



THE HISTORY OF MOPAC



AS AUSTIN'S PRIMARY NORTH-SOUTH ROUTE ALTERNATIVE TO I-35, MoPac has long been identified as a heavily congested corridor in need of traffic solutions. In fact, additional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or Express Lanes on MoPac have been included in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations (CAMPO) Long Range Transportation Plan since 1994. The timeline below provides an overview of the history of MoPac and how the MoPac Improvement Project came to be.

- 1961** | The MoPac Expressway was **initially conceived of as part of the 1961 City of Austin Master Plan** and Circulation Plan when only 160,000 people lived in Travis County.
- 1975** | **The first 6 miles of MoPac from RR 2222 to RM 2244 (Bee Caves)** was completed. In its first year, MoPac averaged approximately 34,000 trips per day. In 1989, the MoPac/183 interchange was opened.
- 1990** | Traffic on MoPac at RM 2222 reached **139,000 trips per day**.
- 1994** | Following significant input and involvement from the public, **CAMPO included High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on MoPac** in the 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- 2000** | HOV lanes were again included in CAMPOs 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan. By then, traffic on MoPac at RM 2222 reached **156,000 trips per day**.
- 2001** | In 2001, **MoPac improvements were cancelled** due to issues regarding the acquisition of additional property needed to construct the HOV lanes. At the time, TxDOT agreed to avoid the taking of additional land and the construction of any elevated structures.
- 2002** | **The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority was created** and tasked with the mission to enhance mobility through innovation. The MoPac Expressway was quickly identified as a priority project.

2005 | Following additional public involvement activities, **CAMPO included an Express Lane proposal for MoPac** in both the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan and the 2008-11 Transportation Improvement Plan. TxDOT began studying potential improvements in the MoPac Corridor and the Mobility Authority began studying the idea of Express Lanes in greater detail. By then, traffic on MoPac at RM 2222 had reached **164,000 trips per day**.

2007 | The proposal to improve MoPac **was put on hold due to a lack of funding**.

2010 | State Senator Kirk Watson, Texas Transportation Commission Chair Deirdre Delisi and Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority Chairman Ray Wilkerson held a news conference to announce that the **MoPac Improvement Project was being launched** and the required Environmental Assessment would be completed in two years. The Environmental Assessment kicked off with a community open house on October 6, 2010.

2011 | The project team, including the Texas Department of Transportation and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, **conducted a series of community meetings as part of the Environmental Assessment**. A noise study was conducted and seven sound wall meetings were held to inform residents about the findings of the noise study. Where sound walls were found to be reasonable and feasible, residents living adjacent to the proposed walls were given the opportunity to approve or reject the walls, in accordance with TxDOT Guidelines regarding noise abatement. The project team also convened an Aesthetics Committee and held an open house to review the proposed aesthetics plan with the community and collect feedback.

2012 | A final public hearing was held regarding the Environmental Assessment on May 23, 2012. Following the public hearing the Environmental Assessment was completed and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review. **On August 23, 2012 the FHWA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact, clearing the way for design and construction of the project**. During 2012 the Mobility Authority began the process of finding a company to design and build the project.

2013 | In April 2013, following a 12-month selection process the Mobility Authority selected CH2M HILL as the best value proposer to design and build the MoPac Improvement Project. **A contract with CH2M HILL was signed shortly thereafter and design work began**. During the summer of 2013 CH2M HILL surveyed the MoPac corridor and conducted other investigative work in preparation for construction. Construction began in late 2013.

2016 | **On October 15, 2016, the first section of Express Lane opened** on northbound MoPac between RM 2222 and Parmer Lane.

2017 | **On September 30, 2017, the portion of the northbound Express Lane between Cesar Chavez Street and RM 22222 was opened to traffic**, allowing drivers to use the entire northbound Express Lane from Cesar Chavez Street to Parmer Lane. **On October 28, 2017, the entire southbound Express Lane was opened** from Parmer Lane to Cesar Chavez Street.



The MoPac Express Lane project included \$5 million in bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the corridor.