



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DFW Connector Team submits accelerated design/build plan TxDOT Commission approves conditional award

AUSTIN – Today, the Texas Transportation Commission conditionally awarded a design/build comprehensive development agreement (CDA) to NorthGate Constructors to develop, design and construct up to 14.4 miles of the SH 114/121 corridor, known as the DFW Connector. This design/build team is led by Kiewit Texas Construction L.P. (Fort Worth), and Zachry Construction Corporation (San Antonio) in addition to a host of Texan and American firms.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the region have identified \$667 million in public funds for the DFW Connector. On March 5, the Commission committed an additional \$250 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to the project. Over the next few months, TxDOT will negotiate and execute the design/build contract.

“It is a significant accomplishment for the region and the state to begin implementation of a project of this magnitude,” said Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley. “The region needs mobility and air quality improvements now.”

Pre-construction activities will begin on the DFW Connector in summer 2009 with construction beginning in 2010. Construction is estimated to take approximately five years, less than half the time usually needed for traditional contracts of this magnitude. In comparison, the I-30/35W Interchange in downtown Fort Worth required seven projects over 10 years to complete.

By using a CDA design/build method, the right of way, design and construction phases of work are accelerated – minimizing the impacts to businesses and the travelling public. While design work is being undertaken on one part of the DFW Connector, construction is under way on another part.

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"The DFW Connector is another tremendous example of what state government can do when local and state entities partner with the private sector to deliver the best possible result to taxpayers," said Texas Transportation Commissioner Bill Meadows. "This project will reduce congestion in an extremely busy urban area, ease access to one of our nation's busiest airports, create jobs and promote long-term economic development in Tarrant and Dallas Counties. Projects and partnerships like this are what maintains our state's status as one of the most desirable places in the nation to do business."

As construction proceeds for the North Tarrant Express and the DFW Connector, TxDOT will minimize impacts and coordinate construction at both entrances to the DFW International Airport. Both contracts include coordination of construction sequencing to manage economic and mobility impacts.

"DFW is the third busiest airport in the world," said Meadows. "This project will help North Texans gain access to this economic engine and the rest of the world."

The DFW Connector may ultimately double the existing capacity and improve mobility on seven highways, six interchanges and 10 bridges. SH 114 will be widened to as many as 14 mainlanes with up to four additional toll-managed lanes and up to seven frontage road lanes. These massive improvements could ultimately rebuild six interchanges at FM 2499, SH 26, SH 121, SH 360, I-635 and International Parkway.

This is not a concession-model CDA and no long-term lease agreements will result from this design/build CDA. When the project is complete, the team's work is done unless TxDOT chooses to have them provide maintenance.

The award is conditional until all elements of the contract are negotiated and executed, which is expected by this summer. Concurrently, the department is continuing the environmental process and expects clearance from FHWA soon. Upon execution of the contract and environmental clearance, right of way acquisition and design will begin this year.

All roadways and rights of way will always be state-owned. TxDOT will retain oversight throughout the contract and will perform regular audits of the contractor. The North Texas Tollway Authority will operate the managed lanes. Any revenue derived from the managed lanes will first go towards operation and maintenance, and any excess would be retained by the region.

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Through the development of this CDA, the local cities, Tarrant County, Dallas County, North Central Texas Council of Governments' Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and D/FW International Airport gave significant input on the DFW Connector and on many of the agreement's details, such as the managed lane toll policy. The project was funded through a partnership between TxDOT and the RTC. The importance of local involvement will continue to be vital as the project is implemented.

"This announcement brings welcome news to our citizens," said City of Grapevine Mayor William D. Tate. "The quality of life and on-time business delivery will improve greatly by addressing the congestion in the DFW Connector. We look forward to working with TxDOT and the team to minimize the impacts to our citizens and business community."

In addition to action on the DFW Connector project, the Commission acted on three other ARRA-funded projects. In Bexar County, the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority was granted the authority to use state right of way to construct an interchange at Loop 1604 and U.S. 281. The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and NTTA were granted similar authority for their plans to construct direct connector ramps at U.S. 290 and U.S. 183 in Travis County and at the I-20/SH 121 interchange in Tarrant County, respectively. ARRA funding for all four projects was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission March 5 and totals approximately \$400 million of the \$1.7 billion approved for highway and bridge construction and maintenance.

More information is available on the DFW Connector at: www.txdot.gov KEYWORD: DFW Connector.

More information is available on ARRA-funded projects at: www.txdot.gov KEYWORD: ARRA.

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