

MEDIA ALERT



For Immediate Release:

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Statement from Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority regarding community concerns about the MoPac South Environmental Study

“The MoPac South Environmental Study is an important project to the Mobility Authority and to Austin. We have been studying it since 2013, and are in the final year of deliberating its completion.

The Mobility Authority appreciates and encourages a healthy public discussion on this project, and on all of our projects. We want to hear from folks, and their opinions really do matter. The community needs to know that the MoPac South project is still a proposal at this point – we are still studying it and we are about a year away before the study is complete, so there is plenty of time for people to get involved. But if this project isn't built, traffic studies show that the commute time on MoPac south will nearly quadruple between Slaughter Lane and downtown by 2035.

We have a problem in Austin – traffic congestion. Traffic jams are crippling our city and our region and if we don't do something it's only going to get worse. Some 130,000 vehicles a day travel on MoPac between downtown and Slaughter Lane, and we all know the number grows daily.

This project was identified as a priority project by the State in its Rider 42 funding plans. It is in the region's long range transportation plan, and we are the transportation authority charged with implementing it. It's our mission to implement solutions that enhance our quality of life by reducing traffic congestion.

We know building a project like this isn't something you can rush into. That's why we are in the midst of a detailed and thorough environmental study – it's mandated by federal law. We started the study a couple of years ago, and we're about a year away before it's complete – so there is plenty of opportunity for citizens to get informed and stay involved. In fact, based on community concerns, we have extended the study period to allow for additional feedback. We will hold issue-specific workshops and listening sessions, and we've scheduled an additional Open House for late summer to show the community how we've responded to their input. Other ideas on how to get commuters in and out of downtown are being studied. We will study the impact on traffic downtown and around Austin High School.

If the project is approved to move forward, the Mobility Authority Board of Directors and staff are committed to designing and constructing the proposed Express Lanes in a way that's sensitive to the environment. We will provide solutions to address the impacts to neighborhoods and traffic downtown and how the roadway crosses two of Austin's most treasured public spaces – Lady Bird Lake and Zilker Park.”

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About the Mobility Authority

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created in 2002 to improve the regional transportation system in Travis and Williamson Counties. The Mobility Authority implements innovative and sustainable transportation options to enhance quality of life and economic vitality in Central Texas. The Mobility Authority operates 183A Toll in Williamson County and 290 Toll (Manor Expressway) in east Austin and is constructing Express Lanes on MoPac Expressway. For more information about the Mobility Authority, visit www.MobilityAuthority.com.