



I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East - Hyak to Easton Corridor

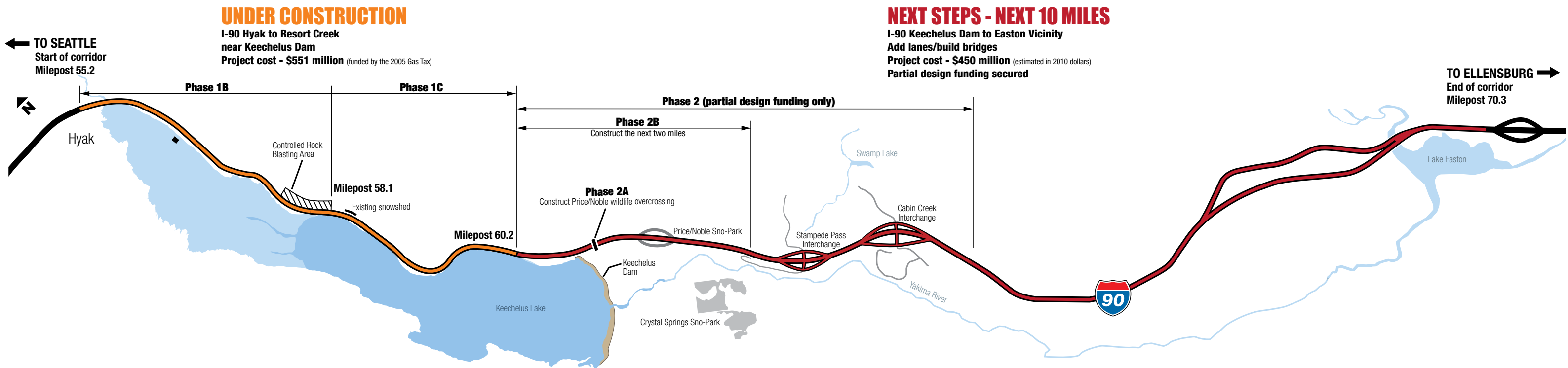
August 2011

Add lanes & build bridges

Connecting Washington across Snoqualmie Pass

Interstate 90 is a critical link connecting the large population and business centers of Puget Sound with the agricultural industries and recreational activities of eastern Washington. WSDOT will build a potentially safer, more efficient and reliable interstate from Hyak to Easton, securing I-90 as a primary statewide transportation corridor. WSDOT plans to reduce road closures due to avalanches, address unstable slopes, replace deteriorating concrete pavement, add capacity, and improve bridges and culverts to facilitate the movement of people and wildlife.





WSDOT will expand the bridges over Gold Creek for water and wildlife passage. Visual concept of the wildlife undercrossing and 1100'/900' bridges to be open to traffic 2013.



Reduce avalanche closure delays by building a new expanded snowshed. Visual concept comparison of the new and old snowshed.

Constructing the first five miles

Constructing five miles from Hyak to Resort Creek

WSDOT is underway on another ambitious construction season this year. Max J. Kunej Co. (Spokane) will continue the four-year project to widen and improve the first three miles of the corridor from Hyak to the Keechelus Lake Snowshed. Work includes adding a lane in each direction, replacing deteriorating concrete pavement in existing lanes, adding and replacing bridges and culverts, reducing potential wildlife collisions on the interstate, and stabilizing rock slopes. WSDOT is also extending chain-up/off areas, adding illumination, traffic cameras and variable message signs.

This summer WSDOT will award the contract to widen and improve the next two miles of I-90 from the Lake Keechelus Snowshed (milepost 58.1) to the Keechelus Dam vicinity (milepost 60.2). This contract also includes building the new expanded snowshed.

In 2009 WSDOT began work on the five-mile project two years ahead of schedule. This five-mile project lays the groundwork for a wider, safer and more reliable I-90 east of Snoqualmie Pass, scheduled to be complete and open to traffic in 2017.

Moving more than people

WSDOT has committed to address the issue of ecological connectivity on I-90 Snoqualmie Pass. The interstate has been identified as a physical barrier to the movement of fish, wildlife and aquatic passage. Additionally, wildlife attempting to cross the interstate presents a safety concern to the traveling public. To meet ecological connectivity needs, WSDOT has selected bridge and culvert designs that improve wildlife connections, stream channel migration, fish passage, and habitat.

The next ten miles

Funding secured to start the next two miles

The 2011 Transportation Budget directed WSDOT to use up to \$8 million in project savings to start designing the next two miles (Phases 2A and B) of the project from the Keechelus Dam vicinity to the Stampede Pass Interchange. The budget language also approves the use of project savings from the I-90 Project to be used in the corridor for future phases. WSDOT will start designing the next two miles from Keechelus Dam to Stampede Pass Interchange summer 2011. Improvements to these next two miles of I-90 include:

- Adding a new lane in each direction
- Replacing deteriorating concrete
- Stabilizing rock slopes
- Building wildlife crossings
- Improving sight distance by reducing sharp curves
- Adding new chain-up areas
- Replacing site of Price/Noble Creek Sno-park

WSDOT and the future of I-90

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East project completed in 2008 identified improvements for the 15-mile corridor. The first five miles is under construction, but WSDOT still has more work to do. WSDOT estimates it will cost approximately \$450 million (in 2010 dollars) to improve the remaining 10 miles of I-90. The Keechelus Dam to Easton Project improvements share the same transportation and ecological connectivity objectives as the Hyak to Keechelus Dam Project. These improvements include adding a new lane in each direction, replacing deteriorating concrete, adding new chain-up areas, stabilizing rock slopes, and improving sight distance by reducing sharp curves. In addition, WSDOT will reconstruct interchanges to provide clearance for oversized loads and construct unique wildlife crossings over I-90 intended to reduce collisions between vehicles and wildlife.



Extend chain-up areas to increase freight mobility



Design concept of Price/Noble wildlife overcrossing proposed for Phase 2A

Why is the I-90 Project area unique?

The 15-mile long I-90 Project area is built on National Forest land with an easement from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Since the late 1990s, the area has been managed by USFS according to the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan, which protects old-growth habitat, removes portions of existing USFS roads, and manages National Forest land to facilitate wildlife movement. Since I-90 is on National Forest land, the I-90 Project design must be compatible with the USFS Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan.

In recent years, non-governmental and public groups like the Cascades Land Conservation Partnership, the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trust, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have invested in substantial private and public land conservation efforts to protect old-growth forest, provide larger contiguous blocks of forested habitat, and facilitate habitat connectivity across the I-90 corridor. These efforts have added 75,000 acres (approximately 117 square miles) of conservation land and additional National Forest land within the I-90 Project area. The I-90 Project improvements must also align with these conservation efforts.

After years of studying the I-90 corridor as part of environmental analysis and design efforts, WSDOT and its partners have developed ways to integrate ecological connectivity into the I-90 Project while still meeting transportation objectives. For example, as WSDOT removes the existing bridges and culverts to accommodate the widening of the interstate, it will rebuild them to facilitate the movement of wildlife and aquatic systems. By reconnecting habitat across I-90, WSDOT will help reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions. When complete, I-90 Project improvements will help create a healthier ecosystem for the plants, wildlife, and aquatic systems of the Central Cascades while providing a safe, reliable transportation system.

Who are I-90 Project partners?

The I-90 Project team has formed cooperative partnerships with county, state and federal agencies, as well as conservation organizations and universities. These partnerships allow WSDOT to coordinate with land management agencies, perform wildlife monitoring activities, and identify possible mitigation sites for acquisitions.



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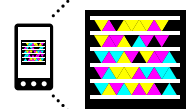
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