? How is  
22 that going to affect those students? What are we going  
23 to do about that?

24           I also want to hear, are the people going  
25 to be displaced? Where are they going to go? How are

1 we going to address the people that are going to be  
2 displaced? But then we also, as a body, need to know,  
3 if we don't vote for this resolution, what is the real  
4 impact?

5 I know you said this is a ten-year plan.  
6 Does this mean that we would have to put in more money  
7 in a year, more money in two years? I feel like there's  
8 a lot of loose ends, and we're being asked to make a  
9 decision without all the information.

10 So can you speak to the process and then  
11 also to the -- the several concerns that have been  
12 raised? And then I have one final question.

13 **MR. ALLEN:** Okay.

14 **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** The pro- -- can you --  
15 can you speak succinctly to the process? And don't --  
16 don't do it like in a bunch of legal jargon and -- and  
17 acronyms. Just are we voting today on this and in the  
18 spring, we're going to vote again on something else.

19 **MR. ALLEN:** Yeah.

20 **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** -- regarding --

21 **MR. ALLEN:** Excuse me. Today, we're --  
22 if we -- when we vote, we're voting on contributing  
23 \$100 million to the project, okay?

24 **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** Right.

25 **MR. ALLEN:** The process that we're in is

1 the environmental process. And right now, we are  
2 evaluating comments on the Draft Environmental Impact  
3 Statement, the first one. And we've been after that for  
4 over a year.

5 We are also taking additional comments  
6 from all of the public involvement that we're doing,  
7 both City of Houston and TxDOT and the stuff that we're  
8 doing together. If somebody had something they wanted  
9 to give me before they left today, we would certainly  
10 accept it and put it into the record, all right?

11 More process, we're looking to get the  
12 responses of how we're going to mitigate or deal with  
13 the concerns that have been expressed through this  
14 process, the responses to that, as early as the end of  
15 this calendar year; if not the end of this calendar  
16 year, the first quarter of 2020.

17 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: So is the project  
18 designed?

19 **MR. ALLEN:** The project is not designed.

20 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: So are we in the  
21 planning phase?

22 **MR. ALLEN:** The project is in the  
23 planning phase.

24 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: Okay. So now that we  
25 are in the planning phase, can all of the concerns that

1 are being raised by these residents be addressed before  
2 we get to a design?

3 **MR. ALLEN:** Yes is the answer.

4 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: And how is that done?

5 **MR. ALLEN:** Well, we have a team of  
6 engineers and environmental specialists that go through  
7 the comments and say, here's what's being asked or  
8 suggested here.

9 I'll give you one example just quickly  
10 that came outside of the DEIS -- I mean the Draft  
11 Environmental Impact Statement process.

12 We were in a meeting in Austin talking  
13 about air quality and some other things. And somebody  
14 from the Northside mentioned to me, we sure would like  
15 to be able to keep southbound 45 exit ramp to North  
16 Main. And I said, "Wow." I said, "That area is tight.  
17 It's got cross-streets that exist that make it very  
18 difficult. We might have to close Cottage. That's a  
19 tough ask."

20 A couple of the folks in the room said,  
21 "We think we can close Cottage." I said, "Okay." We  
22 went back home. I've got designers that have got design  
23 details to lay over our schematic to show how that ramp  
24 would go in.

25 Now, I've got other people working on, all

1 right, if Cottage doesn't have cars on it, let's use it  
2 for pedestrians. So they're working on pedestrian  
3 access for that.

4                   Unfortunately, that work is being done  
5 inside our walls, and there's not a good vehicle  
6 necessarily to communicate every day, all right, here's  
7 something that -- that's on the windshield that --  
8 that's really good and -- at least in my opinion, it's  
9 good.

10                   We had a similar question about ramps on  
11 the northbound side as well. And we are working on  
12 those too. Those are two quick examples.

13                   MS. CASTEX-TATUM: Okay. And I just have  
14 to say this because for far too long, communities of  
15 color, they have always taken the brunt of  
16 infrastructure projects. And if we don't do this right,  
17 we will continue to perpetuate the distrust of big  
18 government and people that participate in our democracy.  
19 And we have a -- a responsibility as this body to make  
20 sure that the people trust what we're going to do.

21                   And I understand this big picture. I  
22 really do. As a region, we need a project. But is this  
23 the right way to do this project? And are we  
24 communicating the concerns of the people?

25                   My -- my last question that I want to ask

1 of you, Mr. Allen -- and -- and please don't take this  
2 personally. But I want you to be able to explain to me,  
3 if you were sitting in -- in -- in the -- in the  
4 position that you had to take a vote today and you've  
5 heard all of the people who have spoken today, you know  
6 the big picture, do you feel that you can confidently  
7 say to the voting members and to the people in the  
8 audience today that we are in the best position to take  
9 this vote today for the record of the decision and that  
10 if we do pass -- and if we do have a vote to move  
11 forward with this funding, that you, as Tx- --  
12 representing TxDOT, will make the changes necessary and  
13 the people here who have raised these very valid  
14 concerns can trust that their concerns will be heard,  
15 because I'm hard-pressed to believe that -- well, I'll  
16 let you answer.

17 **MR. ALLEN:** Okay. You've laid out a lot  
18 there for me all in one question. Here --

19 I'm sorry?

20 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, before you address  
21 that, Quincy, let me just say, pizza has arrived. It's  
22 over here in the lunch room. So if you want some,  
23 please help yourself.

24 Hopefully that was okay, Commissioner. I  
25 didn't want to be telling people to eat your -- eat your

1 pizza. I see you've got yours already, sir.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I was testing it.  
3 It's -- it's okay. It's safe.

4 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Go ahead, Quincy.

5 **MR. ALLEN:** All right. Where we are in  
6 time -- I'll try to make this quick -- is an opportunity  
7 to confirm we want to be in line for funding. It is  
8 not -- just getting in line for funding does not say  
9 that our environmental process, whether it's responses  
10 to the draft environmental document or the final, is in  
11 any way complete or a slam dunk. We still have got to  
12 prove ourself there.

13 Part of that process is taking the  
14 comments and responding to them and integrating what can  
15 be integrated and dealing -- or it may -- they may have  
16 an idea, and we may do it a little bit differently, but  
17 it's a great idea.

18 So what this does is kind of -- it's a  
19 stage things. It's a funding thing. Get in line for  
20 the funding. The environmental process continues. If  
21 we decide later that we don't want to do this, we  
22 just -- I mean, we can make that decision later. But we  
23 can't get back in -- in the funding line.

24 **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** So it's not a -- it's  
25 not a linear process. Two things can be happening

1 simultaneously?

2 **MR. ALLEN:** Yes, ma'am.

3 **MS. CASTEX-TATUM:** Okay. But how do --  
4 how do we -- where -- how do I tell the people who are  
5 so very concerned that if we vote today, that's not  
6 going to happen? What assurances do we have that if we  
7 vote today to give -- to do the funding, that those  
8 things will happen?

9 **MR. ALLEN:** All right. The thing is,  
10 I've got to have an environmental document for this  
11 project, all right? Funding is one thing. But the  
12 environmental document becomes the critical path if it's  
13 vote -- once we vote for the 100 million today.

14 But if we don't have the environmental  
15 document, we can't do anything. It's a game-changer.  
16 It's a -- it's a game hinderer if it's not handled  
17 properly.

18 And I have to commit to what I'm hearing  
19 from the public, our public involvement, to address  
20 those concerns and then have somebody looking over my  
21 shoulder that says, yes, they were properly, whatever,  
22 addressed. Or we don't have a project.

23 And -- and you said linear tracts. It's  
24 kind of separate tracts. We've got a funding tract over  
25 here. But the environmental tract is as much or even

1 more power -- you know, powerful than the funding.

2 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: So tell me again what  
3 the impact of a delay would mean.

4 MR. ALLEN: All right. If we delay, we  
5 have to -- we get out of line for the \$1.1 billion that  
6 has been -- is being considered to be put on this  
7 project in the UTP update at the end of August. We get  
8 out of that -- we send a message and say, hey, we're not  
9 ready. And we get out of that funding line.

10 MS. CASTEX-TATUM: So how do you get back  
11 in line?

12 MR. ALLEN: We're at the mercy of other  
13 projects. The money will go, and then we have to raise  
14 our hand and say, "All right. We're ready to get back  
15 in line." They say, "Great. We don't have that money  
16 here. So just -- just wait." And when it'll be  
17 available, I don't know.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. Is that -- are we  
19 good -- are you done, Quincy? Are you done, Council  
20 Member?

21 Jeff.

22 MR. TAEBEL: I have a question for Alan.  
23 This goes back to the conversation had at the Technical  
24 Advisory Committee that was referenced.

25 Will this body have another chance to vote

1 on actually allocating the \$100 billion? And if so,  
2 when and how do you envision -- what would happen  
3 between now and then?

4 **MR. ALAN CLARK:** Yes. We'll have -- this  
5 vote today is clearly stating what our intention is.  
6 The actual programming of money for projects occurs in a  
7 document we call the Transportation Improvement Program.  
8 You-all hear us talk about amendments to that every  
9 meeting.

10 The next update of the Transportation  
11 Improvement Program, which will extend it two more years  
12 to the time period when this project can be funded,  
13 happens this spring. Traditionally, we would be  
14 bringing to you that document around March. Asking for  
15 your approval in May. Ultimately, it becomes effective  
16 with the beginning of the new federal fiscal year. It  
17 also has to be concurred in by the Texas Department of  
18 Transportation.

19 So there -- there will be, in -- in the  
20 next six months, another time in which you have to  
21 affirm -- if you were to act positively today, you would  
22 have an opportunity to then affirm that by programming  
23 those funds specifically in the Transportation  
24 Improvement Program.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Go ahead. Thank

1 you.

2 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Council Member Pollard.

3 **MS. POLLARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 My question -- and I appreciate all the  
5 public speaking. I really do. The -- all your  
6 comments. Even though you accused us of already coming  
7 with our minds made up, mine wasn't. And I -- I  
8 appreciate all this discussion. It's helping to  
9 crystallize a lot of this.

10 My question for Quincy is -- and you've  
11 discussed some of it in answers to others questions.  
12 But do -- give us a little better view of the extent to  
13 which you have worked with the Harris County Flood  
14 Control District and -- and what their reactions and  
15 comments and -- and input has been on that process.

16 **MR. ALLEN:** Thank you for your question.

17 We work very closely with Harris County  
18 Flood -- Flood Control District, and we have for as many  
19 years as I can remember. Every project that we have, we  
20 run through their office to make sure that whatever  
21 we're doing drainage-wise on that project doesn't --  
22 what do you call it -- overload another part of the  
23 system.

24 In this case, we have been specifically  
25 looking at improvements to Buffalo Bayou with Harris

1 County Flood Control District and the City of Houston.  
2 Principally, you've heard of the North and South Canal.  
3 If we're able to do those cut-throughs on that, we've  
4 done the analysis with Harris County Flood Control. We  
5 believe that that would sus- -- significantly improve  
6 the drainage in that area. That's not the only area  
7 that needs it.

8 The other thing is, once you get the water  
9 flowing well through there, then we've got to look  
10 downstream because we don't want to push this problem --

11 **MS. POLLARD:** Right.

12 **MR. ALLEN:** -- on somebody else. And  
13 we've had those conversations with Harris County Flood  
14 Control. And they're helping us with examining the flow  
15 downstream.

16 Now, more recently, last couple of weeks,  
17 as I said, we've moved -- started moving back up Little  
18 White Oak Bayou. And that -- that -- that's got a lot  
19 of things there. I mean, it -- it weaves its way in and  
20 out of 45.

21 More specifically what I've had my staff  
22 working with them is looking at, hey, how can we improve  
23 this principally right there at 610? If you look at  
24 the -- there's a culvert there that goes under 610. And  
25 if you look north of that, the water flows from north to

1 south. You can see that the water builds up there  
2 behind that culvert.

3 And the thought was -- in our shop was,  
4 could we rebuild that piece of 610 on this project and  
5 put an opening like you might see at Braes or TC Jest or  
6 something like that where it's a V-shaped concrete  
7 channel that allows the water to go in, and then you  
8 flatten off some spots up at the top that might lend  
9 themselves well to future pedestrian access, if that  
10 makes sense.

11 Your question was how we've been working  
12 with flood control. Almost weekly, if -- if that's  
13 helpful, but...

14 **MS. POLLARD:** And is there a significant  
15 portion of this project that's underground? Am I  
16 recalling that correctly?

17 **MR. ALLEN:** Yes. There's a significant  
18 part of this project that's below grade, yes, ma'am.

19 **MS. POLLARD:** And is that -- is that  
20 going to become a retention bond? Or how -- how do we  
21 plan to keep cars from flooding and -- and people out of  
22 that?

23 **MR. ALLEN:** Okay. Thank you for the  
24 question, a separate question from what we've been  
25 doing.

1                   **MS. POLLARD:** Uh-huh.

2                   **MR. ALLEN:** But I'd like to offer an  
3 example to you of an area that didn't flood that's below  
4 ground during Harvey. And that would be the piece there  
5 between -- on 59 between Shepherd and the Spur, okay?

6                   In that project, we've got a four-story  
7 building underground that you don't see. It's our pump  
8 station.

9                   **MS. POLLARD:** Uh-huh.

10                  **MR. ALLEN:** We're going to use that  
11 technology, as well as others, to drain that downtown  
12 piece that's behind George R. Brown or the piece that --  
13 we've got a small piece up there in Segment 2.

14                  (Inaudible crosstalk.)

15                  **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay.

16                  **MS. POLLARD:** Okay.

17                  **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Jeff Weatherford.

18                  **MS. POLLARD:** Thank you.

19                  **MR. WEATHERFORD:** Mr. Chair, the last TPC  
20 meeting, the last two TAC meetings, I've been very  
21 vocal. After the last TAC meeting, Mr. Gant might say  
22 too vocal about the public outreach and getting the  
23 public on board with this. So I'm not going to rehash  
24 all that.

25                  I was really looking for the clarification

1 that Mr. Taebel got. But, basically, my comment on that  
2 would be, if we were to move forward with this and in  
3 the next six months, we don't see tremendous progress,  
4 then I think you'd probably see a lot of people around  
5 this table with a different point of view when it came  
6 time to put that \$100 million actually in the TIP. So  
7 that would be my comment today.

8 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. And then Justin  
9 Beckendorff.

10 **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Quincy, I know this  
11 is -- is -- will be a time range. But where do you  
12 feel, if you had a crystal ball, where this project  
13 would actually start or it would be -- begin to be moved  
14 if we -- if we voted to approve this today?

15 **MR. ALLEN:** My best estimate would be  
16 sometime in 2023 and maybe as early as first quarter of  
17 2024.

18 **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Okay. So we're still  
19 looking at five to six years plus before anything.

20 So that -- is it a fair assumption to say  
21 that there is still a fair amount of time for us to go  
22 ahead and do this so we can remain in line for the  
23 1.1 billion, and we still have a fair amount of time to  
24 work with the citizens and address their concerns while  
25 remaining in line to secure that money?

1                   **MR. ALLEN:** Thank you for the question.

2                   Yeah, you're getting in line on a ten-year  
3 program. You'll be in year one if -- if it's selected  
4 in August. And then, like you say, it stays in that  
5 program until it's needed. It comes out with a TIP -- I  
6 mean, the transportation improvement vote, so --

7                   **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Okay. And then would  
8 it also be a fair statement to say if we do not do this  
9 and we -- we get out of line, that that 1.1 billion will  
10 be disbursed to other project -- projects and that those  
11 projects -- there's a good chance that they may not even  
12 be in this area? They could be in Dallas or  
13 San Antonio?

14                   **MR. ALLEN:** Or El Paso.

15                   **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Yes, sir. Or El Paso?

16                   **MR. ALLEN:** That's correct.

17                   **MR. BECKENDORFF:** Thank you.

18                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** State Representative  
19 Dennis Paul.

20                   **MR. PAUL:** I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman.

21                   I've got just more of a comment. I'm here  
22 as an ex officio member just to come in and express my  
23 opinion to y'all. And thank y'all for y'all's service.

24                   But I do want to see support of this  
25 project and y'all's support going forward with this --

1 this \$100 million on a vote today.

2 I can tell you from my experience working  
3 at the State, that if we don't show the Transportation  
4 Commission that we have an interest in this project,  
5 those -- all those dollars will be gone. I can  
6 guarantee you that Austin, Dallas and Fort Worth,  
7 San Antonio, El Paso are all just jumping at the bit to  
8 get these dollars. And that's why it's important that  
9 we show the commitment that we do want to go forward  
10 with the project and show that this is something that's  
11 important to our region. And it is going to be  
12 extremely important to our region. This is going to be  
13 a major highway through our -- our -- the state -- the  
14 center of our state.

15 You know, I'm a native Houstonian as well  
16 and seeing this project -- you're seeing these 45  
17 projects going through all my life. And it's critical  
18 that we get this.

19 You know, somebody mentioned Hurricane  
20 Rita. My family, we were in a mandatory evacuation zone  
21 during Hurricane Rita, and we evacuated. My 95-year-old  
22 grandmother was stuck on I-45 through this region for  
23 14 hours. She almost died that day.

24 So for all the people that did die that  
25 day going through this hurricane evacuation, going

1 through a traffic situation that was unbearable --  
2 luckily, my grandmother didn't die that day. She passed  
3 away a year later. And I think a lot of it was due to  
4 the stress from which she went through with that thing.

5 But this is going to be critical, critical  
6 for hurricane evacuation, critical for our community for  
7 mobility and -- and transportation of goods and people  
8 through and out this community.

9 TxDOT has been a good partner working with  
10 us in numerous projects in our region. We've had major  
11 redone of I-45 itself in our -- in my district.

12 Currently, we're going under a Highway 146 total rebuild  
13 through our district through that -- through an  
14 extremely densely populated area, a densely business  
15 populated area, as well as residential. We've had  
16 numerous meetings with them. We've got those addressed,  
17 those concerns, and got it done. And now we're finally  
18 moving -- moving forward on that project to get it done.  
19 It's going to be a major change of highway through this  
20 whole region.

21 So they can do it. I think we need to  
22 get -- get this project done, get this -- go ahead and  
23 start working on this because we will lose these funds.  
24 We will lose this opportunity if we don't. And it could  
25 be another ten years.

1           And as the doctor said, if you're going to  
2 be here in 20 years and that highway is in the same  
3 position it was, then that was a shame on all of us as  
4 elected officials and leaders here to not get it done.

5           And we're early enough in this process.  
6 We're talking about -- he's still using the word "Draft  
7 Environmental Impact." Those concerns, we'll be able  
8 to take it in. I know that they're going to be able to  
9 hear from the communities and hopefully address most of  
10 their concerns in what they're able to do at the -- at  
11 the final project.

12           As far as flooding, I mean, nobody around  
13 this region is going to be doing more for flooding  
14 than -- than what I have been doing in the last couple  
15 of years just to make sure that we can get the resources  
16 that we need. We're getting the State to get resources  
17 that we need for flooding.

18           And it's a violation of our state law for  
19 them to create a project that's going to flood and make  
20 things region. So I know they're going to be working  
21 for flooding to get those things done.

22           So, Quincy, thanks for what y'all are  
23 doing. And I think this is a great project. And I  
24 support y'all going forward, as well as making sure that  
25 you do take care of all these concerns and address them

1 as best y'all can of what these people are saying.

2 So with that, Commissioner --

3 **COUNCILMAN CLARK:** Thank you, sir.

4 Commissioner Garcia, you're next.

5 **MR. GARCIA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I too had a mother stuck in that traffic,  
7 and it took her 24 hours to get from Scarsdale to Katy.  
8 But the problem with that was that Judge Emmett learned  
9 not to call -- not to say the word evacuation because  
10 everybody would do it all at once. We have since  
11 learned from that mistake.

12 And on this particular matter, Quincy, you  
13 know, one of the other things -- you know, there's a  
14 TxDOT doctrine, I guess, if you will, that I -- that I  
15 don't think we have really spent time thinking about.  
16 And that is that when we widen to any significant  
17 extent, whether it's one lane or whether it's five  
18 lanes, do we not still encourage single-use vehicles on  
19 the road?

20 And so I'd like to see that the project  
21 has some design in it that our neighbors from the north  
22 or the west or east know that there's, you know, options  
23 to just driving -- commuting through individually on  
24 these roadways. But it -- it just seems to me that the  
25 things that I've learned over the years is that the more

1 we widen, no matter to what extent, we do nothing to  
2 discourage single use of vehicles and encourage a  
3 gravitation towards mass transit. They have to work  
4 together.

5 **MR. ALLEN:** I appreciate your comments.  
6 It -- Commissioner, I would just -- I would offer this  
7 idea, that we're not changing the number of single-use  
8 car lane capacity. It's not growing with this project.  
9 The only thing that's growing is transit. To use the  
10 transit lanes, you've got to have more than one person  
11 in your vehicle.

12 In a sense, we are incentivizing people to  
13 have more than one person in their car or to take  
14 transit in the form of -- in what we know now as bus and  
15 what might be something else in the future, whether  
16 that's bus rapid transit or Light Rail. I very much  
17 appreciate your comments.

18 The one thing I'd -- I'd like to add just  
19 to remind everyone, we do a lot of hurricane planning  
20 now. It's what we learned from Rita and from -- from  
21 the other storms, Hurricane Ike and then obviously  
22 Harvey.

23 If we were to get hard -- hit hard with  
24 another storm surge that, like, came with Ike or we  
25 thought might come with Rita, we have provisions in

1 place now to contraflow where we can put all the  
2 outbound traffic on all of the lanes and shut down the  
3 inbound. We have that on I-10 going west towards  
4 San Antonio, and we have it on I-45 going north toward  
5 Dallas.

6 If you want to see what's on I-10, as you  
7 get down to the edge of our district, look and see those  
8 yellow water-filled barriers. That's the crossover. We  
9 have a detailed plan with the Department of Public  
10 Safety. We can implement that in a matter of hours. So  
11 we don't want anyone's family to be hung up in that.

12 My mother was on the way to Nacogdoches.  
13 That's where her sister lived at the time. And we've  
14 got horrific tales too. And I bet everyone in here has  
15 them.

16 **MR. GARCIA:** Uh-huh.

17 **MR. ALLEN:** But I want to leave you with  
18 the idea that -- that we have improved that situation.

19 **MR. GARCIA:** And I know that. And thank  
20 you for that. But, you know -- and I appreciate the --  
21 the response to the widening of the lanes because, you  
22 know, I'm going to look at official, we have met, but  
23 there's still a gap in the -- the full understanding of  
24 this project. And so I -- I still think that we -- we  
25 have room to grow and then to improve the dialogue and

1 the -- and the -- and the -- and the -- the input from  
2 the community and making sure -- it sounds like  
3 you're -- you're touching on some good high points. But  
4 a lot of it also sounds like it's -- it's recent  
5 conversation.

6 So, secondly, in this -- in this  
7 conversation of getting out of line and getting back in  
8 line, do we have an opportunity to address the  
9 mitigation dollars today? Not -- leaving the 100  
10 million aside, but addressing the mitigation dollars  
11 today, is there an opportunity to do that today?

12 **MR. ALLEN:** (Inaudible).

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Is your mic on?

14 **MR. ALLEN:** Forgive me.

15 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Is it back on?

16 **MR. ALLEN:** The mitigation dollars do not  
17 affect us staying in line or getting in line or getting  
18 out of line. The miti- -- mitigation dollars don't. We  
19 need the 100 million. That's what's been asked as -- as  
20 the match for what we're doing to go forward.

21 **MR. GARCIA:** Okay. Thank you.

22 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Mayor Zimmerman.

23 **MAYOR ZIMMERMAN:** Thank you,  
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 Dr. Lewis, I want to thank you for your

1 comments. As I've had a chance to work with you over  
2 the years, you always seem to get right down to what  
3 needs to be done.

4 This is not a time for politics. This is  
5 a time for thoughtful action. I'm very concerned about  
6 the way some of our colleagues have spoken about TxDOT.  
7 That's not right. TxDOT has been a partner not only for  
8 this region, but for many of us as counties and cities.

9 And, Quincy, I want to tell you that you  
10 have the -- you've got our full support. I think you've  
11 got the full support of this body.

12 And, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to call the  
13 question, because we're not going to design that road  
14 now. So I call for the question. It's time to vote.

15 **MS. PATMAN:** I ask a procedural question.

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Well, he called for the  
17 question. That supersedes everything.

18 **MR. PATMAN:** Okay.

19 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So what we're calling  
20 the question on is the reconsideration of Judge  
21 Hidalgo's motion.

22 And let me see if I can articulate your  
23 motion. And if I don't articulate it correctly, please  
24 let me know.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible) your

1 mic.

2 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Sorry.

3 So if I don't articulate it appropriately,  
4 please let me know.

5 Basically, what this is going to be a vote  
6 is to delay consideration of the 100 million. Does  
7 that -- does that cover your --

8 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** There's a motion to delay  
9 consideration of the 100 or 150 million recognizing that  
10 we don't trust with but verify with taxpayer dollars.  
11 And if all of this could be explained away in a  
12 30-minute Q and A session, all these folks wouldn't be  
13 here. There's clearly some serious, serious outstanding  
14 issues. And we have to have the courage to say, wait a  
15 minute. There's an annual cycle. We're doing this out  
16 of line. We already reviewed our -- our annual plan  
17 three months ago. I was here. And --

18 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge --

19 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- this is coming  
20 outside --

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge --

22 **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- the plan --

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** On a -- on a calling the  
24 question, there's no discussion, no debate. I just  
25 wanted to --

1                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** That was all I had to  
2 say.

3                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yeah.

4                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** Just call for courage --

5                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So --

6                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- and responsibility to  
7 our community.

8                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** So, basically --

9                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** We're not saying no.  
10 We're saying, let's do it -- let's not put a down  
11 payment on a house we haven't --

12                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Right.

13                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** -- seen. These are all  
14 promises.

15                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge.

16                   **JUDGE HIDALGO:** It's not written  
17 anywhere.

18                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge.

19                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Point of order.

20                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you.

21                   So what the motion is here is to delay  
22 the -- any funding on this particular project. If this  
23 particular motion passes, we will -- it will become  
24 the -- the main motion. We will vote again. If the  
25 motion fails, that means the main motion would --

1 will -- would -- would come up. And that would include  
2 Councilman Millican's to fund the 100 million and to  
3 come back and do the mitigation later.

4 And he didn't get an opportunity to  
5 explain why he was deferring the mitigation. But if --  
6 when we get to that, he'll -- he'll have an opportunity  
7 to explain that. He had some thought behind that.

8 So what we're going to do is, I'm going  
9 to -- we've called the question. And we are going to  
10 vote on delaying the funding of the 100 million.

11 All in favor of delaying the 100 million,  
12 say aye.

13 (Individuals respond.)

14 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Any opposed?

15 (Individuals respond.)

16 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** It appears that the  
17 ayes -- the nays have it. So the main motion is on the  
18 floor.

19 **MS. PATMAN:** Okay. I have a point of  
20 order.

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, ma'am.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I would like to --

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Is your mic on?

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- do the  
25 substitute motions --

1                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Mic on?

2                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Put your mic on.

3                   **MS. PATMAN:** -- for the main motion that  
4 substitutes the staff recommendation for the main  
5 motion.

6                   **MR. ROBINSON:** Second.

7                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. We have a motion  
8 and second. It now bears discussion on the amendment.

9                   So what I'm going to do is I am going to  
10 recognize Council Member Millican, being that he made  
11 the main motion, and let him explain why he made his  
12 motion. So that would kind of wrap all this up into  
13 one -- one package, and we can move on to our other  
14 business.

15                   Council Member Millican.

16                   **MR. MILLICAN:** Thank you, Chairman.

17                   I made the motion because of the fact that  
18 I believe that this topic is very passionate. We have a  
19 lot of input. And we need to consider this in great  
20 detail before we start allocating funds or deciding  
21 what -- what's going to happen or not. I think that the  
22 main thought process with allocating 100 million was to  
23 get our foot in the door and the slot taken with TxDOT  
24 and that we will have plenty of time to mitigate any of  
25 the circumstances and discuss the -- the money at that

1 time rather than to go ahead and allocate money today.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Discussion?

3 **MS. PATMAN:** Discussions?

4 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes. Dis- --

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Discussion?

6 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Let me -- let me just  
7 make a few brief comments being we're kind of winding  
8 down here.

9 Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia also sent in a  
10 letter of support of delaying. The mayor of Houston  
11 sent in a letter. And I'll let the council member  
12 address that.

13 I think what Councilman Millican was  
14 wanting to do is -- is -- I received a lot of e-mails.  
15 This is probably the issue that I've seen -- received  
16 more e-mails and more letters than pretty much any issue  
17 I've dealt with in a long, long time.

18 And I -- and I think -- you know, I  
19 understand TxDOT and the position they're in. But I  
20 also heard and listened to all the concerns. And I  
21 thought it would be appropriate to take those mitigation  
22 dollars and hold those back as an incentive for TxDOT to  
23 negotiate in good faith; not that I think they're not  
24 negotiating in good faith, but really listen to the  
25 community and figure out what we're going to do for

1 those mitigation dollars and move forward that way and  
2 have them come back to us as TxDOT and maybe update this  
3 TPC council on a quarterly basis.

4 Any more frequently than that would  
5 probably be a little too soon because as we all know,  
6 government moves a little slower than we prefer. So if  
7 they update us quarterly, we would be able to continue  
8 to have them put because the citizens would be  
9 continuing to contact us as -- as they have. And it  
10 would allow us to, you know, get their issues addressed  
11 while communicating with TxDOT.

12 So I think that's why Council Member  
13 Millican suggested we pull those dollars out and make it  
14 more of a monitoring process, which would give us the  
15 opportunity to stay more engaged in the process and make  
16 sure we're really doing what we can for the citizens of  
17 the Northside.

18 Yes?

19 **MS. PATMAN:** Well, is it appropriate for  
20 me to spoke -- speak on my motion.

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Oh, yes, ma'am. Please.

22 **MS. PATMAN:** Okay. The only way I can  
23 support moving forward today is if, in fact, the money  
24 that the staff recommended is in this resolution, is in  
25 what we pass.

1 I respectfully don't see how omitting this  
2 money gives us more leverage. I just -- it seems  
3 counterintuitive to me. So it seems to me -- and the  
4 staff has given this great consideration. And it's a  
5 good staff, an excellent staff. And they've taken into  
6 account a lot of considerations in a difficult issue and  
7 come up with this recommendation.

8 So first of all, I think we should stand  
9 by the staff recommendation. Yes, we're the board. But  
10 they're the ones that have had a chance to really delve  
11 down into these issues and try to forge something that  
12 they hope everyone can live with.

13 And, second, given the outpouring from the  
14 community today and given the fact that clearly moneys  
15 are going to be needed for mitigation and for even  
16 facilitating the process to hear their concerns, it  
17 respectfully seems to me appropriate to go ahead and  
18 move forward on that today. To do otherwise would seem  
19 to me to really be not giving adequate deference to  
20 those who have taken extensive time to show up today and  
21 express their concerns.

22 So I respectfully ask that my motion to --  
23 my substitute motion be accepted. Thank you.

24 **MR. ROBINSON:** Mr. Chairman, I think as  
25 I've seconded that motion, I'd like to point out that as

1 referred to, the Mayor of Houston's discussion here  
2 did -- it was based on that assumption that there were  
3 to be mitigating dollars in that.

4 So Council Member Millican, respecting  
5 your interest of going forward on this, I think for all  
6 the reasons stated by the public here today, as well as  
7 my colleagues representing the City of Houston, we feel  
8 that that money that you carved out is essential to our  
9 interaction in a fully engaged meaningful engagement as  
10 was said this morning. And if we are to go forward, we  
11 find it truly essential to the process.

12 And I think in that regard, the second  
13 respectfully would have that added back whereupon I  
14 think there might be the momentum to move forward with  
15 this. And I'm speaking on my own behalf.

16 Thank you.

17 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Judge, do you still have  
18 some additional comments? You were on the list.

19 Okay. That would be Mayor Zimmerman.

20 **MAYOR ZIMMERMAN:** Thank you,  
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Carrin, would you be willing to -- or,  
23 Larry Millican, would you be willing to amend your  
24 motion to incorporate the 50 million for the mitigation  
25 and include or request that TxDOT and H-GAC work

1 together to come back with a plan to update the TPC, as  
2 the chairman suggested, quarterly about that overall  
3 process? And if you would, then I think we can move  
4 this thing along a little bit quicker.

5 **MR. MILLICAN:** Most certainly.

6 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. I'll view that as  
7 a friendly amendment.

8 The motion on the floor is to accept the  
9 staff recommendation with the quarterly monitoring.

10 Any further discussion?

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

12 **MS. LEWIS:** Would you please repeat what  
13 motion -- would you please repeat the motion we are  
14 voting on, please, in its entirety?

15 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. The motion is to  
16 accept the staff recommendation, which was in the  
17 packet. That would include the \$100 million, plus the  
18 \$50 million in mitigation funding. Not only would it  
19 include the 100 million, plus the 50 million, but it  
20 would also include quarterly reports from TxDOT to the  
21 TPC so we can stay abreast of this project and stay on  
22 top of it to ensure that the community's interest and  
23 concerns are being heard.

24 **MS. LEWIS:** So the staff recommendation  
25 also included 1.5 --

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** 1.5 million as  
2 well.

3                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes.

4                   **MS. LEWIS:** So that -- that -- that's in  
5 this motion as well?

6                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yes, that is correct,  
7 because the friendly amendment was that the staff  
8 recommendation.

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Just a point of --  
10 excuse me. Just for a point of order, does Justin need  
11 to second that since he was the second in line  
12 originally?

13                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yeah. He -- yeah.  
14 Yes, Quincy.

15                   **MR. ALLEN:** All I was going to say is  
16 that we -- I'm committed to due process with Alan or  
17 somebody else from -- from the MPO staff to make the  
18 quarterly deal.

19                   The other thing I'd like to remind -- I  
20 believe the 1.5 is for planning and the 50 is for  
21 substantive mitigation. But it --

22                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Yeah. We're going to  
23 put that the same it was in the packet as what -- what  
24 we're voting on.

25                   Is everybody clear what we're voting on?

1 Any --

2 **MR. ROBINSON:** I've got one more caveat.

3 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Oh, really?

4 **MR. ROBINSON:** Yes, I do. I've got one  
5 more point. And, Mayor Zimmerman, I appreciate what  
6 you've just done.

7 I know that where we are engaging with the  
8 public process, Quincy has involved a memorandum of  
9 understanding to engage the Mayor's committee that is  
10 based -- currently the facilitation group. And that is  
11 truly to incorporate these considerations by the public.  
12 And bringing that forward is -- will be the basis of our  
13 decision before the record of decision is made.

14 **MR. ALLEN:** Well --

15 **MR. ROBINSON:** Help me clarify that.

16 **MR. ALLEN:** Chairman, I don't know that  
17 that needs to be part of the motion for the --

18 **MR. ROBINSON:** Where we're operating now  
19 with moving forward with the facilitation group.

20 **MR. ALLEN:** I'm sorry. I -- you lost me.  
21 We have an MPO in place for the facilitation group. And  
22 you want to amend that, or do you want --

23 **MR. ROBINSON:** No. I wanted to state  
24 that again.

25 **MR. ALLEN:** Oh, that's all you're saying?

1                   **MR. ROBINSON:** Yes.

2                   **MR. ALLEN:** Yes. Let me confirm that we  
3 do have an MPO that established that facilitation group.  
4 And -- and I'm thankful for that.

5                   **MR. ROBINSON:** Thank you.

6                   **MR. ALLEN:** Uh-huh.

7                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Hearing no  
8 further discussion, we're voting on the 100 -- the staff  
9 recommendation, which includes the 100 million, the 50  
10 million, plus the --

11                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** 1.5.

12                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- 1.5.

13                   Hearing no further discussion -- oh,  
14 sorry, Commissioner. Go ahead.

15                   **MR. GARCIA:** Yes. I just wanted --  
16 earlier, you mentioned that Congressman -- Congresswoman  
17 Garcia had sent in a letter opposing the -- the project.

18                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** I'm sorry if I misspoke.  
19 She was not -- she was not opposing the project. She  
20 was supporting --

21                   **MR. GARCIA:** The delay --

22                   **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** -- the delay. She  
23 supported the project. She was just looking for the  
24 delay.

25                   **MR. GARCIA:** Exactly. And so I just want

1 to make sure that the record reflects. I know that  
2 Senator Alvarado's staff was here earlier and read her  
3 letter --

4 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Right.

5 **MR. GARCIA:** -- requesting the same  
6 delay. State Representative Christina Morales was also  
7 requesting a delay; Council Member Karla Cisneros also  
8 requesting a delay; County Commissioner Rodney Ellis  
9 also requesting a delay; State Representative Jessica  
10 Farrar was also requesting a delay; Council Member  
11 Robert Gallegos also supportive of a delay; as well as  
12 Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. So I want to make  
13 sure --

14 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Thank you for getting  
15 that on the record. I want to make sure that all those  
16 folks are recognized for their position so they can be  
17 recognized for that.

18 Hearing no further discussion, all in  
19 favor of the motion?

20 (Individuals respond.)

21 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Any opposed?

22 (No response.)

23 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Motion --

24 **MR. GARCIA:** Abstain.

25 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Have the record reflect

1 that Commissioner Garcia and Judge --

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He abstained.

3 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

4 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Okay. Judge Hidalgo  
5 voted against and -- and -- and Commissioner Garcia  
6 abstained.

7 Thank you very much.

8 We have Item Number 9. We need to stay  
9 for this business. Let's see if we can get through it  
10 in a timely fashion.

11 Item 9 is dealing with the -- with  
12 Approval of a Resolution Supporting Retention of State  
13 Highway 99 (the Grand Parkway) Segments B, C, I1, and D  
14 in the Proposed TxDOT 2020 Unified Transportation  
15 Program.

16 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

17 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** We have a motion by --  
18 who made the motion?

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Matt.

20 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Matt Sebesta made the  
21 motion.

22 Who made the second?

23 (Inaudible crosstalk.)

24 **CHAIRMAN CLARK:** Bay -- the council  
25 member from Baytown made the second.