



CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL
MOBILITY AUTHORITY

October 27, 2021
AGENDA ITEM #8

Discuss and consider reauthorization
of the Mobility Authority's Qualified
Veteran Discount Program and
corresponding amendments to the
Mobility Authority Policy Code

Strategic Plan Relevance:	Regional Mobility
Department:	Operations
Contact:	Tracie Brown, Director of Operations
Associated Costs:	Not Applicable
Funding Source:	Not Applicable
Action Requested:	Consider and act on draft resolution

Project Description/Background: The Mobility Authority's Qualified Veterans Discount Program provides toll-free travel on select roadways to recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Legion of Valor, Purple Heart and qualifying Disabled Veterans license plates. The program requires qualified veterans to register using the Mobility Authority's online portal and that an electronic toll tag be associated with the vehicle.

In establishing the program, the Mobility Authority Board recognized that every non-paying vehicle traveling in the Express Lane has the potential to increase the price for other paying customers. Therefore, the Board excluded Express Lanes from inclusion in the program. The Board also required that all outstanding tolls must be resolved before a vehicle's acceptance into the program.

The Mobility Authority's Qualified Veteran Discount Program was implemented on November 1, 2018. Before the program's launch staff made considerable outreach efforts to local veteran organizations to notify them of the upcoming opportunity. Letters were mailed directly to the registered owners of qualifying vehicles who previously used Mobility Authority-operated toll roads. Staff performed additional outreach efforts in early 2021.

Previous Actions & Brief History of the Program/Project: The Mobility Authority Board of Directors issued a resolution in support of veteran toll exemptions in December 2009. The resolution authorized the Executive Director to design a program that provided free or discounted tolls on Mobility Authority toll roads for certain veteran classes and

present the program for the Board's consideration at a future date once the State of Texas appropriated and made available funds sufficient to defray the full cost of the proposed program. The State has not made available funds to underwrite this program.

In July 2018, the Board of Directors approved the implementation of a veteran discount program to provide toll exemptions for certain qualified veteran customers. This program required the veteran customer to register, have a valid electronic toll tag to be associated with the qualified license plate and pay all outstanding tolls and fees before being accepted into the program.

In September 2018 the Board approved adding qualified veterans to the list of exemptions in the Mobility Authority Policy Code. The program went into effect on November 1, 2018.

In January 2020 the Board approved a modification to its Qualified Veteran Board to codify legislative changes that allowed an additional exemption to be issued under hardship.

Action requested/Staff Recommendation: In the resolution authorizing the Qualified Veteran Discount program, the Mobility Authority's Board resolved that *"the program to provide free or discounted use of CTRMA toll projects to veteran's eligible under Section 372.053 shall expire on December 31, 2021 unless reauthorized by the Board of Directors prior to that date."*

The following outlines the program results to date:

- Enrollment in the program has increased month over month since the program's launch.
- There are currently 9,628 qualified vehicles registered in the Authority's veteran discount program.
- Less than 2% of participants have enrolled more than one vehicle in the program.
- These vehicles account for 2.6M exempted transactions through September 30, 2021.
- The associated revenue waived to date is \$2,733,718.32.

Given the benefit provided to our veteran customers and the nominal impact to the agency's revenue to date, staff recommends reauthorization of the Mobility Authority's Qualified Veteran Discount Program. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Board regarding the program's performance. Staff also recommends amending Section 301.004 (d) of the Mobility Authority's Policy Code to remove the reference to a December 31, 2021 program expiration date.

Backup provided: Draft Resolution
Draft Policy Code

**GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY**

RESOLUTION NO. 21-0XX

**REAUTHORIZING THE MOBILITY AUTHORITY QUALIFIED VETERANS
DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, in 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature passed H.B. 3139, providing for a veteran toll discount program, codified under Section 372.053 of the Transportation Code; and

WHEREAS, Section 372.053 of the Transportation Code authorizes toll project entities to establish a program for free or discounted use of a toll project for an electronic toll collection customer whose vehicle is registered under Transportation Code as a disabled veterans, recipient of the Purple Heart, or a person who has received the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution No. 18-039, dated July 25, 2018, the Board approved the implementation of the Qualified Veteran Discount Program through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, currently veterans of 9,628 qualified vehicles registered with the Mobility Authority's Qualified Veterans Discount Program have benefitted from the Program; and

WHEREAS, due to the successful utilization of the Program by qualified veterans, and in order to continue to show the Mobility Authority's gratitude for their military service, Mobility Authority staff recommend continuing to provide the Qualified Veterans Discount Program beyond the previously adopted expiration date of December 31, 2021, and amending Mobility Authority Policy Code Section 301.004, as shown in Exhibit A which would have the effect of leaving the program in place subject to further action of the Board.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby amends Mobility Authority Policy Code Section 301.004, as shown in Exhibit A to continue providing the Qualified Veterans Discount Program.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority on the 27th day of October 2021.

Submitted and reviewed by:

Approved:

C. Brian Cassidy, Counsel for the
Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority

Robert W. Jenkins, Jr.
Chairman, Board of Directors

Exhibit A

MOBILITY AUTHORITY POLICY CODE

301.004 Exemption from Toll

- (a) The operator or the registered owner of a vehicle operated on an authority toll facility is required to pay the toll established by this subchapter unless the vehicle is exempted by federal law, state law or by this section.
- (b) An authorized emergency vehicle defined by Section 541.201, Transportation Code, is exempt from paying a toll to use an authority toll facility under Section 370.177, Transportation Code.
- (c) A state or federal military vehicle is exempt from paying a toll to use an authority toll facility under Section 362.901, Transportation Code.
- (d) ~~Through December 31, 2021, r~~Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Legion of Valor and Purple Heart awards as well as Disabled Veterans are eligible to participate in the Qualified Veterans Toll Discount Program to be exempt from paying a toll to use the authority's non variable rate toll facilities. Participation is limited to no more than two vehicles per qualified veteran, the designated primary plate and an additional plate upon demonstration of a hardship as determined by the Executive Director. All participants must be registered with the authority; the vehicle must be registered with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles; the vehicle must have a qualifying specialty plate and have it properly displayed; the vehicle must be associated to an electronic toll tag account; and the participating veteran must have no outstanding CTRMA toll violations at the time of the transaction. ~~T~~he exemption does not apply to the authority's express lane facilities.
- (e) Under Section 370.177(a-1), Transportation Code, and to facilitate a multi-modal transportation system that ensures safe and efficient travel for all individuals in central Texas, a vehicle used exclusively to provide transportation to a member of the public under a transit program established and managed by the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority or the Capital Area Rural Transportation System is exempt from paying a toll to use an authority toll facility.
- (f) The authority will create technical procedures to implement the toll exemptions described and established by this section.