

The Nickel Projects

What are the Nickel Projects?

In spring 2003, the Washington State Legislature approved a Nickel Funding Package providing more than \$4 billion over 10 years for a variety of highway improvements projects throughout the state. Three of the “Nickel Projects,” totaling \$485 million, are on I-405. These three projects are the first step toward achieving the I-405 Master Plan as detailed in the 2002 environmental impact statement (EIS).

The Kirkland Nickel Project [SR 520 to SR 522]: This project, totaling \$164 million, extends from SR 520 in the south to SR 522 in the north. This will reduce congestion in the “Kirkland Crawl,” and complements Sound Transit’s 128th Street Direct Access project. Construction on the project begins next year. Portions of the widened section of I-405 will open by 2008, and all work is scheduled for completion in 2010.

The Bellevue Nickel Project [SE 8th to I-90]: \$186 million to add one northbound lane between I-90 and SE 8th Street and one southbound lane between NE 4th Street and I-90. Congestion is reduced into and out of Bellevue from the south. The project reconstructs the Wilburton Tunnel, improving the existing “Wilburton Weave,” and taking the tunnel to its ultimate configuration as described in the I-405 Master Plan. These improvements complement the Bellevue Access project currently under construction. The Bellevue Nickel Project is scheduled to begin construction in 2007 and be open to traffic in 2011.

The Renton Nickel Project [West Valley Highway to Maple Valley Highway]: \$136 million to add one northbound lane between SR 181 (West Valley Highway) and SR 167 (Valley Freeway) and one southbound lane from SR 169 (Maple Valley Highway) to SR 167. The project also extends the SR 167 southbound HOV lane north to I-405. The Renton improvements reduce congestion approaching the SR 167 interchange, and complement the recently completed SR 167 flyover ramp. The Tukwila/South Renton Nickel Project is scheduled to begin construction in 2007 and be finished in 2010.



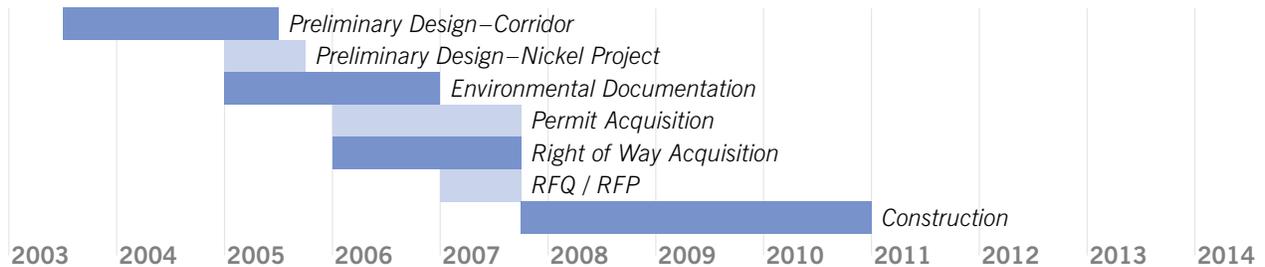
Nickel Benefits & Project Schedule

A preliminary benefit/cost analysis based on travel time savings and accident reduction was performed on the nickel projects, indicating that the Kirkland project offers an 11:1 benefit/cost ratio, while Renton and Bellevue came in at 3:1.

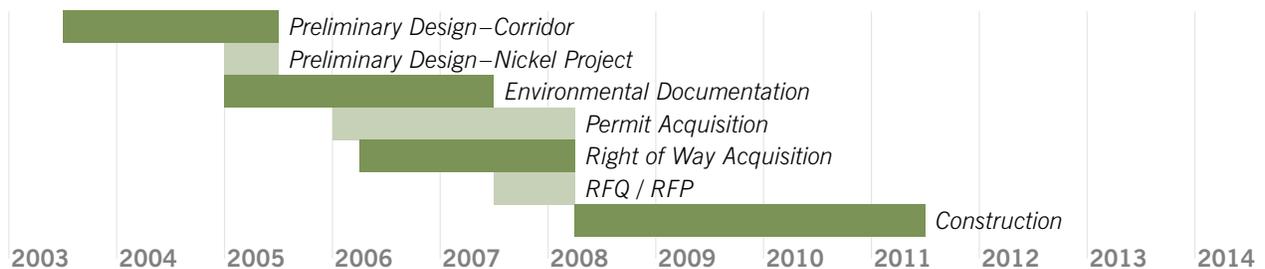
With a corridor-wide “programmatically” EIS approved by the federal government in October 2002, project-level environmental documents are now being prepared for each Nickel Project. That work, along with preliminary engineering, began in July 2003, when Nickel funding became available.

Part of the \$485 million was designated toward further design and assessment of the larger “footprint” of the I-405 corridor. This ensures that as each project is developed it is consistent with corresponding sections of the Master Plan. For example, while the project team prepares Environmental Assessments for the Nickel Projects, they also assess resources in much of the rest of the corridor so that future improvements can be cleared earlier.

I-405 West Valley Highway to Maple Valley Highway (South Renton)



I-405 SE 8th Street to I-90 (South Bellevue)



I-405 SR 520 to SR 522 (Kirkland)

