

SALMON CREEK INTERCHANGE PROJECT

A joint project by the Clark County Public Works Department and the Washington State Department of Transportation

The Clark County Public Works Department and the Washington State Department of Transportation continue to work together on the Salmon Creek Interchange Project. When complete, this project will improve both mobility and safety on local roads and the interstate system in the fast-growing Salmon Creek area.

Work on this project began two years ago with identification of preliminary design options. By mid 2005, the project team selected a preferred design for further study and environmental assessment. Design and environmental study continued through 2006 when more

detailed information became available which led to increases in the original cost estimate. This increase in the cost estimate was compounded by industry-wide increases in the costs of construction materials such as steel and concrete.

The project design team then identified an alternative that would still achieve desired improvements to traffic flow in the area at a lower cost. Key project elements have not fundamentally changed: the revised design still includes a new connection at NE 139th Street across I-5 and I-205, a new I-5 interchange at NE 139th Street, and a streamlined interchange at I-5 and NE 134th Street.

The primary objectives still remain as the team seeks the most cost-effective design that reduces traffic congestion, improves safety, and minimizes impacts to the community and the environment in the Salmon Creek area.



PROJECT NEED

The close proximity of signals and high traffic volumes in this area create long delays, traffic back-ups, and a high rate of automobile accidents. The roads in the interchange area are rated as providing an unacceptable level of service, the worst rating of traffic congestion possible in Clark County. This traffic congestion has:

- contributed to 110 reported vehicular accidents, resulting in 53 serious personal injuries and \$15.4 million in damages between 2000 and 2003
- resulted in the Board of County Commissioners reinstating a development moratorium for the Salmon Creek area in October 2005 that was previously enacted from December 2001 through April 2003

PROJECT BENEFITS

The Salmon Creek Interchange Project will:

- allow for economic growth and development in the area to continue
- help increase traffic flow through the entire interchange system and reduce traffic congestion and back-ups on the freeway off-ramps
- reduce the number of congestion-related accidents, associated injuries and damages

Project changes

The project team discovered additional risks and needs as environmental, design and traffic studies progressed which resulted in increased costs. These findings included:

- increases in traffic volumes forecasted over the next twenty years
- evidence that the C-Tran Park-and-Ride needed to be relocated to allow NE 134th Street to operate at an acceptable level
- presence of high ground water, poor soil conditions, and a sensitive wetland in key construction areas
- significant cost increases for construction materials, particularly steel, asphalt, pipe and concrete
- significant increases in real estate values, which affect purchase prices of properties needed for road rights-of-way

PROJECT FUNDING

Federal, state and local funds totaling \$120 million are expected to be available for this project. Sources include:

\$9.9 million Federal earmarks
\$55 million Nickel funding (WSDOT 2003 Transportation Package)
\$8 million Transportation Improvement Board
\$5 million Traffic Impact Fees
\$6 million County Road Fund
\$36.1 million other sources

The project team will continue to seek additional funds to complete the project. The project's first phase is currently estimated to cost about \$120 million. For the long term, many other transportation improvements in the Salmon Creek area have been identified. These projects will be included in county and state plans and completed as funding becomes available.

Additionally, the project team has been considering ways to bring congestion relief to the Salmon Creek area early in the project's construction schedule. The revised project design can be constructed in phases.

For example, relocation of the park-and-ride and the associated change to the traffic signal will result in congestion reductions in the area even before the entire project is completed.



The Salmon Creek Interchange Project will improve safety and mobility.

Project status

The project team is completing an environmental assessment — a process required by the federal government that complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

The environmental assessment is expected to be completed in spring 2007 and will be available for public review and comment. The project team will complete the final design and secure the necessary environmental permits once the environmental assessment is complete.

Construction will begin in 2009 if permits are acquired, design is finalized and the county has completed the financing plan. The first project phase will take three to four years to complete, but some elements could be completed early in the first phase providing some congestion relief.

The refined Salmon Creek Interchange Project

The new Salmon Creek Interchange Project includes improvements and changes to the interstate system and local streets. The project's first phase is described below.

Improvements to the interstate system:

- A new interchange at NE 139th Street and I-5 that provides for movement in three directions: a northbound on-ramp, a northbound off-ramp, and a southbound on-ramp (the interchange will be designed so that movement in the fourth direction, the southbound off-ramp, could be added in the future)

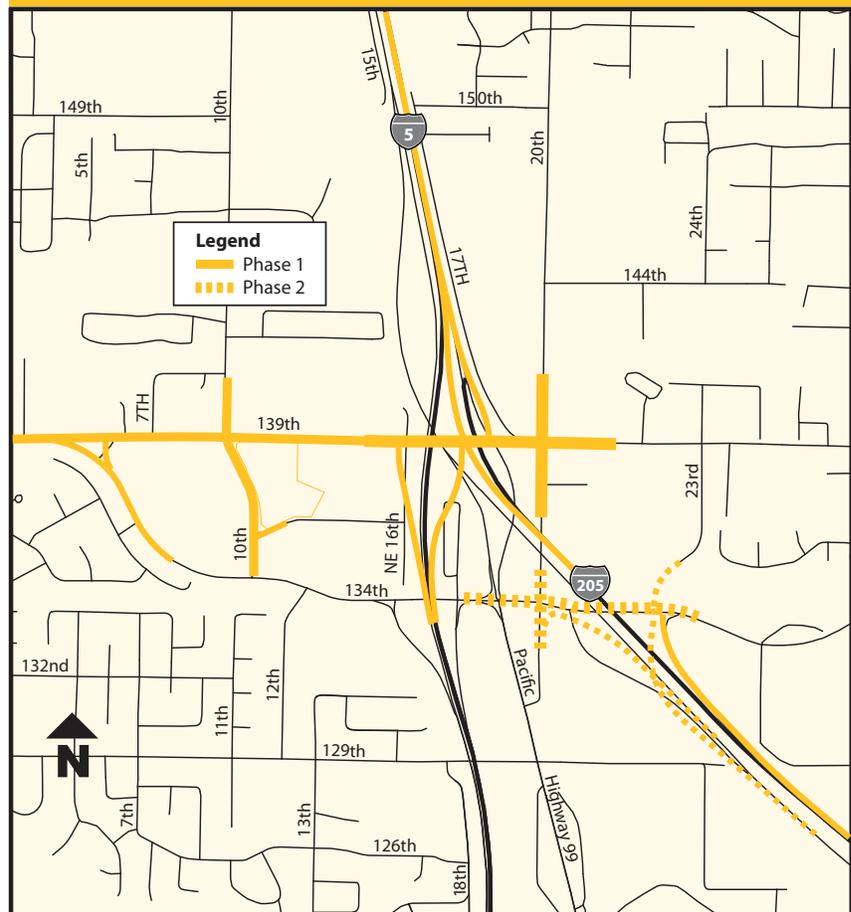
- Removal of the on-ramp from NE 134th Street to I-5 northbound and associated changes to the traffic signal
- An exit-only lane to NE 134th Street from I-205 northbound resulting in a two-lane off-ramp
- A new northbound lane from NE 139th Street to NE 179th Street to accommodate the new on-ramp from NE 139th Street
- New I-5 bridges over I-205 to accommodate future I-5 widening

Improvements to the local road system:

- A new segment of NE 139th Street from NE 10th Avenue to NE 20th Avenue that passes over I-5 and I-205

- Widening of NE 139th Street to two lanes in each direction with bike lanes, sidewalks, and a raised median from NE Tenny Road to NE 23rd Avenue
- Redesign of the intersection of NE 139th Street and NE Tenny Road to a signalized "T" configuration with NE 139th Street being the main through route
- Modification of the traffic signal and intersection of NE 134th Street and NE 10th Avenue to accommodate the other changes in the area and truck turning movements
- Improvement of the intersection of NE 20th Avenue and NE 139th Street with double left turn lanes and right turn lanes in all directions

SALMON CREEK INTERCHANGE PROJECT AREA



SALMON CREEK INTERCHANGE PROJECT

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- Relocation of the C-Tran Park-and-Ride from NE 134th Street to a new location near the corner of NE 139th Street and NE 10th Avenue
- Widening of NE 10th Avenue from NE 134th Street to NE 141st Avenue to one lane in each direction with a center turn lane, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

Additional improvements are likely to be needed in the area immediately after construction of the first phase is complete. These phase two improvements include:

- A new southbound on-ramp from NE 134th Street at NE 23rd Avenue to I-205 southbound
- Widening of NE 134th Street from NE 20th Avenue to NE 23rd Avenue including the bridge over I-205

Since the project is still in development, additional elements could be added if environmental, transportation or engineering studies determine that they are necessary. These are called “risk” items and, if needed, could increase the project’s cost estimate. As design advances, the chance of major elements or costs being added to the project decreases.

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TO LEARN MORE

The community is invited to participate throughout the process. To learn more about the project or add your name to the mailing list, call Kristin Hull at 1-877-624-7196 (toll-free) or send e-mail to info@salmoncreekinterchange.org. Regular updates are available at www.salmoncreekinterchange.org.

