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OR 213 closing for four days for a new bridge

Closing the key stretch of road may bring traffic gridlock to the area

Motorists in and around Oregon City will face major traffic congestion starting 8 p.m. Thursday March 22 as OR 213 closes between Washington Street and Interstate 205 for installation of a new bridge. Motorists should start planning now for lengthy delays.

The closure for the rapid bridge construction, as the construction method is called, is scheduled to take four days (104 hours), re-opening by 4 a.m. Tuesday March 27. During the closure, all traffic, including bicycles and pedestrians, will be directed to a detour and signed alternate routes.

The OR 213 closure will probably mean long delays on adjacent roads, including I-205, Highway 99E/McLoughlin Boulevard and local roads in Oregon City. The detour and alternate routes take motorists onto arterial streets that are not designed for high capacity traffic.

Motorists should plan for lengthy delays, prepare to use alternate routes and only visit this area if necessary.

Roadside reader boards started announcing the closure in late February, with some signs close to the project and some as far away as Mulino. During the closure, message signs along I-205 in Washington, north of the I-5 intersection, will encourage drivers traveling through Oregon from Washington to stay on I-5 to avoid adding to the congestion expected on I-205.

The City of Oregon City, in partnership with ODOT, will reconstruct the intersection of OR 213, Washington Street and Clackamas River Drive, with Washington Street realigned to pass under OR 213 immediately south of the railroad bridge. The project, scheduled to finish by the spring of 2013, will relieve congestion, enhance safety and provide increased capacity for the growth expected over the next 20 years.

The Washington Street intersection with OR 213 is among the busiest signaled intersections in the state, with an average weekday traffic count of 65,000.

Rapid bridge construction allows the contractor to shorten the project by six months and avoid all daytime lane closures on OR 213 except for this four-day full closure. Traditional construction would have meant closing at least two travel lanes on OR 213 for 12 to 16 months, resulting in severe traffic backups.

During the four-day, five-night closure, contractors will first remove a 130-foot long section of OR 213, which will involve excavating about 900 cubic yards of asphalt and 6,000 to 8,000 cubic yards of material beneath the roadway. Then the crew will use rollers, threaded rods and jacks to slide the new bridge – 130 feet long and 140 feet wide -- into place over the permanent foundation.

To see a map of the area, go to

www.orcity.org/sites/default/files/jughandle/OR213ClosureFlyer.pdf

For more information, including detour and alternate routes go to www.jughandleproject.com.

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