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FDOT Announces Phased Re-Opening of the Pensacola Bay Bridge

PENSACOLA, Fla. – After a recent assessment of the repairs to the Pensacola Bay Bridge, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has announced its plan to re-open the Pensacola Bay Bridge in phases beginning with restoring two lanes of traffic in March 2021. This phased approach reiterates FDOT’s commitment to reconnecting the impacted communities as expeditiously as possible.

“FDOT understands that this has been a tough time for Pensacola and Gulf Breeze residents and has been laser-focused on reconnecting these communities as safely and quickly as possible,” said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. “We will continue to work with the contractor to ensure the final repairs are completed by Memorial Day and at a superior level of quality so it may serve these communities for decades to come.”

The first phase will open two lanes of traffic (one in each direction) for the first 4,000 feet on the Pensacola side. The remaining approximate two miles of the bridge will be open to four lanes of traffic (two in each direction). During this initial phase, the speed limit will be temporarily set at 35 mph and emergency refuge areas will be available on the bridge.

To quickly clear travel lanes following vehicle incidents, assist drivers in the event of mechanical breakdowns, and keep the bridge free of debris, FDOT’s Road Ranger Service Patrol will be stationed on each end of the bridge from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on weekends and major holidays. At other times, at least one unit will be on-call and available. Law enforcement will also be on sight 24-hours a day on both ends of the bridge to alert drivers about the temporary restrictions.

The second phase, which consists of opening the remaining 4,000 feet to four lanes of traffic, will be complete by Memorial Day.

The phased approach allows traffic to resume on the bridge in order to provide mobility and connectivity on U.S. 98 between Escambia and Santa Rosa counties while FDOT’s contractors continue repair efforts. An animation of the Pensacola Bay Bridge phased opening can be found [here](#) and graphics are also attached.

Consistent with the requirements within the construction contract, FDOT will continue to withhold payments of \$35,000 per day until four lanes of traffic are restored to the entire southbound span of the Pensacola Bay Bridge. FDOT is regularly reviewing the contractor’s schedule of the entire Pensacola Bay Bridge Project with the anticipated completion date for all improvements currently scheduled for January 2022.

A combination of adverse weather and unexpected obstructions on the seabed of Pensacola Bay have impacted the original plan to open four lanes of traffic. Over the course of the repairs, crews demobilized twice in October 2020 for Hurricanes Delta and Zeta as well as experiencing a number of days with high winds and heavy rains. Because crews are working with soil and other hidden features in the earth, unforeseen complications can be encountered. The phased reopening makes weather-related and unforeseen conditions more manageable by removing many of the in-water components from the first phase schedule.

Motorists should continue to use all available detour routes, which still includes the Garcon Point Bridge and State Road 87. At this time, tolls on the Garcon Point Bridge have been suspended through Friday, March 12. Commuters can also use the Escambia County Area Transit's (ECAT) temporary bus route travel between Pensacola and Gulf Breeze free of charge.

Details on the detour routes, including graphics, FAQs, and regular updates can be found online at fdot.gov/PensacolaBay. Members of the public wishing to receive these updates can choose to subscribe by providing their email address on this website as well.

For additional real-time updates on the Pensacola Bay Bridge, follow FDOT District Three on social media:

- Twitter: [@MyFDOT_NWFL](https://twitter.com/MyFDOT_NWFL)
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