



January 17, 2025

Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority

ATTN: MoPac South

3300 N. IH-35 Suite 300

Austin, TX 78705

RE: Official Public Comment on the MoPac South Environmental Study Virtual Open House Number Six

Dear MoPac South Team,

The City of Rollingwood appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MoPac South Environmental Study and Recommended Build Alternative in conjunction with Virtual Open House Number 6. We were pleased to see the inclusion of shared-use paths and sidewalks along the west side of MoPac adjacent to Rollingwood following the series of Technical Working Group Meetings hosted by CTRMA this summer. This significant addition takes steps to meaningfully address bike and pedestrian connectivity challenges in our area. However, many of the concerns that we expressed in our most recent letter and in previous communications have not yet been addressed.

The following comments are based on our review of the Recommended Build Alternative, Alternative 2C, and the other materials provided for this open house and are made in addition to the city's numerous previous comments and feedback given on this proposed project. While we recognize the importance of improving regional mobility, we have significant concerns about the project's current design, particularly regarding its impact on Rollingwood and surrounding communities. Our concerns focus on the following key areas:

Inadequate Consideration of East/West Traffic

The project's emphasis on north/south mobility between Slaughter Lane and Cesar Chavez fails to address the critical role of east/west traffic. Residents and businesses in Rollingwood and neighboring areas rely on connections between arterial roads and MoPac. By focusing solely on commuter traffic moving north and south, the proposed design worsens congestion for east/west users, undermines local mobility, and hinders access to businesses and services in the Rollingwood and Westlake area. We urge the Mobility Authority to incorporate robust considerations for east/west traffic impacts into project goals, evaluation criteria, and design.

Regaining Access to and Exits from MoPac Express Lanes

The current proposal eliminates critical express lane access and exit points for Rollingwood and neighboring communities. Residents and commuters who rely on Bee Cave Road, Rollingwood Drive, and Loop 360 to access the northbound MoPac express lanes will face severe challenges. The removal of the Enfield Road express lane entrance and the introduction of the Cesar Chavez loop create convoluted, unsafe routes, significantly increasing travel times and congestion in local neighborhoods.

Similarly, access to Bee Cave Road from the southbound MoPac express lanes is eliminated under the current design. This forces traffic onto already-congested local roads as a route to exit the express lanes, exacerbating safety issues and creating bottlenecks at intersections like Lake Austin Boulevard and Redbud Trail. Maintaining direct, safe access and exit points to express lanes in both directions for those originating on or exiting to Bee Cave Road is essential to support regional and local traffic flow.

Noise and Light Pollution

The City of Rollingwood opposes the inclusion of elevated lanes. Alternative 2C is described as “two express lanes with elevated ramps near Barton Skyway.” The elevated bridge structure begins at Bee Cave Road and stands to introduce considerably elevated noise and light pollution in the area. The additional lighting required for elevated infrastructure is a of concern and noise pollution, already a challenge due to proximity to MoPac, will also worsen as sound propagates from elevated structures. We strongly advocate for including noise and light mitigation as critical evaluation criteria and urge reconsideration of alternatives which avoid elevated lanes in proximity to Rollingwood.

Significant Traffic Hazard at Northbound MoPac Entrance at Bee Cave Road

The proposed design creates a hazardous overlap where the northbound express lane exit to Cesar Chavez intersects with the northbound general-purpose lane entrance at Bee Cave Road. This configuration forces drivers entering MoPac at Bee Cave Road to merge across two lanes of traffic to continue northbound, avoiding exits for Cesar Chavez or 5th Street. This results in a dangerous crisscross pattern and a potential bottleneck, significantly increasing the risk of collisions and traffic congestion.

Consideration of the Intersection at Bee Cave Road and MoPac

The current proposal does not include any improvements to the intersection of Bee Cave Road and MoPac. We strongly believe that any modifications to MoPac in this area should account for future improvements and the overall design of this critical intersection. Treating these as separate processes risks creating a disjointed system where the intersection and highway fail to function seamlessly together.

Unclear Schematics

The schematics released for public comment during this period are unclear, difficult to interpret, and fail to effectively depict the proposed traffic flow. Several new elements, including the connection between the MoPac South and MoPac North projects, are introduced for the first time in this proposal but are neither clearly highlighted nor adequately explained. Additionally, multiple ramp relocations are proposed within the Cesar Chavez to 360 corridor, also for the first time, yet the schematic depicts both the current ramps (in the underlying photo image) and the proposed ramps in a confusing manner. As a result, the materials provided do not enable the average person, especially those not closely involved in the project, to fully understand the proposal or its impact on traffic flow.

Recommendations

To address these concerns, we recommend the following actions:

- **Address East/West Traffic Impacts:** Incorporate comprehensive strategies to support east/west traffic mobility and connectivity within the project scope, ensuring local residents and businesses are not disproportionately affected by increased congestion.
- **Restore Critical Express Lane Access:** Maintain direct, safe access to and exits from the express lanes for Rollingwood and neighboring communities. Specifically, reinstate northbound access near Enfield Road and southbound access to Bee Cave Road to alleviate congestion and support regional traffic flow.
- **Evaluate Alternatives to Elevated Lanes:** Reconsider elevated infrastructure near Barton Skyway and Bee Cave Road to minimize noise and light pollution. Prioritize design solutions that mitigate existing noise challenges.
- **Redesign Hazardous Merging Areas:** Reconfigure the northbound express lane exit and general-purpose lane entrance near Bee Cave Road to eliminate the crisscross merging pattern. This will improve safety, reduce bottlenecks, and enhance traffic flow.
- **Integrate Improvements at Bee Cave Road and MoPac Intersection:** Include design enhancements for the Bee Cave Road and MoPac intersection as part of the MoPac South project to ensure compatibility and seamless functionality between the highway and local roads.
- **Provide Clear and Accessible Project Materials:** Enhance the clarity of schematics and other project materials to improve public understanding. Clearly highlight new design elements and proposed traffic patterns, ensuring they are accessible to a broad audience, including those unfamiliar with the project's technical details.

In conclusion, the City of Rollingwood is in favor of improvements to MoPac and appreciates CTRMA for its efforts to enhance regional mobility. However, we believe that a thoughtful and inclusive

approach is necessary to ensure that all communities, including Rollingwood, benefit from these changes without facing disproportionate burdens. By addressing our concerns related to east/west traffic flow, access to and exits from the MoPac express lanes, noise and light pollution, the traffic hazard at the northbound MoPac entrance at Bee Cave Road, the Bee Cave Road and MoPac intersection, and ensuring clear and accessible project materials, CTRMA can deliver a project that truly serves the needs of the region. Thank you for your consideration.

We appreciate your attention to these critical issues and your commitment to collaborating with local communities to refine the project. Rollingwood is eager to see a design that improves regional mobility without disproportionately impacting our residents, businesses, and those that travel through Rollingwood daily.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gavin Massingill

Mayor

City of Rollingwood