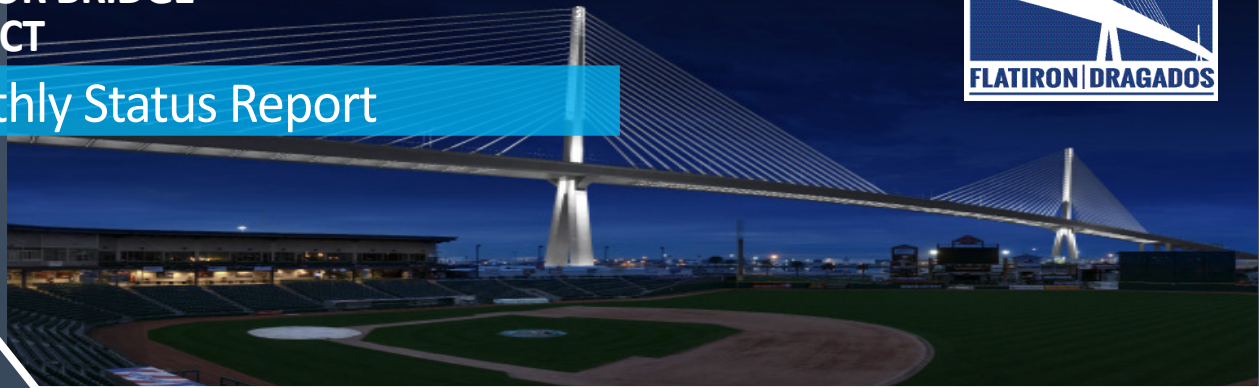


US 181 HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT

Monthly Status Report



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March 2023

Traffic Switch onto New IH 37 Mainlanes and Bridge Over Future US 181

Last month Harbor Bridge Project (HBP) roadworks reached a significant milestone by switching traffic onto a new IH 37 bridge and mainlanes over the future US 181 connection to SH 286. The activity opened up new scopes of work around the South Interchange as crews immediately completed excavating remnants of previous IH 37 ramps and embankment to make way for construction of the Southwest Loop Ramp and the second portion of the IH 37 bridge and mainlanes. A new exit ramp to Port Avenue, turnaround at Nueces Bay Boulevard, and IH 37 entrance ramp at Nueces Bay also opened in early April.

Women on the Harbor Bridge Replacement Project

In honor of National Women in Construction Week, the HBP hosted a March event to recognize our female colleagues and generate feedback for recruiting more women to pursue construction-related careers. The HBP developer, Flatiron/Dragados, has 28 full-time female employees, not counting TxDOT and Third-Party subcontractor employees affiliated with the Project. You may be surprised to learn that several of the positions held are situated outside an office setting. During our roundtable forum, we discussed our job descriptions. Here are a few examples that require significant time in the field: Equipment Operator, Safety Deputy, Quality Director, Environmental Coordinator, Field Engineer, Operations and Maintenance Forewoman, and Maintenance of Traffic Manager. Each participant described their unique position with pride and void of undertones in wanting to trade jobs with another. Our group discussed the ups and downs of working in construction and why we choose to remain in our professions.

More Takeaways: Historically, the construction industry has been male-dominated. However, times have changed. Today more women are making significant contributions to the trade. The construction job market is booming in Texas, with jobs available to anyone willing to work regardless of their skill set. Opportunities abound for women with new innovative ideas, work ethics, and fresh perspectives. We want to contribute to a more inclusive and collaborative workplace culture while promoting teamwork and respect. Male counterparts witness our natural problem-solving and multitasking ability daily on the HBP. Last month, our group proposed ideas on how to help break down barriers and encourage more women to pursue careers in the field through education and outreach programs, job fairs, and other initiatives to raise awareness and promote gender equality in heavy infrastructure. We all agreed that serving as role models can help young girls to visualize themselves in similar roles while overcoming societal barriers.

Despite great improvements, women still face obstacles in the construction industry. Bias, unequal pay, and feeling excluded from company culture sometimes result in a lack of advancement opportunities. To address these challenges, Flatiron, Dragados, and TxDOT are striving to attain a more welcoming and supportive environment for women. This includes providing improved training, advanced safety protocols, professional development opportunities, and zero-tolerance policies against discrimination. Come join our team and be a part of history in the making!



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