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Ft. Hood is on lockdown after a gunman killed at least 7

Press conference expected from Fort Hood on the shooting

HOUSTON TRAFFIC 

Expansion starts on 290 Freeway

 By Kevin Quinn

HOUSTON (KTRK) -- Big plans are in store for improving a local freeway, but with every improvement comes a lot of construction and potential headaches.

The Northwest Freeway, like every other freeway in Houston, builds up during rush hour. The construction is not expected to solve every problem with congestion out here, but the state expects the project to help some.

Construction crews survey the roadway as a \$2.5 million project to alleviate congestion along part of 290 gets underway.

"Anything would help at this point," said commuter Debra Earnest.

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The Texas Department of Transportation will widen existing roadway to add lanes east and west bound between West Little York and Fairbanks North Houston. It will restripe 290 in both directions between Jones Road and FM 529 in order to make a lane that will allow for easier merging. Crews will also widen the westbound approach to Senate Avenue on the 290 feeder to create a combined u-turn and left turn at that intersection. That would keep motorists from getting stuck in the u-turn only lane and having to merge out to keep going straight.

The idea in each case is to allow drivers more time and space to make decisions.

"While it's not the ultimate, final step to improving congestion on this corridor, it is a very important first step," said Anikka Ayala-Rogers of TXDOT.

The work will take place primarily at night. At that time, some of the main lanes of 290 will be shut down. You should expect temporary lane reductions and extended shoulder closures as the work continues.

Some lament that with progress comes a price.

"The more time they got it shut down, the more traffic there's gonna be," said commuter Zach Agado.

We're told construction here should be complete in the next six months.

Completion of the overall U.S. 290 corridor expansion project is still years away

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