

MoPac 1 Project Status Report to MoNAC
October 8th, 2007

The *MoPac 1* project continues to progress. Currently, environmental studies (including noise and air analyses, traffic studies, etc.) are being conducted and preparation of the draft environmental assessment is nearing completion. In response to public comments made at the second round of open houses in April regarding HOV lanes and general purpose lanes, the project team is performing additional traffic and noise analyses to study those options. The team is also studying a potential connection to possible US 183 managed lanes.

The Aesthetics Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings concluded in August. A copy of the AAC summary report can be found on the *MoPac 1* project website. The project team was fortunate to have active citizen participation which provided helpful guidance on the various aesthetic elements of the project (e.g. noise barriers and landscaping elements, etc.). The group was so dynamic that TxDOT has decided to invite the members to critique detailed concepts during the detailed design phase.

The next project activity involving the public will be a series of noise workshops. The project team will divide the approximately seven miles of potential barriers into 13 segments, and will invite the adjacent property owners, as well as neighbors, to the workshops to present the potential barriers. At some point in the future, the adjacent property owners will then have an opportunity to vote on whether or not they want a noise barrier built along their property in areas where the walls are determined reasonable and feasible. Non-adjacent property owners can provide input but only adjacent property owners can vote. The majority vote will determine the outcome for each individual barrier. We expect these workshops to occur in early 2008 – check the website for information on the exact dates.

On a related note, construction is nearing completion for the TxDOT Austin District Sample Noise Barrier and will be available for viewing soon. The sample barriers are located at the TxDOT Bull Creek campus on the east side of Bull Creek Road across from the Westminster Manor retirement facility. Please note that this sample barrier does not represent the designs that would be used for the *MoPac 1* project, nor will it demonstrate noise abatement, but will provide a sense of scale and visual appearance of a representative barrier.

Beyond the noise barrier workshops, it is anticipated that the environmental document will be submitted to FHWA for review in spring 2008 and an official public hearing following after FHWA has approved the document..

We thank everyone for their continued interest in the unique and important project.