

The perfect storm of roadwork

by [Amy Dove - Goldstream News Gazette](#) February 17, 2010

Traffic tie-ups expected through View Royal, Saanich, Esquimalt

Expect major gridlock between West Shore and Victoria as three municipalities undertake massive road works projects this year.

View Royal, Esquimalt, Saanich and the Capital Regional District will be ripping up roads and slowing traffic starting next week through to 2011. With six major construction projects, traffic delays between West Shore and Victoria will be unavoidable.

"There's going to be some serious traffic issues. We just don't have (alternative) routes to (direct) people around," said View Royal engineer Emmet McCusker. "(This is) a preview of what they are going to see for year."

People are encouraged to carpool or use public transit. Those traveling by car should allot extra time to get to work and use the Trans-Canada Highway, he added.

To kick it off, Capital Regional District water services is replacing pipes along Island Highway from Stormont Avenue almost to Helmcken Road. That work is expected to take up to five weeks, restricting traffic to one lane from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Traffic direction will alternate, McCusker said, with the priority given to traffic heading into Victoria in the morning. A popular route for commuters, the work will push more traffic onto the already congested Trans-Canada Highway.

"We have to give them a fairly lengthy time to work," McCusker said. "We know it's going to be a little ugly."

CRD Parks is also working on the rail trestles on Helmcken Road and Island Highway as part of the E&N rail trail. A pedestrian and cyclist path is being added to the Helmcken trestle, however, traffic should not be impacted.

Work on the trestle near Four Mile hill will slow traffic as crews build abutments and outfit a new bridge deck for pedestrians, cyclists and the train.

The road is expected to be closed to traffic in both directions for a duration of time for this work. The trestles should be finished by late summer.

The Island Highway overhaul, funded by a \$7.4-million federal gas tax grant, starts in May and will last 10 months. Traffic will remain limited to one lane from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. The project will add sidewalks and bike lanes to both sides of the road.

All utilities, including phone and capacity for fibre optics, will be buried under the road. The roadway will be widened to accommodate turning lanes.

Stormwater management and landscaped boulevards are also planned.

View Royal is working on a communications strategy to ensure emergency services can move freely through the area, McCusker said. The fire department is bringing volunteers in early in case people can't get to the station for early morning calls, said Fire Chief Paul Hurst. When the road is closed completely, the fire department will ensure there is a staffed truck on the other side to ensure residents near the Esquimalt border are covered.

"It's going to be a challenge for 18 months," he said. "All it is going to take is an accident on the Trans-Canada Highway and essentially movement in and out of Victoria is going to be seriously impaired."

The fire department has requested daily updates from contractors to ensure



Drivers should be prepared for delays along Island Highway this year as View Royal launches a major overhaul of the commuter artery, says View Royal engineer Emmet McCusker. Traffic will be limited to one lane between 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. starting this week.

Amy Dove/News staff

they know where and when work crews are active. That information will be passed on the RCMP and ambulance as well, Hurst said.

Updates on the project, including traffic pattern changes, will be available every Friday in the Gazette, as well as online at www.viewroyal.ca and through fire department podcasts at <http://www.viewroyalfire.com>

The Town is also planning on setting up a Facebook page and other social media networks to post traffic delay updates.

Other municipalities dig into roadways —

Further complicating traffic flow, Saanich and Esquimalt also have major road works planned starting in March through the summer.

Esquimalt is undertaking a six-month revamp of Craigflower Road between Admirals and Garthland roads. Traffic will be limited to one lane between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. starting next month. The road is being repaved, sidewalks added and a traffic light installed.

Saanich adds to the congestion in June with an overhaul of Admirals Road between Colquitz Avenue and Gorge Road. Sidewalks and bike lanes are being added.

Work there is estimated to span nine weeks from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, with one lane alternating traffic.

Roadwork schedule

- Feb 1 E&N rail trestle work on Island Highway and Helmcken Road **until April**
- Feb 22 Water Main work on Island Highway. One lane 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Five weeks**
- April 1 Craigflower Road overhaul from Admirals to Garthland roads. One lane 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Six months**

- May — View Royal Island Highway overhaul. One lane 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Ten months**
- June — Bike lane, sidewalk work on Colwood strip **Four months.**
- Saanich roadwork on Admirals Road — Colquitz Avenue to Gorge Road One lane 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Nine weeks**