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The Texas Department of Transportation's median improvement project on State Hwy. 174/Wilshire Boulevard in Burleson will not start until January 2013. The work zones should be in place after Jan. 1. The project is expected to be complete by April 2014.

The original start date for the project was right after Thanksgiving, this year. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the project coordinator worked with the City to push back the timeline so that retail traffic on Hwy. 174 would not be affected during the 2012 holiday season. Retail traffic will be impacted during the 2013 holiday season.

Representatives from TxDOT and the project contractor, Austin Bridge & Road, as well as City staff met with residents and business owners Tuesday to discuss the construction schedule for the 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.

Work will start with the milling and road widening (in areas of the intersections, mostly) in January. That part of the project will most likely take place at night, between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. The road will remain a milled surface until the final overlay is done, which is projected to take place in October 2013. The overlay will also be done during overnight hours. The contractor doesn't expect the actual median work to begin until May 2013. The inside lane in each direction will be closed for the median construction. Landscaping and the irrigation are on schedule to be finished by September/October 2013.

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 construction will create a 4-inch raised concrete median in place of the current center turn lane. All existing signalized intersections will remain, with the exception of Lorna Street. The Lorna Street signal will be removed and a median will prevent left turns, but Lorna will be maintained up to Hwy. 174, allowing right turns. A new signalized intersection will be created approximately midway between Hidden Creek Parkway and Elk Drive to serve the Burleson Independent School District administration building and Durham Transportation

bus barn on the north, as well as retail traffic on the south side. All other median openings will be a hooded left, which allow left turns in but not left turns out. Those locations include between Newton Street and Exchange Street (Antonio's restaurant on the north and China King restaurant on the south), between Exchange Street and Gardens Boulevard (Hobby Lobby to the north and just west of FasTaco to the south), and into the west end of the Walmart parking lot, between the intersection with Hidden Creek Parkway and the new intersection between Hidden Creek Parkway and Elk Drive.

In August 2011, the Burleson City Council approved a resolution to support the Texas Department of Transportation project to construct the center median. In September 2011, TxDOT 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 (approximately 93 percent). The City will be responsible for approximately 7 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.