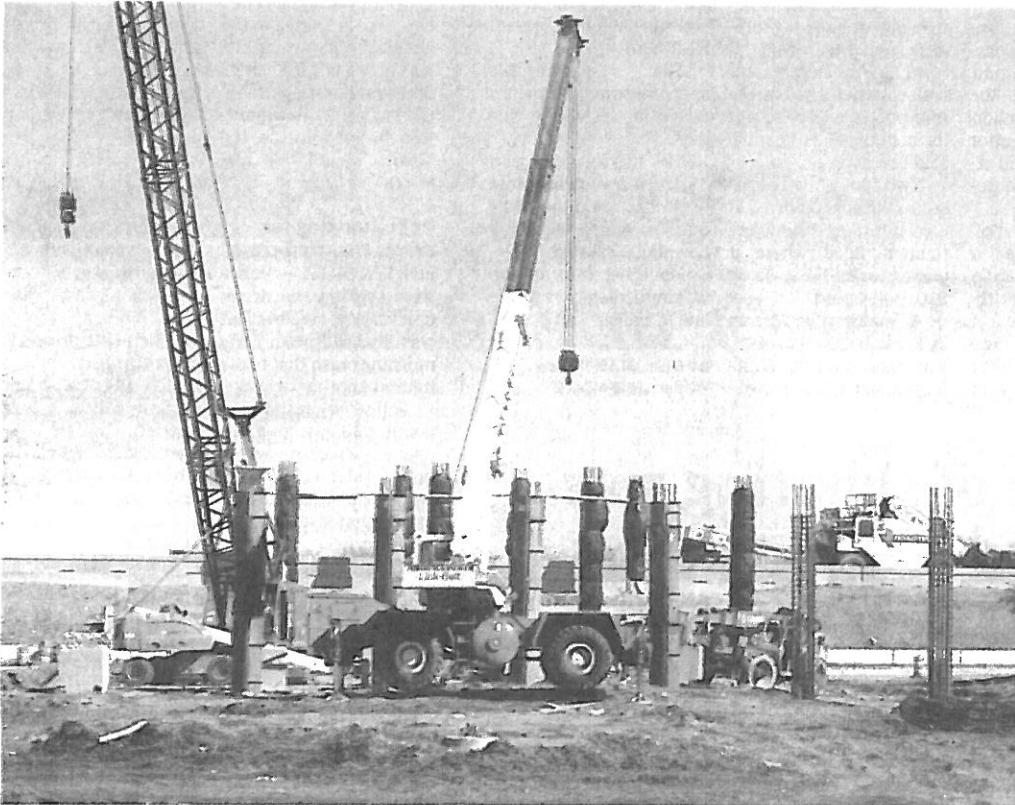


TARRANT & TEXAS

Opinion Next UTA president has big shoes to fill to keep school on right track **Editorial, 9B**

Fort Worth traffic

Two new bridges will make Riverside an I-35W alternative



Work is under way on a new bridge at North Riverside Drive and Loop 820 in Fort Worth. This is part of the North Tarrant Express project. Star-Telegram/Max Faulkner

Residents of one neighborhood are upset about loss of green space

By Gordon Dickson
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Many homes in the Stone Glen neighborhood in far north Fort Worth don't have fences.

Instead, back yards simply open up to the Big Fossil Creek green belt, where residents take advantage of a natural area that includes trails and a children's playground.

But a chunk of that green space is about to be cleared to make way for what city officials say is sorely needed traffic relief. A pair of four-lane bridges on North Riverside Drive are expected to be under construction within a few weeks and completed in a year or less.

One bridge will span Northeast Loop 820 and is being built as part of

the North Tarrant Express project.

The second bridge will cross over Big Fossil Creek. It is being handled in a separate contract approved last week by the Fort Worth City Council.

When the two jobs are complete, North Riverside Drive will become a viable commuting route and alternative to Interstate 35W. It will be a con-

More on BRIDGES, 6B

Student accused of hiding evidence

Man went to TCU with Pickens' late grandson

By Deanna Boyd
dboyd@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH — A fellow TCU student has been charged with tampering with evidence in connection with the death of the grandson of billionaire T. Boone Pickens.

Brennan Trainor Rodriguez, 21, is accused of removing evidence from an apartment and hiding it from police investigating the death of Thomas "Ty" Boone Pickens IV. Court documents identify the evidence as heroin, drug paraphernalia, syringes and marijuana.

Pickens, a TCU junior, died on the morning of Jan. 29 at Baylor All Saints Hospital after being taken there by private vehicle from an apartment he had been visiting in the 1800 block of Rogers Road. A police report shows Rodriguez lived at the apartment in question.

A ruling on Pickens' cause and manner of death was still pending Monday with the Tarrant County medical examiner's office.

More on PICKENS, 6B

NRH retreat worth cost, officials say

3 Council members held a two-day meeting at a Pottsboro resort.

By Gene Trainor
Special to the Star-Telegram

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS — The City Council's two-day retreat last month at a Pottsboro resort and conference center has raised questions about whether such meetings justify the cost and the inconvenience to residents who may want to attend such public events.

The council and city executives met Feb. 8-9 at the Tanglewood Resort and Conference Center, about a two-hour drive from North Richland Hills. The meeting, which was posted on the city's website with a link to the resort, was held

Safeguards sought in water fund plan

2 Lawmaker wants ways to keep \$2 billion from being misspent.

By Paul J. Weber
The Associated Press

AUSTIN — A widely supported \$2 billion proposal to jump-start wa-

boost water resources in response to the ongoing drought is backed by majority Republicans and Democrats alike. But the details and the mere concept of using the state's emergency piggy bank has renewed debate



Bridges

Continued from 1B

tinuous thoroughfare from Golden Triangle Parkway to Meacham Boulevard — about 7.5 miles total, including a stretch on the northern end, where it is labeled Old Denton Road.

It's a bittersweet traffic solution for residents who want a better connection parallel to I-35W — but not at the expense of their green space.

Residents who live closest to the planned bridge "would rather it not happen," said Tom Burke, president of the Stone Glen at Fossil Creek Homeowners Association.

"The city basically said, 'So what?' and went ahead and built it," he said. "It's going to dramatically change the makeup of the neighborhood."

Fort Worth Councilman Danny Scarth said he is trying to locate money to help the neighborhood build a brick wall to separate it from the creek bridge to provide residents some privacy.

The association estimates that it will cost at least \$100,000 to build a wall, but the group has only about \$15,000 available.



Residents of the Stone Glen neighborhood in Fort Worth will see major changes because of the bridges. Councilman Danny Scarth is trying to get a wall built to separate the subdivision from the new Big Fossil Creek bridge.

The city typically doesn't spend road money on such improvements, Scarth said.

People who buy land in the area are required to sign a document saying they're aware that the city owns right-of-way for a road, Scarth said. But even so, some residents were surprised to learn that their green space is about to be paved over.

"I wish I had some options," Scarth said. "We've got 150,000 people who have moved north of them since the subdivision was built. We've just got to deal with the traffic."

The bridges will be paid for with funds from the city's 2008 bond package as well as some regional toll revenue and possibly some

other sources, officials said.

Loop 820 bridge

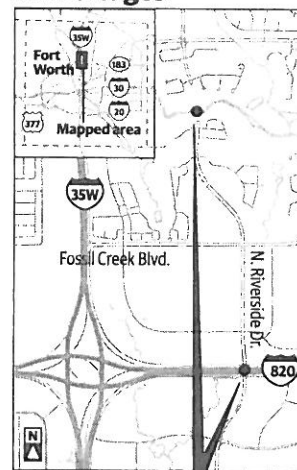
The developer building the North Tarrant Express project, a multibillion-dollar makeover of Northeast Loop 820 and Texas 121/183 in Northeast Tarrant County, has agreed to make the Riverside bridge over Loop 820 part of its project, spokesman Robert Hinkle said. That bridge will cost about \$16 million to build.

The project coincides with work already taking place in the area between I-35W and North Beach Street, he said.

Some preparatory work is taking place.

"We're getting out the orange cones, and we're

New bridges



Two North Riverside Drive bridges, one crossing Loop 820 and the other Big Fossil Creek, will be under construction within weeks and are expected to be complete by early next year.

Star-Telegram

going to start outreach to area businesses," Hinkle said.

Big Fossil Creek bridge

The City Council last week approved a contract for up to \$4 million with AUI Contractors LLC to build the bridge, sidewalks and lighting over Big Fossil Creek.

The project also includes construction of a few hundred feet of new roadway for North Riverside Drive between Redwood Creek Lane and Stone Creek Parkway.

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Twitter: @gdickson

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Water

Continued from 1B

agency while asking what safeguards would protect the \$2 billion proposed for water projects from being spent improperly.

State Sen. Troy Fraser, R-Horseshoe Bay, who is carrying the water bill in the Senate, said those issues are still being ironed

out.

"It's a large sum of money," Whitmire said. "How do we put the checks and balances — the safeguards, Troy, so that we don't see the abuses that we witnessed with the cancer fund?"

Public corruption prosecutors late last year began investigating the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, and the agency remains under a spending moratorium.

Lawmakers also have yet to put new money on the table for Gov. Rick Perry's Emerging Technology Fund, which has faced questions over accountability.

Outside the Capitol on Monday at a rally organized by a teachers union, Sen. Wendy Davis, D-Fort Worth, told demonstrators that she supports spending \$4 billion from the state's reserve fund on public education, saying "our

schoolchildren are more important than any road, any water resource."

The reserve fund is expected to grow to \$11.8 billion by the end of 2015.

The Texas Water Development Board is overseen by a part-time, six-person water board. Frustrations about the pace of the board's work and its reluctance to set priorities for the state's 50-year water plan led Fraser to propose a substantial overhaul of the

board's structure. Among the ic stalling a full-tir three members.

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The proposed from the rese would create a loan program sc nities could begi on projects outli state water plan, cludes more than