



Council Member Anne Clutterbuck
Houston City Council Member, District C
April 10, 2009

DISTRICT C - KIRBY & RICE VILLAGE CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Houstonians who live in or commute through the Upper Kirby and Rice Village areas surely have noticed several of the on-going City construction projects in this area. Although living through construction can be a headache, these renovation projects are an important investment in our infrastructure and I would like to take this opportunity to share with the District C community some additional information about these plans.

South Kirby Drive

The reconstruction of Kirby Drive south of the 59 freeway is part of a combined effort with the City of Houston and the Harris County Flood Control District to expand our storm water drainage capacity and protect against flooding in the densely developed areas of central Houston.

Last November, Phase 3 of the project was completed, which is the section of Kirby from Holcombe to Robinhood. Construction was then halted for the months of November through January to ensure mobility in and out of the Rice Village area during the holidays. The next stage of the project, Phase 4a, runs from Robinhood to Bissonnet. A contract with GRH-Garver Construction, L.P. was approved by City Council in February and work is scheduled to begin in late April.

Phase 4b encompasses the section of Kirby between Bissonnet and Highway 59. Part of this project involves expanding the width of the lanes, which necessitated the purchase of additional right-of-way from five property owners on the east side of Kirby. While the City anticipated that this work would begin sooner, the process of negotiating the purchase of the land and adjusting the design plans has resulted in a delay. Once the land has been acquired, the contract will go out for bidding.

Upper Kirby

Street construction of Kirby north of Highway 59 is a separate project, funded entirely by the Upper Kirby Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ). While the purpose of this project is to expand flood control capacity, the project will also replace sanitary sewer and water line infrastructure, add wider sidewalks for increased pedestrian mobility, transfer utility lines from overhead to underground, expand the narrow driving lanes, and completely reconstruct the road. The entire project is being funded with the tax increments from the area and remarkably will not require the issuance of any debt!

Most recently, you may have seen workers on the east side of this portion of Kirby, installing the sanitary sewer and waterline improvements. Paving for part of the east side of Kirby has followed and should conclude quickly. Crews will then continue down the east side of Kirby to Richmond before beginning on the west side. The street will remain open for both directions of travel throughout construction. Both sides of Kirby are scheduled to be

completed in late August, with the final improvements of landscaping and installation of new trees to be completed early November.

University at Main

The stretch of University Blvd. along the south side of Rice University has been undergoing a waterline and storm sewer renovation, which is nearly complete. In the next week, the contractor is scheduled to pour the south (east bound) lanes with concrete. For the next three weeks, however, the contractor will continue to work along University repairing the sanitary sewer lines. During this time, traffic on University will be limited to the south lanes. Once this is complete, all traffic control will be removed and University will be re-opened fully.

Morningside Sidewalk

If you live near Morningside Street between Rice Boulevard and Bissonnet, then you may have noticed the presence of surveyors and engineers working on the design plans for the new sidewalk. In order to maximize the extension of the new sidewalk all the way to Bissonnet, the sidewalk will be installed entirely on the east side of Morningside, with no construction anticipated on the west. Upgraded drainage for the sidewalk is also part of the design work. Construction should begin by January of next year. This project is being funded entirely with the proceeds from the sale of the 2400 block of Bolsover and will address some of the drainage issues along Morningside, as well as providing a desperately needed and safe pedestrian walkway along this heavily travelled part of the Village.

I personally know what a nuisance it is to navigate the traffic caused by street construction and I thank you for your continued patience. I am confident that upon completion, the new streets will be safer and provide a more attractive and enjoyable drive or walk. These projects are important investments in Houston's future, and a long overdue return on our tax dollars.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these projects or another City of Houston matter, then please contact my office, at (832) 393-3004 or by email at districtc@cityofhouston.net.

-- Anne Clutterbuck, Houston City Council Member, District C