

Highway and Interchanges

Project Overview

The Columbia River Crossing project will expand options for improved travel between Vancouver and Portland. Bridge, transit and highway improvements are essential to address transportation problems in the area.

Today, I-5 between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland experiences crash rates about two times higher than comparable urban highways in the area. Many factors contribute to these accidents:

- Six hours of congestion every weekday
- Poor sight distance on the bridge
- Closely spaced interchanges
- Short on-and off-ramps



Traffic backs up in Vancouver after an accident on the Interstate Bridge.

Safer and Better Travel on I-5

We need the project to make I-5 work better by:

- Preventing southbound congestion from starting before 6 a.m. and lasting until noon each weekday
- Preventing northbound congestion from starting at 1 p.m. and lasting until 9 p.m. each weekday
- Providing reliable high capacity transit service
- Improving safety on the I-5 bridge and highway
- Moving goods more efficiently for a healthy economy




To achieve these goals, more lanes are needed crossing the river to accommodate both through and on/off traffic. Shoulders need to be widened to improve safety. Ramps and seven interchanges in the project area need to be improved or rebuilt.

New lanes are being added in the project area to make the interchanges work better, but the highway will transition back to the existing number of lanes at Delta Park in Portland and Highway 99 in Vancouver. Final designs depend on the decisions made regarding the river crossing and how well these choices solve the transportation problems identified in the project area. In all options being analyzed, CRC is committed to working within existing right-of-way as much as possible.

Goals and Challenges

The map on pages 2 and 3 provides an overview of the project goals and the challenges related to existing highway conditions.

Did you know?

-  The Columbia River Crossing project area is five miles long.
-  More than 50 bridges and overpasses will be improved or constructed as part of the project.
-  135,000 vehicles cross the Columbia River on I-5 daily.

I-5 Southbound to Delta Park

Goals

- Eliminate the need for southbound lane changes as people merge into traffic.

Challenges

- Minimizing right-of-way impacts and avoiding sensitive areas while connecting to Delta Park improvements.

I-5 in Downtown Vancouver

Goals

- Avoid impacts to downtown Vancouver and to the historic area on the east side of I-5.
- Accommodate four to six lanes in each direction coming off the bridge.
- Maintain existing access at all the interchanges.

Challenges

- Working in the existing right-of-way to avoid impacts to the downtown business development and the Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve.
- Ensuring adequate spacing of vehicles between freeway, ramps and add/drop lanes.
- Avoiding safety and operational problems resulting from the short distance between interchanges.

I-5 from 4th Plain to SR 500

Goals

- Eliminate the need for lane changes from on-ramps as vehicles merge into traffic.

Challenges

- Adding new lanes to make safety improvements within the existing right-of-way.



Victory Interchange

- Goals**
- Improve southbound traffic operations between Marine Drive and Victory Boulevard.
 - Lengthen exit ramp distance for safety.
- Challenges**
- Accommodating local traffic between Marine Drive and Victory Boulevard.
 - Addressing inadequate distance between the Marine Drive and Victory Boulevard interchanges.
 - Avoiding impact to the existing light rail line.

Marine Drive Interchange

- Goals**
- Improve freight access to Port of Portland and industrial areas by reducing grades and eliminating stops.
 - Improve the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists from Columbia River to Expo Center.
 - Reduce traffic back ups during peak travel times.
- Challenges**
- Providing direct access for trucks from arterials (Martin Luther King Blvd., Vancouver Way and Marine Drive) to I-5 while maintaining access to local businesses and Delta Park.
 - Designing a more direct walking/ bicycling route through the interchanges and North Portland Harbor that remains connected to the existing City of Portland trail network.
 - Providing better access for both cars and trucks accessing I-5 in a limited amount of ramp space.

Hayden Island Interchange

- Goals**
- Ensure adequate access to residences and commercial businesses.
 - Minimize impacts to floating homes.
- Challenges**
- Enhancing safety of vehicles entering and exiting I-5.
 - Accommodating more vehicles on I-5 to meet current and future demands at peak times.
 - Increasing I-5 and ramp capacity while staying within the existing right-of-way.

SR 14 Interchange

- Goals**
- Maintain access between I-5, SR 14 and downtown Vancouver.
 - Minimize impacts to National Park Service, City of Vancouver and Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve.
 - Improve access to pedestrian/bicycle path across Columbia River.
- Challenges**
- Avoiding historic resources including Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the Old Apple Tree and Pearson Field. Also avoiding the BNSF rail line and the soon-to-be constructed Vancouver Land Bridge between the waterfront and Ft. Vancouver.
 - Providing efficient access to and from I-5 while accommodating new downtown development.
 - Connecting pedestrian/bicycle route from downtown Vancouver to I-5 bridge.

Mill Plain Interchange

- Goals**
- Improve SR 14 and Mill Plain weave.
 - Improve interchange operation.
 - Maintain current access.
- Challenges**
- Avoiding Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve property and structures.
 - Avoiding downtown Vancouver property and structure impacts.
 - Avoiding Clock Tower Development.
 - Avoiding steep ramps to aid freight trucks.

Fourth Plain Interchange

- Goals**
- Increase length of northbound ramp to make it easier to merge.
- Challenges**
- Minimizing impacts to local streets near Clark College and the Veteran's Hospital and cemetery.

SR 500 Interchange

- Goals**
- Improve the connections between I-5 southbound and SR 500 eastbound and SR 500 westbound and I-5 northbound.
- Challenges**
- Avoiding or minimizing impacts to Leverich Park and homes south of SR 500.
 - Retaining 39th Street southbound exit from I-5.

Project Schedule

CRC will continue to work closely with the public and its six local partners to refine the project to address the problems on I-5 and meet community needs.

Ongoing public input on bridge, transit and highway design will be critical to the project development process. Additional analysis of the environmental and community effects of the project will be included in a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) expected in late 2009.

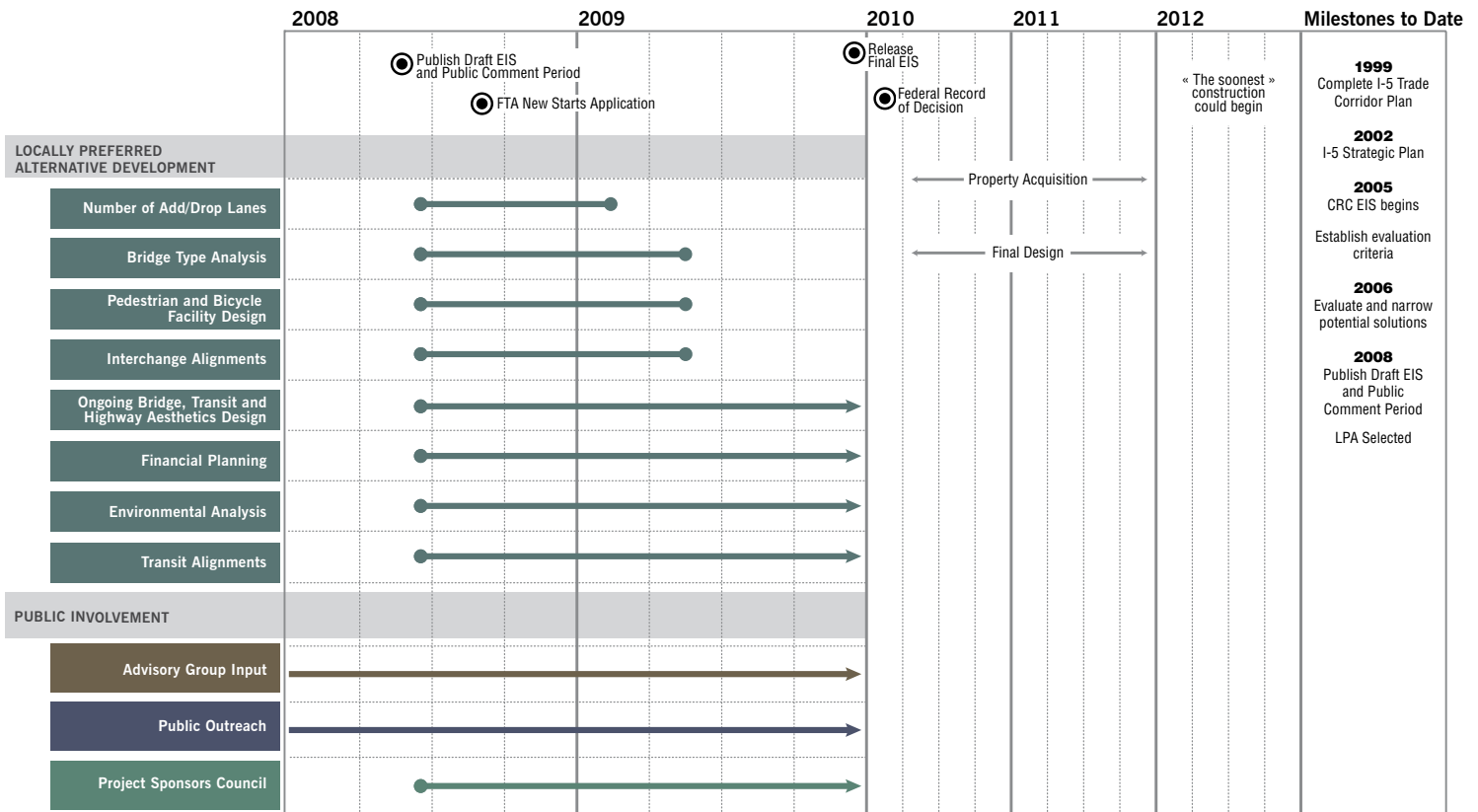


How can I get involved?

- Contact the project office to talk with a staff member
- Visit the website at www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org to learn about the project and sign up for updates
- Attend an advisory group meeting
- Invite CRC staff to an event or meeting to discuss the project

How can I comment on the project?

E-mail: feedback@columbiarivercrossing.org
 Mail: 700 Washington Street, Suite 300
 Vancouver, WA 98660
 Phone: 360-737-2726 or 503-256-2726
 Fax: 360-737-0294



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