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PRESS RELAEASE

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UNIVERSITY RAIL CORRIDOR POSITION STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, HOUSTON AUGUST 22, 2006

The American Institute of Architects Houston emphatically recommends that the University Corridor light rail line under consideration by Metro be placed along Richmond Avenue.

- This decision was made with the recommendation of an Advisory Panel of AIA Houston members who have long-standing national and local urban design expertise, familiarity with the issues surrounding the University Corridor Rail alignment, and direct access to documentation of ALL proposed alignment options.
- The Richmond alignment maximizes pedestrian activity in accordance with National AIA objectives for Livable Communities. Other proposed alignments will retard new transit-oriented development.
- The Richmond alignment is the best for all citizens of Houston because it will do a far better job of connecting them with centers of commerce than any other proposed alignment.
- The Richmond alignment can be achieved with minimal impact on local properties, minimal takings, and an expedited schedule. Other proposed alignments require extraordinary engineering and configurational effort. We acknowledge that construction will cause disruption to some residents and business owners, but the long term benefits of a better quality of life and higher property values for those people mitigate the short-term inconvenience.
- The Richmond alignment is the only option that will ensure compliance with the Federal funding guidelines. No other option guarantees such funding.
- The Richmond alignment is the only option for the greater common good. Houston should not yet again become the only city forbidden to utilize federal funds for rail transit, while hundreds of millions of dollars continue to pour into Dallas and other communities for rail transit.

Jeffrey Brown, AIA, President of AIA Houston said: "Great vision is required to become the 21st Century global city Houston advertises itself to be. Securing major national events, increased tourism, and a better quality of life for Houstonians depends on such vision. The Richmond alignment would be a major step toward that vision."