

Source: **SOUTHLAKE JOURNAL**Date: **Wednesday
December 30, 2009**

Construction Won't Deter Traffic

DFW Connector Will Be 'Design-and-Build' Project

By Scott Price
STAFF WRITER

After years of planning and getting the funding together, the DFW Connector project, which is designed to relieve traffic congestion on Texas 114, 121, 26 and I-635 and various other nearby roads, will begin construction on Feb. 15.

This 8.4-mile project through Southlake, Grapevine and Irving will cost \$1.02 billion, and it is being built under a comprehensive development agreement between Texas Department of

Transportation (TxDOT) and NorthGate Constructors.

"This is a 'design-build' project," said Selma Stockstill, a spokeswoman for NorthGate Constructors. "With design-build it will be built in half the time of a traditional project because the design and construction are done at the same time."

Stockstill said the DFW Connector project is expected to be completed in late 2014. She said the project is intended to improve safety, mobility and air quality by doubling roadway capacity

by adding general purpose lanes, toll lanes and continuous frontage roads.

At its largest, Texas 114/121, between Texan Trail and International Parkway, will have a total of 20 lanes, including service roads and the managed toll lanes. Currently, the highway has eight lanes.

When the project is completed, drivers on Texas 114/121 are expected to pay 64 cents for the four-mile trip on the toll lanes, including two in each direction. The other lanes will remain free.

TxDOT on Dec. 8 issued its final notice to proceed, which allows NorthGate and its vendors legal authority to take possession of the roads.

Jerry Hodge stepped down as Grapevine Public Works director several years ago to be the transportation projects director, which means he works with TxDOT, NorthGate and others involved in the DFW Connector to help facilitate a smooth process.

"We are still going to have a lot of traffic in Grapevine, just as we do now. Our job will be to keep the lanes open

and keep the traffic flowing," Hodge said.

With the traditional design, bid and build process, Hodge said, the process would have taken at least 15 years of construction. He said a five-year construction process is something everyone is happy about.

NorthGate Constructors is a team of private developers led by Kiewit Texas Construction of Fort Worth. NorthGate is leasing an office in north Irving and has more than 100 employees there.

Developers emphasize that the road will see no reduction in lane capacity during the construction. The agreement with TxDOT requires the existing number of lanes to remain open on weekdays.

But the pace of traffic may slow because of detours and narrow lanes.

"We are going to provide our commuters with the tools to navigate through the corridor," Stockstill said.

The highways involved include Texas 114 and 121, In-

Source: **SOUTHLAKE JOURNAL**Date: *Wednesday*
December 30, 2009

Construction Won't Deter Traffic

terstate 635, Texas 360 and 26, and Farm Roads 2499 and 1709.

The money for the project will be funded by \$667 million in state highway funds, \$250 million in federal Recovery Act (stimulus) funding and \$107 million in bond funding from Proposition 14, which was approved by Texas voters in 2003 to improve mobility statewide. More stimulus money is going to the DFW Connector than any other highway project in the country.

For information visit www.dfwconnector.com or call the DFW Connector toll-free hot line at 877-411-4212.