

Texas Transportation Commission gives expansion of State Highway 183 green light



14

7

0



Share



0

4



AA

By [BRANDON FORMBY](#)

Transportation Writer

bformby@dallasnews.com

Published: 29 May 2014 11:48 PM

Updated: 30 May 2014 12:51 AM

State Highway 183's long wait for an overhaul is over.

Expansion work will begin later this year on the highway that connects Dallas and Tarrant counties as well as dozens of cities to the southern entrance to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. It will be the first time since 1973 that the east-west corridor, also called Airport Freeway, will undergo a substantial upgrade.

The project, which will include upgrades to State Highway 114 and Loop 12, won't add any new free, main lanes to any of the highways. All of the expanded capacity will come from the toll express lanes.

The work is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

"It was unfortunately overlooked for quite a few years," said state Rep. Linda Harper-Brown, whose Irving district includes Airport Freeway.

The Texas Department of Transportation will rebuild 10.6 miles of the highway in Irving and Dallas and 1.5 miles in Euless. It also will add an 18.3-mile toll express lane in each direction from State Highway 121 in Bedford to Interstate 35E in Dallas.

The work is part of an \$847.6 million contract that the Texas Transportation Commission unanimously awarded Thursday to Southgate Mobility Partners.

Southgate also will add toll express lanes on 2.5 miles of Loop 12 and 10.5 miles of State Highway 114, including through Las Colinas. There also will be minor upgrades to portions of 114 and 183 that aren't being completely rebuilt.

Direct connections from the new 183 and Loop 12 toll lanes will be added. That interchange also will get new direct ramps from eastbound 183 to northbound Loop 12 and southbound Loop 12 to westbound 183.

"There are many transportation needs within these corridors," Ed Pensock, TxDOT's strategic projects director, told transportation commissioners Thursday.

The toll portions, also called TEXpress lanes, will operate with fluctuating prices like the similar lanes on LBJ Freeway and the DFW Connector. Toll rates will fluctuate based on congestion, with the goal of keeping motorists moving 50 mph or more.

The North Tarrant Express, which expands 183 and Interstate 820 from Bedford to Fort Worth, will open later this year. It, too, will have TEXpress lanes.

TxDOT is expected to set the toll rates next month. An agency spokesman said the North Texas Tollway Authority probably will manage toll collections. TxDOT is paying for the project outright and hasn't decided how it will use revenue from tolls once the lanes open.

"This project does have \$250 million in debt, and that is one option for toll revenues," said TxDOT spokesman Tony Hartzel.

A long wait

Irving has waited a long time for 183 to be upgraded. The highway runs the width of the Dallas County suburb. When Steve McCullough was named city manager there in the early 1990s, he was ordered to lobby for a rebuild.

He was at the transportation commission's Thursday meeting in Austin to thank officials for funding the project. The city has spent years

helping relocate businesses that had to be moved to make way for the highway's new, wider footprint. But in some parts of the city, cleared land has sat vacant next to the highway as funding eluded transportation officials.

"This day is a welcome day for Irving," McCullough said.

TxDOT still has some land to buy for the widening. The contract approved Thursday will have a narrower footprint through Euless than originally anticipated, so some businesses that expected to be affected may not be.

Mike Collins, planning and economic director in Euless, said city officials will try to help relocate affected companies elsewhere along the highway.

"There could be some opportunities created throughout the corridor for there to be new investments made," he said.

Schedule uncertain

Hartzel said there's not yet a schedule detailing when construction will begin on specific portions of the highways. The agency is well aware that it'll be working on three major highways in Irving at once.

Hartzel said attempts will be made to prevent congestion on multiple routes during construction.

"That will be key on this one because there's going to be so much at one time," he said.

While Irving will bear the brunt of the construction work, transportation officials see the project as a benefit to Texas. Both 114 and 183 are major arteries that connect Dallas to suburbs in three counties – and the state's largest international airport to all of North Texas.

"This has been long in coming," said transportation commission chair Ted Houghton.

Follow Brandon Formby on Twitter at @brandonformby.

BY THE NUMBERS

Project details

Construction projects on State Highway 183, State Highway 114 and Loop 12 will start later this year and are expected to finish in 2018.

12.1: miles of rebuilt roads

31.3: miles of new toll lanes

\$847.6 million: Budgeted cost of the project

Did you see something wrong in this story, or something missing? Let us know.

You Might Also Like



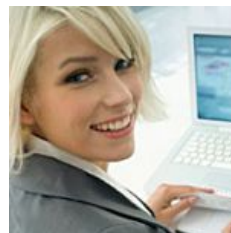
[20 Backyard Landscaping Ideas](#) 20 photos (HGTV Gardens)



[Matthew McConaughey's Austin Estate vs. Airstream](#) (HGTV FrontDoor)



[Dallas' 9 Best Sandwiches](#) (Zagat)



[5 Graduate Degrees You Should Just Get Online](#) (Education Portal)

Recommended by

From the web

["CPAP Gave My Kids Their Daddy Back" - Former NFL Star Shares His Story](#) EasyBreathe

[The Top 5 Most Overrated Summer Destinations](#) MainStreet

[The Warning Signs of Kidney Disease](#) Better Medicine

More from *Dallasnews.com*

[Baylor's Art Briles refuses to step inside Bears' new \\$260 million stadium](#) Sports

[Dallas police detective Ken Penrod dies at 55](#) Obituaries

[Texas Transportation Commission gives expansion of State Highway 183](#)