

Providence's Washington Bridge Update: traffic pattern changes are coming

The Washington Bridge in Providence, Rhode Island, has been a focal point of transportation concerns following the closure of its westbound side due to significant structural issues. To address congestion, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has announced plans to update the traffic pattern over the coming months.

RIDOT Director Peter Alviti outlined the plans, which include adding a third travel lane in both directions. Currently, there are two eastbound lanes and two westbound lanes, all on the eastbound side of the bridge, which is a newer structure.

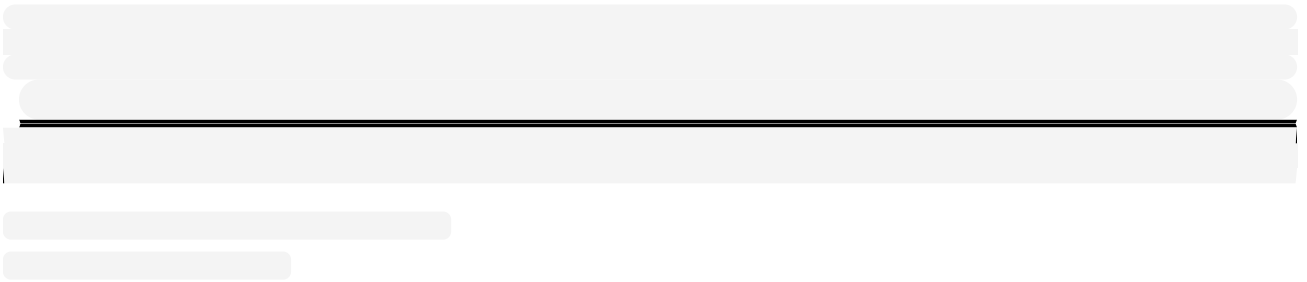
The closure of the westbound side on Dec. 11 caused substantial traffic backups on I-195 between Providence and East Providence, as well as in surrounding neighborhoods used as detours. The new traffic pattern, scheduled to begin on Feb. 26, will involve reducing two travel lanes on each side to 10 feet wide, exclusively for passenger vehicles. Trucks will be restricted to the right lane, which will be 11 feet wide.

Additionally, the speed limit will be reduced to 40 miles per hour in both directions. Westbound vehicles will cross over to the eastbound side of the highway about 3,000 feet sooner, and vehicles merging onto I-195 East from South Water Street/India Street will have to yield.

To address potential traffic incidents, tow trucks and Rhode Island State Police troopers will be stationed in the area at all times for quick response. However, inclement weather and supply chain issues could impact the projected eight-week completion timeframe for these changes.



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