

# Texas' Top Highway Projects

Ten Projects Worth Approximately \$1.2 Billion in TxDOT Contracts

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**Texas Construction magazine** presents for the first time a list of the state's top highway construction projects, a ranking by contract value of the top 10 projects that started in the previous year.

In past issues, highway projects have been incorporated into the annual Top 25 Projects feature.

With Texas setting the national pace for highway construction, we thought it only fitting to break out the highway projects into a separate category. Each of the top 10 projects was worth more than \$55 million in contract value and started in 2004.

Together the 10 projects were worth nearly \$1.2 billion and represent contracts in the four major metropolitan areas of the state as well as the Rio Grande Valley.

Judging from the top 10, the majority of highway work in the state in 2004 was awarded to Williams Brothers Construction Co. of Houston. The firm is the general contractor on four of the 10 projects, with jobs from Houston to San Antonio to the Rio Grande Valley. >>

## Top Highway Projects



# Interstate-10/Beltway 8 Interchange

Cost: \$250 million

**The \$250 million** IH-10/Beltway 8 Interchange contract was awarded to Houston-based Williams Brothers Construction Co. The contract involves the expansion of IH-10 and reconstruction of the eight freeway-to-freeway direct connectors.

About two years ago, the Houston District of TxDOT began the reconstruction of Interstate 10/Katy Freeway. The \$27 billion Katy Freeway Reconstruction program involves the complete reconstruction of approximately 23 mi. of IH-10 West and approximately 2 mi. of Interstate 610. The program also involves the total reconstruction of two major freeway-to-freeway interchanges, including the IH-10/IH-610 Interchange and the IH-10/Beltway 8 Interchange.

Currently, IH-10 near Beltway 8 consists of three general purpose lanes in each direction, a reversible HOV lane and two continuous frontage road lanes in each direction.

The new design includes four general purpose lanes, two toll lanes and three continuous frontage road lanes in each direction. Also included is the addition of auxiliary lanes eastbound and west-



bound at various entrance and exit ramps to accommodate improved points of egress and ingress.

Consequently, the direct connectors between IH-10 and Beltway 8 need to be reconstructed to accommodate the new and improved Katy Freeway.

The IH-10/Beltway 8 Interchange contract is on a 51-month schedule. The traffic-control plan calls for the first two years of the project to be dedicated to the expansion of the IH-10 main lanes. The actual reconstruction of IH-10/Beltway 8 direct connectors will not begin until January 2007, at which time the contractor will reconstruct the connectors two at a time.

Progress is currently under way in the construction of the new detention pond in the southwest corner of the interchange and accelerated construction of the new westbound main lanes. A key

component in the contract is addressing frequent flooding in the vicinity of the interchange.

The Katy Freeway Reconstruction program is one of the largest highway construction programs in Texas' history and the first project in the nation to convert a portion of an interstate highway into toll lanes.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Houston

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Williams Brothers Construction Co., Houston

**Start/complete:** October 2004/January 2010

**Contract value:** \$250 million



## Loop 410/U.S. 281 Interchange

Cost: \$154.7 million

### Key Facts

**Location:** San Antonio

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Williams Brothers Construction Co., Houston

**Start/complete:** October 2004/January 2010

**Contract value:** \$154.7 million

**Williams Brothers** Construction Co. of Houston was awarded the \$154.7 million contract to build the Loop 410/U.S. Highway 281 Interchange in October. The long-awaited project had been anticipated in San Antonio for more than two decades. It is the largest single highway project to ever be awarded in the San Antonio district.

The project had been scheduled to be built in five separate phases and take more than 10 years to complete, but the phases were combined into one big proj-

ect so the interchange could be built faster.

Williams Brothers' bid calls for completing the job in 933 working days.



## State Highway 45 Southeast, Austin

Cost: \$154.3 million

### Key Facts

**Location:** Austin

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Zachry Construction Corp., San Antonio

**Start/complete:** October 2004/August 2007

**Contract value:** \$154.3 million

design, construction, right-of-way services, utility adjustments and environmental reviews on the project, which is one element of the \$3.6 billion, 65-mi. Central Texas Turnpike Project.

The \$154.3 million contract involves linking the SH 45SE turnpike to Interstate 35 at FM 1327, north of Buda to the junction of State Highway 130 and U.S. 183 near Mustang Ridge.

The 7.4-mi.-long facility will be constructed as a four-lane roadway with controlled access and a wide center median. As traffic warrants and funding is identified, the facility could be expanded to handle future transportation needs.

**TxDOT is using** a design-build contract known as a Comprehensive Development Agreement for the State Highway 45 Southeast project. Zachry Construction Corp. of San Antonio will oversee



**Southeast of Houston**, the widening construction on U.S. Highway 59 through Fort Bend County has reached the Brazos River. The contract for this section of freeway will provide for the highway to be upgraded from a four-lane rural highway to interstate standards and build frontage roads

## U.S. 59, Southwest Freeway

Cost: \$152.5 million

across the Brazos River for the first time.

Between State Highway 6 and University Boulevard, a distance of 4.5 mi., the highway will be widened to eight lanes on a completely new structure.

Previously motorists from west of the Brazos River would be forced onto the main lanes of U.S. 59-Southwest Freeway or face a long detour around the river.

The \$152.5 million contract was awarded to Williams Brothers Construction Co. of Houston for corridor improvements to U.S. 59 that will accommodate four lanes of traffic will full shoulders and two diamond lanes extending Houston's high occupancy vehicle lane system.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Houston

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Williams Brothers Construction Co., Houston

**Start/complete:** June 2004/Summer 2008

**Contract value:** \$152.5 million

The construction of the bridges will not allow the complete closure of the freeway, a major transportation corridor from Mexico to mid-continent and Canada.



## State Highway 121, Collin and Denton Counties

Cost: \$103 million

**Work on State Highway 121** in Collin and Denton counties will widen the highway from its current two lanes to a six-lane controlled-access facility with frontage roads.

The \$103 million project is from east of FM 2281 (Old Denton Road) to the Dallas North Tollway, a distance of 5.8 mi. The project, which passes through Plano, Frisco, the Colony, Hebron and Lewisville, represents a major step in improving mobility in one of the fastest-growing areas of the state.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Denton

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Austin Bridge & Road LP, Dallas

**Start/complete:** August 2004/Januray 2008

**Contract value:** \$103 million



The \$97.3 million project includes widening 8.97 mi. of an existing freeway from two to three main lanes, reconstruction of frontage roads, reconstruction of seven bridges and building an underground drainage system.

Zachry Construction Corp. of San Antonio recommended a revised construc-

## U.S. 83, Cameron County

Cost: \$97.3 million

tion method to TxDOT that would deliver a completed project in just 46 months. The Zachry team will widen the access roads at one time and then address the main lanes all at once.

Reconstruction of the bridges will also be handled more efficiently. Crews will work simultaneously on the first and third bridge intersections while traffic is diverted around those bridges and onto the frontage roads. Drivers on the access roads will then be able to re-enter the main lanes and use the remaining bridges farther down the highway.

Once the reconstructed bridges are re-opened, the process will be repeated

### Key Facts

**Location:** La Feria

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Zachry Construction Corp., San Antonio

**Start/complete:** December 2004/ October 2008

**Contract value:** \$97.3 million

with the second and fourth bridge intersections and so on until all seven bridge intersections have been reconstructed.



## State Highway 121, Collin County

Cost: \$84 million

**Balfour Beatty** Construction Co. of Atlanta has begun work in Frisco on the construction of six-lane frontage roads between the Dallas North Tollway and FM 2478 (Custer Road). In addition to constructing the 5-mi. frontage roads, the \$84 million project includes an interchange at State Highway 289.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Frisco

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Balfour Beatty Construction Co., Atlanta

**Start/complete:** October 2004/January 2008

**Contract value:** \$84 million



## U.S. 83 Expressway, Hidalgo County

Cost: \$74.4 million

**Williams Brothers** Construction Co. of Houston began construction on U.S. 83 Expressway from FM 1015 in Weslaco east to FM 1425 in Mercedes. TxDOT is continuing the expansion of U.S. 83 Expressway from four to six main lanes.

The 5.3 mi., \$74.4 million project also includes the widening of the frontage roads to three lanes and reconstructing several overpass bridges. The project is the last segment of U.S. 83 Expressway to be expanded to six lanes in Hidalgo County.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Mercedes

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Williams Brothers Construction Co., Houston

**Start/complete:** October 2004/Summer 2008

**Contract value:** \$74.4 million



## Interstate 35 East, Ellis County

Cost: \$61.5 million

**Interstate 35E**, from south of the U.S. Highway 77 overpass in Ellis County to just north of Parkerville Road in southern Dallas County, is undergoing construction to widen the highway from four lanes to six lanes over the next three years.

The length of the project is 5.9 mi. and will abut the cities of Red Oak, Desoto, Glen Heights and Lancaster. The improved roadway will have a divided concrete median with a barrier and 12-ft.-wide shoulders. The bridges within the project will also be widened to include

### Key Facts

**Location:** Westlaco

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Ed Bell Construction Co., Dallas

**Start/complete:** October 2004/First quarter 2008

**Contract value:** \$61.5 million

new shoulders.

Ed Bell Construction Co. of Dallas was awarded the \$61.5 million contract, which is expected to be complete in three years.

## U.S. 59 Eastex Freeway

Cost: \$58.6 million



**The reconstruction** of U.S. Highway 59 in the northeast Houston metropolitan area to modern freeway standards has crossed into neighboring Montgomery County.

Texas Sterling Construction LP was awarded a \$58.6 million contract in September for the expansion of U.S. 59-Eastex Freeway (U.S. 59 North) from a four-lane freeway to an 8-lane freeway through the suburban Kingwood area.

In addition, three-lane frontage roads from the Harris County line to Northpark Drive will promote greater mobility within the area.

### Key Facts

**Location:** Houston

**Owner:** Texas Department of Transportation

**General Contractor:** Texas Sterling Construction LP, Houston

**Start/complete:** September 2004/September 2007

**Contract value:** \$58.6 million



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