

Cable Street Improvements: Public Safety and Traffic Control

The major concerns raised at the February 2007 public meeting were:

- ◆ Speeding along the detour route
- ◆ A potential increase in accident rates
- ◆ The safety of students, children, and pedestrians
- ◆ The ability of fire engines and trucks to make some of the turns along the detour route
- ◆ The temporary locations of WTA and school bus stops
- ◆ The temporary location of mailboxes

This handout describes the steps that the County and its consultants and contractors will be taking to address these concerns. We will be monitoring the success of these actions closely and will make adjustments as necessary. We will do our best to be aware of and responsive to problems that arise.

Speeding

In response to concerns about speeding, the County will put the following measures in place:

Speed bumps. Temporary speed bumps can be installed during construction along the detour route. After the detour begins, we will identify where they are most needed; the speed bumps will be on site and ready to go. The general County policy is that permanent traffic calming devices, such as speed bumps, are not provided on County roads. (For more information, please see: http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/engineering/faq.jsp#traffic_speedbump.)

Enforcement. The Sheriff's department estimates that an additional 16-20 hours of patrols will be needed during the construction period. The County Executive is requesting overtime from the Sheriff.

Speed monitors. The County will put mobile speed monitors on the detour routes for the duration of the

project. After construction is complete, the County will install a permanent speed monitor at a location to be determined by the neighborhood.

Flaggers. The contractor will provide 6,000 hours of flagging time. For at least the first few weeks of the project, there will be ten flaggers assigned to this project. They will be present during working hours for the construction crew. In general, one flagger will be at each of the closed ends of Cable St. Three more will be stationed along Cable at the cross streets. There will be 1-2 roving flaggers, including the traffic control supervisor. In addition, flaggers will initially be stationed along the detours to assist residents, school children, and parents dropping off or picking up students; this may change to only roving flaggers as residents and travelers become accustomed to the detour routes.

Special signage. People using the detour may not be as familiar as residents are with issues such as the curve at the northwest corner of Lakeway, so extra, reflective signage will be placed there to call attention to the posted speed limit and the curve.

Accident response

The Sheriff's department has been informed of the project. If accidents occur, they will be handled as other accidents in the county are. After emergency services are notified, the response to a crash depends on several factors including the location, if it is blocking the road, if there are injuries, and the availability of resources.

The Sheriff's Office will have a normal response to non-blocking/non-injury crashes. This means that they will not use emergency lighting, etc., to get to the scene. If a crash is blocking all or part of the road or involves injury, then the Sheriff's Office will respond using emergency lights and sirens. In the event of a crash on this detour route, they would likely send 2-3 deputies

if possible to assist with traffic control. The fire department will respond to any injury crash. This generally would include an ambulance and engine from the Geneva Station and the paramedics from Bellingham. If the crash involves serious injury, then there would likely be a second ambulance and engine from the Sudden Valley station.

Safety of children, students and pedestrians

The County is working with the local schools to identify students' common walking routes and the most appropriate times and locations to station flaggers. We also encourage drivers to exercise common sense and courtesy, particularly during the construction period.

The detour routes will be striped to distinguish the pedestrian/bike area from the traffic lane. Pedestrians as well as drivers will need to abide by the lane markings. In some particular areas--at corners, for instance--cones or jersey barriers may be brought in. Several comments were made at the February 2007 meeting about people being accustomed to jogging, walking their dogs, and letting their children play in the street. Those activities will definitely need to be constrained to the marked pedestrian areas throughout the construction period.

Movement of fire engines and trucks

The Geneva fire station is confident that its vehicles can safely navigate the detour route. The contractor will always provide access to and from the fire station for emergency vehicles.

The County and its consultants recognize that some of the intersections along the one-way routes are more problematic for large trucks and trucks pulling boats or trailers, etc., and are notifying trucking companies. Semi-trucks will be encouraged to approach Sudden Valley using SR 9. The intersection of Coronado and Lake Whatcom Blvd. is very problematic for semis, and a flagger's assistance will be required at that location. Detour signage will identify the right turn from north-bound Coronado to east-bound Lake Whatcom Blvd. as off limits to trucks.

Temporary bus stops

WTA is planning two new stops on Fremont Ave. and two new stops on Old Lakeway. The goal is to use the same cross streets & distances from intersections, so effectively the existing stops

will move three blocks north & three blocks south, pending safe locations for bus pull-out areas.

There are currently two middle school and high school bus stops, one at Austin and Cable, and the other at Geneva and Cable. The Bellingham School District is planning to relocate these stops to Fremont and Old Lakeway, with exact locations to be determined. The temporary stops will be put into place beginning the last week of April, in order to accustom students to the new locations prior to the beginning of construction. For more information, contact Steve Olsen at 676-6546.

Temporary mailboxes

The County and its consultant are coordinating with the US Postal Service mail supervisor for operations during construction. All mailboxes on Cable Street are currently on the north side of the street. The current plan is to temporarily move them slightly north to get them out of the working area. A flagger will escort the US Postal Service vehicle to the boxes, and/or the mail carrier may decide to walk the mail in to the boxes. The traffic control supervisor will work with people on the south side of Cable Street as necessary to safely cross the work zone to retrieve mail.

Along the two detour routes, all mailboxes will be temporarily moved to the right-hand side of the detour route to allow the mail carrier to deliver mail from his/her vehicle. This means that half of the residents will have to cross the street to pick up their mail, and they may request flagger assistance if needed to make this crossing. The mail will be delivered in off-peak traffic times. The cars using the detour will pass the mail vehicle on the left. The mail carrier may also subsequently decide to walk the detour route mail in. The traffic control supervisor will work with residents on the detour routes to cross the road to retrieve their mail if they are unable to wait for off-peak periods.

Contact information during construction

If you have concerns during construction, please contact:

Steve Dillon, Whatcom County project inspector - 815-3435

David Wilson, Whatcom County project engineer - 815-1901

For information about the project, please visit:

<http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/water/geneva.jsp>