

Good afternoon!

Project Update:

Marshbank continued preparing Park Lane this week for its stormwater system of raingardens, trees and undercarriage. The street's underground continues to offer surprises requiring changes and adjustments to the work scope. However, none of these have delayed the May 8 target for substantial completion.

Discussion of Work Hours and Shifts:

I received a couple requests this week to elaborate on what goes into the decisions made regarding construction work hours and shifts, and particularly why Marshbank cannot work more hours in a day in an effort to get the project done faster. This was a subject that was brought up a couple times last year during advisory group meetings, and continues to be a good question. Many factors are involved in these decisions, but I will do my best to provide you a summary of those factors here.

The conventional construction schedule for a public works project is an eight-hour-a-day, five-day-a-week schedule. The day typically starts at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. This schedule is optimal because individual construction tasks must conform to the requirements imposed on them by external and logistical factors necessary for productive work. For example, the availability of materials and trucks to transport those materials limits the amount of work a work crew can accomplish in a given day. So too do rush hour traffic, state laws, noise and nuisance laws, and union regulations. Attempts to work outside that optimal window causes a few, and often many, of these factors to together eliminate any substantial benefit that might be accrued by a contractor working outside that window.

One of the main reasons that conventional schedule is considered optimal is the risk to both the public and the contractor are together balanced as low as can realistically be achieved or expected. Stepping outside that window increases the risk, often steeply. The consequence of doing that is not just increased cost to the project. There can also be a very real risk to the successful completion of the project, especially a project like Park Lane where successful completion of the project in May is a defining requirement.

Now, there is a planning and coordination process that can be followed in order to schedule and complete work outside of that optimal window. This process is geared towards addressing the sorts of factors I described above, and many of you have probably seen examples of this in the past. The February night work on Park Lane was one result of using this process. The night work on the 85th Street project is another example. Using this process does not completely mitigate the risks (the optimal window for construction is still the most optimal). But the process, and the plan that results, is a strategic tool in our project management tool box.

However, this process has a few very serious restrictions.

First, the process to develop the plan for working outside the optimal window requires both time and funds investment in advance. It can only involve a definite and well-defined scope of work, because all of the logistical support required for that scope of work must also be coordinated. In short, it is not a process that can be implemented spontaneously or under very short notice.

Another restriction imposed by this process is a complete commitment to the plan once developed. Once the decision is made, days or weeks in advance of the actual work, we are committed

to all of the plans costs and consequences, whether the plan succeeds or not. The possibilities for flexibility between the time of decision and the completion of that planned work scope are really limited. Literally anything unpredictable that occurs after the plan is put in place (i.e. weather, delays in related work, changes in work conditions, etc.), regardless of cause or “fault”, results in that planning time and investment being wasted and the whole process needs to be completely started again. There is no way to turn back the clock, and typically no refund.

In conclusion, the decision to work outside the optimal construction window is a very risky one. We can and do still take those risk, but doing so requires careful practice in order to ensure the benefit will justify the costs and risks. Even an option that appears to be an easy enhancement, like working a 10-hour day instead of an 8-hour day, only benefits the project if we can guarantee, in advance, that we can get 10 hours of productivity instead of 8 hours at additional cost.

Advice for the Week Ahead:

The sidewalk along the east side of Lake Street, between Central Way and Kirkland Avenue, will be closed for the next few weeks until Marshbank can pour the new concrete for the sidewalk and crosswalk. In the meantime, signs instruct pedestrians to safely cross Lake Street at either Central Way or Kirkland Avenue. Please do not attempt to walk along Lake Street outside the construction as you will be walking into traffic on Lake Street.

Large truck traffic will likely increase this month in the area around the project site, as the materials Marshbank will use to build the new street grade begin arriving. The traffic and pedestrian flagging team will do their best to continue assisting everyone in safely navigating the work zone.

Frank Reinart will be on leave from March 17 through April 6 and will not be able to respond to either email or telephone calls during that period. During his absence, please contact Christian Knight if you have any questions or concerns related to the Park Lane construction. His email address is cknight@kirklandwa.gov and his telephone number is (425) 587-3831.

City Project Work Status Update:

Based on the current schedule, the near-future construction activities by the City should include:

Week of March 16 to 20:

- Bioretention areas and storm drain
- Concrete edging, borders, and curbs
- Remaining tree removal
- Sidewalk grading

Week of March 23 to 27:

- Bioretention areas
- Concrete edging and curbs
- Foundations and electrical conduit for the new light poles
- Sidewalk grading
- Removal of the temporary pedestrian walkway and construction of the brick paver surfaces nearest the buildings

Have a good weekend!

