



**Citizens for Appropriate Transportation (CAT) Issue Brief**  
**Eisenhower Transportation Corridor**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD DISINVESTMENT**

We have a problem along the Eisenhower Corridor we should address. The stories are real, but I changed the names. Every person lives within one block of the Ike.

Kathy and her husband want to spend almost \$100,000 to improve their house. She worries whether this is a good investment because of the uncertainty about expanding the Ike. Kathy sees her house as a good place to raise a family and then provide for a comfortable retirement.

Bob called to ask if he should buy a condo on Harrison. Although I cannot tell him yes or no, I update him about the state's plans and the status of the Phase 1 Engineering – Environmental Study.

Dan and his wife Joan live half a block north of the Ike. In his e-mail, Dan says he is “very concerned about the possibility of the expansion shortening the distance between our house and the highway, and lowering the value of our house. I have no faith in the state being concerned for our interests at all.”

Debbie said, “My house needs a lot of work, but I am only going to do the work that is absolutely necessary until I know the future size of the Ike.”

Roberta and Ron comment, “The IDOT proposals to move the 1-290 ramps to the north side of the expressway and elevate them above an additional lane will impact negatively on the Harrison street neighborhood --- what a terrible blow to the investment of our resources and energies as a community!”

Tony retired. He expected to spend the rest of his life in Oak Park, but moved because he did not want to live through years to construction to rebuild the expressway and Blue Line.

Joe adds, “I also expect the construction period will radically alter my living conditions and make my home unsellable.”

Our decisions about how to maintain and improve our homes affect our aging housing stock. The stories suggest some people are postponing rehabilitation work.

One of the five core values in Envision Oak Park (the Village's Comprehensive Plan) is “Thriving Neighborhoods.” “All actions should support the maintenance and enhancement of Oak Park's neighborhoods. All portions of the community – neighborhoods, open spaces, institutions, and commercial areas – help define quality of life in Oak Park. However, the village's neighborhoods play a primary role in defining community character, supporting diversity and accessibility, and fostering an engaged and integrated citizenry.”

Disinvestment is hard to correct once it starts. We are looking at the potential of lower demand for houses along the Ike, less rehabilitation work, a slower growth rate in property taxes, and less capital appreciation in housing values.

We better deal with this problem before it gets out of hand. It will take a lot of us to remedy the problem.