

Hello everyone. First, the good news – we learned late this afternoon that crews will be wrapping up their work tomorrow (Friday, Feb. 27), one day early, on the State Route 305 Agate Pass bridge. Motorists can still expect single-lane alternating traffic tomorrow from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., and then everyone can breathe a sigh of relief as equipment gets packed up and the bridge maintenance crews head home.

The last three weeks have been a marathon effort for drivers and bridge crews alike. We were fortunate to have unseasonably warm and dry weather for a big portion of the three weeks, allowing bridge crews to not only complete a significant amount of work, but to complete work that can only be done in dry weather (such as asphalt patching and bridge rail painting).

This week maintenance and inspection activities have occurred simultaneously. While WSDOT bridge engineers have been conducting a detailed inspection of the bridge, maintenance crews have continued to make repairs. Repairs have included smoothing a ‘bump’ on the pavement at the end of the bridge, replacing missing or rusted rivets, removing general rust from the bridge, adding over-height load signs on the bridge, repairing sidewalk joints, painting the new raised pedestrian railing, and other tasks.



This ‘before’ photo shows rust eating away at rivets and a beam flange. Crews are removing rust from the most critical areas of the bridge, a time- and labor-intensive but necessary job.

This ‘after’ photo shows the rivets and beam cleaned and coated with a zinc-based coating to protect the steel from future rust.



Other rivets are rusted to the point that they must be replaced. Rust has eroded the dome heads of these rivets into points.



Damaged and missing rivets are replaced with high-strength bolts and covered with a protective zinc-based coating.



To reduce the potential of bridge strikes by over-sized trucks, crews also installed signs stating the vertical clearance under the bridge.



The dry weather allowed crews to grind and patch a bump in the pavement at the bridge abutment to smooth the ride for motorists.



Another task crews were able to complete was to repair the work platform under the bridge. Not visible to the traveling public, this platform is a key safety component for crews working on the bridge.



Not all repairs were completed in this three-week period. This photo shows an area affected with “pack rust,” a thick layer of rust that has exerted so much force that it has bent the steel plates it inhabits. Crews will monitor the area and a future repair will be scheduled. In the interim, a zinc coating will slow rust progression.

We are also pleased to report that the in-depth bridge inspection has revealed no obvious critical problems with the bridge. WSDOT bridge engineers, however, will take up to three months to complete their inspection analysis and finalize the inspection report.

Much more maintenance beyond this three-week effort is needed on the bridge, and it will be incorporated into future bridge maintenance schedules. Next February, crews will again return to conduct annual bridge flushing, inspections and maintenance work. Any work requiring the use of under-bridge-inspection trucks (UBITS) will again require daytime lane closures to ensure the safety of drivers, crews and equipment, and could result once again multiple days of alternating single-lane closures.

WSDOT would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to the residents and commuters who modified their driving schedules, avoided the bridge during work hours, or switched to the Bremerton or Kingston ferries since early February. The intense effort has been successful for a number of reasons, including the favorable weather, good work planning and execution, and perhaps most importantly, lower traffic volumes.

Thank you again for your cooperation and support, and we’ll see you next year!

p.s. The electronic signs on the highway still say the work continues through the 28th – they will be updated first thing tomorrow morning.