



Improving Transportation Safety

Today, the ramp from Hayden Island to I-5 northbound is the location with the highest collision rate on I-5 in Oregon. This site is within the five-mile Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project area, which experiences more than one crash each day on average. With a million more people expected to live in the region by 2030, traffic volumes and congestion are expected to increase. The highest accident locations in the project area are linked to outdated highway designs. Without key improvements in the project area, the number of crashes could double.

The Washington State Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Transportation are actively working to prevent collisions and reduce risk by upgrading roadway designs and facilities as part of the CRC project.

Columbia River Crossing

A long-term, comprehensive solution

CRC is a long-term, comprehensive project to improve safety, reduce congestion and enhance mobility on I-5 between SR 500 in Vancouver and Columbia Boulevard in Portland. The project will replace the I-5 bridge, extend light rail to Vancouver, improve closely-spaced interchanges and enhance the pedestrian and bicycle path between the two cities.

Project Benefits

- Improved safety
- No bridge lifts
- Earthquake protection
- Reduced congestion on I-5 and adjacent neighborhoods
- A more reliable trip for freight, autos and transit
- New and sustained jobs with improved access to ports and highways
- Reduced emissions and improved air quality



Traffic backs up on the I-5 bridge following a collision.

I-5 Collisions Affect Many

Safety issues in the CRC project area affect more than just auto commuters. When collisions occur on I-5, they create traffic back-ups, delay freight deliveries, prevent people from reaching destinations on time and leave cars idling on roadways. These collisions negatively affect car drivers, passengers, transit riders, bicyclists, pedestrians and truck drivers. Local streets also become clogged with more cars when crashes and congestion on I-5 divert traffic.

Bridge Lifts Cause Congestion and Collisions

When the lift span rises on the Interstate Bridge, collision rates climb. Motorists traveling southbound in Vancouver are four times more likely to be in a crash, and northbound motorists in Portland are three times more likely to have a collision as traffic unexpectedly comes to a stop.

Collisions Increase Without Action

Currently, about 135,000 vehicles cross the I-5 bridge every day. This number is expected to grow, and will be as high as 184,000 vehicles by 2030 if no action is taken. More cars on the road within the project area means safety issues will continue to get worse. Based on traffic analyses, collisions could double within the project area if no action is taken.

Outdated Designs Create Safety Hazards

The project area includes 40 outdated highway features that create safety hazards, such as closely-spaced interchanges, short on- and off-ramps and narrow shoulders. Crash data from the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation show that non-standard features lead to collisions in the project area. Some of the specific problems on I-5 include:

- Short acceleration lanes at locations such as the SR 14 interchange and on I-5 south between SR 500 and Fourth Plain Boulevard
- Short on- and off-ramps at Hayden Island and Victory Boulevard
- Lack of safety shoulders for disabled vehicles on the Interstate Bridge

These problems are a common cause of crashes; 66 percent of collisions in the project area are rear-end crashes and 14 percent are side-swipes. People are injured in more than one-third of these collisions.

Inadequate Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths

Pedestrians and bicyclists also face safety challenges. Narrow pathways on the bridge make passing difficult. As people travel in close proximity to highway traffic they are exposed to flying debris and loud traffic noise from vehicles. Poor lighting and signage makes routes more challenging to navigate in the early morning or after sunset.

Solving the Problems

The CRC project includes a range of safety and design improvements to address the safety issues within the CRC project area. The following actions will help to reduce the collision rate by as much as 75 percent (compared with doing nothing by 2030).

- Replace the existing bridge with new structures high enough to allow marine traffic to travel without bridge lifts and with full safety shoulders for stalled vehicles and incident responders
- Adjust the highway grade so drivers can see over the crest of the bridge, reducing the potential for rear-end collisions during congested periods
- Increase the length of on-ramps to make it easier for drivers to merge into traffic, and improve connections between interchanges
- Build a wider and safer path for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Reduce congestion by improving mass transit options, enhancing carpool and vanpool options, and tolling the I-5 bridge

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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

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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www.ColumbiaRiverCrossing.org