

Capilano water main project hits delay

Concrete mass, gas line among surprises

[Maria Spitale-Leisk](#) / North Shore News

February 28, 2016 12:00 AM

Metro Vancouver's massive water main construction project underway on Capilano Road since September has hit a snag, pushing the completion date into next year.

Work crews were scheduled to install a new valve chamber at Edgemont Boulevard and Capilano Road starting in February, but "unforeseen obstacles" with the larger water main project mean the valve work, which should take four months to finish, won't go ahead until at least November.

"Basically what happened was the schedule got delayed by a few underground conditions that weren't expected. I mean, it's a huge pipe," said Tegan Smith, who is managing the District of North Vancouver's interests in the project.

A new two-metrediameter regional water main, replacing 80-year-old infrastructure, has been constructed under Capilano Road.

The arterial route has been closed in 200-metre sections between Cleveland Dam and Edgemont Boulevard since late last summer, with detours in place.

Along the way crews ran into some obstacles including a large concrete mass and a FortisBC gas line that was installed on top of the old water main.

"And that was significant gas infrastructure that needed be relocated before installing our main," said Goran Oljaca, Metro Vancouver water services director of engineering and construction.

The old water main was more than 40 metres (131 feet) long and about six feet high with reinforced concrete, making it difficult for crews to remove.

Outdated Metro utilities maps were missing a 170-metre section of the gas line, said Oljaca, and the old water main was installed before Capilano Road was even built.

Crews only discovered just how far those utility lines stretched once they excavated.

Metro contract crews took on the task of lifting the gas line that sat on top of the water main and supporting it with concrete blocks, which slowed down work on the project by two weeks.

The good news is the water main installation is over and Capilano Road is scheduled to fully reopen to traffic March 11, according to Metro Vancouver.

It's been a long winter for North Vancouver resident Victor Tilton who travels up Capilano Road three times a week to ski at Grouse

Mountain. Tilton has been waiting for a window where Capilano Road would be open from top to bottom, based on Metro Vancouver project updates he read online.

"But it's always marked closed no matter what," said Tilton.

Reader boards on Capilano Road provide information about traffic detours in the area, said Oljaca.

On Dec. 18 the road did reopen to two-lane traffic, but traffic was restricted again after the Christmas break as crews completed the water main installation.

At least one Capilano Road business has been financially impacted by the construction.

Michael Jang said business is down 40 per cent over the same period last year at his store Henry's Grocery at the corner of Montroyal and Capilano Road.

"It's very slow," he said. All the businesses in his complex are suffering, added Jang, explaining that traffic that would normally pass in front of his store is being detoured a block above that point.

Between now and June work crews will repair some sewage infrastructure and begin final paving of Capilano Road which will take approximately four weeks starting in May.

Metro has to wait until winter to do the valve chamber work because it can't be installed during the summer when water consumption is at its peak. Oljaca is hoping the project - which involves digging a massive pit to install the infrastructure - will go ahead around Nov. 1, but it hinges on the District of North Vancouver's construction schedule as they try to mitigate traffic congestion in the area.

Edgemont Village will already be under construction in the fall as Grosvenor builds its new mixed-use development.

Oljaca is anticipating four houses at the west end of Edgemont Boulevard at Capilano Road will be impacted by Metro's fourmonth-long project as crews construct a valve chamber the size of a double car garage under the road.

"We'll make sure that we provide access to their driveways," said Oljaca.

A temporary three-way stop sign on Montroyal at Highland Boulevard, used as a means of traffic calming while Capilano Road was closed, will stay put after the project wraps and be monitored for its effectiveness, according to the district.

So will the 24 Townhouses by Boffo on the other Ridgewood/Edgemont corner - cjk

© 2016 North Shore News

[Sign up for the North Shore News FREE digital newsletter to receive top headlines from each issue in your Inbox. \(http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe\)](http://www.nsnews.com/newsletter/subscribe)