



TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

May 20, 2020

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The Honorable Sylvester Turner
Mayor, City of Houston
PO Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251-1562

RE: North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP)

Dear Mayor Turner:

Thank you for your letter dated May 12, 2020. It is obvious based on the level of detail in the letter that the discussions and involvement with the public, County and METRO leadership, and local associations and groups was robust. The time, effort and feedback are very much appreciated.

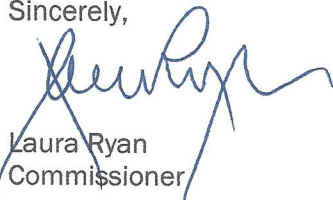
TxDOT has been working diligently for over a decade on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). The years of work have included proactively seeking meaningful public involvement which allowed us to define the purpose and need for the project. More specifically, TxDOT has spent the better course of the past four years evaluating the physical, cultural, and human environments affected by the proposed project; including a thorough examination of strategies to avoid adverse impacts and the identification of mitigation for those impacts that can't be avoided.

To this end, we plan to take the agency's years of work and align it with the requests outlined in your letter assuring for proper consideration and due diligence. The thought is that TxDOT will be able to quickly respond to a portion of the letter - those areas that we have already committed to doing or the request is within our authority and parameters of the project; a second phase will provide an update regarding requests that are not possible due to either federal or state regulations or the request is outside the authority in which TxDOT may act; and the third phase will be regarding requests that will take the completion of certain process steps, and possibly additional research to fully understand the impact of a decision, both direct and indirect. With all phases, we will remain open and collaborative regarding communications and outcomes.

As we have discussed, the FEIS, and the subsequent record of decision (ROD) are critical stage gates in the environmental clearance process. Likewise, the ROD is a necessary step in moving into the detailed design phases of project development, which is where we will have the opportunity to fully explore many of the project refinements requested in your letter. At that time, we will have many options for refining the project and we are committed to judiciously identifying "win/win" opportunities to make the project reflect our collective best efforts.

TxDOT values the collaborative spirit of our partners and I look forward to the NHHIP being a positive transformative project for the State of Texas, the City of Houston, Harris County, and the entire Houston-Galveston Metropolitan Area. I'll work with the Houston District team and your staff to coordinate a follow up meeting in the near future.

Sincerely,



Laura Ryan
Commissioner

cc: Texas Transportation Commission
James Bass, TxDOT Executive Director
Quincy Allen, P.E, Director of District Operations
Eliza Paul, P.E. Houston District Engineer
Carlos Swonke, P.E. Environmental Affair Division Director