

From the Mayor

April 2, 2021

This month's article will serve as my annual "summer construction preview". I do this to give a high-level account of all of the public projects that we try to coordinate each summer. Realistically, I am also trying to prepare you for the disruption these projects will most certainly bring.

Constrained by our 'midwestern' construction season, we have a specific window of opportunity to get things completed before the asphalt plants close in late Fall. While I can say all of these projects are necessary, and will be worth it in the end, I also know how much frustration the closures and restrictions create.

The Hickory Street railroad safety improvements, designed jointly by Norfolk-Southern and INDOT are expected to be completed in May. New crossing gates, redirected traffic flow, and signal connections have all been designed to maximize safety for the fifteen freight trains a day that pass at street level through this neighborhood.

An additional traffic signal, recently installed at the Main, Center, and Market street rail crossings are designed to keep traffic from backing up onto the tracks. INDOT tells us these signals will not operate at maximum efficiency until the construction is complete, including the sensor placement in the new asphalt that will be the final phase of construction. Further final adjustments to the timing of the lights will occur over the next few weeks. INDOT has asked for your patience.

Concrete work on curbs and ADA ramps has begun on SR 15 South at Washington Elementary School. It will progress north on SR 15 to Fort Wayne Street over the next few weeks. After that is completed, milling, resurfacing, and striping will conclude at Detroit and Market streets sometime in May. Further information will be coming. But as expected, road closures and lane restrictions will be necessary.

Also, sometime in April, the railroad crossing at Detroit Street for the east-west CF& E railroad tracks will be replaced and require a road closure of approximately three days.

INDOT has also notified us that they will be initiating bridge and lane improvements and resurfacing of US 30 from SR 19 to just east of Warsaw later this summer. Most certain to snarl traffic, the project will not likely finish until the spring of 2022.

Our city street department will also be very busy with projects of their own this summer. Using newly acquired asphaltting equipment, the city will resurface several dozen side street sections and alley ways between May and September. The city will also be doing significant micro sealing, crack sealing and asphalt rejuvenation maintenance projects in that same time frame. Also scheduled this summer will be the installation of new traffic signals on Center Street at the Indiana and Lake Street intersections.

Planned storm water repairs and sanitary relining projects will continue this summer as well that will also create annoying temporary restrictions.

The disruptions these projects create is often frustrating. Our department heads meet monthly and communicate regularly to try and coordinate the city's projects to minimize "down time" for impacted streets and alleys. We will do our best to communicate closures and restrictions as far in advance as possible. But I'm not going to lie. Multiple utility, state highway, and railroad projects will occur simultaneously, and their schedules change quite often for many reasons, frequently with limited or no advance notice. Thanks for understanding. I share your frustration.