

# PRESS RELEASE



CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL  
**MOBILITY AUTHORITY**

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## Full Northbound MoPac Express Lane to Open This Weekend

**(Austin, Texas)**— The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority) announced today that the full northbound MoPac Express Lane will open to traffic on Saturday, October 7, 2017. This segment begins just north of the Lady Bird Lake Bridge and continues northward to RM 2222, connecting with the north-end Express Lane segment which opened to traffic last year to Parmer Lane. Drivers will now be able to travel the full 11-mile Express Lane from downtown to north of Parmer Lane when they need a reliable, free-flowing alternative. Opening of the full southbound Express Lane will follow.

“The wait is over and commuters can breathe a sigh of relief,” said Jeff Dailey, Deputy Executive Director of the Mobility Authority. “Last year’s partial opening of the northbound north-end segment was a success, and we’re confident this additional segment will be instrumental in reducing commutes for tolled and non-tolled travel. We’re giving commuters back their time.”

Beginning Saturday, October 7th, drivers can access the northbound Express Lane from downtown near Cesar Chavez St, or centrally near RM 2222. Drivers entering MoPac from downtown/Cesar Chavez St. will use the underpass to access the Express Lane, while drivers already traveling northbound on MoPac from points south will enter from the inner-most general purpose lane, just north of the Lady Bird Lake bridge. They can exit either north of RM 2222, or continue traveling the full length of the Express Lane to north of Parmer Lane. While the full northbound lane will open to traffic this weekend, other elements of the project, including final Southbound construction, sound walls and landscaping will continue.

Prior to entering the Express Lane at downtown, drivers will see signage posting two prices: 1) The price of a trip from downtown to RM 2222; and 2) The price of a full-length trip to Parmer Lane. Both posted prices are for drivers with a TxTag or other electronic toll tags. Pay By Mail prices are 33% higher. If the price increases after drivers have already entered the lane, they will still pay the price they saw on the sign prior to entering. During periods of low traffic, the toll in the Express Lane will remain relatively low, beginning at a rate of \$0.25. As traffic

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increases, the rate adjusts to maximize the number of vehicles that can be carried in the Lane at a target speed of at least 45 mph for a reliable, free-flowing trip. During peak traffic, the toll will be set at a rate high enough to preserve capacity in the Express Lane and provide a reliable trip for users.

Drivers entering the Express Lane near RM 2222 will continue to use the Express Lane as they have for the past year. The only difference will be merging with Express Lane traffic coming from downtown. Drivers exiting the Express Lane near RM 2222 will not be able to exit MoPac Expressway at the RM 2222 exit, as the Express Lane exit merges with the general-purpose lanes north of the RM 2222 exit. All drivers are asked to remain alert and exercise caution, especially as the community becomes accustomed to using the full northbound Express Lane. Backing up or slowing down to unsafe speeds while approaching the Express Lane is strictly prohibited.

For drivers that are unfamiliar with the MoPac Express Lane, it is separated from the existing general purpose lanes by striping and white plastic delineator sticks. Drivers should not attempt to cross over these delineators, as they will cause vehicle damage. Trucks and trailers are prohibited from the Express Lane. The Express Lane provides public transit buses, registered van pools, and emergency vehicles a reliable, toll-free route to their destination. Individual drivers pay a variable toll to use the lane when they need a free-flowing and reliable route. Visit [mopacexpress.com](http://mopacexpress.com) for more information about how the Express Lane operates.

As with last year's partial opening of the northbound north end segment, the weekend opening will provide drivers an opportunity to adjust to the new traffic pattern in advance of the first peak weekday travel period. It will also allow some additional time to make technical adjustments, as needed, or work out potential challenges with tolling equipment. The Mobility Authority's Traffic & Incident Management Center (TIM) allows for Express Lane monitoring and maintenance, and enables resource coordination for incident response. High definition cameras and vehicle detectors along the MoPac corridor assist with monitoring operations so that the variable-priced toll rates can be adjusted with traffic volumes, leveraging supply and demand principles to manage congestion. The operation can be controlled remotely as well.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: No media vehicles are allowed to be parked in or near the Express Lane at any point.** For access to areas along the corridor with the best capability for video footage of the lane and traffic, contact Steve Pustelnyk at 512-680-9997. Media access to the Traffic Management Center will be limited to the remote Traffic and Incident Management Center Come and Go at the Mobility Authority Offices on Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup> and Mobility Authority officials will be available for interviews at this time.

#### **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 in Williamson County, 290 Toll in east Austin, the 71 Toll Lane in east Austin, and the northbound MoPac Express Lane. The agency is also finishing construction the 11-mile MoPac

Express Lane project, building the eight-mile 183 South in east Austin, and constructing the four-mile SH 45SW toll road between FM 1626 and MoPac in southern Travis and northern Hays counties. For more information about the Mobility Authority, visit [www.MobilityAuthority.com](http://www.MobilityAuthority.com).

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