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Drivers Beware: Sunset/405 Bridge Construction

By [Danielle Gillespie](#), Staff Writer

2010-05-13

Pacific Palisades commuters can expect additional traffic congestion until spring 2013, as the 405 Freeway is widened and three bridges, including the Sunset Boulevard bridge, are demolished and reconstructed.

'People can look at it as short-term pain for long-term gain,' said Marc Littman, spokesman for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).

Metro and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) are collaborating on the \$1-billion project with the goal of improving traffic flow. A 10-mile carpool lane will be added on the northbound 405 between the 10 Freeway and U.S. 101.

To accommodate the new lane and increase capacity, the bridges at Sunset, Skirball Center Drive and Mulholland Drive will be replaced, 27 on- and off-ramps realigned and 13 existing underpasses and structures widened. In addition, 18 miles of retaining walls and sound walls will be built.

As of May 7, the contractor, Kiewit Corporation (a Fortune 500 company based in Omaha, Nebraska), began preparing the Sunset bridge for demolition, and the lanes have been narrowed from three in each direction to two in each direction.

At the end of May or early June, the southern side of the bridge will be demolished over the course of six to nine nights. At that time, the entire bridge will be completely closed to traffic (all 24 hours), so there will be detours and traffic-control officers at critical locations to direct traffic, Littman told the Palisadian-Post.

Crews will then spend 10 months working 24 hours, seven days a week to reconstruct the south side of the bridge. Four lanes will be open for traffic, two in each direction, but there may be nights on which traffic is restricted. Notification of these restrictions will be provided in advance.

Once the south side is finished, the northern side of the bridge will be demolished and rebuilt in the same manner, according to Littman. The entire bridge should be complete in less than two years.

As part of the improvements, the bridge will be widened from 90 feet to 120 feet, and the number of lanes will increase from six to eight. Two lanes will be dedicated to eastbound traffic on Sunset that is merging onto northbound 405. The northbound off-ramp will become three lanes instead of the current two and be made longer to provide additional capacity, according to Dave Sotero, a spokesman for Metro. In addition, the bridge will be upgraded to better

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Work is scheduled to begin on the Skirball and Mulholland bridges later this year, and then the carpool lane will be added, Littman reported.

'Another lane of capacity benefits everyone,' Littman said of the carpool lane.

About 800,000 people a day already use Los Angeles County carpool lanes. The addition will provide continuous carpool lanes from the San Fernando Valley to Orange County.

While the Sunset bridge is under construction, efforts are being made to limit noise for nearby residents, Littman said. Sound barriers will be used whenever possible and equipment will not be left idling. Lights will also be monitored so they are not shining into homes at night.


Littman suggested that people avoid the Sunset bridge during rush hour, but if that is not possible, they need to plan for a longer commute. He also proposed that people use the Wilshire bridge.

Adding to the traffic congestion, Church Lane will also be closed for six months between Sunset and Kiel Street as a new waterline connection is installed.

Work began on Church Lane last Friday.

Littman said the best way for residents to receive updates on detours and road closures is by visiting www.metro.net/I-405 or calling the project hotline at (213) 922-3665.

Kasey Shuda, a Metro community-relations officer, will answer questions at tonight's Pacific Palisades Community Council meeting, 7 p.m. in the community room at the Palisades Branch Library, 861 Alma Real Drive.



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