

Natural Bridge Safety Project

March 2021 update

With the temperatures warming up as we head into spring, crews are heading back out to work along the Natural Bridge corridor over the next few weeks.

The majority of work will be around the new roundabout at Goodfellow and Natural Bridge. The crews have set up the new traffic pattern with the roundabout this week. For the next six weeks or so, crews will be working out there to build the new roundabout, as traffic works its way around them. Crews will also be working on the sidewalks at Goodfellow, Fair and Darby, bringing those sidewalks up to meet Americans with Disability Act requirements.

Since the crews will be out in the middle of the roadway, we do ask you to please slow down as you are traveling through that area, and to please avoid distractions, such as looking at cell phones, as you go through the work zones.

During the winter months, when there wasn't a lot of work underway on the corridor, roughly 18 percent of the team working on the project were minority workers – overall, we are still looking at more than 30 percent of the work force on the project being minority workers. About 17 percent of the contract is being completed by disadvantaged businesses.

One of the questions our engineers often hear about the project is the selection of roundabouts to replace several of the intersections. There is a certain amount of uncertainty about roundabouts, as people are often unsure how to use them, and often people don't have a lot of confidence in other driver's knowledge of how to use them. Generally speaking, roundabouts are very good on roadways that have lower levels of traffic that tends not to be steady around the clock. On those roadways, roundabouts help traffic flow more smoothly and steadily (since there is less long-term stopping at signals) and there is less potential for highly damaging side-impact crashes. The way cars move through a roundabout prevents the most severe crashes from occurring during a typical left turn. The goal of this design is to allow traffic to flow smoothly while saving lives. Studies conducted around the county show that roundabouts can reduce fatalities by 90 percent, injuries by 76 percent and crashes by 35 percent. Although it is way too soon to see what the impact the changes have had on this section of Natural Bridge, we are already hearing from residents along the corridor that speeds have been noticeably slower since this work has begun.

Another concern we hear is about emergency vehicles using roundabouts and any impacts to response times. We construct roundabouts large enough to handle all emergency response vehicles, and there is little to no impact on their response times.

If you have any questions, or need to discuss concerns about the project, please call our customer service team at 314-275-1500 and ask to speak to one of the Natural Bridge project team members.

Tips for using a roundabout

- If you are entering a roundabout, yield to the traffic that is already in the roundabout. You may have to wait a moment until there is room to merge in.
- Once you are in the roundabout, don't stop to let other cars in. As you move around, they will have space to merge in soon.
- If you see an emergency response vehicle approaching the roundabout, pull to the side of the road before entering the roundabout. If you are in the roundabout, please pull through before stopping.

