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For More Information

Visit the I-405 Project website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i405

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Keep moving during construction

WSDOT is keeping you moving during I-405 construction with new transit and vanpool service, real-time traffic updates, and expanded park-and-ride lot capacity. Visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i405/keepmoving for more information on:

- Real-time traffic information**
- Riding the bus**
- Getting traffic updates on the road**
- Biking**
- Beating backups by using carpool lanes**
- Bridging the gap between home-transit-work**



New transit service on I-405 through Kirkland keeps you moving during construction.



How is WSDOT improving your I-405 commute?

On any given day, parts of I-405 are congested for up to 12 hours. WSDOT is addressing I-405 congestion with improvement projects at key chokepoints.

This progress report provides an update on how WSDOT is relieving congestion on I-405, how much it costs, and how long until you have a better commute.

Inside this report, you'll find:

- An overview of how WSDOT is improving your I-405 commute.
- The steps WSDOT takes to build an I-405 highway project.
- A corridor map with an update on planned I-405 projects and their status.
- Resources and options to help keep you moving during I-405 construction.



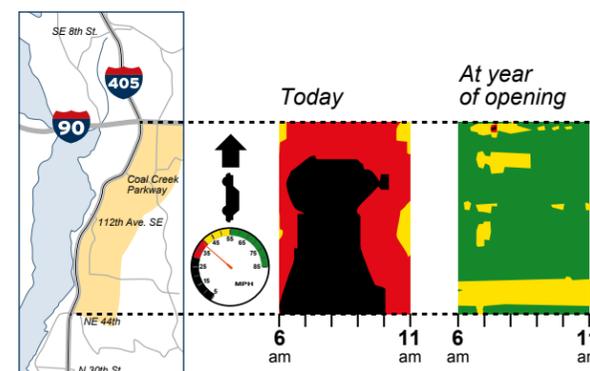
Artist rendering of incremental improvements to the I-405/SR 167 Interchange as designed in the I-405 Master Plan. (See inside for currently funded I-405/SR 167 interchange improvements.)

I-405 construction is underway

In 2002, WSDOT, with residents; elected officials; business leaders; and federal, state, and local governments developed an I-405 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The I-405 master plan, which is derived from the EIS, outlines nearly 300 roadway, transit, and environmental improvements, including two new lanes in each direction along the length of I-405 and a bus rapid transit system. WSDOT is implementing the first projects in the master plan on time and on budget.

Since 2002, WSDOT has proceeded with master plan projects that address the worst congestion first. Two new lanes are already open to traffic on I-405 through Kirkland, and construction on new lanes in Bellevue and Renton begins this year. WSDOT is also finishing the environmental analysis on projects in Kirkland, Bellevue, Renton, and Renton to Bellevue.

How congestion will be reduced



To illustrate how conditions will improve on I-405 when WSDOT opens planned projects to traffic, WSDOT developed this Doppler graphic. Red and black areas indicate traffic slowing below 40 mph. Green and yellow areas show faster moving traffic. This example shows how traffic conditions will improve during the northbound morning commute on I-405 when the Renton to Bellevue (SR 169 to I-90) project is funded and open to traffic.

Regular Construction Updates

For construction updates on I-405 projects, join WSDOT's e-mail update list by sending an e-mail to lyris@lists.wsdot.wa.gov with "subscribe i-405" in the body of the message. Also visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i405 for more information about I-405 projects.

IT'S YOUR NICKEL. WATCH IT WORK.



How do I-405 projects get built?

As funding becomes available, WSDOT prioritizes construction projects that address the worst congestion first (take a look at the map inside this newsletter for information about funding). This section provides an overview of the steps that WSDOT takes once it receives funding for a project from the I-405 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). (*Timelines for each step are only estimates. Completion of a stage can take more or less time depending on funding and other factors.*)

Step 1: Project Kick Off (30 days)

Before building each project, WSDOT must conduct a review of potential environmental effects and costs. Project kick off, also known as the scoping period, is the first opportunity for the public to weigh in on those details. During the scoping period, WSDOT engineers hold events and public meetings to explain the project and identify the major concerns of citizens; tribes; and local, state, and federal governments. Once scoping ends, WSDOT publishes a scoping document that includes public comments submitted during the scoping period and WSDOT's preliminary responses to those comments.



I-405 project team members answer questions and discuss proposed project plans at a public scoping meeting.

Step 2: Environmental Assessment (EA) (18-24 months)

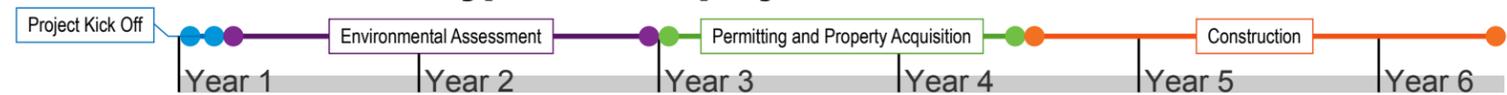


WSDOT analyzes existing environmental conditions during the environmental assessment phase. Here, a biologist tests water quality.

The I-405 master plan for the entire corridor included a broad analysis of the potential environmental benefits, adverse effects of I-405 improvements, and proposed strategies to minimize negative effects. However, before WSDOT can proceed with building each separately funded I-405 improvement, it must assure the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the project will not have substantial adverse effects on neighborhoods, noise, air quality, traffic, and other areas of concern. The Environmental Assessment (EA), required by the National and State Environmental Policy Acts, is an in-depth evaluation of the project. To develop the EA, WSDOT meets with local officials and analyzes project designs, soil samples, and noise and traffic models. WSDOT also hosts frequent neighborhood meetings, outreach events, and at least two formal public involvement opportunities: the Discipline Report Open House, about six to 12 months into the EA; and the EA Hearing, near the conclusion of the process.

If FHWA approves the EA, the federal agency issues a public document called a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Only then is WSDOT allowed to proceed with acquiring necessary environmental permits and property to build the project.

Timeline of a typical I-405 project



Step 3: Permitting and Property Acquisition (18 months)

Just as you have to apply for permits when you build or remodel your house, WSDOT has to apply for environmental permits to build a highway project. To receive permits, WSDOT may have to outline measures to minimize adverse environmental effects.

To widen the freeway or to build a new interchange, WSDOT may have to acquire new property. This involves identifying which properties WSDOT will need to purchase, hiring an independent real estate assessor to determine fair market value, and negotiating and completing the purchase. When a property has tenants, WSDOT offers relocation benefits and assists with relocation.



After a project receives funding, project team members meet with affected property owners to discuss the purchasing process and provide resources and benefits to assist them with relocation.

Step 4: Construction (Two to three years)



To keep lanes open during peak commute hours, construction crews work in the median as much as possible.

When WSDOT has completed the preliminary steps and is ready to build an I-405 project, we carefully review bids and select a contractor—considering price, quality, and experience.

Before and during construction, WSDOT coordinates with transit agencies and local businesses to ensure that commuters can get to work, buses can run smoothly, and shoppers have access to businesses. WSDOT develops a plan to address any problems caused by construction, including any traffic impacts that may result from lane closures.

During construction, WSDOT also holds frequent neighborhood meetings and other outreach events, and maintains ongoing communication with the public through weekly updates in the newspaper, highway advisory radio (signs along the freeway alert you to tune your radio for the latest construction updates), variable messaging signs along the highway, e-mails, and the WSDOT Web site.



WSDOT and construction crews install noise walls along I-405 for the Kirkland Nickel Stage 1 Project.

