



I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East

January 2011

Hyak to Easton Corridor Project

I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Corridor Program

I-90 is a critical link connecting the large population and business centers of Puget Sound with the agricultural industries and recreational activities of eastern Washington. To ensure the continued availability and reliability of this important statewide corridor, WSDOT has started construction on the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project (I-90 Project), a 15-mile corridor improvement program that begins at Hyak (milepost 55.2) and ends near Easton (milepost 70.3).

The 2005 Transportation Partnership Account provided funding for WSDOT to design and construct approximately five miles of I-90 between Hyak and Resort Creek near Keechelus Dam. Current funding for the project is \$551.4 million, as proposed in the Governor's 2011 Transportation Budget.

Construction on I-90 Snoqualmie Pass is underway

Due to the complexity of this project, WSDOT divided construction into three contracts. WSDOT started and completed the first construction contract (Phase 1A) in 2009, two years ahead of schedule.

In 2010, WSDOT and contractor crews started construction on Phase 1B, which improves the first three miles from Hyak (milepost 55.2) to the Lake Keechelus Snowshed (milepost 58.1). Contractor crews started work to add a new lane in each direction, replace the deteriorating concrete pavement of existing lanes, add and replace bridges and culverts, stabilize rock slopes, extend chain-up/off areas, and add illumination, traffic cameras, and variable message signs. This work is scheduled to be complete in 2013.

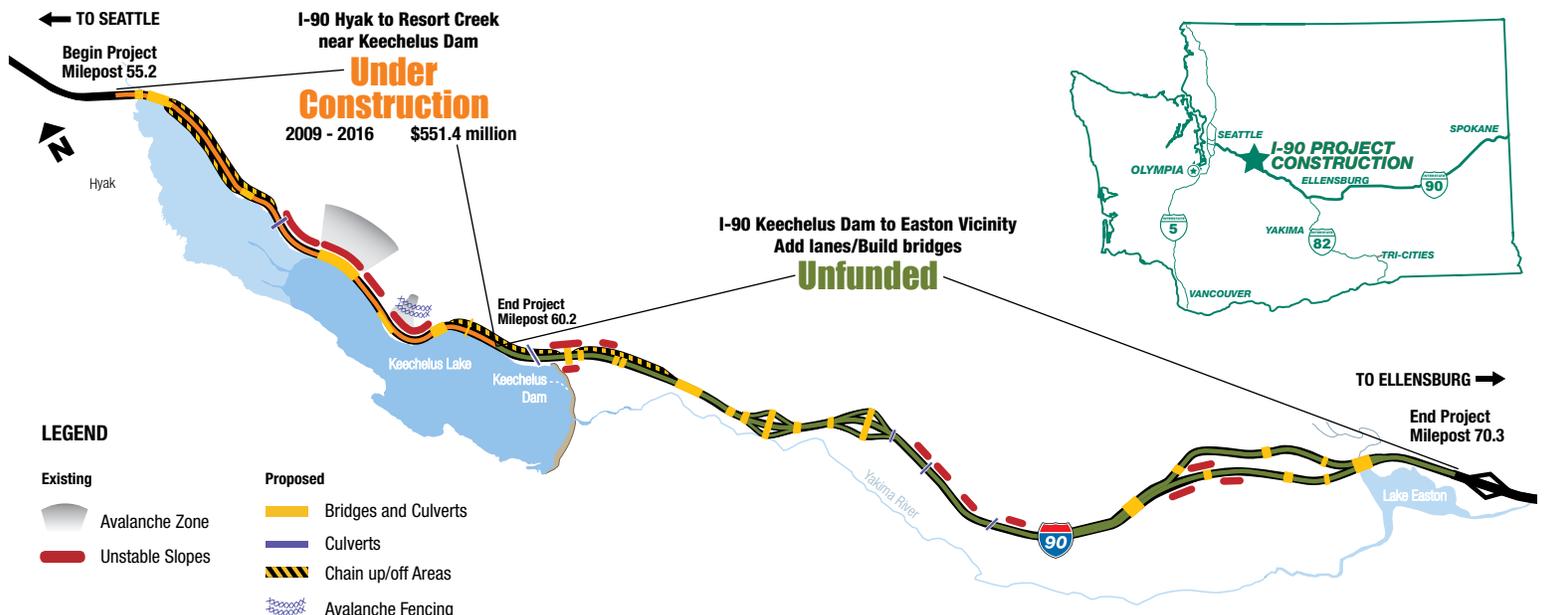
In 2011, WSDOT and crews will start construction on Phase 1C, which improves the remaining two project miles from the Lake Keechelus Snowshed to Resort Creek near Keechelus Dam (milepost 60.2). This work includes continuing to add a new lane in each direction, replacing the existing deteriorated concrete pavement, replacing the snowshed, stabilizing rock slopes, and replacing bridges and culverts. WSDOT plans to close the roadway nightly to perform controlled rock blasting and to place girders. This work is scheduled to be completed by 2016.



Crews place girders for temporary bridges over Gold Creek during Phase 1A.

WSDOT's commitment to keep traffic moving across Snoqualmie Pass during construction

As one of Washington state's most critical transportation corridors, the uninterrupted movement of freight and passenger vehicles across I-90 Snoqualmie Pass is essential to our economy. WSDOT is committed to keep Washington moving across I-90 Snoqualmie Pass by maintaining two travel lanes in each direction during peak daytime travel hours through the construction zone. Drivers may experience single-lane closures during nighttime hours or as needed to perform critical daytime activities.



I-90 Hyak to Keechelus Dam Project highlights - First Five Miles - Funded

Phase 1B Under Construction

WSDOT will improve the area at Gold Creek and the top of Keechelus Lake. The existing 120 foot bridges will be replaced with an 1,100 foot bridge and a 900 foot bridge designed for water and wildlife passage. WSDOT will build a wildlife crossing under the highway to serve the migration route from the upper valley and Keechelus Lake area.



Existing Gold Creek Bridges



Visual Concept of new Gold Creek Bridges including a wildlife crossing under the highway

Phase 1C Construction Starts 2011

The existing snowshed was built in 1950, and only protects the westbound lanes from an avalanche zone. WSDOT will build a new 1,100 foot snowshed that will cover both westbound and eastbound lanes to increase safety and reliability of I-90 during winter operations, reduce avalanche risks to the traveling public and minimize road closures required for avalanche control work.



Existing East Snowshed



Visual Concept of new Expanded East Snowshed

Phase 1C New eastbound bridge at Slide Curve

WSDOT will build a bridge on the eastbound lanes to accommodate the widened highway and sharp curves through this area.



Existing Slide Curve area

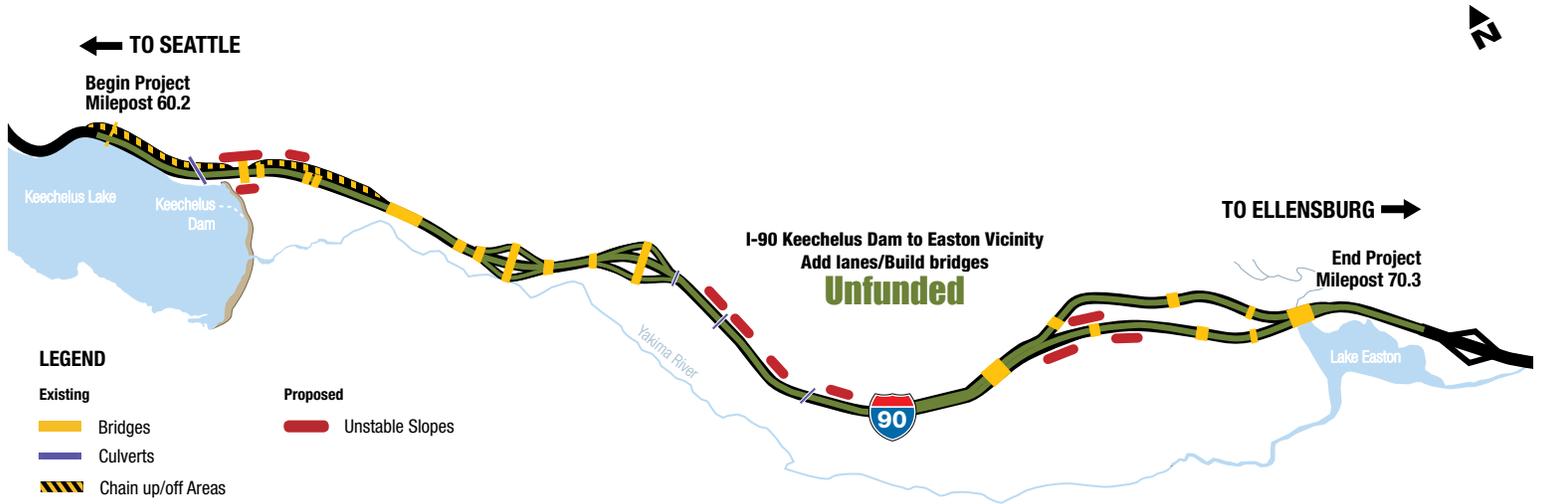


Visual Concept of new Eastbound Slide Curve Bridge

I-90 Keechelus Dam to Easton Vicinity - The remaining 10 miles - Unfunded

After WSDOT completes the Hyak to Keechelus Dam project, there's still more work to do. There are several safety issues and important improvements that WSDOT will need to address in the remaining 10 project miles of the I-90 Project Corridor from Resort Creek near Keechelus Dam to Easton vicinity.

- Add a new lane in each direction and replace deteriorating concrete of existing lanes
- Build a wildlife crossing over the highway to reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions
- Stabilize rock slopes to prevent rock and other debris from reaching the roadway
- Replace and extend truck-climbing lanes to keep vehicles moving in freight-heavy traffic
- Replace low-clearance bridges at interchanges to provide clearance for oversized loads
- Rebuild bridges and culverts for additional travel lanes and improve the movement of water and wildlife



I-90 Project Final Environmental Impact Statement:

In fall of 2008 the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) and a Record of Decision (ROD). In early 2009, federal and state permits were received and construction started on Phase I of the project. There is some overlap of work between Phase I and Phase II allowing progress to continue using the Final EIS documentation and permit approvals from 2008.

However, after 2013 additional updates and modifications to permits and documentation will be required. This will include a NEPA re-evaluation of the Final EIS from 2008 and most likely a Supplemental EIS. All new permits will be required after 2015.



Extended truck climbing lanes to keep cars moving in freight traffic.



Visual Concept of proposed Price/Noble Wildlife Crossing Over the Highway



Stabilize slopes to minimize risks to drivers.



Replace low clearance bridges at interchanges.

Why is the I-90 Project area unique?

The 15-mile long I-90 Project area is built on National Forest land with an easement from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Since the late 1990s, the area has been managed by USFS according to the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan, which protects old-growth habitat, removes portions of existing USFS roads, and manages National Forest land to facilitate wildlife movement. Since I-90 is on National Forest land, the I-90 Project design must be compatible with the USFS Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan.

In recent years, non-governmental and public groups like the Cascades Land Conservation Partnership, the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway Trust, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have invested in substantial private and public land conservation efforts to protect old-growth forest, provide larger contiguous blocks of forested habitat, and facilitate habitat connectivity across the I-90 corridor. These efforts have added 75,000 acres (approximately 117 square miles) of conservation land and additional National Forest land within the I-90 Project area. The I-90 Project improvements must also align with these conservation efforts.

After years of studying the I-90 corridor as part of environmental analysis and design efforts, WSDOT and its partners have developed ways to integrate ecological connectivity into the I-90 Project while still meeting transportation objectives. For example, as WSDOT removes the existing bridges and culverts to accommodate the widening of the interstate, it will rebuild them to facilitate the movement of wildlife and aquatic systems. By reconnecting habitat across I-90, WSDOT will help reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions. When complete, I-90 Project improvements will help create a healthier ecosystem for the plants, wildlife, and aquatic systems of the Central Cascades while providing a safe, reliable transportation system.

Who are I-90 Project partners?

The I-90 Project team has formed cooperative partnerships with county, state and federal agencies, as well as conservation organizations and universities. These partnerships allow WSDOT to coordinate with land management agencies, perform wildlife monitoring activities, and identify possible mitigation sites for acquisitions.



Contact Information

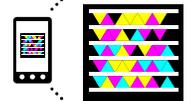
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