

The largest concrete surface in Michigan is the I-75 Rouge River Bridge, and as it is now scheduled to be replaced, Metro Detroit is looking at one of the biggest freeway closures to have taken place in recent years. The closure, which will stretch between Detroit and Downriver, is scheduled to start on February 4th, 2017 and will last approximately two years. Projected to cost about \$200 million, the project will include removing and replacing all of the concrete on the bridge!

As per the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the project further entails removing the Goddard Street Bridge and replacing it with two smaller bridges, repairing 13 other bridges located along the I-75 through the Downriver communities, and adding intelligent transportation system (ITS) equipment. The ITS equipment includes a combination of electronic, telecommunication and information technology that MDOT uses as a means to improve safety and travel times on the bridges.

Though drivers should expect the southbound I-75 to stay closed over the two-year period, those affected will be happy to know that the northbound I-75 will remain open at all times. There are a number of reasons as to why MDOT decided to only shut one direction down, many of which are directly beneficial not only for the project itself but also to those who rely on the I-75 Bridge in their daily commutes.

For one, by rebuilding the bridge one side at a time without traffic, the project will be able to be completed quicker. Construction activity will move along quicker and without interruption as not as much time and effort is required to shift traffic. Consequently shorter project duration will also ensure lowest overall project cost. Keeping the entire northbound side of the bridge open further provides adequate room for emergency crews to respond to any incidences on the bridge that may occur.

For 2017 and 2018, two alternative routes are offered to motorists who will be affected by the southbound closing.


**Detour for 2017**

**Detour for 2018**

Image Source:

<http://www.clickondetroit.com/traffic/southbound-i-75-to-close-for-2-years-starting-feb-4-between-detroit-and-downriver>

### *Planning ahead is Key*

In planning the re-building of large concrete structures, it is important to think of all aspects that may affect the quality, cost and duration of the project. MDOT for instance, strategized that by maintaining the bridge over the course of the past 40 years rather than doing a full replacement of the bridge, which would have amounted to approximately \$400 million, they had actually saved \$250 million!

Source:

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