

# PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release  
December 17, 2019  
Contact: Dee Anne Heath  
Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority  
Office: (512) 996-9778  
Cell: (512) 565-6247

## Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority Launches New Augmented Reality Mobile App

*Free app for users of 45SW Trail now available*

(Austin, Texas) – Today the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority) is, quite literally, taking a step into the future with its new augmented reality mobile app. Developed to educate the public on the regional history, native landscape and importance of the Edwards Aquifer, Trail Explorer by CTRMA is an innovative mobile app experience that expands upon the Mobility Authority’s commitment to offering multimodal transportation options to Central Texans. The free app adds an interactive and fun, while highly educational, element to the 45SW Trail which runs alongside the 45SW Toll Road (45SW) in south Austin.

A large portion of 45SW is located in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, which is an environmentally sensitive region for karst (cave) features that serves as a vital component of the community’s drinking water resource.

“The Mobility Authority was tasked to design and construct 45SW with the utmost environmental mitigation, which we’re proud to say we accomplished,” said Mike Heiligenstein, executive director for the Mobility Authority. “But we didn’t stop there,” he added. “We also took the opportunity to cultivate future environmental stewards by engaging the community through an educational and fun trail adventure featuring informational signs and this unique corresponding app.”

The Mobility Authority installed 14 informative and visually engaging signs along the 4.5-mile 45SW Trail to share the rich history and natural wonders of the Hill Country and Edwards Aquifer, including how the community can help protect our region’s water source.

The Trail Explorer by CTRMA app enhances the signs by offering a narrated experience in English and Spanish. The six augmented reality animations let users watch a prehistoric sea creature animate in life-size form right before their eyes, witness the majesty of a towering Live Oak Tree as it grows from the ground up or take a deeper look at the caves below the surface in Central Texas, and much more.

“One of the biggest challenges that comes with using an emerging technology like augmented reality, is to use it in a way that adds real value to the user’s experience. When the Mobility Authority approached us to help them build the Trail Explorer app, we immediately loved the idea,” said Ricky Holm, founder of Chocolate Milk & Donuts, an Austin-based creative agency that specializes in virtual and augmented

# PRESS RELEASE

reality development. “The thought of using AR to add an interactive layer of information seemed like a great opportunity to engage with the local community where they already are, on their mobile phones. Users can leverage the latest in AR technology to learn about the unique attributes of our local environment in a fun and engaging way,” Holm said.

Additional features of the app include GPS guidance to help users navigate the trail and alert users to upcoming experiences. Users can also take photos with the augmented reality animations to capture and share the journey with their friends and family.

To celebrate the new mobile app, which is launching just in time for family fun over winter break, the Mobility Authority will host a public “Trailabration” on Saturday, December 21, 2019 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The free event will feature hot chocolate, coffee, holiday treats and special giveaways.

“We hope everyone has a chance to come out and experience this app and our trail along 45SW. It’s a project that we believe is important on many levels, from healthy and active families, to educating the community on our region – all while having fun. We invite you to get out there and explore,” said Heiligenstein.

The Mobility Authority will continue to offer important multimodal connections as a part of its projects and is considering expanding the Trail Explorer app to other trails in the future.

###

## ***About the Mobility Authority***

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created in 2002 to improve the regional transportation system in Travis and Williamson Counties. The Mobility Authority implements innovative and sustainable transportation options to enhance quality of life and economic vitality in Central Texas. The Mobility Authority operates 183A Toll, 290 Toll, the 71 Toll Lane, the MoPac Express Lane, the 45SW Toll Road, and the 183 Toll Road. The agency is finishing construction of the 8-mile 183 South Project and the 290/130 Flyovers Project. For more information about the Mobility Authority, visit [www.MobilityAuthority.com](http://www.MobilityAuthority.com).

## ***About 45SW Toll***

45SW Toll is an innovative environmentally sensitive 3.6-mile toll road between State Loop 1 (MoPac) and FM 1626 that includes extensive water quality protection measures and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Construction of the project commenced in November 2016 and was opened to traffic in June 2019.