

City of Carmel

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NEWS RELEASE

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River Road opens despite continued utility delays

CARMEL, IN – Carmel officials have opened River Road, south of 146th Street, despite continued utility complications that have caused numerous delays on a project that was to have been completed last fall.

On Thursday, with the help of the Carmel Street Department, barricades were placed strategically around utility poles that sit in the roadway so that traffic can pass by. The City also lowered the speed limit to 25 miles per hour.

“We appreciate the patience shown by our residents, particularly in this part of the city,” said Jeremy Kashman, City Engineer. “But we did not feel it was fair to commuters to keep that road closed when the only thing left to do is to move the utility poles that should have been moved weeks ago.”

Generally, when a road project is launched by the City of Carmel, there are in essence two projects – the relocation of all utilities and then the project itself, whether that is building a road or a roundabout. The City and its contractors have a great record for completing projects within the time frame predicted. But projects are often delayed by utility complications.

Under state statute, Carmel has no control over the utility companies, which means the removal of gas, electric, telephone and cable lines is done at the discretion and scheduling of those various utility companies. On the River Road project, city officials and staff have worked with their teams to keep the utilities on track. The City was told by a subcontractor for Duke Energy that one plan would work, only to learn from a subsequent contractor that it would not work.

While waiting on Duke, the City continued to build the road around Duke's poles, but did not open the road in hopes they would be removed. This week, the City was told it would be several more weeks before the poles are removed, which prompted the City to take additional steps to get the road open.

Carmel Engineering believes these temporary barricades along with reducing the travel speed to 25 mph will sufficiently protect motorists. The situation will be monitored and if the city determines there is a safety concern, we may close the road again.