



Mile Post 49.2 to Mile Post 57.45

# U.S. 26 MT. HOOD HIGHWAY

*Safety and Preservation Project*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the purpose of this project?

ODOT will construct a project along a nearly eight mile stretch of U.S. 26 between Rhododendron and OR 35 to improve safety by reducing severe crossover crashes and rockfall.

### What are the main project elements?

- Paving between Silent Rock and OR 35
- Cutting back the rock slope on the west end of the project for rock fall mitigation
- Highway widening to install a median barrier
- Installing a median barrier between the east- and westbound lanes for about a 2.5-mile stretch from east of Kiwanis Camp Road to east of Mirror Lake trailhead
- Construction of a retaining wall to reduce impacts to existing trail from highway widening work
- Extending the westbound passing lanes for a total of about 1,400 feet

### How will people using U.S. 26 be affected by construction?

During construction, people will still be able reach their favorite spot on the mountain or wherever they are heading. However, the reality is construction means delays. While there will be some short-term highway closures delays, ODOT will work to keep people moving.

Here is what to expect when construction takes place during the months of April – October:

- Travelers should expect closures up-to one hour three days a week Monday through Thursday in the early evening between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. for blasting the rock slopes. ODOT is working the details to the exact time of these closures.
- Not all of these closures will take a full hour. However, it is best to plan on being delayed for an hour during these times.
- The closures are times based on how many vehicles are using U.S. 26 and on available sunlight.
- Nearby trails will also briefly close during the blasting.
- Intermittent traffic stops lasting 20-minutes anytime the contractor is actively working.
- One lane closed between Kiwanis Camp Road and Mirror Lake around-the-clock for rockfall and retaining wall work. This means only one lane will remain open in each direction.
- Increased truck traffic on U.S. 26
- Construction will not occur on holidays and Sundays
- No construction work will occur from November to March



***Project includes placing about 2.5 miles of center barrier to prevent crossover crashes. A gap is provided for emergency use only at the runaway truck ramp.***

### How long will construction take?

We currently anticipate construction will take place April through October in 2014, 2015 and 2016. However, it is important to note that severe weather or a change in site conditions could extend the amount of time it takes to construct this project. More details about the schedule will be available once a contractor is on board.





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## Frequently Asked Questions Continued

### **When will ODOT hire the contractor?**

The project will be advertised to bidders on October 18. ODOT will open the bids on November 21, 2013 and the contractor should be on board and authorized to begin work at the beginning of 2014.

### **When will work start on this project?**

Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2014 when the snow melts. We hope to begin work in April 2014.

### **Where will all the rock and other materials from the rock slope go?**

Nearly a million cubic yards of rocks and other materials will go to several disposal sites on Mt. Hood. These sites include the, ODOT Maintenance Yard at U.S. 26 and OR 35 Junction, Lolo Pass Road – two sites, Tamarack Quarry and Laurel Quarry

### **Will trucks use Trillium Lake Road during the weekends?**

No. Trillium Lake is a popular destination for people enjoying Mt. Hood, especially on the weekends.

### **How will the trucks hauling to disposal sites affect traffic on U.S. 26?**

Travelers using U.S. 26 or the roads leading to the quarries and disposal sites should expect slow trucks and congestion. ODOT will not allow hauling on Sundays when traffic volumes are highest on U.S. 26 to help ease the congestion.

### **How will ODOT maintain the roads used by trucks hauling rock and other materials?**

### **Will this project include improvements to the trailheads at Mirror Lake and Laurel Hill?**

While these trails lead to beautiful and unique places, however, the purpose of the U.S. 26 safety project is to reduce severe crossover crashes and rockfall hazards. ODOT lacks the funds available to improve trail access or parking and the trailheads belong to the US Forest Service. However, nothing in this highway safety project would preclude any future plans for trail access improvements.

### **Will this project include adding new travel lanes?**

No. The primary focus of this project is to reduce rock falls and severe crossover crashes. This can be accomplished without adding lanes.

### **Will ODOT widen U.S. 26 between Camp Creek and Rhododendron?**

No. ODOT only has funding available to address the safety concerns and not to reduce congestion. Recently ODOT completed improvements in this area to address safety concerns.

### **Can ODOT reduce the speed limit on U.S. 26 to improve safety?**

Changing speed limits on a highway is a lengthy process requiring a speed study and special approval from the statewide traffic engineer. ODOT recognizes speed is a concern on Mt. Hood and currently a team of traffic engineers is designing a project to place traveler information and warning signs to help address speed and congestion. More details will be available regarding that project in the winter 2014. Additionally, a public education effort will compliment the U.S. 26 Safety Project aimed at changing driving behaviors such as speeding.

### **Where can I learn more?**

Learn more at: [www.US26MtHoodSafety.org](http://www.US26MtHoodSafety.org).

### **When will ODOT give it's next update?**

ODOT will give another update when a contractor is onboard in early 2014.

***Watch for an online open house in October at [www.US26MtHoodSafety.org](http://www.US26MtHoodSafety.org)***