



Central Texas Regional
Mobility Authority

NEWS RELEASE

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MOBILITY AUTHORITY JOINS EFFORT TO ENSURE ALL CENTRAL TEXAS RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO THE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES THEY NEED

(Austin, TX) – The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is teaming up with the Texas Department of Transportation, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and other regional transportation providers to study how best to serve the transportation needs of all Central Texas residents.

The Mobility Authority is expected to operate most of the toll roads in Central Texas, and while all of these toll roads will continue to offer an alternative, non-tolled parallel route, the Mobility Authority wants to make sure that the transportation needs of all Central Texas residents are fully understood and addressed. The Mobility Authority and its transportation counterparts will jointly develop standards and methods for examining the effect of toll roads on the mobility of surrounding communities.

“Most of the toll roads are expected to be utilized predominantly by long distance commuters,” says Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Mobility Authority. “Still, some of these projects will pass through or around lower income communities. We need to make certain the transportation needs of these communities are not ignored as we implement the toll road system.”

The Mobility Authority has been extremely active in working with residents who live and work near their projects, including those who live east of Interstate 35 in Austin. During development of the original toll plan in 2004, the Mobility Authority held five community meetings in East Austin to inform citizens about the plan and gather feedback about community issues and tolling policies. While most of the planned toll roads in Central Texas are actually outside this area, its residents are among the least mobile in the community, with up to 44% of households not owning a car. As a result, residents in these areas are more likely to use mass transit, carpool and walk or use a bicycle.

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For those who do own a car, the Mobility Authority may consider pricing strategies that benefit people who carpool or who drive outside of the peak rush hour period. The Mobility Authority will also partner with Capital Metro to maximize the efficiency of mass transit service in and around the toll road corridors to ensure that individuals without a car have a reliable alternative means of transportation.

“The lack of transportation funding has created a crisis in Central Texas,” says Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Mobility Authority. “It is a regional problem. Toll roads are a reasonable approach to addressing the problem, and everyone needs to participate in the regional solution.”

Toll roads are currently under development in Williamson and Travis Counties. The Loop 1 Extension, SH 45 North and SH 130 project are expected to begin opening in phases later this year. The 183A toll road which runs through Cedar Park and Leander will open in March, with construction on sections of SH 45 south possibly underway next year. Toll roads are also being developed in phases along US 183 south of IH35, SH 71 east of IH 35, US 290 East of US 183 and US 290/SH 71 in Oak Hill. Managed toll lanes are also planned for Loop 1 through downtown Austin and US 183 north of Loop 1. Long range plans call for toll roads or managed toll lanes in other roadway corridors including Loop 360 and IH 35. All of the toll roads being built in existing roadway corridors will provide a parallel non-toll alternative.

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 January 2003 to serve Travis and Williamson counties. Texas RMAs were enabled by the Legislature as part of a package of initiatives to meet the state’s various transportation needs in new, better and more efficient ways.

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