

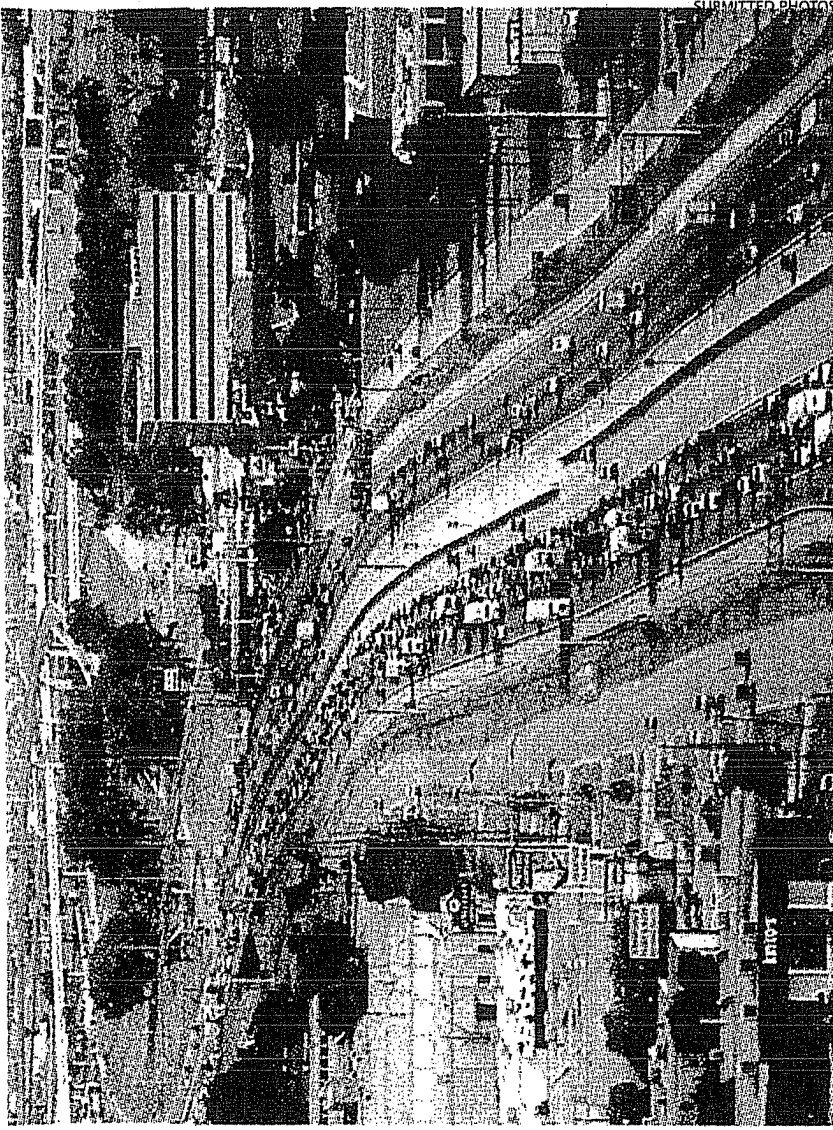
35E widening faces more traffic

ite budget woes likely to stymie ig-awaited effort

DACE CARLISLE | STAFF WRITER

ns for a \$4.4 billion project to
iate burgeoning north-south
c traveling the Interstate 35E
dor are inching forward.
e 28-mile expansion could
ificantly improve the traffic
for trucks and commuters
two managed toll lanes and
free lanes in each direction,
s with continuous frontage
s from Interstate 635 to U.S.
Currently, the corridor has
lanes that eventually merge
o lanes north of the Lake Cit-
rea. There isn't a continuous
age road.

major hitch in the project
nding, however, with \$535
on earmarked for the proj-
hrough collected regional
revenue from Texas 121 not
g far, said Gary Bailey, an
ner with the Texas De-
ment of Transportation.
project is estimated to cost
hly \$100 million in construc-
costs for each mile, he said.
his is the No. 1 project in
h Texas ... but funding is an
right now," Bailey said.
local group of I-35E stake-
ers recently submitted a
osal to fund the project to
Texas Legislature, but the
ated state budget shortfall
d impede costly infrastruc-



TIED UP: Just like this traffic, proposals to jump-start a widening project on Interstate 35E between Denton and Dallas will be bottled up as the Legislature deals with a shortfall estimated to be as high as more than \$20 billion.

one of the projects approved for a
public-private partnership prior
to the moratorium.
The moratorium was enacted
in the 2007 legislative session. At
the time, legislators objected to
private companies managing or
tolling public roadways. Some
state leaders say they would re-
visit the moratorium in the 2011
legislative session.

Some city officials say they
hope the project will be funded
by a public-private partnership,
similar to the LBJ Express Proj-
ect, but legislators would need to
give TxDOT permission for such
an endeavor due to a moratorium
on the practice. LBJ Express was
Sen. Tommy Williams, R-The

WIDEN, P36

"It's time to put
politics aside and
get this done for
small business,"
said Susan Eck-
erly, senior vice
president of the
National Federa-
tion of Indepen-
dent Businesses.
"Small businesses
don't operate in a
world of 67 votes
— they simply need certainty
that new taxes and paperwork
burdens will be eliminated."
Both efforts, one backed by Re-
publicans, the other by Demo-
crats, would have attached an
amendment to an unrelated food
safety bill.



Eckerly:
"It's time to
put politics
aside and
get this done
for small
business."

The Republican amendment,
sponsored by Sen. Mike Jo-
hanns, R-Neb., got 61 votes. The
Democrat version, sponsored
by Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont.,
got only 44 votes. Both amend-
ments would have repealed the
1099 expansion, but Johanns'
amendment directed the Office
of Management and Budget to
tap unspent federal funds to off-
set the cost of repeal. Baucus'
amendment simply repealed
the 1099 provision without an
offset.

Many Democrats objected to
the Johanns amendment because
it would leave budget decisions
to the executive branch instead
of Congress. Republicans voted
against the Baucus amendment
because it could add up to \$19
billion to federal deficits over
10 years.
The 1099 provision was includ-
ed in the health care reform bill
as a way to help pay for the cost
of the legislation. In theory, ex-
panded third-party reporting of
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REPEAL, P37

has already protected for Bridgestone, he said. of Bridgestone's copied the fire company's NFL trademarks. The NFL quickly rectified the infringement.

A few decades ago, Nike handed out advertising handbills at an Olympic marathon sponsored by Adidas, Bowers said. Nike's marketing materials were confiscated, but the publicity worked in Nike's favor and boosted the

supp Arlington is preparing to help the NFL protect Super Bowl sponsors, said Mayor Robert Cluck by weighing ordinances that would let the city fine ambush marketers hundreds of thousands of dol-

being specifically patrolled for trademark infringement. "We are fully expecting large companies to try this and are prepared for it," Cluck said.

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VIDEN: State leaders could revisit ban on new private-public deals

PAGE 3

things, if there's support in the local delegation, which project has," Williams said. e project continues to move ward, and it's a high priority everybody."

ing the engine

public-private partnership be the only way to move the E expansion forward, said ton Mayor Mark Burroughs, se city would benefit from e improvements to the cor-

"There are no TxDOT dollars, and in order to fund a massive project like this, the only realistic way to do that is a public-private partnership with managed lanes," Burroughs said.



BURROUGHS

The transportation infrastructure is imperative to sustain economic growth in North Texas, Burroughs said. And if the long-delayed I-35E expansion project doesn't move forward, the region could be left behind economically

with goods and workers unable to move effectively between Dallas and Denton, he said.

"The transportation infrastructure is at the top of every major company's list of determining the best site locations. It's critical to have projects in the pipeline to address that issue," Burroughs said. "If you can't move around the Metroplex, you lose the competitive advantage."

Eyes on the road

Work to fulfill the Federal Highway Administration environmental review for the \$2.2 billion cen-

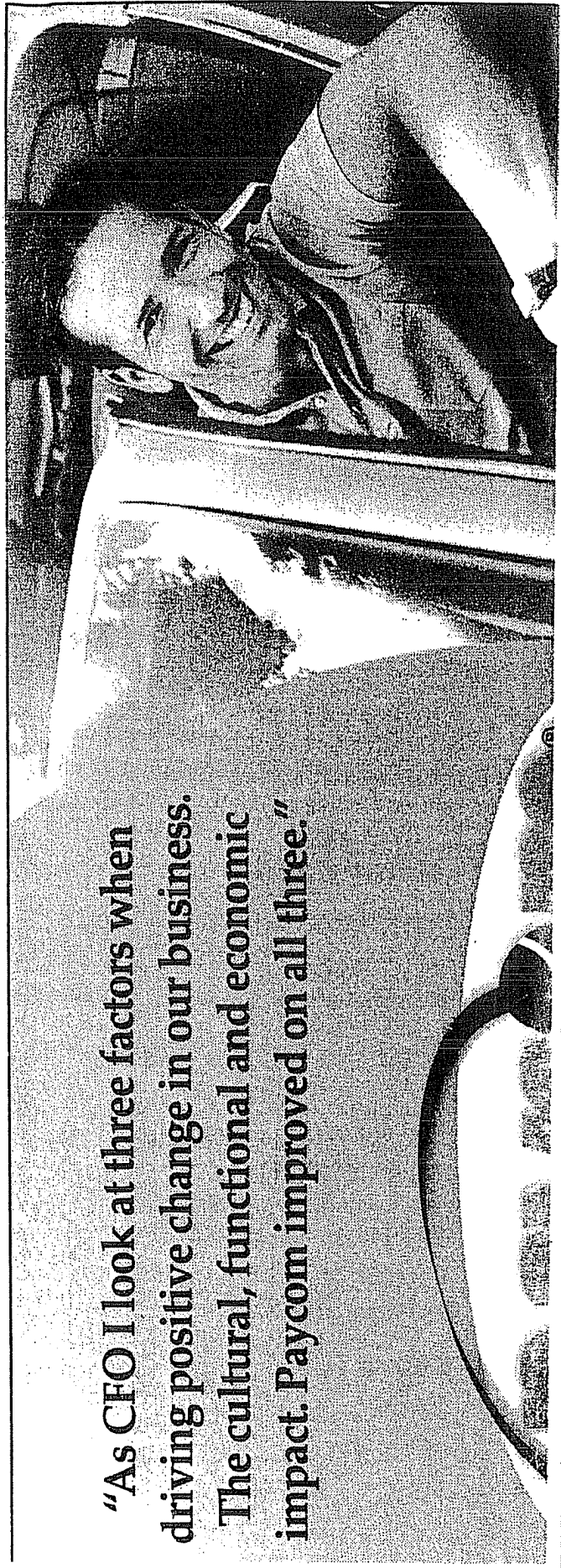
Construction could take two to five years, depending on funding, right-of-way acquisitions and specialty structures, such as bridges for added lanes over Lewisville Lake. Once TxDOT receives the federal environmental clearance, utilities would be relocated before moving forward with purchasing about 200 private properties, Bailey said. Rights of way for about another 500 private properties also will need to be purchased along the 28-mile project, Bailey said.

ter segment of the project—from President George Bush Turnpike to FM 2181—is expected to finish early next year, Bailey said. The 28-mile, three-phase project was first proposed roughly 15 years ago, with project development beginning a decade ago, officials said.

If funds for the project are found, construction could begin in late 2012 to early 2013, he said. The overall \$4.4 billion project could employ thousands of architects, environmentalists, construction workers and designers, Bailey said.

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I-35E redo between Dallas and Denton ramps up

07:20 AM CST on Tuesday, November 23, 2010

By MICHAEL A. LINDENBERGER / The Dallas Morning News
mlindenberg@dallasnews.com

Texas plans to begin buying nearly 200 pieces of private property along Interstate 35E north of Dallas early next year as it moves to deliver on the long-promised reconstruction of the heavily traveled route to Denton.

At nearly \$5 billion, the mix of paid and free lanes would be the area's largest highway project ever.

The reconstruction would add just one free main lane in each direction to the famously traffic-clogged stretch. But it also would create continuous frontage roads that supporters say would help ease traffic.

In addition, the new I-35E would feature new tolled lanes where rates would go up as traffic gets heavier, just as on a similar reconstruction of LBJ Freeway in Dallas that should get under way in January.

Those rates could reach more than 75 cents per mile during busy times, compared with the 14.5 cents typical on roads built and paid for by the North Texas Tollway Authority.

Right-of-way acquisition would take about a year and would begin as soon as the project clears the Federal Highway Administration's environmental review, probably within several months, said Gary Bailey, Denton area engineer for the project. Relocating utilities would take another year, meaning construction on the 12-mile central segment of

Billions needed

Similar reviews of the northern and southern ends of the route are expected early next year. And Denton County consultant, John Polster, said officials hope to build all three phases as a single project.

But whether any of that happens at all, much less according to the schedule laid out by transportation officials, depends on whether Texas can find the billions it still needs to pay for the road.

And that, in large part, depends on the Legislature.

"We are looking at a \$4.4 billion project, and right now we have about \$450 million to pay for it," said Bailey, who called the project one of North Texas' most pressing transportation needs.

Local contributions push that total to about \$600 million. But with inflation likely to drive the total construction cost to nearly \$5 billion by the time work begins, Polster and others acknowledged that without private investors or surprise federal funding, the project is unlikely to move forward.

To pay for it, officials hope to use a model that has worked for the LBJ Freeway project and the similar North Tarrant Express, though not without controversy. Both projects are hybrids that include rebuilding free lanes and adding tolled lanes. And both mix hundreds of millions of tax dollars with billions provided by private investors.

It's exactly the kind of public-private partnership that has been at the center of Gov. Rick Perry's transportation agenda since at least 2003. But it also is the kind of deal that the Legislature ostensibly put out of business in 2009.

Beyond a handful of projects, like the LBJ Freeway reconstruction, that were grandfathered in by the Legislature, no new roads are supposed to be built using private toll firms like the Spanish company Cintra that is building LBJ and the North Tarrant Express.

But two years ago, Senate leaders including Sen. John Carona of Dallas and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, both Republicans, said that they saw the decision to end the state's authority to enter into public-private partnerships as purely temporary and that they'd revisit the issue in 2011.

That's precisely what Denton County officials and leaders of the Regional Transportation Council are counting on. And it is something Perry, too, has said he'll pursue once lawmakers return.

"I just don't think now is the time to leave any of our funding options off the table," Perry said in an interview with *The Dallas Morning News* just before his re-election this month.

Will toll idea fly?

Whether that will be enough to reignite Texas' once strong romance with highway privatization may boil down to what influence the freshman

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class in the House has on road building – and that isn't clear.

Will new members be as opposed to tolls as they are likely to be to new taxes? Will they be against the use of bonds to build highways, a method that has long been the Legislature's preference?

Time will tell, and probably soon, Polster and others said.

"That's likely to all come down to the battle for the speakership," said Polster, noting the importance of who will be leading committees, a decision that the House speaker makes. "But we've met with key transportation-related legislators who are part of the leadership, and we aren't trying to convince anyone on the religion of PPPs [public-private partnerships]. We have explored gas-tax-only avenues, and that essentially ends up being a no-build scenario."

Nobody is for that, he said.

"We're in a new era," Polster said of the post-election political realities.

"So we are just going to have to get in front of everybody we need to, to make our case that not building I-35 is far worse than anything that would come out of the contemplated legislation."