

DOT provides update on Center Street paving

BY JOSHUA MALONI
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Center Street's face-lift might occur later than originally expected.

The Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce invited members of the New York State Department of Transportation to a Lewiston Business Group subcommittee meeting on Tuesday. Assistant Regional Design Engineer Sanjay Singh, P.E., and Construction Supervisor Lisa Bevilacqua said the majority of milling and paving will likely occur in 2022.

Business leaders were anticipating a summer 2021 start – and the Chamber of Commerce was lobbying for roadwork to happen before or after festival weekends. However, “By the time the project gets awarded (this summer) ... we need to work on getting signal pole foundations located, because things in the grounds, utilities, can interfere with where they need to go. And, unfortunately with COVID, we are seeing a very long lead time in getting the poles manufactured and delivered,” Bevilacqua said. “We need to find their home out in the

field so they can be designed to the proper height, and ordered ahead of time. That's going to be most likely the contractor's first priority.

“We also, as part of our contract specifications, we cannot pave top course in this area after Oct. 31, unless the contractor wants to warranty it – which they rarely want to do that. So, yes, very little paving will take place this first season – maybe patching, maybe some side street work, maybe some temporary asphalt. But mainline paving will happen next season.”

Project Particulars

Singh explained the DOT first began formulating a repair plan for Center Street – a state-controlled road – two years ago. He said Mayor Anne Welch “visited our offices here ... and explained her vision of what she wants to see as part of this project.

“We tried to incorporate as many elements as we could.”

“The project in itself is about eight-tenths of a mile long. It starts at the intersection of Fourth Street with Center Street, and extends east up to the ramp from the expressway,” Singh said.



The New York State Department of Transportation has formulated a plan to repave Center Street and remove one of the roadway's largest signs.

“The reason this project was initiated was mainly to improve the rideability of the pavement surface. And this type of project is called a preventive maintenance project. The idea behind preventive maintenance projects comes from an old English adage or idiom that a stitch in time saves nine. So, before the deterioration of the pavement extends further deeper into the pavement structure layers, if we can just scrape off an inch-and-a-half off the top of the asphalt pavement, and put in a new layer, we can restrict the deterioration from going into the lower layers of the pavement – and save a lot of expense. Because, if we have to redo a reconstructed roadway – which means removing two-and-a-half feet of roadway and reconstruct it – that's a very expensive proposition.”

Singh added, “There are some other improvements we do on preventive maintenance projects. We look at all the curb ramps and make sure that they are compliant with ADA standards.”

He noted the \$2 million project also includes cleaning and adjusting grading structures.

“All of that has to be done before we can do the paving,” he said. “That takes a little bit of prep time ... you will be seeing this year and next year before paving.”

What Is Included

Singh said, “There were a few things we kept in mind. One of



them was the context, because we are in the village setting for historical Lewiston.”

DOT plans to make these aesthetic and safety improvements:

•**Traffic Lights:** “The signal system at the intersection of Fifth and Center was at an age where it was almost near the end of its useful life. So, we're going to replace that signal,” Singh said. “The other three signals, we are going to change some of the components. At all four signalized intersections, we are going to add (push-to-cross) buttons to make it more pedestrian-friendly.”

•**Poles:** “What we're also doing is trying to minimize the number of poles that would be necessary for putting in the (push-button) signal heads ... and we are going to use some decorative-type polls for the street signs, as the mayor had requested,” Singh said.

•**Signs:** “The main sign the mayor and I had discussed, the one at the intersection of Center and Ninth. ... That's the one we are going to move to the other side of the street further east,” Singh said. “And, instead of having one huge sign panel, we are going to have a sign assembly with, basically, like three sign polls with a combination of smaller auxiliary sign panels. Basically, same information, but smaller square-footage.”

•**Crosswalks:** “The existing SEE PAVING, continued on Page 3

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