



Central Texas Regional
Mobility Authority

NEWS RELEASE

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REPLACING TOLL PLAN WOULD REQUIRE 17-CENT PER GALLON GAS TAX INCREASE

(Austin, TX) – A financial analysis of the Central Texas Toll Program conducted by Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has found that local drivers would have to pay an additional gas tax of 17-cents per gallon to raise the same amount of revenue as the next phase of the toll program. That's almost double the current state gas tax of 20-cents per gallon.

The analysis was conducted at the request of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) which is already facing a \$10 billion dollar transportation funding shortfall. Without the toll plan, the analysis found the funding shortfall would increase to more than \$11.2 billion and a number of major roadway projects would have to be delayed; some for more than a decade. CAMPO is expected to decide later this year whether to give final approval to the next phase of the toll plan.

"We are facing a transportation funding crisis," says Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. "We need to face reality. The cost of right-of-way and construction is rising faster than the rate of inflation. The gas tax isn't keeping pace. Ignoring the problem will simply make it more difficult and expensive to fix."

Several toll roads are nearing completion in Williamson County. The Loop 1 Northern 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 the spring of 2007. The gas tax analysis conducted by TxDOT did not include these roads.

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The toll projects covered by the TxDOT analysis are all located in Travis County and include SH 45 in Southwest Austin, 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. All of these planned toll roads will provide a parallel non-toll alternative. The TxDOT analysis assumed drivers in Hays, Williamson, and Travis County would pay the additional 17-cent per gallon local option gas tax. The tax would have to be 27-cents per gallon if only collected in Travis County.

“We are spending more and more time stuck in traffic each year and we can’t afford to ignore the problem any longer,” says Heiligenstein. “We need to take all reasonable measures to get people moving again and tolling offers a sensible approach.”

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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