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Work under way is prelude to widening Nason Street over Highway 60

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By DAN LEE
The Press-Enterprise

Work crews have started relocating water pipes as part of a project that will lead to widening the Nason Street bridge over Highway 60 in Moreno Valley and the reconfiguration of the freeway ramps.

The water pipes and electrical utilities must be relocated before work on the ramps and bridge widening can begin in order to avoid conflicts, city Deputy Public Works Director Prem Kumar said.

The city is reimbursing Eastern Municipal Water District and Southern California Edison for the cost of relocating their facilities, he said.

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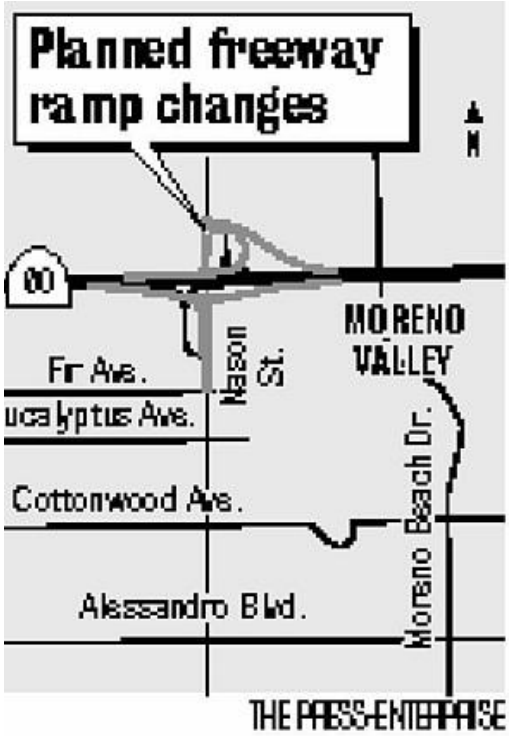

The bridge will be widened to four lanes and the freeway ramp configuration changed to accommodate increased traffic in the area, which in recent years has seen the opening of the Stoneridge Towne Center, which includes a SuperTarget, Kohl's and Office Max, and new housing tracts built south of Highway 60.

Because of the water pipe relocation, lanes on Fir Avenue will be closed at least through the end of the month.

In addition to relocating the water lines, Eastern is planning to replace the old 12-inch pipeline with 18-inch pipe to improve service, water district spokeswoman Betty Gibbel said by phone. The work could be completed by early July, she said.

Moving the water pipe and electrical utilities is expected to cost the city more than $2.5 million combined, Kumar said, but Eastern is paying for the installation of the larger pipes. Edison plans to remove the company's overhead power lines and place them underground, he said.

Once that is complete, city officials will begin work on changing the ramps on the south side of the freeway, Kumar said.

Currently the ramps are in a "hook" configuration: Cars exiting the eastbound freeway make a 90-degree right turn before turning back to connect with Nason Street; vehicles trying to get on the freeway must turn 180 degrees. The new configuration will have the ramps in a diamond formation, angling off or onto the freeway on either side of Nason Street, Kumar said.