



**CENTRAL TEXAS  
Regional Mobility Authority**

## AGENDA ITEM #15 SUMMARY

Quarterly briefing on the environmental assessments for the Bergstrom Expressway, the Oak Hill Parkway, the MoPac South Project, the 183 North Project, and the SH 45 Southwest Project.

Strategic Plan Relevance: Regional Mobility

Department: Engineering

Associated Costs: N/A Briefing Only

Funding Source: Toll Equity Grants, Rider 42, STP MM (CAMPO)

Board Action Required: No

Description of Matter: The Director of Engineering will provide a summary of project activities for the following projects:

- Bergstrom Expressway
- Oak Hill Parkway
- MoPac South Project
- 183 North Project
- SH 45 Southwest Project

Reference documentation:

GEC Quarterly Activities Reports

Contact for further information:

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**CENTRAL TEXAS**  
**Regional Mobility Authority**

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Quarterly  
Progress  
Report**

January 2013

BERGSTROM EXPRESSWAY

OAK HILL PARKWAY

MOPAC SOUTH PROJECT

US 183 NORTH PROJECT

SH 45 SOUTHWEST PROJECT



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# Bergstrom Expressway Project

## INTRODUCTION

This report documents and describes the Bergstrom Expressway Project (US 183 South) for the period through January 15, 2013. This Project is currently in the environmental clearance phase of development which requires the completion of an Environmental Assessment consistent with the regulations contained in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Environmental Document is currently being developed in house by Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Austin District staff and supported by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority), with the Public Outreach being led by the Mobility Authority. In addition, the Project has been authorized by legislation to use a Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA) project delivery method. This process promotes innovative financing methods that will allow the Project to be funded and constructed much earlier than traditional methodologies.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project corridor begins just south of the Manor Expressway and extends to SH 71 East; the corridor includes seven grade separations, and connects to 3 major interchanges at the Manor Expressway, Airport Boulevard, and SH 71 East. The corridor includes two pedestrian bridges and a continuous shared use path connecting local communities. The Project can be considered the Gateway to Austin from the Airport and is depicted in the location map below.



The US 183 South Corridor from US 290 East to SH 71 East is one Austin's most significant arteries. Since US 183 was constructed in the mid 1960's, the roadway has been a four lane divided highway with minor improvements. As the primary route to and from the Austin Bergstrom International Airport and points beyond, it attracts numerous motorists per day. In recent years, this vital corridor has grown increasingly congested as the region's population has expanded. The situation is projected to get even worse in the future. Meanwhile, funding challenges at the federal and state level have made it increasingly difficult to finance the corridor.

As part of the NEPA process, the identified needs are to reduce congestion, improve safety and utilize innovative funding and financing processes to expedite project development and construction. Along with the NEPA process, the Mobility Authority is utilizing a Public Involvement and Outreach Program that includes hosting "brown bag" lunch and one-on-one meetings to obtain agency and stakeholder buy-in along the corridor. The Environmental Assessment document is currently being prepared by the TxDOT Austin District. The Mobility Authority, with Atkins under their General Engineering Consultant contract, is supporting and coordinating closely with both TxDOT as the document is being developed.

### RECENT ACTIVITIES

The Project Development process is currently focusing on four major elements: Environmental Assessment (EA), Schematic Development, Public Outreach and Context Sensitive Solutions. The Mobility Authority is currently working with TxDOT and other agencies to identify ways to expedite the environmental processes and clearance date.

The first Project Open House held in September was a great success with over 100 attendees. The second Open House is tentatively scheduled for March and will include the first phase of the Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) process. The third Open House and CSS Process is tentatively scheduled for June/July 2013. Following the third Open House, TxDOT will host the Formal Public Hearing (Required by NEPA) in September/October 2013 which will include the results of the CSS process.

The Mobility Authority is currently supporting TxDOT in the development of the EA:

- Development of exhibits required by NEPA for the document
- Facilitating and Coordinating meeting with other Agencies
- Developing, Updating and Tracking with Primavera Scheduling
- Evaluating impacts and addressing issues relevant to project development
- Supporting in recovery plans in order to meet critical dates

The Mobility Authority is currently updating the Design Schematic:

- 90% Schematic Scheduled for submittal February 25
- Evaluating and Addressing Design Issues
- Facilitating and Coordinating meeting with other Agencies

The Mobility Authority's Stakeholder and Outreach is comprehensive and currently includes:

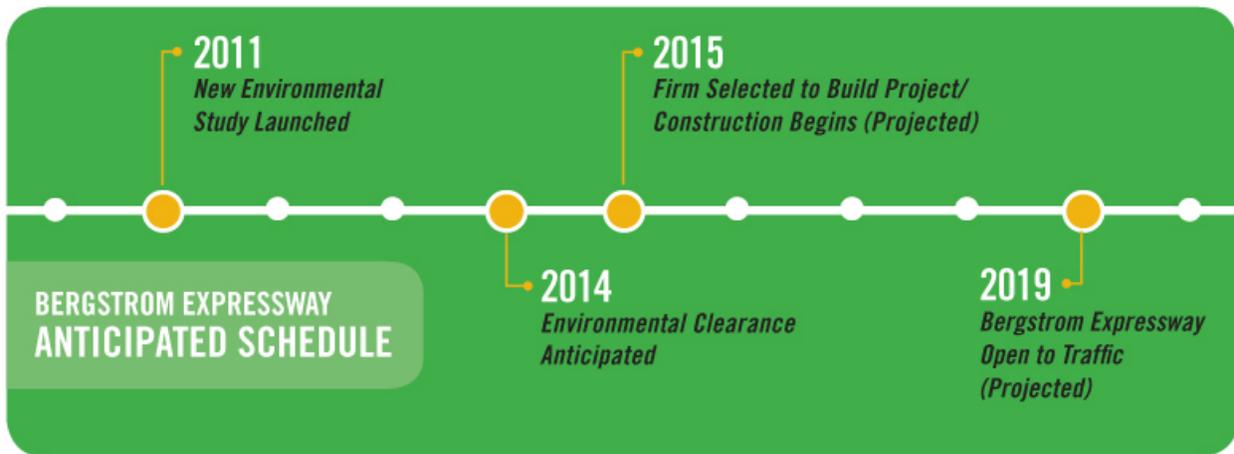
- Agencies: FHWA, TxDOT, City of Austin, Travis County
- Businesses: Misc. Land Developers / Property Owners, Freescale, YMCA, AT&T
- Home Owners Associations: Knollwood, Senate Hills, University Hills
- Interest Groups: Gateway Oaks, Heritage Tree Foundation, PODER, El Concilio

The Mobility Authority's Context Sensitive Solution process is currently focusing on:

- integrating the facility with the area’s built environment to enhance community and in particular the area’s economical quality of life
- integrating the natural environment in order to maximize the facilities scenic, recreation and aesthetic qualities
- incorporating aesthetics that fit the facilities physical setting and preserve the scenic, aesthetic, neighborhood, historic and environmental attributes of the area
- including innovative design elements including considerations from the Green Mobility Challenge

**SCHEDULE**

The Environmental Assessment process was launched in late 2011 and is anticipated to be complete by mid 2014. A detailed schedule discussion, including the tracking of intermediate milestones, will be provided in upcoming Quarterly Reports. Below is a summary of the anticipated timeline that is being communicated to the public.





# Oak Hill Parkway

## INTRODUCTION

This report documents and describes the Oak Hill Parkway Project for the period through January 15, 2013. This Project is currently in the environmental clearance phase of development which requires the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consistent with the regulations contained in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Project is currently being developed jointly by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Austin District.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project encompasses the area surrounding the existing “Y at Oak Hill” intersection and includes the study of US 290 West from FM 1826 to Loop 1, including SH 71 West from Silvermine Drive to US 290 West. The study area is depicted in the location map below.



Currently this area experiences large-scale congestion while attracting more than 60,000 cars/trucks a day and serving as a corridor for statewide travel. As part of the NEPA process, several reasonable alternatives will be identified to address the issues currently plaguing the study area. These alternatives, along with a “No Build” scenario, will be screened to assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts such that environmental values are considered alongside the technical and

economic factors. Another important element of the NEPA process, which is also consistent with the Mobility Authority's approach to project implementation, is public involvement; throughout the entire Environmental Impact Statement process, input will be solicited from neighbors and drivers of the corridor that could potentially be affected.

The Environmental Impact Statement document is currently being prepared by a consultant team led by Rodriguez Transportation Group, Inc. (RTG) under a professional services agreement with the TxDOT Austin District. The Mobility Authority, supported by Atkins under their General Engineering Consultant contract, is coordinating closely with both TxDOT and RTG as the document is being developed.

### PREVIOUS EFFORTS

As part of the Public Involvement Initiation, several critical elements were advanced in the previous quarter:

- Community members participated in an Oak Hill Envisioning Mobility Workshop on August 29th to discuss Oak Hill's values and vision for mobility improvements in the area and to help us identify potential names for the project.
- On October 17th, the Texas Department of Transportation, City of Austin, Capital Metro, public officials and the Mobility Authority conducted a press conference to unveil the project name and logo. The Oak Hill Parkway project is now officially underway. Media coverage was very positive!
- The project-specific website, [www.oakhillparkway.com](http://www.oakhillparkway.com), was formally launched and contains a host of useful information related to the project.
- Related to the Resource Agency Involvement, a Notice of Intent was published which notifies all parties that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared, describes the proposed action and other basic details related to the Project.

### RECENT ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the Project is currently focusing on the initiation of two main elements: Public Outreach and Resource Agency Involvement. This quarter's activities include:

- The Oak Hill Parkway's first open house occurred on November 15th with the goal to gain a better understand the specific issues along the project, directly from the public in attendance. Eighty-three (83) members of the general public signed in for the meeting and we collected project forty-three (43) comment forms combined from the meeting and via the website. Through the comments and project surveys we learned valuable insight into the communities concerns as well as receiving input on the type of project they would like to see. We also had aerial plots of the project area on hand where people could write down and point to specific areas of concern, access issues, pedestrian access issues, planned development, etc.



Citizens provided input directly onto project aerial maps at our November 15<sup>th</sup> Open House Meeting.

Citizens completed 48 project surveys and 46 satisfaction surveys via the Open House and Project Website.



- The open house Comment Summary and Responses to comments are under development and will be posted with the project survey results on the project website by the end of January. ([www.oakhillparkway.com](http://www.oakhillparkway.com))
- Enhancement Team Kick-off meeting was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to share project information between TxDOT, City of Austin, Travis County and CapMetro and to hear what projects are on their radar. The goal for this group is to cross coordinate other projects in the area (roadway, parks, hike/bike facilities, developer projects) in efforts to create synergy in the Oak Hill community around the project. This team will also be discussing some of the non-transportation related Green Mobility Challenge concepts which are beyond the scope of the Mobility Authority's project.
- Invitations were distributed to public agencies to invite their participation/cooperation on the project as part of the NEPA process. An Agency Scoping Meeting will be facilitated on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to bring in the agencies who expressed an interest in being involved in the project. The main topic of discussion will be the Draft Public and Agency Coordination Plan which was prepared by RTG's team.

- A draft of our first newsletter is underway with the goal to send a final version to our distribution list by early February.
- Planning efforts are underway for Workshops with community members regarding Environmental, General Design, Context Sensitive Solutions and Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities. These workshops will initiate with the Environmental Workshop scheduled for January 31<sup>st</sup>. The workshops will involve members of the public who expressed interest to participate in specific elements of the planning process. The goal is to ensure all members of the public have the opportunity to be actively engaged in more detailed elements early in the project development.

#### **PROGRESS STATUS**

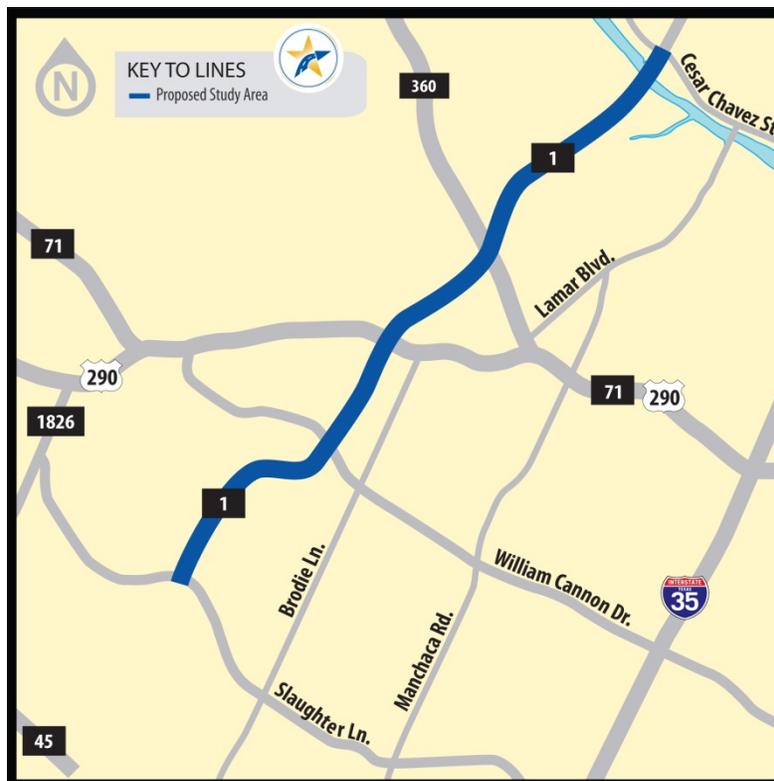
The Environmental Impact Statement process is still in the beginning stages of development and is currently anticipated to take approximately 4 years to complete. A detailed schedule discussion, including the tracking of intermediate milestones, will be provided in upcoming Quarterly Reports.

# MoPac South Project

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mobility Authority is initiating activities to start the Environmental Study for improvements to MoPac from Cesar Chavez Street south to Slaughter Lane. Proposed improvements could include adding lane(s) along existing MoPac lane. Implementation of bicycle/pedestrian facilities and inclusion of park-and-rides will be evaluated as part of the project during the environmental study.

The project has been selected as one of the recipients of the Texas Legislature's Rider 42 funding allocation projects. As a Rider 42 objective, the project will utilize enhanced public engagement strategies and tools. The environmental study and community outreach program are anticipated to start in 2013. This will be the first environmental study led by the Mobility Authority.



This report describes the status of the MoPac South project and documents the activities accomplished through the fourth quarter of 2012.

### RECENT ACTIVITIES

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

### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT / PROCUREMENT

- The Mobility Authority is currently in contract negotiations with Jacobs, the approved Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant for this project. The firm is anticipated to be on board by the first of March 2013.
- Based on FHWA comments and Rider 42 funding limits, the project limits now extend south to Slaughter Lane instead of SH 45 SW.
- The La Crosse and Slaughter Lane Overpasses will be analyzed in a separate Categorical Exclusion.

### SCHEDULE

The environmental approval process is anticipated to take two to three years. A detailed Project schedule will be produced once an Environmental Services Consultant has been contracted and a detailed scope prepared.

### UPCOMING MILESTONES

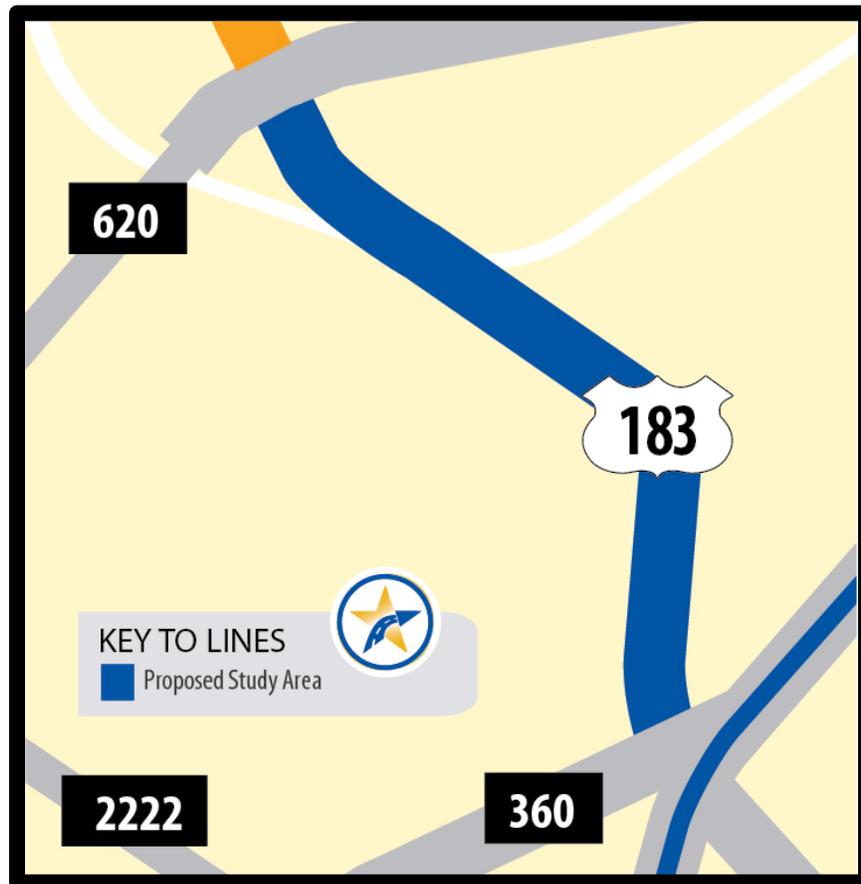
- Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant Begins Work (March 2013)

# US 183 North Project

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mobility Authority will soon initiate activities to start the Environmental Study for improvements to US 183 North from RM 620 to MoPac. Proposed improvements could include adding lane(s) along existing US 183, as well as direct connectors from US 183 and MoPac.

The project was selected as one of the recipients of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Surface Transportation Program - Metropolitan Mobility (STP MM) funding program. The environmental study and community outreach program are anticipated to start in 2013.



This report describes the status of the US 183 North Project and documents the activities accomplished through the fourth quarter of 2012.

### **RECENT ACTIVITIES**

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

### **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT / PROCUREMENT**

- The Mobility Authority is currently finalizing the schedule to procure a Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant for the project. The Request for Qualifications is anticipated to be issued in January 2013.

### **SCHEDULE**

The schedule for this project is in development.

# SH 45 Southwest Project

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In an effort to improve mobility in southwest Travis County, the Mobility Authority is proposing a 3.6-mile, four-lane limited access expressway on a new alignment connecting MoPac South to FM 1626 in southern Travis County. Modeled after the success of the MoPac Improvement Project, the TxDOT and Mobility Authority are working collaboratively to complete the NEPA process while proactively reaching out to stakeholders and the environmental community. In 2011, TxDOT, via a professional services contract, authorized Phase One of the NEPA study which is focused on establishing logical termini for the proposed facility. The public outreach program will be initiated during Phase Two and an environmental impact statement (anticipated) and schematics will be prepared. Concurrent with the Phase One activities, CAMPO and the University of Texas' Center for Transportation Research are developing traffic modeling for the corridor on behalf of Travis and Hays Counties which may influence the proposed project.



This report describes the status of the 45 Southwest Project and documents the activities accomplished through the fourth quarter of 2012.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period, no action has occurred.

## SCHEDULE

Mobility Authority activities are currently on hold.