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Christie Administration Breaks Ground On Route 35 Reconstruction

Tuesday, July 02, 2013

Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

12.5 Miles of Superstorm Sandy-Damaged Highway to Be Rebuilt in Two Years

Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today officially broke ground on the \$265 million construction project to rebuild Route 35, the gateway to many of the barrier islands that make up the Jersey Shore. Heavily damaged by Sandy nine months ago, Route 35 runs through nine municipalities along the Barnegat Peninsula. In many places, the Superstorm carried away entire sections of the highway and completely destroyed the highway drainage system. The Federal Highway Administration has committed to pay 80 percent of the cost of the project from its Sandy Emergency Relief funds.

"Route 35 is the heart of many of our Jersey Shore communities, and today's groundbreaking sends a clear message that it's on its way back," said Governor Christie. "Back in February, I announced an aggressive schedule to rebuild Route 35 so that our Shore residents and visitors could resume normal travel along the barrier islands. Route 35 will come back stronger and better, and I am grateful to our federal partners at the Federal Highway Administration for working with us to secure funding for such an essential part of our state's recovery."

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to substantially complete the 12.5-mile reconstruction project of the roadway, from the border between Point Pleasant Beach and Bay Head to the entrance of Island Beach State Park in Berkeley, by the summer of 2015. DOT officials will maintain the normal complement of travel lanes on Route 35 during the summer seasons to ease congestion for residents, while still meeting the deadlines set by the Administration.

"The extent of damage to Route 35 prompted Governor Christie to accelerate a Route 35 reconstruction project that had been planned for later this decade," said DOT Commissioner James Simpson. "We need to rebuild now because the highway remains severely compromised and would likely sustain multiple failures were another strong storm to batter the peninsula. That is an unacceptable risk because Route 35 supports commerce and tourism in this very popular Shore region."

The Department has divided the project into three geographical sections and has awarded contracts to three contractors. Work in the northern section of the project in Mantoloking and Bay Head will start this month, with work in the middle and southern sections expected to start in August.

DOT is scheduling the work to minimize inconvenience to motorists during the busy summer seasons. With substantial completion anticipated prior to the summer of 2015, extra care will be taken to minimize construction-related traffic disruptions this summer and the summer of 2014.

The Department also is incorporating Complete Streets features into the project in accordance with its policy to design accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and the mobility impaired into project plans. Complete Streets features promote safety and mobility for all who share the road. Experience has shown that it is more cost-effective to incorporate such features into a project design rather than to try to retrofit them into a completed project.

Project Details

The new roadway will be built in a manner that makes it stronger and better able to withstand future storms. Significant portions of the existing roadway consist of nothing more than 8-inch-thick slabs of concrete on sand. The new roadway will be 24 inches thick and consist of a stable sub-base of rock and stone topped by several layers of asphalt.

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The new drainage system will be substantially improved. The existing system relies on gravity to draw storm-water through a system of pipes to outlets along Barnegat Bay. Flash flooding plagues portions of the roadway as a result of this inadequate system.

The new system will include underground pump stations to efficiently pull large quantities of storm-water through the drainage pipes. It is being designed to handle 25-year storms. Inlet grates will trap debris, and subsurface water quality manufactured treatment devices will purify storm-water prior to discharge into the bay. The electrical and control equipment for the pump stations will be built on platforms near the pumps.

Contract 1

Work under Contract 1, a 3.5-mile segment of the highway covering Mantoloking and Bay Head up to the border with Point Pleasant Beach, will begin in a week or so. To minimize inconvenience to motorists during the busy summer season, any work that would require the closure of a Route 35 travel lane will not occur until after Labor Day. Crews will focus on drainage system work this summer.

In this section, Route 35 consists of a single roadway offering just one travel lane in each direction. After Labor Day, crews will need to close portions of one travel lane and direct traffic through quarter-mile work zones. Alternating traffic patterns will be established by flagmen who will momentarily stop traffic in one direction to allow vehicles heading in the opposite direction to pass, and then reverse the flow.

Work in this section is expected to reach substantial completion by the summer of 2014. A \$36 million contract for this section of the project has been awarded to Agate Construction Co.

Contracts 2 and 3

The project sections covered by Contracts 2 and 3 will not require alternating traffic patterns because the highway is wider and features a divided layout. Along this nine-mile stretch, Route 35 generally consists of two northbound lanes and two southbound lanes, with some space or even several blocks separating the northbound and southbound sides.

During the summers of 2013 and 2014, all existing travel lanes will be maintained. Between the months of September and May, one travel lane in each direction will be maintained at all times.

Contract 2 covers the middle portion of the project, a five-mile stretch in Toms River, Lavallette and Brick. A \$101 million contract was awarded to George Harms Construction Co.

Contract 3 includes the southernmost portion of the project area, a four-mile segment of Route 35 starting at the entrance of Island Beach State Park in Berkeley and continuing north into Seaside Park, Seaside Heights and Toms River. An \$81 million contract has been awarded to Union Paving & Construction Co.

Work under Contracts 2 and 3 is expected to start in August 2013 and be substantially complete by the summer of 2015.

The federal government will be providing 80 percent of the total project costs with Sandy emergency relief funds, with the balance paid by the state. Including inspections, engineering, utility and other costs, total project costs are expected to be about \$265 million.

DOT will conduct a Pre-construction Public Information Center to provide project details and answer questions 4:00 -7:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 9 at the Lavallette Elementary School gymnasium, 105 Brooklyn Avenue, Lavallette.

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Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Colin Reed
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000