



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority

NEWS RELEASE

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Solar Highway Among Award Winning Innovations at Green Mobility Challenge Competition

(Austin, Texas) – Could a solar highway be on the horizon in Central Texas? That’s just one of dozens of innovative, award-winning ideas to emerge from the Green Mobility Challenge hosted by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority.

The competition challenged highway engineers, planners, architects and landscape designers to find innovative and sustainable ways to build, operate and maintain our region’s transportation system. Six teams representing 12 different companies and two universities competed in the finals event Tuesday, November 15, at the LCRA Redbud Center. Teams were challenged to submit sustainable design ideas on two particularly sensitive highway projects, the Manchaca Expressway (SH 45 SW) and the Oak Hill Expressway (U.S. 290/SH 71 West).

A team of 12 celebrity judges, including Federal Highway Administration Division Director Janice Brown, Austin City Council Member Chris Riley and Mobility Authority Board Chair Ray Wilkerson heard presentations from each team before awarding first place prizes of \$15,000 each to AECOM and a team made up of LJA Engineering, Coleman & Associates, Blanton & Associates and Construction Eco Services.

AECOM was recognized for their innovative ideas on the Manchaca Expressway, which included building a contiguous park with shared use path along the entire corridor, using state of the art intersection design to eliminate traffic signals, using green shoulders and bio filtration to protect the Edwards aquifer and building special roadway crossings to serve as wildlife corridors.

The LJA Engineering Team was recognized for proposing to relocate, clean up and restore Williamson Creek, to develop a regional park and make mobility improvements that support creation of a town center. The LJA Team plans to donate their \$15,000 prize check to the fire victims' fund in Oak Hill.

Other innovative ideas that emerged from the Green Mobility Challenge included using bridge structures to span sensitive aquifer recharge areas, installing solar panels on the roadway surface, implementing high efficiency LED lighting and creating a contiguous park and shared use trail along Williamson Creek through Oak Hill. A student group suggested using reversible “zippered lanes” that would reduce the need for paved areas over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. All reasonable and feasible ideas presented as part of the Green Mobility Challenge will be considered for implementation on future Mobility Authority projects.

“At the Mobility Authority, we strive to balance the need for greater mobility with our desire to be environmental stewards. The Green Mobility Challenge represents a bold and innovative step in our green evolution. In the years ahead, we plan to construct mobility improvements in some of the corridors that have politically divided this community for decades. Thanks to the Green Mobility Challenge, we hope to develop these roads and all of our future facilities in a more environmentally friendly way,” said Mobility Authority Chairman Ray Wilkerson.

Second place awards of \$10,000 each went to a team made up of Klotz Associates, J. Robert Anderson Landscape Architects and ACI Consulting and to Jacobs Engineering. The student team with members from Texas A&M and Rice University was also recognized with a \$10,000 scholarship.

Event sponsors included Atkins Global, HNTB Corporation, Webber, Vinson and Elkins, Locke Lord, Municipal Services Bureau, American Council of Engineering Companies of Central Texas and Stantec.

About the Mobility Authority

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created to improve the regional transportation system. Our mission is to implement innovative

solutions that reduce congestion and create transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality. The Mobility Authority is the state's first Regional Mobility Authority, created in October 2002 to serve Travis and Williamson counties. The Mobility Authority operates the 183A toll road in Williamson County and is currently working to extend the 183A project and construct the US 290 East (Manor Expressway) project.

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