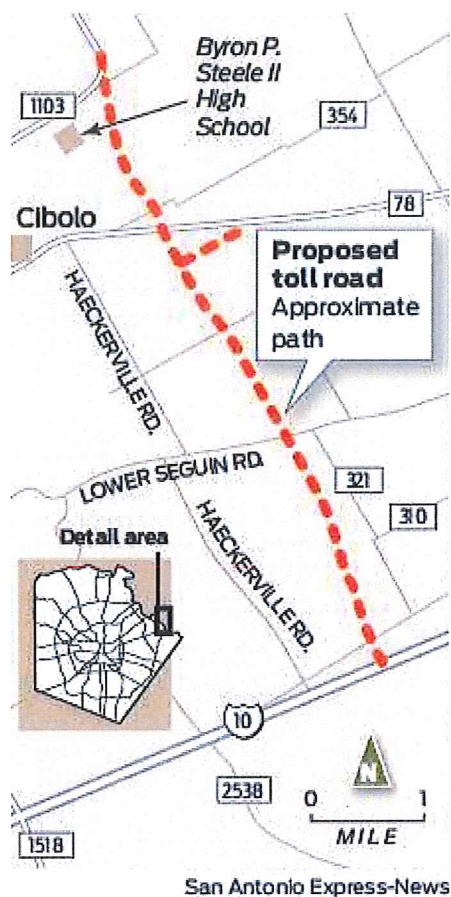


# Cibolo advances plans for toll road to I-10

By Jeff B. Flinn STAFF WRITER



The city of Cibolo is considering a \$110 million, 7-mile toll road to help ease congestion in the area.

City Council members voted 7-0 Tuesday night to allow City Manager Robert Herrera to pursue a partnership with the Texas Turnpike Corp., a private toll road company that has legislative authority to build and operate toll roads in Texas.

As presented, the four-lane road would stretch from FM 1103 at Wagon Wheel Way south to Interstate 10, a couple of miles east of Loop 1604.

The project would be entirely financed by the corporation, which could have the expressway operational in a fraction of the time it takes to get roads funded and built through Texas Department of Transportation or Metropolitan Planning Organization, city officials said.

A citizens committee that included supporters and critics of the idea spent two months studying the feasibility of the project before voting unanimously to recommend that the city proceed with developing the plan.

Mayor Allen Dunn said there will be public hearings to discuss the plan, once it's ready, and it will be presented at civic clubs and homeowners associations before it goes to the council for a final vote.

John Crew of Dallas, majority owner and chairman of the corporation's board of directors, spoke about the TTC plans for the road, should they be given the go-ahead.

"It will be a limited access, high-speed facility that lets you get in and out of your community," Crew said. "It's about moving people and alleviating the congestion you're currently dealing with. This would be a needed facility."

The toll road, he said, would cost travelers about \$0.30 cents a mile, or \$2.10 to drive the entire length.

The designed route would offer two lanes in each direction with a bridge over FM 78 and another bridge over the railroad tracks. Crew said there would be a speed limit of 55 mph on the northern portion near FM 1103, but it could jump to 70 mph past the bridge.

Traffic figures Crew shared show a traffic count of 120,000 vehicles a day on Interstate 35 in the Cibolo area, between 35,000 and 40,000 a day on I-10, and roughly 17,000 a day on FM 1103.

"We'd need 5,000 to 6,000 cars per day (on the toll road), to start," he said, which the corporation thinks is doable.

Crew said he was first introduced to city officials when he presented the tollway concept at a January 2015 meeting in Seguin. The corporation's previous venture — a proposed 27-mile toll road in North Texas between Greenville and Garland, to alleviate gridlock along Interstate 30 — was turned down last year.

If given the green light, the corporation would have to negotiate with landowners to acquire the 42 parcels of land the road would cross. Construction itself is expected to take about 18 months, officials said.

"The concept is, we have Cibolo growing at a phenomenal rate," Crew said. "When I tell (residents) that I can save them 45 minutes, would you give me \$2, they say, 'Yes.'"

"That seems a little high, but by the time we get this built, and given the continual growth in Cibolo, that would be pretty comparable to expect," he added. "We've got to pay for a pretty extensive bridge to build to get over the railroad track and FM 78. It's got to save time, or people won't use it," he added. [jflinn@express-news.net](mailto:jflinn@express-news.net)

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John Crew, Texas Turnpike Corp.