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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**TRAVIS COUNTY LOOKS FOR REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC PROBLEMS
ANTICIPATED FROM PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
THE EASTERN PART OF THE COUNTY**

**Travis County, Austin, Manor, TxDOT, neighborhood associations, and developers work on ways
to build and fund area-wide projects**

Austin, TX – At its October 26, 2010 meeting the Commissioners' Court discussed at length the need for an area-wide solution to traffic problems anticipated to come from five possible development projects near Manor where SH 130 crosses US 290 East. These developments will place tens of thousands of vehicle trips on existing roadways that don't have the capacity to accommodate a large influx of traffic at an acceptable level of service. At the meeting, one of the developers was requesting approval of a preliminary plan for one of the projects. Commissioner Davis and other members of the Court took advantage of the opportunity to press for a stronger commitment from the developers for a solution to the traffic problems.

Developers are typically required to build the streets within their developments and to upgrade the part of existing roads that abut their property. However, the County Code does not currently include a policy under which developers upgrade existing roadways or build new roadways outside the boundaries of their property. It is these external roadways that will be impacted most heavily by the five new developments. Until the County Code is amended to address external roads, however, the County must approve a new development even if the developer hasn't made any provision for the upgrading of external roads.

Everyone agrees in principle on the need for a regional solution to the traffic problems that will be created on the external roads, a point pressed hard by Commissioner Davis in whose Precinct these five potential developments will occur. To that end, there have been several meetings of concerned parties including the County, the Cities of Austin and Manor, TxDot, neighborhood associations, and developers. A list of possible regional road projects costing over \$250.4 million resulted from the meetings. There was general agreement on which projects had the highest priority and developers expressed a willingness to examine how they could help fund the projects.

"I would like to see the County use the public-private partnership model to build these potential roadway projects", stated Commissioner Davis. "This would basically require the County and the developers to act as partners and each bear half the cost of the projects".

Commissioner Davis anticipates the County will use the public-private partnership model to build these potential roadway projects. This basically requires the County and developers to each bear half the cost of the projects. The County's share is funded through voter-approved "general obligation bonds" that are paid for by countywide property taxes. Members of the Court have indicated the next election to approve general obligation bonds will likely occur in November 2011.

It remains to be determined how the developers will fund their share of the costs. The developers have proposed entering into a "regional phasing agreement" with the County under which developers would pay a fee to the County each time a lot in one of the new developments is sold. The County could make roadway improvements only when enough lot fees have accumulated to pay for a particular project. County staff has instead proposed that the County create a "public improvement district," or PID. This allows roadway upgrades to be made sooner. It lets the County issue "PID bonds" to pay the cost of the improvements up front. The PID bonds are then paid down as the County collects the fees from sales of lots in the new developments.

County staff and the developers will continue efforts to develop an area-wide agreement and it is expected that several large projects will be identified and in need of funding. Also, the Court anticipates establishing a Citizens Bond Advisory Committee to assist it with determining the best use of the anticipated November 2011 bond funds. Commissioner Davis will be seeking community volunteers from Precinct 1 to participate on the committee.