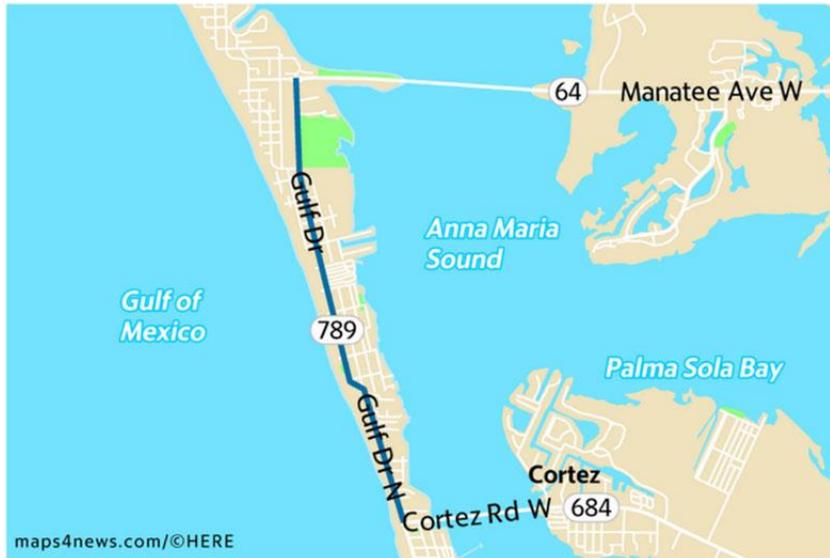


1). The Islander: \$7.4M AMI pipeline project to affect island traffic into 2019

By Terry O'Connor

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The blue line follows the general area of the major utility project to replace old pipes on Anna Maria Island this fall.

Anna Maria Island traffic is expected to tighten along the main artery of Gulf Drive and associated side streets as construction on the \$7,427,500 underground waterline replacement project begins in two weeks.

Preliminary work began May 29. Actual construction should begin by mid-June, said project spokesperson Trudy Gerena, of the community outreach department with Manatee County. Community outreach delivers information to the public and media on 70-plus taxpayer-funded programs.

Motorists can expect temporary delays, daytime lane closures, possible flagging operations and detour routes down side streets and over a block, Gerena said.

The primary contractor is Westra Construction of Tampa and Palmetto.

“The contractors are very experienced in doing this type of work,” Gerena said. “The main thing as far as the community is concerned is coordination of lane closures and detours. They will cause as little inconvenience as possible.”

Bradenton Beach Mayor Bill Shearon said he is confident traffic disruption will be minimized. There is no other option, he said.

“It’s something that has to be done,” he said. “The county’s being proactive rather than reactive. It’s a whole lot better getting it done now before a catastrophe happens.”

Shearon said a consultant conducting an AMI traffic study this summer has been notified work on the underground waterline replacement project is underway.

Rerouting traffic will affect island motorists, but most of the disruption will be on side streets, he said.

“It is what it is,” Shearon said. “We have a congestion problem anyway. I just don’t see it’s going to affect anything if they have to stop traffic for a little while.”

The project includes replacing 50-year-old water and sewer pipes and modifying existing lift station pipes, and the connection to existing pipelines, project manager Jennifer Fehrs of the Manatee County Public Works Department, project management division, wrote in a letter to city and county officials.

Fehrs said the project limits on Anna Maria Island extend from State Road 684/Cortez Road West to just north of State Road 64/Manatee Avenue on State Road 789/Gulf Drive.

The project is expected to take two years and will finish sometime in summer 2019.

The Manatee County utilities and public works departments presented a Force Main 5 Rehabilitation project update May 30 at CrossPointe Fellowship in Holmes Beach.

For more information, go to AMIpipereplacement.com or call 941-748-4501.

<http://www.islander.org/2017/06/7-4m-ami-pipeline-project-to-affect-island-traffic-into-2019/>