

Belfair bypass work to begin in late 2022

Work to create the long-envisioned state Route 3 Freight Corridor-New Alignment project, also known as the Belfair Bypass, is slated to begin in late 2022, and agencies are moving quickly to finalize designs and award construction contracts for supplementary projects.

To help channel bypass traffic into Belfair's business district, two Belfair connectors from the bypass will be routed via Log Yard Road and Romance Hill Road.

Mason Transit Authority began work in early January on the construction of a roundabout at Log Yard Road, which will eventually be incorporated into the north-end connector. During the Jan. 7 Board of Mason County Commissioners meeting, Mason County Engineer Diane Sheesley announced it has secured a contract not to exceed \$315,000 with

Skillings Connolly of Lacey to complete the Romance Hill connector.

The final freight corridor design and environmental reevaluation are slated to begin by spring 2020 with construction beginning in summer 2022.

According to Doug Adamson, of the state Department of Transportation, some elements of the initial bypass project design have changed including adding single-lane roundabouts to both the northern endpoint near Lake Flora Road and southern endpoint at state Route 302.

"We make changes just as a matter of course," Adamson said. "All projects go through this process."

According to WSDOT, because traffic is required to yield rather than stop, roundabouts are intended to promote a continuous flow of traffic.

The proposed bypass is an alternate 6 mile route of Route 3 and is intended to provide drivers the option to travel around rather than through Belfair.

■ *Compiled by Isabella Breda*