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**CTRMA Delivers Response to Community  
Regarding Comptroller's Report**

*Recommendations Considered and Inaccuracies Clarified*

Austin, Texas – March 30, 2005 – Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), today presented his agency's review of the recent report released by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (TCPA) regarding the CTRMA's operating practices. A full copy of the CTRMA's response can be found at [www.ctrma.org](http://www.ctrma.org).

As promised on March 9, 2005, the CTRMA today brought forth its response to the TCPA report within 30 days — further supporting its conduct as an accountable and responsive public agency.

The CTRMA's report serves as a comprehensive review of the TCPA report. In it, the CTRMA highlights positive aspects of its approach to meeting the transportation needs of Central Texas mentioned in the TCPA report. In addition, the report includes areas of improvement that CTRMA will explore as well as a discussion of the inaccuracies contained in the TCPA report.

"The CTRMA accepts several of the Comptroller's recommendations as worthy of consideration," said Heiligenstein. "While we may disagree with a particular analysis or critique, the CTRMA will be receptive to constructive and critical recommendations that will make us a better agency."

Over the past five months the CTRMA worked closely with the staff of the Comptroller in the spirit of partnership to produce a worthy report.

"While we have found a number of errors in the Comptroller's report, we don't believe any of the mistakes were intentional," said Heiligenstein. "We had hoped to have a chance to review the report prior to it being distributed, giving us an opportunity to clarify the inaccuracies."

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As was previously reported by the CTRMA, there were a number of accusations and inaccuracies contained in the TCPA report. The CTRMA's response reaffirms the following:

- CTRMA Board Chairman Bob Tesch and Board Member Johanna Zmud do not have any conflicts of interest, have not violated any laws and calling for their resignation is unwarranted.
- CTRMA has a proactive policy requiring board members, staff and prime contractors to disclose any potential conflict of interest. The TCPA found no conflicts of interest and no violations of state law.
- CTRMA does not reimburse for alcohol or first-class airfare. The three items cited in the TCPA report were isolated mistakes.
- All of the contractors and subcontractors utilized by CTRMA have been hired in accordance with state statutes. All are highly qualified and successfully completed the tasks assigned to them.

CTRMA has reviewed the recommendations of the TCPA and has begun implementing a number of the productive suggestions. The changes include:

- Assure that a CTRMA employee is dedicated to contract management.
- Require criminal background checks.
- Continue efforts to join the State Travel Management Program.
- Hire additional support personnel as warranted.
- Re-examine reimbursement policies in light of additional staffing.

The CTRMA's response is forward-looking and discusses those improvements that either have or can enhance the Authority's already efficient operations.

While containing specific responses to items contained in the TCPA report, the information released today by the CTRMA also serves to reiterate the transportation challenges in our region and the ways that the CTRMA is working to bring greater mobility to Central Texans.

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## Attachment

The following is CTRMA's direct response to specific inaccuracies contained in the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' report on the CTRMA issued March 9, 2005. The full response can be found at [www.ctrma.org](http://www.ctrma.org).

Assertions made by the TCPA are included below in quotations, followed by the CTRMA's response. This information can be found on pages seven and eight of the CTMA's report.

- *"RMAs are not directly accountable to the people of Texas."* — CTRMA is accountable to numerous organizations comprised of elected officials, including the state legislature, CAMPO and Williamson and Travis Counties.
- *"Few if any jurisdictions have ever embarked on a project of the magnitude of US 183A with so little in the way of public supervision and oversight."* — There are hundreds of similar special authorities around the country that build highways, airports, power plants, dams and other infrastructure all with similar organizational structures.
- *"The CTRMA operated for two years without a budget."* — The CTRMA Board was first presented a budget in August 2003.
- *"CTRMA has authorized, as of this writing, more than \$2 million for public relations, marketing and 'outreach' services, much of it expended in areas miles away from any impact on US 183-A, before any construction started."* — CTRMA has spent \$668,952.54 thru December 2004 on communication activities. Potential users of the 183-A project are located throughout the region, and CTRMA is expected to build and/or operate additional projects throughout the area. Tolling is new to the region, and CTRMA will be installing an electronic toll collection system that will require a comprehensive marketing program to encourage toll tag use.
- *"Another significant restriction in the bond agreements is a covenant not to build competing systems ... This provision ... effectively prevents CTRMA from improving vehicle mobility in the vicinity of US 183A."* — The bond covenant only prevents CTRMA from financing other projects that would have a direct negative impact on the toll revenue required to service the bond debt. It does not restrict improvements that will not have an adverse economic impact, and it does not prohibit improvements by cities, counties or TxDOT.
- *"CTRMA acknowledges that it has no formal contract monitoring program or procedure in place to assess its contractor's performance effectively."* — CTRMA has an extensive process for reviewing contractor invoices and monitoring the quality and timeliness of work product.