

DRAFT

Talking points: Working with local business

Feb. 25, 2013

General

- The Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge Project will improve a vital section of interstate. It'll allow local businesses, as well as those up and down the west coast, to move goods. During construction, our team is committed to minimizing impacts to local businesses.
- We've closed on- and off-ramps four times during this project to perform necessary work to accommodate the new bridge. Specifically:
 - The I-5 southbound on-ramp from Franklin Boulevard from November 2009 to January 2010.
 - The I-5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard from April to July 2010.
 - The I-5 southbound on-ramp from Franklin Boulevard from June to December 2010.
 - The I-5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard from October 2011 to October 2013
- Each time, we've gone door-to-door to the businesses on Franklin Boulevard. We talked with them and gave them fliers to distribute to their customers. Dates and detours, including a map, and contact information.
- Business representatives, such as the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, have told us they appreciate the project's role in creating local jobs, bringing extra money spent by the crew members into the community, and improving the region's infrastructure for the long term.

The decision to close the ramp for two years

- We carefully considered many options before determining that a two-year ramp closure was the best option.
 - The full closure of the ramp saves taxpayers an estimated \$260,000.
 - It ensures the safety of drivers and workers. Reconstructing the ramp without a closure would expose construction crew members to traffic, putting workers and drivers in harm's way.
 - It shortened the reconstruction time by three months, reducing the impact to the traveling public.
- We have also eliminated many shorter ramp closings that would have been necessary if the ramp were constructed incrementally. Motorists have a predictable alternate route they can plan on and be assured of accessing for the entire period.
- Balancing the concerns of drivers, workers and the public at large is certainly a challenge. In this case, a continuous closure isn't ideal for everyone, but it makes the most sense overall. Still, we want to do what we can to minimize impacts to businesses.

Two-year ramp closure as example of working with business

- With the announcement of the two-year closure of the Interstate 5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard, local businesses contacted us to discuss suggestions for detour signage.
- We convened a meeting with project and business representatives to better understand the issues. We also took them on a driving tour so all parties could be together to see the situation and discuss solutions.
- The group agreed to a plan, engineers designed new signage and the contractor quickly secured and installed the new signs. They now show the temporary exit number, rather than indicating a detour.
- Once drivers exit I-5, signs noting the detour and listing businesses along Franklin Boulevard direct traffic north onto Glenwood Boulevard and east or west on Franklin Boulevard to reach the communities of Springfield and Eugene.
- ODOT always welcomes feedback, and we've been impressed by the thoughtfulness local businesses have shown in their suggestions.