

SR 536 Skagit River Bridge to close to eastbound traffic for painting

Beginning in May 2026, WSDOT will begin final preparations to repaint the SR 536/West Division Street bridge over the Skagit River. The Skagit River Bridge was last painted in 1990, meaning it has been 36 years since the bridge last received this important preservation work. The project will remove old paint, bird droppings, rust and debris from the structure and add a new layer of paint that will help prolong the service life of this vital structure between downtown and West Mount Vernon.



When: Construction activities will begin Friday, May 29, and finish in early 2027 before the 2027 Skagit Tulip Festival. A long-term closure of the bridge to eastbound traffic is expected to begin Thursday, June 11. This date is subject to change. People traveling through the area can expect to see signs announcing the upcoming traffic control after Memorial Day weekend.

What does this mean?

- Westbound travel will be maintained across the bridge except during periodic weekend and nightly full closures of the bridge.
- Eastbound SR 536 traffic will not be allowed across the bridge until the project finishes. All eastbound traffic will detour using Avon Allen Road, SR 20 and Interstate 5.
- Emergency vehicles can travel in either direction over the bridge. They are equipped with traffic signal prioritization switches. In an emergency, these switches will signal temporary traffic signals at both ends of the bridge, turning them red to hold traffic until the emergency vehicles have passed through the area.
- People walking, biking or using mobility devices can still use the bridge, except during the periodic weekend and nightly full closures. Shuttle service will be provided during these times.

More information

- **Project page:** bit.ly/SR536SkagitRiverBridge
- **Scan the code below with your smartphone.**



To stay up to date on traffic changes on state highways, check the WSDOT travel map: bit.ly/WSDOTTravelMap

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SR 536 Skagit River Bridge Painting – Frequently Asked Questions

Why limit traffic to one direction?

A traffic study showed that alternating traffic during construction would increase delay times in both directions and potentially back up traffic into downtown, which would prolong response times for emergency vehicles trying to reach locations west of the Skagit River. By closing eastbound traffic over the Skagit River Bridge, westbound travel times should remain consistent with what people see now. Emergency vehicles can still travel eastbound over the Skagit River Bridge using a traffic signal prioritization switch that only can be activated by emergency services.

Will there ever be times when eastbound traffic can cross the bridge?

No, there will not be any “breaks” in the eastbound directional closure, and there will be no directional switches. The only exception will be the short, temporary allowances for emergency service vehicles to cross eastbound over the bridge. There will be signals in place to allow temporary eastbound travel for emergency vehicles only.

Will there ever be times when the bridge is closed to traffic in all directions? When will that be?

Yes, there are several nighttime and weekend-long full closures of the bridge scheduled during construction. The bridge will close in both directions to set up traffic control in May 2026. Emergency response vehicles still will be able to use the bridge in both directions throughout these closures. WSDOT will provide updates about full closures when they are scheduled.

How and when can bikes and pedestrians cross the bridge during construction?

The bridge will remain open to pedestrian and bicyclist traffic in both directions through most of the project. During full closures, a free shuttle will be available for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the Skagit River. Signs with instructions on how to call a shuttle will be available at the pick-up and drop-off points located near each end of the bridge. WSDOT will provide updates about full closures when they are scheduled.

Why paint the bridge when it appears that the bridge should be replaced?

WSDOT prioritizes which bridges need to be replaced based on a combination of available state/federal funding and the status of the existing structure. The Skagit River Bridge was built in 1953, and preservation projects, such as painting and repairing the bridge, can help extend the service life of the structure and provide a cost-effective alternative to replacement.

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