

Mark Goldberg
Houston City Council Member District C
Vice Mayor Pro-tem



Mr. Michael Marcotte
Director of Public Works and Engineering
611 Walker
Houston, TX 77002

August 23, 2005

Dear Mr. Marcotte,

In 2001, the Highland Village neighborhood applied to the Neighborhood Traffic Project (NTP) program for relief from cut-through traffic. Traffic studies were conducted which documented a significant level of cut-through traffic using Drexel and Suffolk to go to or come from Westheimer. A mitigation strategy was developed and approved by various City departments, which called for the installation of barricades across half of Drexel and half of Suffolk thus preventing traffic from entering the neighborhood from Westheimer. However, when this was presented to the community in 2003, the response to the proposal was almost 50/50, with most of those in favor in the northern portions of the neighborhood area nearest Westheimer. As the community seemed polarized at the time, it was decided to not move forward with the installation of the temporary barricades. Some of the opposition seemed to stem from a lack of information over various closure options. Over 90 percent of Highland Village wanted the one-way closure, and Lynn Park's vote was split. After it was decided not to go forward with the one-way closure, Highland Village Civic Club received calls from both neighborhoods stating that individuals voted no in hopes that a full closure would be considered.

Over the past year I have seen an increased need to reverse our decision and install the temporary barricades on Drexel and Suffolk. After visiting with the residents, watching speeding cars cut through the neighborhood, and speaking to Gary Schatz who was in charge of the original study, I feel that despite the opposition these barriers will provide critical long-term benefit to the neighborhood. In addition to Highland Village Shopping Center's expansion, this summer Escalante's Mexican restaurant will open on Suffolk. The restaurant backs-up to the neighborhood and residents know this will increase nighttime cut through traffic. Highland Village Civic Club consists of 90 homes with an approximately 80 children in the neighborhood. It is imperative to Highland Village that the safety of the neighborhood be preserved.

I am asking for you to approve the Traffic & Transportation Division installing the temporary barriers and restarting the NTP process necessary to acquire permanent barricades that can be constructed as part of Highland Village's NSR project. The NSR project is going to enter the planning phase after Labor Day and construction is expected to start in FY '08. I would like to see the permanent barricades included in the NSR plans, so both the NSR and NTP projects are completed simultaneously. My office is prepared to provide outreach support and field any comments or inquiries from the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Goldberg".

Mark Goldberg