

Eastgate roadwork on pause for holiday shoppers

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Transportation officials have an early Christmas present for shoppers in the Eastgate area: a temporary cessation of most major road construction.

That's according to Clermont County Engineer Patrick Manger, who in the following email Q & A discusses how officials who closely monitored traffic in Union Township over the Thanksgiving holidays used the information to draft traffic plans for the Christmas holidays.

Manger also discusses what roadwork has been completed and what is yet to come in the Eastgate area.

How will Eastgate area roadwork affect holiday shoppers? Any tips regarding detours, the best times to travel, etc.?

"We monitored traffic in the Eastgate area on Black Friday and throughout the rest of the holiday weekend and found that the additional lanes on Eastgate Boulevard and the elimination of one signal on Eastgate Boulevard made possible by the reconfigured state Route 32 ramps and the elimination of several weave-and-merge movements on state Route 32 have already been a huge improvement to traffic flow for holiday shoppers.

"Our new adaptive signal system has kept us busy making continual adjustments to the signal timing based on real-time traffic volumes as waves of shoppers make their way through the area. I have not seen traffic able to move so freely about the Eastgate area on a Black Friday in all the time I've been here.

"We have intentionally planned no construction activities which would require detours or road closures during the holiday shopping season, with the exception of the existing lane restrictions on Interstate 275 over state Route 32. The Ohio Department of Transportation construction contractor will continue to work throughout the winter on I-275 and will soon switch from working on the northbound side to the southbound side of the interstate, but no additional lane restrictions are expected.

"Likewise, our contractor for the Ivy Pointe extension project between Ivy Pointe Boulevard and AicholtzCQ Road will continue to work throughout the winter without impact to local traffic."

What roadwork has been completed in the Eastgate area?

“Reconstruction of Eastgate North Road, often referred to as Phase 1 of the Eastgate area improvements, was completed in the fall of 2013 and paved the way for both the Eastgate Boulevard widening and I-275 and state Route 32 interchange-improvement projects, referred to as Phase 2 and Phase 3, respectively.

“The reconstruction of Eastgate Boulevard over state Route 32 was completed and fully opened prior to this Thanksgiving. Significant portions of the I-275 and state Route 32 interchange project have also been completed this year; most notably the widening of state Route 32 and elimination of several merge-and-weave locations, completion of the eastbound state Route 32 ramps to and from Eastgate Boulevard and the completion of the tunnel which will accommodate traffic from I-275 wishing to travel east on state Route 32 beyond the Eastgate Boulevard interchange.

“The Clough Pike widening project also wrapped up this fall, adding a center turn lane and sidewalks in addition to making improvements to drainage and traffic signals within the corridor.

“Our Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Phase II project also wrapped up this fall, bringing new technology to more than 50 traffic signals across the county. Specific to the Eastgate area, this project interconnected 14 county- maintained traffic signals, creating a system with adaptive technology which allows each of these signals to adjust timing in a coordinated manner based upon real-time traffic data collected at each intersection.”

What roadwork has yet to be done in the Eastgate area and when will that work begin and end?

“The remaining portions of the I-275 and state Route 32 interchange project will continue through much of next year. The bulk of the work that remains will center around I-275 and should have minimal additional impact to traffic.

“The new tunnel is expected to open by the end of this year for northbound I-275 traffic and the flyover ramp from southbound I-275 through the tunnel will follow later next year. Once opened, these new ramps will allow traffic wishing to travel eastbound on state Route 32 beyond the Eastgate area to bypass the traffic signals on state Route 32 and avoid Eastgate Boulevard ramp traffic.

“Our Ivy Pointe Boulevard extension project kicked off this fall and will open in the fall of 2015, connecting Ivy Ponte Boulevard to Aicholtz Road.

“The construction of four new bridges on I-275, two of which have already been completed, will make way for our planned reconnection of Aicholtz Road under the interstate. This project will start in the fall of 2015, making improvements to and reconnecting Aicholtz Road from Eastgate Boulevard to Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road when it reopens in the fall of 2016.”

How much money is being spent on roadwork in the Eastgate area, and why?

“More than \$80 million will be spent on construction in the Eastgate area between 2012 and 2016.

“The purpose of all of these improvements is to increase the safety and efficiency of travel throughout the area. Improved traffic flow benefits residents and visitors, employers and employees, and provides an avenue for continued growth, economic development and investment throughout the community.

“Additional information can always be found on GoClermont.org and by following the Clermont County Transportation Improvement District GoClermont pages on Facebook and Twitter.”

Want to know more about what is happening in Union Township? Follow me on Twitter @jeannehouck.

<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/local/union-township/2014/12/04/eastgate-roadwork-pause-holiday-shoppers/19882249/>