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Forrest Street will close March 4 for project to replace two bridges and improve safety

The City of Athens will close Forrest Street east of U.S. 31 on March 4 to begin the replacement of two bridges and other safety improvements.

This is the city's last ATRIP project. ATRIP is an ALDOT administered federal aid highway program that funds up to 80 percent of the construction of important roadway projects. The city's contract with ALDOT is for a \$4,014,444 project with ATRIP providing \$2,558,081 of the cost.

The project includes replacing the two bridges east of U.S. 31 over Swan Creek, resurfacing Forrest Street from U.S. 31 to Lindsay Lane and expanding sidewalks to connect to the Swan Creek Greenway, a National Recreation Trail that runs under Forrest Street.

The two bridges have exceeded their life expectancy, and the new bridges will meet safety standards and address structural deficiencies. The resurfacing will replace inadequate pavement and widen shoulders for safety.

"Road improvements are necessary but unfortunately are frustrating as well," said Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks. "A road project of this magnitude is going to cause traveling headaches, especially for school traffic. However, the work must be done to provide bridge and street improvements needed to address our current needs and future needs."

The project length is 1.26 miles. The detour routes will be Alabama 251, Lindsay Lane and U.S. 72. Motorists can go online at <http://www.athensal.us/206/Police> to see a map of the detours.

Morell Engineering is coordinating with the contractor, Miller & Miller, on the closure timeline, which is as follows:

- Miller & Miller plans to install message boards on Monday, Feb. 18, to give the public advanced notice.
- Shoals Electric plans to put the Lindsay Lane/Alabama 251 intersection into flash mode on Monday, Feb. 25.
- The Lindsay Lane/Alabama 251 intersection will go live the morning of Monday, March 4, after morning school traffic.
- Forrest Street will close Monday, March 4, and remain closed throughout the project. It is anticipated, weather permitting, the street will reopen in the summer of 2020.

Motorists can stay updated on the project through these avenues:

- City of Athens, Alabama (Public Relations) on Facebook
- AthensAL on Twitter
- Nixle alerts. Register for these by texting your zip code to 888777
- The city's website at www.athensal.us