



# TACOMA/PIERCE COUNTY HOV PROGRAM

## Annual Mega-Project Report

September 2015

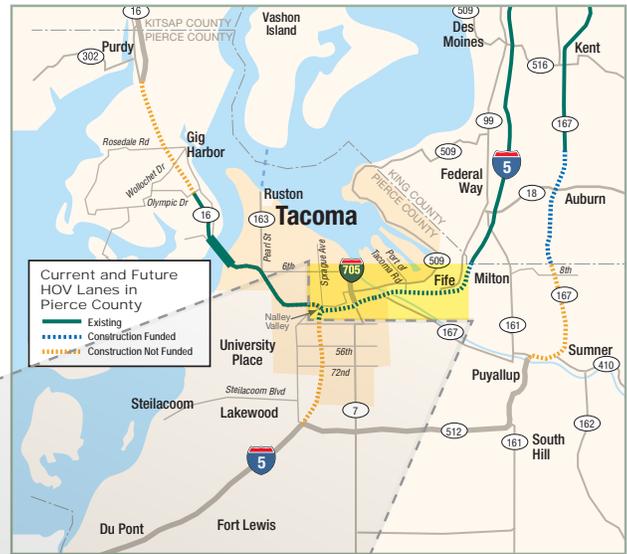
### Purpose of this report

The financial and schedule information in this document is intended to assist the Office of Financial Management in meeting its legislative reporting obligations for mega-projects pertaining to Section 604 of Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1094.

### Program Description

The Tacoma/Pierce County HOV Program (T/PC HOV) encompasses numerous projects to build high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes and make other improvements on state highways in Pierce County. As part of this program, in 2007 WSDOT opened its first HOV lanes on State Route 16, and in 2010, WSDOT opened the first I-5 HOV lanes in Pierce County. In addition, WSDOT has already completed several projects to prepare for future HOV construction on I-5 and SR 16.

The map below shows the current status of the Tacoma/Pierce County HOV Program. These seven projects add 18 HOV lane miles to I-5 and SR 16, and connect to WSDOT's HOV system north of Pierce County. Construction on projects #1, #2, and #3 is complete and those roadway facilities are open to traffic. Projects #4 and #5 are now under construction. The schedule on the following page shows the program's construction timelines. These projects represent a \$1.6 billion investment in state highways within Pierce County.

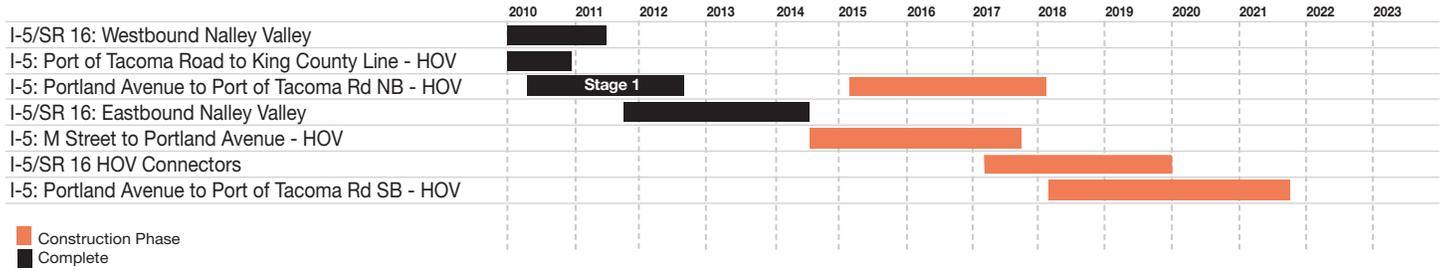


### HOV Active Projects Map



- 1 I-5/SR 16: Westbound Nalley Valley (complete)
- 2 I-5: Port of Tacoma Rd to King County – HOV (complete)
- 3 I-5/SR 16: Eastbound Nalley Valley (complete)
- 4 I-5: Portland Avenue to Port of Tacoma Road - Northbound HOV (under construction)
- 5 I-5: M Street to Portland Ave – HOV (under construction)
- 6 I-5: Portland Avenue to Port of Tacoma Road – Southbound HOV
- 7 I-5/SR 16: HOV Connectors

## Active project schedule and construction progress



The above timeline highlights the construction schedules for the funded projects within the Tacoma/Pierce County HOV Program.

## Two groundbreaking ceremonies highlight recent program focus



At left, residents from the City of Tacoma's McKinley neighborhood join elected officials and guest speakers from Pierce County, the City of Tacoma, contractor Kuney Brothers, and WSDOT to celebrate the start of the I-5: M Street to Portland Avenue - HOV project. The ceremony took place inside the city's McKinley Park. Participants shoveled ceremonial bark rather than the more traditional dirt, which was then spread around the park following the ceremony.

In the last 12 months, construction has begun on two HOV projects in the Tacoma area, prompting two celebrations. The first ceremony occurred on July 10, 2014, to commemorate the start of the I-5: M Street to Portland Avenue - HOV project.

In mid-February, 2015, guests and speakers once again gathered for a

second celebration. This time, they gathered to celebrate the start of an adjacent project called I-5: Portland Avenue to Port of Tacoma Road - Northbound HOV.

Puyallup Tribe of Indians representatives participated in the groundbreaking of this project, since it builds a bridge over and in the Puyallup River.



A representative from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians opens the groundbreaking ceremony for the I-5: Portland Avenue to Port of Tacoma Road - Northbound HOV project with a ceremonial song accompanied by the beat of a drum.

At right, Secretary of Transportation Lynn Peterson (middle) joins WSDOT construction staff and contractor Hamilton Construction to celebrate the start of the I-5: Portland Avenue to Port of Tacoma Road - Northbound HOV project. Crews celebrated by shoveling sand rather than dirt, as sand was a resource they could reuse on the construction project.



## New Construction - I-5: M Street to Portland Avenue - HOV



*This aerial photograph shows how I-5 looked before construction on the M Street to Portland Avenue project began. The overpass in the foreground was Pacific Avenue; it is now demolished and is being rebuilt. The overpass near the Tacoma Dome is McKinley Way, which will also be demolished and rebuilt once Pacific Avenue reopens by the end of 2015. Both overpasses must be demolished and rebuilt to accommodate a wider I-5.*



*This design-visual shows how I-5 will change during the I-5: M Street to Portland Avenue HOV project. Crews are building a new northbound I-5 bridge and lanes over I-705. Existing northbound I-5 lanes will be converted into northbound and southbound HOV lanes that will open to HOV traffic when adjacent projects to the north are complete.*

WSDOT recently began work on the next project in the Tacoma/Pierce County HOV line-up. The I-5: M Street to Portland Avenue - HOV project is widening I-5 from M Street to an area near L Street in Tacoma to provide room for one HOV lane in each direction.

The project will result in many other improvements for drivers, including:

- installing on-ramp meters to maximize highway traffic flow;
- resurfacing all northbound and southbound I-5 lanes within the project limits;

- building new McKinley Way and Pacific Avenue overpasses to accommodate the widened highway below;
- improving ramp alignments and curves;
- improving lighting, stormwater collection and stormwater treatment;
- installing new high performance barrier;
- installing traffic cameras and highway advisory radio capacity;
- improving electronic signage for traveler notification; and
- installing traffic data collectors. WSDOT uses the data to manage traffic and provide traffic information to the public.

Traffic impacts will be most noticeable for two groups of drivers: mainline I-5 motorists, and residents living east of I-5 within the project limits.

Tacoma residents are now experiencing a lengthy closure of Pacific Avenue at I-5. Earlier this year the overpass was demolished and crews are now building a wider overpass in which the piers do not conflict with the future locations of widened I-5 lanes. Once the Pacific Avenue overpass reopens, crews will close the nearby McKinley Way overpass for the same demolition and rebuilding process.

The Pacific Avenue overpass is scheduled to open to traffic by year's end. Immediately after it opens, crews will close McKinley Way at I-5 for up to 18 months.

Why does McKinley Way need to be closed longer than Pacific Avenue? The longer closure is needed because I-5 under the two overpasses is different. Under Pacific Avenue, crews have room to construct the new overpass adjacent to I-5 lanes. In the case of the McKinley Way overpass, crews must complete some work on I-5 before the McKinley Way overpass can be completed and reopened.

The entire project is scheduled to open to traffic in 2017.



