



**CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority**

AGENDA ITEM #13 SUMMARY

Quarterly briefing on the MoPac Improvement Project.

Strategic Plan Relevance: Regional Mobility

Department: Engineering

Associated Costs: None

Funding Source: N/A

Board Action Required: No

Description of Matter:

The report is an account of the activities on the MoPac Improvement Project from July through September, 2012.

Reference documentation:

GEC Quarterly Activities Report and Board Presentation

Contact for further information:

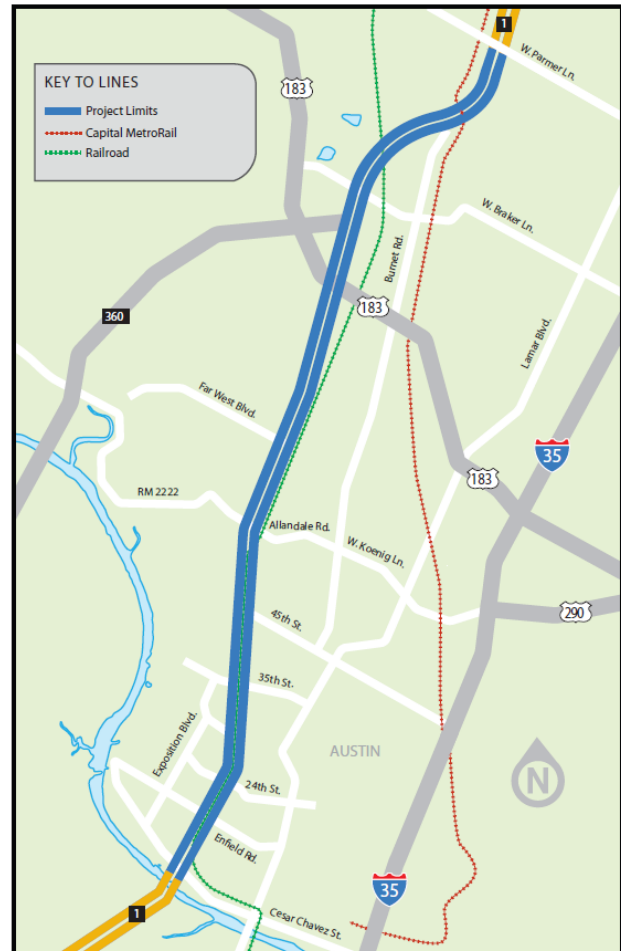
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 11-mile stretch of MoPac between Parmer Lane and Cesar Chavez Street is one of Austin's most important arteries, serving as a key route to downtown and points beyond. As a primary alternative to Interstate 35, MoPac moves more than 180,000 cars and trucks each day. This stretch of MoPac is currently seeing high levels of congestion and unreliable operations. At the urging of local and state leaders, the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the City of Austin, and Capital Metro (CapMetro) teamed up to develop a reasonable solution to the mobility problem in this corridor that takes into account the needs of drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the concerns of surrounding neighbors.

Beginning in 2010, TxDOT and the Mobility Authority partnered to complete schematic design and environmental studies following the requirements set by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (also known as "NEPA"). The environmental studies identified variable-priced express lanes (one in each direction) along with sound walls, bike and pedestrian facilities, and aesthetic improvements as the preferred alternative for the corridor. In August 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved this preferred alternative for implementation. As a result, the Mobility Authority will take responsibility for the financing, design, construction, operations, and maintenance of the facility.

This report describes the status of the MoPac Improvement Project and documents the activities accomplished from July 2012 through September 2012.



ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been accomplished by TxDOT, the Mobility Authority, and their consultants during the reporting period.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

- **Environmental Process Schedule:** With the issuance of a finding of “no significant impact” by the FHWA on August 23, 2012 the Environmental Study is complete; meeting the 2 year schedule set in the summer of 2010! The finding clears the MoPac Improvement Project to proceed to the final design and construction phase. On September 11, 2012, the 139L notice was posted by FHWA, which restricts the time in which a person or entity may take legal action to dispute the environmental finding. The 180 day time frame will expire March 10, 2013.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Messaging, Information, and Meetings

- **Stakeholder Meetings and Elected Official Briefings:** The Project Team continues to coordinate with stakeholders and elected officials. Various meetings held in the third quarter of 2012 include:
 - Executive Director Mike Heiligenstein met with City of Austin leadership to provide a progress status update on the project.
- **Informational Workshops:** The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) partnered with the Mobility Authority to sponsor an Austin Regional Express Lanes Workshop in September 2012. This workshop focused on the planned network of express lanes in the region. Approximately 50 representatives from City, County, State, and regional agencies attended the one day workshop. Representatives from Toll Authorities in Georgia, Washington State, and California presented lessons learned from their operating managed lane systems. Breakout sessions held in the afternoon brainstormed local needs and challenges.
- **E-Newsletter:** A seventh project e-Newsletter was sent out to project stakeholders on September 4 to update the public on the Project’s approval from FHWA and the upcoming construction phase.
- **Web-Site Update:** The MoPacExpress.com web site has been updated to inform the public that the project has been environmentally cleared for design and construction. The focus of the site will transition to informing the public on what Express Lanes are, how the MoPac Express lanes will operate, and what to expect during construction. Construction updates will be a vital part of the web-site starting mid next year.

DESIGN/BUILD (D/B) CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT

- **Official Issuance of RFDP:** The RFDP was finalized, approved by FHWA and TxDOT, and officially issued to the Proposing Teams on September 21 2012. The Proposers will have approximately four months to prepare their Technical and Price Proposals, with submittals due in January. Continual coordination and One-on-One meetings will occur during this

time. Mobility Authority Board approval of the recommended Design/Build Contractor is anticipated to occur in February 2013.

- **D/B Notice to Proceed (NTP):** With no bond sale anticipated, NTP for design and construction can occur as soon as the D/B contract is finalized and approved by TxDOT/FHWA. This is anticipated to occur between March and May 2013.

FUNDING / AGREEMENTS

- **TxDOT Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA):** A \$197.6 Million FAA with TxDOT was executed on September 13, 2012. The FHWA obligated the funds for the Project on September 24, 2012.
- **City of Austin Proposition 1:** The agreement for the City to disperse \$100,000 of 2010 Proposition 1 funds for the MoPac corridor was executed in September 2012. The funds will contribute towards traffic studies and aesthetic guidelines development costs.
- **TxDOT Project Development Agreement (PDA):** The PDA continues to be refined and terms discussed with TxDOT. The PDA will clarify the roles of TxDOT and the Mobility Authority for the Project's final design, construction, operations, and maintenance.

SCHEDULE

The overall Project remains on schedule. On August 23, 2012, FHWA issued a finding of “no significant impact” on the final EA. Design/Build Contractor Procurement completion is anticipated in early 2013. The anticipated start of design and construction is mid-2013 with a potential facility open to traffic in 2016.

SCHEDULE RISK ASSESSMENT



Environmental Process / TxDOT & FHWA Coordination



Procurement of a Design/Build Contractor



Public and Political Opinion



Coordination with UPRR / City of Austin / CapMetro / Austin Energy



Traffic and Revenue - Financing

UPCOMING MILESTONES

- Shortlisted Teams submit proposals (January 2012)
- Selection of a Design/Build Contractor (February 2013)

MILESTONES MATRIX

Milestone	Date	Status
Restart Environmental Study and Public Involvement	Summer 2010	Complete
Market Valuation / Exercise Primacy	Fall 2010	Complete
Develop and Refine Preliminary Alternatives	Fall 2010	Complete
Conduct Open House Meetings (Round 1 & 2)	Fall 2010	Complete
Reasonable Alternatives Refinement	Winter 2010/ 2011	Complete
Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Schematic Complete - Initiate Review Process	February 2011	Complete
TxDOT Austin District EA Review Begins	February 2011	Complete
Restart Aesthetics Committee	March 2011	Complete
Complete Level 2 Traffic and Revenue (T&R)	May 2011	Complete
Context Sensitive Design Advisory Committee Meetings	March-May 2011	Complete
TxDOT Environmental Division EA Review	Spring 2011	Complete
Conduct Open House Meeting (Round 3)	May 2011	Complete
Conduct Sound Wall Workshops	Summer 2011	Complete
FHWA Resolution on Design Exceptions	Summer 2011	Complete
FHWA Begins EA Review	Fall 2011	Complete
Conduct Community Open Houses	March 2012	Complete
FHWA issues "Satisfactory for Further Processing"	April 2012	Complete
Conduct Public Hearings on the Draft EA	May 2012	Complete
Submittal of Final EA to TxDOT/FHWA	July 2012	Complete
FHWA issues "Finding of No Significant Impact"	August 2012	Complete
Issue RFDP	September 2012	Complete
Shortlist Teams Submit Proposals	January 2012	In Progress
Selection of a Design/Build Contractor	February 2013	
Initiate Final Design	March 2013	