

METRO AND STATE NEWS

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Loop 1604 superstreet opens today

Redesigned road near Texas 151 is expected to ease congestion on the Northwest Side.

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The commute for Northwest Side motorists is about to get a little easier.

That's what Texas Department of Transportation officials are betting on with the opening of a superstreet system along Loop 1604 near Texas 151.

Starting today, motorists no longer will be able to turn left onto Loop 1604 from New Guilbeau or Shaenfield roads. Instead, drivers will turn right and make protected U-turns onto the loop farther down the road.

Motorists still can turn left onto both streets from Loop

1604. The reconfigured New Guilbeau intersection opened last month.

The latest project is the city's second superstreet, a concept that eases congestion through a combination of left-turn restrictions, protected turnarounds and synchronized traffic signals. The first one opened on U.S. 281 north of Loop 1604 late last year.

Superstreets are considered innovative and affordable solutions, but also temporary. The

new superstreet probably will reduce traffic bottlenecks for five to eight years, TxDOT San Antonio spokesman Josh Donat said.

Studies showed the majority of travel times along 281 improved at anticipated levels, though there was some indication that motorists returning to the corridor because of the new superstreet lowered the expected time savings at night.

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STREET

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TxDOT officials hope the new 1604 superstreet will reduce average commute times by 40 percent.

"This is something we can do right now while we are searching for ways to take care of a more long-term solution," Donat said.

A Texas Transportation Institute study says that Loop 1604 between Texas 16 and FM 471 — roads that bracket the new superstreet — is the 74th most congested roadway segment in the state. Every day, roughly 71,000 vehicles pass along a portion of the corridor, according to a 2009 TxDOT traffic count. Federal stimulus funds paid for both superstreet projects. The Alamo Regional Mobility Authority built the 281 system. TxDOT has overseen construction of the \$6.3 million superstreet on 1604.

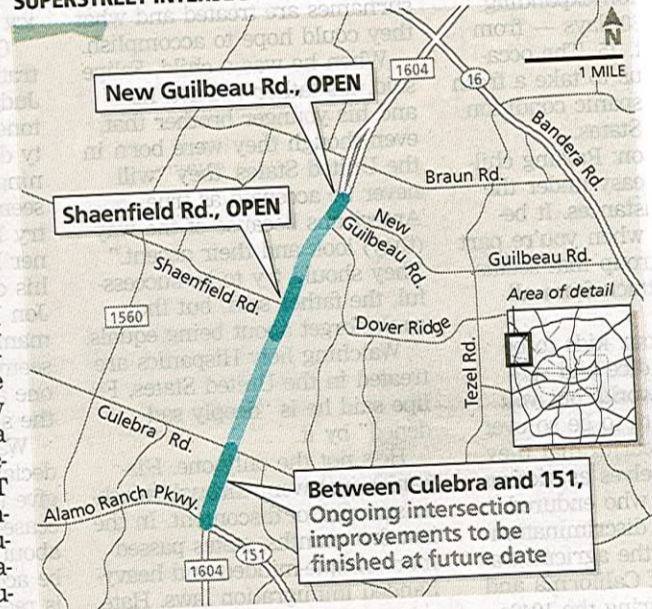
Other construction work along the corridor — including work to convert an on-ramp into an off-ramp to Alamo Ranch Parkway and completion of the concrete islands around the Shaenfield intersection — will continue through the fall, Donat said. Crews should finish the entire project by year's end, he said.

A future project is in the works to build an underpass at 151 and 1604.

Two superstreet intersections open

The 1604 superstreet system opens today with newly configured intersections at Shaenfield and New Guilbeau roads.

SUPERSTREET INTERSECTIONS AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION



Typical superstreet design

A superstreet intersection prohibits minor cross-street traffic from going straight through or turning left in typical fashion. The traffic is rerouted in a more efficient way. Actual superstreet designs may vary from this example.

