

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

YOUR COMMUTE

DFW Connector project: Few lane closures likely during peak hours in Northeast Tarrant

- Posted Wednesday, Mar. 03, 2010



[View photos](#)

[Keep up with traffic affecting you in Your Commute](#) 

[Get traffic updates throughout the afternoon in our Honkin' Mad blog](#) 

Have more to add? News tip? [Tell us](#)

BY GORDON DICKSON

gdickson@star-telegram.com

Motorists traveling through Grapevine during the \$1 billion DFW Connector project probably won't have to worry about navigating closed lanes, at least not during the workweek.

The contractor heading up the project has agreed to pay a stiff fee of \$8,300 per hour, per lane, in the unlikely event that any lanes must be closed during peak travel periods. Generally, the peak period is 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

NorthGate Constructors, which last month broke ground on the four-year project, hopes to never pay that so-called lane rental. The fee was spelled out in NorthGate's contract with the Texas Transportation Department.

Instead, NorthGate plans to limit lane closures to nights and weekends, deputy project director Rob Anderson said. In most cases, NorthGate won't be charged for after-hours lane closures.

"Closures will be needed at times, and these closures will be advertised plenty ahead of time," Anderson told about 200 people Wednesday during a monthly meeting of the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition in downtown Fort Worth.

Several road projects are in
the mix for the next five years

The DFW Connector is among several big-ticket highway projects scheduled to be under construction in Tarrant County during the next five years. How to keep the traffic flowing while still creating room for workers to do their thing was the subject of the coalition's meeting.

NorthGate also intends to deploy a courtesy patrol in the Grapevine area. Specially trained employees will patrol Texas 114 /121 in utility trucks, removing any debris found on the road and helping stranded motorists with flat tires and other minor repairs.

The service will supplement the courtesy patrol operated on freeways by the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department.

North Tarrant Express work to affect traffic near mall, D/FW

Another project, the North Tarrant Express, is scheduled to be under way this year. The project involves the expansion of Northeast Loop 820 from Interstate 35W to North East Mall, and Texas 121/183 from North East Mall in Hurst to just east of the Texas 121/183 split in Euless.

The main contractor on that \$2 billion project, NTE Mobility Partners, is working on a plan to improve communication with Northeast Tarrant County residents, spokesman Robert Hinkle said.

Ideas include hosting an open house, perhaps on a Saturday in the near future, when residents can visit the project and perhaps tour the work site.

The event could even morph into "a play date," at which time children might be allowed to "climb on the machinery," Hinkle said.

GORDON DICKSON, 817-390-7796