



**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 October through December, 2012.

Reference documentation:

GEC Quarterly Activities Report and Board Presentation

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◀◀ MOPAC
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT ▶▶

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

No. 9 | January 2013

EXPRESS LANES SLATED FOR CONSTRUCTION IN 2013



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority

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**DESIGN/BUILD
CONTRACTOR**

TBD

PROJECT PARTNERS



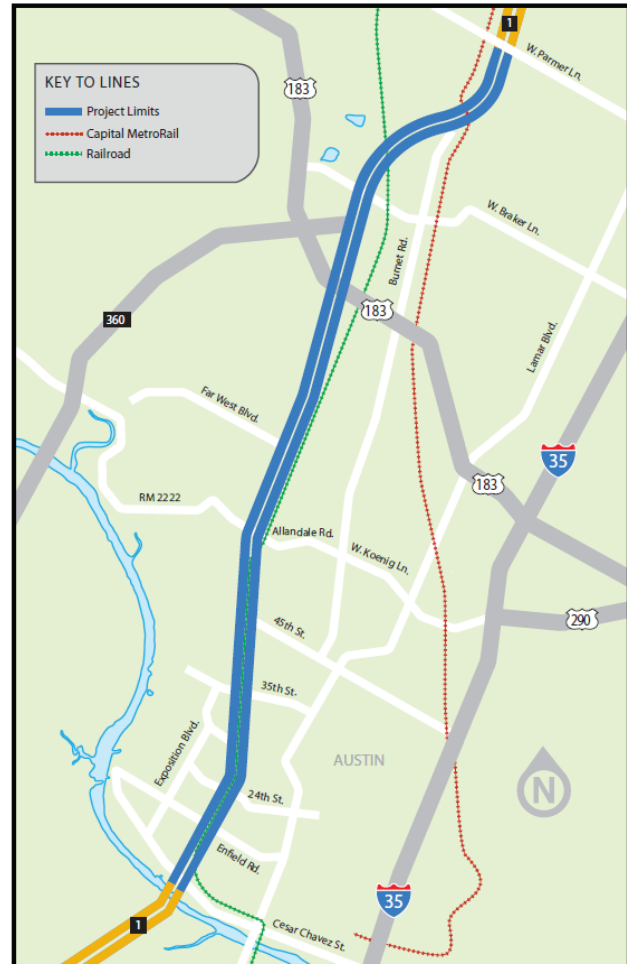
MOPAC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT No. 9

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The MoPac Improvement Project is a combined effort by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the City of Austin, and Capital Metro (CapMetro) to address the mobility problem in this corridor. The project takes into account the needs of drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and the concerns of surrounding neighbors. The Project was environmentally cleared in August of 2012. In mid-2013, the Mobility Authority will begin construction of one Express Lane in each direction along an approximately 11 miles stretch of MoPac from Cesar Chavez Street in downtown Austin to Parmer Lane north of Austin within existing right of way.

The Express Lanes will be located in the middle of the MoPac corridor separated from the existing general purpose lanes by a four to five foot wide striped buffer zone with flexible pylons. While this addition of lanes will require widening of the pavement, the Express Lanes project requires no property acquisition and all existing non-toll general purpose lanes and UPRR corridor will remain.

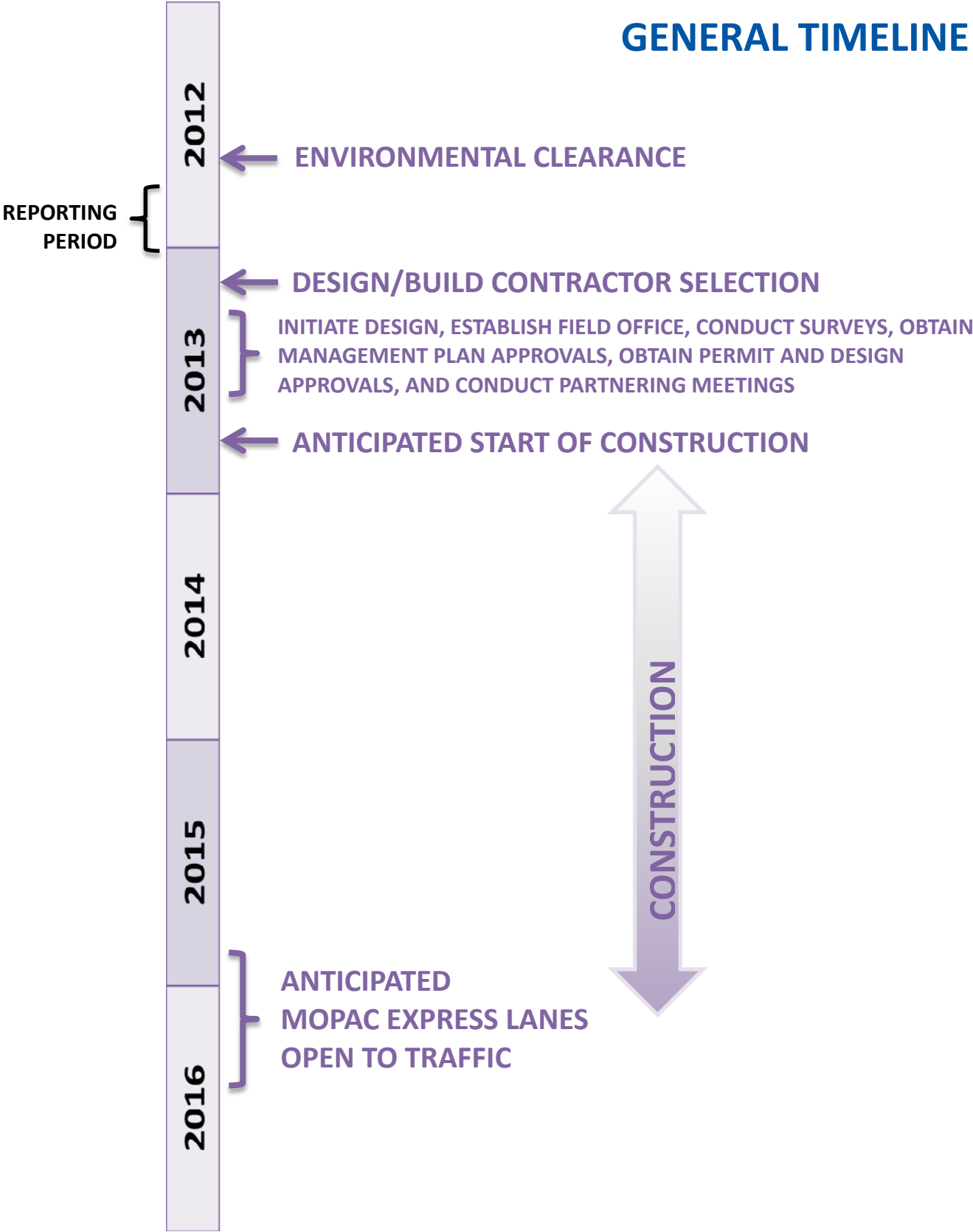


In addition to the Express Lanes, the MoPac Improvement Project will include:

- Sound walls
- Collector/Distributor road under Steck Avenue
- Aesthetic enhancements and significant landscaping
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Full mainlane overlay with special (PFC) pavement
- Enhanced incident management (cameras and traffic data collection)

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

GENERAL TIMELINE



UPDATES

Here are some key facts and updates about the project:

UPCOMING ANTICIPATED MILESTONES

- **February 2013:** Board of Directors approves Design/Build Contractor
- **March 2013:** Design/Build Contract negotiations and execution
- **Spring 2013:** Establish field office, conduct partnering meetings, initiate design, obtain permits, develop agreements, complete field surveys, and obtain design acceptance prior to construction
- **Summer/Fall 2013:** Ground Breaking/Construction Begins

After the Design/Build Contractor's schedule is finalized and approved, key milestones will be identified and provided to the Board and the public, including when construction will officially begin, sound wall construction completion, and any major planned lane closures.

Before barricades and cones go out, a series of events has to occur, including: setting up offices for designers and field staff, preparation and approval of management plans, partnering meetings with agencies and stakeholders, initiate agreements with utilities and railroads, submittal and acceptance of preliminary design, and submittal and acceptance of construction packages. These activities could take 3 to 5 months to complete. While the traveling public may see surveying crews out this spring, the project will most likely not break ground until the early fall.

The project is expected to take up to two and a half years to complete, but the Design/Build Contractor will be incentivized to complete the work as quickly as possible.

LANE CLOSURES AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

As MoPac is one of Austin's most important arteries, this construction project will be disruptive to both drivers and nearby residents. However, the Mobility Authority is working diligently to help make the construction process go as smoothly as possible. As construction gears up, an extensive public outreach program will be launched to help keep residents, the traveling public, and other stakeholders up-to-date on construction progress, planned closures and location of work zones. A 24/7 hotline will be available for when issues and concerns arise.

Lane closures will mostly occur at night to avoid impacts to traffic during the day. The Design/Build Contractor will be required to keep all existing lanes on MoPac open between 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. each weekday; there are stiff financial penalties in place for any lane closure outside this time period. There will be frontage road lanes, shoulders, and some cross street lanes allowed to be closed at limited times during the day; lane rentals will be used for these to keep them to a minimum. Special restrictions are also being placed on the Contractor to minimize impacts to nearby neighborhoods while night work is ongoing. The Design/Build Contractor will also be required to protect any trees that don't have to be removed for construction. Hundreds of additional trees are planned to be planted as part of the project.

More details on potential construction impacts will be provided when a Design/Build Contractor is under contract and the construction workplan is finalized.

AESTHETICS, BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, AND SOUND WALLS

The MoPac Improvement Project is more than just pavement. The project includes aesthetic enhancements, the construction of sound walls along many of the neighborhoods in the corridor, and the inclusion of miles of shared use paths and sidewalks. Significant community outreach regarding all these corridor enhancements occurred during the environmental phase. The goal for these enhancements is to be consistent with community values, compatible with the surrounding environment, constructible, affordable, and sustainable.

Current proposed enhancements shall improve the visual appearance of the corridor with special architectural features, colorization of concrete structures, and enhanced landscaping. The estimated cost of this enhancement is approximately \$3 million. In addition, as mitigation for noise, approximately 7.1 miles of sound walls will be built. The walls will be located within MoPac right-of-way either along the property line or near the roadway, with the exception of one mile stretch of wall along Great Northern Boulevard. Wall height varies between 8' and 20' tall, depending on topography and location. The cost of the sound walls is approximately \$20 million. Close coordination with residents will occur as sound walls are constructed along the corridor.



SUSTAINABILITY

The Mobility Authority's mission is to implement innovative solutions that reduce congestion and create multimodal transportation choices that enhance quality of life and economic vitality. In line with this mission, the Mobility Authority promotes sustainability in the development of the MoPac Improvement Project.

The Mobility Authority has implemented a "Green Credits" Program which the Design/Build Contractor will be required to comply with on the MoPac Improvement Project. The Green Credits Program will encourage the Design/Build Contractor to incorporate sustainable measures and design elements into the project. This Program, which has also been implemented on the US 290E construction, is similar to LEED certification in that projects receive various credit values for meeting identified sustainable initiatives. The Design/Build Contractor will be required to meet a minimum number of credits as a condition of Final Acceptance for the Project; which includes mitigation plans for noise, waste management, recycling, water quality, and air quality. Achieving these credits will equate to a cleaner, more efficient construction project that minimizes effects on the surrounding community.

Steps will be taken to define and minimize environmental impacts to the greatest extent possible on the Project.

AGENCY COORDINATION

Coordination with the UPRR, CapMetro, City of Austin, and various utilities continues to be active, as it has been throughout the environmental and Design/Build procurement processes. Many agreements with all of these agencies are in progress and will be finalized throughout the year, especially once the Design/Build Contractor is brought on board and final design is initiated. Most of the remaining agreements (UPRR, Cap Metro, and Utilities) require final design documents before agreements can be executed. The agencies will be invited to attend Project Partnering Meetings during the first few weeks of the design process to open lines of communication with the Design/Build Team. The Mobility Authority will continue to foster communication and cooperation between agencies to keep the Project on track and all stakeholders informed.

ACTIVITIES

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

DESIGN/BUILD (D/B) CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT

- **RFDP:** During the reporting period, the Proposers prepared their Technical and Price Proposals; submittals from all three Proposers were received in January 2013. These are currently under technical review. Mobility Authority Board approval of the recommended Design/Build Contractor is anticipated to occur in February 2013.
- **D/B Notice to Proceed (NTP):** 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.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- **Pre-Construction Communications Plan:** As the Mobility Authority prepares to begin construction of the MoPac Improvement Project, the agency will engage in a Pre-Construction Comprehensive Communications Campaign to inform the community about the project and prepare for groundbreaking in summer/fall of 2013. The plan includes developing materials (Frequently Asked Questions, fact sheets, and presentations) for staff to present to elected officials, public agency staff, and key corridor stakeholders. The Project website, MoPacExpress.com, is also being updated with changes going live in early 2013.
- **Community Outreach Manager:** The Mobility Authority is currently in the progress of hiring a Community Outreach Manager who will lead all community outreach activities regarding construction, with the assistance of the Design/Build Contractor's Community Relations Specialist and the Mobility Authority's communications team.

FUNDING / AGREEMENTS

- **TxDOT Project Development Agreement (PDA):** It is anticipated that the Texas Transportation Commission will approve the PDA in January 2013. The PDA clarifies 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. Design/Build Contractor Procurement completion is anticipated in early 2013. The anticipated start of design is Spring 2013 and construction could begin in Summer/Fall of 2013. The facility is anticipated to be open to traffic by early 2016.

SCHEDULE RISK ASSESSMENT



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