



**CENTRAL TEXAS  
Regional Mobility Authority**

**AGENDA ITEM #16 SUMMARY**

---

Executive Director's report.

Strategic Plan Relevance: Regional Mobility

Department: Executive

Associated Costs: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

Board Action Required: No

Description of Matter:

Executive Director's Monthly report

- A. Interlocal agreement with the City of Leander and development project adjacent to the 183/183A Intersection.
- B. City of Austin City Council candidate presentation.

Reference documentation:

Executive Director's report

Contact for further information:

Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director



CENTRAL TEXAS  
Regional Mobility Authority

# REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULY 30, 2014

Mike Heiligenstein – Executive Director

## Maha Loop Groundbreaking

On July 9, the Mobility Authority joined with Travis County Precinct 4 Commissioner Margaret Gomez to hold a groundbreaking of the \$16.6 million non-tolled Maha Loop extension project in East Travis County.

Executive Director Mike Heiligenstein served as emcee for the event. Board Secretary Nikelle Meade represented the Mobility Authority and in her remarks to the more than 50 guests and media present emphasized the Mobility Authority's commitment to bringing greater mobility to the region by offering solutions — both tolled and non-tolled — that help people get where they want to go.



July 9 Maha Loop Groundbreaking

The almost two-mile stretch of road will connect Pearce Lane to State Highway 71. It will also be an important artery to reduce congestion around the Formula One track.

The Mobility Authority was approached because of our reputation for delivering projects on budget and on time, and because we have the design-build authority to construct projects like this.

This project represents what the Mobility Authority is all about — it's not about tolling, it's about finding mobility solutions. Constructing this project is part of the Mobility Authority's mission to "Implement innovative, multi-modal transportation solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality."

This project is important for East Travis County, and will enhance the quality of life and economic opportunities for the area. Thanks to the Board's leadership on this project, we have once again proven to the community our ability to get things done. The road is expected to be open by next spring.

## Industry News:

### Tolled Express Lanes a National Trend, and Colorado's Firmly on Board

Excerpted article from KUNC radio, Greely, CO



An express toll lane in Utah on southbound I-15. Note the electronic sign that notifies drivers of the variable price of the toll.

On a June day in 2006, Myron Swisher stood on a highway overpass, watching a history-making moment on Interstate 25. Swisher, who worked for the state Department of Transportation, had labored for the past nine years to open a high occupancy toll lane on the crowded road, and he wanted to watch the first cars use it.

"It was probably about 2:30 in the afternoon, so I wanted to get out there and see how things are going before rush hour started," Swisher said.

Looking back, Swisher's moment on the bridge may have marked the beginning of a new era in Colorado transportation.

The state is now in the midst of planning or constructing at least four new express toll lanes on Front Range highways. It's not alone: transportation experts say the trend toward tolling new highway lanes, begun in California, is spreading to congested cities across the country.

"We're seeing an explosion of these projects across the country to help create mobility in these congested corridors," said Chuck Fuhs, a Houston-based consultant with 40 years of experience in the transportation industry.

The reason for this is twofold, said Fuhs and others who watch trends in transportation. For years, transportation departments would build new lanes, only to see them fill up almost immediately. Tolloed lanes, often with prices that change according to demand, are a better way to ensure drivers have a reliable trip. The other big reason for expanding toll lanes has to do with widespread public unwillingness to raise the gas taxes that pay for transportation projects. For agencies lacking money to build a new lane from scratch, tolloed lanes are a way to partially pay for new road efforts.

### **Dynamic Pricing Affects Driver Behavior**

Tolls also serve an important purpose: managing demand by price. The basic idea: In order to keep traffic flowing in the express lane, there should only be a certain quantity of cars. If there is a lot of extra room in the lane, the price to enter is low. If space is getting tight, the price increases, discouraging drivers from entering.

"It's similar to how you would pay more for an airplane ticket during holidays," said Gian-Claudia Sciara, of the Urban Land Use and Transportation Policy Center at the University of California, Davis.

In the early days of the movement, transportation departments often took underused existing High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, and transformed them to toll lanes. The lanes Swisher worked on for I-25 were former HOV lanes. Now, more and more cities are adding lanes knowing at the outset they'll be tolloed.

### **Disapproval at First, But Opinion Often Shifts**

In any city, the announcement that express toll lanes are coming is typically met with opposition, said Ginger

Goodin, a senior research engineer at Texas A&M's Transportation Research Institute. Goodin has evaluated express toll lane projects in many cities, including Seattle, Los Angeles and Houston. Goodin knows of over 20 express toll lanes in existence in at least 12 cities across the country, and said 20 more are in development.

Often during toll lane construction, she said, "you start seeing dropping public support. But what we have also mapped, once it is in place and people start using it, six months to a year, a ramp-up period, then you get public support."

While some toll lanes have bumpy starts and need tweaking, both Goodin and Fuhs, the consultant, said most of them end up working well and often gaining in popularity over time.

"The difficult part is, can you ride that wave of negative criticism. There's going to be a lot of pressure to just open the lane to everybody," said Goodin.

One of the most common criticisms of such lanes is that they are "Lexus lanes," giving the wealthy a faster transit time while the 99 percent suffers in the slow lanes. But studies have found that drivers from a wide range of incomes end up using the lanes when they really need a reliable travel option. Also, by offering a faster option for buses, those that use public transit also often benefit.

## **Events and Activities**

- Mike Heiligenstein spoke to Austin City Council candidates on July 8 to provide an overview of Mobility Authority plans and projects.
- Work will begin on the week of July 28 on the 183A frontage road asphalt maintenance project. The project entails removing and replacing the very top 2" of an overall pavement section that is about 18" thick. We anticipate the process to be finished by the end of October 2014. Some work will occur at night to minimize disruption to the traveling public and ongoing traffic advisories will be posted online and sent via email.
- Mike Heiligenstein and the project team met with Leander developers about significant residential and potential commercial development projects along the 183A/US 183 intersection improvement project. (See details in enclosed attachments.)
- July 29, SH45SW Public Hearing, Bowie High School, 5 p.m.
- Sept. 24, Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m.



# PROJECT UPDATES

## MoPac Improvement Project Construction

- The MoPac Improvement Project is on schedule.
- Final design and the permitting process scheduled to be completed by end of July.
- Work on Segments 1 & 2A (Parmer Lane to 183) included subgrade grading and drilling shafts for Capital Metro bridge widening.



*Retaining Wall Construction in Median at RM 2222*

- Work on Segment 2B (183 to RM 2222) included: installation of electrical and ITS conduit, storm drains, and temporary signs; construction of retaining walls; and substructure work for RM 2222 bridge widening.
- Work on Segment 3 (RM 2222 to Enfield) included: construction of temporary ramps; utility relocations in advance of sound wall construction; and construction of columns and abutments for 45<sup>th</sup>, and Windsor Road bridges; completed substructure for widening of southbound Enfield bridge.
- Work on Segment 4 (Enfield Road to Ladybird Lake) included: subgrade earthwork; installation of storm drain facilities; construction of Enfield Road temporary ramp; roadway widening; and construction of bore pits for utility relocation.
- Pre-casting of beams and sound walls continues. Inspection of operations at the casting plant was conducted members of the oversight team.
- Mowing operations continue.
- CH2M HILL has been providing a courtesy vehicle (similar to HERO) during peak hours and during construction as well as handling the maintenance of the corridor (graffiti removal, garbage pick-up,

guardrail repair). They will continue this until final acceptance of the project.

- MoPac Man continues to update the website daily with closure information and has responded to numerous e-mails and tweets. His 800 AM broadcasts are updated weekly with closure information as well as information about the upcoming express lanes.

## MoPac South Environmental Study

- Technical memoranda are being prepared for the alternative analysis as well as for the social, economic, and environmental impact evaluations.
- Stakeholder meetings continue, including a meeting with the City of Austin to discuss Bike and Pedestrian issues .
- Engineers are Initiating sketch level designs.
- The next public meeting is planned for early 2015.
- Initial draft EA submittal is planned for early 2015 with a Public Hearing planned for the Summer of 2015.

## MoPac Intersections Environmental Study

- The Schematic design and the majority of the technical memoranda have been submitted to TxDOT for review and comment.
- A public event is planned for Fall/Winter 2014.

## 183 North Mobility Project

- Purpose and Need Statement was submitted to TxDOT and FHWA for review and comment on June 9.
- A second Technical Working Group was held on June 24.
- A ride along with City of Austin and city Bike/Ped groups was held on July 7 to identify possible locations for bike and pedestrian improvements.
- Approximately 100 members of the public attended the July 8 Open House. The Virtual Open House was available on the project website between July 9 -18.
- Project preliminary design development and traffic operational analysis is on-going.
- Project on schedule for Public Hearing Aug 2015.

### SH 45SW Environmental Study

- Public hearing is scheduled for July 29.
- Final Design Procurement shortlist and interviews are planned for late August. Construction is anticipated to start in Late 2015/Early 2016.

### Bergstrom Expressway Project

- The Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently under review by Federal Highway Administration, with a Public Hearing scheduled for mid-2014 and an EA finding in early 2015.
- Final Design Schematic is currently under review by Federal Highway Administration with anticipated approval in September 2014.
- Public involvement activities continue as the team prepares for the Final CSS Open House scheduled in August 2014.
- We have initiated the procurement process with the Request for Qualifications issued in April, anticipated Shortlist of Proposers in September and Best Value Section in early 2015.
- Project programming activities continue as the team works to finalize Project Funding Agreements with TxDOT and FHWA.
- Other Project programming efforts have begun in order to meet Federal requirements such as Project Management Plan, Initial Finance Plan, and the Cost Estimate Review Workshop.
- Financing activities continue as we develop the updates to TIFIA Application and begin the Investment Grade Traffic & Revenue Study.
- Outreach and status reporting activities continue as the team meets with the stakeholders including Public Officials, Agencies and Community Organizations.

### Maha Loop/Elroy Road Phase One



*Maha Loop July 8 Groundbreaking Ceremony*

- A Notice to Proceed for construction was issued June 23.
- Contractor began on July 8 to drill shafts on south bridge.
- Change order was made to adjust fence elements to comply with property owner agreement negotiated by Travis County after bid award was approved by Travis County (\$73k).

### Manor Expressway

- CTMC is currently addressing Punch List items in order to obtain final acceptance and finalizing the non-conflict utility relocations required by the project.

### Oak Hill Parkway



**OAK HILL**  
**PARKWAY**

- TxDOT, TTI and the Mobility Authority are working together to memorialize some of the public funding workshop information through an information song that would be generic enough for use on other projects.
- Follow up meetings with various stakeholders have resulted in refinements to the western transition to better facilitate access for emergency services and businesses.
- An Open House was held June 17 at Covington Middle School along with a corresponding Virtual Open House on the OakHillParkway.com website from June 18 - 27. The refined and narrowed mobility concepts (A, C and No Build) were presented as those moving forward for further evaluation. Approximately 140 members from the public attended the Open House.
- The comments from the Open House are being reviewed and responses developed. Some of the comments will result in further refinements to the concepts being carried forward.
- Efforts with TxDOT and the City of Austin continue for potential detention facilities.



CENTRAL TEXAS  
Regional Mobility Authority

# Transportation Overview

## July 8, 2014

---

Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director

# History of the Mobility Authority



- Created in 2002 by the Texas Legislature to improve the transportation system in Williamson and Travis counties
- Mission:
  - Implement innovative, multi-modal transportation solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality
- 7-member board of directors:
  - Chairman appointed by the Governor
  - Travis and Williamson County Commissioners courts each appoint three members
- Authorized under state law to implement a wide range of transportation systems, issue revenue bonds to fund projects, and utilize user fees and/or taxes to fund operations and repay bonds. From Rail to Trail.



***We build toll roads, and so much more.***

# Why Toll Roads?



- **Federal and state highway funds are drying up.**
- **Tolling allows projects to be expedited.**
- **Only those who use toll roads pay for them.**
- **Free alternatives are always available – and in many cases expanded.**
- **The Mobility Authority never tolls an existing non-tolled road; we just add new capacity.**



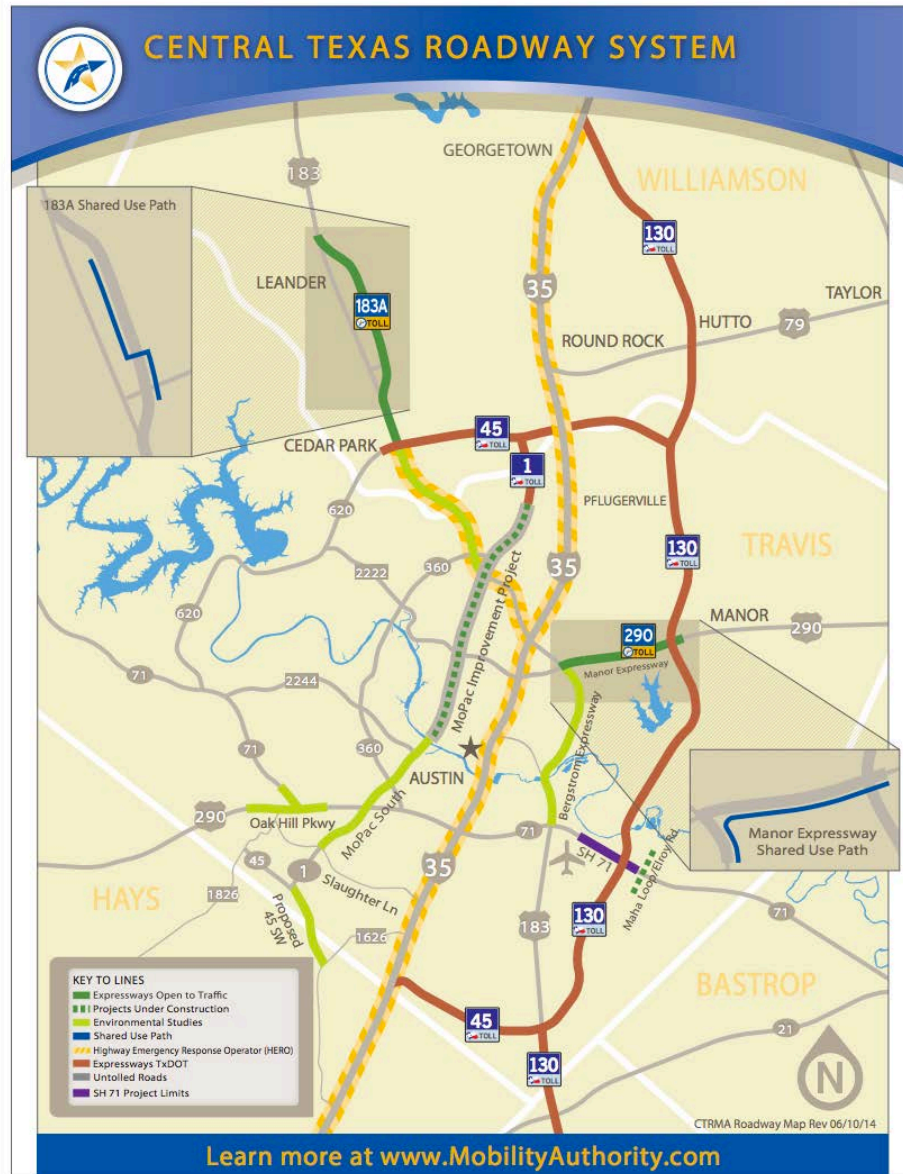


# Mobility Authority Project Development 10-Year Report Card



	Tolled	Non-Tolled	Bike/Pedestrian
<b>Completed Roads (Lane Miles)</b>			
183A	69.6	20	11 miles
Manor/290E	38	37	6 miles
<b>Under Construction</b>			
MoPAC (11 miles)	22 miles*	Intersections/ Aesthetic Improvements	Estimated \$4 million in improvements
71 East	16	--	--
<b>Under Development</b>			
Oakhill Parkway "Y"	21	21	TBD
183 South	36	36	7
183 North	30*	All Current Remain non tolled	TBD
MoPAC South	16-30*	All Current Remain Non-tolled	TBD

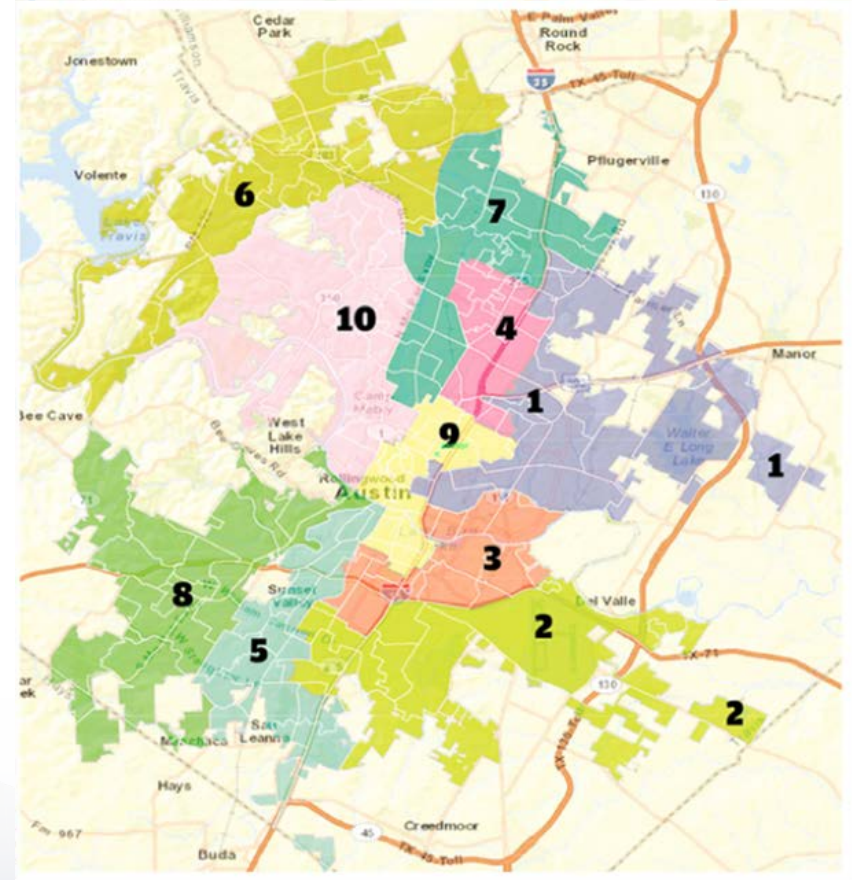
# Building an Expressway Network



# Our Projects & Your Districts



- 183 A – District 6 , 10
- Manor Expressway – District 1
- MoPac Improvement Project – District 7, 9, 10
- MoPac South – District 5, 7, 8, 9
- Oak Hill Parkway – District 8
- Bergstrom Expressway – District 1, 2 , 3
- 183 North – District 6 , 7, 10
- SH 45 SW – District 5 , 8
- Maha Loop/Elroy Road – District 2
- SH 71 – District 2



# Lessons Learned, Opportunities and Challenges



- **Initially a response to citizen/community demands for better transportation planning and development. Regional leaders criticized for failure to act – failure to get “fair share” in state allocation process. Always a difficult process.**
- **Drive to join two very different counties into one Authority. Looking for alternatives to property tax to fund.**
- **What RMA offered:**
  - Local control/management (Board)
  - Revenue stays home
  - Outreach by local community leaders
  - Focus on building consent
  - Ability to build agency around entrepreneurial model (19 employees)
  - Design/Build / P3 / TRZ
  - Access to federal and state funds and loans

<b>Facilities in operation</b>	<b>\$750 million</b>
<b>Facilities under construction</b>	<b>\$325 million</b>
<b>Under active development</b>	<b>\$ 2 billion</b>

# The Mobility Authority is:



- **Building a system**
- **Leveraging scarce dollars**
- **Reaching out to the community**
- **Using technology**
- **Providing congestion relief**
- **Providing reliable alternatives**
- **Creating partnerships**
- **Building now – planning for the future**



## • HERO Program

- Emergency road service to motorists along I-35 and US 183
- Monday – Friday, 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Helps drivers, clears the roadway for thousands of motorists
- Allows safety and emergency vehicles to reach accident scenes quickly



# More than just Toll Roads



- **Shared-Use Paths**

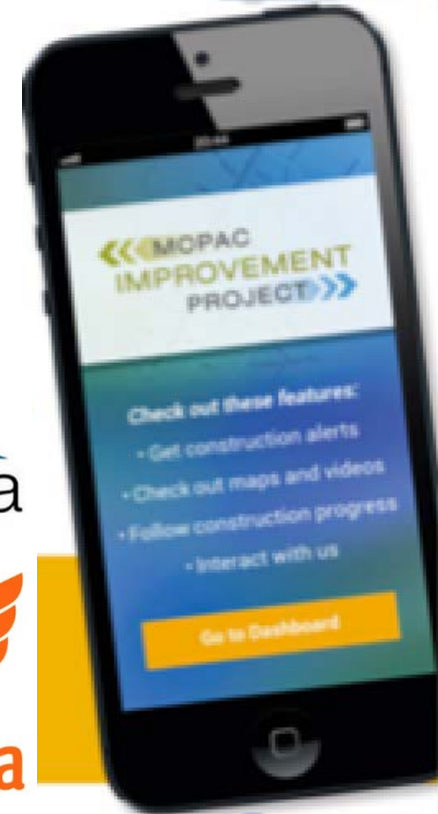
- 183A – 11 miles of SUP
- MoPac Improvement Project – 3 miles of paths
- Manor Expressway – 6 miles of paths

- **Green Mobility Challenge**

- Design competition for landscape architects, planners and engineers to design environmentally responsible transportation facilities

- **Mobile Apps**

- MoPac Improvement Project
- Carma Carpooling
- Metropia Mobile





**CENTRAL TEXAS**  
**Regional Mobility Authority**