

# NEWS RELEASE



**For Immediate Release:**

August 4, 2017

**Contact:** Dee Anne Heath

Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority

dheath@ctrma.org

(512) 996-9778 (office)

(512) 565-6247 (mobile)

## **Federal Court Decisively Rules in Favor of Mobility Authority and TxDOT**

***Judge denies plaintiff's efforts to halt two key mobility improvement projects***

**(Austin, Texas)**— The U.S. District Court in Austin today issued a ruling in favor of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on a lawsuit attempting to prevent the agencies from advancing three key mobility improvement projects in south Austin. The suit was filed last year in federal court by Save Our Springs Alliance and other plaintiffs in an effort to stop construction of two projects that had already received environmental clearance, the SH 45SW Project and the MoPac Intersections Project, as well as the environmental study of the proposed MoPac South Project.

“We are pleased that the judge has denied the claims brought by the plaintiffs so we can continue working to bring meaningful congestion relief to our region,” said Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director for the Mobility Authority. “Today’s ruling confirms the credibility of the environmental study processes and planning procedures that guide our work. It’s time to separate politics from the science and let the science lead.”

The plaintiffs asserted there were flaws with the process in which the environmental studies on all three projects were carried out. They claimed that, rather than studying the projects independently, they should have been analyzed as one single project. Each of these projects has significant independent utility, meaning each would benefit drivers and would be considered a reasonable expenditure, even if no additional transportation improvements in the area were made. Additionally, the projects were studied according to robust state and federal environmental documentation guidelines. TxDOT had previously issued environmental clearance for SH 45SW and MoPac Intersections to move into construction. The environmental study process for MoPac South has been on hold pending the judge’s ruling.

Following today’s ruling, progress on the three mobility improvement projects will continue.

“Our region has suffered from traffic congestion long enough and we are driven to bring sustainable transportation options to our growing region. Today’s decision marks a renewed commitment to mobility improvements, and it constitutes a huge victory for the residents and commuters of Central Texas.” Heiligenstein said.

### **WHAT'S NEXT FOR EACH PROJECT?**

- Construction on **SH 45SW** in Hays and southern Travis counties will carry on. In addition to improved mobility, the project includes extensive water quality protection measures and bike and pedestrian facilities. When construction is complete, it will offer immediate relief to drivers in the area. By redirecting commuter traffic off of Manchaca Road, Slaughter Lane and Brodie Lane, SH 45SW allows local roads to better serve drivers residing in surrounding neighborhoods.
- The **MoPac South Environmental Study** will resume, and the Mobility Authority and TxDOT will re-engage with the public and stakeholders as potential solutions for managing congestion along south MoPac Expressway between Cesar Chavez Street and Slaughter Lane are assessed.

###

### **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 northbound MoPac Express Lane segment between RM 2222 and Parmer Lane. The agency is also finishing construction the 11-mile MoPac Express Lane project, building the eight-mile 183 South 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).