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Oregon Department of Transportation plans to widen Highway 126

EUGENE, Ore. -- The Oregon Department of Transportation plans to widen an accident prone stretch of Highway 126 this summer between Eugene and Veneta in an effort to make it safer for motorists.

ODOT plans to spend \$25 million to widen the 12 mile stretch of highway from two lanes to four. Construction to expand the highway will begin in mid-June and be completed by the end of the year. Motorists should expect delays of 10 to 20 minutes when traveling on the highway this summer.

To expand the 12 mile stretch between Greenhill Road in west Eugene to Territorial Highway in Veneta, ODOT will have to place more than 15 million tons of rock into the Fern Ridge Reservoir, which is adjacent and north of the road.

"This project is about safety and protecting families," said ODOT Director Matt Garrett. "Expanding the highway is the only way to reduce needless deaths."

Highway 126 is one of the most dangerous highway corridors in the state of Oregon, with an average of 45 collisions each year. Drivers frequently take chances by passing vehicles that are traveling below the 55 mph speed limit. In 2019, a family of four died after their westbound car struck an eastbound freight truck head-on while the truck was trying to pass a slow moving van, bringing the 2019 death toll to 14.