

# freeway **TODAY**



The old Cinema West theater was demolished recently to make way for the Marsha Sharp Freeway.

## Freeway on schedule for fall letting

**W**hen the Texas Transportation Commission approves the FY 2003 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) this fall, for all practical purposes, the freeway will be funded, said Steve Warren, director of transportation planning and development for the Lubbock District.

That's the latest word on the progress of the Marsha Sharp Freeway scheduled to break ground late this year or early next year.

The Commission will review the UTP this fall and, hopefully, give it the stamp of approval to include all four freeway projects.

Construction costs will run about \$257 million with right of way reaching the \$196 million mark.

Project one includes widening West Loop 289 to six lanes from Slide Road to 34th St, and rebuilding the frontage road system under the loop. TxDOT will also build the frontage roads from Chicago Avenue west to the loop. This portion of the freeway project will run \$48 million and will take three years to complete. The

West Loop interchange will be a 3-tier structure with frontage roads at ground level. The loop main lanes will be next with the freeway as the third level. The two flyovers will cap off the top portion of the project.

The second project includes building the entire freeway from Salem Avenue to Avenue L—frontage roads and main lanes—and rebuilding the 19th Street, Quaker Avenue, 4th Street and Avenue Q interchanges. There are 16 bridges on this project including four pedestrian bridges—one at Avenue U and three on the Texas Tech campus. This second project will cost \$103 million and will let in FY 2004 and will take four years to complete.

Plans for project three include returning to the West Loop to build the main freeway lanes from Loop 289 to Salem Avenue. This project will let in FY 2007 and will cost \$54 million.

The final project—scheduled to let in FY 2010—includes building the I27 interchange and the railroad overpass that will tie back into Avenue Q.

The first two projects—a total of \$151 million—are funded. The last two projects are scheduled to move up in priority in the next few years.

Freeway elevations will vary along the route. From the West Loop to 19th Street, the freeway will be at ground level. From 19th Street to Sherman Avenue it will be depressed, and from Sherman Avenue to just west of I27 the freeway will be elevated. It will be depressed again under I27.

### Dates to Remember

FY 2003—Project #1. Widening the loop to six lanes and rebuilding the frontage roads.

FY 2004—Project #2. Full freeway from Salem Avenue to Avenue L.

FY 2007—Project #3. Finishing out the west end—main lanes—from Salem to outside West Loop 289 and building the 34th St. and Slide Road interchanges.

FY 2010—Project #4. I27 interchange and the railroad overpass that ties back into Avenue Q.

**Project #1**

- \$48 million
- Lets in FY 2002
- Widening of South Loop 289 from four to six lanes from 34th Street to Slide Road.
- Rebuilding frontage road system under the main lanes.
- Building the 50th Street overpass and extending 50th Street to Frankford.

**Project #2**

- \$103 million
- Lets in FY 2003
- Building total freeway from Salem Avenue to Avenue L.
- Building 19th St., Quaker Avenue, Fourth Street and Avenue Q interchanges
- 16 bridges and 4 pedestrian overpasses—three at Texas Tech and one at Avenue U

**Project #3**

- \$54 million
- Lets in FY 2007
- Building 34th Street and Slide Road interchanges
- Build main lanes from Salem to outside West Loop 289, just east of the waterpark
- 8 bridges

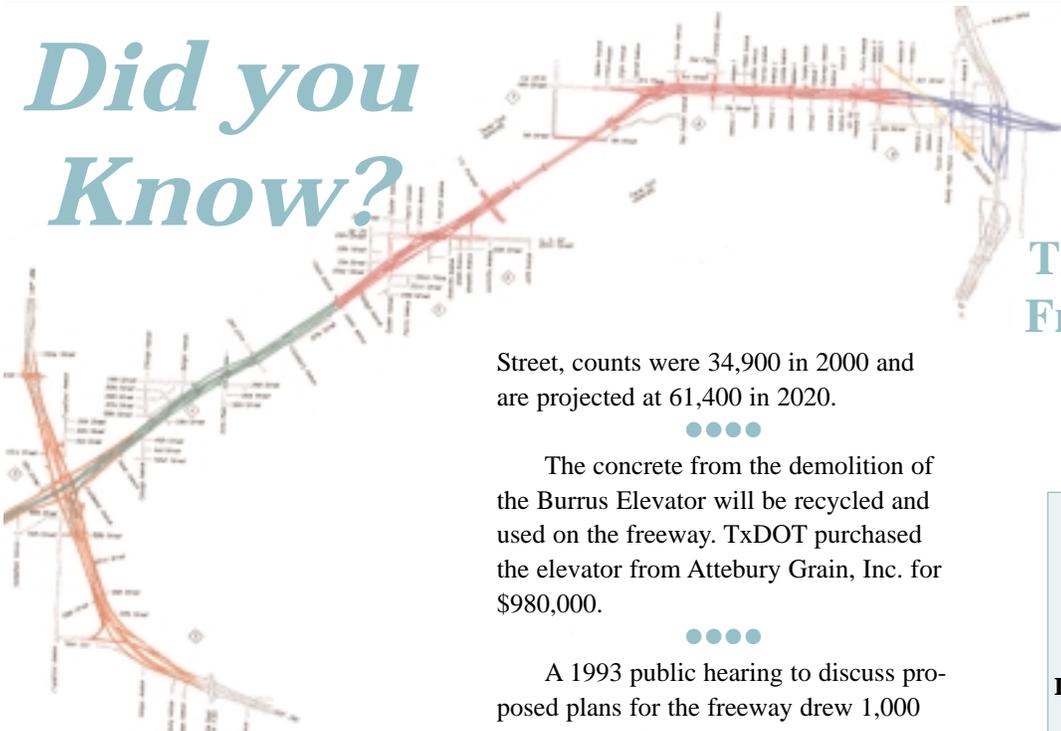
**Project #4**

- \$63 million
- Lets in FY 2010
- Building I27 interchange.



For questions concerning right-of-way acquisition, call Claude Kneisley at **806 748-4417**. For construction questions, call Frank Phillips, P.E. at **806 748-4574**

# Did you Know?



## The Marsha Sharp Freeway Schematic

Street, counts were 34,900 in 2000 and are projected at 61,400 in 2020.



The concrete from the demolition of the Burrus Elevator will be recycled and used on the freeway. TxDOT purchased the elevator from Attebury Grain, Inc. for \$980,000.



A 1993 public hearing to discuss proposed plans for the freeway drew 1,000 participants. The meeting lasted until the wee hours of the morning.



The concept of an east-west access is not new. The idea was first introduced in the 1964 Lubbock Urban Transportation Plan, a document created to address future traffic growth and transportation needs beyond the year 1985.

In 1998, the department figured that the 2000-year vehicle per day traffic count from I27 to Avenue L would be 24,000 cars. In 2020 the projected figure is 42,000. The count from Avenue L to University was 32,900 in 2000, increasing to 57,800 in 2020. From University Avenue to Indiana, traffic counts were 25,500, increasing to 44,900 in 2020. Finally, from Indiana Avenue to 34th

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TxDOT Environmental Specialists Joslyn Tomlinson and Davis Melton inspect grasses at the location where the third freeway storm sewer system will be built. There are four systems that will accommodate water flow from the Marsha Sharp Freeway. Three of these are already in place.



## Natural drainage a goal for freeway

A crucial aspect of designing any highway is the drainage system. It's important to address, in the initial design, how the runoff will be handled.

At the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), engineers decided a long time ago that a natural system would be the best way to address drainage on the new Marsha Sharp Freeway scheduled to go to construction this year. In other words, instead of a complicated and expensive pump system, engineers elected to let gravity do the job.

"TxDOT decided a long time ago not to build or maintain a pump system," said Davis Melton, environmental specialist for TxDOT's Lubbock District. "We did build a storm sewer system on a portion of the freeway to handle the runoff. But, we're still relying on nature to get the water to that system."

The drainage system for the freeway is divided into four segments. The first segment runs from just southwest of West Loop 289 to 19th Street

Water from this segment will drain as it always has, via the streets in curb and gutter into area playa lakes.

Runoff water from 19th Street to Avenue U will drain down Avenue U to the city's canyon lakes system. The drainage will follow a new underground storm water sewer system built several

years ago at a cost of \$7 million.

"We still have some work to complete this project," he said.

Work came to a halt several years ago when contractors discovered gasoline contaminated soil and groundwater just 700 feet east of University.

"The Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC) has been working to clean up the site so we can get back in and finish the project," said Melton.

When work resumes, the storm sewer line will extend past University Avenue to 19th Street. In addition to draining water from the freeway, the new system will intercept rising groundwater before it can spill over onto freeway main lanes.

"The design includes a porous system with a special overflow to allow rising ground water to drain into the canyon," he said.

The third drainage system runs just east of Avenue U to Buddy Holly Avenue and down Buddy Holly Avenue to Atzlan Park. This particular drainage project was added later when consultants, after reevaluating water flow from the freeway, decided that the current capacity would not be enough to handle the amount of water draining into the Yellowhouse Canyon. TxDOT will install a new drainage pipe to handle the overflow.

However, not all the water will drain

into the Yellowhouse Canyon, said Melton. A portion will follow a designated route from just east of Buddy Holly Avenue to Mckenzie Park. This fourth and final project is designed so water will enter the North Fork of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River just upstream from where it merges with Blackwater Draw.

In addition, not all of the drainage projects are approved, however. Drainage projects one, two and four were approved in the original Environmental Impact Statement, but project three has yet to receive approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). That approval is necessary before the new design can be incorporated into the final freeway plans.

"The department is working on an environmental reevaluation document that includes all the changes that we've made on freeway design since 1995," said Melton. "Hopefully, the FHWA will move quickly on this. We're ready to build the freeway."

The first freeway project—the West Loop 289 interchange—is scheduled to let this fall.



Abandoned buildings in the Town & Country Shopping Center. TxDOT paid \$8.5 million for the Weingarten property making this the third largest right of way acquisition in the history of the district. The largest acquisition was Texas Tech property purchased for \$12.4 million. The second was railroad right of way at \$9.3 million.

## *Pace picks up on right of way acquisition*

The pace has picked up on clearing right of way for the Marsha Sharp Freeway, said Claude Kneisley, right of way manager for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in Lubbock.

TxDOT recently opened two bids to remove 25 additional buildings from the right of way along the route of the future

Marsha Sharp Freeway. The bids total \$615,000.

The department plans to have the right of way cleared by the end of this year and utilities relocated within the next three years.

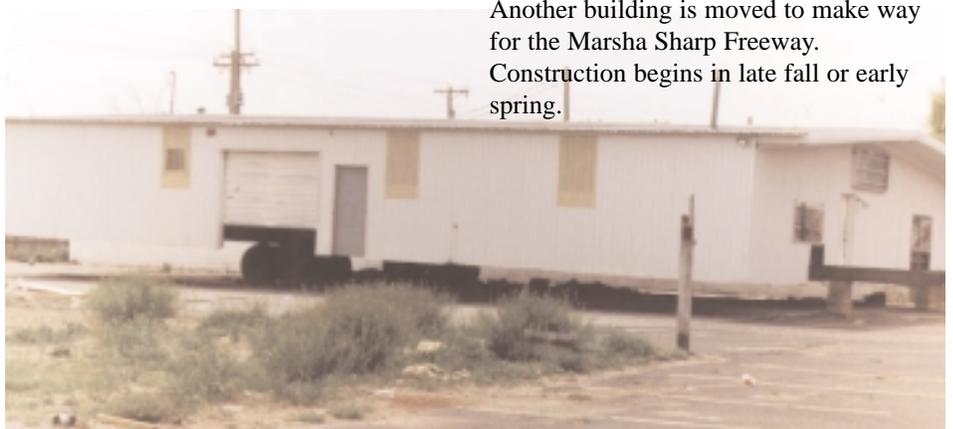
The contractors will have from 60 to 100 days to complete the demolition. TxDOT has to have the right of way cleared, including moving the utilities, before construction can begin on the freeway. Right of way acquisition is 90 percent complete for this project.

“Some of the buildings coming down this time around include the old Fuddrucker’s building, Granada Apartments, an auto store and a few railroad buildings,” said Kneisley. “There are a few houses left to be torn down.”

A contract is being written to demolish the grain elevator on Fourth Street, Kneisley added. That structure should come down late this year or early next.

### Right of Way Summary

Parcels	354
Appraisals ordered	354
Appraisals received	354
Approved appraisals	354
Offers made	353
Offers accepted	295
Checks requested	292
Final offer letters sent	51
Condemnations requested	48
Hearings set or held	44
Closed parcels	327
Approved appraisal values	
	\$130,115,797.00
Approved values closed	
	\$86,989,830.00
Amount of offers accepted	
	\$75,584,034.00



Another building is moved to make way for the Marsha Sharp Freeway. Construction begins in late fall or early spring.

