

Growing pains ahead for Parmer

By Rachel Youens
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Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better, and over the next year-and-a-half, those who drive along west Parmer Lane will experience some growing pains. A new series of improvements is aimed at moving cars through the Parmer and MoPac intersection more efficiently.

This project was originally intended to be built in conjunction with the Loop 1 Toll, but those plans fell through, according to Terry McCoy, TxDOT's North Travis area engineer.

Construction began in April on phase one of the four-phase project in the form of bridge supports constructed near Waters Park Road to build elevated lanes leading to MoPac and Duval Road. Other changes in the project include a widening of the MoPac frontage roads, widening west Parmer Lane and adding lanes on the Parmer Lane bridge across MoPac, similar to the recent Yager Lane bridge project spanning IH 35.

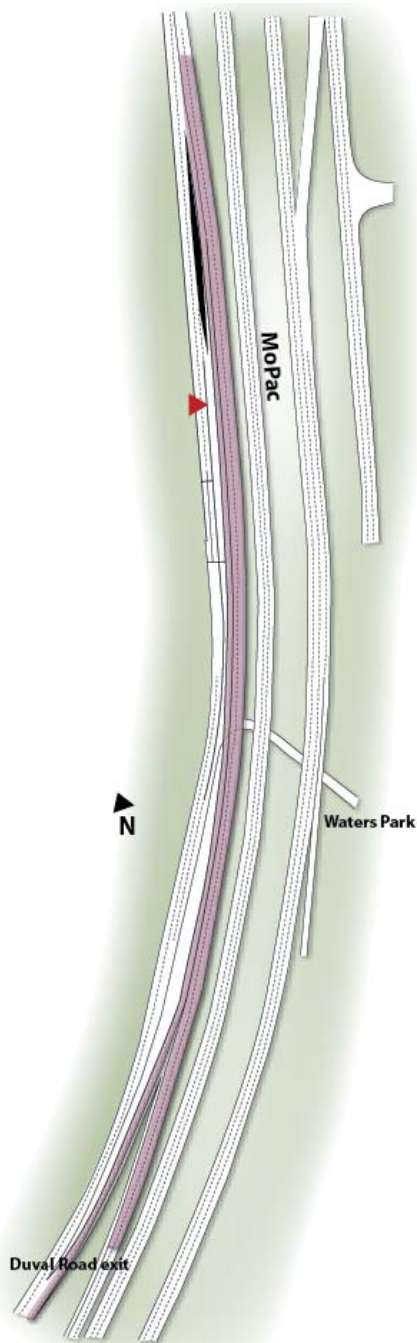
The improvement project is scheduled to take 18 months, wrapping up around mid August 2008. TxDOT has awarded contractor Dan Williams \$23.4 million for the project.

Although some of the construction will cause temporary disruptions to area traffic, McCoy hopes to speed the process by offering incentives to contractors to work ahead, work at night and make the most intensive projects the fastest.

Construction of a southbound collector/distributor bridge

The goal of this elevated structure is to prevent cars who are going to exit at Duval or enter MoPac south, from ever having to go on the frontage road. This will prevent the weaving activity drivers are forced to make on the frontage road while in getting in place to make their exit. The bridge will pass over the tracks of the MetroRail

Start: First phase started in April, second begins in Nov.
Finish: Jan. 07



Parmer Lane bridge widening

TxDOT plans to take the Parmer Lane bridge over MoPac from six lanes to nine lanes by demolishing the sides of the bridge and adding on to them. The support for this bridge has already been built over the past few months, so that when TxDOT finally takes off the sides, they will be able to quickly rebuild. The project is estimated to take only two months. In order to prevent having to work over traffic, the bulk of the work will be done at night and some lane will be shut down and diverted.

Start: March 08

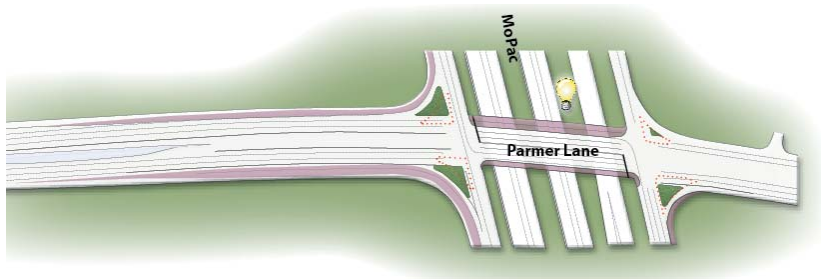
Finish: April 08

Widening of frontage lanes

Although construction to widen the frontage road will interfere with entrances to the shopping center here, TxDOT is working with contractors to avoid shutting entrances off. They plan to do construction one entrance at a time and to do wide entrances in two steps so one side remains open.

High mast lighting

These tall street lights, like the ones lining IH 35, are more expensive but last longer and give a stronger amount of light. The lights will be installed sparingly along MoPac, due to requests from the Milwood neighborhood to avoid light pollution.



Courtesy of JB Goodwin