

Improvements

NE 112th Avenue Connector • NE 18th Street Interchange • NE 18th Street Corridor Improvements

Vol. 1 No. 1

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION • CITY OF VANCOUVER

February 2006

Good News: Traffic relief is on the way

Three priority east side transportation projects will be built over next eight years

Relief is on the way for several traffic snarls and safety concerns within the I-205 corridor and on the east side of Vancouver. The first improvement could be open to local motorists as soon as 2009. By 2014, drivers in the area will enjoy several new avenues of relief from current traffic woes.

Three priority projects that are currently taking shape will increase safety and mobility on I-205 and adjoining roads, reduce congestion on Mill Plain Boulevard and other major roads near I-205, and create several new options for entering and exiting the freeway. They are:

- A new off-ramp connection to NE 112th Avenue from the northbound I-205 off-ramp to westbound Mill Plain Boulevard
- A new NE 18th Street interchange (I-205/ Mill Plain Interchange to NE 28th Street)
- Improvements to NE 18th Street between I-205 and NE 138th Avenue

Identifying answers

Studies as far back as 1986 identified the need for these and other improvements in the area as population and traffic increase. In 2003, the state completed a comprehensive study of improvements needed along I-205 between SR 14 and SR 500. The NE 112th Avenue connector and a new freeway interchange at NE 18th Street were identified as high priority solutions in this study.

Funding the solutions

In 2003, the Washington State Legislature passed the Nickel Funding Package, which provided funding for the NE 112th Avenue connector. Environmental documentation for the remaining I-205 improvements recommended in the 2003 study was to be coordinated by the City of Vancouver and scheduled to begin in spring 2005. Prior to the start of that work, the Legislature passed the 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding Package, earmarking \$58 million for the NE 18th Street interchange.

Redefining the projects

With the interchange project now funded and a specific construction area defined, the city and state recognized the opportunity to reduce overall project costs and improve service by combining elements of the three projects.

- Construction of the NE 112th Avenue connector will be delayed one year to allow revisions to the northbound I-205 on-ramp that will accommodate the new NE 18th Street northbound off-ramp.
- A year-long environmental process will begin in February to include the NE 112th Avenue connector and NE 18th Street interchange.
- Connections from the new NE 18th Street interchange will be designed to integrate with the NE 18th Street corridor improvements.

The improvements highlighted in this newsletter are a combined effort between WSDOT and the City of Vancouver.

Combining these projects is an opportunity to reduce overall project costs and improve service.



OPEN HOUSE

Thursday,
February 16

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

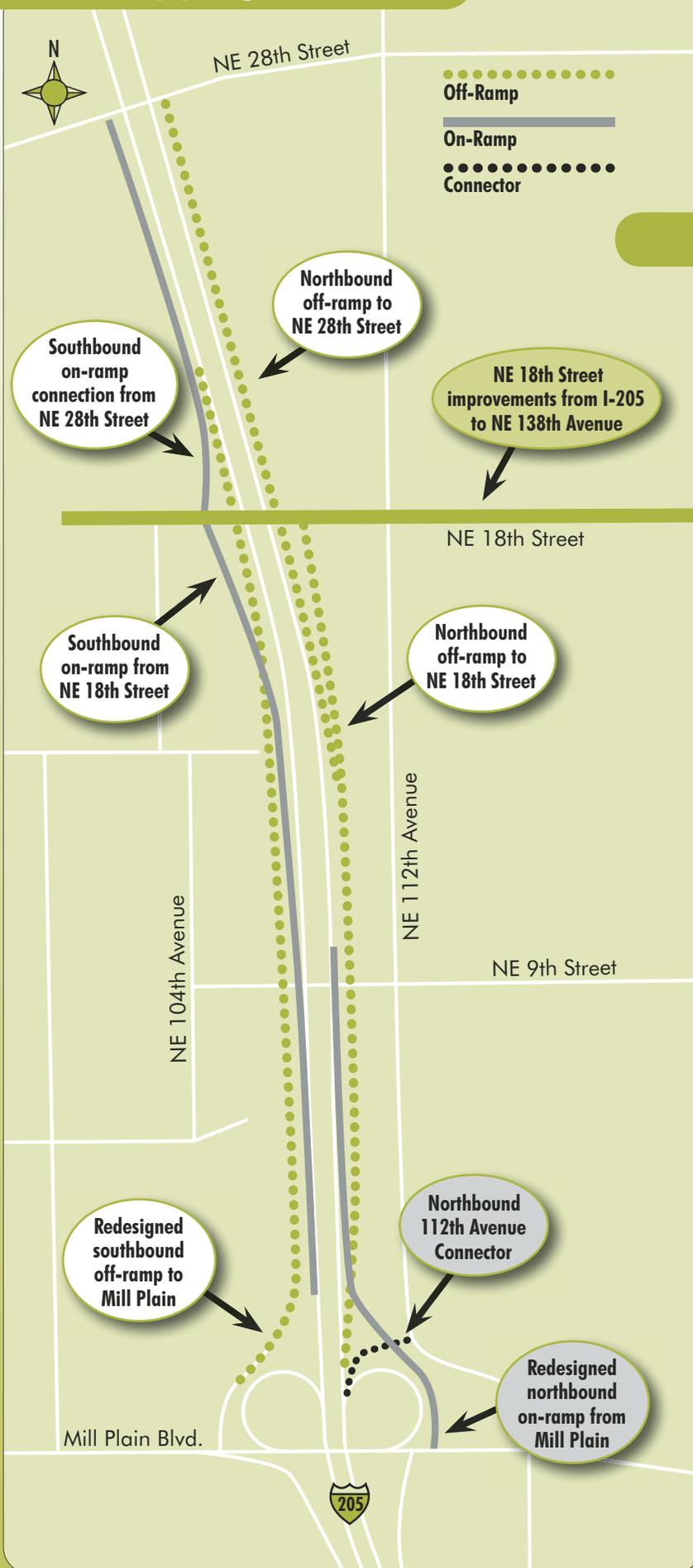
WSDOT Southwest Region
Headquarters
11018 NE 51st Circle
Vancouver, WA 98682

Join us at this kick-off meeting where we will introduce the combined projects, provide information, and get your feedback on issues to be addressed.

Project Status Checklist

	Environmental Process	Funded	Designed	Completed
NE 112th Avenue Connector	in process	✓		
NE 18th Street Corridor: I-205 to NE 138th Avenue	✓			
NE 18th Street Interchange	in process	✓		

Mapping the future



Projects in brief

NE 112th Avenue Connector

- This addition to the existing northbound I-205 off-ramp to westbound Mill Plain Boulevard will give drivers a direct connection to NE 112th Avenue, completely bypassing Mill Plain Boulevard.
- It will reduce congestion on Mill Plain Boulevard in the vicinity of I-205 and reduce backups on the northbound off-ramp to eastbound Mill Plain Boulevard.

NE 18th Street Corridor Improvements

- Improvements will extend from I-205 to NE 138th Avenue and include a wider roadway, center turn lane, sidewalk, pedestrian path, bicycle lanes, and street lighting.
- The project will integrate with the new freeway interchange at NE 18th Street.

NE 18th Street Interchange

- This new interchange will provide freeway connections to and from NE 18th Street and NE 28th Street/Burton Road.
- The interchange will improve safety, reduce congestion on Mill Plain Boulevard, and create a new ramp system connecting NE 28th Street/Burton Road and NE 18th Street.

Listening to stakeholders

Planning for these projects has involved input from stakeholders representing citizen, business, and community interests in the area. Combining these projects addresses two key stakeholder expectations:

- *Sensibly sequence and schedule projects.*
- *Avoid piecemeal improvements. Plan them as part of a larger transportation system.*

NE 112th Avenue Connector

Getting from Point A to Point B is not much fun when Point A is I-205 northbound and Point B is NE 112th Avenue. Drivers first must negotiate the often-congested off-ramp and intersection at Mill Plain Boulevard and NE Chkalov Drive. This congestion, caused by the close proximity of traffic signals along Mill Plain Boulevard and the high volume of traffic exiting I-205 during peak travel hours, poses significant safety concerns while generating traffic delays and driver frustration.



Northbound drivers heading for NE 112th Avenue currently must negotiate congested Mill Plain Boulevard. An improvement is in the works.

Project details

- The NE 112th Avenue connector will include a traffic signal at NE 112th Avenue, new sidewalks, and improvements to existing sidewalks and driveways from north of the new intersection to Mill Plain Boulevard along NE 112th Avenue/NE Chkalov Drive.
- The new connector will have two traffic lanes with space for a third lane in the future, if necessary.
- The current northbound on-ramp to I-205 from westbound Mill Plain Boulevard will be redesigned. It will include a bridge over the connector ramp and a second bridge over the planned new off-ramp to NE 18th Street.
- The connector is expected to improve the way traffic uses the area's road system.
- By 2020, the new connector ramp is projected to reduce congestion by 50% during peak travel times around the northbound off-ramp and Mill Plain Boulevard/NE Chkalov Drive intersection.

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL.
WATCH IT WORK.**

Benefits

In the next few years the situation at Mill Plain Boulevard will improve with construction of the NE 112th Avenue connector. This addition to the existing off-ramp to westbound Mill Plain Boulevard will give northbound drivers on I-205 a direct connection to NE 112th Avenue, completely bypassing Mill Plain.

While improving access to NE 112th Avenue, this project will:

- Reduce congestion on Mill Plain Boulevard around I-205 and NE Chkalov Drive/NE 112th Avenue.
- Reduce congestion on the northbound off-ramp for drivers heading east on Mill Plain Boulevard or south on NE Chkalov Drive.
- Reduce rear-end accidents on the off-ramp, which are directly attributed to congestion on the ramp.

- Reduce congestion during peak-travel times on northbound I-205 and westbound SR 14, which is directly attributed to backups on the Mill Plain Boulevard off-ramp.

Project funding

\$12 million – State “Nickel” funding package (administered by WSDOT)

\$1.4 million – State Congestion Relief funds (administered by the City of Vancouver)

\$700,000 – Federal funds (administered by the city)

This project is being designed and constructed as part of a joint effort between the City of Vancouver and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Timeline tweaks

The connector project was on hold from summer 2005 until last November's vote on Initiative 912 because elements of the design overlap with the NE 18th Street interchange. Voters rejected the initiative and the interchange was funded. We now need to revise the design for the NE 112th Avenue connector and northbound on-ramp to accommodate a bridge over the new I-205 northbound off-ramp to NE 18th Street (*see diagram on reverse side*). The design of this bridge and the associated environmental review (including an assessment of need for potential noise walls) will delay construction to a new tentative start date of late 2007.

Timelines

	1986	1996	1999	2001	2002
Planning & Funding	South County Planning Area: Citizen Advisory Committee Report	I-205 and East-West Arterials Study	WSDOT begins work on I-205 Corridor Study	WSDOT completes I-205 Corridor Study	
NE 112th Avenue Connector				I-205 Corridor Study recommends connector ramp	
NE 18th Street Corridor Improvements	South County Planning Area: Citizen Advisory Committee Report recommends widening of NE 18th Street east of I-205				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work be Assessment • First of t extensive p
NE 18th Street Interchange	South County Planning Area: Citizen Advisory Committee Report recommends NE 18th Street/ NE 28th Street Interchange	I-205 and East-West Arterials Study recommends interchange at NE 18th Street and Burton Road			

NE 18th Street Interchange

As drivers along I-205 on Vancouver's east side are well aware, interchanges on that road, particularly during peak-traffic hours, approach or exceed capacity. The volume of traffic on I-205, coupled with vehicles entering and exiting the freeway at the Mill Plain Boulevard interchange, results in frequent backups which, in turn, account for many of the accidents in that area.

Project details

The proposed NE 18th Street interchange will increase access, reduce congestion, and improve safety by providing new and improved freeway exit and entrance options between Mill Plain Boulevard and NE 28th Street/Burton Road. These will include:

- New northbound off-ramp from I-205 to NE 18th Street and NE 28th Street/Burton Road
- New southbound on-ramp to I-205 from NE 18th Street and NE 28th Street/Burton Road

Benefits

Construction and design of the interchange will:

- Improve safety and mobility on the freeway and adjoining roads
- Reduce congestion on Mill Plain Boulevard in the vicinity of I-205 and NE 112th Avenue/NE Chkalov Drive by providing new freeway access to and from NE 18th Street and NE 28th Street/Burton Road.
- Increase ramp capacity for easier travel to and from I-205
- Reduce traffic weaving between the SR 14 and the Mill Plain Boulevard ramps
- Ease freeway congestion by alleviating backups at existing ramps
- Reduce rear-end accidents on the northbound I-205 off-ramp at Mill Plain Boulevard, which has been identified as a high accident location.
- Create a new ramp system connecting NE 28th Street/Burton Road and NE 18th Street as part of the new southbound interchange
- Improve or maintain existing levels of service along the I-205 corridor



The proposed new interchange will improve the current limited freeway access between Mill Plain Boulevard and SR 500.

Project status

Work is underway to develop the design and complete environmental documentation for the NE 112th Avenue connector and NE 18th Street interchange projects. Environmental work will be completed in early 2007. Design of the interchange should be developed sufficiently for a public meeting, tentatively planned for late 2007.

Project funding

\$58 million – State Legislature's 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding Package (*money available for construction in 2011*)

"Washington's Future Just Got Better"

MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Access Point Decision Report recommends east side improvements • State Legislature passes Transportation Funding ("Nickel") Package 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Legislature passes 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding • Voters reject I-912, which would have repealed 2005 Transportation Funding 	
		Design, engineering, and environmental study begin		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Right-of-way
Work begins on Environmental Assessment (EA) First of three open houses kicks off extensive public involvement	Value Engineering Study — A panel of engineers looks at the most cost effective way to construct the project		EA completed and released for public comment	Anti-congestion
	Access Point Decision Report approves authorizing environmental and preliminary design phases to proceed			Environmental correction to northbound

NE 18th Street Corridor Improvements

In 2002, the city began a study of the planned improvement and extension of NE 18th Street between NE 87th Avenue and NE 192nd Avenue. Since then, the city has accomplished preliminary engineering design, an Environmental Assessment, and extensive public involvement.

The city is now assembling the necessary funding for final design and construction of the section of NE 18th Street between I-205 and NE 138th Avenue. This portion of the corridor will be improved first to provide needed roadway capacity east of I-205 to help relieve Mill Plain Boulevard of congestion and coordinate with the proposed NE 18th Street interchange.



Drivers, cyclists, and walkers can look forward to improved mobility on NE 18th Street between I-205 and NE 138th Avenue.

Project details

The NE 18th Street corridor improvements will include:

- Widening the roadway from two to four travel lanes
- New center-turn lane and left-turn pockets at appropriate locations
- Sidewalk on north side
- Multi-use recreational pedestrian path on south side
- Two bicycle lanes
- Street lighting
- Improvements to major intersections (including NE 112th Avenue, Four Seasons Lane, NE 125th Avenue, and NE 138th Avenue) and minor intersections

Benefits

The NE 18th Street corridor improvements will:

- Provide a safe and efficient multi-modal east-west connection across the city
- Accommodate and integrate with the new I-205 interchange to be built at NE 18th Street
- Ease growing congestion on Burton Road, Mill Plain Boulevard, and NE 112th Avenue
- Address traffic growth resulting from new development east of I-205

Project status

In the summer 2006, the city will begin the contracting process for final design engineering. Next steps, before the start of construction, are final design and right of way acquisition. In the meantime, drivers on NE 18th Street will soon see the start of improvements at the NE 138th Avenue intersection. Construction of that separate project is expected to begin in late spring 2006.

Project funding

Estimated cost of improving the NE 18th Street corridor from I-205 to NE 138th Avenue is \$28 million. It will be funded by a partnership of city, state, and federal money; traffic impact fees; and private developer contribution.

Milestones identified in the timeline below are representative of major events. The timeline as depicted is not meant to convey the entire project cycle or decision-making process.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Design complete right of way acquisition	Construction begins (late 2007)		Connector ramp opens					
Anticipated federal approval of EA	Final design complete for segment between I-205 and NE 138th Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction begins on segment. • Anticipated opening (2009) 						
Environmental and public process for I-205 corridor from south of Mill Plain Boulevard north of NE 28th Street/Burton Road	Engineering, design, and environmental work				Construction funding available, construction begins			Anticipated opening

Project contacts

We want to hear from you. If you have questions or comments about any of the projects discussed in this newsletter, call, write, or e-mail a project team member.

NE 112th Avenue Connector

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