Saturn Parkway Extension, Beechcroft Road Widening project to begin May 30

SPRING HILL, Tenn. – Construction of the Saturn Parkway (State Route 396) extension and widening of Beechcroft Road (S.R. 247) is scheduled to begin May 30.

The $47 million Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) project will improve connectivity, safety and commercial operations along this important corridor and neighboring routes for local and industrial truck traffic by:
• Extending the existing four-lane Saturn Parkway north as a two-lane from where it currently terminates at the GM-Spring Hill Manufacturing facility intersecting with the realigned Beechcroft Road (S.R. 247)
• Widening Beechcroft to three lanes, two travel lanes and a center turn lane, with curb and gutter
• Constructing an eastbound Beechcroft right turn lane onto Cleburne Road
• Constructing a westbound Beechcroft left turn lane onto Cleburne to help manage school traffic
• Constructing an eastbound Beechcroft right turn lane onto Town Center Parkway
• Modifying the turning radius at the intersection of U.S. 31 (Main Street) and Stephen P. Yokich Parkway to improve right turns for tractor-trailer trucks
• Reducing the slope of a large hill on Beechcroft to greatly improve driver visibility
• Adding a turn lane into the Meadows of Spring Hill subdivision
• Constructing a grade-separated overpass bridge over the CSX railroad, which will resolve long existing public safety issues with trains blocking the roadway while loading and unloading freight at the GM facility. The bridge will be built just south of the existing rail crossing so as to not impact traffic.
• Constructing a bridge crossing McCormack Creek Branch on the new road alignment, and replacing a culvert
• Constructing a bridge over the GM Plant employee parking entrance

Installation of silt fences and other pre-construction activities will begin May 30, with the groundbreaking expected in the first week of June, said Jennica Greffe, a project manager for Superior Construction, the contractor overseeing the Saturn/Beechcroft design-build project. The Beechcroft improvements will be built first, followed by the Saturn Parkway extension starting this fall and running into next year. The entire project is projected to be complete by Christmas 2019, Greffe said.

During construction, the speed limit on Beechcroft will be reduced to 30 m.p.h. just west of Cleburne Road to the Meadows of Spring Hill subdivision near the railroad tracks. It will be increased to a permanent 35 m.p.h. speed limit when construction is complete. Drivers should use extra caution and never speed through the work zone. The speed limit on the new Saturn extension will be 40 m.p.h.

The construction will periodically include partial lane closures, with a flagger directing one lane of traffic between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The project could potentially involve some full road closures with detours, which would be publicly advertised in advance. There also have been discussions of a possible full closure of the Beechcroft/Cleburne intersection to allow for completing the intersection improvements over a weekend.

Saturn Parkway is a four-lane divided highway connecting Interstate 65 to the General Motors Spring Hill Manufacturing plant in Spring Hill. The road currently ends at the GM plant, limiting access to truck traffic and employees only. Local traffic must use interchange ramps to exit Saturn Parkway, while industrial traffic must use local routes to access the commercially developed area to the north of the GM plant, along Beechcroft Road.

The project is designed to promote economic development by providing direct connectivity from Saturn Parkway to Beechcroft, reducing travel times for trucks moving between the auto part suppliers on Beechcroft, the GM Plant, and I-65, and to improve safety along Beechcroft,
Main Street and Stephen P. Yokich Parkway by maintaining traffic flow and reducing truck traffic.

The direct route will reduce travel times for tractor-trailer trucks moving through the area, shift truck traffic off local roadways, and allow other motorists to stay on a public road without diverging from the main traffic movement.

Funding for the project includes $37.6 million in federal funds and $9.4 million in state funds. In addition, the developer of the auto parts manufacturing facilities along Beechcroft will fund roadway improvements fronting the two facilities. The developer of the new Harvest Point residential subdivision off Cleburne Road also will be constructing road improvements in front of its development.