

# PRESS RELEASE



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Mobility Authority Celebrates Upcoming Opening of 45SW Toll with Community-wide Celebration**

*45SW Toll will provide a new, reliable connection to Central Austin*

(Austin, Texas)—Today the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority) officially celebrated the upcoming completion of the new 45SW Toll Road, a 3.6-mile toll road connecting MoPac eastward to FM 1626 in Hays County. The innovative and environmentally-sensitive roadway features two lanes in each direction and a continuous, 4.5-mile shared use path that will connect with the future Violet Crown Trail. The shared use path, which provides a multimodal travel option for the community, will feature trailheads at MoPac and Bliss Spillar Road and an area known as the “Hill Country Classroom,” a shaded section of the trail where cyclists and pedestrians may rest while viewing educational signage. The road is expected to open to traffic on Sat. June 1.

To celebrate the new alternate route into Austin for southern Travis and northern Hays county residents, the Mobility Authority held a “Grand Opening Jubilee” and ceremonial ribbon cutting. The event, attended by approximately 400 members of the community, was held on the 45SW Toll Road at the Bear Creek Bridge and featured live music, vendors, food, drinks, family fun activities and shuttle service at the event site provided by Capital Metro. Mobility Authority officials were joined by dignitaries and elected officials for the ceremonial ribbon-cutting. Speakers included Mobility Authority Executive Director Mike Heiligenstein, Mobility Authority Chairman Ray Wilkerson, Austin TxDOT District Engineer Terry McCoy, Travis County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Hays County Commissioner Mark Jones and State Representative Vikki Goodwin.

“We are proud to turn this new road over to the community,” said Ray Wilkerson, Mobility Authority Board Chairman. “Residents have long demanded a faster, more reliable connection into Austin. This new road delivers, bringing improvements to travel times, safety, and quality of life for drivers, neighbors, and pedestrians alike.”

The 45SW Toll Road will bring much-needed congestion relief to South Austin by offering drivers an alternative to gridlocked neighborhood streets like Manchaca Road, Slaughter Lane and Brodie Lane. Drivers who choose to use the 45SW Toll Road may save 9-17 minutes over driving local routes to reach Central Austin. Drivers who continue to utilize local roads may save as much as 6-7 minutes over current travel times.

“The project was designed and constructed with Best Management Practices meant to protect the environmentally-sensitive Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone,” said Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director for the Mobility Authority. “Through our mindful construction practices and 24/7 on-site environmental compliance monitoring, we have exceeded industry standards for water quality and created a model which future projects will follow.”

In 2018, the Mobility Authority was the recipient of the Austin Chamber of Commerce’s Environmental Champion Award for its investment in sustainability, innovation, and leadership in the transportation industry, most notably on the SH 45SW Project.

“This project is why I ran for office in the first place,” said Travis County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty. “I am so proud to be a part of this occasion. It was Hays and Travis counties that bonded together to make this project possible. And that is what government needs to be doing for its people.”

Driving the need for the SH 45SW Project, population in the area increased by 241 percent between 1990 and 2010, and is expected to increase by an additional 40 percent between 2010 and 2035. If nothing had been done to address congestion, that population growth was anticipated to result in travel times 89 to 97 percent longer in the morning, and 42 to 90 percent longer in the afternoon by 2035, according to CAMPO’s 2035 travel demand model.

“At TxDOT, we are constantly working to make transportation better for the citizens we serve,” said Terry McCoy, TxDOT Austin District Engineer. “We work as a team and as a community and that is the only way we are successful. Everyone that worked on this project did so with great pride and sincere interest. Congratulations to the team for delivering such a successful project.”

State Representative Vikki Goodwin, a long-time resident of the Shady Hollow neighborhood said, “To say I am thrilled to have this road finally complete is an understatement. Thank you to all the people that came together and made this possible. I hope this highway is not only the most environmentally-sensitive, but also the safest road in Texas.”

Hays County Commissioner Mark Jones said, “I want to applaud the Hays County taxpayers. Without their support, we would not have been able to join with Travis County to make this road happen. I am hopeful that this is the start of a partnership with the Mobility Authority that will bring additional mobility improvements to the region.”

There will be three access points on 45SW Toll: MoPac Boulevard, Bliss Spillar Road and FM 1626. The road, slated to open June 1, will utilize all electronic tolling, and drivers will not have to stop or even slow down to pay a toll. The cost to travel the full length of the road will be \$1 for electronic tag holders, and \$1.50 for Pay By Mail customers. To give drivers an opportunity to try out the road, the Mobility Authority is offering a toll-free period through June 30, where drivers who have an active electronic tag may travel the road for free.

“It’s a small token of our gratitude to the community for their patience during construction,” said Mike Heiligenstein.

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***About the Mobility Authority***

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is a local, independent government agency created in 2002 to improve the regional transportation system in Travis and Williamson Counties. The Mobility Authority implements innovative and sustainable transportation options to enhance quality of life and economic vitality in Central Texas. The Mobility Authority operates 183A Toll in Williamson County, 290 Toll in east Austin, the 71 Toll Lane in east Austin, and the MoPac Express Lane. The agency is also finishing construction of the eight-mile 183 South Project in east Austin, and constructing the four-mile SH 45SW toll road between FM 1626 and MoPac in southern Travis and northern Hays counties. For more information about the Mobility Authority, visit [www.MobilityAuthority.com](http://www.MobilityAuthority.com).

***About the SH 45SW Project***

The SH 45SW Project is an innovative environmentally sensitive 3.6-mile toll road between State Loop 1 (MoPac) and FM 1626 that includes extensive water quality protection measures and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Construction of the project commenced in November 2016 and will be completed in 2019. More information about the project can be found at [www.SH45SW.com](http://www.SH45SW.com)