

One more day before Drake Road closes at Maple

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Drivers in West Bloomfield have one more day before Drake Road closes at Maple as crews begin building a modern roundabout at the intersection.

The intersection's \$1.8-million upgrade is part of the larger Northwestern Connector Project designed to ease traffic congestion from where Northwestern Highway ends at Orchard Lake Road west to M-5.

Work began Monday, but Drake will not close until sometime Wednesday morning because the nearby Jewish Community Center on Maple is a polling place for today's elections. Workers are holding off on closing Drake "so as not to impede folks from getting to their balloting place," said Craig Bryson, spokesman for the Road Commission for Oakland County.

Drake will be closed through early August, Bryson said. The detour route will follow 14 Mile, Farmington and Walnut Lake roads each way. Just west of the intersection, Maple is gaining a turn lane in front of Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield.

The Northwestern Connector Project includes plans for eight roundabouts and rebuilding Orchard Lake Road as a six-lane boulevard between 14 Mile and Maple. Once funding is available, plans also call for widening Maple and 14 Mile between Orchard Lake Road and M-5.

When the Maple/Drake roundabout is finished, construction is set to begin on another at Maple and Farmington roads. Work will pause for winter and resume in spring.

For more on the connector project, go to <http://www.nwconnector.com/>.

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