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## **Darien Officials: Hoyt Street Sidewalk Work Held Up by State Transportation Dept**

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The project to build new sidewalks along the southern end of Hoyt Street was supposed to be complete before school started and kids were headed into and out of Holmes School, but crews were working on the sidewalk actually in front of Holmes on the first day of school.

Students living north of the elementary school had to walk around open pits, orange cones or cross to the other side of the busy street (where there are no sidewalks). Darien Public Works Director Ed Gentile recently said he hoped to get the project completed by early November, possibly this week.

The reason: Hoyt Street is state Route 106 which is controlled by the state Department of Transportation, and

the project needed to have a "state encroachment permit" approved by that department's officials, Gentile said. They took months longer to approve the project than Gentile or other Darien officials thought it would take.

"We applied for approval [early in the year] to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, but the approval was not issued until August," said Darien Police Capt. Donald Anderson, in charge of traffic matters for the Police Department. Gentile said the process got started in April.

Gentile and Assistant Public Works Director Darren Oustafine even went to a regional ConnDOT office in New Haven to meet with officials and try to speed up the approval.

"They [state officials] were looking for quite a bit of detail on the plans that we felt was above and beyond the need to replace an existing sidewalk," Gentile said.

This year, the sidewalk on the west side of Hoyt Street is expected to be replaced [as far north as the intersection with Echo Street North](#), a distance of about four tenths of a mile. Next year, the project is expected to continue, with a new sidewalk [as far as the intersection of Hoyt with Lynn Court](#), another three tenths of a mile.