



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Time not the only thing changing in Pierce County this weekend**

*Westbound SR 16 traffic shifts and Sprague Ave. exit closes for one year*

TACOMA – Crews rebuilding the Nalley Valley Viaduct are springing ahead and shifting westbound SR 16 traffic onto a new temporary roadway and closing the ramp to Sprague Avenue for one year over the weekend, March 13-14.

“This is a huge deal for Tacoma drivers,” said Kevin Dayton, region administrator. “We expect significant disruptions to traffic flowing in and through Tacoma for a couple of weeks until drivers get familiar with the new traffic revisions.”

Those revisions are expected to contribute to slowdowns and motorists should plan for delays and congestion from both directions of I-5 to SR 16; from I-705 to I-5; and westbound SR 16 at Union Avenue.

Weather permitting; crews will close westbound SR 16 overnight from 10 p.m. Saturday, March 13 to 10 a.m. Sunday, March 14. During the closure, crews will construct the crossover pavement from the existing westbound viaduct to the existing eastbound viaduct. They will also complete placement of the traffic barrier and finalize the detour lane striping.

Once this work is complete, westbound traffic will be rerouted to the temporary roadway, making way for new roadways and bridges. The Sprague Avenue exit, which carries 12,000 vehicles a day, will remain closed through project completion in spring 2011.

One of the biggest challenges for crews building the new westbound Nalley Valley structure is keeping traffic moving. Each day, an average of 65,000 vehicles travel westbound on the viaduct.

“Shifting westbound SR 16 traffic and closing the Sprague Avenue exit is required to construct the new viaduct,” said Kevin Dayton, region administrator. “The traffic modifications leading onto SR 16 were developed to maintain mobility and safety as best we can through the I-5 corridor which is already at and beyond capacity at peak commute times.”

While disruptive, the work is a sign that this \$120 million project is progressing. This project is funded by the 2003 Nickel transportation package, employs about 200 construction workers and supports an estimated 620 jobs.

Once the project is complete, new westbound bridges and Sprague Avenue ramps eliminate one of Pierce County's worst bottlenecks and reduce collisions by an estimated 60 percent, or 16 fewer per year.

For more information, visit [www.tacomatraffic.com](http://www.tacomatraffic.com).

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