

Changes coming to Highway 22X

Foothills: Calgary Southwest Ring Road construction to begin this year

By Krista Conrad
Staff Reporter

Residents in the Red Deer Lake area can expect to see changes coming along Highway 22X in the next year.

Construction is set to get underway on the Southwest Calgary Ring Road in 2017. According to Alberta Transportation representative Garry Lamb, site preparation could begin as early as next month.

"Visually what will probably first be seen is that there will be some clearing of trees that are in the road right-of-way," said Lamb.

He said it will be most noticeable around 80 Street and 96 Street, where stands of trees near the highway will have to be removed. They will be cut down during winter months to avoid disturbing nesting birds come spring.

Spruce Meadows will also be required to remove its event signs along

Highway 22X, he said.

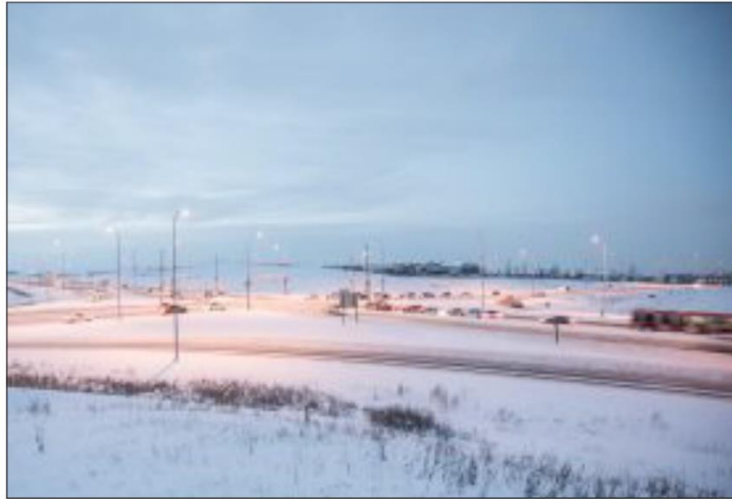
Drivers and residents can expect increased truck traffic and excavation work through 2017 and the construction is expected to continue for the next five years until the road opens in 2021, he said.

The largest changes will occur later in the year, with road and access closures. Access into Calgary's 24 street from the highway will remain open for part of the year, but not for long.

"That's always been meant to close and likely accessing that end of the city will be closed sometime late this year," said Lamb.

Westbound access onto Highway 22X from Tournament Lane at Spruce Meadows will also be closed due to construction activity, he said. He said drivers will have to head eastbound and make a u-turn across median access points in order to travel west.

"This is all part of the



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Construction on the Calgary Southwest Ring Road is set to get underway in 2017, beginning with removing trees and signs and closing access roads.

access issues," said Lamb. "They'll be working in that median moving dirt and getting ready to build new roads and things like that."

MD Coun. Suzanne Oel attended public open houses in late November and said she's pleased with how the project is being

rolled out.

"I know a lot of people will be in anticipation of this," said Oel. "It will be some disruption but it will be a really great connection for the whole southwest of Calgary once it's done."

Oel said it will be a busy

time in the area through the next few years as the road and overpasses are completed. Hopefully, the contractors will be careful not to cause too many delays along Highway 22X at the same time, she said.

The MD of Foothills met with Alberta

Transportation during the planning process and expressed the importance of keeping traffic flowing along the highway, she said.

"I remember one year all the approaches to Calgary were under construction at the same time, they were all being repaired and constructed in the summer, so there was just back-ups everywhere," said Oel. "So we're just hoping they have it well-timed."

Oel said overall the project looks well-planned. She said she's impressed that the international contractor, Mountain View Partners, has hired local companies to complete the work.

"They're looking at putting out the job opportunities to the local environment," said Oel. "I was quite pleased to hear that, because obviously Alberta's hurting pretty bad."

Construction updates can be found on the project website, www.swcrrproject.com.

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