

# A Bittersweet, Necessary Evil...

## *Road Reconstruction*

*By Brit Macias*



“I think my teeth almost rattled out of my head driving down Bell Street today,” one Facebook status read recently.

Well... the City of San Angelo has some bittersweet news for citizens: Many of the streets are finally going to be properly redone!

CRN sat down with City Operations Director, Shane Kelton, to learn more about the reconstruction process and potential starting and ending dates for the road projects.

Kelton explains that there are two types of construction programs used on the streets in San Angelo and City Council has approved \$80 million (\$16 million every other year) over the next 10 years to repair and reconstruct streets.

The first type of construction used is regular, standard maintenance. This is a seal-coating process, which is currently on an eight-year rotation. In this process, the crews lay down a thin coat of asphalt with rock or chip-seal on top of the asphalt to seal cracks. Mostly this is the process done in residential areas.

The second type of construction used is total reconstruction or rehabilitation, which is what most of the major problematic roads in San Angelo are about to see. This process will take place on minor arterials that are in really bad shape, either rehabilitating them with complete reconstruction—including infrastructure underneath the road—or minor rehab with what Kelton describes as mill-and-overlay.

Mill and overlay is applicable when a street’s basic structure is adequate and a shorter-term solution is acceptable. For this, existing asphalt will be milled down roughly 1.5-2 inches, more or less, then workers will come back in with hot-mix asphalt and lay down 1.5-2 inches of fresh asphalt. These projects should be completed within 60-90 days of the start date, Kelton predicts.

The larger projects, such as Martin Luther King Blvd and Bell Street, will take a lot more reconstruction. First up will be MLK Blvd, where Kelton explains the road will be partially reconstructed, and partially mill and overlay. While Bell Street, from the Concho River all the way to Old Ballinger Highway, will be completely reconstructed, including infrastructure beneath the road.

All new infrastructure will entail water, sewer, and any franchise utilities underground such as Atmos gas or Verizon phone lines. In order to make sure that all infrastructure is in good shape, crews will dig the road all the way down (12 inches) to lay an entirely new road base and asphalt, as well as adding new curbs and gutters. “The whole 9 yards,” Kelton explains, including some traffic signals.

Some streets will have traffic signal changes, such as MLK Blvd, at 14<sup>th</sup> and MLK, the signal will come out. Pedestrian elements will be put in to meet ADA standards and updated traffic signals will be put in at some of the reconstructed streets’ intersections.



Franchise utilities that are not city services will have their own contractors working in conjunction with city contractors. “From the water/sewer side, it will be an all-inclusive project for the City. We will bid all our water, sewer, and street work out at the same time under the same contract for one general contractor. He will oversee the pieces of the puzzle as they come together,” Kelton tells CRN. Different people will do different work on their own particular jobs, be that water or sewer, and the road construction crew will follow behind them working together.

Kelton also explains the City’s process for bidding out the road work to outside contractors. The process begins with engineers designing projects and getting all the specifications done, then, purchasing laws require the city to send out “invitations to bid” to any vendors that want to bid—i.e. Reece Albert, Price, etc, as well as many in the metroplex East of here.

Once bids are received, they are all taken to City Council, where Shane will recommend that the lowest responsible bid be accepted. When Council accepts the bid, a notice to proceed is sent to the bidder and the project moves forward with “X” number of days to complete their project.

CRN asked Kelton just how long some of these projects can be expected to take, considering the inconvenience to citizens, no matter how badly they want the roads to be redone. "Some of these projects, like MLK, it's probably going to be a 12 month project," he explains.

Kelton also tells CRN that Bell Street, being a much larger project with all new sewer and water lines, and one that will affect so many people, the project will be broken into 3 different years, in order to help alleviate some of the headache. As far as smaller projects, Kelton predicts them to be 60-day to 90-day projects.

A "headache" the road construction definitely will be, but Kelton has high hopes it will be worth it. "Everybody wants it done, but it is a nuisance. It's a hindrance because at any time they may have to be stopped. Part of the road will be torn up, part of it will be caliche and part of it will be pavement, so it's going to be hindrance for a while, it really will, but hopefully the end result in the long run will be worth it."

What about all those pesky potholes around town? Kelton tells CRN what causes them and says his guys are on top of repairing them. "Rain is one of a street's worst enemies," he states. When cracks in pavement happen, water gets in the crack and down into the road base, which is actually the true road, Kelton explains. The asphalt is simply there to preserve the road.



"The actual structure of the road is what's below (asphalt) and when you get water and moisture down in that and you get vehicle weight and some action on it, you start to get what's called pumping." Pumping, Kelton explains, takes all the fines from the road base and pushes them up through the cracks, especially in winter months when the pavement contracts with the lowering temperatures. Road base and the fines begin to come through, which creates gaps and the pavement comes up, which creates potholes.

"Because of all the rain we've had and the condition of our streets because we've lived a long time without a good maintenance plan on our streets due to lack of funding, we've been getting a lot of potholes and I've been running crews overtime since March trying to keep up with the potholes. It's just been a never ending deal."

Due to rain slowing down and temps increasing, Kelton predicts his crews will soon begin catching up on repairing all the potholes. Some are repaired with

quick fixes—not cutting and repairing—they throw material in the hole, tamp it, and go on to the next one since there are so many.

Kelton is unsure exactly how many potholes a day that his after-hours crew of 4-6 men get to, though he estimates around 60 an evening for the quick-fixes. There are different kinds of potholes, so he explains that the day-to-day count could vary.

Below is a list of proposed bidding, start, and end dates for the roads to be worked on, found on the City of San Angelo website.

#### **Martin Luther King Boulevard from Loop 306 to 29th Street**

- Design - Through June 2016
- Bid process - July 2016 through September 2016
- Construction - October 2016 through April 2018

#### **Bell Street Phase 1 from Rio Concho Drive to Harris Avenue**

- Design - Through November 2016
- Bid process - December 2016 through February 2017
- Construction - March 2017 through August 2018

#### **Bell Street Phase 2 from Harris Avenue to Loop 306**

- Design - Through November 2016
- Bid process - February 2018 through April 2018
- Construction - May 2018 through June 2019

#### **Bell Street Phase 3 from Loop 306 to Old Ballinger Highway**

- Design - Through November 2016
- Bid process - August 2018 through October 2018
- Construction - November 2018 through January 2020

#### **Southland Boulevard Phase A from Sherwood Way to the Walmart/Sam's traffic signal**

- Design - Through July 2016
- Bid process - August 2016 through October 2016
- Construction - November 2016 through June 2017

#### **College Hills Boulevard from Loop 306 to Valleyview Boulevard**

- Design - Through June 2016
- Bid process - July 2016 through September 2016
- Construction - October 2017 through March 2017

### **South Chadbourne Street from Avenue L to Avenue B**

- Design - Through October 2016
- Bid process - November 2016 through January 2017
- Construction - February 2017 through November 2017

### **North Chadbourne Street from Concho Avenue to Avenue B**

- Design - Through October 2016
- Bid process - August 2017 through October 2017
- Construction - November 2017 through May 2018

### **North Chadbourne Street from Loop 306 to West 43rd Street**

- Design - Through January 2017
- Bid process - August 2017 through October 2017
- Construction - May 2018 through December 2018

### **Annual seal coating to begin in September**

A more detailed, though fluid, list can be found [here](#). As bids come back, some of the projects may move forward or back and will be updated on the Proposed Timelines page by the City.

Until Next Time...

***Brit Macias***

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