

## **Traffic opens on Shields Blvd. as Crosstown project progresses**

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Shields Boulevard, south of the current I-40 Crosstown, is expected to reopen to four lanes by 5 p.m. today, March 6, as Manhattan Bridge and Construction Co. finish final details and complete work on schedule. North and southbound traffic can use the bridge once again with the completion of the new northbound lanes of Shields Blvd. Two lanes will be open in each direction with a speed limit of 45 m.p.h. Drivers should be alert because barrels will be in the area until the other lanes are reconstructed at a later date.

The \$15 million project began in December 2007 and is one of 23 separate projects required in building the new I-40 Crosstown. With approximately 12,000 vehicles traveling this section of roadway daily, those who commute will get much-needed relief from the roadway having been closed in this area due to the construction.

This project on the east end of the Crosstown corridor involved reconstruction of the northbound Shields Blvd. bridge, the Lee St. drainage structure and large amounts of grading and dirt work west of the Canal Bridge.

The next phase along the corridor is tentatively scheduled to open for bids in April and involves diversion of interstate traffic and reconstruction of eastbound I-40 from I-44 to Agnew Ave.

The new I-40 Crosstown is being built south of the existing highway and stretches four-and-a-half miles from May Ave. to I-235. Designed to be a combination of ground-level and semi-depressed roadway, the new Crosstown will replace the present elevated thoroughfare. The new 10-lane interstate is expected to be open to traffic in 2012. Currently estimated at more than \$600 million, the project is federally funded, using a blend of earmarked and regular formula federal dollars.

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