

Major traffic change coming as part of massive I-95 improvement project

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Interstate-95.

Drivers should prepare for a sizable traffic shift on Interstate-95.

On Friday Sept. 28, the current southbound traffic on I-95 between Allegheny Avenue and Interstate-676/Vine Street Expressway will switch to a structure that puts both its usual Delaware-bound travelers and northbound traffic on the major interstate.

This means vehicles traveling in both directions will be on the same side of the highway, which will have four through lanes in each direction and on- and off-ramps.

Lanes and ramps will close this week for prep work at night, and on Sept. 28, the switch will be done at night. Work to demolish that southbound stretch of I-95 will begin immediately.

The traffic shift is one of many projects that are part of a larger multi-phase infrastructure project to **improve and rebuild I-95** in Pennsylvania, which stretches 51 miles between Delaware and New Jersey.

Next week's shift is part of the GR4 project of the Interstate-95 Section GIR - Girard Avenue Interchange Improvement Project.

I-95/GIR is part of the overall, decades-long I-95 project. It has a price tag of over \$900 million to rebuild three miles of I-95. GR4 – a portion of the I-95/GIR plan – is a \$311.5 million project, awarded earlier this year to James J. Anderson Construction Co.

Hill International, a Philadelphia-based construction consulting firm, is providing management services to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Bridget Day is the project manager.

PLANS FOR I-95 & THE GIRARD AVENUE INTERCHANGE

The I-95/GIR project is a reconstruction of the Girard Avenue Interchange and the adjacent segments of I-95, from Allegheny Avenue through the Interstate 676 Interchange to Race Street.

This project comprises GR0, GR1, GR2, GR3, GR 4, GR 5/6, the first four of which are complete. (*See more below.*)

GR4 is slated to be completed by 2022; GR6 will operate on a 2022-25 timeline; and GR5 will be from 2024 through 2027. GR6 is in the design

phase, according to Hill International, which said it will come before GR5.

GR4 projects will also encompass areas adjacent to and beneath I-95, including urban stormwater management devices; LED street and understructure lighting; and a multi-use trail.

Work for the larger I-95/GIR program included:

- Temporary improvements to the southbound off-ramp and Aramingo Avenue;
- improving a stretch of Richmond Street to make way for a complete reconstruction of the new northbound viaduct;
- demolition of the northbound viaduct between Palmer and Ann streets;
- widening and rebuilding of a 1,200-foot section of I-95 between Palmer Street and Frankford Avenue at the southern end of the interchange;
- rebuilding I-95 north from Palmer and Ann streets with new northbound off- and on-ramps at Richmond Street.

Ongoing work will include the complete rebuild of the southbound side of I-95 from Allegheny Avenue to Palmer Street and northbound and southbound I-95 between Frankford Avenue and Race Street, near the approach to I-676.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

About \$740 million worth of projects are underway now for the larger I-95 improvement project.

A \$340 million project for GR4 will widen and reconstruct I-95 southbound from Columbia Avenue to north of Ann Street to create four through lanes in each direction as well as a fifth lane for ramp traffic entering and exiting I-95 between interchanges at Girard Avenue and Allegheny Avenue.

A \$400 million project for GR5/6 will reconstruct and widen I-676/Vine Street ramp connections with I-95 northbound and southbound; replace I-95 bridges over Race, Callowhill and Spring Garden streets, Fairmount Avenue, Brown Street and Ellen Street-to-Frankford Avenue; and it will re-align sections of Poplar, New Market, Front and Laurel streets at I-95, among others.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Nearly \$400 million worth of projects of the I-95 program are complete.

An \$11 million project for the GR0 section reconstructed and improved I-95 between Allegheny Avenue and Race Street. Improvements were made to the direct access to the Delaware River Waterfront and redirect non-local traffic from residential neighborhoods.

A \$112 million project for GR1 included the reconstruction and widening of Richmond Street on its existing alignment between Aramingo Avenue and Cumberland Street, among others.

A \$43 million project for GR2 included the reconstruction and widening of I-95 from south of Shackamaxon Street to north of Columbia Avenue to create four through lanes in each direction and a fifth lane for ramp traffic, among others.

A \$215 million project for GR3 widened and reconstructed northbound I-95 from Columbia Avenue to the north of Ann Street to create four through lanes in each direction as well as a fifth lane for ramp traffic entering and exiting I-95 between interchanges at Girard and Allegheny avenues.

Other initiatives are taking place to transform I-95, including a \$225 million effort to cap its lanes with a new public space.

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation recently announced a **\$4 million grant** for a citywide public engagement campaign for the effort.



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