Podcast #2

Title: Collins Street Bridge Demolition

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CRAWFORD

Welcome to this edition of the I-30 podcast. I am your host Jason Crawford. I am the I-30 mobility task force coordinator. Thanks for joining me today to discuss a major milestone in the I-30 project, the upcoming Collins Street bridge demolition. If you don't mind, I'll take a second and update you on what is happening along I-30 in Arlington.

Right now TxDOT is in the middle of a $165 million dollar project to improve mobility along the I-30 corridor. The project consists of two new bridges at Center Street and Baird Farm, the reconstruction of the Collins Street bridge and widening I-30 with the addition of managed lanes.

As you can imagine this project is really going to change the look of the I-30 corridor. Now, let's talk about what is going to happen that will really be a huge step in the reconstruction of the Collins Street bridge.

Many of you are probably asking, why is there a need to reconstruct the entire Collins Street bridge?

Well, that is a good question. The existing Collins Street over I-30 consists of two bridges. The one that currently carries northbound traffic is an original Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike bridge. The second bridge carries the southbound traffic. In order to improve mobility and access, a single new bridge is being constructed.

I know my next thought when I heard about the bridge being reconstructed, was how is traffic on Collins Street going to continue to flow as the new bridge is being built?

In this case, because there are currently two bridges, the demolition will occur in two phases- phase one starting this summer and phase two scheduled to begin in the summer of 2009. The first demolition that will be happening this summer will remove the old northbound turnpike bridge. At that time all traffic, north and southbound, will be switched to the existing southbound bridge. The bridge is wide enough to carry two lanes of traffic in each direction and a center turn lane, so the impact to drivers should be minimal.

That's good news for drivers who travel on Collins Street! Drivers who travel along I-30 should look for some detours and lane closures during the demolition process, but the demolition will occur overnight and on one weekend to avoid peak weekday traffic demand. I-30 will be reduced to one lane in each direction and motorists will be detoured to the frontage roads at Collins Street and then re-enter I-30 downstream. Demolition will be complete by the morning of Monday rush hour.

During the actual demolition TxDOT will close Collins Street to northbound and southbound traffic, to ensure public safety. Access to local businesses on Collins Street near Lamar Blvd. and Copeland Road will be maintained.

In addition to the bridge demolition, here are a few other changes that are happening as part of the I-30 mobility project.

At the end of July 2008, we converted Copeland Road between Collins Street and Convention Center Drive to a one-way eastbound frontage road. Copeland Road will still be two-way from Convention Center Drive east to State Highway 360. The newly converted Copeland Road frontage road will serve as the detour for eastbound I-30 traffic during the bridge demolition.

Contractors will also begin several activities in this area. First they will build a new Copeland Road that will be two lanes eastbound. Second they will construct an entrance ramp over a new exit ramp for Nolan Ryan Expressway. Finally, they will also begin building the south intersection of the Baird Farm Road bridge with the eastbound frontage road.

Well that's a wrap on this podcast. Thank you so much for joining us today. The first phase of this bridge demolition marks an important milestone in the I-30 project. Stay tuned for new and interesting podcasts we've planned over the course of construction. Be sure to sign up for our construction email alerts, check back for updated content or sign up for an RSS feed to be notified when we post the next podcast.

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