I-30 MOBILITY TASK FORCE
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Podcast #3

Title: FM 157/Collins Street Southbound Detour

[music]

KRANTZ

Welcome back to the Keep30moving Podcast. I'm your host, Public Information Officer, Larry Krantz. Thanks for joining us. February promises to bring new developments to the I-30 reconstruction project through Arlington, and for more on those changes, I spoke to Project Mobility Coordinator, Jason Crawford.

Jason, thanks for coming on the podcast.

CRAWFORD

Thanks very much Larry.

KRANTZ

So, this I-30 reconstruction project, I hear there's going to be some significant travel changes along FM 157 or Collins Street and Center Street beginning in February. What can you tell me?

CRAWFORD

That's right. The construction project out here on I-30, we are reconstructing 157 Collins Street between Lamar Boulevard and the main entrance to Lincoln Square or Skyline Drive. As part of that reconstruction, we're going to start at the north end and, because the right-of-way is so restricted between the businesses on the north side, what we're trying to do is maintain mobility in the corridor. What we're going to do is take two lanes of northbound traffic from Interstate 30, north to Lamar on Collins Street. The southbound traffic won't be permitted through that area. Instead, what we're going to do is send southbound over to the new Center Street Bridge. So they would go south onto the Center Street Bridge, then access the eastbound frontage road or Road to Six Flags.

KRANTZ

So really you're talking about traffic moving one direction over one bridge and one direction over another.

CRAWFORD

It's going to be just southbound traffic on the Center Street Bridge. But the Collins Bridge, we're actually going to maintain north and southbound traffic. For westbound I-30 traffic that exits Collins Street, we're going to still allow them to go south over the bridge, and access all the businesses and residences to the south of I-30. The only section that we're restricting to northbound traffic only is north of I-30 to Lamar Boulevard.

KRANTZ

So, when you're talking about reconstructing, take me through exactly what that means.

CRAWFORD

The first thing it means is that the contractor will really only get to build one half of the road at a time. That's one of the interesting things with road construction, is that we're trying to maintain traffic on a lot of the roadways that we're rebuilding at the same time. Because he has to build half of the road at a time, we need to shift those two lanes of traffic that we're going to maintain as far over to the east side as where we're going to shift traffic first. That way the contractor can build the new pavement on the west side. As part of the construction activity, the contractor is actually going to have to demolish and remove the existing Collins pavement that is out there. They are going to have to put down new grading and then new pavement before we can shift traffic over onto the new pavement on the west side, and then rebuild the side to the east where we had shifted temporary traffic.

KRANTZ

I see this is supposed to start in February. How long is it supposed to take?

CRAWFORD

The section between Lamar and Interstate 30 will probably take nine to twelve months to complete. In that time, we will have this detour where southbound traffic is using the Center Street Bridge and northbound traffic is allowed between I-30 and Lamar. As soon as the new Ryan Plaza is constructed--and that is just south of the Guitar Center and actually connects over to the Center Street Bridge—when that section is completed, we'll then take Collins traffic

down south on Collins to that intersection with Wet-N-Wild Way and Ryan Plaza and then take the traffic to the west to go south on the Center Street Bridge.

KRANTZ

I guess when people are thinking about reconstructing I-30, why is it necessary for TxDOT to be at work on some of these roads that cross or run parallel?

CRAWFORD

That's a good question Larry. Part of the reason that we're rebuilding FM157 or Collins Street is that the new Collins Street Bridge is actually being built lower than the bridge that's out there right now and traffic is using. Because the bridge is lower, the approaches on the north and the south side will also have to be lowered. So this is all part of that effort to make kind of a more pedestrian friendly bridge, and so we don't have hump in the road crossing the Interstate; but tying all the roadways in both on the north and the south side so that they travel smoothly and you don't get large differences in grade or slope of the road.

KRANTZ

For folks who have witnesses this construction project first hand, how much longer?

CRAWFORD

This project is scheduled to be completed in fall of 2010 for the activity we have between Cooper Street and Ballpark Way, which is about two miles. We do have an interim milestone this spring, that we will complete all of the eastbound pavement, and we're going to take all of the Interstate traffic that is currently on the north side of the corridor and we'll be moving it down to the south side to this permanent pavement. Also, the eastbound frontage road will be significantly completed between Cooper Street and Ballpark Way, and a large section of the westbound frontage road between Ballpark Way and Lamar Boulevard will also be completed as part of our milestone this spring.

KRANTZ

For more information on this project, log onto www.keep30moving.org. To ask a question we may answer on a future podcast, send Jason an email at info@keep30moving.org. For TxDOT, and for Jason Crawford, I'm Larry Krantz, reminding you that traffic fines double in construction zones when workers are present.

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