

Jackson School Road Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated April 20, 2020

In an effort to keep community members informed about the progress of the Jackson School Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Project, the City of Hillsboro provides updates on the dedicated project webpage at Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/JacksonSchool and to an email subscriber list on a quarterly basis.

General Project Information

What is the history of the Jackson School Road Project?

The 1.54 miles of NE Jackson School Road between NE Grant Street and NE Evergreen Road is a collector street serving as a north-south link between Downtown Hillsboro and Highway 26 and provides access to residential neighborhoods. It also serves as access to three elementary schools (Jackson, Lincoln, Mooberry), one City park (Hamby), and TriMet bus service (Evergreen & Jackson School). Jackson School Road is currently a two-lane roadway with an intermittent center turn lane, intermittent sidewalks, limited roadway lighting, and no bicycle facilities.

Improving the Jackson School Road corridor has been part of the area's Transportation System Plan for more than four decades. In 2015, this project was transferred from the Washington County's Major Streets Transportation Improvement Program to be managed by the City of Hillsboro. The project is currently part of the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Improvement Program.

What are the project goals?

The key goals of the project are to:

- Improve access to and from NE Jackson School Road and adjacent residential neighborhoods for all modes of travel.
- Encourage safe, active transportation by providing enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Construct a roadway to meet current and future demands.

What are the projects planned improvements?

The project will provide balanced access to and from NE Jackson School Road to adjacent residential neighborhoods for all modes of travel, and:

- Improve the corridor to provide one-way cycle tracks along both sides of NE Jackson School Road.
- Construct sidewalks and install street lighting over its entire length.
- Add a center turn lane to provide safety for left-turning vehicles onto and off of the roadway.
- Construct new creek/drainage crossings.
- Construct a roundabout at the intersection of NE Jackson School Road and NE Harewood Street.
- Add landscaped planter strips with street trees.
- Replace the Glencoe Swale culvert between NE Rogahn Street and NW Evergreen Road.
- Upgrade the Storm water system along the roadway.
- [Relocate utilities underground \(as approved by the City Council in April 2018\).](#)

Why does the City anticipate an increase in the amount of vehicles that travel on Jackson School Road each day?

The City models traffic growth over the next 20 years based on the ability to develop and redevelop land. This looks at both the growth in housing and the growth in employment within the region. Redevelopment of downtown is one factor. However, much of Washington County's job growth will be north of Evergreen Road, while there will be significant housing in Yamhill County, Cornelius, and Forest Grove. This combination will increase traffic as drivers commute to and from their homes and employment. This not only results in an increase in traffic along Jackson School Road but also Glencoe Road and 25th Avenue.

Can the project move forward without...:

• ...Planter strips?

- The planter strips provide space for required water quality treatment facilities. The project is required to provide treatment for roadway stormwater runoff due to Federal, State and Local regulations. The project team looked at options for providing water quality facilities elsewhere in the project corridor, but those alternatives resulted in the need to acquire and remove several homes, and large impacts to the usable space in Hamby Park.
- The planter strips provide a physical buffer between vehicles and bikes and pedestrians, making the overall design safer for all modes of transportation.
- The planter strips provide a location for new street trees to be planted and for street lights to be placed.
- The planter strips and street trees provide a visual narrowing of the road corridor, which contributes to traffic calming.
- The planter strips also provided a space for street furniture such as street lights and mailboxes as well as a location for garbage cans on pick up days.

• ...A center turn lane?

- In the most recent five years of available crash data, 75% (28) of the 36 crashes reported were turning related or were the result of a vehicle being rear-ended. These types of crashes are less likely to happen when a center left turn lane is present. Rear-end collisions are reduced as the result of a driver being able to stop out of the lane of travel. For vehicles turning left off of Jackson School, vehicles are able to pause and wait for an appropriate gap without the pressure of holding up traffic behind them. Additionally, because they are in a lane designated for turning, opposing drivers more clearly see that a vehicle is preparing to turn.
- Project staff worked with a traffic engineering consultant to analyze future traffic volumes and demands at each intersection along Jackson School Road. Their analysis of future operations on Jackson School Road determined that, in addition to the number of intersections that will warrant a left turn lane, the number and location of driveways that access Jackson School Road results in a recommendation for a continuous center turn lane.

• ...Removing Trees?

- The project will only remove trees when it is absolutely necessary for construction of the required improvements.
- The majority of trees are being removed due to the undergrounding of overhead utilities requested by residents. Many trees in the project corridor have sprawling root systems which will be cut when the utility trenches are dug. Project staff worked with a certified arborist to determine which trees would need to be removed based on whether or not they would be able to survive this impact to their root system without becoming a safety hazard.

What will be the width of the roadway?

The width of Jackson School Road will span 38 feet from curb to curb after the project is completed, except for the new roundabout. To clarify, 68 feet is the right-of-way space that includes sidewalks, bicycle tracks, planter strips, and the 38 feet of pavement.

Will this project add additional travel lanes?

As part of this project, no additional travel lanes are being added. The widest part of the road is currently 50 feet, curb to curb, just north of the crosswalk at Estate Drive near the elementary school. By the project's completion, the widest part of the road will be reduced to 38 feet from curb to curb.

Can the sidewalks and bike lanes be smaller?

The advisory committee which develops the Public Rights Of Way Accessibility Guidelines recommends a minimum 5 foot wide sidewalk. These guidelines have been regarded as industry best practices and have been upheld in Department of Justice litigation. The ODOT Highway Design Manual states that "the standard width for bike lanes is 6 feet. In constrained areas, narrower lanes may be acceptable through a design exception." The City has granted itself a design exception for a 5 foot bike lane on Jackson School Road.

What will be the roadway's speed?

The City is designing the roadway for a 35 mph speed limit, consistent with standards. Speed limits are set by the State through speed zone investigations, not by the City.

What is the project's timeline?

The project is on schedule to start construction in winter 2019 and be complete by winter 2022. Final design is complete and the City is currently negotiating with property owners to acquire the final portions of land needed to construct the project.

Safety

How will the project encourage safe driving and travel?

Jackson School Road is a collector road that currently serves more than 8,000 vehicles each day (*Note: this figure has been updated with more recent traffic counts*). As our area continues to grow, the road will serve 10,000 vehicles each day in the near future. This increase in traffic will happen regardless of this safety improvement project.

Without this project, the road will become noticeably less safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. That's why the City of Hillsboro is taking action now on the Jackson School Road Improvement Project, which has been on the area's Transportation System Plan for more than 40 years.

Many residents in the Jackson School neighborhood have voiced support for this improvement project and the benefits of adding sidewalks, bike facilities, street lighting, and features that will encourage safer driving and travel. Safety is at the heart of these improvements:

- Jackson School Road will continue to have one lane of traffic in each direction. A new center turn lane will allow cars to turn across traffic without blocking traffic, which will help prevent crashes.
- Bike lanes and sidewalks will be added to protect all who travel to school, work, and home.
- Better street lighting will be installed to increase safety for everyone.
- Overhead utilities will be relocated underground.
- The speed limit will remain 35 miles per hour. The improved road is not designed for speeds any higher. A new roundabout, street tree planters, and a narrower curb-to-curb width are all specifically included in the design to

encourage drivers to slow down. These features are included, in part, due to community feedback and requests from people who were concerned about speed.

Communication & Outreach

The City's recent project update said "Most residents in the Jackson School neighborhood have voiced support for this improvement project and the benefits of adding sidewalks, bike facilities, street lighting, and features that will encourage safer driving and travel." What is the basis for this statement?

From the information that is available to project staff in the form of public comments and staff conversations with hundreds of Jackson School neighborhood residents over the past four years, project staff state with confidence that vocalized support for the project has far exceeded requests for the project to be halted or ended.

Following a project newsletter update, a Jackson School area resident wrote to City communications staff to dispute the wording of the above statement and request a correction, citing a lack of systemically collected, quantifiable data to measure project support. The City acknowledges that the above statement is based on staff analysis of public comments received and verbal conversations between residents and project staff, which the resident argued that staff's perspective and impression of conversations could be biased in favor of the project. The statement is not based on scientific polling or surveying, which was never stated or implied. The City's project outreach has focused on residents living along or near Jackson School Road, and largely on those with properties impacted by the project. Residents who live farther away from Jackson School Road may not have voiced an opinion on the project and, therefore, cannot be considered as supporting or opposing the project.

The City appreciates the dialogue with residents, regardless of their support or opposition for a particular project. City staff strongly desire to be transparent and maintain trust. The above statement, which was authored by project staff, might be better summarized as "The vast majority of comments about the project received by project staff, and conversations between staff and Jackson School neighborhood residents (as perceived by staff), have included advocacy of safety improvements in the project." The City respects and appreciates the resident's call for accurate communication and staff are sharing those concerns with the community for awareness and understanding.

The City also recognizes that articulating support for the project does not necessarily equal unwavering support. The project has been modified a number of times. Staff describe receiving numerous comments from impacted property owners who have requested changes to elements of the project, but expressed their support for the project's sidewalks, bike lanes, and other features.

Also of note, outreach on the Hillsboro 2035 Community Plan's five-year update showed transportation improvements are [the third most requested idea](#) for the community's future, with more sidewalks and more bike lanes being the fourth most requested ideas.

How has the City provided project updates and solicited community feedback?

Since the City took over the project from Washington County in July 2015, the City has held two open houses for the community in November 2016 and October 2017. Each of the City's open houses was attended by many staff members who received input and feedback from hundreds of community members.

Area residents have received project updates through a general information notice, a dedicated webpage, email newsletter updates, print mailings, in-person meetings, phone calls, and other communication through City of Hillsboro employees and our contractors.

Has community feedback helped shape the project?

Yes. Based on community feedback, the project was adjusted and modified many times during the design phase, which is now complete. While the project could not meet every resident's request for changes, staff have spent considerable time listening to and providing information for property owners, and trying to find solutions. Many phone calls, emails, and 1-on-1 meetings have taken place and City employees have listened to all residents who have expressed either concern or support for the project.

Did the City listen to input from residents during open houses (or write down the comments)?

In addition to the opportunity to speak directly with project staff, sign-in sheets and comment cards were made available to open house attendees. The project team has copies of sign-in sheets, presentations, meeting materials, and a log of every comment card that was filled out at the open houses on file. Requests for follow-up on comment cards was fulfilled by project staff.

How can input be provided?

The City welcomes questions and feedback from community members:

- Call: 503-681-5399
- [Email](#)
- Visit or send mail to:
City of Hillsboro Public Works Department
4415 NE 30th Avenue, Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

How can I receive project updates?

The City provides project updates quarterly by email. [Sign up to receive emails directly.](#)

Underground Utilities

As part of the project, are all utilities going to be underground?

Yes. In April 2018, the Hillsboro City Council voted to change the project's design, and underground all utilities in the public right-of-way on both sides of Jackson School Road.

Trees & Vegetation

How has tree and vegetation removal, as part of the project, been minimized?

Trees are an important part of our ecosystem and help make our community beautiful. Nobody wants to remove a tree, but sometimes it is necessary. We must also balance our natural environment with the safety of our community. The project team worked diligently to minimize tree loss while ensuring the safety of all who use the road, including children who walk and bike to nearby schools.

The design for Jackson School Road is as narrow as it can be, while providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Trees and vegetation will be removed only where it's essential.

For every tree that must be removed, the City will replant a tree in the Jackson School Road corridor or in the City. This is not required to maintain the City's status as a Tree City USA community, but it reflects the desire to balance the necessary tree removal with new trees for the future.

When will tree and vegetation removal occur?

Tree removal will not occur during the nesting and migratory season.

A licensed tree service has removed the previously identified trees and vegetation along the project corridor beginning October 2019. A certified arborist will oversee the work.

The process will take approximately two to three months, weather permitting. Minimal disruption to traffic is expected. Affected property owners and current residents were notified prior to the start of the work in mid-September with a mailing.

Affected property owners and residents will need to remove any personal belongings within the public right-of-way before work begins in October. During construction, more than 60 established, healthy trees will be preserved and protected in the corridor; 364 new trees will be planted in the Jackson School Road corridor and throughout the City later in the project. Prior to this work, PGE will be trimming near powerlines.

Will more trees be removed?

Trees and vegetation that were previously identified to be removed – but were not taken down by the tree removal contractor – will be removed as part of the construction contract. Some of these are in sensitive areas that require a more careful removal.

How will removed trees be used in the community?

A portion of the removed trees will be used as wood chips in Hillsboro parks and trails, firewood donated to nonprofits, art pieces, and root balls relocated to Jackson Bottom Wetlands. In addition, property owners may choose to keep wood from trees cut down on or adjacent to their property.

Hillsboro is a Tree City USA community. How can the City allow 300 trees to be removed for a public infrastructure project?

The requirements the City must adhere to for its Tree City USA designation do not prohibit it from removing trees when necessary for construction of a capital improvement project. Though not required, the City is planting a replacement tree for every tree that is removed as part of this project.

In addition, as part of its participation in the Tree City USA program, the City planted more than 29,000 trees at the Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve in 2018; and will plant more than 10,500 trees in 2019 the majority of which will be planted at Jackson Bottom Wetlands Preserve.

Harold Eastman Memorial Rose Garden

Will the Rose Garden be affected by the project?

The Rose Garden will be reconfigured as part of this project. The project team is working with City of Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department staff and the Tualatin Valley Rose Society to ensure that valuable, memorial, and irreplaceable roses are properly relocated to the Sunrise Community Garden during construction. The Rose Society will continue to maintain and care for the roses at this temporary location until construction is complete. The City will then replant the roses in their new locations at the Rose Garden, which will be coordinated with the Rose Society. Memorial items such as the tile mosaic, plaques, and benches will be preserved and protected during construction and will be integrated into the new Rose Garden layout.

Understanding Eminent Domain

Why is property acquisition occurring for this project?

With all construction projects where property acquisition is needed, the City works diligently and collaboratively with residents and land owners in the hope of reaching a resolution that is fair for all involved, including the City's taxpayers. This may include changes to the project to accommodate the needs of property owners.

Sometimes acquiring private property is needed for the government to build important infrastructure to serve the greater public good. That process is called eminent domain and it is commonly used on large infrastructure projects. It requires the City to negotiate with affected property owners and seek agreement on fair market value for the portion of the property needed for public use.

The overwhelming majority of these matters results in a settlement agreement between the City and the property owner — and that is true for this project. Sometimes the courts must decide what constitutes fair market value, but that is rare and a last resort.

How many properties have reached an agreement with the City?

As of October 25, 2019, about 190 impacted properties in the Jackson School Road corridor have reached an agreement with the City. The City continues to work diligently with the owners of the remaining six properties to reach a fair agreement.

Budget

What is the current budget?

A construction contract was awarded at the February 4, 2020 City Council meeting to Pacific Excavation, Inc. in the amount of \$21,473,000.00.

What is the total project cost?

The total project budget is \$29 million. This can be defined by the following:

- \$5M Consulting
- \$2.5M Right-of-Way (temporary access, temporary and permanent easements, dedication deeds, settlements)
- \$21.473M Construction (includes tree and vegetation removal, and rose garden relocation)
- \$.5M - Miscellaneous (legal, permitting, fees)

Why have the project's scope and cost estimates changed?

Projects of the size and scale of Jackson School Road take years of thoughtful planning. In 2006, the original budget estimate was \$8 million. Now, after 13 years of inflation and market changes, that cost estimate no longer reflects current pricing for labor, materials, and land acquisition.

The \$5.4 million figure that some have inaccurately referred to as the "original budget" was the funding contribution from Washington County — not the original budget estimate.

The project's scope and cost estimates have also changed based on community member requests, such as:

- The undergrounding of utilities (requested by residents)
- The narrowing of the roadway, which required a project redesign (requested by residents)
- Engineering changes to save as many trees as possible (requested by residents)

Costs have also increased over time due to:

- The addition of waterline replacement along the project
- Hamby Park improvements
- Storm water regulations (state and federal)
- Inflation (averages 6% each year)
- The addition of fish passable culverts (federal requirement)
- Multiple design changes
- Increased difficulty of constructability

Good stewardship of public resources is a top priority for the City. Project staff have worked to be as cost efficient as possible by combining work with other Water Department and Parks & Recreation Department projects.

How is the project funded?

This project is primarily financed through ten special-use funds.

- Washington County [Major Streets Transportation Improvement Program](#), phase 3D
- Traffic Impact Fee for Transit
- Transportation Development Tax
- [Transportation Utility Fee](#)
- Surface Water Management Funds System Development Charge
- [Surface Water Management Local Service Fee](#)
- Traffic Impact Fee for Collector Roadways
- Strategic Investment Program (SIP)
- [Hillsboro Water Department](#)
- [Hillsboro Parks & Recreation Department](#)

Each of those funding sources are earmarked for specific project elements and can only be used for those purposes. For example, Transportation funds must be used for Transportation projects. Those funds cannot be used for Police, Fire, or school projects.