

5-1-2008

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Recommended Citation

"Detour Ahead" (2008). *News Releases*. 1865.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/1865

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Detour Ahead

05.01.2008 | Campus and Community

With reconstruction of the Stewart Street bridge over the Great Miami River starting in June, commuters who use the bridge to reach campus will need to take a different route.

The bridge closes June 23. It will be replaced with a \$16.5 million six-lane, seven-span concrete box-beam bridge. It is expected to reopen by the end of 2009.

UD and the city of Dayton recommend that commuters using Interstate 75 and U.S. 35 take the Main Street/Jefferson Street exit from U.S. 35 and turn left (south) onto Warren Street, which turns into Brown Street and leads directly to campus.

Electronic signs on I-75 and U.S. 35 will direct drivers to detours. In addition, multiple directional signs will be installed along the detour route through the Brown-Warren business district leading to UD and Miami Valley Hospital, according to Richard Perales, University campus planning director.

"We have been working hand in hand with the city to make sure that this project goes smoothly and causes minimal disruption to drivers," Perales said. "This will be a signature bridge in Dayton that will alleviate congestion and provide a gateway to the University of Dayton as well as downtown on the city's southern edge. We're excited about this project because it will improve the entry to campus."

In anticipation of increased traffic in the Brown-Warren corridor, city officials are sprucing up that entry with improved landscaping and sidewalk repair, Perales said.

About 16,000 vehicles cross the four-lane Stewart Street Bridge each day. A closed-spandrel, earth-filled arch bridge with seven spans, it was built in 1912 by E.M. Gephart and R.E. Kline, said Steve Finke, assistant director of public works for the city of Dayton. The designer, the Concrete-Steel Engineering Co., was noted for its use of the Melan arch, which uses parallel steel arch ribs as reinforcement; Melan arches also were used on the Washington Street and Monument Avenue bridges in Dayton.

The new bridge will include aesthetic features such as underlighting, contemporary street lights, decorative railings, decorative concrete panels along the outside of the bridge and a plaza at each corner. Wide sidewalks will allow access across the river for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The engineering firm Woolpert designed the structure.

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