

THE BEE

Insley Street dug up again; closed till Christmas

BY ERIC NORBERG

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And the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services said, “let us dig up Insley Street again.” And it came to pass. You now cannot drive between 17th and 20th on S.E. Insley in Westmoreland for the rest of this year.

It really is not as capricious as it sounds. It’s been in the Big Pipe sewer plan all along: Insley must be dug up — three times.

The first time was last year; a large, lined hole was dug in the street at 18th (shown), and then when it was complete, it was filled in so the road could be used again. Number two for Insley Street is underway now.

Here’s the situation.

While the Eastside Big Pipe is being drilled underground north from the Opera shaft at OMSI towards Swan Island, the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services has resumed preparations for the eventual completion of the project, at S.E. McLoughlin Boulevard at 17th.

The next step at that location is reopening the huge underground shaft through which eventually the main boring machine will drill the giant sewage pipe, completing the Big Pipe by drilling south from OMSI to McLoughlin. That won’t happen, though, till the machine has completed the pipe to Swan Island, and been hauled up and transported back to the Opera and restarted going south.

But a necessary preliminary to all that is drilling a smaller shaft under McLoughlin and down S.E. 18 Insley Street, and that’s what will happen late this year. In June, B.E.S. closed Insley again at 18th and clearing out the shaft they prepared there last year.

When the bigger hole at S.E. 17th and McLoughlin is itself again fully open, a “microtunnel” boring machine will be lowered into it, and sent off south under McLoughlin drilling towards the Insley site. That should be in October, and by Thanksgiving the machine should have arrived at the Insley hole, and have been re-

In December, the Insley site will be filled in again to allow use of the street — but it’s not over yet for nearby residents. Insley will be dug up one final time before the project is done.

The purpose of all this is to connect the Insley Collector shaft, which now overflows to a Willamette River outfall when it rains, to the Big Pipe terminus at 17th and McLoughlin. The Insley Collector pipe accumulates all the sewage from Sellwood and Westmoreland, as well as points east.

At the very end of the construction of the Eastside Big Pipe, the Insley intersection at 18th will be closed and the shaft there cleared out for the final time. The outfall pipe will be disconnected, and the Insley Collector will instead be connected to the shaft and microtunnel, so sewage and rainwater from this part of Portland will stop overflowing into the river, and will instead flow entirely into the “Big Pipe”.



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When the smaller sewer shaft was complete last year, it was filled in temporarily to allow use of Insley Street till this June, when Insley was repaved, on April 23, 2007, and this shaft was reopened to allow a microtunnel to be drilled to it. This *BEE* photo was taken just before Insley was repaved, and shows the outline of the shaft constructed in 2006 at Insley and S.E. 18th.