

23: East Downtown Trench

Trinchera en el Este del Centro de Houston

Description:

The TxDOT plan relocates I-45 from the south and west sides of Downtown, to the east and north sides, running it alongside US-59 /I-69. The combined freeways would be placed in a trench, eliminating the elevated structure that divides Downtown and EaDo, and allowing for a lid park (for which funding has not been identified.) This trench, though, would be more than twice the width of the current freeway. Nearly all of the blocks between Chartres and St. Emanuel Street would be demolished.

We Heard:

St. Emanuel feels like an urban street with on-street parking, low vehicle speeds, and bidirectional travel, and maintaining this roadway feel will be critical for maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood.

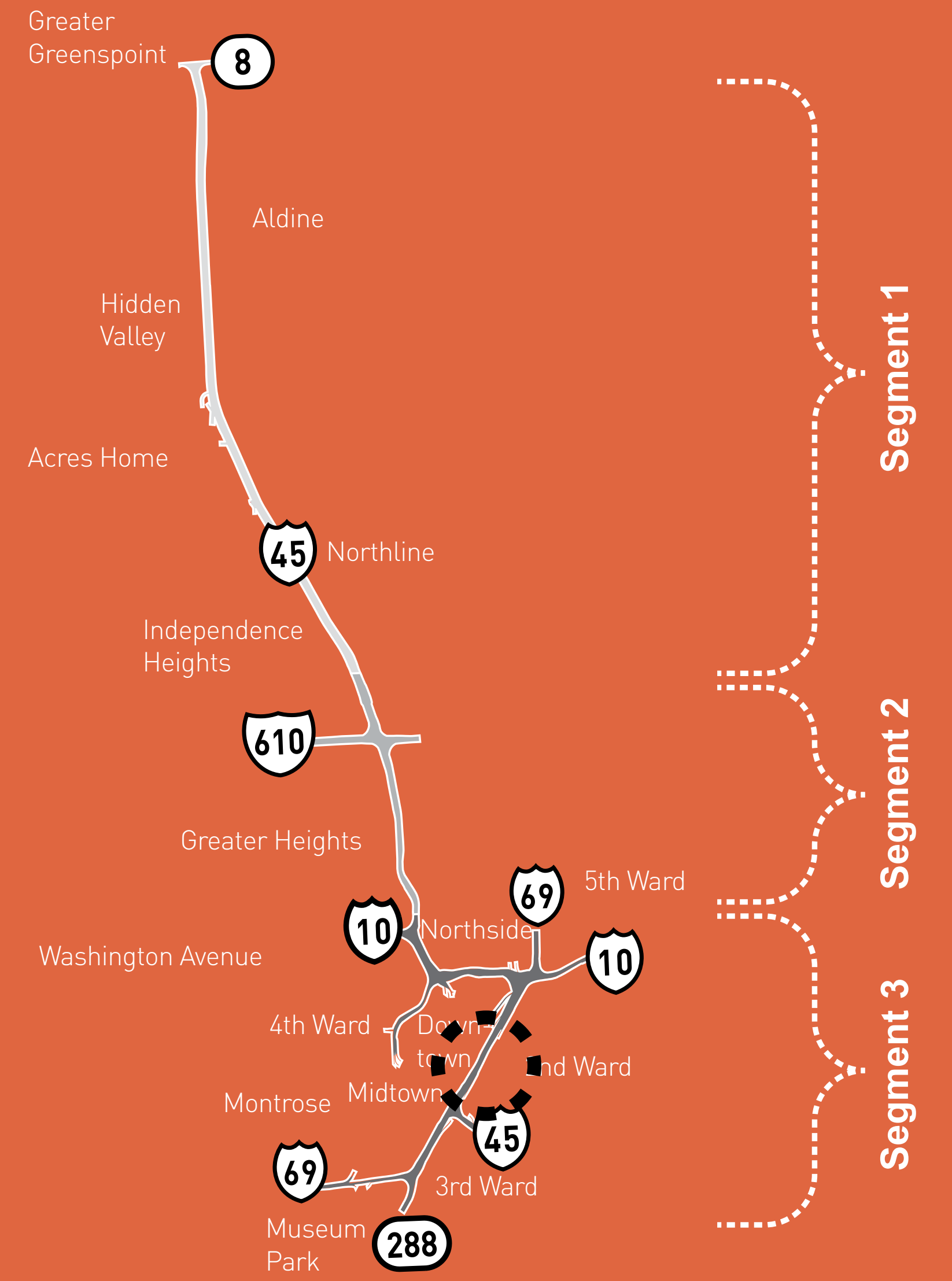
Also Addresses:

Connections

Traffic

The depressed freeway section proposed to run along the east side of Downtown will require demolishing a significant amount of private property in the EaDo neighborhood. The impacted property owners have worked hard over the past few years to create a vibrant community with residences, restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, and their progress to date has been remarkable. A lot of that effort will be annihilated instantly with this project.

Key:



TxDOT Proposal

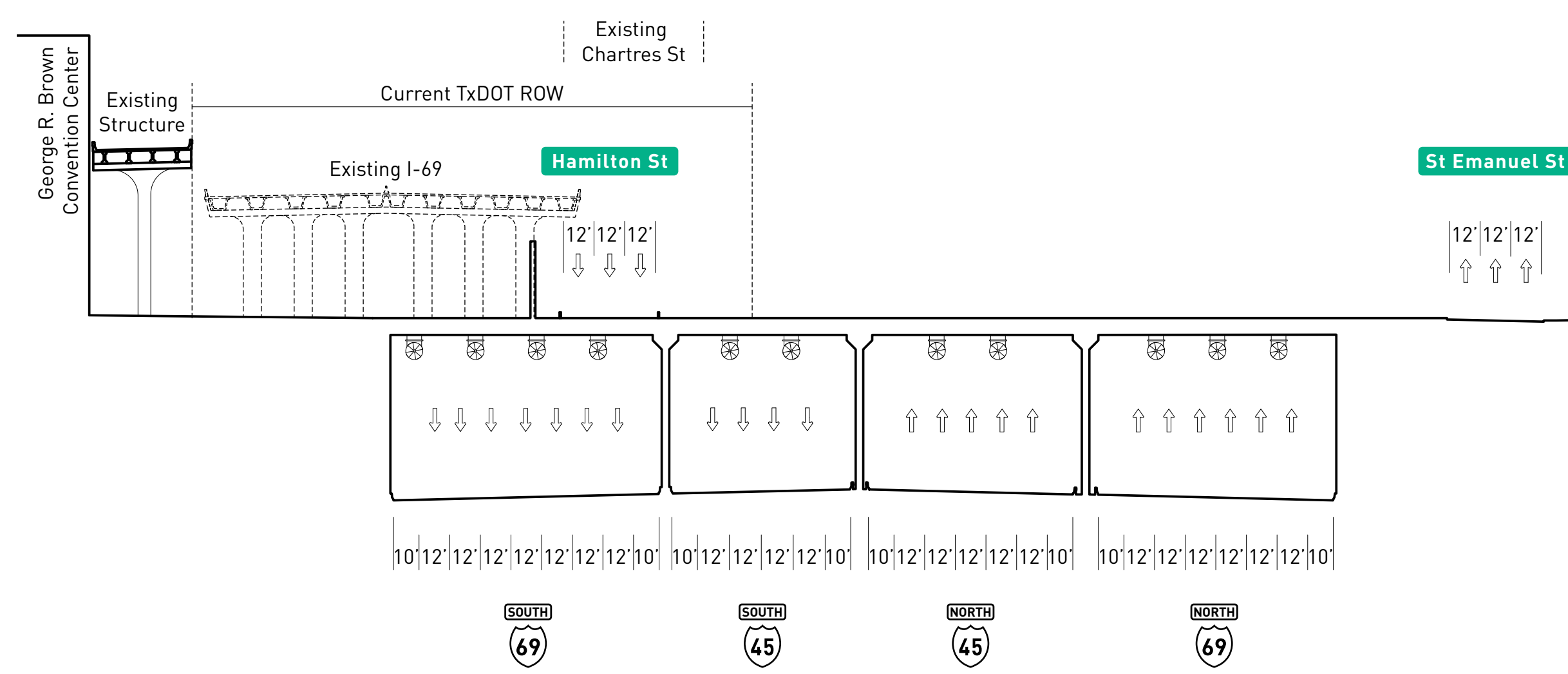
TxDOT is proposing to widen both I-45 and US-59 /I-69 in Downtown. Currently, the Pierce Elevated has 6 lanes and US-59/I-69, behind the George R. Brown Convention Center has 8 lanes, for a total of 14. TxDOT is proposing a 22-lane trench. To meet current design standards and increase safety, TxDOT is also proposing 12-foot lanes and shoulders on both sides; the current freeways do not meet these standards.

PROS

- Adds capacity
- Increases safety

CONS

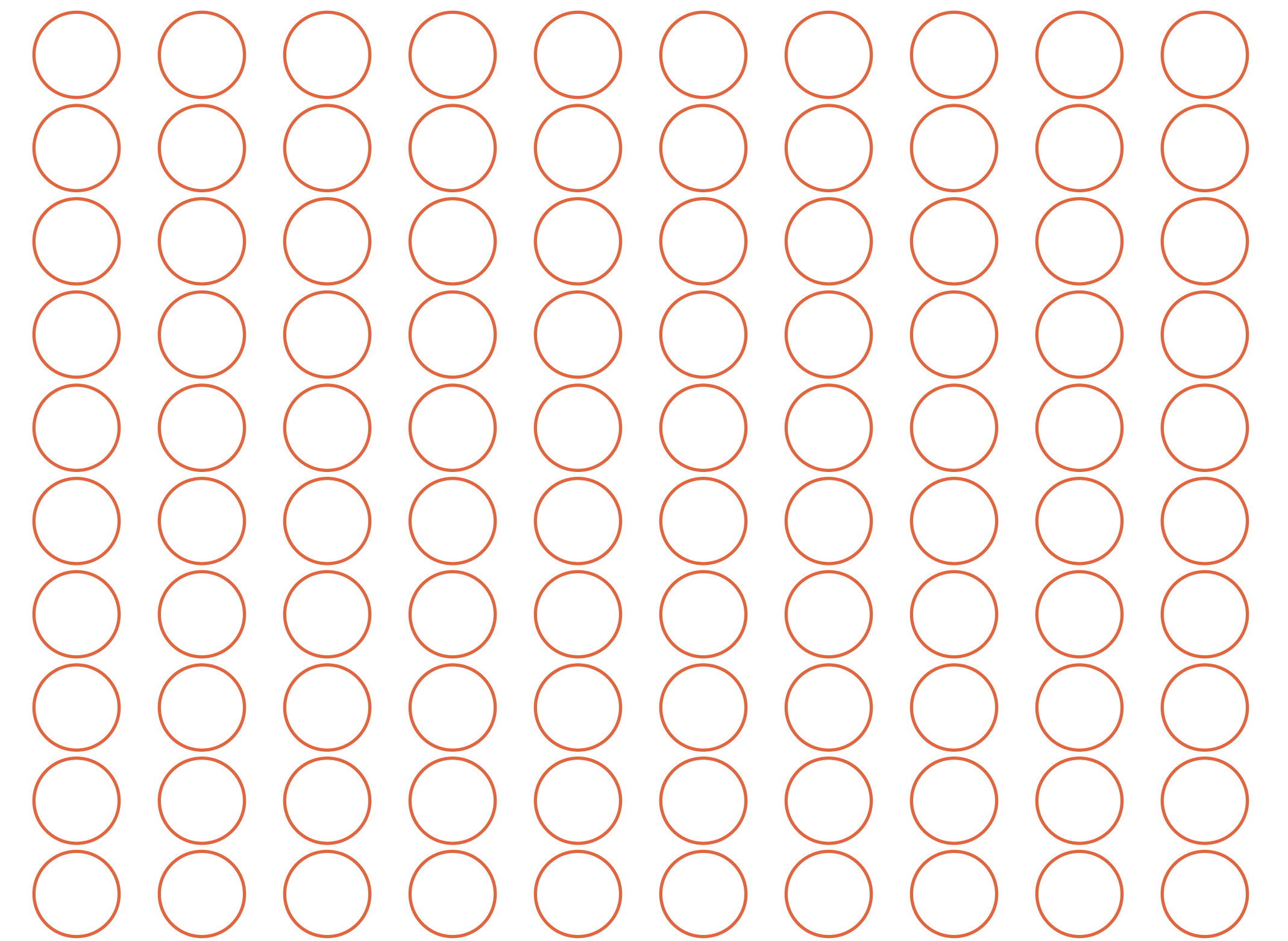
- Requires 330 feet of new right-of-way
- Displaces business



Give us your input.

Put your #23 sticker on the alternative you prefer.

TxDOT Proposal



Alternative 23.1 - Design Exceptions

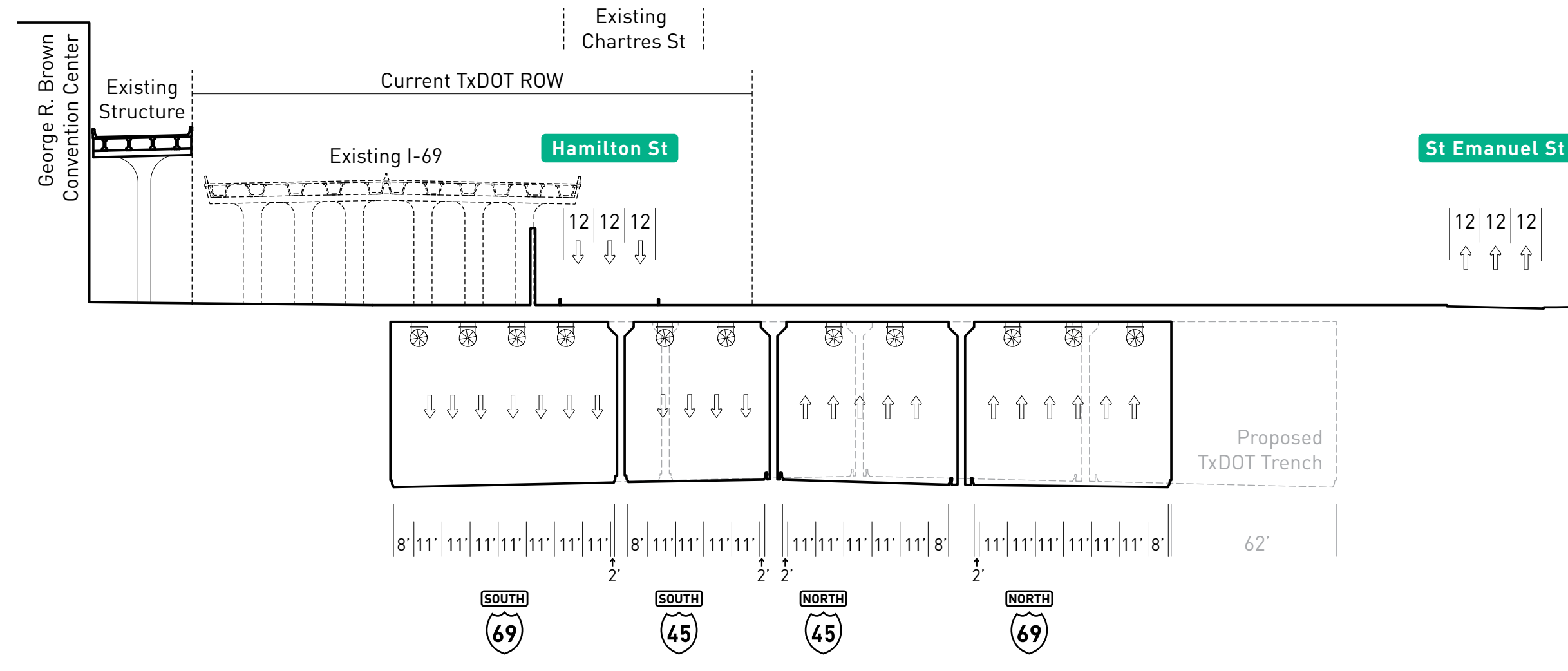
TxDOT can get exceptions to design standards to reduce impacts on neighborhoods. This can involve narrower lanes and not providing inside shoulders. There are many examples of urban highways like this, but they do increase the risk of crashes, especially when breakdowns happen.

PROS

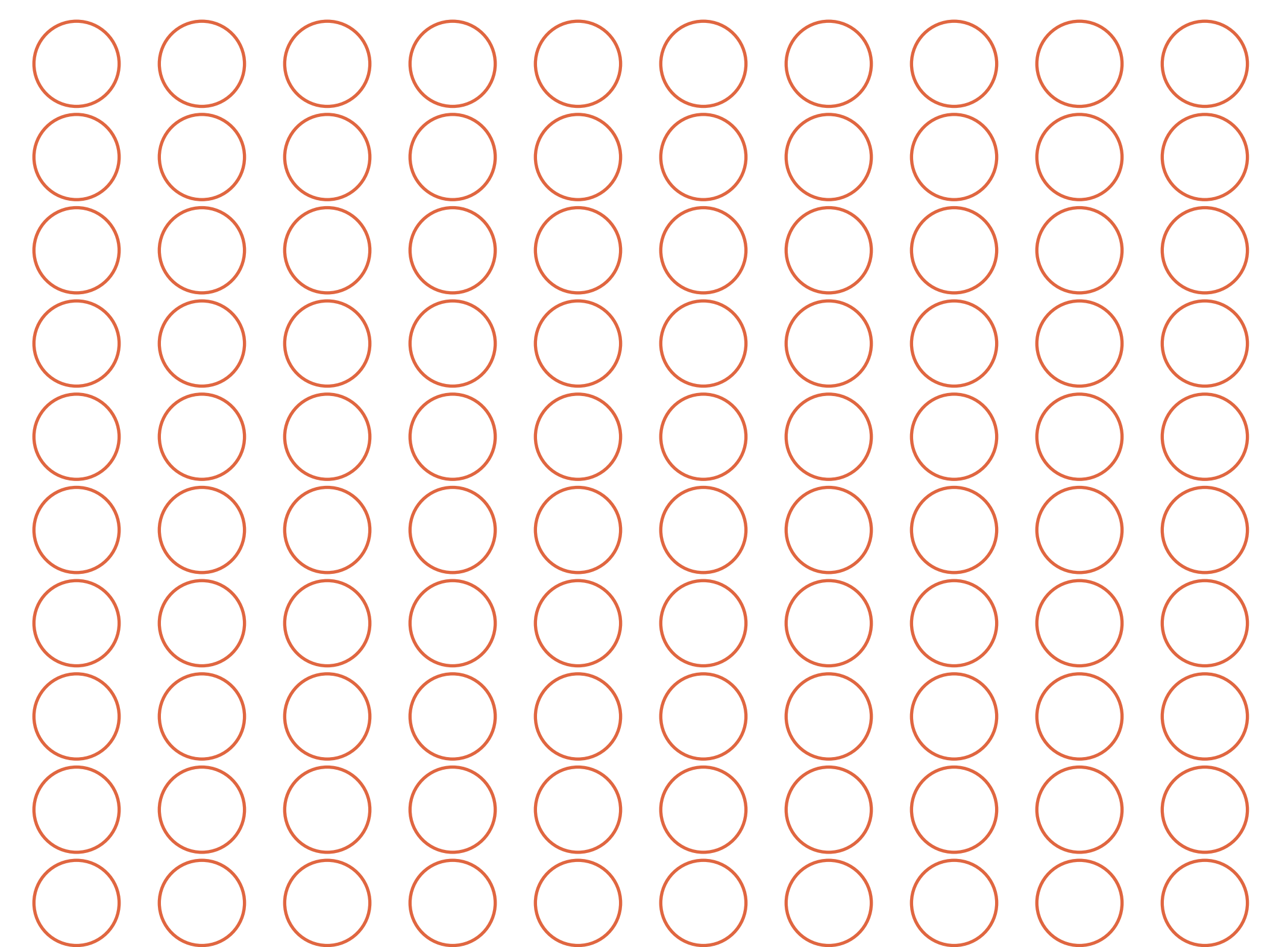
- Adds capacity
- Requires 62 feet less right-of-way
- Potentially allows for development space between the freeway and St. Emanuel Street
- St. Emanuel Street could be lined on both sides with buildings, creating a better pedestrian environment

CONS

- Likely still displaces business
- Increases risk of crashes on the freeway



Alternative 23.1 - Design Exceptions



Alternative 23.2 - Design Exceptions + No Added Capacity

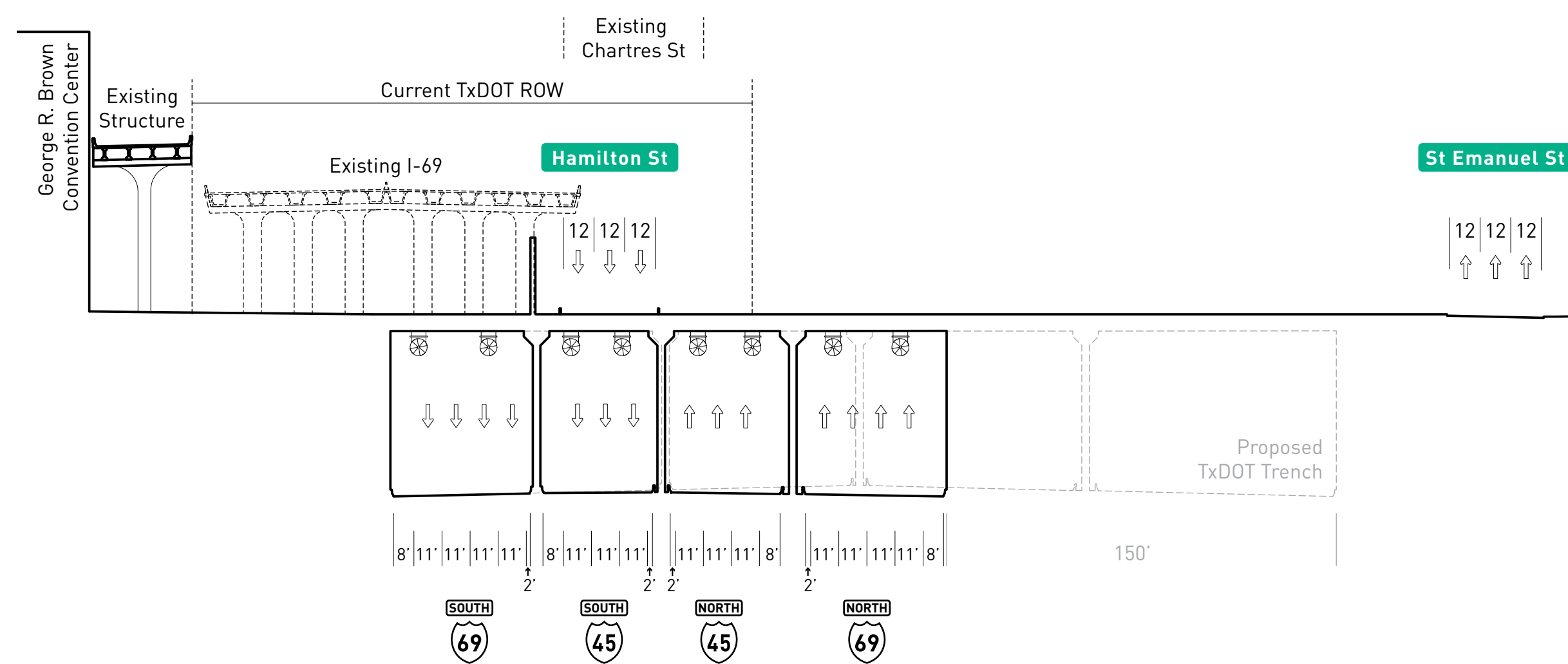
In addition to using design exemptions, the trench could be built with the same number of lanes the highway has today. This significantly reduces the right-of-way and likely saves some of the businesses on St. Emanuel Street.

PROS

- Requires 150 feet less right-of-way
- Retains 1/2 block between St. Emanuel Street and the trench
- Saves some existing buildings and businesses
- St. Emanuel Street could be lined on both sides with buildings, creating a better pedestrian environment

CONS

- Increase risk of crashes on the freeway
- Does not add capacity



Alternative 23.2 - Design Exceptions + No Added Capacity

