**TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

TRAVIS County | **MINUTE ORDER** | 

AUSTIN District

Subchapter F, Chapter 223, Transportation Code prescribes the process by which the Texas Department of Transportation (department) may enter into a design-build contract with a private entity that provides for the design, construction, expansion, extension, related capital maintenance, rehabilitation, alteration, or repair of a highway project. Transportation Code, §223.242 authorizes the department to enter into, in each fiscal year, up to three design-build contracts for highway projects with estimated construction costs of $50 million or more.

State Highway 71 is a major thoroughfare for commuters traveling from downtown Austin to the Austin Bergstrom International Airport and for central Texas motorists traveling to Houston. Due to an increase in traffic and demand, there is a need to address operational and capacity deficiencies in this mobility constrained corridor. Upgrades to SH 71 would improve mobility in the area and meet future travel demand stemming from projected population growth.

The SH 71 Express Toll Lanes Project (Project) in Travis County provides for the addition of express toll lanes from Presidential Boulevard to just east of SH 130, along with the realignment of Farm to Market 973 from just south of the Colorado River to a point approximately 0.5 miles south of the current SH 71/FM 973 intersection. The estimated total cost of the Project is approximately $140 million.

The delivery of the Project can be expedited through the employment of innovative methods for development and construction typically available in a design-build contract. Completion of the Project is a crucial element to responding to traffic congestion throughout the Austin and Travis County area and is critical to the region's continued mobility and economic vitality.

Transportation Code, §223.245 prescribes requirements for the procurement of a project to be developed under a design-build contract, and requires the department to publish a notice advertising the issuance of a request for qualifications in the *Texas Register* and on the department's internet website that includes the criteria that will be used to evaluate qualification statements, the relative weight given to the criteria, and the deadline by which qualification statements must be received.

IT IS THERFORE ORDERED by the Texas Transportation Commission (commission) that the department is authorized to publish in the *Texas Register* and to post on the department's internet website, a request for qualifications to develop, design and construct the SH 71 Express Toll Lanes Project.

Submitted and reviewed by:

Director, Strategic Projects Division

Recommended by:

Executive Director

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Minute Number | Date Passed