

Appendix C: Airline Community Business Owners Meeting – August 18, 2005

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The Airline Vision Team, in partnership with the Harris County Community & Economic Development Department, Office of Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee, and the Office of State Representative Kevin Bailey hosted the Airline Community Business Owners Meeting, on Thursday, August 18, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. at Cathedral of St. Matthew, 9101 Airline Drive; Houston, TX 77037.

To announce the meeting to all interested parties, the Airline Vision Team distributed over 100 bilingual flyers to business owners through door-to-door tagging. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting. This is inclusive of residents, business owners, educators, clergy, and volunteers from the Little York Volunteer Fire Department. Bilingual individuals from the Airline Vision Team and HCCEDD were available to translate information to residents.

Participants commented on the housing; transportation and infrastructure; community facilities and public services; public health and economic status of the community. Participants commented that abandoned and unkempt homes (particularly Tropical Storm Allison flood buyout homes and other homes with general neglect) in the community commonly attract gangs and criminal mischief, resulting in residents fleeing the community and business owners feeling unsafe. Discussions on housing in Airline also focused on the unsafe manner homes are enlarged to accommodate additional families and garages.

Participants discussed transportation and infrastructure issue in the community. Participants unanimously stated that the lack of water and sewer service is a deterrent to new business locating in Airline. Business owners also commented on how the weekend flea market traffic is a barrier to swift response times for the fire and police departments and threaten public safety for area business owners and their patrons. The Little York Fire Volunteer Department volunteers commented on the lack of fire hydrants in the community and the need for an emergency signal light at the fire department entrance on Airline Drive.

Business owners noted that Airline Drive is not solely for the flea markets and its patrons. Participants commented that there are not enough parking spaces for shoppers and that the entry into available parking is unorganized. A suggestion was made to have an independent organization hire police Officers to patrol the flea markets and handle traffic control and parking for all of the flea markets.

Business owners stated that population growth is necessary to the economic health of businesses in the community. The economy is affected by the community's security issues. Residents regularly commented on the poor response time of the Harris County Sheriff's Department and the Sheriff Department's refusal of office space in the Little York Volunteer Fire Department. Several participants mentioned the automotive salvage yards proximity to schools and homes in the community and the dangerous piling of cars next to

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fences that do not secure schools, homes, and businesses. Residents stated that Harris County Public Infrastructure Department – Permits Department must do a better in enforcing the permitting process of automotive salvage yards. It is common for the salvage yards to be havens for fires. Fire personnel are usually hindered by mud and other automotive debris, thereby placing residents and personal property in a perilous predicament.