

LIGHT RAIL ELEVATED BRIDGE PROPOSAL BY ATP

1. An elevated rail line via a new tall bridge would completely change the character and culture of one of the oldest and historically significant parts of the City, commercializing it and greatly diminishing its appeal to residents who live there, particularly those who live on or near Riverside or have a view corridor facing it (all **unnecessarily** since a ground option is available).
2. A street level rail does not intrude in the same manner, as it merely adds another type of vehicle to the mix.
3. According to ATP's rep at the public meetings, ATP is preferring the bridge because it's "easier"; this should not be the criteria; Stassney Lane would have been easier too and was the location for the rail pitched by the City before the rail vote several years ago.
4. A high bridge violates the privacy of many homeowners in Travis Heights because it provides a birds eye view into homeowners' yards and windows. Noise and vibration from the rail is also inevitable and adversely affects use and enjoyment of residents' homes.
5. Businesses along Riverside are also disadvantaged because of lessened visibility of their buildings and signage due to the bridge.
6. The bridge would create a darkened tunnel effect on the ground level below it and decrease light into the neighborhood due to its massiveness. Additionally, noise from car traffic on Riverside would increase and reverberate into the neighborhood further because it would be capped by the bridge instead of dispersed upward.
7. At the public meetings, ATP provided incomplete and misleading information about the Travis Heights portion of the rail project, as no elevations were mentioned or shown on the information boards used at the meetings; the depiction of Riverside was just the route and appeared to be at street level, so objections to the high bridge would not have been elicited. The explanation given by ATP's rep for the fact no elevations were provided was that there wasn't room to include all information and that it was all available on line; but obviously, if a concern wasn't raised by what WAS shown, a deeper look online would not occur and the City would not be eliciting accurate and meaningful public input.
8. The form distributed at the public meetings for comment had one vague question regarding the proposed bridge, to be answered yes or no: "Extending Bridge and Elevating Waterfront Station - do you agree with the recommendation?" Most

people would think the bridge reference is to the bridge over Lady Bird Lake and likely not object to it or the station near it, causing responses on the form to most likely not provide an accurate response about the Riverside bridge; ATPs rep pointed to that question and told me to put my Riverside answer/comments there; additionally, the mere naming of the Riverside bridge the “Lady Bird Lake Extension Bridge” in the DEIS is misleading because it is separate and apart from the lake bridge, with the lake bridge connection point to Riverside not even decided at this date.

9. Constructing a new bridge would be more disruptive, costlier and time consuming than modifying the street as initially planned. It is also contrary to the stated aim of Project Connect to reduce the impact of transportation on air, land, and water, because it adds a huge new concrete and steel infrastructure when an existing street level option is available.
10. Ironically, Travis Heights residents will be the most adversely impacted by the new infrastructure (both construction and operation) but will not be serviced by it because ATP has determined that Travis Heights is not a demographic in need of transit support. The initially proposed Alameda station has been deleted from the plans, perhaps to aid in the ability to propose a new high bridge that does not need to reach existing ground elevation until further east. But the fact that it was initially included confirms that a rail line at ground level is doable (Riverside was to be elevated between Blunn Creek and Alameda about 8 feet to accomplish this “due to the curvature in the street” but was to be the only elevation) and is still available as an option, although not the option preferred by ATP.
11. According to a Travis Heights resident who has spent 30 years as a TXDOT bridge designer, the bridge would create an eyesore nearly as massive as the elevated upper deck of I-35.
12. Last but not least, the installation of a high bridge down Riverside through Travis Heights would cause a devastating decrease in property values of homes on, near or in the line of sight of the bridge, and would likely have a similar effect on business properties adjacent to the bridge.