

Tempe's College Avenue improvements start in fall

by **Derek Quizon** - Aug. 9, 2010 01:48 PM
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Renovations along College Avenue from U.S. 60 to Apache Boulevard designed to slow traffic and make the street safer for bicyclists and pedestrians are scheduled to begin this fall.

Construction is to start in September or October, Tempe transit department spokesman Eric Iwersen said. The work will restrict traffic to two lanes. After construction is finished, motorists should expect to see less space on the road. Restrictive measures outlined in the plan include landscaped medians, raised intersections and traffic circles.

"It's a great street today - it's a nice mix of all the modes of travel. But there was an effort to make it more accessible for bikes and pedestrians," Iwersen said.


It's part of an overall plan to encourage residents to walk, use public transportation and ride their bikes around the city, he said.

Similar renovations are planned for University Drive, Broadway Road and Hardy Drive. Tempe officials expect renovations along College Avenue to be completed next summer. Broadway Road should be finished between late 2011 and early 2012, and University will be completed in fall 2012.

Hardy Drive improvements have not been designed and funding for the project has not been secured.

The planned renovations are the result of two years of meetings with neighbors and members of neighborhood associations, Iwersen said. Residents of the neighborhoods surrounding those streets had long complained about traffic and complained the streets were often used as shortcuts by motorists trying to avoid major thoroughfares.

Many complaints, documented on the city's website, raise safety concerns related to speeding and ask officials to install more speed bumps. The Tempe Bicycle Action Group had also labeled certain intersections along College and University Road as "problematic" for cyclists.

The stretches of College, Broadway, Hardy and University being renovated are all considered "collector streets" by the city - they run between neighborhoods and have more traffic than a residential street, but less traffic than busier streets like Rural Road or Mill Avenue. They all help residents connect to downtown Tempe, Arizona State University  and the light-rail line.

They are all popular with pedestrians and cyclists as well, Iwersen said, and some of them are badly in need of renovations due to wear and tear.

"All of those factors making it an appropriate time to (renovate) those streets," he said.

Read more: <http://www.azcentral.com/community/tempe/articles/2010/08/09/20100809tempe-asu-college-avenue0811.html#ixzz0wuF99rCn>