

What is the U.S. Highway 385 construction project?

The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) is reconstructing a portion of U.S. Highway 385 between the Pennington-Lawrence county line and the south end of Sheridan Lake (Calumet Road). Once completed, this section of Highway 385 will feature safety improvements, including wider shoulders on each side of the road where possible, improved road curves to meet current design standards, additional turning lanes to improve traffic flow, and new surfacing.

Why do the improvements need to be made?

This project is being completed with funding from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the use of federal funds requires that certain standards be met. U.S. Highway 385 does not meet current design standards and requires redesign alongside general maintenance due to the age of the infrastructure.

Site distances for hills and curves: Portions of the roadway do not meet current design standards for curvature and will be redesigned to meet current design criteria.

Roadway shoulders: Current design standards dictate an eight-foot shoulder, and the current highway only has two to three-foot shoulders.

Clear zone: The current roadway has a limited clear zone of two to 16 feet, and current design standards require a minimum 30-foot clear zone.

Culverts and drainage pipes: Multiple box culverts nearing the end of their useful life and drainage pipes in poor condition will be replaced.

Access to adjacent properties: Driveways and access to adjacent properties will be improved, and turn lanes will be installed at key intersections to improve the flow of traffic.

When will construction take place?

Construction will take place from spring 2024 through the end of 2026, with final surfacing being completed in 2027.

In what order will the project be constructed?

PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION

Spring 2024 - Winter 2025

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION:

- Pilot car lines and wait times
- Loose gravel road surface
- Large construction equipment
- Rock blasting
- Narrowed driving lanes
- Temporary road closures

CLOSURE A

Boat Ramp to Pactola Dam

May 20 - July 12, 2024
Including Memorial Day Weekend

CLOSURE B

S.D. Highway 44 to Boat Ramp

May 20 - June 7, 2024
**Road open Friday at noon - Monday at 6 a.m. for boat ramp access*

Memorial Day Access:

OPEN	CLOSED
Monday, May 27	Tuesday, May 28 at 6 a.m.

PHASE 2 CONSTRUCTION

Spring 2025 - Fall 2026

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION:

- Pilot car lines and wait times
- Loose gravel road surface
- Large construction equipment
- Rock blasting
- Narrowed driving lanes
- Temporary road closures

CLOSURE C

Sheridan Lake Road to Be Still Road

April 28 - June 13, 2025

CLOSURE D

Be Still Road to Calumet Road

August 12 - October 17, 2025

**Local access to Be Still Road will be maintained*

CLOSURE E

Pactola Dam to Taylor Ranch Road

October 20, 2025 - April 17, 2026

**Local access to Victoria Lake Road and McCurdy Gulch Road will be maintained*

What will the construction zone be like?

During construction, lanes will be kept at a minimum of 12 feet wide. The surface of the road may be loose gravel.

Will U.S. Highway 385 be closed to thru-traffic during construction?

At least one lane in each direction will be maintained throughout most of the construction process. However, construction plans will include completely closing portions of the road for a period of time in consideration of traveler safety and efficiency for the construction crew. More information will be provided to adjacent landowners, businesses, and members of the general public prior to the start of any closures. The map on the front page details anticipated closures and dates.

What detours will be provided for local residents and visitors?

Detour signage will be posted for road closures. The project website will include the most recent detour information. Please note that detours during road closures may add an extra 30 to 60 minutes to drivers' commutes, which may be on unpaved roads with loose surfaces.

Will the construction be loud?

Residents may notice an increase in noise during daylight hours throughout the course of construction. Rock blasting and drilling will occur within the project limits, with the potential for work to be completed overnight. Notice will be provided to adjacent residents prior to overnight rock blasting or drilling in the form of a letter, email, or phone call.

Will I be able to access recreation areas within the construction zone?

Pactola Reservoir North Boat Ramp: In 2024, construction will occur both north and south of the Pactola Reservoir north boat ramp (north of Pactola Dam). U.S. Highway 385 from S.D. Highway 44 to the boat ramp access road will be closed in May 20 - June 7, 2024. During this time, the boat ramp access road will only be accessible on the weekends and Memorial Day. Construction will continue south of the boat ramp access road on Highway 385 from the boat ramp access road to Pactola Dam and will be closed May 20 - July 12, 2024. The boat ramp will be accessible from the north during this time. In 2025 and 2026, the north boat ramp will be fully accessible.

Pactola Reservoir South Boat Ramp: Through the duration of construction in 2024, 2025, and 2026, access to the south boat ramp will not be impacted.

Centennial Trail: The Centennial Trail crosses Highway 385 near the north end of Pactola Reservoir. As part of this construction project, this trail crossing will be converted to an underpass. Hikers will not be able to cross at Highway 385, and will be rerouted on a temporary trail. Signage will be posted at the trailheads alerting hikers of any closures. While in the project area, please stay on trail during construction. During rock blasts, Centennial Trail near Veteran's Point will be closed for 1-2 hours. Additional questions about any USFS facilities can be directed to the Mystic Ranger Station: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/blackhills/about-forest/distriicts/?cid=stelprdb5110167>

Veteran's Point Trail: Veteran's Point Trail will be accessible through the duration of construction. During Phase 1 construction (2024), Veteran's Point Trail can be accessed from the south. During Phase 2 construction (2025 and 2026), Veteran's Point Trail can be accessed from the north. During rock blasts, the parking lot for Veteran's Point Trail will be closed for 1-2 hours. Additional questions about any USFS facilities can be directed to the Mystic Ranger Station: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/blackhills/about-forest/distriicts/?cid=stelprdb5110167>

Pactola Visitor Center: Highway 385 from the south end of Pactola Dam to the south entrance of Custer Gulch Road will be closed from October 2025 through April 2026. The Pactola Visitor Center is open seasonally, and will be closed for the winter during this road closure.

Sheridan Lake: Highway 385 from Sheridan Lake Road to Be Still Road from will be closed from April 28 to June 13, 2025. Highway 385 from Be Still Road to Calumet Road will be closed from Aug. 12 - Oct. 17, 2025. During both of these closures, Sheridan Lake may be accessed from the north via Sheridan Lake Road or from the south via Calumet Road.

What is the estimated cost of the project?

The entire project is anticipated to cost a total of approximately \$72 million.

How was the public involved in the design process of U.S. Highway 385?

The project team held multiple public meetings in September 2019 and landowner meetings in January 2020 to gather input and feedback. Feedback from residents and stakeholders was considered while finalizing the roadway design. The proposed design of the road includes safety improvements and brings the highway up to current design standards. The project team is also coordinating with local emergency services.

Have all the options for construction been considered?

This construction sequencing decision was determined by the SDDOT with input from a focus group made up of project stakeholders, including representatives of parents of Hill City students, school district representatives, business owners, South Dakota Department of Tourism, U.S. Forest Service, adjacent landowners and residents, local Chamber of Commerce representatives, local government and State representatives, and trails advocacy groups.

How can I learn about the project and stay up to date on construction progress?

A project website is available and will be updated throughout the construction process.

Project website: <https://www.us-385.com>

Facebook: South Dakota Department of Transportation

Twitter: @SouthDakotaDOT



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