

Commission Award Launches New Phase of I-40 Crosstown

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Today marks the first commission action on the construction phase of the I-40 Crosstown reconstruction. In a landmark vote, the Oklahoma Transportation Commission moved August 1 to award the first phase, a \$6.8 million project, to Muskogee Bridge Company. The award was extremely close to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's engineering estimate.

The first project is expected to last one year and involves building two interstate bridges and a railroad bridge on the corridor's east end near Byers to provide a passageway under the new interstate. Transportation officials chose to begin construction at this location to expedite the city's expansion efforts to its existing canal system. While under construction, this project, as well as several to come, will not affect current traffic on the interstate.

Since 1996, ODOT has worked closely with the city of Oklahoma City, various community groups and Congress to address critical needs along the corridor.

"The progress we've made on I-40 would not have been possible without Senator Jim Inhofe's leadership and support," ODOT director Gary Ridley said. "Because of his determination over the past few years along with efforts of Representative Ernest Istook and the rest of the Oklahoma delegation we can take another step toward completing a vital corridor, not only for Oklahoma but for the nation."

The complete 4-mile reconstruction of I-40 in Oklahoma City is estimated at \$360 million and will be built approximately five blocks south of the existing interstate. The project has already received \$180 million in special designated federal funds while more is anticipated in the current federal appropriations bill expected to be finalized soon.

"The Crosstown is the state's largest construction project and moving forward with the first construction phase is a monumental moment for the department and for the state," John Bowman, Crosstown Project Development Engineer, said.

ODOT has been working diligently to relocate utilities prior to construction to ensure contractors have an open, safe and unobstructed work area while utility companies continue to provide service to customers. Engineering is underway for other projects and additional segments are expected to let for bid over the next year.

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