

## Transportation safety improvements on the way

By: Kent Hohlfeld in Architecture and Engineering, Transportation August 24, 2017 3:44 pm



A stretch of sidewalk on Southwest 90th Avenue, from Southwest Washington Street to Southwest Morrison Street, is one project being tackled to improve safety in unincorporated Washington County. (Courtesy of 3j Consulting Inc.)

Traversing roads in certain unincorporated areas of southwest Washington County is becoming much safer for pedestrians thanks to a series of safety improvements.

New sidewalks are on the verge of completion on portions of Southwest 90th and Southwest 113th avenues, where pedestrians previously were forced to walk alongside roads filled with motor vehicles.

"Basically we are filling in the gaps," said John Howorth, principal engineer at Beaverton engineering and consulting firm **3J Consulting Inc.** "We are separating pedestrians from vehicles."

Sidewalks have been added to areas on Northwest 113th Avenue between Rainmont Road and Anderson Street, as well as Southwest 90th Avenue between Southwest Leahy Road and Northwest Oak Street.

The projects are being funded through the Urban Road Maintenance District Safety Improvement Program and the Minor Betterments Program. The presence nearby of schools, including West Tualatin View Elementary and Metzger Elementary, influenced the county's selection process. Creation of a safe route for schoolchildren was a major objective of the projects.

Washington County has a list of projects that can be funded through its Urban Road Maintenance District. Projects are selected by a committee using criteria that awards points based on items such as schools, accident prone areas and citizen complaints.

"(Projects near schools) get more points," said Aaron Clodfelter, senior engineer for Washington County's operations and maintenance division. "It doesn't guarantee a project gets picked. The Urban Road Maintenance District advisory committee makes the selection."

3J Consulting is working on a total of five projects geared to improve pedestrians' safety on county roads.

The company expects the projects on Southwest 90th and Northwest 113th avenues, with a combined budget of \$1,023,000, to finish this fall.

"Of all the projects I have worked on, these are the most welcomed," Howorth said. "I was walking the site and was getting some of the neighbors saying how much they like having the sidewalks. That is not something you always

hear.”

The focus has now shifted to designing sidewalk improvements on Northwest Thompson Road from 114th Avenue to Knollview Drive. Also, the design phase is under way for improvements on Southwest 209th Avenue between Southwest Johnson and Alexander streets. Improvements on Southwest Alexander Street will stretch from 198th to 209th avenues.

One of the biggest challenges the engineers have faced is fitting the sidewalks within the existing public right-of-way. Designers had to also contend with property owners who didn’t understand that their property didn’t extend all the way to the street.

“Neighbors sometimes have improvements go to the street,” Howorth said. “Staying within the existing right-of-way is the No. 1 most difficult thing to do. It is pretty constrained in terms of space.”

Construction began this month; roads are remaining open during construction. Completion of the last project of the bunch is expected by fall 2019.

Tagged with: 3J CONSULTING WASHINGTON COUNTY