

October 15, 2007

CAMPO Votes to Approve Road Projects and Policies to Govern Tolling

On October 8, 2007, the CAMPO Board approved all five TxDOT toll road improvement projects that will provide Central Texas much needed express lanes in existing corridors. [Click here](#) for a map of the approved road projects; those shaded in blue are the five TxDOT toll projects. Construction is set to begin on the first of these in 2009.



In response to concerns of the public as well as CAMPO Board Members, Senator Watson led the Board through a thorough, eight month discovery process to understand what financial resources are available, how those options could be best utilized to the greatest benefit of the public, ensure transparency and accountability as well as including many opportunities to provide information to the public and receive public comment.

That process led to many changes to the proposed road projects as well as the approval of five policies to govern these projects:

- The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority will operate each project
- Existing, non-tolled capacity will be maintained in the corridor with fewer, if safe, traffic lights than today
- Buses and vanpools shall have free access to the toll roads, as will car pools as soon as practicable.
- Any revenue raised above that necessary to pay debt on an annual basis will be used for further projects in the corridor including full build out of the road, transit, mitigation of environmental or community degradation or to accelerate payment of the debt and ultimately remove the tolls when debt is paid off.
- Should a preferable funding source become available to CAMPO, it shall be used to reduce or eliminate the toll before spending it on other projects.

Despite the efforts of the CAMPO Board to address the many concerns of the community, a vocal group of people opposing the use of toll revenue to help pay for

construction and maintenance of these projects drew a win/lose line in the sand. They choose to use rude and belittling language, call people names and threaten the CAMPO board members as well as supporters. This behavior is not acceptable among our children and should not be acceptable among adults either.

Please thank our elected officials for their patience in dealing with such in appropriate expressions of opinion, their hard work and efforts to make the right decision for our community given situation presented.

Voting yes on all the roads, except as indicated under #1 and #4 below: State Senator Kirk Watson, State Representative Mike Krusee, Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe, Travis County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Travis County Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt, Williamson County Commissioner Cynthia Long, Austin Mayor Will Wynn, Kyle Mayor Mike Gonzalez, Cedar Park Mayor Bob Lemon, Round Rock Mayor Nyle Maxwell, Georgetown Mayor Gary Nelon, Austin Mayor Tem Betty Dunkerley, Austin City Council Member Brewster McCracken, former Austin Mayor Pro Tem John Trevino and Texas Department of Transportation Austin district engineer Bob Daigh.

TxDOT toll projects:

1. US 290 from US 183 to east of SH 130 - six lane tollway with frontage roads and multi-level interchange at US 183 - 6.2 miles, \$504 million. Senator Kirk Watson recused himself from this vote due to a business conflict.
2. US 183 from Springdale Road to Texas 71 E - six lane non-toll or toll controlled access facility with frontage roads - 7.2 miles \$305 million.
3. SH 71 from west of Riverside Drive to Presidential Blvd. at the airport - four lane non-toll or toll controlled access facility with frontage roads and multi-level interchange at US 183 - 1.2 miles \$153 million.
4. 'Y' at Oak Hill - elevated 6 lane tollway with frontage roads and an elevated interchange. 2.9 miles, \$411 million.
5. SH 45 SW from Loop 1 to FM 1626 - four lane toll controlled access facility and two non-toll lanes - 3.6 miles, \$76 million. Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt also voted no.

Council Member Jennifer Kim, State Representative Eddie Rodriguez, Hays County Judge Liz Sumter and Sunset Valley Mayor Pro Tem Mills Jeff Mills voted NO on all the TxDOT toll projects.

To see a full list of amendments to the 2030 plan and the four year Transportation Improvement Program (similar to a capital improvement program), [click here](#).

Courtesy of JB Goodwin