



## TxDOT joins project

### Construction to begin this month on stretch of U.S. Highway 380

By Bj Lewis / Staff Writer

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Texas Department of Transportation officials announced Thursday a project plan to widen a seven-mile-plus stretch of U.S. Highway 380 west of Denton.

The nearly \$26.8 million project is a combination of work and financial commitments between TxDOT, Denton and Wise counties and other regional partners.

County Commissioner Andy Eads said he is pleased to see the project moving forward. Eads said he has been working on the plan since 2007.

"This has been a dangerous stretch of county highway and we're pleased the state of Texas, the region and Denton County each contributed the necessary money to see this project to completion. It was a true partnership."

TxDOT's construction documents show the project would extend from the Wise County line to a point west of FM156. Eventually, highway officials plan to widen the road to Interstate 35.

Bill Nelson, with the TxDOT office in Decatur, said the project is somewhat unique. The Decatur office, which typically works in Wise and Jack counties, is assisting Denton County because of the volume of work the Denton office has under contract.

"We currently have a project that comes up to the county line, so this is an extension of that," Nelson said.

The end result of the construction will be a four-lane divided highway that will tie into the lanes being built in Wise County, coming in at a little more than seven miles long, Nelson said.

Jagoe-Public Co. of Denton is handling the construction, which begins this month and barring any major delays, will be completed in September 2014.

Nelson said motorists driving the road today can see where the fences have been relocated in anticipation of the construction. Some of the utilities are still being relocated, which might present a challenge to the contractor because of slow negotiations with utility owners in certain places. Nelson said TxDOT will be lending a hand to accelerate things.

Nelson said the plan is to have as minimal an impact on traffic flow as possible once construction begins.

<sup>f</sup> “At some point we will have to make some transitions, and we will have to build those transitions, so there will  
<sup>b</sup> be times we are working in close proximity to traffic.”

A possible headache in the early stage of construction could come with drainage work under the roadway, Nelson said.

“That will probably be the most noticeable and hopefully the most disruptive,” he said. “Hopefully, after we get that work done, we will have minimum interference with daily traffic.”

Also, Nelson said that at some point during construction, motorists would lose the benefit of left and right turn lanes at intersections. Nelson said officials are asking people to exercise more caution when turning off the roadway.

“Once all construction is complete, we will have left turn lanes, full 10-foot shoulders ... we may not have dedicated right turn lanes, but we will finish with a much improved roadway.”

*BJ LEWIS can be reached at 940-566-6875. His e-mail address is [blewis@dentonrc.com](mailto:blewis@dentonrc.com) .*