



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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West Alabama Undergoing Resurfacing, Bikeway Moved For Upcoming US – 59 and Spur 527 Construction

New route maintains connectivity of bikeway network; new striping to allow for reversible lane

(Houston, Texas) – The City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department announced today it has rerouted the bike lanes on West Alabama and continues to resurface and restripe the street in response to the planned Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) reconstruction work on US-59 and Spur 527.

TxDOT currently plans to partially close Spur 527 for reconstruction in February of 2004 as part of its reconstruction of US-59 in the area. Even though TxDOT will maintain open one outbound lane on Spur 527 during the construction period and new exits will be opened from US-59 into downtown at Main Street and at Polk Street, studies indicate that motorists will increase their use of other east-west routes in the area. Rerouting the bikeway and resurfacing West Alabama are two portions of the Public Works and Engineering Department's mitigation plan to ease traffic congestion in the area during the construction period. Other strategies include resurfacing additional streets, enhancing traffic signal timing, adding a reversible lane system to West Alabama and other traffic operation improvements.

The bike lanes currently on West Alabama have been moved to a new east-west route. The new bikeway runs along Fairview from Commonwealth west to Dickey Place, north along Dickey Place to Avalon, west along Avalon to Belmeade, south along Belmeade to Ella Lee, then west along Ella Lee to Wesleyan. It will connect to the existing bikeway network at Wesleyan and Commonwealth. Resurfacing work on Fairview between South Shepherd and Dunlavy was completed on March 6th. Signs have been posted along the new bikeway route reminding drivers and bike riders of the shared nature of the roadway.

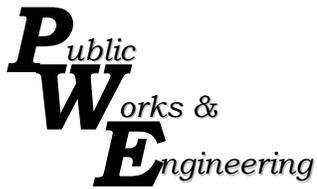
(See attached "Fairview Bikeway Detour Map".)

The old surface of West Alabama from Spur 527 to Wesleyan has been removed and the City contractor has completed applying the first layer of asphalt, designed to level and smooth the roadway. The final riding surface has been applied from Spur 527 to Woodhead.

After the final riding surface is applied within the next few weeks, the restriping of West Alabama will be completed as follows:

- Spur 527 to Shepherd – Three traffic lanes (one westbound, one continuous left-turn lane and one eastbound lane). When necessary, the continuous left-turn lane in this section can be converted to a "reversible lane" to accommodate peak inbound and outbound traffic demands.
- Shepherd to Wesleyan – Four traffic lanes (two westbound, one continuous left-turn lane, and one eastbound lane).

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Gary Oradat, a Deputy Director with the Public Works and Engineering Department, stated, “After months of study and requesting input from local bicyclists, we feel the new bikeway is the best method available to provide bike riders an alternative route into and out of the downtown area. It maintains the connectivity of our bikeway network and offers a short cut to those not wishing to ride all the way north to Inwood, Chilton and West Dallas. Additionally, resurfacing and restriping West Alabama prepares the street for the expected increased traffic loads and provides us with the flexibility we need to manage traffic in the area during peak traffic hours.”

For more information on the City of Houston Bikeway Program, visit their website at www.houstonbikeways.org.

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