



News Release

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LANE REDUCTION ON BELTWAY OUTER LOOP TO OCCUR ON OR ABOUT THIS WEEKEND (April 4) Traffic Required to Merge from Four to Three Lanes Starting at Eisenhower Ave. Connector Exit; *Telegraph Road Interchange Construction Ramping Up*

Alexandria, Va. – The Capital Beltway's Outer Loop (I-95 North/I-495 East) will be reduced from four to three lanes beginning at the Eisenhower Connector Exit on or about the weekend of April 4th. Currently, the Outer Loop transitions from four to three lanes, one mile farther east, at the Telegraph Road Exit. The extension of this three-lane configuration to the Eisenhower Connector Exit is needed to accommodate construction that will be ramping up on and near the Capital Beltway, as part of the Telegraph Road Interchange reconstruction. The Telegraph Road Interchange effort, valued at \$236 million, is the final major contract of the \$2.5 billion Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project.

The reduction from four to three lanes on this portion of the Outer Loop is expected to remain in place until the outer portion of the future Beltway widening is completed in 2011. The lane reduction will be implemented in the same vicinity on the Inner Loop (I-95 South/I-495 West) in the coming months.

The lane reduction is planned for implementation, beginning on Friday night at 9:00 p.m., April 4 until Sunday evening, April 6. During this time, two of the four lanes on the Outer Loop, between the Eisenhower Connector and Telegraph Road Exits, will be closed. By Sunday evening, all lanes will reopen in the new three-lane configuration. The work, which involves painting new lane markings, is weather dependent and requires at least 24 hours of dry weather before proceeding. If rain occurs, the work will be postponed until the following Friday night, April 11.

Once the earlier merge from four to three lanes is in place, motorists may experience some delays until they become acclimated to the change. In addition, traffic engineers anticipate that the typical backups, which occur in this area during peak travel times, will be shifted to the new merge point.

"The extension of the three-lane Beltway configuration is necessary to provide a safe work area for crews as they rebuild the Telegraph Road Interchange, widen the Beltway from Route 1 to the Eisenhower Connector Exit and install new sound walls," commented Ronaldo T. Nicholson, P.E., Project Manager for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project and Director of Mega-Projects for Northern Virginia. "In addition to improving safety for residents, commuters and workers alike, this approach ultimately will minimize impacts on motorists. The available work space reduces the need for ongoing short-term Beltway lane closures and expedites the project's overall schedule," added Nicholson.

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Replacing the soundwall, which separates the Beltway from adjacent residences, is among the first construction activity that will occur in the coming months as part of the Telegraph Road Interchange effort. In addition, crews will install new roadway drainage structures and will begin rebuilding the area south-of-the-Beltway at the Telegraph Road Interchange.

Ultimately, the new, grade-separated Telegraph Road Interchange will provide access to eastbound Huntington Avenue and North Kings Highway from the Beltway Outer Loop and southbound Telegraph Road, through elevated ramps over Telegraph Road, rather than signalized intersections. Access from the Beltway Outer Loop to southbound Telegraph Road also will be provided via an elevated ramp.

Traffic lights will provide access from northbound Telegraph Road to eastbound Huntington Avenue and North Kings Highway, as well as access from westbound Huntington Avenue and North Kings Highway to southbound or northbound Telegraph Road. These traffic improvements are expected to improve traffic flow, as well as provide easier and safer pedestrian access.

Overall, the contract will build eleven ramps and bridges, five box culvert extensions, drainage improvements, retaining walls, noise walls, pedestrian paths, traffic systems, lighting, signage and landscaping.

Business and utility relocations as well as ground strengthening work were completed in advance of the interchange reconstruction.

Though this final phase of construction is just getting underway, other major elements of the 7.5-mile Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project are nearing completion. In late May, the second new span of the Wilson Bridge is scheduled to open to Inner Loop (I-95 South/I-495 West) traffic, with all lanes of both bridge spans and on the mainline Beltway (from the MD 210 Interchange to Route 1 in Virginia) opening in late fall 2008. The majority of traffic improvements on the new interchanges at Maryland 210 and I-295, and Route 1 in Virginia, also are scheduled to be completed by late 2008.

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