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Residents pitch underground I-45 expansion option 📺

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By Mike Zientek / 11 News

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The battle pitting some Houston residents against the state has entered another round.

Those people live in Woodland Heights just north of downtown near I-45. And they worry widening the freeway means they'll lose their homes.

Friday homeowners fired more volleys in this expansion fight.

"This siding was milled out of Buffalo Bayou, out of cypress. This is cypress," says Ken Lindow, who knows every detail about his Woodland Heights home.

It was built back in 1910, when only about 80,000 people lived in Houston.

Now, nearby Interstate 45 has more cars than that on it every day. And Lindow worries plans to change the road, will threaten his historic house.

"We have no children, this home is like a child to us," he says. "And it kills my soul to know that someone in The Woodlands would destroy this house to save a few minutes to commute to downtown Houston."

"We are ordinary people whose homes and quality of life are threatened by the laziness and arrogance of lifelong civil servants," says Peggy Lindow.

So Ken, his wife Peggy and their neighbors gave members of the local transportation policy commission an earful Friday. They don't like the idea Texas transportation officials say a study recommends, which is to expand I-45 by four lanes north of downtown.

Woodland Heights residents argue there are other options. It's one similar to TXDOT's, only a lot bigger.

"It would be a tunnel like these," says engineer Gonzalo Camacho.

It would be four lanes stretching 20 miles from Greenspoint to downtown. And Camacho says it could work.

"This is the future of your city, what do you want to do?" asks Camacho. "Should we continue doing what we're doing, which is not an answer. Or, should we look beyond that?"

TXDOT engineers say they'll consider it.

"I have a little more concern because of all the flooding ... but from a transportation standpoint we'll look at it," says Gary Trietsch of TXDOT.

Ken Lindow hopes so. Maybe that, he says, can save the home he loves.