

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## “Construction on Highway Bridge Postponed”

Additional funding, Johnson Park and detours are part of the reason construction on an east Norfolk Avenue bridge that had been planned for 2016 may now begin in 2017.



City of Norfolk Public Works Director Dennis J. Smith said there were many factors members of a Norfolk City Council subcommittee considered when deciding whether to go ahead with construction next year or hold off until 2017.

One of the reasons to wait is there are potentially Nebraska State Department of Road funds that the City could receive towards payment of the bridge construction. Notification as to whether the City is awarded those funds or not won't be given until early 2016. At that time, the bids for the work would be put out and would potentially come in at a higher rate as contractors would have already lined up work for 2016.

Smith said City staff is also coordinating schedules of the work on the bridge with the start of work on Johnson Park planned for 2016. A \$700,000 grant from the

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission was awarded for the Johnson Park trail project in December 2014. The park is located ½ block north and one block west of the bridge.

Businesses in the area east of Hy-Vee East would also have more time to prepare for the closure of the street near the bridge if the construction was delayed until 2017.

“The bridge engineers indicate the safest and least expensive method to complete the project is with complete bridge closure. The engineers are continuing to look at options to make the project as least disruptive as possible,” said Smith.

The cost of the project is estimated to be \$3 million which includes reconstruction of the street between First Street and Cottonwood Street, an extension of the Johnson Park Trail south under the bridge and reconstruction of the bridge. The bridge was found to be structurally and functionally deficient following a biannual inspection in 2014 required by the Federal Highway Administration and the Nebraska Department of Roads. Smith said the bridge is currently safe to drive on but needs to be replaced soon.