



## NEWS RELEASE

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## NEWS RELEASE: TWO MAJOR NORTH TEXAS HIGHWAY PROJECTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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***(Editors and News Directors – Disregard previous version of this release. Please use this version which contains corrected quotes and photo captions)***

**FORT WORTH/DALLAS** - With shovels and scissors, two major highway projects in Tarrant and Dallas counties are marking beginning and ending milestones today on the path to improving the drive for North Texans. Local and state officials broke ground on a major Tarrant County highway project and cut the ribbon on the much-anticipated Southern Gateway project in south Dallas, signifying the latest successes for mobility and safety with the Texas Department of Transportation's *Texas Clear Lanes* program.

Wednesday morning, Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr., State Representative Nicole Collier, Tarrant County Judge B. Glen Whitley and many others kicked off the Southeast Connector Project, a \$1.6 billion project to rebuild, widen and transform the Interstate 20 (I-20), I-820 and US 287 interchange in southeast Tarrant County. The project, which will be complete in 2027, represents the largest investment of TxDOT funds on any roadway project in the history of TxDOT's Fort Worth District.

Wednesday afternoon, the ceremonial duties shifted to southern Dallas where Chairman Bugg was joined by Commissioner Robert Vaughn, County Judge Clay Jenkins and others to cut the ribbon on The Southern Gateway project. The five-year, \$666 million project rebuilt and widened I-35E from Colorado Boulevard to US 67 and widened US 67 from I-35E to I-20. This innovative project features non-tolled, reversible managed lanes that help provide a total of seven lanes into or out of downtown Dallas depending on peak travel time demands, which will make an easier and safer drive for commuters.

“TxDOT is leading the way in finding solutions to congestion issues, which is critical especially as Texas’ population continues to increase dramatically,” Bugg said. “The additional traffic demands mean lost time, lost productivity and safety concerns for commuters, travelers and commercial traffic. Improvement projects like these create more efficient and safer routes for drivers and give them back more valuable time that used to be spent in traffic. What’s more, these projects give the Texas economy even more opportunity to continue to grow.”

Both projects celebrated Wednesday are part of TxDOT’s Texas Clear Lanes program, which reduces congestion throughout the state by focusing planning and construction efforts on the Top 100 Most Congested Roads in major metropolitan areas of Dallas, Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio and Houston. Thanks to dedicated funding approved by Texas voters in 2014 and 2015, TxDOT has been able to develop and program projects specifically designed to reduce gridlock and improve safety in these large metropolitan areas.

The program has \$61.3 billion in projects that have been completed, are under construction or are in planning. More than a dozen projects have been completed statewide, and The Southern Gateway is the fifth North Texas project to be completed. The region has completed \$1.2 billion in projects to date, with another \$5.1 billion under construction and \$3.3 billion in planning.

“The Southern Gateway illustrates how a highway project can help reconnect and enhance communities. Planning for this project began more than a decade ago, and I appreciate the opportunity to have guided TxDOT’s effort to give the community and stakeholders a voice on the final vision that we see today,” said State Senator Royce West. “This project, which finished on time and on budget, will serve southern Dallas well for decades to come.”

“The Southeast Connector project has afforded increased economic opportunities for businesses located right here in our community, and will continue to do so as construction advances,” said State Representative Nicole Collier. From the beginning, TxDOT has made this project community driven. They have considered and included community input and feedback and demonstrated first-hand how government works for, and with, the people of Texas.”

For more information on the Texas Clear Lanes initiative and scheduled projects, visit [www.TexasClearLanes.com](http://www.TexasClearLanes.com).

Two photos of the events today are attached with captions below. Project photos, maps and graphics of the projects will be available for 30 days at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/37h2tnfb>

For more information about the Southeast Connector, please contact Fort Worth District Public Information Officer Val Lopez at 817-370-6630, or [Val.Lopez@txdot.gov](mailto:Val.Lopez@txdot.gov). For more information about The Southern Gateway, please contact Dallas District Public Information Officer Alice Rios Shaw at [mary.shaw@txdot.gov](mailto:mary.shaw@txdot.gov).

## **CAPTIONS**

**Photo 1 – (Southeast Connector Groundbreaking)** *With shovels in hand, state and local leaders broke ground for the Southeast Connector project on November 30, 2022. The \$1.6 billion project by the Texas Department of Transportation will rebuild, widen and transform the I-20, I-820 and US 287 interchange in southeast Tarrant County.*

**Photo 2 – (Southern Gateway Ribbon Cutting)** *State and local leaders cut a ceremonial ribbon to mark the end of the Texas Department of Transportation’s Southern Gateway Project in southern Dallas. The \$666 million project rebuilt and widened ten miles of I-35E and US 67 including the construction of non-tolled, reversible managed lanes to help with peak travel time demands. Dignitaries included {from left to right} Michael Morris, Director of Transportation for the North Central Texas Council of Governments; Dallas City Council Member Paul Ridley; TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams; Regional Transportation Council Chairman Duncan Webb; Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins; Dallas Deputy Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member Omar Narvaez; Dallas Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member Carolyn King Arnold; Dallas City Council Member Tennell Atkins; Texas State Senator Royce West, Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg, Jr.; Texas Transportation Commissioner Robert Vaughn; Dallas City Council Member Adam Bazaldua; Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price; and TxDOT District Engineer Cason Clemens.*

## **OFFICIAL QUOTES FOR PUBLICATION:**

### **Robert C. Vaughn, Texas Transportation Commissioner**

“I’m proud of the men and women at TxDOT who work hard every day to deliver mega projects like The Southern Gateway and the Southeast Connector. These projects will stand for generations as a reminder of TxDOT’s commitment to working with its community partners to build projects that become a part of the community they serve. With North Texas welcoming thousands of new residents each month, projects like these help keep our region moving safely and our economy humming.”

### **U.S. Representative Marc Veasey, 33<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, Texas**

“Bolstering our infrastructure here in North Texas is necessary because of our rapid growth. The Southern Gateway will do just that by investing in improving our roadways and reducing congestion which is why I am so proud to support this critical project.”

### **Clay Jenkins, Dallas County Judge**

“The Southern Gateway is a transformational transportation and infrastructure project for southern Dallas County that addresses long-standing congestion and safety concerns, provides opportunities for economic development, and increases access for neighboring communities. The \$666 million project rebuilt a section of I-35E which serves as a critical artery not only for our county and state, but for north-south connectivity for the nation.”

### **Eric Johnson, City of Dallas Mayor**

“Interstate 35E has long been a vital trade and transportation corridor for our city, but it also tore apart neighborhoods in Oak Cliff when it was first constructed,” said City of Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson. “That is why I am grateful for the Southern Gateway project, which capitalizes on this highway’s economic benefits while also respecting our neighborhoods and providing improved mobility for families in southern Dallas. This new infrastructure, combined with the coming Southern Gateway Park, will mean a stronger city, stronger communities, and a brighter future for Dallas.”

### **Carolyn King Arnold, Dallas Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member, District 4**

“The Southern Gateway project has provided a multigenerational community to be eyewitness to. A bold move to invest in the transformational steps to increased mobility efficiency, access and a modernized infrastructure.”

**Omar Narvaez, Dallas Deputy Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member, District 6**

“We are grateful for the commitment of partners like TxDOT and others to improving the infrastructure where it is most needed and bringing neighborhoods together.”

**Tennell Atkins, Dallas City Council Member, District 8**

“Good infrastructure brings economic development, and I’m excited about what is to come for this area of Southern Dallas.”

**Casey Thomas, Dallas City Council Member, District 3**

“When we talk about equity, that extends to the mobility access we provide to all communities in Dallas.”

**Duncan Webb, Regional Transportation Council Chairman**

“As a Texas Clear Lanes project, the completion of the Southern Gateway will reduce congestion, improve mobility, provide more reliable travel times, and most importantly, increase safety for pedestrians, and commuters. Roadway safety is a priority for the Regional Transportation Council, as well as for TxDOT and all our regional partners. I look forward to the enhancements to our quality of life that this innovative project will provide, including new development along the corridor and improvements in neighborhood connectivity.”

**Daniel Young, Pegasus Link Constructors Director of Construction**

“As roadway builders, Pegasus Link Constructor’s presence in downtown Dallas and southern Dallas County in the past decade testifies to our project team’s commitment to working with our client, TxDOT, and project partners to get the job done, on time and within budget. PLC was able to push through during challenging times and consistently maintain a locally sourced labor force of more than 600 staff and craft employees during the peak of construction, and eventually cross the much-anticipated finish line, leading us to today’s ribbon cutting celebration.”

**Leon Blondin, CEO at Balfour Beatty U.S.**

“Congratulations to the Balfour Beatty project team and joint venture partners in providing a long-term, transformative highway solution for one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the nation. The completion of The Southern Gateway is just another example of our team’s expertise in delivering complex construction projects across the country and our ongoing commitment to achieving our client’s, stakeholder’s and local communities’ transportation.”

**Thomas Nilsson, President of Infrastructure Business at Fluor**

“This is one of the many vital infrastructure projects to improve the I-35 corridor in Dallas in response to business and population expansion in one of the country’s most dynamic regions. The reconstruction provides traffic congestion relief, improved safety and increased mobility. This project builds on Fluor’s history of successfully delivering vital infrastructure in Texas and reinforces the strength of our commitment to our state and local partners.”

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The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, maritime, rail and public transportation across the state.

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