



Big projects to ease congestion for Oklahoma City, Durant

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At Monday's monthly meeting of the Oklahoma Transportation Commission, three projects were awarded that will greatly improve driver access in the Oklahoma City and Durant areas.

Commissioners approved a \$9 million contract to Allen Contracting, Inc. for construction on the west end of the new I-40 Crosstown to reconnect the interstate to downtown Oklahoma City. Using the ramp at Agnew to reconnect at Pennsylvania Ave., this project will extend to Klein Ave. and will provide access to and from Virginia Ave. and Klein Ave.

Construction is expected to begin in the fall and will take approximately eight months to complete. The project will give drivers added options when choosing where to enter and exit and is expected to ease congestion on the Crosstown on and off-ramps and in Downtown Oklahoma City.

Another Crosstown project is expected to be awarded in the fall to finalize lane configurations on the existing I-40 and begin the eastern most access ramps to downtown. The project will focus on the east end of the Crosstown and will add a dedicated off-ramp lane from southbound I-235 to eastbound I-40 and another off-ramp lane from westbound I-40 to northbound I-235.

The upcoming Boulevard project, which remains in the design phase, will involve five separate projects to connect the east and west ends of the I-40 Crosstown to the downtown district. In the meantime, these projects will improve congestion and begin the connections to the future Boulevard.

Commissioners also approved a \$3 million contract for an interim project to improve traffic movement on SH-74 (Portland Ave.) in northwest Oklahoma City by constructing right-turn lanes at three city streets prior to the SH-74 corridor reconstruction projects currently scheduled for 2015 and 2016.

The project, awarded to Shell Construction Company of Oklahoma City, will add dedicated right turn lanes on north and southbound SH-74 at N.W. 150th St. (33rd St., Edmond) and N.W. 164th St. (15th St., Edmond), and on northbound SH-74 at N.W. 178th St. (Edmond Rd.) in northwestern Oklahoma County. This heavily traveled commuter route carries an average of more than 24,000 vehicles a day, with future estimates for traffic to increase to 28,000 vehicles a day in the next 10 years.

Currently, two projects are scheduled in 2015 and 2016 to widen SH-74 and reconstruct SH-74 intersections at N.W. 150th St. (33rd St., Edmond), N.W. 164th St. (15th St., Edmond), N.W. 178th St. (Edmond Rd.), N.W. 192nd St. (Danforth Rd.) and N.W. 206th St. (Covell Rd.). When the entire SH-74 corridor reconstruction is complete, the road will be four to five lanes between Memorial Rd. and Waterloo Rd. at the Logan County line.

Also approved was the east portion of the US-70 Durant Bypass. The \$24 million project, with incentives, was awarded to Dondlinger & Sons Construction. It will connect the west half of the bypass beginning at SH-78 and extending to just east of Sawmill Rd. This portion will be a two lane highway and is expected to take about a year and a half to build.

Construction on the west side, which takes traffic south of Durant, began in August 2009 and is anticipated to be completed this summer. The west side interchanges with US-69 and US-69 Business and ties in to US-78 where the east portion will be constructed.

The bypass is expected to reduce the amount of truck traffic in town and ease congestion. Semi-trucks have a difficult time making 90-degree turns which can cause traffic backups.

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