



MTSU road, parking revamp enters phase 3

Most work to be done by fall semester

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Phase three of MTSU's parking and improvement plan is under way, meaning those heading to campus can expect short-term detours or delays on MTSU Boulevard and Blue Raider Drive.

Rock City Construction of Franklin has set up shop near the old driver's education range adjacent to the Livestock Center at MTSU and has begun work.

The construction company was the low bidder, at \$4.9 million, for the latest phase of MTSU's parking and transportation plan.

Sonny Nicholson, project supervisor for Rock City, said crews were busy using heavy equipment to dig up sections of the old driver's education area off Greenland Drive and hauling away chunks of asphalt Tuesday morning before the rain began.

Portions of that area will be planted with grass. A row of recreational vehicle hookups for use during events at the Livestock Center will be modified into two parallel shorter rows. And an extension of Blue Raider Drive will run through part of the area into the current Wiles Court and connect with Greenland Drive.

Four homes will be demolished on Wiles Court so that the road extension can run through the cul-de-sac.

"We will start the dry-wall abatement on the homes next week," Nicholson said.

Once that is completed, a trackhoe will demolish the homes, which have been purchased by MTSU.

Blue Raider Drive will extend through a new roundabout just west of Scarlett Commons and continue on to the existing roundabout at MTSU Boulevard.

Shuttle lanes will be added to any modified roads. But the shuttle lane will be inbound only on the existing Wiles Court, since buses will not exit campus to Greenland Drive by that route.

MTSU Boulevard will be improved from Normal Way to the existing roundabout.

The contractor will be placing fencing along both sides of the street in the area between the current roundabout and Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building.

"The contractor will attempt to maintain traffic flow on MTSU Boulevard around Cummings Hall and Corlew Hall," said Ron Malone, assistant vice president for events and transportation. "That will require at least one lane remain open, with signalers at each end."

But he cautioned that at times, sections of the street would have to be closed while repairs and renovations occur.

The street will be widened and medians and larger sidewalks added, along with raised crosswalks. Improved electrical and water infrastructure under MTSU Boulevard and Blue Raider Drive is also in the works.

"We have quite a bit of work to complete in the project," Malone said Monday. "With the dates we are anticipating, we are going to try to complete all the access routes in and out of campus. There will be some details not finished by Aug. 15, but those won't affect accessibility. Only those things affecting the interior of the campus will be done."

For example, additional lighting and the completion Wiles Court into Greenland Drive and the traffic signal there may not be finished after fall semester begins, Malone said.

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In time, all parking along MTSU Boulevard and even some parking in adjacent parking lots affected by the construction will be relocated.

During phase three, a new parking lot will be added at Alumni Drive and Cityview after an old house is torn down. That should add about 141 parking spaces, Nicholson said.



Work began this week to tear up the driver's education range located north of Scarlett Commons apartments as part of a street and parking improvement plan. (Jim Davis/DNJ)

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