

Major movers

A quick look at current construction around the country



Chicago—Wacker Drive: Crews have been moving east to west one intersection at a time during the second phase of the project, with the intersection of Wacker and Monroe Street reopening to traffic in June. Much of the summer's work will focus on Adams, Jackson and Franklin streets. Ramps will be removed where each intersects with Wacker Drive and replaced by landscaped medians. In particular, the ramps connecting upper Wacker with Franklin and lower Wacker were a concern due to the double-merge condition they created, which was deemed dangerous to motorists. Phase II remains on schedule for completion by the end of 2012.



Seattle—S.R. 99: Summer work will consist of excavating the launch and receiving pits for the boring machine that will begin digging the tunnel itself in summer 2013. The launch pit is under construction at the south portal site, where crews are currently building the pit walls. Measures also are being installed to protect the viaduct and nearby buildings from ground settlement during tunneling. Construction at the north portal site will consist of building the receiving pit for the machine as well as the operations building. Crews at both sites also will remove any interfering utilities along the way. The tunnel is scheduled to open to traffic in late 2015.



Virginia—I-495: The focus of early summer work on the new I-495 express lanes will be on finishing the paving and milling of the new lanes. Once that is completed, VDOT can begin installing and testing the new tolling equipment, including RFID technology to connect with vehicle E-ZPass transponders. Each toll plaza also will have cameras for accident and license-plate detection. New ramps and bridges will be installed to provide access to the HOT lanes from 10 points.



New Haven, Conn.—I-95: The interchange linking I-91, I-95 and Rte. 34 is one part of the larger I-95 New Haven Harbor Crossing Corridor Improvement Program, linking those highways with the new Q Bridge. Over the summer, crews will continue widening the existing highway, focusing on I-95. North-bound traffic will be shifted onto temporary connector roadways while the work is ongoing. Twenty-two new bridges and 18 new retaining walls also will be constructed.



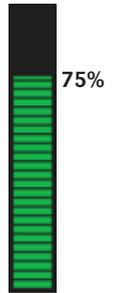
Austin, Texas—SH 130: With all of the new ramps installed along segments five and six of SH 130—a 40-mile stretch through Travis, Caldwell and Guadalupe counties—the focus will turn to paving for the summer, with crews employing the echelon technique popular in Europe as they move north to south. Workers also will begin testing the new tolling equipment and camera systems for both portions of the four-lane north-south highway. Segments five and six are on schedule to be open to traffic in late September 2012.



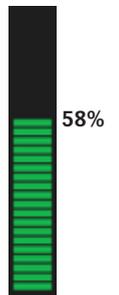
Major transportation infrastructure takes years of planning, design and construction work to complete, so it is important to have a dependable source of funding. Unfortunately, the transportation bill passed by Congress last week was more than 1,000 days overdue and will be in effect for only two years. What appears below is a status update on some of the biggest road and bridge projects in the country. Let's hope their funding holds up long enough to see them through to completion. **R&B**



San Francisco—San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge: In late June, crews had finished 137 strands of wire to form the main cable of the bridge. Four hydraulic machines had compacted the strands, one 1.5-meter section at a time, into the finished 2.6-ft-diam., 1-mile-long cable of the self-anchored suspension bridge. Workers had attached 100 out of 114 cable bands to the main cable and hung 160 out of 200 suspender ropes from the main cable to the bridge deck. Once the suspender ropes are installed, the load transfer will begin. The load transfer process is expected to start in late summer or early fall 2012. The bridge is on schedule to open to traffic on Labor Day 2013.



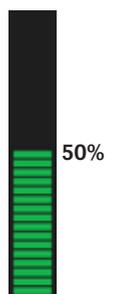
St. Louis—Mississippi River Bridge: Crews are currently completing construction of the two 400-ft towers of the New Mississippi River Bridge between St. Louis and southwestern Illinois. Once the towers are completed, they will begin attaching the cables that will support the deck of the 1,500-ft cable-stayed bridge and the framework for the driving surface. Crews have completed installation of all the girders on the Illinois approach between the existing I-55/I-64/I-70 Tri-Level Interchange in East St. Louis and the main span. They have started the initial work to form up the driving surface on the Illinois approach. The bridge is on schedule to open to traffic in early 2014.



Seattle—S.R. 520 Floating Bridge: Repairs have been successfully implemented on four pontoons under construction in Aberdeen for the new floating bridge over Lake Washington. WSDOT and the contractor team are targeting July or August to float completed pontoons from Aberdeen. Pontoon assembly is slated to begin on Lake Washington this summer. Other floating bridge construction work continues on pontoons in Tacoma, anchors in Kenmore and bridge supports on the east side of Lake Washington in Medina. Crews have poured concrete for two of the 58 anchors that will hold the floating bridge in place. Crews also are building a cofferdam at the east end of the structure.



New Haven, Conn.—Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge: Formally known as the I-95 New Haven Harbor Crossing Corridor Improvement Program, the project to build the Pearl Harbor Memorial (Q) Bridge carrying I-95 over the Quinnipiac River began construction in October 2009. The contractor recently opened the northbound "barrel" of the extradosed bridge. It is five lanes wide with full shoulders. Southbound traffic will be shifted to the northbound structure next summer; the old bridge will be completely demolished; and the southbound barrel of the new bridge will be constructed. Construction is estimated to be completed in June 2015.



Cleveland—I-90 Innerbelt Bridge Project: This job has reached the phase where the superstructure of the new bridge will be visible to the traveling public. Structural steel is being erected on the main viaduct piers, which will support the structure over the Cuyahoga River valley. The steel girders will form the distinctive delta shape that will soar from the edge of downtown at the east to the upper reaches of the Tremont Bluff overlooking the river valley at the west. Crews have completed eight of 16 supplementary bridge structures. The remaining structures will be completed over the next 12 months. The estimated completion date is October 2013.

