



Home > News > Your Commute

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## YOUR COMMUTE

### Saginaw's Longhorn Road project is finally about to begin

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SAGINAW -- For residents and city officials, it has been a long time coming.

The much-anticipated widening of Longhorn Road from three lanes to a six-lane divided thoroughfare is about to begin.

On Tuesday night, the City Council voted unanimously to award a construction contract to [AUI Contractors of Fort Worth](#), one of 12 companies that bid on the multimillion-dollar road expansion.

Assistant City Manager Dolph Johnson said construction is scheduled to begin in May and will continue for about 15 months.

"We're about to start turning dirt," Johnson said in an interview last week.

The project will reconstruct Longhorn Road from Old Decatur Road to U.S. Business 287, making it a major east-west thoroughfare.

Improved intersections, median landscaping, sidewalks, streetlights and traffic signals will also be added along Longhorn Road, making it safer and less congested, Johnson said.

Initially, the project was budgeted for about \$10.6 million, although AUI's bid came in significantly less, at \$8.1 million. Johnson said the difference will give the city some wiggle room that might allow for additional improvements.

Saginaw is paying for a third of the project with bonds issued in 2007. The rest of the tab is being paid with county and federal funds.

The Longhorn Road expansion was approved as part of the county's 2006 bond program, which sets aside money to match cities' contributions for road projects that would ease traffic problems and improve air quality.

Councilman David Flory said Tuesday night that Saginaw residents got a deal.

"The citizens need to be made aware -- we're getting an \$8 million project for about \$3 million, roughly," he said.

Johnson acknowledged that the Longhorn Road reconstruction will create traffic headaches for a while but said motorists will have access to all businesses.

"They will build one half of the road and open that up, and then go in and build the other half," he said. "There will be some inconveniences, obviously." Still, he said, the result will be worth it.

"We're able to complete a major project in our master plan at a third of the cost to the citizens of Saginaw," he said.

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