



## CONNECTING NEIGHBORS

MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project

# WELCOME

February/March 2008

Issue 4

This is the fourth edition of Connecting Neighbors, the Michigan Department of Transportation's newsletter designed to give you news and information about MDOT's I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. The important news in this edition: Major construction on the Gateway Project is set to begin on Monday, February 25, 2008. Read on to find out what you should do to be prepared as this important economic development initiative gets underway.

### About the MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project

ease traffic at the economically vital Detroit-Windsor border crossing and decrease traffic on city streets. The project is expected to conclude by December 2009. Learn more inside...

On Monday, February 25, 2008, the Michigan Department of Transportation will begin major construction on Phase 4 of the MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. MDOT's Gateway Project represents the largest single construction contract that MDOT has ever undertaken in any part of the State. It is a \$230 million investment in Michigan's infrastructure that will increase capacity and



- 1 Construction of a new Bagley Ave pedestrian bridge
- 2 Reconstruction of the I-75 freeway, Clark St to 14th St and the I-96 freeway, I-75 to Warren Ave
- 3 Reconstruction of the SB I-75 service drive
- 4 New ramps for truck and auto access to the Ambassador Bridge
- 5 New ramps for access to local community
- 6 Reconstruction and rehabilitation of over 20 area bridges
- 7 Construction of a new soundwall along the SB I-75 service drive
- 8 Extensive landscaping throughout the project area
- 9 Toll plaza improvements (work done by Detroit Int'l Bridge Co.)

## MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project

### During Phase 4 of the Gateway Project, MDOT will reconstruct:

- 1.5 miles of mainline I-75 from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street
- 1 mile of mainline I-96 from the I-75/I-96 interchange northward to Warren Avenue
- 18 ramps and 24 bridges

### MDOT will also build:

- A signature cable-stay pedestrian bridge over I-75 and I-96 connecting East and West Mexicantown. The lighted bridge, the first of its kind in Michigan, will span I-75 at Bagley Street connecting neighbors and visitors to the area's attractions including the new Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center and Mercado, as well as local businesses throughout Southwest Detroit
- 3 miles of retaining wall along the reconstructed freeway



**Meet Ed Tatem**, MDOT's community liaison for the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. As a veteran engineer and transportation professional with expertise in bridge and highway design construction. Ed is no stranger to major construction projects like the Gateway, having spent 18 years in several MDOT positions. Nor is this New Yorker, who re-located to Michigan in 1984, a stranger to Mexicantown and Southwest Detroit. Tatem recently discussed his experience in the community, his new role and plans for the liaison office:

**You have had lots of experience working in Detroit and in Southwest Detroit in particular. Can you tell us about your work in the community?**

**Ed Tatem:** I used to run MDOT's Transportation Service Center (TSC) in Detroit. It's located right at Rosa Parks and Fort Street. In 1997, I worked on a rehabilitation project on Porter Street and the I-75 Service Drive. I was also involved with repair projects in the neighborhood on Michigan Avenue and Fort Street and in the I-75 reconstruction to I-375. I really enjoyed working there. I got to interact with some of the community schools, like Amelia Earhart. Also I coached the Tee Ball Team, "The Incredibles," that plays at Saint Hedwig and Memorial Park. At that time, I got to interact with the Southwest Detroit Business Association and the Mexicantown Community Development Association.

### What do you appreciate most about the community?

**Tatem:** One of the things that I really admire is that there is a lot of pedestrian traffic as well as a lot of bakeries. There is also a park in the area, Clark Park. You can tell a lot about a community by the kinds of bakeries and parks it has. It reminds me of when I was growing up in New York and the pedestrian traffic they had there. It means that there is a vibrant neighborhood with a lot of children, which makes the community more like a family.

### What will be your main role as community liaison for the Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project?

**Tatem:** My main role is to ensure two-way communication between MDOT and the community. MDOT engineers are doing good work, and I want to make sure the community knows that. On the other hand, with any project of this size and scope, local residents and businesses are going to have questions, concerns and issues. I am here to bring those concerns to the attention of MDOT to make sure they are addressed and resolved.

## Monday, February 25, 2008

To facilitate the safe and efficient construction of the Gateway Project, MDOT will close a section of I-75 from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street beginning on Monday, February 25. The total closure of this section of the freeway to through traffic allows MDOT to complete the project in 22 months rather than 4 years. Access to and from the Ambassador Bridge and to and from Mexicantown and other areas of Southwest Detroit will be maintained throughout construction.

### How can the public reach you with questions and concerns? Will the liaison's office have an open-door policy?

**Tatem:** Yes, there will be an open-door policy. People are welcome to visit me at the new MDOT office located in the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center at 2835 Bagley Avenue. The telephone number where I can be reached on weekdays is (313) 963-2813. I will also be out there in the community trying to give as much information as is available.

### Are there any other special skills that you bring to your job as community liaison; anything else you want neighborhood residents to be aware of?

**Tatem:** I read and write in Spanish, which I think will be useful in helping me to reach out and connect with the residents of Mexicantown. I want people to know that my door is always open, and that I look forward to being a part of the community.



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?



### Mark Your Calendars: Monday, February 25, 2008...

That's the date that MDOT is closing the I-75 freeway from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street to begin major construction on the I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project. This section of the freeway will remain closed until December 2009.

### Remember...

Access to businesses and restaurants in Mexicantown and southwest Detroit will be maintained during construction. These facilities are open for business!! Access to and from the Ambassador Bridge will also be maintained at all times.

### Test drive Gateway Detour Routes before Monday, February 25...

Drivers, start your engines: It's time to test drive detour routes that will take you around the MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway construction site!!!

By now you know that MDOT will be closing a one-and-a-half mile section of I-75 from Rosa Parks Boulevard to Clark Street on Monday, February 25. If you are a motorist who uses this stretch of freeway to get to and from work daily, or for the occasional trip to a sporting event, the theater or the symphony, MDOT wants you to test drive alternate routes that will help you avoid the Gateway Project closure.

"Whenever we close a roadway for construction," said Brenda Peek, an MDOT communications representative for the Metro Region, "our first concerns are maintaining safety, access and mobility for the public. While we know that closing a roadway always causes some inconvenience, our traffic management staff works hard to keep it to a minimum."

Peek went on to suggest that the best way for motorists to prepare for the I-75 closure is to drive MDOT's posted detour routes or to find their own alternate routes in advance of Monday, February 25.

To get maps of MDOT's posted detour routes; motorists can go to the Gateway Project Web site at [www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway) and download the "Guide to I-75/I-96" brochure. There are two brochures posted: one with detour maps for cars and another with detour maps for commercial trucks.

In addition, "Guide to I-75/I-96" brochures are currently being distributed to businesses, restaurants, public buildings, at the Ambassador Bridge toll plaza and many other locations throughout the area.

MDOT will also post updated traffic information on the [www.michigan.gov/drive](http://www.michigan.gov/drive) Web site after Monday, February 25.

I-75 from Clark Street to Rosa Parks is expected to reopen by December 2009. A one-mile section of I-96 will be closed for 90 days this summer.

"It is also important for everyone to know that access to and from the Ambassador Bridge and to and from Mexicantown and Southwest Detroit will be maintained throughout the construction project. We're encouraging everyone to visit the businesses and restaurants in Mexicantown and Southwest Detroit," said Peek.

Suggested detours are the I-94 and Lodge freeways, Fort Street, Michigan Avenue and Grand River Avenue. MDOT's media partner, WWJ-AM 950, will broadcast regular traffic updates.

For more information about the MDOT I-75 Ambassador Bridge Gateway Project, visit [www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway).



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MDOT I-75 Ambassador  
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Prepared by: MDOT Graphics \OfficeOfCommunications\gatewayBridge\December2007Newsletter\gateway brdg issue 3 newsltr.indd • 2000 copies printed @ \$0.50 each for a total cost of \$1003.

## Get Detour Information

To get a copy of *Connecting Neighbors: Guide to I-75/I-96*, the brochure with detour maps and information on how to avoid the construction area, visit [www.michigan.gov/gateway](http://www.michigan.gov/gateway). To have multiple copies of the brochure shipped to you for distribution, send your e-mail request to [MDOTgateway@loviogeargeinc.com](mailto:MDOTgateway@loviogeargeinc.com).

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