

The Hancock Neighborhood Association (HNA) at a Special Meeting held on October 8, 2014, voted overwhelming that:

The Hancock Neighborhood Association is opposed to the proposed urban rail.

Prior to the Special Meeting the HNA had invited speakers from both Project Connect and TxDot to present at its regular July meeting. This was followed by designation of an HNA Urban Rail Working Group comprised of the HNA Executive Committee, HNA Parks and Green Spaces Committee, and Chair of HNA Transportation Committee, which met with Kyle Keahey, Project Connect, and Mike Trimble, City of Austin Capital Projects Office, held September 11, 2014, to gather information on design aspects of the rail coming through Hancock neighborhood starting from its boundary at 45th Street to the proposed station at Hancock Center and down Red River Street. A report of findings from this meeting, supporting documents and links to relevant sites are posted to the HNA website at:

<https://www.hancockna.org/www/content/hna-urban-rail-working-group-report>. At the regular HNA meeting in September these findings were reported to the membership for discussion and a vote was taken to hold a Special Meeting for HNA to take a position on the proposed Central Corridor urban rail. It is from an informed perspective with full consideration given to the impact on the integrity and quality of the Hancock Neighborhood that the membership puts forward these reasons for its opposition to the proposed urban rail.

Land Use

- Light rail needs to work well with land use. The City has engaged in advance with development planning along Airport Blvd and in Mueller, however the route along Red River was decided without engaging the Hancock neighborhood on potential development along our segment of the route and anticipated impacts.
- Historically, property fronting rail lines turns commercial and/or suffers degradation of single-family residences along the route.
- Nothing in preliminary planning about what happens to side streets onto Red River, such as need for guardrails or entering into either lanes of traffic flow.
- Hancock Center as a station would increase pressure for high-density development and increase traffic flow in the area.

Costs

- The high cost of the urban rail project adds pressure to increase the tax base along the route leading to commercial and/or high-density development eroding the character of the neighborhood.
- The impacts of the proposed first line are uncertain, but the need to come back to Austin citizens for additional moneys to build out the rest of the rail is certain. Ties up Austin's bonding capacity.
- Having light rail and highway improvements jointly under Proposition 1 does not allow for a clean vote on either separately.

Process

- Too much money with too much uncertainty at a time when Austin will be working through decision-making processes with the new City Council single-member district system.
- Decision on bus rapid transit supported with federal funds on Lamar/Guadalupe limited options for light rail route.
- Can anticipate that Hancock neighborhood concerns will be secondary to any requirements for qualifying for federal transit funds and City of Austin incentives to densify the central core.