

## Groat Road open to Edmonton traffic again

By Claire Theobald, Edmonton Sun

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While traffic is once again flowing on Groat Road under the troubled 102 Avenue Bridge, the fate of the twisted girders remains to be seen.

“We want to thank all the motorists and the community and public for [dealing with] all the stress and delays this week, but that’s behind us now,” said Byron Nicholson, director of special projects with road design and construction for the city.

Groat Road from 107 Avenue to River Valley Road had been closed since mid-March after four of the seven 40-tonne girders buckled and bent as crews worked to build the 102 Avenue Bridge.

Carlos Cruz Noguez, assistant professor of structural engineering at the University of Alberta, said the bending was a case of lateral torsional buckling, but engineers are still working to determine what caused the girders to bend.

A 1,200-tonne super crane was brought in to stabilize the beams in the hopes the girders would bend back into position, though city officials have not said whether this effort was effective and are currently assessing how the stress of the flex has affected the integrity of the girders.

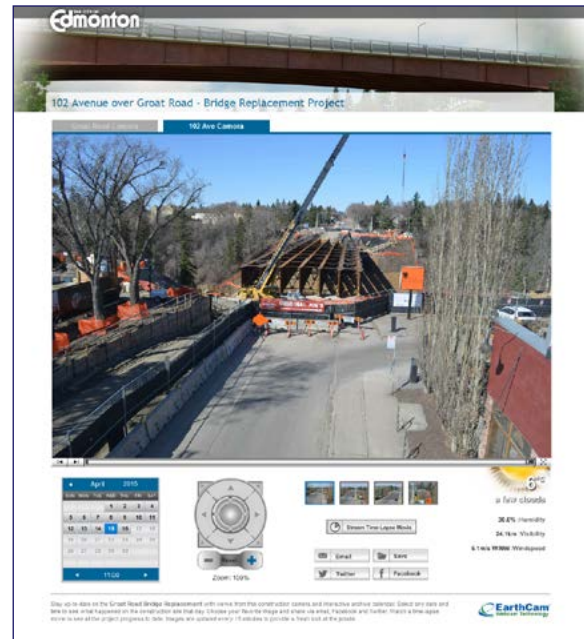
“We’re not sure yet what the fate of any of the girders are,” Nicholson said Tuesday, adding it could be another week or two before those assessments are complete.

Crews started dismantling the super crane Friday, and worked through the weekend to assess the bridge and prepare Groat Road for traffic, officially reopening on Tuesday at 5:30 a.m.

Parking bans put into effect to ease congestion from the 42,000 daily commuters who use Groat Road but were forced to travel through downtown while the route was closed have been lifted.

Once the girder damage assessment is complete, contractors will provide an updated construction schedule including future closures of Groat Road that may be necessary, though Nicholson said officials are hoping to keep those disruptions to a minimum and are hopeful those closures could be limited to evenings and weekends.

Nicholson refused to speculate whether construction could still be completed by the original fall 2015 deadline, but if the girders have to be reordered, Barry Belcourt, branch manager of road design and construction, said earlier in March that it could take up to a year to get them.



City of Edmonton construction cam: 102 Avenue over Groat Road - Bridge Replacement Project (<http://www.earthcam.net/projects/edmonton/groatroadbridge/>)