

Major I-5 Construction Coming to Downtown Seattle this Summer

WSDOT Asks Drivers to Plan Ahead

Summer 2007

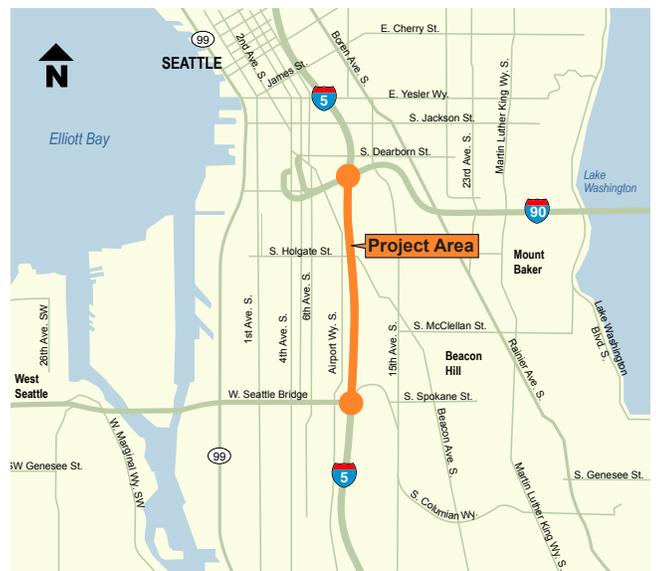
Aging I-5 Poses Growing Threat to Drivers

Now 40 years old, the I-5 elevated bridge south of downtown Seattle is severely in need of major repairs. This is one of the busiest sections of freeway in Washington and the daily pounding has taken its toll. The expansion joints connecting the concrete spans that make up the freeway are failing and potentially pose a serious risk to drivers. Collisions and major traffic back-ups are a growing risk as the top steel plates of these joints detach more and more frequently. The worn freeway surface also is showing its age with exposed steel rebar in some areas, potholes and deep tire ruts that collect rainwater and increase the risk of hydroplaning.

WSDOT crews have managed to maintain the bridge with short-term fixes over the years, but these ongoing minor repairs are costly, disruptive and put drivers and repair crews in jeopardy. Now we must complete more extensive and lasting repairs.

Northbound I-5 Closures Coming this August

WSDOT crews will implement a long-term solution this summer by replacing the expansion joints on the northbound lanes of the freeway and resurfacing this section of I-5; we will also repair expansion joints on southbound lanes. In addition to some nighttime and weekend closures on both directions of I-5 for several months, this work mandates 19 long, labor-intensive days of northbound I-5 lane closures. These concentrated closures will allow crews to complete the job as efficiently and safely as possible with the least effect on drivers, businesses and events. WSDOT is asking drivers to prepare now for this major construction project.



**MAKING EVERY
DOLLAR COUNT.**



Exposed steel rebar and cracked pavement create a dangerous, uneven driving surface.



The expansion joints are failing and potentially pose a serious risk as the top steel plates of these joints detach more and more frequently.

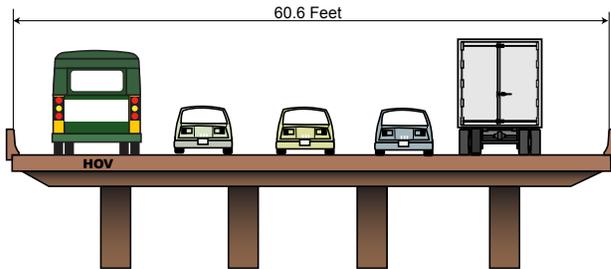
Repairs will create a smoother ride, and extend the lifetime of the bridge.

The I-5 elevated bridge south of downtown Seattle is severely in need of major repairs. The existing 40-year-old joints often require costly and dangerous emergency repairs, sometimes in the middle of rush hour. This summer, crews will remove these expansion joints and the adjacent concrete and replace them.

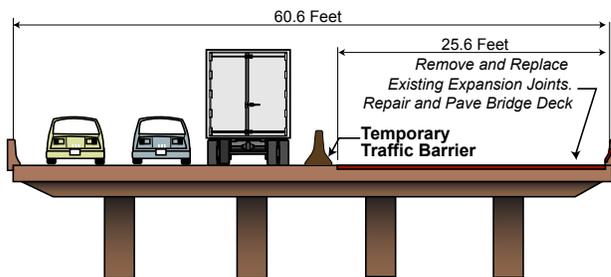


Deep ruts in the worn surface of the bridge deck can trap rain water, causing drivers to hydroplane.

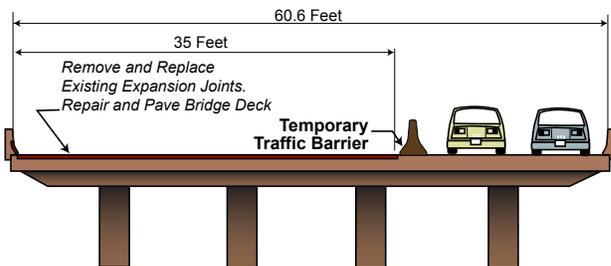
**I-5 Spokane Street to I-90 Bridge Repair,
northbound freeway lane closures, Aug. 10-29**



BEFORE CONSTRUCTION



STAGE 1



STAGE 2

Our Challenge: Keep Traffic Moving While Completing Intensive I-5 Construction

Repairs to I-5 between Spokane Street/West Seattle Bridge and I-90 near downtown Seattle will require some of the most extensive lane and ramp closures Seattle-area drivers have ever seen. We will concentrate the most intensive construction work into 19 days in August when we will close many lanes and ramps on northbound I-5 at all times. Starting in July, crews will close lanes at night to repair existing joints on southbound I-5. WSDOT will complete the southbound joint repair before construction on the northbound lanes to minimize disruptions to drivers.

WSDOT examined dozens of ways to complete this construction work and still keep traffic moving. The 19-day intensive August closure will allow us to get in, get the work done and get out of drivers' way as quickly and safely as possible.

Weekend and overnight closures would force drivers to endure several months of major overnight and weekend closures throughout the spring, summer and fall. Such work could take longer than expected, stretching closure times into morning rush hours and unexpectedly and repeatedly snarling traffic throughout the Seattle-area for hours and hours. In addition, this work requires reasonably warm, dry summer weather. Wet or cold weather would force us to extend the construction work into 2008, conflicting with other major construction projects in the region.

WSDOT has been working closely with the city of Seattle, transit agencies, freight haulers, employer groups and numerous other organizations during the planning process for this project. The August timeframe was chosen with consideration of their schedules and input, in addition to the requirements of the project.

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It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin and sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities.

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Drivers Should Plan Ahead for August Freeway Lane Closures and Backups

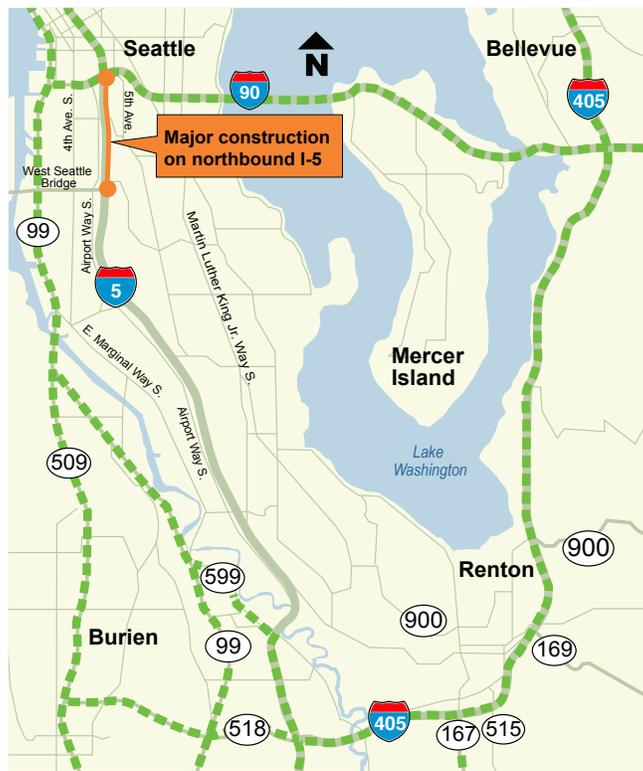
The August construction lane closures will reduce northbound I-5 to just two to three lanes, which will push traffic onto other routes, including city streets in Georgetown, SODO, Rainier Valley and Beacon Hill. WSDOT anticipates I-405 and State Route 99 will be popular freeway alternatives. Trucks will be encouraged to use I-405, East Marginal Way South and Airport Way S. Drivers will likely face lengthy backups and significant delays on freeways and city streets.

Drivers who rely on I-5 and alternate routes should start considering their options now. WSDOT asks drivers to:

- carpool, vanpool, take the bus or train
- work from home
- adjust work schedules to avoid busiest times
- avoid the area or use alternate routes where possible
- delay or reschedule discretionary trips
- take time off from work during the Aug. 10-29 construction

A temporary transit and truck lane on Airport Way S. will help keep traffic moving.

Alternate Highway Routes



Alternate Surface Street Routes



For more information about the project, including information about commute alternatives, visit WSDOT's Web site at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i5/SpokaneStreetBridgeRepair

For more information:
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www.wsdot.wa.gov/Northwest/EmailUpdates