

Hays County Commissioner Mark Jones Presentation to CAMPO Board

Speaking In Support of Building SH 45 SW

September 10, 2012

Chairman Conley and CAMPO Board Members,

I am Mark Jones, Hays County Commissioner for Precinct 2, which includes six cities: Buda, Kyle, Hays City, Mountain City, Niederwald and Uhland.

The Hays County Commissioners Court requests that CAMPO retain SH 45 SW in its Regional Transportation Plan. In our view the reasons to keep SH 45 in the CAMPO Plan are much stronger than the reasons given to remove it. I would like to make the following ten points:

1. Currently, traffic between Hays County and Austin is contributing to severe congestion on Brodie Lane and Slaughter Lane as the shortest route between FM 1626 and Loop 1. About 40% of Hays County residents work in Travis County and about 20% of students at Texas State University in San Marcos reside in Travis County. Traffic flows both ways. (Please see the first attached map.)
2. Hays County has relied on the adoption of SH 45 SW in the CAMPO Plan in our commitment of \$70 million in TxDOT pass-through funding to expand FM 1626 over the next two years. Our contractor will begin construction on October 1. Without the SH 45 SW connection from FM 1626 to Loop 1, that expansion is much less effective.
3. Travis County has purchased the right-of-way for SH 45 SW between Loop 1 and FM 1626 within Travis County based on voter approval of \$3.3 million in 1997. Hays County has purchased the required right-of-way for SH 45 SW within Hays County.
4. SH 45 SW can be built without harming the environment according to City of Austin staff ("it is technically feasible to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts in a manner consistent with a goal of non-degradation."). The CTRMA has also solicited state-of-the-art environmental designs for SH 45 SW, which are shown on their web site. Much of the land along SH 45 SW is set aside as preserves by the City of Austin and is therefore not available for roadside development. (Please see the second attached map.)
5. An example of green highway design is the City of Austin currently funded construction of the new highway flyovers at Loop 1 and US 290 with the TxDOT pass-through program. This project is in the center of the recharge zone, and includes appropriate water quality protection.

6. Hays County supports environmental protection in the construction and operation of SH 45. Much of Austin and Hays County are located in the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone and Austin and Hays County believe strict measures to protect water quality are important.

7. The third attached map shows the Census-designated Austin Urbanized Area in pink and the aquifer recharge zone in blue. You can see that much of the recharge zone in Austin is already developed. There are 52,000 people currently living in the Austin Urbanized Area within Hays County, primarily east of the recharge zone. These are the people who now drive on Brodie Lane and Slaughter Lane to get to Loop 1.

8. Growth is continuing throughout the CAMPO area, from **1.7 million** in 2010 to **3.25 million** in 2035. This amount of growth requires all of the roadways adopted in the CAMPO 2035 Plan to be built or expanded, including SH 45 SW, Manchaca Rd. and Loop 1. Work is underway to add managed lanes to Loop 1, a major state highway, from Parmer Lane on the north to Slaughter Lane on the south.

9. As an example of the continuing growth, the City of Austin Emerging Projects Report shows over **2,000 new single family homes**, a **hotel** and **offices** near Circle C within the recharge zone along SH 45 between FM 1826 and Loop 1. At the average rate of 10 daily vehicle trips per residence, this will add about **20,000** vehicle trips to SH 45, Loop 1 and FM 1826. There are also **900 proposed new single family homes** in the Brodie Lane area, which will add about **9,000** vehicle trips a day to the area roadways.

10. We do not believe that roads cause population growth. Population has grown in the Austin Metropolitan Area without regard to whether roads are constructed or not. Hays County grew from 100,000 to 160,000 people between 2000 and 2010 without any significant increase in roadway lanes miles. CAMPO projects that Hays County will grow in population by 2035 to be almost as large as Williamson County is today (371,200 vs. 423,000 people).

Hays County requests that CAMPO maintain SH 45 SW in its Regional Transportation Plan recognizing that existing development makes the roadway necessary and future growth in the CAMPO region will make it even more so. SH 45 SW can be built in a way to protect water quality.

I would like to ask everyone in the audience who supports building SH 45 to stand up.

Thank you,

Mark Jones

Hays County Commissioner, Precinct 2