

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

ICYMI: ROUTE 495 LANE CLOSURES TO BEGIN FRIDAY AS REHABILITATION OF THE BRIDGE OVER ROUTE 1&9/PATERSON PLANK ROAD BEGINS

From the New Jersey Department of Transportation:

Expect severe congestion and delays for next two-and-a-half years

TRENTON –New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti today strongly urged motorists who take Route 495 to the Lincoln Tunnel to adjust their travel plans to avoid severe traffic congestion expected for the next two-and-a-half years, as necessary lane closures begin to rehabilitate the Route 495 Bridge over Route 1&9 and Paterson Plank Road in North Bergen.

"We understand this construction, which is critically needed, will result in a tremendous amount of pain for everyone who lives and travels in this corridor," **Commissioner Gutierrez-Scaccetti said**. "The increase in the gas tax provided the funding to make these necessary investments and improvements to our aging infrastructure, so we can avoid the potential for unimaginable disruptions that would occur if it were necessary to completely shut down Route 495."

Beginning at 9 p.m., Friday, August 17, NJDOT's contractor, IEW Construction Group, *will close one lane of Route 495 in each direction, limiting the roadway capacity and causing severe congestion*. Work will start by closing one lane of Route 495 westbound and then one lane of Route 495 eastbound to establish a center work zone. This configuration will be in place until the fall. At that time, the next stage will begin with a traffic shift to create a work zone on the right side of Route 495 eastbound. This stage is expected to be in place until summer 2019.

Commuting Alternatives

Commuters should learn the multiple alternate driving routes and public transportation options that are available to them, and be prepared to try several options in the first days and weeks of the closure to find the route or mode of travel that best meets their needs while minimizing inconvenience.

For those who live or work in Hudson County, one option is using the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail to and from Hoboken or Jersey City where commuters can utilize PATH trains or ferry service to Manhattan, which helps reduce the number of cars heading toward the Tunnel. For commuters coming from Monmouth County, there is ferry service with capacity from Atlantic Highlands, Belford, and Highlands.

To mitigate congestion during this project, NJDOT has been working with local officials, employers and commuters to promote several strategies including:

- Switching to public transportation
- Hudson-Bergen Light Rail
- Ferries
- PATH
- NJ TRANSIT Train/Bus
- Join a carpool or vanpool
- Adjust travel times to leave before or after the peak morning and evening travel periods
- Telecommute or work at other sites that your employer may have available
- Use alternate crossings
- George Washington Bridge
- Holland Tunnel
- Goethals Bridge across Staten Island to Battery Tunnel – includes 12 miles of HOV 3

Project Overview

The \$90.3 million state-funded project began in September 2017 with local street improvements. Construction will be accomplished in 12 stages. The work in Stages 1 and 2, which was necessary before the lane closures could be implemented, has been taking place under the bridge and along the Paterson Plank Road – Union Turnpike corridor, which will handle the diverted traffic during bridge construction.

The project will rehabilitate the nine-span viaduct including repairs and reconstruction of the concrete bridge deck, and the westbound exit ramps to Route 1&9 southbound and Paterson Plank Road northbound. The deck replacement will require multiple stages to maintain traffic while structural repairs are performed to replace and strengthen deteriorated structural steel, which will be painted to preserve the existing steel superstructure. Additional improvements, including new highway lighting, drainage, barriers, guiderail, attenuators, and paving will improve operations and safety in addition to extending the viaduct's useful life.

There are eight stages to the bridge deck portion of the project, which is expected to last for about two and a half years. The entire project is expected to be completed in summer 2021.

Stage 3, the first of the eight bridge deck stages, began on Friday, August 10 by closing the access to Route 495 westbound from the 31st Street ramp. Traffic utilizing the 31st Street ramp from Kennedy Boulevard is detoured to Paterson Plank Road. Closing this ramp removes approximately 1,200 vehicles from entering Route 495 westbound during the peak commuting times, which will allow traffic coming from the Lincoln Tunnel to flow better.

Exclusive Bus Lane

The exclusive bus lane (XBL) is a contra-flow transit lane along Route 495 from the NJ Turnpike to the Lincoln Tunnel and is considered the busiest and most productive bus lane in the nation. Each weekday, the XBL dedicates a westbound travel lane to eastbound buses during the morning commute from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Each day more than 1,850 buses carrying more 63,000 passengers travel from the North Bergen Park and Ride, west of Route 1&9, across Route 495 through the Lincoln Tunnel to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in midtown Manhattan. **The XBL lane will be maintained during all stages of construction.**

History and Purpose

The Route 495 Viaduct is a nine span bridge that carries traffic over the NYS&W and Conrail rail lines, as well as Route 1&9, Paterson Plank Road and Liberty Avenue in North Bergen, Hudson County. Route 495 opened in 1939 and originally provided access between Route 3, Route 1&9, and the Lincoln Tunnel. In 1952, the roadway was extended west and a new interchange with the NJ Turnpike was constructed. 15 percent to more than 30 percent depending on time of day.

The Route 495, Route 1&9/Paterson Plank Road bridge deck is in poor condition and the structural framing and supporting piers have areas of severe corrosion and section loss. The purpose of this project is to restore the structural integrity of the bridge, extending its service life for an estimated 75 years, and minimize the need for future emergency repairs, which impact traffic operating conditions.

NJ TRANSIT's North Bergen Park and Ride Lot

The North Bergen Park and Ride Lot is located beneath the Route 495 viaduct immediately west of Route 1&9. NJ Transit Bus Route 320 – Mill Creek, Harmon Meadow, New York, operates at the Park and Ride and travels to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan, New York City. The lot has more than 1,500 parking spaces. The parking spaces that are located below the bridge will be lost temporarily during construction. Therefore, a new temporary parking area was built adjacent to the existing lot during construction that added a net gain of 136 spaces.

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