



Oregon

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Department of Transportation

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Public Information Sheet

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Bridge Clearance project Interstate 5 @ Santiam Highway Overcrossing

What's the problem?

The purpose of this project is to raise the vertical clearance of the Santiam Highway bridge above Interstate 5 (I-5). This bridge now has 15 feet, 10 inches of clearance from the surface of I-5 to the bottom of the bridge. The standard for new bridges is 17 feet, 6 inches.

In an agreement between the ODOT Bridge Unit, the Oregon Transportation Commission, and the motor freight industry, the I-5 roadway will be lowered to create 16 feet, 8 inches of clearance – a vertical gain of 10 inches. At this location, only the northbound side of I-5, and the northbound off-ramp, will need to be lowered.

This is one of twelve projects that will increase clearance on I-5 bridges from Salem to Cottage Grove. The added clearance will allow over-height loads, such as manufactured homes, to travel on I-5 without detouring over to Corvallis, and then up Highway 99. The goal is to keep these large freight loads on the freeway where they belong.

Who is responsible to fix this?

ODOT is responsible for the safety and efficiency of the highway. If nothing is done, the over-height loads will continue to be forced off the interstate and onto detours using city and county roads, as well as secondary highways. These detoured loads pass through small towns and large cities as well as through some crowded arterials. This is not as safe as travel on the interstate, nor is it an efficient use of our highways.

What has happened so far?

Funding was acquired through the Oregon Congressional delegation. Approximately \$3.8 million in total funds are devoted to the project. Since the funds are earmarked, they have to be obligated by the end of September 2009.

What else was considered?

An alternative was discussed to only lower the northbound off-ramp, which would then turn into an auxiliary lane to the Knox Butte exit. However, this option was much more expensive and was therefore rejected.

What will happen during construction?

During construction, the northbound lanes of I-5 will be shifted to a temporary alignment to the left of the existing lanes. After the travel lanes of the freeway have been lowered, the shoulder and northbound off-ramp will be closed for 2 to 4 weeks. All northbound traffic that intends to exit to that area will be redirected to the detour routes at the Knox Butte exit.

Why does the off-ramp have to be closed?

The primary reason is safety. Realigning the off-ramp around the construction zone would force existing traffic to make a very tight turn. The combination of rapid deceleration from freeway speeds coupled with the distraction of the work zone, makes the use and operation of the off-ramp unsafe until the project is completed.

What will be done to detour traffic?

The detour will be well posted. The intersection at the end of the Knox Butte off-ramp will be temporarily turned into a four-way stop to ensure safety, and to improve traffic flow.

When will the construction take place?

The project is scheduled to go out to bid in April of 2009. Construction will begin in the summer of 2009.

Who to contact with a question?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact ODOT's Project Leader, Jerry Wolcott, at 541-757-4164, or email at jerry.o.wolcott@odot.state.or.us