

Simpson Avenue Bridge Repairs To Take 2 Months Longer Than Expected **Local News**

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HOQUIAM, Wash. - Engineers have determined it will take about two months longer than expected to repair supports for the US 101 Simpson Avenue Bridge, which closed Aug. 5. The reopening is now scheduled for January, instead of November. "Given the condition of the soils and the age of the structure, we are unable to use conventional methods to fix the bridge," said Kevin Dayton, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) region administrator. "This is extending the work beyond what we originally anticipated." WSDOT is moving quickly to make the repairs. Now that designs are complete, WSDOT will hand deliver the plans to potential or interested contractors on Tuesday, Oct. 5, in anticipation of opening bids Oct. 12. Work on the bridge will begin in late October.

Dayton said the existing pier needs significant strengthening, but that crews will work six days a week to complete the repairs necessary to reopen the bridge to traffic. WSDOT is taking special care to ensure the integrity of the vulnerable structure. Normal techniques to drive in or vibrate support piles into the ground cannot be used to make repairs because they might damage the existing, functional bridge piles. WSDOT closed the bridge to motorists in August after noticing unusual movement on the bridge and then discovering severe erosion and degradation of the timber piles that support the bridge's concrete piers. During the closure, motorists are detouring using the nearby Riverside Bridge. Built in 1927, the Simpson Avenue Bridge is a 1,978-foot-long bridge that spans the Hoquiam River and carries about 13,000 vehicles per day. "We understand the burden this situation puts on local businesses," said Dayton. "We are working diligently to restore the bridge for the community as soon as we can." For more information, visit:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/US101/SimpsonBridgePierRepair/.