

34th Street Bridge Update



Project Could be Complete within Six Months, City Manager Says

Soon, residents in Moore will enjoy better traffic flow on the 19th Street bridge because relief is on the way as workers make progress on the 34th Street bridge project, which could be complete as early as September, said Brooks Mitchell, Moore city manager.

The bridge will include a lighted archway that stretches the length of the structure, as well as stonework, some of which has already been completed and can be seen by drivers passing on Interstate 35. That stonework will eventually be replicated on other parts of the bridge, Mitchell said.

When complete, the 34th Street bridge will provide an additional four-lane route between east and west Moore and a walking trail. There will also be stoplights at the intersections of 34th Street and the frontage roads on either side of the bridge.

Once open, the new bridge is expected to reduce 19th Street traffic by 25 percent, primarily on the east side of I-35, Mitchell said. However, the city does expect additional development along the service roads as a result of these roads.

"When the bridge first opens on the east side of 19th Street, traffic will ease up," Mitchell said. "I don't see the west side changing a whole lot because of the retail stores there."

While there have been some slow-downs along I-35 due to lane closures during the bridge's beam installations, traffic disruptions along the highway have been minimal, Mitchell said.

The bridge project is expected to cost about \$12 million, which Mitchell said is about on par for this kind of project. As a complementary addition to the bridge project, the City of Moore is in the process of accepting and reviewing bids to widen 34th Street. Although the exact cost of the project is not yet known, Mitchell said he expects it to cost an additional \$4 million.

The widening project will open 34th Street to four lanes on the west side of I-35, between Telephone Road and Santa Fe Avenue. The City of Moore expects to have the bids sometime in April and to begin work on the project in May, Mitchell said.

"The hope is to coordinate (the projects) so the bridge opening and widening happen together, with as little disruption as possible," Mitchell said.

The great news is that both projects are expected to be complete in time to accommodate the traffic for next year's holiday retail rush. — **195M**