

INTERSTATE 25 REBUILDING THE ROADWAY

COSMIX timeline laid out

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Officials say project will end earlier than planned

By PERRY SWANSON THE GAZETTE

Construction crews will start rebuilding Interstate 25 through Colorado Springs in late June and finish by the end of 2007, a year earlier than expected, highway officials said Wednesday.

The Colorado Springs Metro Interstate Expansion, or COSMIX project, will widen I-25 to three lanes in each direction from South Circle Drive to North Academy Boulevard, and rebuild several interchanges and bridges. Some areas already have three lanes, but the \$150 million project will widen spots where the interstate narrows to two.

The process will go faster than other highway projects because workers will build some parts of it and design other parts simultaneously, said Bill Knapp, a vice president of CH2M HILL, one of the companies building the project.

The first phase will be widening the interstate from south of Rockrimmon Boulevard to Fillmore Street.

"That buys us elbow room so we can shift traffic on that new pavement while we rebuild the mainline in those tough sections," Knapp said.

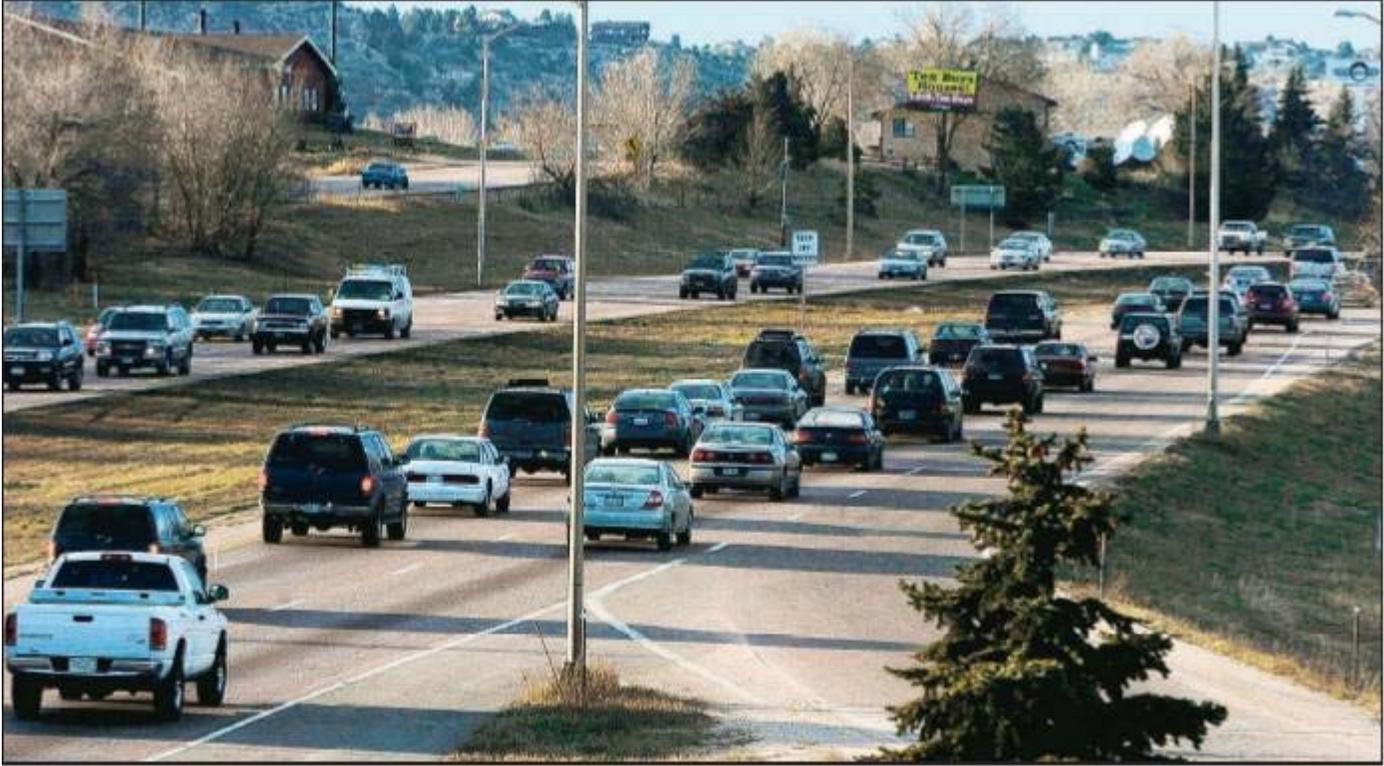
Meanwhile, engineers will prepare for work later in the project, such as rebuilding the interchange at North Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard, and replacing the Bijou Street bridge.

The highway construction plan calls for traditional interchanges at North Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard. Frontage roads will also connect the interchanges.

The general time frames announced Wednesday for major elements of the project are:

- Summer to end of 2005: Adding lanes from south of Rockrimmon Boulevard to Fillmore Street.
- Fall 2005 to fall 2006: Construction on the North Nevada Avenue and Rockrimmon Boulevard ramps, building a southbound frontage road and the Corporate Drive extension.
- Spring to fall 2006: Adding lanes from Woodmen Road to North Academy Boulevard.
- Summer 2006 to fall 2007: Rebuilding the Bijou Street interchange, including replacement of the Bijou Street bridge. The bridge will be closed Jan. 2, 2007, and reopened by October 2007.
- Summer 2006 to winter 2007: Completing the addition of lanes and the reconfigured interchange at Rockrimmon Boulevard and North Nevada Avenue.

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KEVIN KRECK, THE GAZETTE - Traffic moves on Interstate 25 north of Fillmore Street on Wednesday afternoon. The Colorado Springs Metro Interstate Expansion, or COSMIX, will widen the interstate to three lanes in each direction from South Circle Drive to North Academy Boulevard.

Rebuilding I-25

