

Construction

More roadwork on tap for I-40

ODOT planning to widen freeway and reconstruct Douglas Blvd. interchange

By Jeff Harrison

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As one major road project on I-40 winds down in eastern Oklahoma County, another is ramping up.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation is planning to begin a \$170 million project to widen I-40 and rebuild the interchange at Douglas Blvd. Work is expected to begin in April and be completed in 2025.

It is the largest single contract awarded in ODOT history.

The project comes as crews are wrapping up an I-40 bridge replacement project in the Mid-Del area. The project included reconstructing I-40 between Crutch Creek and Sooner Rd. including six bridges.

The I-40 and Douglas Blvd. interchange will be reconstructed as a Single-Point Urban Interchange — also referred to as a SPUI — designed to improve safety and mobility while minimizing impacts to surrounding properties. It will be similar to one recently built at I-40 and Morgan Rd.

The project also will address nine bridges and widen 6 miles of I-40 to six lanes between Industrial Blvd. and the I-240 interchange. The Westminster Rd. bridge over I-40 will be rehabilitated and raised to accommodate modern truck traffic. The I-40 bridges over Anderson Rd. will be reconstructed as well as I-240 westbound ramp to I-40. Plans also include removal of the Engle Rd. bridge over I-40.

The new interchange will help handle increased traffic in the I-40 corridor and at nearby Tinker Air Force Base. The U.S. Air Force plans to expand the base to accommodate a new maintenance facility for the B-21 Raider, the nation's newest bomber aircraft. To make way for the expansion, Oklahoma City plans to permanently close Douglas Blvd. from SE 44th to SE 74th streets, as well as a portion of SE 59th and SE 49th streets.

The project was awarded in October 2022 by the Oklahoma Transportation Commission to Allen Contracting Inc. and Shell Construction



Senator James M. Inhofe, left, and Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation and ODOT Executive Director Tim Gatz celebrate I-40 improvements.

PHOTO BY JEFF HARRISON

Co. Inc. of Oklahoma City.

The interchange was recently named after former Sen. Jim Inhofe who retired last month after more than 35 years in Congress. Inhofe was a powerful force on issues of military and infrastructure.

A more than \$4 million resurfacing project is nearly complete to improve the driving surface and less-

en the number of possible closures during I-40 reconstruction.

Officials say two lanes of I-40 will remain open in each direction during construction. Ramps will be intermittently closed and local street closures will occur during bridge work. Motorists are encouraged to seek alternate routes such as NE 23rd St. and I-240.



The largest single contract in ODOT history will soon result in a rebuild of the I-40 and Douglas Boulevard interchange as the interstate is widened. PHOTO BY KRISTIN HARRISON