

ROSS STREET UTILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

Q&A's

Q: WHY IS ROSS STREET ABOUT TO UNDER GO CONSTRUCTION?

A. Ross Street will not be part of this construction project. The purpose of this project is to replace utility lines that currently run under Ross Street. The walkway area between the Oak trees and buildings on the north side of Ross Street will be under construction. For some time there has been concern with the service reliability of utility lines currently under Ross Street. Upgrade of these utility lines is an important component in continuing reliable utility service for existing campus facilities and supporting future growth.

The primary scope of this project is to provide new direct buried thermal utility lines routed down the north side of Ross Street between the Central Utility Plant and Spence Street, while at the same time maintaining utility service to facilities around Ross Street during construction.

Q: WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE BIG BEAUTIFUL OAK TREES AND THE TREES NEAR THE CONSTRUCTION?

A: The Oak trees that are immediately adjacent to and line Ross Street will be pruned and fertilized by a licensed specialist during the dormant season. Special tree protection will be placed around each tree. Next, at approximately 31 feet from the back of curb a vertical cutting machine similar to a large knife will slice down thru the root system. This will keep the construction equipment from pulling the roots from the tree trunk and drip water line when excavating and thereby minimizing the distress places on the trees.

The trees and shrubbery in the construction zone (between the buildings and the sidewalk) will have to be removed. These are indicated on the phasing diagrams. Replacement trees will be planted at various locations on the campus. Trees or shrubbery will not be placed over the new utility lines.

Q: WHEN WILL ROSS STREET BE REPAIRED AND REOPENED FOR TRAFFIC IN BOTH DIRECTIONS?

A: After the utility project is complete, design and construction of the pavement on Ross Street will begin. Repair funds are available and we estimate this work to cost approximately \$6.0 M. We plan to award this construction contract concurrently with the award of the grade separations projects. If for some reason, the grade separations contract gets delayed, we will award a separate contract for Ross Street.

Q: HOW LONG WILL THE UTILITY PROJECT TAKE?

A: The total construction contract is for a year and will be performed in 6 steps. This means that each step will take on the average approximately 2 months. The diagrams show that Step 1 will start at the Central Utility Plant and progress towards Spence Street. The next step will not be started until completion of the previous phase.

Q: WHY DOES SO MUCH AREA HAVE TO BE USED FOR THE UTILITIES?

A: There are going to be 7 utility lines of various sizes installed in the same trench. When a separation distance is added between the lines, this equates to a trench width of approximately 18 feet. The equipment has to have working room on both sides to install the pipe. This will add another 6 feet for a total work zone width of 24 feet.

Q: WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE BUILDINGS FROM THE ROSS STREET SIDE?

A: All sidewalks and ramps will be maintained in compliance with Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) during construction. Pedestrian access to Reed McDonald, Holbouty and Doherty will be phased in such a way that each building will have access. Emergency exits will be maintained if in conflict with construction activity. This may be accomplished with phasing or with temporary pedestrian sidewalks/ramps.

Q: WHAT IS THE TOTAL PROJECT COST?

A: The total project cost is projected to be \$3,871,000.

Q: WHO IS THE CONTRACTOR?

A: A local utility company named Garrett Mechanical. This firm has an extensive history of performing work on this campus and realizes the importance of not only safety but the need to promptly complete the project.

Q. WILL ROSS STREET BE OPEN AT ANYTIME DURING CONSTRUCTION?

A. Ross Street will be gated off at Ireland Street and Spence Street thru the duration of the project. Only deliveries and construction vehicles will be allowed during the daytime. In the evenings, the gates will be open for one way traffic going east. There may be periodic traffic interruptions in which a section may be temporarily closed. The Transportation Department will try to provide as much advance notice as possible. Everyone is encouraged to observe the traffic signs and use caution when entering the construction area.

Q: WHO IS THE CONTACT PERSON IF I HAVE A QUESTION?

A: Mr. Jon Hall, Texas A&M University System's Construction Project Manager, can be contacted at 458-7064. For design related issues, Mr. Bruce Karr, System Civil Engineer, can be contacted at 458-7042.