



June 30, 2009

09-44 R1

For More Information:

Christine Miles, 503-731-8265, Christine.L.Miles@odot.state.or.us

Regional Projects Website: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/MLK/index.shtml#update>

New Lane Changes On Highway 99E Viaduct

Lane changes begin Thursday on north end of project

Beginning **Thursday, July 2**, motorists will notice new lane changes on the north end of Highway 99E northbound viaduct. Motorists will travel from Highway 99E northbound onto Stephens Street then continue onto Grand Avenue. Contractors are rerouting traffic off the existing north bound viaduct to begin tearing down the old structure. No changes to south bound lanes (MLK Jr. Blvd.) will occur at this time. **Two travel lanes will be maintained in each direction throughout the majority of construction. Traffic pattern could be in place for at least a year.**

Oregon Department of Transportation is heading into stage three of replacing the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Grand Avenue viaducts on Highway 99E in southeast Portland. The viaduct replacement project is scheduled to be completed by early spring 2011.

Work to be completed

The viaduct replacement project includes the following:

- Replace the MLK, Jr. Boulevard and Grand Avenue viaducts. The new viaducts will feature two travel lanes in each direction, bicycle lanes and sidewalks
- Pedestrian ramp improvements at 6th Avenue connecting Woodward Street with Powell Boulevard and the Ross Island Bridge. Pedestrian ramps on both sides of the viaduct at Division Place will connect with streets below
- Access improvements at Woodward Street for northbound traffic entering and exiting Highway 99E

- Architectural historic features on viaducts including four prominent pylons and historical-style illumination

Viaduct History

Although it appears to be a single structure, the viaduct is actually two separate structures. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Viaduct, which serves southbound traffic on Highway 99E, was built in 1936 on the edge of a wetland filled with sawmill waste up to 66 feet deep. As a result, the structure has several columns and spans that have visibly settled. The railings, joints, columns and beams are deteriorating. Because of its condition, the viaduct is posted for legal loads only. Southbound overweight vehicles are not allowed to cross the viaduct. The Grand Avenue structure, built in 1965 and serving northbound traffic, does not meet today's standards for width or safety.

The viaducts carry approximately 54,000 vehicles per day and approximately 20 percent of the vehicles using the viaduct each day are trucks. Highway 99E is the primary commuter and freight route between downtown Portland and the southeastern metropolitan area. Max J. Kuney Construction of Spokane, Washington is the prime contractor on the \$68 million project, of which \$1.25 million is federal stimulus funding.

Editors: A PDF map of northbound traffic stages is online at ftp://ftp.odot.state.or.us/outgoing/MLK_Viaduct_Traffic_Map/.

To view historic pictures of the viaduct,

http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1/MLK/historic_photos.shtml

##ODOT##