



North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Transportation Department



MEDIA RELEASE

SH 161 Moves Closer to Completion

Dec. 21, 2007 (Arlington) – The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have reached an agreement on the terms and conditions and cost assumptions to build State Highway 161 as a toll road, meeting the deadline set by Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Ric Williamson last month.

After weeks of negotiations, NTTA and TxDOT came to agreement for the purposes of the market valuation for SH 161 on financial aspects including operations and maintenance costs, toll escalation rates, terms and payments and traffic and revenue figures.

"I am proud of the hard work of our partners," said Michael Morris, director of transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments. "The travelers of the region will soon benefit from these negotiations."

The planned toll road will run from State Highway 183 to Interstate 20 in Dallas County. The long-anticipated road has been included in regional transportation plans since the 1950s. Planners aim for the toll road to relieve congestion on SH 360 and Loop 12.

"The North Texas Tollway Authority Board of Directors and staff are pleased with the progress made on the State Highway 161 toll project with the Texas Department of Transportation," said NTTA Board Chairman Paul N. Wageman. "The process of market valuation, as outlined in Senate Bill 792, passed by the 80th Texas Legislature, resulted in a positive step forward for mobility solutions in north Texas and specifically Dallas County. NTTA is committed to furthering development of this project to meet important regional milestones. I also want to thank the stakeholders, TxDOT and the North Central Texas Council of Governments who worked tirelessly to bring this project closer to completion," Wageman added.

As a toll road, SH 161 could bring additional money for other much-needed regional transportation projects, similar to the deal struck for SH 121. NTTA's \$3.2 billion payment for the right to build and operate SH 121 in Collin and Denton counties has provided the region the money to continue needed highway projects that will benefit the Metroplex's 6 million residents.

"One of TxDOT's goals is to empower local and regional leaders to solve their local and regional transportation problems," said Bill Hale, District Engineer for the Texas Department of Transportation Dallas District. "It's a new way of thinking and results of the process helped us solve our differences for SH 161. Reaching out to transportation leaders for their input, suggestions, and partnership has adds flexibility and synergy to solving the Dallas area's transportation needs."

"With the demand for transportation increasing faster than the state's ability to build infrastructure it is critical that Texas look to innovative financing methods to improve mobility in this state as quickly and efficiently as possible," Hale added.

The road will be built in four phases. The first phase, completion of frontage roads and interchanges at SH 183, is due to open next summer. Phase two, to be completed in 2009, will involve construction of the frontage roads from SH 183 to IH 30. Efforts are underway to advance the construction of frontage roads across the Union Pacific Railroad line. The third phase, main lanes from SH 183 to IH 30, is expected to be complete by November 2010. The final phase, the IH 30 interchange and the main lanes to IH 20 are expected to be built by 2012.

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 William W. Meadows, Directors Gary Base, Bob Day, David Denison, Michael Nowels, Bob Shepard, Alan E. Sims and Victor Vandergriff.

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, 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 or call 214-461-2000 for additional information about the NTTA. For Customer Service, please call 972-818-NTTA (6882).

About the Regional Transportation Council:

The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for regional transportation planning in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since 1974. The MPO works in cooperation with the region's transportation providers to address the complex transportation needs of the rapidly growing metropolitan area. The Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area includes Collin, Dallas, Denton, Rockwall and Tarrant counties, as well as portions of Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman and Parker Counties. The RTC's 40 members include local elected or appointed officials from the metropolitan area and representatives from each of the area's transportation providers. More information can be found at www.nctcog.org.

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