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Project to expand U.S. 75 in Collin County to begin in 2014



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When Raymond Cotnoir moved near U.S. 75 in 1977, the highway in Allen was four lanes with no frontage roads and barely a shoulder.

Now, it's a six-lane behemoth. And it's only going to get bigger.

The Texas Department of Transportation is moving forward with its expansion of U.S. 75 in Collin County. A large stretch is already being rebuilt in McKinney. Next up will be a widening of about seven miles of the highway in Allen and Plano.

Construction on that project is set to begin in early 2014. TxDOT plans to add a lane on the northbound and southbound sides. They also will rebuild the entrance ramps and exit along the stretch.

Officials said the goal is to eliminate a bottleneck that occurs in Plano when the road switches from six lanes to eight lanes. And engineers hope the new ramps will reduce backups during peak traffic hours.

The effort is needed, they said, because use of the road continues to grow. This year, about 230,000 vehicles travel the stretch of road each day. That number is expected to reach 380,000 by 2045.

But the traffic may have to get worse before it gets better.

TxDOT spokesman Mark Pettit said that existing lanes in the area are expected to remain open as much as possible during busy hours. If lanes need to be shut down, they will most likely be closed at night.

"The most significant disruption will be at areas where the entrance and exit ramps are being altered," Pettit said.

TxDOT will brief the public on its plans at a 6 p.m. open house and public hearing Tuesday at the Allen Senior Recreation Center.

A previous hearing drew more than 100 residents, many of whom were worried about added noise that the expansion would bring.

The agency has since conducted noise level studies around the site. TxDOT plans to build a large noise wall on the east side of the highway near McDermott Road.

Cotnoir, who was one of those residents who complained, said his worries about noise have been mostly eased. But, since he lives about a block east of the highway near the interchange with Exchange Parkway, he has other concerns too.

The repositioning of exit ramps may mean that motorists will be driving past his neighborhood at high speeds. And it will bring the highway closer to a park near his house.

He expects a similarly large turnout of skeptical people at this week's meeting.

"There are a lot of people with the same concerns," he said.

What: TxDOT public hearing on U.S. 75 expansion

When: 6 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Allen Senior Recreation Center, 451 St. Mary Drive, Allen

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