



DelDOT Preparing for Major Project to Restore the I-95 Corridor through Wilmington

CONTENT CONTRIBUTED BY THE DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

IN 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act into law, setting into motion a project in Delaware to construct nearly 24 miles of highway that would become part of the east coast's Interstate 95. By 1964, the interstate had been constructed through Wilmington, and now almost 60 years later, this section is showing its age and needs extensive rehabilitation.

What will happen in 2021?

Beginning in March 2021, DelDOT will undertake a major rehabilitation project to “restore the corridor” in Wilmington. Planned construction

includes repairing and resurfacing the roadway and concrete decks, replacing deteriorating concrete traffic barriers and roadway expansion joints, and completing steel and concrete repairs to 19 bridges throughout the corridor to extend the service life of these structures for a minimum of 30 years. This project will also prevent the department from continuing a band-aid approach to making repairs as the need arises which is more costly and disruptive to traffic in the long term than undertaking an intensive project to complete all the needed work in a condensed window of time.

During construction, traffic will operate in a contraflow pattern, where both directions of travel are moved to one side of the road to allow for the

work to proceed more rapidly on the closed side of the interstate. At least one lane of traffic in each direction of I-95 will remain open, and ramp closures will be staggered to continuously maintain access in and out of the city. However, overall capacity will be reduced on the road for nearly two years while the work is completed.

Preparing for the Project

DelDOT understands that this project will be a major inconvenience to those who live and work in Wilmington, as more than 100,000 vehicles use I-95 every day. The department began its initial planning for the project in 2014, and there are a number of projects in and around the city that are currently underway in anticipation of motorists using alternate routes while the interstate is under construction. In March 2021, the goal is to limit construction in other areas of Wilmington and New Castle County as traffic will shift away from I-95. These projects include:

- The opening this summer of the new \$48 million Christina River Bridge and approach roads at the Wilmington Riverfront, which will provide easier access to Route 13 and I-495



- More than \$40 million in paving and ADA improvements to numerous city streets, as well as multiple maintenance projects on I-495 to ensure it is ready to absorb a large portion of traffic that would normally utilize I-95
- The new \$10 million Wilmington Transit Center will expand public transportation options and provide needed amenities to support customers
- Upgrading more than 200 traffic signals within the city and integrating them into the state system to allow for real-time timing adjustment
- Completing the I-95/Marsh Road interchange improvements

In total, DelDOT is investing more than \$100 million to improve Wilmington's infrastructure in advance of the I-95 rehabilitation project to provide alternatives to those who live and work in the city.

Investing in Public Transportation

With the project estimated to take nearly two years to complete, travel habits for residents and commuters will be disrupted. As a result,

many will look for alternatives to avoid the delays created by the project. While the new Wilmington Transit Center will serve as a central hub for riders coming in and out of the city, DART will also be expanding hours of operations on weekends and offering additional holiday service and free Wi-Fi service on fixed route buses, and creating a dedicated bus lane on portions of US 13 northbound to allow for expedited public transit into Wilmington.

Regional rail service will also be upgraded with the opening the Newark Regional Transportation Center this year and with the expansion of parking at the Fairplay Station at Delaware Park to accommodate new ridership for those choosing to use SEPTA to commute to and from Wilmington and Philadelphia.

Supporting the Business Community

Keeping the business community in and near Wilmington informed about the project is a priority for the department, and DelDOT has already

met with numerous employers over the past year as planning for the project has progressed. This spring, a business focused workshop is being planned to help employers prepare for the project and help in minimizing the impact it will have on employees and operations.

One service being offered is DART's RideShare Delaware program, which is available to work directly with businesses to customize commuting travel option programs and to pilot and implement continuity plans prior

to the 2021 project start date. RideShare Delaware will also focus on employees and conduct outreach activities at places of employment to educate employees on their clean-commute options and provide project information and updates. To request a presentation or learn more, visit www.ridesharedelaware.org.

Stay Informed

More Information on this project can be found on our free smartphone app as well as the project website, www.de.gov/i95rehab. If you have questions, would like to arrange a presentation on the project, or be added to our communications list for project updates, please call us at 302-760-2080, or email us at dotpr@delaware.gov. While this will not be an easy project, DelDOT's goal is to complete this project as safely and quickly as possible and ensure the main corridor through Wilmington is well-maintained for the residents and businesses that call it home for years to come. ■