

LAKEFRONT TRAFFIC CHANGES BEGIN THIS MONTH

As part of the Corps of Engineers' completion of 100-year flood protection, construction will soon begin to replace the floodwalls and floodgates and improve the levees between the 17th Street Canal and Topaz Street in West Lakeshore. To do so, the Corps' prime contractor, Tetra Tech EC, Inc. will be diverting traffic along Pontchartrain Blvd. north of Robert E. Lee Blvd., and, along Lake Marina Drive. These traffic changes are expected to begin the week of October 19th.

"Everyone who lives in the area, patronizes lakefront businesses, or enjoys the lakefront for recreational purposes should know that although we will be closing some lanes on two West End area streets, those streets will be open," said John Stanich, New Orleans program manager for Tetra Tech. "We're doing everything we can to ensure that those who live, work and play nearby can get where they want to go."

The 18-month project, which extends from the 17th Street Canal along Lake Marina Drive and Pontchartrain Blvd to Topaz Street, includes replacing I-walls with T-walls and replacing the Orleans Marina floodgates. Orleans Marina residents and boat owners will see reduced parking and access for several months. Travelers headed to Lakeshore Drive will encounter lane closures, but Lakeshore Drive will be accessible from West End for pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles.

In addition to traffic diversions, Tetra Tech has been authorized by the City of New Orleans to work extended hours – 7 a.m. to dusk, 6 days a week – in order to expedite the project's completion and complete a major portion of the work before June 1, 2010.