

Other Efforts in the Corridor

- Tiger III Improvements
- Ramp Metering
- Madigan Access Improvements



TIGER III Improvements, I-5 – SR 510 to SR 512 Congestion Management



Variable Message Signs (VMS): A VMS is an electronic traffic sign used on roadways to provide motorists important information about traffic congestion, incidents, roadwork, travel times, special events or speed limits on a specific highway segment. They may also recommend alternative routes, limit travel speed, warn of duration and location of problem or simply provide alerts or warnings.

Traffic Cameras (CCTV): WSDOT operates an extensive network of closed-circuit television across the state to help detect congestion and incidents. The camera images are sent to our TMCs for operations monitoring, to the Web for travelers, and to the media.

Highway Advisory Radios (HAR): HARs are licensed low-power AM radio stations installed along the roadway to provide alerts and general information regarding traffic and travel. The presence of a HAR transmitter is marked by a roadway sign instructing motorists to "Tune to a specific AM frequency".

Traffic Data Collectors: Traffic detectors are one of the key set of tools used to keep track of what is happening on the roadways. The most common detector we use is the induction loop, a simple low-voltage wire coil buried in the roadway that sends an electrical pulse when a vehicle passes over it. Other, less common detectors use infrared, radar, sound or video imaging to detect vehicles. The detection data is sent from the roadside to the TMCs to monitor operations and provide traffic conditions to the Web and the WSDOT 511 traffic information hotline.

Traffic Management Center (TMC): WSDOT operates seven regional TMC's. They are the nerve centers for our operations activities. Real-time information is gathered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from many sources including traffic detectors, CCTV cameras, ramp meters, the Washington State Patrol, road crews, WSDOT's incident response teams, and media traffic reporters. We use this information to respond to incidents, deal with other problems that occur, and notify the public and the media of these events.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

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Ramp Meters



What are ramp meters?

Ramp meters are stop-and-go traffic signals that control the frequency with which vehicles enter the flow of traffic on the freeway.

Why does WSDOT install ramp meters?

WSDOT uses ramp meters to reduce accidents and decrease travel times for commuters. Most ramp meters allow only one vehicle through each green light, creating a 4 to 15 second delay between cars entering the highway. This delay helps reduce disruptions to freeway traffic and reduces accidents that occur when vehicles merge onto the highway.

How do ramp meters work?

Ramp meters are part of a large computer-operated system that is managed in WSDOT's Traffic Management Centers (TMCs). Magnetic "loops" are embedded in the pavement that provide the TMCs with information about traffic flow, such as the volume and speed of vehicles on freeways and ramps. This traffic data is continually fed to the ramp meters, which automatically alter their cycles to maximize traffic flow on both the ramps and the freeways.

Why are they effective?

Without ramp meters, multiple cars try to merge simultaneously. Drivers on the freeway slow down to allow the cars enter and these slower speeds quickly cause backups. If cars enter the highway in controlled intervals, they are less likely to cause a disruption to the traffic on the freeway. A short wait on the ramp allows drivers to increase their average freeway speed and shorten overall freeway travel times. Ramp meters also reduce the number of accidents that often occur when multiple vehicles merge onto the highway at the same time.

Ramp Meter Facts

- Ramp meters reduce accidents system-wide by at least 30%.
- On I-405 in Renton, ramp meters provided a travel time savings of 3 to 16 minutes.
- Ramp meters are a proven and cost-effective method of relieving traffic congestion.

Madigan Access Improvements

Project Information

This City of Lakewood-led project improves access to Madigan Army Medical Center by providing double left-turn lanes from southbound I-5 to Berkeley Street and another lane across the Berkeley Street overpass (Freedom Bridge).

WSDOT is administering the project for the City of Lakewood.

The End Result

Construction will add one travel lane to the I-5 Berkeley Street overpass, also known as the Freedom Bridge. The southbound I-5 exit to Berkeley Street will be widened to create a second left turn lane. Union Avenue will also be widened.

When complete, the bridge will have a new roadway surface and improved pedestrian access with enhanced sidewalks.



Project Benefits

- Widened overpass and added left turn lane will help prevent exiting traffic from backing onto mainline southbound I-5, which will increase driver safety, improve access to the Madigan area, and improve traffic flow on southbound I-5.
- Project complements previous WSDOT work to create an auxiliary lane on southbound Interstate 5 between Thorne Lane and Berkeley Avenue, giving drivers more room to merge on and off I-5 along this busy stretch of highway.

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