

November 4, 2010

Hon. Rob Franke, Chair
Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition
2801 Network Blvd., Suite 600
Frisco, TX 75034

RE: State Highway 183

Dear Chair Franke:

State Highway 183 (SH 183) has been a major transportation corridor in the North Texas area since the 1940s. In 1959 SH 183 was reconstructed from a two lane asphalt roadway to a four lane divided freeway with frontage roads. At that time it had a design speed of only 50 miles per hour.

Due to population growth in the mid-cities area, an additional main lane was added in each direction in 1973. There have been no major capital or operational improvements to SH 183 in the ensuing 37 years.

That does not mean, however, that SH 183 has been efficiently capable of handling traffic during the intervening period. Due to the continued growth of the Metroplex, a Major Investment Study regarding SH 183 was concluded in May of 2000. The Major Investment Study had seven primary recommendations, including the reconstruction of SH 183 with eight general purpose main lanes and the incorporation of managed lanes.

A preferred alternative was selected and preliminary engineering and environmental assessment was conducted from 2001 to 2004. On February 10, 2004, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued their "finding of no significant impact" (FONSI). A public hearing based on the FONSI was held on May 25, 2006.

Daily peak hour traffic loads on portions of SH 183 run from 175,000 to 200,000. The current traffic volumes on SH 183 are 20% to 50% over capacity on a daily basis. The environmental assessment reevaluation is currently pending completion to permit SH 183 to accommodate anticipated traffic based on the Mobility 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

SH 183 from Interstate Highway I-35E to State Highway 360 is a heavily used regional highway that serves as the southern entrance of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. SH 183 serves as a mobility corridor for Dallas, central Irving, northeast Fort Worth and forms a southern boundary of the DFW airport.

Although TxDOT has continued to advance the project, state funding at this critical juncture of development is oversubscribed for a project of this magnitude. Additionally, the 80th Session of the Texas Legislature allowed certain innovative financing options including public-private partnerships, to lapse through the imposition of a sunset date.

We are respectfully requesting the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition to address the capacity and funding issues that constrain the SH 183 improvements from being implemented in the foreseeable future. DRMC has demonstrated its ability to create a regional consensus around major thoroughfares to advance major transportation projects which TxDOT has not been able to accomplish in its sole capacity.

We formally request the creation of a SH 183 Stakeholder Coalition, acting under the auspices of DRMC to seek the changes necessary to provide TxDOT innovative financing tools to fund, construct and operate State Highway 183 consistent with the anticipated traffic levels in the 2030 Mobility Transportation Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Hon. Linda Koop
City Councilmember
City of Dallas

Hon. Rick Stopfer
City Councilmember
City of Irving