

Summer Construction and Road Maintenance

Summer is upon us and you've probably noticed more and more road construction projects as you drive around Fort Collins. While the seemingly endless detours and orange cones can be frustrating for residents and businesses, the City's road improvements and maintenance are an important component to improving traffic flow and safety in Fort Collins.

The City is not the only organization that needs to get into the roads. Larimer County, private utility companies, and more all have work to do in our roadways, and there is a limited window of opportunity to get it done. Because of the weather in the winter and spring, road construction projects typically have to occur between April and November. This year crews got a late start on the season due to some late spring snowstorms.

Speaking of weather, the past two winters, including the December 2006 blizzards, were particularly hard on our streets, resulting in a 15-20 percent decrease in roadway conditions, which means there is that much more repair and maintenance work to do now.

Every winter, the City's pavement management, street oversizing, and utilities staff meet to schedule and prioritize upcoming projects, while balancing safety, cost, local access, and alternative routes.

The Pavement Management Program oversees annual street overlay projects, crack sealing, asphalt and concrete patching, and curb, gutter and sidewalk repairs. The primary goal is to keep good roads maintained, so that we can prevent major repair work in the future.

There are more than 470 street miles in the City of Fort Collins, and about 25 miles will be repaved in the 2008 Street Overlay Project. The \$7 million overlay project is funded primarily through a ¼-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2005 (Building on Basics), as well as some contributions from the General Fund.

Fort Collins pavement management practices are ranked among the most successful in the country, and our costs for road maintenance and repair are comparable to other similar-sized cities and organizations.

The Street Oversizing Program manages road construction in new developments, and widens existing streets when it becomes necessary due to increased traffic, either from new local development or regional growth in neighboring communities.

The Street Oversizing Fund receives money from two sources: Transportation Impact Fees, which are paid by developers to build roads and create local access to collector and arterial streets, and General Fund contributions. One example of those impact fees is the Harmony-Ziegler Improvement Project (H-ZIP), a \$33 million project that Bayer Properties, the owners of Front Range Village, helped fund in order to support traffic to their new lifestyle center. The final phase of H-ZIP will be completed this summer.

So far the city has been able to keep up with the demands of new development. Regular road maintenance and several larger road construction projects are funded through the voter-approved Building on Basics ¼-cent dedicated sales tax. This includes projects like the Harmony and Shields intersection, which will begin construction this fall.

However, Fort Collins continues to grow rapidly. Another 120 miles of collector and arterial street lanes will be needed by 2015 to serve new developments and added traffic, which means developers must pay their fair share to help our street infrastructure keep up with demand.

In our continuing efforts to conserve time, money and raw materials, several of our 2008 paving projects are using a Hot-In-Place Recycling method, which recycles existing asphalt with new material to repave roadways. This process uses 1/3 less asphalt than conventional methods, and reduces the amount of time a lane must be closed during paving.

For the latest information on construction projects throughout the summer, please visit www.fcgov.com/conezones, where you can find maps, schedules, and alternate routes through town. The City is committed to completing these repairs quickly, so that we can minimize the disruption they cause for you. However, we are equally committed to doing the work necessary to ensure our streets are safe, well maintained, and in excellent condition to handle our increased traffic flow. Thank you for your patience during the coming months – when it's all over I'm confident you'll agree that the improvements were worth the effort.