

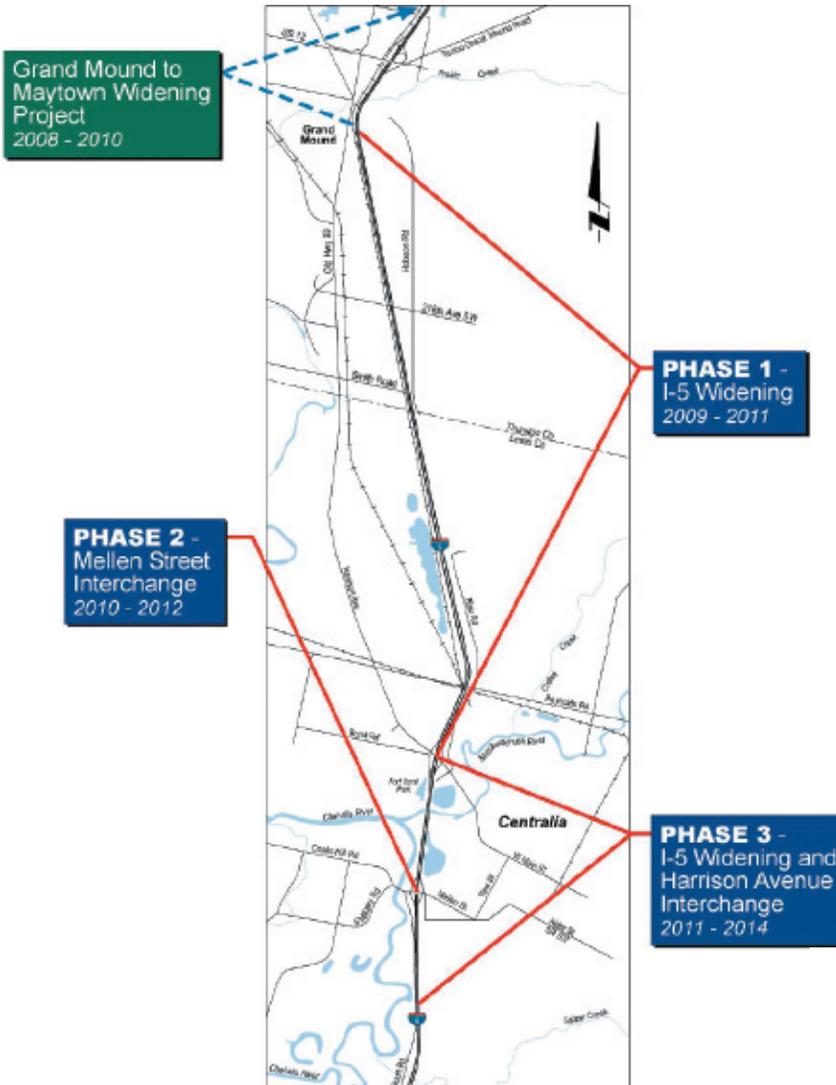
# I-5, Mellen Street to Grand Mound: A Safety and Capacity Improvement Project



Washington State  
Department of Transportation

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## What is the I-5, Mellen Street to Grand Mound Project?

This project will widen about seven miles of I-5 between Mellen Street in Lewis County and the Grand Mound interchange (Exit 88) in Thurston County to at least three lanes in each direction. It will also reconstruct two interchanges and several bridges.

Using \$160 million in the State's Transportation Partnership Funding Package earmarked for this project, WSDOT is committed to completing it by 2014.

## What are the expected benefits of the project?

The additional lanes will improve safety on I-5 and at interchanges, reducing accidents and providing much needed congestion relief. The improved mobility will benefit both the local community and through traffic.

## What is expected in each of the three phases?

To expedite the overall project, WSDOT has divided the work into three phases:

- **Phase 1: I-5 Widening.** Work to widen I-5 to three lanes in each direction will begin south of Grand Mound (Exit 88) to connect to an adjacent widening project to the north (Grand Mound to Maytown) and continue south towards Harrison Avenue. Construction is planned to begin in 2009.
- **Phase 2: I-5, Mellen Street Interchange.** This project will replace the existing Mellen Street interchange (Exit 81) to accommodate the widening of I-5 beneath it. Construction is planned to begin in 2010.
- **Phase 3: I-5 Widening and Harrison Avenue.** This project will widen approximately three miles of I-5 to three lanes in each direction and may include a fourth auxiliary lane between the Mellen Street interchange (Exit 81) and Harrison Avenue. The Harrison Avenue interchange will be reconstructed to accommodate the widening of I-5. Construction is planned to begin in 2011.

## What are the issues at the Mellen Street interchange?

WSDOT is examining alternative locations farther to the south for the Mellen Street interchange because of safety and critical infrastructure problems at the current location.

- The section of State Route 507, east of the Mellen Street interchange, is a high accident location.
- The short distance between the interchanges at Mellen Street and Harrison Avenue creates safety problems between merging and exiting vehicles.
- The proximity of the wastewater pump station and its pipelines to the Mellen Street off ramp is a serious and expensive constraint on widening the interstate and providing a new off ramp at this location.

**What is the process for developing alternatives?**

The project team will develop an initial set of alternatives for the Mellen Street interchange. These alternatives will be evaluated and gradually narrowed over the spring and summer, leading to the selection of a preferred alternative by fall 2006. The process will involve input from the public at three open houses, technical analysis, and consultation with a technical team that consists of representatives of local cities, counties and ports that have responsibilities for local land use and transportation planning. As the evaluation of alternatives proceeds, WSDOT will report the results of its evaluation to the public at open houses.

**How will decisions about the alternatives be made?**

At every step in the process, WSDOT makes decisions after receiving input from local jurisdictions and from citizens. Decisions will be based on societal values and driven by data. Opportunities for public involvement are scheduled to occur throughout the process and WSDOT will present the results of its analysis and evaluation to the public.

**Will WSDOT prepare an environmental impact statement to assess impacts of the project on the natural and built environment?**

In 2003, WSDOT finalized an environmental impact statement (EIS) that looked at the I-5 corridor from Toutle Park to Maytown, which included preliminary analysis of wetlands and other environmental issues in the project area. WSDOT is now looking at specific projects and will conduct a more detailed analysis of them as part of the design process.

**What will WSDOT do to ensure that access to essential services and businesses is maintained during construction?**

WSDOT will make accommodations to preserve access to services and businesses during construction. Access to Providence Hospital will remain open at all times. WSDOT will keep two lanes open in both directions at all times during the daytime, with single lane closures at night as needed. Interchange ramps will be open during daylight hours. Reduced speed limits may be imposed in the project area. If temporary ramp closures are needed, they will occur only after advance notice and primarily at night.

**How can you get more information?**

To learn more about the project, please contact Richard Hensley P.E., Area Engineer, by telephone at 360-740-8600 or toll-free 1-866-713-2412 or by email, [henslerg@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:henslerg@wsdot.wa.gov). Additional information is available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/I5/MellentoGrandMound/>.

