First Avenue South Rebuild Update - 03/20/09

Progress Overview

Installation of the new water main has been steadily moving south, and has now crossed Forest Street. To-date, over 1500 feet of 24” diameter pipe has been placed in the center of First Avenue South, leaving 1300 more to go. The contractor has also been tapping into the storm drain in the center of the road in preparation for placing new drains and catch basins at the curb.

When (and where) the water main installation is completed, crews will begin preparing the new service line connections to businesses – initially to those on the east side of the street. Which bring us to the following item:

Traffic Swap – Forest to Stacy

Until now, daytime north and southbound traffic has been separated by the work zone in the middle of the street. Over the course of the next week crews will shift northbound traffic to the west side of the First Avenue in most of the northern third of the construction zone, as follows:

This weekend crews will shift the northbound lanes from just south of Forest to Stacy—except at the Lander Street intersection. The resulting “S-weave” for northbound traffic at Lander will be eliminated after the new water main is placed in this intersection, likely April 11th.

The northbound lanes in the remaining two-thirds of the project, between Horton and Forest, will be shifted to the west side of the street this coming Thursday, 3/26.

Northbound traffic will remain on the west half of the street until the curb, sidewalks and pavement are rebuilt on the east half of the street (planned for June). At that time, both north and southbound traffic will be moved to the newly completed east side of the street so crews can begin work on the west side.

Driveway Access

As northbound traffic is swapped to the west side of the street, access to driveways on the east will be maintained by providing a “vehicular bridge” across the work zone from the west side of the street. However, ONLY RIGHT HAND TURNS WILL BE ALLOWED into or out of these access points. This means driveways on the east side of First Avenue must be approached from the south and must be exited going northbound.

Water Outages

The new water main will be connected to the existing supply system without any area-wide shutdowns. Most businesses will experience only a single, comparatively short outage as their own service line is tied into the new water main. Those on the east side of First, north of Forest, can expect to be contacted by Seattle Public Utilities about the timing of their change-over in a few weeks.

Metro Stops

Bus routes on First Avenue will remain in service, and northbound buses will continue to stop at, or near, most of their current locations (at Stacy, Lander, Forest and Horton). Actual stop locations will occasionally change to ensure safety during construction activity and
“pedestrian bridges” may be used in places to provide access across the work zone. Please look for pertinent Metro “Rider Alert” notices.