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Road construction adds up for summer

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THE OLYMPIAN

The state Department of Transportation has three construction projects in the works — all scheduled to start in June.

□ • **Chehalis Western Trail bridge:** One watched keenly by bicycle groups and other trail users is construction of a \$1.88 million pedestrian bridge over Interstate 5 along the Chehalis Western Trail. The bridge helps fill a gap in the still-uncompleted 20-mile trail corridor, which runs in two main segments. The first runs from Rainier to just south of Olympia and Lacey. The second runs from Martin Way to Woodard Bay on Puget Sound.

"It's going to be incredible when that goes up," said cyclist Jack Horton, president of the Woodland Trail Greenway Association and frequent user of the trails. Most people don't know how to get from one trail section to the other, Horton said, so the bridge will provide a useful and direct route.

"It's really going to create a great alternative for cyclists, joggers and other users," said Thera Black, a senior planner for transportation with the Thurston Regional Planning Council who calls the three-part bridge project "Bridging the Gap." The other two parts, which still need \$2 million, would add a bridge over Pacific Avenue and a bridge over Martin Way.

In the meantime, Black said, local governments plan to add a pedestrian-crossing island on Martin Way at the north-end trail terminus. Work on that will coincide with bridge construction and should be done by year's end, she said.

"Once bridging the gap is complete, someone could get on a bike at Tenino and go all the way to Puget Sound and not be on surface roads, except for one tiny piece in Tenino ... which is really remarkable for a community of our size," Black said.

"It's going to enable the trail system to actually function like a system. Right now we have disparate sections. This will tie them together."

The project won't be without disruptions. Neil Uhlmeier, a project engineer for WSDOT, predicted nighttime lane closures in the Olympia area near the footbridge, which is to be between the Lilly Road and Sleater-Kinney Road overpasses at I-5 milepost 108.

"There will be construction activities during the day. But anything that impacts traffic on I-5 will be done at night," Uhlmeier said. Bids will be opened May 3, followed by the award of a contract.

Construction is to run from mid-June to mid-January for the girder bridge that will have welded wire fencing along the upper sides. The concrete-deck bridge will have 14-foot-wide travel space and measures 240 feet in length, Uhlmeier said.

• **State Route 510:** A \$1.3 million repaving and re-marking project is planned along Route 510, between Lacey and Yelm from Sitka Street to 93rd Avenue Southeast.

"It starts just east of Marvin Road at the roundabout," Uhlmeier said, adding that all of the work will be done at night to reduce traffic disruptions. Lanes will be restricted roughly between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., with pilot vehicles used to lead alternating lines of traffic.

The entire 9.9-mile project gets rumble strips along the center line to alert motorists. New asphalt will be poured on two-thirds of the corridor, with a 3.6-mile gap in the middle that only gets the paving markers and rumble strips.

WSDOT issued a contract to Tucci and Sons of Tacoma for work that must begin no later than June 5; completion is expected in September.

- U.S. Highway 101: A third project adds cable barriers to the median along U.S. 101 between Evergreen Parkway and Crosby Boulevard on Olympia's west side. The goal is to reduce the risk of crossover wrecks.

"The bulk of the work will be at night," project engineer John McNutt said. He predicted nighttime lane closures and possibly daytime shoulder closures, but no daytime lane closures.

Bid advertisements will go out in July, and work should begin in September or October, later than originally planned. The project was delayed in conjunction with a Pierce County project.

As a result, project costs could exceed the \$370,000 estimate.

Olympia

Crews will repave four streets and apply a chip seal to 31 streets. The work, done to streets still in good condition as a way to protect them, totals about \$1.2 million and starts in July, said Bonnie Herrington, public works spokeswoman.

Officials say it will make roads last longer and keep the long-term costs of maintaining them lower.

Drivers should expect some traffic delays when sections of Madison, Fourth, and Thurston avenues and Frederick Street are repaved with asphalt. Some lanes might be closed or narrowed during construction. Flaggers will be on hand to keep traffic moving. The projects usually take several days.

The chip seal will be applied to major routes, such as Boulevard Road, Carlyon Avenue and Henderson Boulevard, but is expected to be less disruptive. It takes crews about two hours to do each street, and residents can drive on it right after it's applied. Parking won't be allowed on the street beforehand.

Officials are starting to take the projects out to bid, grouping some of those in the same neighborhood for a better deal.

If there is money left in the budget, they have 11 more streets that could get the application, said Randy Wesselman, transportation engineer supervisor. They'll know by mid-May if there's enough money. "Depending on how the bid comes in, we'll see how many on the actual list we can do and then start on the additive alternative list," he said.

In addition, 16 more projects are planned, from new speed bumps to sewer work, that will affect some streets.

Lacey

Crews will reconstruct College Street from Pacific Avenue to Martin Way and pave the thoroughfare south of Lacey Boulevard to about 37th Avenue.

On the northern section, the project includes paving the road, replacing traffic signals at Third Avenue, Sixth Avenue and Martin Way, and adding a second right-turn lane from College to Martin Way.

During the morning rush hour, the right lane of northbound College backs up as motorists wait to turn onto eastbound Martin Way. Most drivers need sufficient space so they can immediately get into the left lane of eastbound Martin Way to then be able to turn onto the northbound I-5 onramp.

On the southern section, crews will pave the aging road.

"We're just going to make the ride much nicer," City Engineer Roger Schoessel said.

The total cost of the project is \$2.1 million. Work is scheduled to begin in May.

A private developer will pay for the construction of a roundabout on Rainier Road in front of Horizons Elementary School.

Tumwater

A contractor will widen Tumwater Boulevard from Capitol Way to the I-5 interchange so the stretch has two travel lanes in each direction.

The \$5.6 million project includes installation of the city's first roundabout at Tumwater Boulevard and Newmarket Street. It will add curbs, gutters, sidewalks and bike lanes to the mile-long stretch. Construction is set to begin in May and will continue into 2007. Close to 20,000 vehicles travel that stretch of road each day, and the volume will increase as the community grows. The City Council awarded the project bid Tuesday night.

The city's staff and the contractor, Looker and Associates of Puyallup, are finalizing a contractor. Work is set to begin in mid-May, Public Works Director Jay Eaton said.

A project to reconstruct North Street from Cleveland Avenue to the east city limits is close to being ready to bid out to a contractor, but it's uncertain whether the project will begin this summer, Eaton said.

"If that isn't wrapped up here in the next three weeks, we probably wouldn't move with it" this year, he said.

Thurston County

Seven projects totaling \$4.8 million are planned. They range from road repaving to safety improvements, such as a new traffic signal and straightening roads. The projects are:

- Old Highway 99 and 93rd Avenue. Work has begun to straighten the intersection and will continue through the summer.
 - Bridge replacement on Old Highway 99 just north of Tenino. Work begins mid-June and finishes at the end of year. Drivers should follow road detour signs.
 - Duterrow Road between Steilacoom Road and Martin Way. Road widening begins in early June and continues on and off for two years.
 - Morris Road just south of 115th Lane. Safety improvements to straighten a curve begin in August and will continue until the end of the year.
 - Bald Hill Road west of Hobson Road. Curve realignment begins at the end of this month and finishes at the end of May.
 - Mud Bay and Delphi roads. A new traffic signal will be installed starting in August.
 - Martin Way East from the River Ridge High School entrance to Duterrow Road. Road resurfacing begins in July and finishes in September. The road will stay open during construction, but some traffic delays are expected.
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