

Project Components

- Increase traffic capacity of US 97 between South Century Drive and Lava Butte by constructing a four lane highway (two lanes in each direction).
- Separate northbound and southbound traffic with a forested median of up to a maximum width of 108 feet.
- Reconstruct the Cottonwood Road interchange from a partial to a full diamond interchange.
- Eliminate dangerous intersections by constructing alternative access to Lava Lands Visitor's Center and Lava River Cave via Crawford Road and Cottonwood Road.
- Build four structures under US 97 to reduce wildlife/vehicle crashes and facilitate wildlife movement.

Why this project is needed

The project is needed because US 97 and other roadway approaches in the project area do not and, will not, meet traffic operations and safety needs. Current lane configuration of US 97 does not provide for adequate capacity for existing and forecast travel demands, nor are there safe ways to access and exit the highway at several key locations in the project area, including Lava Lands Visitor Center, Lava River Cave and Cottonwood Road.



The highway and accesses do not meet current design and operational standards to accommodate existing and forecast traffic volumes. Traffic volumes in certain locations exceed or are forecast to exceed the capacity of the existing highway during peak travel periods, resulting in congestion, delays, reduced mobility, and greater potential for crashes.

How ODOT plans to solve these problems

The proposal is to: (1) separate northbound and southbound traffic with a forested median of up to an approximate maximum of 108 feet in width, (2) increase the capacity of the existing two- and three-lane highway to four lanes (two in each direction), and (3) reconstruct the Cottonwood Road interchange into a full diamond interchange (on and off ramps in both directions).

Highway access would be limited to the Cottonwood Road interchange and a right-in access to the Lava Lands Visitor Center and Benham Falls at Crawford Road. In the winter, right-out access for southbound US 97 traffic would also be provided at Crawford Road to allow for recreational uses.

Direct highway access would be removed at Lava River Cave, and the project would provide alternative access with a new access road east of US 97. The new access road would connect Cottonwood Road and Lava River Cave, and cross under US 97 to connect with Crawford Road.

In an effort to reduce the number of wildlife/vehicle crashes and facilitate wildlife movement and habitat connections, structures and fencing to accommodate wildlife passage under US 97 in two locations are being proposed. One set of the structures is part of the connection of Lava River Cave to Crawford Road.

ODOT Contacts

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Construction Background

The three year and \$16 million US 97: Lava Butte - South Century Drive Project was awarded to Knife River Corporation - Northwest in June 2009. The project was partially funded (\$11.7 million) by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The project was completed in the fall of 2012.

The construction schedule was as follows:

Reconstruct the southbound lanes including building two new undercrossings	Fall 2010 to Fall 2011
Complete construction of southbound entrance ramp at Cottonwood Road	Spring 2011
Open Access to Crawford Road (Lava Lands Visitor Center and Benham Falls)	May 2011
Complete construction of the new northbound lanes at the project ends	Spring/Summer 2011
Complete Construction of the new frontage road access to Lava Lands Visitor Center and Lava River Cave	Summer/Fall 2011
Complete construction of wildlife fencing	Spring 2012
Construction completed	Fall 2012



US 97: Lava Butte - S. Century Drive Project

