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### **TxDOT, NTTA Complete SH 161 Project Agreement**

Plano – Today at its regularly-scheduled meeting, The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) Board of Directors approved a resolution permitting the interim executive director to execute the State Highway (SH) 161 project agreement, which sets forth the specifics for the road's construction and subsequent operation. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is scheduled to consider the agreement next week at the February meeting of the Texas Transportation Commission.

“Working together, NTTA and TxDOT have completed an important milestone in the development of SH 161,” said Paul N. Wageman, Chairman of the NTTA Board of Directors. “I commend the Texas Transportation Commissioners and TxDOT staff for their collaborative approach to moving this critical mobility project forward.”

Per the project agreement, NTTA will pay \$458 million as an upfront payment to TxDOT. Those funds will be reserved for transportation projects selected by local leaders in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. This upfront payment includes reimbursement for construction of Phases 2 and 3, both of which TxDOT is responsible for completing. The NTTA will pay for and construct Phase 4 as well as the toll gantries on Phases 2 and 3. SH 161 will be an all-electronic toll collection facility owned and operated in perpetuity by the NTTA. However, beginning in year 52 net revenue will be split equally with TxDOT.

“Partnership is the key to advancing transportation projects in our state,” said Texas Transportation Commissioner Ted Houghton. “TxDOT and NTTA are working arm-in-arm to develop two important projects for the Metroplex. The SH 161 and Southwest Parkway/Chisholm Trail projects will both advance thanks to the spirit of cooperation our two agencies are showing.”

In April 2008, the NTTA and TxDOT agreed on a negotiated value for SH 161 clearing the way for TxDOT to begin construction. In October 2008, after TxDOT committed to make a toll equity loan to the NTTA to strengthen the credit rating for the project, which will be financed as a stand alone project, the NTTA exercised its option to develop SH 161. After that, the two entities began negotiating a project agreement. Now that the project agreement is complete, the NTTA will be able to finalize the terms of the toll equity loan and submit the project to the rating agencies, which are required steps before the Authority can accept and then finance the project. Final approval of the toll equity loan by the commission is still needed, and may occur after the loan agreement is negotiated.

Located in southwestern Dallas County, the SH 161 project is an approximately 11.5-mile link in the growing loop around Dallas County. It starts at SH 183 just south of the terminus of the President George Bush Turnpike and ends at IH 20. Designed as a limited access toll road, it will open on a phased basis starting in August of 2009.

#### ***About the NTTA***

The North Texas Tollway Authority, a political subdivision of the state of Texas, is authorized to acquire, construct, maintain, repair and operate turnpike projects in the north Texas region.

The nine-member governing board is comprised of Chairman Paul N. Wageman; Vice Chairman Victor Vandergriff; and Directors Kenneth Barr, Gary Base, Bob Day, David Denison, Michael Nowels, Bob Shepard and Alan E. Sims.

The NTTA serves Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant counties and is responsible for the NTTA System, consisting of the Dallas North Tollway, President George Bush Turnpike, 121 Tollway Addison Airport Toll Tunnel, Lewisville Lake Toll Bridge and the Mountain Creek Lake Bridge.

The NTTA is able to raise capital for construction projects through the issuance of turnpike revenue bonds. NTTA toll projects are not a part of the state highway system and receive no direct tax funding. Tolls are collected to repay debt and to operate and maintain the roadways.

Visit the NTTA Web site at [www.ntta.org](http://www.ntta.org) or call 214-461-2000 for additional information about the NTTA. For customer service, please call 972-818-NTTA (6882).

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