

# Wirt Road Sidewalk Discussion (3/16/2019)

In council meetings held during 2020, the concept of improving “walkability” along Wirt Rd has been discussed. This topic has been discussed numerous time over the years without resolution. The most recent efforts occurred between 2014 and 2017 involving discussions with the City Council member for Houston District A and the Houston Public Works Department.

In early August of 2017, verbal commitments had been made by Houston Public Works, Hilshire Village, and property owners on the West side of Wirt Road to support a plan for improvement of the Wirt Road traffic and safety issues.

On August 23, 2017 engineers from Houston Public Works, a representative from the District A Office, and the Mayor of Hilshire Village walked though the area to get a first hand view of the situation. HPW personnel left with the promise of a preliminary improvement plan. The plan would address:

1. Construction of a sidewalk between Westview and I-10 to facility pedestrian access to the park, churches, and schools which border the west side of Wirt. It would also improve access to the businesses in the Kroger Center, the Trini Mendenhall Community Center, and the Westview bus stops.
2. Addition of the left turn holding lanes on the north bound side of Wirt at Bellewood Dr., Wedgewood Ln., Brykerwoods Dr., and Bobbit Ln.. These holding lanes would be located across from the main entrances to the schools and churches as well as Hilshire Green and Hilshire Villas Dr. (Through some quirk in the past, Hilshire Grove Ln had a left turn holding lane installed when it was built.
3. Reducing the speed limit on Wirt from 35 MPH to 30 MPH in an effort to slow down the traffic in both directions and prevent accidents. A traffic study done through the courtesy of the Spring Valley Police Department found that the average speed on Wirt Road was approximately 47 MPH and the maximum speeds recorded were greater than 65 MPH.

Unfortunately, Hurricane Harvey arrived on the following day and public works projects were put on indefinite hold.

## Background and Facts - Hickory Shadows Park

History	Facts
The park is an outgrowth of the most recent Katy Freeway expansion completed in 2010	The park offers aesthetic relief at the crowded intersection.
The area of the current frontage road and the park was occupied by a high rise office building which produced significant tax revenue for Hilshire Village	It is worth noting that the Katy Freeway is 23 lines wide at this location, making it one of the widest freeway in the country. <i>(Note there is some dispute over how freeway lanes are counted)</i>
The grounds of the park are well maintained by the Harris County Parks Department	The average decibel level in the park is 81 with higher peaks occurring periodically.
The property is owned by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) and does not produce any revenue to the City.	Medical experts consider 70 decibels as the safe level to avoid hearing loss. OSHA requires employers to implement a hearing conservation program when noise exposure is at or above 85 decibels.

Overview map of Hilshire Village showing possible sidewalk from Westview to I-10 along the west side of Wirt Road.

















