

## SH 45SW Fact Sheet



Between 1990 and 2010, the population in northern Hays and southern Travis counties increased by approximately 241%. This rapid growth contributed to severe traffic congestion in the area. According to the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), population in this area is expected to increase by approximately 40% by 2035.

As a result of growth and development, drivers are using local roads, such as Manchaca Road, Slaughter Lane and Brodie Lane as commuter corridors to access MoPac and downtown Austin. These local roads have become increasingly congested, with signalized intersections exacerbating the traffic problem. Neighbors have expressed concerns about cut-through traffic and the inability to safely exit their neighborhoods.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) launched a new environmental study in June 2013 to study a possible solution for improving mobility in the rapidly growing area of northern Hays and southern Travis counties. This study identified the construction of SH 45SW, a new four-lane toll road on existing state-owned right-of-way from MoPac to FM 1626, as the recommended action. The state-owned right-of-way was acquired in 1987 for use as a future roadway. Access to SH 45SW is limited to FM 1626, Bliss Spillar Rd, Loop 1, or SH 45 west of Loop 1. There are no entrance or exit points between Bliss Spillar Rd and Loop 1. The project also includes a 4.5-mile long, 10' wide, concrete shared use path that extends from FM 1626 to Escarpment.

During that study, a comprehensive document, called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), was developed to fully evaluate and disclose the potential impacts of the project. In July 2014, this document was presented to the public for review and comment. The document was later submitted for state review and an environmental decision on the project.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

On March 4, 2015, TxDOT's Environmental Division signed a Record of Decision, which allows the project to proceed into the final design phase under specific commitments to protect the environment during construction and operation of the roadway.

### AGENCY ROLES

TxDOT was the lead agency in the development of the SH 45SW Environmental Study, including related environmental documentation and coordination of public outreach.

The Mobility Authority will design, construct, operate and maintain SH 45SW.

### WHAT'S NEXT

The development of final design and construction plans will take several months. Before construction begins, TxDOT will review the final design and construction plans. With TxDOT's approval, the Mobility

Authority will “let” the project, or solicit bids for the project’s construction. The bidding process allows the Mobility Authority to get the most competitive pricing on the project and also allows multiple businesses to compete for the work.

### **WATER QUALITY PROTECTION MEASURES BEING INCLUDED**

The Mobility Authority will ensure SH 45SW will be designed to achieve a highway runoff total suspended solids (TSS) removal rate of at least 90 percent using a combination of structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The following BMPs, at a minimum, will be used to avoid or minimize the amount of pollutants in the runoff from the roadway:

- Permeable friction course (PFC) pavement (on majority of road surfaces)
- Water quality ponds
- Vegetated controls such as grassy swales
- Vegetated filter strips (in areas where curbs and other stormwater conveyance infrastructure is not used)
- Multiple hazardous materials traps (located at all creeks, waterways, and culverted drainage ways, and each adequately sized to contain a 10,000 gallon spill)

Additional actions to protect against pollutants in the runoff from the project will include:

- No herbicide use within the right-of-way
- Vacuum truck utilization, as determined by the independent environmental compliance manager
- Periodic inspections of hazardous materials traps and other permanent BMPs as required by TCEQ’s Edwards Aquifer Rules (30 T.A.C. Chapter 213)
- Any equipment fuel or hazardous material storage, even if short-term, will be performed within a containment area to prevent the possibility of accidental discharge to groundwater
- Any equipment fueling will be performed at least 200 feet away from the nearest sensitive karst feature and water crossing
- Phased construction practices, where feasible, to limit the area and duration of construction disturbance.

### **TRAVEL TIME SAVINGS**

When SH 45SW construction is complete, it will offer immediate relief to drivers in Hays and southern Travis counties and continue to provide benefit even as the population grows. By redirecting commuting traffic off local roads such as Manchaca Road, Slaughter Lane and Brodie Lane, these arterial streets will serve their intended mobility purpose for the surrounding neighborhoods. The following figures show the average peak travel time savings for four of the most commonly used routes in the study area.

Route #1: FM 1626 to Manchaca Road to Slaughter Lane to MoPac

- Drivers who use SH 45SW to access MoPac will save 17 minutes
- Drivers who continue to take Manchaca Road to Slaughter Lane to access MoPac will save six minutes

Route #2: FM 1626 to Manchaca Road to Lamar Boulevard

- Drivers who use SH 45SW to Loop 1 to US 290 to access Lamar Boulevard will save nine minutes
- Drivers who continue to take Manchaca Road to Lamar Boulevard will save seven minutes

Route #3: FM 1626 to Manchaca Road to William Cannon to MoPac

- Drivers who use SH 45SW to access MoPac will save nine minutes
- Drivers who continue to take Manchaca Road to William Cannon to get to MoPac will save six minutes

Route #4: FM 1626 to Brodie Lane to Slaughter Lane to MoPac

- Drivers who use SH 45SW to access MoPac will save 12 minutes
- Drivers who continue to take Brodie Lane to Slaughter Lane to access MoPac will save six minutes

These travel time savings equate to an 18% reduction in total vehicle hours traveled in the region, resulting in an annual cost savings to area drivers of \$12.4 million in opening year.

### **FUTURE CONNECTION TO I-35**

A possible connection from FM 1626 to I-35 is included in CAMPO's 2035 Plan for study. If such a connection is pursued in the future, it would be evaluated through a separate environmental study. In July 2014, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Technical Advisory Committee recommended inclusion of a connection to I-35 in their priority project list. In order for that project to be studied, the CAMPO Transportation Policy Board would have to approve it for inclusion in their 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

### **PROJECT IMPACTS ON OTHER PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

Under federal requirements, the impacts of traffic and improvements of all projects in the CAMPO Plan are evaluated and taken into consideration as part of this project's analysis in the Environmental Study and when determining how the regional transportation system works.