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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## City of Melissa looking forward to a productive 2021

MELISSA (January 15, 2021) Significant progress is on the near horizon in Melissa as several large and important projects are slated for completion or initiation in 2021, according to City Manager Jason Little.

“Melissa is on the cusp of entering a new phase in its growth and development,” he said. “This includes large projects that will be readily evident to residents, and some that are less apparent but just as important.”

Chief among these are the advancements expected in the transportation sphere during 2021. With the completion of State Highway 121 through Melissa’s southeast side, the emphasis for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) will shift to completing the preliminary work for the expansion of State Highway 5, which bisects Melissa on a north-south orientation.

The right-of-way acquisition for the expansion and reconstruction of SH 5 has been completed, and crews soon will be completing the utility line relocations to clear the way for the construction of the roadbed. TxDOT and the City are currently working to secure the funding required for the road construction.

“This is an important project for us,” said Little. “Melissa and TxDOT both acknowledge our long-standing partnership because Melissa has three state road system segments in our community. We both recognize that these major transportation projects are only successful if we work together for the benefit of Melissa residents and businesses. We have impressed on TxDOT that completing the SH 5 project as soon as practical will finish the state road improvements and pave the way for each corridor to transform into the assets our community deserves.”

While the facilitation of north-south traffic movement is critically important, there is also an urgency to expedite the ability for traffic to move in an east-west alignment. Work has already begun on that score with the start of the expansion of Melissa Road eastward from SH 5 to SH 121. Melissa Village and Cardinal Village are two development centers that anchor the fast-expanding commercial corridor at the intersection of SH 121 and Melissa Road. Retail and grocery shopping as well as a growing array of dining options are taking hold at or near the intersection, making that area an important destination for locals and visitors.

The completion of the Melissa Road segment tying SH 5 and SH 121 will allow for current and future residents west of SH 5 to have ready access to the shops, stores, and eateries planned for or already operating. Similarly, residents on the east side of Melissa will be able to easily make the trek westward along the reconstructed Melissa Road.

East side residents with children attending Melissa Middle School or the Melissa Ridge Education Center serving pre-K and Kindergarteners on Cardinal Drive one block west of SH 5, will especially benefit from the completion of the Melissa Road extension. The Melissa ISD properties on Cardinal Drive are home to several campuses, as well as Cardinal Stadium, the current football home field for Melissa ISD teams, including the Melissa High School Cardinals.

At the same time, Melissa Road west of US 75 is also a project that will see progress during 2021. Trinity Falls, a large and growing neighborhood that will be home to thousands of families, is located at the western terminus of Melissa Road. The segment of Melissa Road between US 75 and Trinity Falls is currently an unimproved road that includes a bridge susceptible to damage during rain events. In fact, the bridge has been declared unsafe for traffic and has been closed for some time.

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The Melissa Road west project will reconstruct that segment, allowing residents of Trinity Falls the ability to drive into Melissa for shopping, eating, and conducting other business. Trinity Falls is not within the City of Melissa, but there will eventually be a connecting trailhead from that neighborhood into the City of Melissa Trails System.

In the downtown sector, transportation issues will also take shape as Cooper Street from SH 5 to the railroad tracks will be closed and Harrison Street will become another east-west access road.

Coordination with the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system has concluded with the designation of Harrison Street as the principal rail crossing to align with the eventual pedestrian crossing of SH 5 at Harrison Street. Harrison Street will be reconstructed in the future to continue as a connecting road to SH 121 via Washington Drive. Work on the Harrison Street crossing will be concurrent with the work being completed on the Melissa Road segment just to its south.

While not the first effort at defining the contours of the Melissa downtown sector, the work on Melissa Road is nevertheless an important step. Contributing to the vision of a downtown hub as Melissa's central gathering place are these streets that form an east to west and north to south grid. With the street grid as the framework for the downtown hub, work on studying and evaluating the existing right of way and its adequacy within the envisioned downtown are underway, all with an eye toward defining the feasibility of developing the downtown hub in the foreseeable future.

However, without sufficient public infrastructure such as roadways, parking, drainage, and other improvements, the Melissa core area will have limited opportunities to redevelop into the kind of hub that the community has expressed support for in Comprehensive Plan surveys. The prospect of a vibrant, energetic, and exciting downtown area with commercial, retail, and residential aspects will come into focus once these evaluations are complete.

Planning for a downtown hub that includes adequate walking trails, biking paths, relaxation spaces, and many other accompanying amenities is ongoing, including design elements that will pay homage to Melissa's history.

The downtown area is among several other parts of the City that will undergo significant improvements in 2021. The initial phase of construction to convert a 90-acre tract across Throckmorton Road from North Creek Elementary School into a signature park for the citizens is expected to kick off this year. The development of a lake feature will initiate the tract's conversion. The conceptual planning for additional park and open space improvements are also underway, and the lake will be the anchoring element.

The North End Storage Tower, a two-million gallon water tower currently under construction, is located in the northwest corner of the land designated for the park and will provide adequate water storage for Melissa into the foreseeable future. It is scheduled for completion in late 2021.

Other 2021 projects include planning and design of roadways in the area around the campus of Melissa High School on Milrany Road, as well as improvements to access routes into and out of the Z-Plex sports center on East Melissa Road.

"Melissa has been making the necessary investments in infrastructure to get us ready for the next steps in our growth and development," said Little. "Our Council leadership, our volunteers on boards and commissions, and our staff have been working hard to get the City to this pivotal point. We will begin seeing the fruits of all that work very soon."

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**ABOUT THE CITY OF MELISSA** – The City of Melissa is a fast-growing progressive suburb with a small-town feel, located 35 miles north of downtown Dallas in the dynamic growth area of northeast Collin County. Melissa sits on 21 square miles, is home to over 16,000 people, and is easily accessible by way of three intersecting highways. Melissa has ample inventory of the highly-sought-after undeveloped frontage available on US 75 and SH 121, primed to serve the commercial needs of a booming Collin County. Melissa is a home-rule municipality, governed by a council-manager form of government.