



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Closure of MLK, Jr. Blvd**

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**Release Date: Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

## **MLK, Jr. Blvd Underpass Project Will Close Road from 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to 1<sup>st</sup> Street**

On Monday, March 11th, construction crews will close down MLK, Jr. Boulevard to allow for work to begin on a new multi-million dollar railroad underpass project. The closure will be between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street and should last into late summer or early fall of 2014.

While MLK, Jr. Blvd. west of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue will remain open to local traffic during construction, eastbound drivers on MLK, Jr. Blvd. are encouraged to turn right on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and use Yakima Avenue to reach downtown Yakima. Electronic reader boards went up in late February to remind motorists of the impending traffic changes.

The MLK, Jr. Blvd. underpass is designed to improve driver and pedestrian safety, reduce exhaust emissions and improve response times for emergency responders.

Mowat Construction Company, which is based in Woodinville, is the primary contractor for the project. Mowat has been building public works projects throughout the western United States since its founding in the mid 1960s.

Mowat's bid of just over \$10.6 million dollars was almost \$2 million below engineering estimates for the underpass. Funding for the project is coming primarily from state and federal sources.

Both the MLK, Jr. Blvd. underpass and the Lincoln Avenue underpass, which was opened in May 2012, have been designed to improve driver and pedestrian safety, reduce exhaust emissions from cars waiting for trains to pass, and speed the response times for police, fire, and other emergency services providers.

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