TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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PUBLIC HEARING
-- BERGSTROM EXPRESSWAY --

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

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The above-entitled Public Hearing took place from 6:33 to 7:41 p.m., on Wednesday, November 19, 2014, at the Delco Activity Center, 4601 Pecan Brook Drive, Austin, Travis County, Texas 78724. Presenters:

Marisabel Ramthun, Jerel Rackley, Shelly Eason, and John Breed.
(Open house held from 6:00 to 6:33 p.m.)

PROCEDINGS

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Good evening. Welcome. We're gonna go ahead and start with the public hearing for the Bergstrom Expressway project. My name is Marisabel Ramthun, and I work for TxDOT in the Austin District.

Today is Wednesday, November 19, and the official time is . . . 6:33 p.m. I would like to begin the public hearing for the proposed Bergstrom Expressway.

Before we get started, I ask that you please silent any electronic devices.

If you're not familiar with the building, there's restrooms on both sides of the building. And in case of an emergency, there is exit at each corner of the building, at all four corners.

I would like to note that this public hearing is only for the Bergstrom Expressway project, and we will not being discussing any other proposed projects in the area.

The engineering layouts and environmental assessment are available here for your viewing tonight. We also have a copy located at Austin District office and at the project Web site. The address for the office
and the Web site are included in the packet of information you receive when you sign in. If you do not get a packet of information, we still have some there at the sign-in table for you to pick up.

Smaller scale of the project layouts are available for your viewing at the University Hills and Ruiz Branch libraries.

We would like to thank the Austin Independent School District and the Delco Activity Center for allowing us to use their facility here tonight for the hearing.

I would like also to recognize the project team from TxDOT and the Regional Mobility Authority. If you could please stand if you're part of the project team. Thank you.

The format for tonight's public hearing is shown on the second page of the packet of information you received. As you're aware, we began the program this evening with an open house at 6:00 p.m. I hope you had a chance to view the drawings for the project and to ask questions to the project team. If not, there will be another opportunity to review the layouts and the displays and talk to the staff during the 15-minute break that we will have after the presentation. That break will occur after we have the
technical and environmental and right-of-way presentations.

You can also sign up during this break to speak during the public-comment period. Please sign up using the speaker registration cards. These are available at the sign-in table, if you wish to provide a comment tonight.

After the break, the public session will begin. The speaker duration of the session will depend upon the number of speakers. We have a court reporter here today to record your comments, and we will be preparing a transcript of this hearing.

We have a public hearing officer in attendance tonight, Mr. Terry McCoy. Mr. McCoy is the Deputy District Engineer for the Austin District.

The purpose of tonight's public hearing is to provide information about the proposed Bergstrom Expressway project and obtain input from the community about the project.

There are many ways you can leave comments. Verbal comments may be made after the break, during the public-comment period, or even comments can be left in the comment boxes that are in the tables behind you tonight. Or you can mail, fax, or send a comment through the project Web site. There's also --
in your packet, on the back page, there's also a page where you can write your comments, and it has the address, fax number, or . . . that you can submit your comment.

Please make sure that if you want to submit any written comments, you do so tonight, or even after you leave tonight. You can do it by December 1st. That's when the open period will end. So you can still submit comments after tonight, by December 1st.

All verbal and written comments received by December 1st will be analyzed and the results will be provided in two reports. The Public Hearing Summary and Analysis is a report that will include a summary of the hearing proceedings and comments. The analysis of all the comments will also be provided in this report. The comment . . . hearing . . . comment and respond report will also have the comments with a response. Copies of these reports will be available on the project Web site for download, or will be available for the cost of reproduction.

I'm gonna turn over the presentation to Jerel Rackley, who is a professional engineer, and he will provide you with the details on the engineering and planning for the Bergstrom Expressway project.
JEREL RACKLEY: Good evening. My name is Jerel Rackley, and I'm the project engineer for this project. I'm going to start by giving you a little history of the US 183 project.

US 183 was constructed in the early 1960s as a four-lane divided roadway. The population of Austin and Travis County has grown quite a bit since then. In the early 1980s, a plan emerged to improve US 183 from RM 620 to SH 71. Several build alternatives and the no-build option were studied. In 1985, the alternative that was approved was a six-lane controlled-access roadway from 620 to 71.

To date, right-of-way has been purchased between 620 and 71, and the highway has been finished from 620 to 290. Between 290 and 71, there have been some operational improvements to US 183 to help increase or maintain mobility.

Today, TxDOT is part of an organization called the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, or CAMPO. CAMPO is the designated planning organization for the region, including Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

Growth in Austin and the surrounding area has resulted in the need for many roadway improvements throughout the region; therefore, there has been a shift
in the view of how much value comes from the tolled facilities.  

Once CAMPO determined that within a 25-year planning period there would not be enough federal or state money to complete the nontolled, six-lane, controlled-access US 183, tolling of the US 183 project from 290 to 71 was approved in the CAMPO 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

The Bergstrom Expressway is the preferred alternative on US 183 between 290 and 71. The proposed project covers a distance of approximately eight miles on the . . . on US 183, and extends from US 290 to SH 71.

Today, US 183, between 290 and 71, is characterized as a four-lane divided roadway, with two lanes of travel in each direction. The number of travel lanes varies in each direction.

The current road also is what's called a . . . noncontrolled-access road, meaning it has driveways coming straight into the traffic lanes. And there are traffic signals throughout the corridor.

We begin any project with the question: What are we trying to accomplish? We've determined that our goal on US 183 between 290 and 71 is to improve safety and mobility for travelers.
The population of Austin in 1980 was about 346,000, and in 2010 it had grown to about 800,000. It's been estimated that Austin will have about one million people living in the city in 2020. An increase in population correlates with increases in traffic volume and vehicle crashes; therefore, we need to change travel movements on 183 in order to improve safety and mobility.

A six-lane tolled expressway with two lane -- two to three general-purpose lanes is the preferred build alternative on US 183. This means the proposed roadway would have three main lanes of travel in each direction, with two to three general-purpose lanes in each direction, depending on existing condition.

A sidewalk is proposed next to general-purpose lanes on one side of the project. A shared-use path -- which is similar to a wide sidewalk -- for both pedestrians and bicyclists, is proposed next to the other set of general-purpose lanes. Also, a 5-foot bike lane is proposed next to both the northbound and southbound general-purpose lanes.

Most of the right-of-way in the corridor has already been purchased, but there is a need for about 4 acres of new right-of-way and 9 acres of
easements. No displacements would occur as a result of the acquisitions.

I'm gonna show you the display of our schematic in the next few slides. In each of these slides, you'll see that the yellow indicates the number -- indicates the lanes that are nontolled. The blue indicates the lanes that . . . that . . . would be tolled. The pink areas show the shared-use path. The tan areas show the proposed sidewalk. And the orange lines show the right-of-way.

You can also view the schematic up close along these bleachers on the side, download it from the project Web -- or -- download it from the project Web site, or view it at the locations mentioned earlier in the presentation.

What you're seeing now on the screen is a view from above of the proposed improvements at Manor/Springdale Road. As can be seen, the nontolled US 183 main lanes continue from the north, over Springdale -- Manor/Springdale Road. The tolled main lanes begin just south of this interchange. Two-lane entrance and exit ramps are provided for nontolled access to the general-purpose lanes.

This slide shows the overpass they're planning to build at Loyola Lane. The proposed main
lanes will go under Loyola, and there will be turnaround structures so travelers will not have to stop to change directions of travel on the general-purpose lanes.

This is a view of the proposed improvements at 51st and Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard. The existing crossover at 51st Street would be removed, and the turning movements accommodated at MLK. Although the distance of travel from the neighborhood to the YMCA is increased by about one mile, the travel time is slightly reduced because of the turnaround structures.

A small amount of right-of-way is needed to build a bicycle-and-pedestrian bridge across 183. This bridge would connect the west side of 183 to the YMCA in the Little Walnut Creek Hike and Bike Trail.

In addition to tolled main lanes, nontolled connectors . . . underneath . . . MLK . . . would be constructed . . . across US 183. These . . . these nontolled connectors would be cro- -- connected underneath MLK. These connectors would allow a traveler to keep going instead of having to stop at the light.

South of MLK, there are several crossings of US 183 where we propose to revise the turning movements by providing turnaround structures at Boggy Creek. These . . . include the intersections at
Technicenter Drive and Hudson Street.

These are the structures, the bridges, across Boggy Creek. There will be four roadway bridges across Boggy Creek. The main lane and general-purpose lanes are built on these bridges across Boggy Creek. There will be turnaround bridges constructed both on the north and south sides of Boggy Creek.

The shared-use path would also be located on a bridge over Boggy Creek, and would be connected to the Southern Walnut Creek Hike and Bike Trail, with a separate bridge across . . . the creek.

At Bolm Road, the existing overpass will be removed, and Bolm Road east and west of US 183 would tie into the general-purpose lanes.

A proposed pedestrian bridge would provide bicycle and pedestrian access across US 183 at this location.

From Bolm Road, travelers on the southbound general-purpose lanes would be able to go northbound using Levander Loop. Right here.

For residents . . . of the Knollwood . . . on the Colorado River, the travel distance would be increased by about one-and-a-half miles; however, the travel time would be reduced by about half a minute because of the turnaround structures provided on the
north side of Boggy Creek.

New connector bridges would be constructed to tie Airport Boulevard, 7th Street, and 1st Street to US 183. The existing truss bridge over the Colorado River would be preserved and decommissioned from use as a roadway bridge. It would be used as a bicycle-and-pedestrian bridge instead.

Montopolis Drive would be realigned and cross US 183 as an overpass.

South of Montopolis Drive, the travel movements at the cross-over at Vargas would be moved to the overpasses at Montopolis Drive and Patton Avenue. The proposed main lanes shown in blue would end just north of Patton Avenue. An overpass is proposed to carry the main lanes over Patton.

The proposed improvements at the SH 71 interchange include reconstruction of SH 71 west and east of US 183 and construction of direct connectors tying US 183 north of the interchange to S -- SH 71 west of the interchange.

I don't show or discuss all of the . . . the detail of the proposed drainage easements for the project. Overall, the project would provide the necessary storm drainage to maintain water detention and flow throughout the limits of the project.
Also, existing driveway connections to --
to the general-purpose lanes would be maintained, in
agreement with property-owners.

If you have any questions about what I've
shown, or want more information, my team members and I
will be available at the sides of the room during the
break.

A summary of the environmental studies
will be reviewed by Shelly Eason. Please welcome
Shelly.

SHELLY EASON: Good evening. Welcome.
All right. I'm Shelly Eason. I've worked for TxDOT for
about 13 years. I'm an environmental specialist.

A summary of the environmental studies is
called an environmental assessment. The National
Environmental Policy Act requires that we document how
we comply with rules and regulations.

WOMAN FROM AUDIENCE: Shelly. I'm sorry.
He's taller than you are. You might....

Thank you.

(Ms. Eason adjusted the height of her
microphone.)

SHELLY EASON: We have copies of the
environmental assessment here tonight, if you'd like to
review them during our break, after our presentations.
And they're on that back table. The document is also available for download and view on the project Web site.

There are various state and federal laws require environmental studies be done before proceeding on transportation projects. We study the natural and the human environment, and we've done lots of studies to include all this. We've done an air-quality assessment, a community assessment, a traffic-noise analysis, a biological evaluation, hazardous-materials site assessment, and an indirect and cumulative analysis.

In the next slides I will show you a summary of what we've done and what we found during the studies and what is documented in that environmental assessment.

In the community assessment, we looked at 11 routes of travel. These routes were chosen because they represented the routes to and from the neighborhoods surrounding the project area in two common destinations along US 183.

The worst-case scenario in the 11 routes that were looked at were -- would result in an increase in travel distance of about three miles and an increase in travel time of one minute.

Three of the 11 routes would result in an increased travel distance of about one-and-a-half miles;
however, the time to travel the extra distance would only increase the travel time about 30 seconds.

Seven out of the 11 routes would have reduced travel time.

Since both the increases in travel time and traffic congestion affect the cost to travel, improving mobility by reducing traffic congestion would reduce travel costs, even though we're -- we propose to toll some of the roads, and the tolls would need to be paid on some of those routes.

In the air-quality assessment, it is concluded that lower emissions of mobile-source air toxics are associated with decreases in traffic congestion. Therefore, air quality in general would be more stable along the US 183 corridor. The community assessment and the air-quality assessment are attached to -- in the -- to EA and appendices. And again, copies of those are available on the tables in the back.

Now let's look at a proposed park. As a part of the assessment of how the Bergstrom Expressway project might make changes to the community, we looked at parks-and-recreation areas along US 183. The planned shared-use park and s-- -- path and sidewalks would provide quite a bit of new access to the city of Austin's planned and existing trail system.
The City bought -- brought to our attention their plans to build a park east of US 183 near Bolm Road. It's in this green area. They plan to name this road the Bolm Road District Park. To date, the City has not made any improvements on the land.

The Bergstrom Expressway project would result in about one acre of parkland becoming part of the roadway right-of-way. The right-of-way is needed so that the shared-use path can be constructed in this area. Let's see. Right there. The shared-use path is a pink color, but it's kinda hard to see there.

Several meetings with the City have been held regarding the proposed shared-use path and the Bergstrom project. A summary of the coordination with the City is attached to the community assessment, that is also available here tonight, attached to the EA.

Federal Highways has determined that the conversion of about one acre of parkland to Bergstrom Expressway right-of-way would have no adverse effect to the features, attributes, or activities that qualify the park for protection under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act.

Okay. In the community assessment, we also studied what would happen when traffic is moved closer to residences, churches, businesses, or outdoor
activities. We created a traffic-noise model of the Bergstrom Expressway project. The traffic-noise analysis indicated that noise barriers would be feasible and reasonable at locations within the right-of-way across from the University Hills subdivision. The final decision to construct the proposed noise barriers will not be made until completion of the project, design, utility evaluation, and polling of adjacent property-owners.

An informal noise -- noise workshop will be held between Bergstrom Expressway project team members and owners of property adjacent to the proposed noise barrier. The purpose of those workshops is to provide information about the noise barriers so the owners may make an informed decision to vote for or against the proposed barriers. More information about those workshops and traffic-noise-barrier plan will be provided as we progress.

There are several large oak trees south of the Colorado River that are of local interest. Several studies of the trees have been completed over the past two years by arborists and project planners. The studies have resulted in the development of some of the best management practices that will be followed during construction. These practices, and other protective
measures, will help to ensure the health of the trees.

Okay. Then another thing, any time we plan work on old structures, such as bridges, TxDOT completes tests to determine if the paint is -- or calking might contain lead or asbestos. Some of the US 183 drainage structures, and p-- and a pipeline along US 183, have lead-based paint and/or asbestos.

Also, there is an old landfill that has been identified in the right-of-way near Loyola Lane. Extensive testing of the landfill has indicated the materials and soils could be handled during construction. But however, TxDOT requires contractors follows -- follow the rules and regulations regarding exposure to hazardous materials. Any cleanup and disposal of hazardous materials found during construction would also follow the appropriate regulations and guidance used for those efforts.

TxDOT has developed policies and practices to avoid impacts of migratory birds. The Bergstrom Expressway construction plans will include notes/instructions of how contractors will avoid birds.

The reconstruction or construction of bridges and culverts would result in some filled channels . . . of the streams that cross US 183 and into the Colorado River. The estimated fill would be
permitted using a US Army Corps of Engineers nationwide permit.

Water quality in the area would be maintained on and offsite of the project. Specifically, the base flood elevations would be maintained and managed as required through coordination with the local floodplain administrator and the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

All rules and regulations required under the Clean Water Act and Texas Pollution Discharge Elimination System would be followed.

The proposed rehabilitation of the 1936 truss bridge has been approved by the Texas Historical Commission. Any changes to the bridge would maintain historic aspects of that bridge.

And through avoidance and protective measures, the Bergstrom Expressway project would not impact federal- or state-listed threatened or endangered species.

And lastly, there's the Davidson-Littlepage Cemetery is located within the US--right-of-way near State Highway 71, and it would be protected during construction.

So all along our way we've been partnering with the local community and other resource agencies.
It's important during any environmental study. Public involvement has been ongoing since the planning of the proposed expressway began in 2011. TxDOT has met with various neighborhood associations and local businesses. Also, we have hosted open houses in -- to present different aspects of the proposed Bergstrom Expressway.

In addition to community input, these resource agents also -- agencies also provided input during the environmental study.

Okay. Your comments on the Bergstrom Expressway are welcome. As I mentioned earlier, if you want to review the entire environmental-assessment document, there are copies of the documents on the tables located behind us. And to the . . . and . . . the technical reports are attached as appendices. You can also look at this document online at the Bergstrom Expressway project Web site.

Any changes to the design of the Bergstrom Expressway project that might occur as a result of your comments would be studied, and we may include them in the environmental assessment before it's considered final.

As I mentioned earlier, right-of-way and easements will be needed for this project, Jerel mentioned; however, no displacements are anticipated.
I'd like to welcome John Breed. He's gonna discuss the right-of-way needs and how our acquisition process goes.

JOHN BREED: Good evening. My name is John Breed. I work for Atkins, who is working for the Mobility Authority as a general engineering consultant. Part of our scope includes providing oversight of the right-of-way acquisition process for the Bergstrom Expressway project that currently includes 41 parcels to be acquired.

It's possible that later in the project development the selected design-build contractor may be required to acquire additional parcels that are necessary for the project. If that determination is made, the selected design-build contractor will be responsible for acquiring that right-of-way, with oversight from the Mobility Authority to ensure that proper guidelines and laws are followed.

Before I go into more specific details on the right-of-way process, I'd like to direct your attention to the slide on the screen behind me.

No -- no person will be displaced by the Mobility Authority's construction project unless and until adequate replacement housing has been provided for and has been made available to all affected persons.
The program is designed to bring all notices, informational material, and personalized assistance needed to make the acquisition and your relocation, if necessary, as easy as possible.

The design of the highway sets the alignment and what properties must be acquired in order to construct the project. The current design at this time does not involve the acquisitions of buildings or structures.

According to law, if your property, home, or business is acquired for a transportation project, you are entitled to receive just compensation for your acquired property and any damages to your remainder property. Just compensation is determined by developing an independent real estate appraisal for each parcel. Each property-owner will be given an opportunity to accompany the appraiser during the appraiser's inspection. You will also be given the opportunity to provide the appraiser with any specific details that you feel are pertinent to the valuation of your property.

A written offer will be forwarded to each property-owner. At this time, we would like to sit down with you and meet with you and discuss the possibility of purchasing your property.

In addition to the Mobility Authority's
acquisition program, affected landowners and tenants may be able to participate in the Mobility Authority's relocation-assistance program. This relocation-assistance program assists residents, businesses, farms, and ranches in moving as a result of being displaced by a highway project. A relocation-assistant agent will be provided to help explain the benefits and help you secure them.

The most important thing that you can remember is you must be occupying the property on the date in which the offer's made to the property-owner to ensure eligibility.

Additionally, copies of the property-owner's bill of rights are located in the back of the room. These rights detail your rights as a property-owner in the state of Texas. If you have any questions, please feel free to get with me at the break or after the meeting tonight.

I'm now gonna turn the hearing back over to Marisabel. And thank you for your time this evening.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: So thank you, Jerel, Shelly, and John, for your presentation tonight.

There are a few more steps in the process as we move forward. As I said earlier, the main purpose of this hearing is to hear from you and get your
comments, including, you know, from what you've seen and heard here tonight.

If you wish to make a verbal comment, please sign in in the -- you know, with a comment registration card. You can turn those cards in at the table, and you will be placed in the queue for your comments.

The last page of the packet of information is a comment sheet. This paper has information where comments may be mailed or faxed, but you may also leave written comments in any one of the comment boxes located in the back of the rooms on the table.

I do want to remind you that you can submit both written and verbal comments tonight. You're not precluded from making additional comments after you leave here. If you leave and decide to make a comment, you can still mail/fax those or submit it through the Web site until December 1st.

Public hearings follows a formalized process where the formal public-comment session is solely intended for receiving public comments. We will not be answering any questions during the public-comment period. If you have questions, you can ask the project team during the break or after the hearing is over. The project teams are wearing names tags, and they'll be
available, you know, to answer your questions.

   The virtual tour of the project will be playing on the screens during the break. Please note that you can also see this on the project Web site.

   We will now take a 15-minute break and allow you the opportunity to view the exhibits and discuss with the project team.

   So the time is 7:07. We will . . .


We'll take a 15-minute break. Thank you.

   (A break was taken from 7:07 to 7:25 p.m.)

   MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Okay. We're gonna go ahead and get started with the comment-period part of the program. If you can please take your seat, out of courtesy of the ones that are gonna speak.

   One point I would like to make is that nothing that we have presented tonight is final. It is subject to change based on the comments that we receive from you from today up to December 1st.

   Let me remind you that we will not be answering questions during the verbal-comment period. This is time for you to provide your comments and statements for the record. If you have questions after the presentation, our staff will be happy to meet with you at the various exhibits. Project team members will
be available after the presentation to answer your questions one on one.

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to make a formal comment this evening has an opportunity to do so, we will limit all comments to three minutes. A timer, located on the screen, will indicate the beginning of your three minutes. After three minutes, you will be asked to be seated so the next speaker can make their comment. Unused time may not be given to another speaker.

As you may have noticed, we have a court reporter here to create a transcript of this hearing. The court reporter will take your comment for the official record of the hearing. Please be sure to face the court reporter when you speak so that your comments can be accurately recorded.

Now we will call out the names of the people who signed up to speak. I ask that you please use the microphone located in the center aisle, right here in front of me. Please state and spell your full name so that the court reporter may document your comment for the record.

The first speaker is John Davis.

(Technical difficulties with the
microphone.)

JOHN DAVIS: John Davis, J-O-H-N
D-A-V-I-S.

And I wanna urge all the workers here and
the committee to please consider that back in the 1980s,
Highway 183 was fully funded by bonds and under -- other
funding mechanism. In fact, 183 North was completed
about 15 years ago. 183 South should have been
completed, but instead, money was diverted to the new
toll road 130.

And the fact -- I urge y'all to look that
converting vital freeways into toll roads is blatantly
discriminatory to those in this community that are
disadvantaged economically; to put basically a rich
man's road in an area where people can ill afford to pay
the fees, to pay the exorbitant toll rates.

So there are other ways, like indexing the
gas tax would be the best solution, that has been frozen
for 20 years. With prices dropping and fluctuating, the
people won't mind paying five cents more a gallon. And
that indexing the gas tax, something -- something so
simple as that, will basically allow enough funding to
not have any toll roads. You'll save yourself a lotta
trouble by trying to force this into a community that
can't afford it.

Why not toll the north side of the community, that has enjoyed freeway access for over 20 years? And I've lived here and waited and waited and waited, and then finally, when there is some light that there's gonna be a nice road system, you -- you put up here that it's gonna be toll roads.

And when that happens -- and I know you guys are gonna force it through, like you tried to do in 2005. The CAMPO CTRMA are sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars in reserve funds. Use that money. Stop trying to force toll roads on existing roads, like you've done on Manor Expressway; like you're doing on Mopac. It's not gonna work here. And you can take it . . . replan it, do what you have to do, but . . . we will not accept toll roads on existing freeways.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: The next speaker is Mary Jo Hernandez.

MARY JO HERNANDEZ: Yes.

(Technical difficulties.)

MARY JO HERNANDEZ: My name's Mary Jo Hernandez, and I'm a member of the Restore Rundberg Revitalization Team. I speak for myself and for the affordability and accessibility of the northeastern, eastern, and southern sections of the city of Austin.
The Rundberg area of the city of Austin is bounded by 183 on the south, Metric Boulevard on the west, Braker Lane on the north, and Cameron/Dessau Lane on the east. 183 is a major thoroughfare and access point for the Rundberg area.

Rundberg, like all of Austin, is deeply concerned about affordability and traffic congestion. The median income for a family of four persons in the area is no more than $24,000 per year. The needs of the Rundberg area for free access to all of Austin are the same as those of other residents.

District 4 and the Rundberg area voted against the recent rail project, and for the Proposition 1, which now releases transportation moneys from the State rainy-day fund for nontolled-road improvements. These funds should be used for this project.

Tolled roads benefit only private investors, not the population of Austin, Travis County, Williamson, or Hays/Caldwell counties.

Tolled-road construction does not represent the values of the people. Free, tax-based road construction is clearly the choice of those who drive and those who will pay the cost of another toll road.

The residents of the Rundberg area cannot
afford to fund or to use toll roads.

Central Texas Regional Mobile Authority -- Mobility Authority and TxDOT, we ask you to listen to us. Respect and honor the will of the people. Improve 183 and keep it free from tolls.

Thank you.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Next person, Toni Rayner.

TONI RAYNER: Good evening, everyone.


I agree with the previous two speakers. But ... I have learned a lot in the meetings I've been attending. And the design of this roadway, I'm very impressed with. I can see where community concerns are being addressed. I'm very impressed with it.

I like the idea that major intersections have free ... bypasses, so that the neighbors can go around these major traffic lights without paying a toll. I notice those kinda things.

I love the hike-and-bike trail. For some reason, the official name's not sticking in my head. I kind of wish that, at least in our neighborhood -- I think your University Hills is the biggest neighborhood that directly abuts the planned
highway. I would really love it if we could actually have a real, nice sidewalk separated from the highway speeds. Surveys, I'm sure, have shown that we've got people making footpaths in the grass. And we have an elementary school 500 feet from the highway. We have a church right next to the highway. We should have had safe, wide sidewalks from the beginning, but we don't.

I would like it if you could figure out a way to give us . . . additional accommodations for the highway frontage.

The noise barrier is probably gonna be a real blessing, but the sidewalks are something we've needed for a very long time.

Also . . . excuse me. I've heard that the area around the Loyola Lane intersection is built on an old landfill, which is why the soil conditions are destroying the existing road surface. And that any excavations will be removing that landfill. Yay.

I don't know if there's a chance that it will be releasing methane into the air, and whether there's any kind of methane-collection accommodations being thought of.

And . . . that's most of it.

Looking at -- oh. One of the things on the maps, and on the presentation, if you could include
some sort of directional indicator, because 183 is . . .
really crazy-shaped. I'm very familiar with the road,
but other people approaching the maps are saying, "Where
the hell is this?" If you could have some sort of
directional finder, I think it would be easier for
strangers to . . . to wrap their brains around it.

Thank you.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Next speaker, Whitney
Siever.

WHITNEY SIEVER: I didn't write anything
down, so I'm . . . I'm just going on . . . just gonna
wing it. Shoo.

I think the first three speakers voiced my
concern about highways being highways, and . . .
think. . . .

I'll just write it down.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Next speaker, Willie
Lewis.

WILLIE LEWIS: Good evening. My name is
Willie Lewis. I . . . I live on Springdale Road, just
down south of 183.

The fact that, you know, we developing 183
now is something that's -- like the first speaker said,
is about 20 years late. But. You know, we -- we did
all the overpass all the way from north, and we get down
here, and now all of a sudden we need a toll road to --
to do the remainder. You know. And we've had over 20
years to do it.

And it's not because of this area. It's
because of the airport out there. People are having a
hard time gettin' to and from the airport. So that is
the reason that TxDOT is doin' it now.

And my thing is . . . the people that's in
the area is not going to use the toll road. They gonna
use the access road. And . . . it's -- this doesn't
make a lot of sense to me to -- at this point to be able
to drive from Cedar Park to Loyola Lane without . . .
express -- without toll, and then all of a sudden for
another five/six miles you're gonna have to do toll
roads. You know.

My thing is that . . . the . . . access to
183 going north has been eliminated between Springdale
Road and -- and 290, and that's because TxDOT built a
bridge. They didn't have enough comments, I guess,
to -- about it, so they just took the access out. Now
you have to go all the way north of Cameron Road to
access 183 if you goin' north. So it -- it just makes
it hard for the neighborhood, people in the
neighborhood, to -- to do the mobility. For me, I would
have to go back to Loyola Lane and then come in on 183
rather than goin' on Springdale, because if I do, then I have to drive on the access road.

    And believe me, it's gonna increase,
brave of the development on north and south on Springdale Road, for people going north.

    Thank you.

MARISABEL RAMTHUN: Thank you, everyone, for your comments tonight.

    After conclusion of the public-comment period on Monday, December 1st, we will compile and consider community input from tonight's public hearing and comments received before December 1st, prepare and circulate summary and analysis of the public hearing and comment response reports.

    If changes are made to the design based on the comments received, the environmental assessment may need to be revise. The environmental assessment would then be review again by the Federal Highway Administration.

    We anticipate that the Federal Highway Administration will issue an environmental finding early next year.

    It is important to note that you can stay informed and get involved by visiting the project Web site, www.BergstromExpressway.com; call in the telephone
hotline at 1 (866) 424-3583; or inviting the project team to meet with your group.

Again, the comment -- the public-comment period ends on December 1st, 2014.

Thank you, everyone, for attending tonight's public hearing, and we're now adjourned.

(Hearing adjourned at 7:41 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

I, RABIN' MONROE, Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, hereby certify that the above transcript is a true and correct transcription of the proceedings, done to the best of my skill and ability;

And I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties in the above-listed action, and, further, that I am not financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Certified to by me this 2nd day of DECEMBER, 2014.

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