

High Bridge, Smith Ave, & Dodd Road

Frequently Asked Questions

Are any trees along Smith Ave/Dodd Rd being removed during construction?

Yes. MnDOT plans to remove several trees as part of the Hwy 149 High Bridge project.

How many trees along Hwy 149 will be removed?

In total, 139 trees will be removed.

Why is MnDOT removing the trees?

MnDOT is removing the trees for various reasons:

Ash trees – In effort to reduce the spread of the Emerald Ash Bore and help control future maintenance costs, trees are being removed. MnDOT has evaluated the cost effectiveness of treating the trees and determined it is best to remove them during planned construction.

Tree condition – Foresters from MnDOT and the city of St. Paul recently evaluated several Norway Maple trees and other tree species along Smith Ave/Dodd Rd, and classified the trees current condition as poor. The existing poor condition coupled with the severe effects that would occur to each tree's root systems during construction makes is necessary to remove them.

Overhead power lines – Several trees are currently affected by overhead power lines and need to be removed due to the conflict.

Sidewalk relocation – Sidewalks along Smith Ave/Dodd Rd are being relocated off private property to avoid property acquisitions throughout the corridor. As a result, several trees affected by this relocation will be removed.

Narrow boulevards – Boulevards that are less than five feet wide, in addition to the effects related to the construction of new sidewalks and curbs, severely disturb a trees root system. Cutting directly through the root systems of these trees at such close proximity to the trunks will not only damage the feeder roots that help keep the trees nourished, it will compromise the stability of each tree. Affecting a tree's stability makes it more prone to falling over during moderate-to high-wind events, which in turn could lead to property damage, or worse, serious injury.

Will MnDOT be replanting trees?

Yes. MnDOT will replant the boulevards as part of a separate project following the Hwy 149 High Bridge construction.

Will property owners along Smith Ave/Dodd Rd (Hwy 149) be charged for tree removals and sidewalk relocation?

No. MnDOT does not have assessment authority, and as such, will not be assessing property owners for the State's cost of the project associated with sidewalk relocation and tree removals.

Why can't the date of the High Bridge closure be delayed?

MnDOT is working in close collaboration with the project contractor on the Hwy 149 High Bridge project's construction schedule. The project has an aggressive construction schedule developed to minimize the overall duration of the High Bridge closure to 15 months, instead of the originally planned two years. In order to maintain this schedule, it is essential that crews are able to remove the existing deck using wet saws by December 2017. The longer the wait to get started, the less time crews will have to use wet saws as temperatures drop with the change of seasons.

If the deck is not removed by December 2017, there is a high likelihood that crews will not be able to remove it until March 2018. That unfortunate result would then delay the decking and subsequent concrete pours, and therefore the overall duration of the project.

MnDOT also must take into account the risk of early winter weather, which in the past, has ended construction seasons prematurely (*e.g., In 2015, a large storm swept across the state in early November, effectively ending the 2015 construction season*).

Will MnDOT be working on the High Bridge at the same time the city is finishing up the Wabasha St project?

Yes, for a short time. The Hwy 149 High Bridge project and Wabasha St project between Water St/Fillmore Ave and Plato Blvd are anticipated to overlap for two weeks.

MnDOT has been in communication with St. Paul Public Works with regard to the Wabasha St reconstruction project in order to minimize the effects of these two major projects. At this point, the Hwy 149 High Bridge project schedule cannot be adjusted any further. MnDOT will continue to coordinate with the city and county to minimize traffic impacts and maximize communication with the traveling public during these two weeks.

For more information about the Wabasha St reconstruction project, visit:

www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/road-construction/wabasha-street-reconstruction-0.



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