



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority



News Release

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MoPac Project Celebrates Texas Arbor Day With Tree Giveaway

AUSTIN, Texas (Nov. 7, 2014) – To help celebrate Texas Arbor Day, 185 residents who live next to the MoPac Expressway received free five-gallon trees today as part of a giveaway sponsored by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. The trees were distributed through a partnership with the non-profit group TreeFolks. The Mobility Authority provided the trees as part of a larger outreach effort aimed at thanking residents for their patience during construction of the MoPac Improvement Project. The tree giveaway followed the distribution of more than 600 “Care Bags” with gifts including wildflower seeds, a MoPac flashlight, earplugs, and a voucher for the free tree.

“We are building Express Lanes on MoPac that are going to transform the corridor and give drivers options to bypass congestion,” said Mike Heiligenstein, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority. “We’re also building seven miles of sound walls that will create a more peaceful environment for nearby residents.”

However, in the short term, building the improvements mean noise and other impacts for nearby residents.

“The Care Bags and tree giveaway are examples of the ways we’re reaching out to residents to express our appreciation for their patience and understanding during construction,” said Heiligenstein.

The 185 residents who requested trees were able to choose from four different species including Texas Redbud, Mexican Plum, Texas Red Oak, and Burr Oak. The Texas Red Oak was the most popular with 63 being requested. The trees were delivered to residents by TreeFolks, a local non-profit group, that will also offer residents advice about where to plant the trees and how to care for them.

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“Our mission is to encourage the planting and care of trees throughout Austin so we can maintain and enhance the urban forest,” said Thaïs Perkins, Executive Director of TreeFolks. “We are excited to have the Mobility Authority support this vital work.”

Perkins says trees provide shade and reduce the heat island effect that drives up temperatures in urban areas. The result can be less energy consumption and lower power bills for residents. Trees also help prevent erosion and contribute to cleaner air and water.

In addition to the tree giveaway, the Mobility Authority is sponsoring the TreeFolks City Shade Program, which involves the recruitment of local volunteers to plant trees in parks and other public places around Austin. Also, the Mobility Authority will be sponsoring a TreeFolks event in spring 2015 that will provide more than 500 one-gallon trees to residents who live in neighborhoods near MoPac.

Beyond the partnership with TreeFolks, the Mobility Authority has committed to enhancing the MoPac corridor by planting hundreds of new trees, installing landscaping and painting many of the concrete structures.

The \$204 million MoPac Improvement Project involves adding one new tolled Express Lane in each direction to an 11-mile stretch of Loop 1 (MoPac) between Cesar Chavez Street and Parmer Lane. The project also includes seven miles of sound walls, as well as improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridor.

For more information about the MoPac Improvement Project visit www.MopacExpress.com.

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 the 183A Toll Road in Williamson County and the 290 Toll Road (Manor Expressway) in east Austin and is constructing Express Lanes on MoPac Expressway. For more information about the Mobility Authority, visit www.MobilityAuthority.com

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