

FM 1960 Handicap Ramp & Sidewalk Project Update

with Bobby Lieb, Grow Northwest, Vice President, Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce

Many of our members and residents have raised concerns about the status of the handicap ramp replacement and sidewalk installation project currently underway along Cypress Creek Parkway. The project appears to have stopped with many of the corners and sidewalk installations torn up and incomplete. So, we made some inquiries with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), the agency responsible for Cypress Creek Parkway, and were able to speak with Philip Garland, the recently assigned project engineer for this project, and as it so happens, a native of Northwest Houston. Mr. Garland confirmed what we all have observed.

First a little background on the ramp project. Some of you may have been asking why the handicap ramps need to be replaced if there were already existing ramps at the corners of the intersections. For TXDOT to receive federal transportation funding dollars, all projects must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The existing ramps no longer met the current ADA standards, and therefore need to be replaced if TXDOT is to remain in compliance. Additionally, over the years as Cypress Creek Parkway was widened, the utilities, (power, telecommunications and irrigation) became more and more compressed into a narrower space within the TXDOT right-of-way. As the contractors began construction they immediately ran into a myriad of utilities at most of the intersection corners, and for the ramps to be set at the new grade and angle, the existing utilities became a hindrance. After a number of hits to the utilities, TXDOT and the contractors decided to temporarily halt the project, reassess the location of the utilities, and perform a redesign of the problem intersections.

The contractors will resume work construction once 100% of the redesign is complete. Mr. Garland said he is working as fast as he can to get the new engineering plans finished, so the project can get underway and completed this year. While construction is on hold, the utility companies have been cooperating with TXDOT to get the utilities moved from the areas they are impeding the project. He assures us the mobility and appearance of Cypress Creek Parkway is every bit as important to TXDOT as it is to us, and they are committed to bringing our main thoroughfare up to a standard that meets today's multi-modal demands and makes the road safer for everyone.