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How will State Hwy. 174/Wilshire Boulevard, between I-35W and Elk Drive, look this time next year?

On Tuesday, Nov. 13, representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the project contractor, Austin Bridge & Road, as well as City staff will be at Burleson City Hall for a public meeting to discuss the construction schedule for the upcoming improvements to State Hwy. 174 between I-35W and Elk Drive. Improvements include replacement of the center turn lane with a raised curb center median with turn lanes, an overlay of the existing pavement and landscaping. The meeting is a come-and-go format, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., at 141 W. Renfro St. Work on the project is expected to begin after Thanksgiving. The work zones could be in place as early as Monday, Nov. 19. This project is expected to take 15 months.

The center median on Hwy. 174 was removed in 1986. The center median stops at Elk Drive, but the project overlay continues to FM 731/John Jones Drive.

The median project includes removing the signalized intersection at Lorna Street and Hwy. 174; adding hooded left turn lanes between the Hwy. 174 intersections with Newton Street and Exchange Street (Antonio's restaurant on the north and China King restaurant on the south); adding hooded left turn lanes between the intersections with Hwy. 174 and Exchange Street and Hwy. 174 and Gardens Boulevard (Hobby Lobby to the north and the future intersection with Gregory Street to the south); removing one intersection (Market Street) that does not have a traffic signal; and adding an intersection, with a traffic signal, on Hwy. 174 between Hidden Creek Parkway and Elk Drive to serve the Burleson Independent School District administration building, the Durham Transportation bus barn, and retail traffic. Hooded left turn lanes are dedicated left in lanes.

In August 2011, the Burleson City Council signed off on a resolution to support the Texas Department of Transportation project to construct the center median. In September 2011, the City hosted a public meeting to garner input from citizens and business owners affected by the median project.

The \$4 million project, which is considered a safety enhancement due to the high traffic volume and multiple unprotected left turn movements, is funded by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT (90.5 percent). The City will be responsible for 9.5 percent of the project, which includes \$150,000 for new signal construction, \$50,000 for landscape design, \$50,000 for landscape and irrigation, and \$40,000 for offsite improvements for a total of \$290,000. The City received \$450,000 from TxDOT's Green Ribbon Program which will be used to fund landscape and irrigation improvements.