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## City street improvements underway

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Construction started on East and West Third Street as part of the summerlong street improvement project.

Brian Bliss/Herald Times

**GAYLORD** — Thursday, Elmer's Crane and Dozer started construction on the next wave of downtown street improvements that are part of a Community Development Block Grant Infrastructure Project.

The project focuses on street improvements covering East Second Street and East Third Street from South Center Avenue to South Maple Avenue, as well as a couple of additional blocks.

Elmer's was unanimously approved by Gaylord City Council for a bid of \$2,560,401.85 for the project, which includes significant upgrades to streets that City Manager Joe Duff said sorely need them.

"This is a good thing," he explained. "(Residents) will have new roads, improved everything.

"Their driveways will be nice, no puddles will be on the roads and they'll have new sidewalks and new utility leads as well."

The tentative construction schedule, provided by C2AE, the project's engineering firm, has Elmer's beginning on East Third Street from South Elm Avenue to South Oak Avenue Monday and going until Friday, May 31.

The schedule lists the estimated completion date for the entire project as Oct. 18.

As of Monday morning, construction had also started on the second portion of the project, which includes East Third Street from South Center Avenue to South Elm Avenue, and West Third Street from South Court Avenue to South Center Avenue. Improvements in that section were tentatively scheduled to take place June 1-28.

Duff said although the schedule has street section improvements taking place consecutively, some will actually run concurrently.

"They'll start in a couple different locations," he said. "It makes more sense for them to tackle multiple sections at once rather than one at a time."

According to Duff, residents can expect to see multiple streets with dirt road or gravel until part of the construction team completes multiple areas at the same time.

"They'll wait until they have a couple different sections ready," Duff said.

That's when curb, sidewalk and driveway work will start.

"Then it'll sit for a while with gravel on the road before they get the black-toppers out there," Duff said. "You will only see the black-toppers a couple different times throughout the course of the project."

Duff said the city will hold construction meetings every other week with progress updates on the project.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. Thursday, May 23, at Gaylord City Hall, 305 E. Main St.

A copy of the tentative construction schedule is posted on the city's website and is set to be updated following the bimonthly meetings.

The project provides a grant of \$1.43 million to assist in fixing the outlined streets.

The city is responsible for the difference in Elmer's approved bid and the amount awarded through the block grant.

"It will come from the normal street fund millage money that we collect each year that we normally use to do these types of projects," Duff previously said.

Duff outlined a number of benefits the construction will provide, such as providing more reliability of public utilities and fewer sewer obstructions.

"First of all, there's a lot of things that are unseen," he said. "Residents will receive what we consider an upsize to the diameter of the water mains, so you will have greater water pressure sometimes in your home."

Duff said the increased reliability of the public utilities comes for new leads into properties. Additionally, he said improvements to the end of driveways and sidewalks will provide greater accessibility and safety for residents.

Other improvements as a result of the project will include storm sewer and drainage structures, concrete curbs and gutters, and restoration with seed and mulch.

Affected streets will be closed to through traffic during the project's construction.

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Brian Bliss

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