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Sanford river crossing begins

By [Tony Lascari](#)

Preliminary work is under way on a new bridge in Sanford connecting the north and south stretches of Meridian Road, also called M-30.

The bridge will cross the Tittabawasee River, providing for continuous north-south traffic movement through Midland County and a direct route to the interchange at U.S. 10.

The project is expected to cost \$6.4 million and will be funded by 11 different sources.

Deepak Gupta, engineer manager with the Midland County Road Commission, said the construction phase of the project only will impact people who would have used the Pere Marquette Rail-Trail.

A one-mile portion of the trail is now closed two miles west of the Averill Rollway to Cedar Street as crews prepare to install the new M-30 bridge. The trail is expected to reopen next summer.

Other than that, the project will include new construction that won't impact other roadways.

"Really the whole job is kind of in a capsule," Gupta said.

The new roadway will be about a mile long with a 1,200-foot bridge.

"They're doing minor work right now," he said of contractors, who have begun tree removal and other site preparations.

Work on the project is expected to continue through the winter.



Daily News photos/BRETT MARSHALL

Dale Pettigrew uses an excavator to clear trees near the Tittabawasee River on Monday. Pettigrew is part of a three man crew who started work last week along Wackerly Road in Sanford in preparation for a new bridge that will straighten out M-30 bypassing downtown Sanford.



Milbocker & Sons Contractors road foreman Ron Rantz, of Jenison, installs a brush rake on a front end loader Monday. "We're just getting started," Rantz said of the work. Work on the bridge is expected to be finished by Nov. 15, 2008.

Photos taken by Daily News photographers are available as [reprints](#).