

MAIN STREET UPDATE:

You don't know what you'll find underground until you start digging, and we had a bit of a surprise at the intersection of West Main and First. So some delay there. But G. Fox Construction has moved over to Maple Street, and West Main is now open for local traffic.

But on Maple, oh brother: alley work, mystery sewers, and transite pipe. I've seen enough construction in alleys to cringe just hearing that we have work there. Unlike a wide open street, alleys are tight and cramped. And they tend to have all kinds of wires and pipes packed in there: gas, phone, cable, fiber. It makes for slow going to carefully dig around and between the mess of small utilities.

And we unearthed not one but two mystery sewers in the alley. Not seen in probably a hundred years and not on any maps, they could not be ignored. But they did add to the scope of work, and they added to the delay.

The project did call for a half-block of new water and sewer along Maple Street south of East Main. But the undersized watermain being replaced turned out to be made of transite. Transite is an extremely brittle material and difficult to tap for a new connection. The practical decision was to replace the entire block of watermain south to Church Street. My apologies to the apartments, homes, businesses, and parking lot that had their access limited with the additional utility work.

And since the extra watermain excavation would mean paving a new road for that half-block of Maple, we could not leave hundred-thirty year old sewer main underneath it. This is a big eighteen-inch pipe; it carries the sewage for just about the entire north end of the city. So more additional work. Replacing it now was the smart thing to do, but it also added some delay.

The utility work on Main Street is behind schedule, but it is progressing. And the worst of it is now behind us. Working up East Main Street should be relative quick.

We will be opening bids for the surface work on July 5. Construction should be substantially complete by early November.

We do post weekly updates on the Main Street construction on the city website: www.ci.evansville.wi.gov. Just click on the "Check Our Progress" billboard.