

Construction Update and Frequently Asked Questions

UPDATE: Roadway improvements near the Newport Pell Bridge require restricting traffic to one lane between the old toll plaza and the bridge. Traffic is also reduced to one lane in the same area on the westbound side. During this time, no vehicles wider than 8'6" will be allowed on the bridge.

When are the lane restrictions in place?

The lane restrictions will be in place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Restrictions will be lifted by May 17, 2024.*

What can drivers expect and what should they do?

Drivers are experiencing a wide range of wait times. For eastbound traffic during morning rush hour, travelers should add 20-30 minutes to their travel time.

Drivers should:

- Avoid rush hour times if possible.
- Leave additional time for crossing the Newport Pell Bridge.
- Zipper merge: use both lanes until the merge point and then merge alternately into a single lane.
- Avoid rubbernecking in the construction zone and keep eyes on the road.

What work is being done?

The improvements include rehabilitation of a small bridge located on the west approach to the Newport Pell Bridge, which carries Route 138 over East Shore Road. Known as "Structure E," this 80' long, single span steel structure is actually 2 bridge sections joined together with a median. Structure E was opened to traffic when the Pell was opened in 1969. All components of Structure E require rehabilitation and that includes demolition of the deck and replacement of the median.

Why can't the work be done at night?

A major component of the current construction activities involves the replacement of existing pavement on Route 138 and the rehabilitation of Structure E that goes over East Shore Road. The median area separating eastbound and westbound traffic on Route 138 is also being replaced with a modern safety barrier. The existing pavement, median, and portions of the structure must be removed, and then new materials will be installed, inspected, and tested. Whether the work is done during the day or at night, the same 24/7 lane closure would be required.

***Revised 4/15/2024**