



NEWS RELEASE

Mike Browning

PUBLIC INFORMATION DIRECTOR

Twitter: @cityofmborotn

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cityofmurfreesborotn

PHONE: 615-849-2629

EMAIL: mbrowning@murfreesborotn.gov

Website: www.murfreesborotn.gov

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Middle Tennessee Boulevard near MTSU opens northbound traffic March 6

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The long-awaited opening of the Middle Tennessee Boulevard widening project near the MTSU campus is set for all northbound lanes from East Main Street to Greenland Drive beginning Wednesday, March 6.

Paving of MT Boulevard will be completed Wednesday with all northbound lanes opening during the day and one southbound lane closed until landscaping in the median is completed.

Final paving of MT Boulevard will not be completed until after Spring 2019 graduation ceremonies, although all lanes will be open to traffic following installation of landscaping.

The project was initially expected to be completed by fall 2018, then December 2018, but was hampered by delays. Even before construction got underway, the project was delayed by a federal government audit of the City's right-of-way acquisition procedure which required a temporary construction easement from MTSU. Land needed for wider lanes and bike paths was taken from the MTSU campus.

"Despite the unfortunate delays, both the City and MTSU were very committed to this project which has been in the works for more than a decade and vital to the MTSU corridor," said Public Works Director and City Engineer Chris Griffith. "Ultimately, we are happy with the upgraded look to the west side of the MTSU campus but regret that it didn't get completed in accordance with the original time line."

Construction on the upgrade began in December 2016 with the City of Murfreesboro overseeing the work done by the contractor Jarrett Builders of Nashville. With the MT Boulevard improvement project completed, the following changes improve traffic flow along the thoroughfare:

- Traffic flow on **Faulkinberry Drive** changes to "right turn in, right turn out" onto Middle Tennessee Boulevard.
- A pull-in area for buses has been added to the front of **Murphy Center**.

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- Signalized pedestrian crossings have been added at **Lytle and Division** streets, and crosswalks at **Bell Street** and **Faulkinberry Drive** upgraded.
- **Brick walls** with planned MTSU signage have been erected at the corners of Greenland Drive, and another wall added at East Main Street, to better define the entry onto campus.
- **Flagpoles** are erected at Faulkinberry Drive.

The \$18.2 million road improvement project upgraded the 0.8-mile section of Middle Tennessee Boulevard from four and five lanes to a consistent four-lane divided street with a landscaped median between East Main and Greenland Drive. The enhancement includes new bike lanes, improved sidewalks and lighting, new traffic signals, decorative crosswalks, landscaping, and underground utilities. The contractor also installed underground utilities, a new box culvert at the Lytle Street intersection, and grading throughout.

The federal government provided \$5.8 million in High Priority Projects (HPP) funds and \$1.2 million in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds; the City \$6.2 million (including Surface Transportation Program (STP) federal funding); and MTSU \$5 million for the total \$18.2 million project cost.

For more information on the MT Boulevard project, contact City of Murfreesboro Public Works Director and City Engineer Chris Griffith at 615-893-6441 or cgriffith@murfreesborotn.gov or project coordinator Mike Stacey at (615) 642-3134.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photo attached:

1. *MT Boulevard opens to all northbound lanes, March 6, 2019, after delays to the \$18.2 million upgrade.jpg.*
2. *MT Boulevard Concept Plan.jpg.* (###)