

## Major transportation projects set for 2020 throughout Bartow

The new year brings a litany of high-dollar transportation projects to Bartow, including some that have been works in progress for decades.

For Cartersville-Bartow Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Planner Tom Sills, few endeavors have been as looked forward to as the completion of the final leg of the Old Alabama Road project, the engineering of which dates back to 1999.

After years of delays, Sills said the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is finally moving forward with the project, with the opening date for construction bids targeted for May.

“Construction would be expected to start about sometime 90-120 days after that,” Sills said. “It will extend State Route 113 across new ground from Highway 113 and Highway 61, and then from Highway 61 it will extend east to Paga Mine Road, following the course of the existing Old Alabama Road for a distance of 5.4 miles.”

At this point, however, Sills said it’s too early to iron out a completion date for the project.

“Currently, we’re thinking the project’s about an \$83.9 million project,” he said. “Construction, we’re looking at \$79.8 million.”

As for the U.S. 41/Tennessee Street cloverleaf project, Sills said he anticipates the roadwork — which began in 2014 — wrapping up by this fall.

“I was giving them a little bit of leeway,” he said. “I’ve heard sooner than that, but they’ve got a lot of work to get to if they’re only 76% complete right now.”

So far, Sills tabbed the cost of the project — which entails the construction of 12 new bridges in the vicinity of the Highway 41/Highway 411 interchange — to be about \$42 million.

Elsewhere in the county, Sills said he expects the first phase of the Cass-White Road improvement project to be completed by July.

“The bridge over the railroad, construction will start [in January],” he said. “If you’re going north on 411, you pass the concrete batch plant, you’ll see the construction on the left.”

Work on Phase II engineering, Sills said, will continue throughout 2020.

“The concept report is still being reviewed by GDOT,” he said. “It got some late comments in right before Thanksgiving that is causing us to have to go back and look at a few things.”

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### About The GDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on GDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with GDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

## Mobile games help employers teach potential recruits about construction safety and building protocols

While finding the right employee hires is a key concern for any business, less attention has been paid, until recently, to streamlined training and workforce development initiatives. Yet, with the growing sophistication and proliferation of online training services and mobile apps that can assist with employee development, it's no surprise one company has found a way to help the construction industry with their onboarding processes.

The Pittsburgh-based educational app developer, [Simcoach](#), has created an app that helps potential construction hires with basic safety and equipment usage. [Zachary Phillips of ConstructionDive](#) reports, "Mobile games encourage continued usage by promising prizes, levels, and rewards for advancing through challenges. Construction managers are capitalizing on younger generations' interest in these types of games, especially on mobile platforms, to recruit and promote safety through educational construction apps."

Games such as *Harness Hero* represent examples of Simcoach's approach to aiding in the training and recruitment processing through gameplay. Phillips explains, "Simcoach's games teach potential recruits about working on a construction site, such as operating heavy machinery. If players do well, they earn badges,

which can lead to a certification that helps them find an apprenticeship."

"Some of its games are accredited in conjunction with the Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania's Introduction to the Construction Trades, a registered pre-apprentice program," Phillips adds.

These services offer one my many alternative methods for training that have proliferated within many fields in recent years, a phenomenon that begs the question: Are we entering an era where job training is fun?



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### Supportive Services Offered:

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