



**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. Report on toll transactions
- B. Schedule for FY 2014-2015 budget adoption

Reference documentation:

April 2014 Project Report
Governor's Letter

Contact for further information:

Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director



Project Report

MoPac Improvement Project

- The MoPac Improvement Project is on schedule.
- Final design and the permitting process are wrapping up.
- CH2M Hill has completed temporary restriping and setting barrier for Segment 2B and most of Segment 3 and Segment 1 &2A northbound.
- Restriping and setting of barrier will continue in Segments 1 &2A southbound.
- Work continues on clearing of vegetation, placement of erosion control devices, temporary lighting, rough grading, and removal of guard fence and existing railing. New activities include construction of drilled shafts at RM 2222 and Enfield (southbound) for bridge widening, and fence removals.
- Pre-casting of beams and sound walls continues. Sound wall mock-up completed.
- 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, mowing, 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.
- An educational advertising plan will run in May featuring informative stories and updates about construction in Community Impact, on KUT radio, KLBQ (Spanish La Jefa) and online banner ads and at the Festival de Mayo at the Dell Diamond

MoPac South Environmental Study

- The first Technical Working Group meeting was held April 16 in order to preview the Open House information, including the latest draft of the: purpose and need, preliminary alternatives, and the evaluation criteria for both preliminary and reasonable alternatives.
- The second Open House was held on April 29 at Barton Creek Square Mall.

183 North Mobility Project

- Consideration of input from the stakeholder meetings and the Open House is underway in the refinement of the Purpose and Need and alternatives.
- This summer the reasonable alternatives will be presented to the public. Planning has begun for a second Open House to be held in July.
- TxDOT is expected to assume oversight of the Environmental Assessment from FHWA as early as June 2014. This may adjust the overall schedule of the environmental document's review process.

SH 45SW Environmental Study

- The project has been added to the CAMPO TIP amendment for construction. The CAMPO Board's vote on TIP amendments has been postponed to a later date.

- The updated project schedule shows the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is anticipated to be publically circulated in June for an anticipated July Public Hearing.

Manor Expressway Phase Two

- The Grand Opening Celebration and Community Festival is set for Saturday, May 17 from 10am-2pm



- CTMC continues to set the two remaining overhead sign bridges, construct sidewalks, install the permanent frontage road signals, install the median cable barrier and miscellaneous concrete rip-rap, dress and stabilize slopes, prepare the beds for the landscaped plants and trees, paint aesthetic structures on the corridor, and has placed the final asphalt course at the SH 130 and US 183 interchanges
- The Systems Integrator continues the installation of ITS tolling equipment

Bergstrom Expressway

- 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
- Public involvement activities continue as the team finalizes the summary and analysis from the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Open Houses. The resulting preferred option will be presented in a Final CSS Open House prior to the Public Hearing in mid 2014
- Final Design Schematic is currently under review by Federal Highway Administration
- The procurement process has been initiated with the Request for Qualifications issued on April 14,

2014 and an anticipated Best Value Section in Spring of 2015

- As part of the project financing , an update to the TIFIA Application is being developed and the team is continuing to coordinate with TIFIA in anticipation of financial close following the Best Value Selection

Maha Loop/Elroy Road Phase 1

- The 90% plans are complete and were submitted to Travis County April 11
- 28 potential bidders/subcontractors/fabricators have pulled the 60% plans from the Civcast business opportunities web site.
- Outreach was conducted to identify contractors that normally do business with Travis County and ensure they will be prequalified prior to advertisement
- The Environmental Assessment has been approved by Travis County
- The preliminary pavement design is complete; there will be an alternate bid for Tensar which is a proprietary geogrid product that allows a 2" reduction in the flexible base layer
- The project is still projected to be coming in under the approved budget

Oak Hill Parkway

- The Public Funding Workshop was held March 22. Although attendance was light, the information was well received. There will be an effort to incorporate the materials into a video or print media to be placed online for those unable to attend. The information will be generic enough for use on other projects.
- Feasible solutions for ending the freeway section to the west have been developed and are being refined through operational analyses. These solutions limit the right of way impacts.
- Efforts with TxDOT and the City of Austin continue for potential regional detention facilities
- The next Open House will be held in early June



**CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority**

April 16, 2014

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of the State of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

As we begin 2014, the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is pleased to report progress as we continue to develop a seamless network of tolled expressways and also seek innovative, non-tolled solutions to improve mobility in the region. There has been significant achievement in four areas:

1. Increased revenue due to growing acceptance of tolled roadways as an effective option to cut through congestion.
2. Careful design and construction of nearly \$1 billion in new facilities.
3. Effective collaboration in the implementation of six key environmental studies, with potential value of \$2 billion in future Expressway projects.
4. Innovative non-tolled solutions, ranging from designing and constructing non-tolled roadways to smart phone apps that will help motorists find ways to cut through congestion in "real time."

Many projects are needed to improve mobility in Central Texas, but, in the past, the environmental study and clearance process has long been a long and complicated process that has added time and money to project development. During the 2013 Legislative Session, SB 466 was passed by the Legislature and signed by you, allowing TxDOT to step into the role of the Federal Highway Administration in conducting environmental reviews. As administered by the state, the process would still need to follow all of the same federal regulations and requirements but could significantly reduce the time required to complete the environmental process review. Working with TxDOT, we will implement this new review process in some of our project studies, with the goal of getting to construction much sooner.

Financials

The Mobility Authority continues to experience a steady increase in transactions and revenue. In March there were 3.9 million transactions compared to 3.5 million in March 2013. Revenues are also steadily on the rise. February revenues exceeded \$3.2 million compared to \$2.6 million in 2013. Investors have been favorably impressed; the finance team recently had a very successful meeting with investors in New York City. Looking ahead, we are beginning to work on the financing of the Bergstrom Expressway Project that will add two tolled lanes along US 183 South toward the airport, while simultaneously adding capacity to existing free frontage lanes. With the anticipated grand opening of Phase Two of Manor Expressway in May, we expect a steady increase in system transactions and revenue in the coming months.

3300 N IH-35, Suite 300, Austin, Texas 78705

Telephone: (512) 996-9778 / Fax: (512) 996-9784 / www.MobilityAuthority.com

Projects under Construction

- **The MoPac Improvement Project.** Express Lanes on MoPac are well on their way to completion in the fall of 2015. The MoPac Improvement Project will give drivers the option to bypass congestion on the 11-mile stretch of MoPac from Parmer Lane to Downtown. Express Lanes are special buffer-separated lanes that use variable tolls to keep traffic moving even when the adjacent lanes are congested. This is accomplished by raising the toll when traffic is heavy and lowering the toll when traffic is light. The lanes provide non-tolled service to public transit buses and registered vanpools, but also allow individual drivers the option to use the lanes if they choose to. Over the past few months crews have been installing temporary highway striping and concrete traffic barriers so that heavy construction can begin. The median is being cleared between US 183 and RM 2222 and bridge widening is getting underway at the southbound RM 2222 bridge. Construction will soon begin on the new Express Lane underpass to downtown Austin. The project is officially 20% complete at this time. We have been pleased with the community's response to our smart phone MoPac app, which gives commuters up-to-minute updates on the project.
- **Manor Expressway.** The Mobility Authority will celebrate the Grand Opening of phase two of the Manor Expressway on Saturday, May 17 with a community-wide, festival-style event on a yet-to-open portion of the toll road in front of the Applied Materials campus. Crews are making finishing touches such as painting, installing of electronic tolling equipment, striping and completing a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists along the corridor. This important project promises to help ease congestion and be a catalyst for economic growth in Austin's desired development zone, and provide mobility benefit to several counties, including Travis, Williamson and Bastrop

Project Studies

We have made significant progress over the last quarter on several environmental studies underway in partnership with TxDOT and other area organizations and cities. The studies could lead to approximately \$2 billion in new roadway development for Central Texas.

- **Oak Hill Parkway.** In our efforts to improve mobility at the "Y" intersection of US 290 and SH 71 for residents of southwest Austin, Lakeway, Bee Cave and Dripping Springs, we continue to make progress on an environmental impact study that engages and informs the community in developing consent for the recommended project. Throughout the process, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority have conducted a series of stakeholder meetings to hear residents' concerns and solicit comments on a variety of plans for a future Oak Hill Parkway. Most recently and at the request of the community, the team has developed an innovative intersection design to lessen the right-of-way impacts of the western terminus. We also held a transportation-financing workshop, in coordination with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, to inform the community about how projects are funded and address tolling questions regularly asked at Open Houses. The Mobility Authority knows this project has been talked to death over the past 25 years. Our goal is to wrap up the environmental study and begin implementing a project that will give this area real mobility improvements and capacity expansion.
- **Bergstrom Expressway.** The Mobility Authority continues to assist TxDOT in the preparation of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bergstrom Expressway. The

draft EA for improvements to US 183 from US 290 to SH 71 is currently under review by the Federal Highway Administration, and a Public Hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 2014. The Mobility Authority Board has exercised its primacy option under state law to develop, finance, construct and operate the Bergstrom Expressway project. In related action, the Board also authorized issuance of an RFQ for a design-build contract to develop the project, allowing us to streamline the overall schedule. Preliminary schedules anticipate opening a project interim milestone in 2018 and the full project in 2020, creating the relief route needed for the area to begin major upgrades to IH 35 through the downtown core.

- **MoPac South Environmental Study.** As we move forward with construction on MoPac north of the river, the Mobility Authority continues to advance the Environmental Assessment for MoPac South, from south of Lady Bird Lake to Slaughter Lane. Alternatives include additional capacity in the form of General Purpose, High Occupancy Vehicles, Transit or Express Lanes as well as no-build and transportation systems/demand management options.
- **183 North Mobility Project.** Similar to the MoPac South Environmental Study, the Mobility Authority and TxDOT have partnered to study improvements to the US 183 corridor from RR 620 south to MoPac. The first Open House for the project was held in February, and the community was invited to tell the team their mobility concerns in the corridor as well as provide feedback on alternatives. Alternatives being considered for this corridor include additional capacity in the form of General Purpose, High Occupancy Vehicles and Express Lanes as well as no-build and transportation systems/demand management options. This project is critical to address congestion in growing western Williamson and Northwest Travis counties.
- **SH 45 SW Environmental Study.** In March, both the Travis and Hays County Commissioners Courts voted to partner with the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority to fund the construction of 45 SW. TxDOT is finishing an environmental study on the project that is expected to be complete by 2015. Construction would cost between \$70 and \$100 million to make the road as environmentally friendly as possible. Travis County and Hays County will contribute \$20 million for the project, a 3.6 mile, tolled expressway that the Mobility Authority would construct and operate. The Mobility Authority is planning to borrow \$48 million from the State Infrastructure Bank to fund the project, and CAMPO is providing a \$32 million grant of regionally allocated funds.
- **Maha Loop / Elroy Road.** The Mobility Authority is assisting with the development and construction of a non-tolled, two-mile roadway in eastern Travis County from Pearce Lane to SH 71 that will enhance area mobility and will be owned and maintained by Travis County. This is the first project of its kind for any Texas Mobility Authority and is an example of potential future partnerships that leverage our expertise as a trusted transportation partner. It not only serves the area being inundated by traffic from the events at the Circuit of the Americas facility, but provides needed capacity for neighborhoods, schools and emergency services.

Other Innovations

- In February, the Mobility Authority partnered with technology company Carma to launch a real-time carpooling smart phone app as part of a federally-funded pilot project. The

app allows people to connect with each other to share their commute. "Carmapoolers" can get toll reimbursements when they carpool along the Mobility Authority's 183A and Manor Expressway toll roads with the Carma app. Research conducted by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute indicate that there are more than 900,000 empty seats on Austin area roads daily. The project will allow the authority to test the impact of specialty pricing as an incentive to drivers to use a toll Expressway, and may provide a way to verify the number of passengers in a qualifying carpool. Two-person carpools get 50% of the toll back, and three+ person carpools get the full toll amount reimbursed. The one-year pilot program will be evaluated in December 2014 for possible continuation.

- In conjunction with the MoPac Improvement Project, the Mobility Authority is negotiating with another technology company to introduce a cutting-edge, smart phone app for Central Texans that will allow commuters to plan trips in advance and earn rewards for making trips that help reduce congestion. The app uses algorithms to predict travel times on all of our area roadways, and rewards commuters for taking less congested, alternate routes and/or making their trip outside of peak travel times. The app shows great promise to help reduce congestion and improve travel times across Central Texas.

I am proud to continue my service as the Chairman of the Mobility Authority Board of Directors, who met recently in an intensive, day-long workshop to identify ways our organization can improve on its assignment to develop innovative transportation programs for Travis and Williamson Counties. We invited citizen leaders, including elected officials, community and business leaders and transportation experts, to join us for a lively lunch discussion and give us feedback on how we can work together to ease traffic woes that will only get worse as the Austin area population booms. We reached a consensus that we must come together as a community to seek a variety of solutions and shift our focus to not only reduce congestion, but also to improve reliability.

While increasing capacity on our roadways continues to be mission critical for the Mobility Authority, we are dedicated to take a leadership role in collaborating with our transportation colleagues to develop innovative solutions – from building a seamless network of expressways for public transit to implementing innovative new technologies – that will help keep Central Texas moving and thriving into the 21st century.

Sincerely,



Ray Wilkerson
Chairman

cc: Chair Ted Houghton, TTC
Commissioner Jeff Moseley, TTC
Commissioner Jeff Austin III, TTC
Commissioner Victor Vandergriff, TTC
Commissioner Fred Underwood, TTC
James Bass, Interim Executive Director, TxDOT
Congressman John Carter

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