

# Riverview 'Big Dig' begins this year

HF-Developer

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■ Concerns expressed over traffic congestion, noise created by construction of east-west corridor

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Construction of the first phase of the East/West Corridor is the largest project ever undertaken in Riverview as well as being a "very exciting" challenge, Rob McLure of SGE Acres, Ltd. told town council last night.

McLure, the project manager, said the first phase is divided into three parts and is funded jointly by the federal, provincial and municipal governments. The first part, to start this spring, is logistically the most challenging of the three.

He said a major cut, which he referred to as the "big dig," will be made into the hill on Ida Street leading from the Gunningsville Bridge. This will involve a seven-per-cent grade being cut into the hill, which will see a whopping 250,000 cubic metres of soil excavated.

"There is going to be no great ribbon-cutting when this is completed," he quipped, "because the result will be a big hole."

To give an idea of the enormity of the excavation, he said the amount dug out of the hill will add up to about 15,000 truckloads of debris, comprising 108,000 tonnes of granular substance, 17,000 tonnes of asphalt and a lot of concrete and other material.

However, McLure said he can give assurances that no blasting will be required in the excavation process. The next part of the project will be carried out in 2006 and will see the east/west connector extended from Ida Street to Pine Glen Road, and the third part, scheduled for 2007, will see it continued onto Findlay Boulevard.

Flattening out the grade on the Ida Street hill to connect to the streets leading to Pine Glen and eventually Findlay will get the biggest obstacle in the construction out of the way first, said the project manager.

"Highway projects come together quickly when you have nailed the alignment and cross-section together," he said.

Coun.-at-large Charles Broderick, pointing to the tremendous volume of material to be excavated from the hill, asked if any of that dirt could be usable in some other part of the project.

McLure said that is something they will most definitely be looking into, noting that SGE Acres is treating the East/West Corridor as a "value engineering" project, and they will examine ways of doing the work as economically as possible.

"There is no way we are going to say 'Just get rid of it' regarding the excavated soil," he said. "We will be investigating other uses for it. Ideally, I don't want to move it very far."

Ward 4 Coun. Wayne Bennett expressed concern that the excavation of the hill would result in 15,000 truckloads of debris being moved. That has to all be trucked over the Gunningsville Bridge, which has to create a huge congestion of traffic, he said.

Mayor Clarence Sweetland agreed, adding that these large trucks use Jake brakes which make a terrible racket.

"Isn't this going to create an awful lot of noise?" said the mayor.

Broderick also voiced concern over the noise factor. Noting there is a residential area to the east of where the work will be carried out, he asked if some consideration can be given to the people living there, by having the construction crews limit their work to the daylight hours.

McLure said it will be like a dead-end road where the work will be taking place, forcing all the trucks moving the debris onto the bridge. However, he said they do plan to build a temporary road, which would run along the future connector road's alignment, which they can use to move the truckloads.

As for the noise concern, the project manager said they can make requests to the construction company eventually getting the contract for the work.

"For the most part, it is pretty quiet work," said McLure following the meeting. "We will be a long distance away from those homes. I don't expect it will cause any noise problems for those residents."

Knowing they have a precise construction schedule in place and knowing they will be able to start the project in 2005, Brenda Orchard, director of economic development for Riverview, said they can now proceed with detailed engineering drawings, issuing tenders and get construction started on this year's portion of the connector road.

Sweetland said the council has been talking about and planning the east/west corridor for a long time, now. It is rewarding, he said, to finally see funds committed to it and its construction actually starting in a few months time.