

Ottawa winter construction could be easier to deal with than last year, city says

None of the big projects lasting through the winter are anticipated to have impact of 417 widening

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The City of Ottawa laid out its winter construction and traffic plans on Friday, saying plenty of big projects will last through the ice and snow but none will be as impressive as last year's widening of Highway 417.

In a technical briefing for reporters, city staff and transportation committee chair Keith Egli pointed to construction on Main Street and Rideau Street, widening of Greenbank Road, replacing the culvert on Prince of Wales Drive and work on the eastbound onramp from Lees Avenue to Highway 417 as major projects that won't stop once the snow starts.

However, they said none of those projects should be as hard to work around as last year's widening of Highway 417.

"I don't think that from a construction perspective that you're going to see more activity from last year. I think the big benefit this winter that we didn't have last winter is the widening of the 417 between Nicholas and the split [with Highway 174] is complete," said Alain Gonthier, the city's manager of infrastructure services.

"There are still going to be pinch points in the city... but definitely compared to last year commuters will see significant benefits."

Some projects are being put on hold over the winter, including the Minto Bridges over the Rideau River and widening of St. Joseph Boulevard.

The city and its councillors have already talked about some of this winter's traffic initiatives, such as maintaining about 20 more kilometres of cycling paths, closing parts of the Transitway for light rail construction work and a new app that will tell you the precise location of city snowplows.