



# MAJOR PROPOSED HIGHWAY REDEVELOPMENT AROUND DOWNTOWN OFFERS NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR LAND USE

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A proposed redevelopment of the freeway network around Downtown Houston could yield a significant amount of land for public use, according to Deal Sikes & Associates, a Texas-based valuation firm and eminent domain counselor.

A key component to the Downtown freeway overhaul is rerouting I-45 to run parallel to US 59 on the east side of Downtown near the George R. Brown Convention Center. The Pierce Elevated portion of I-45 could then be torn down and the underlying property could be sold to the city, or to the owners of adjacent property, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.



Assuming similar access between Downtown and Midtown is maintained, the removal of the Pierce Elevated freeway would likely create significant value and promote new economic life into the southern part of downtown Houston, Deal Sikes principal Matt Deal tells us.

The TxDOT plan, now in a period of public comment, also calls for I-45 and US 59 to be underground as they pass on the east side of Downtown near the convention center. This means the freeways would be buried like tunnels with a “lid” of greenspace for a surface-level park.

Dallas did something similar: the highly acclaimed Klyde Warren Park, which was built over the depressed Woodall Rodgers Freeway, opened in 2012. “The success that Dallas experienced with its over-the-freeway creation of greenspace for Klyde Warren Park could be repeated in Houston with this Downtown freeway plan,” Matt says.