

Project Components

This project will:

- Widen the U.S. 97 bridges and roadway over Interstate 84 and the Union Pacific Railroad, from two to five lanes.
- Install traffic signals at both interchange ramp intersections and at the intersection of U.S. 97 with the Celilo-Wasco Highway and Biggs-Rufus Frontage Road in Biggs Junction.
- Replace approximately five and one half miles of substandard concrete median barrier on I-84 from approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ miles west of the U.S 97 interchange to the railroad overcrossing near Rufus.

Location

The *Interstate 84 at U.S. 97 Interchange* project is located in Sherman County, approximately 20 miles east of The Dalles (see vicinity map).

Why this Project is needed

Interstate 84 at U.S. 97 (Biggs) Interchange is a major hub for transportation of freight by truck, as well as the intermodal connection point for the transfer of wheat from trucks on the highway to barges on the Columbia River. The interchange ramps and intersections are in a very constrained area between the river and the railroad. Biggs Junction, located immediately south of the interchange, has also experienced increased commercial development catering to highway traffic. Traffic counts and vehicle classifications show that more than 40% of the vehicles in this area are large trucks.



The interchange at I-84 and U.S. 97 after the project was completed.

Because of the heavy truck traffic circulating throughout the project area and the existing restrictive ramp and intersection space, left and right-turns for vehicles from the off-ramps are contributing to high congestion and back-up problems. The intersections at the ramps are narrow and heavy vehicles turning onto U.S. 97 cannot stay within the correct lanes; these maneuvers require “gaps” in traffic from either direction on U.S. 97, which is creating safety concerns at these stop-sign controlled intersections. This is most likely the single largest contributor to the existing back-up problems on the I-84 east and westbound off ramps. In addition to the standard sized truck traffic, the configuration of this interchange is such that it cannot accommodate the majority of over-sized wind-tower loads that continue to be delivered to wind turbine projects in this region, which is causing costly out-of-direction travel for those loads.

Traffic studies performed by the Oregon Department of Transportation indicate that if no improvements are made to these intersections, the consequence will be vehicle back-ups down the entire length of the off-ramps and onto the mainline of I-84 in the foreseeable future.

The concrete median barrier that separates the east and west bound lanes on I-84 in the vicinity of the I-84/U.S. 97 interchange does not meet current standards, and is in need of being replaced. New

styles of concrete barrier that will replace the old are much more crash worthy in accidents that involve the larger vehicles that travel our highways today.

What is being proposed

To alleviate these problems, the project will widen the highway and bridges on U.S. 97 from two to five lanes in the vicinity of the I-84 interchange. Traffic signals will be installed at the ramp intersections.

To further facilitate traffic flow in the area, a traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of U.S. 97 with the Celilo-Wasco Highway and the Biggs-Rufus Frontage Road in Biggs Junction. Construction of an acceleration lane is planned on U.S. 97 to the south of Biggs Junction.

This project will also replace approximately five and a half miles of substandard median barrier on I-84 between MP 103.70 and 109.15.

Project Timeline

Design 2010-2012
 Contract Bid Let Spring 2013
 Construction 2013-2015

Estimated Project Cost

\$18 million – funded by the Jobs and Transportation Act (HB 2001) and federal highway dollars

The Interstate 84 at U.S. 97 Interchange construction contract was awarded to Kerr Contractors Oregon, LLC in May 2013. Construction began in July 2013 and was substantially completed by the end of May 2015. The traffic lights at the interchange and in Biggs Junction were turned on May 22, 2015.

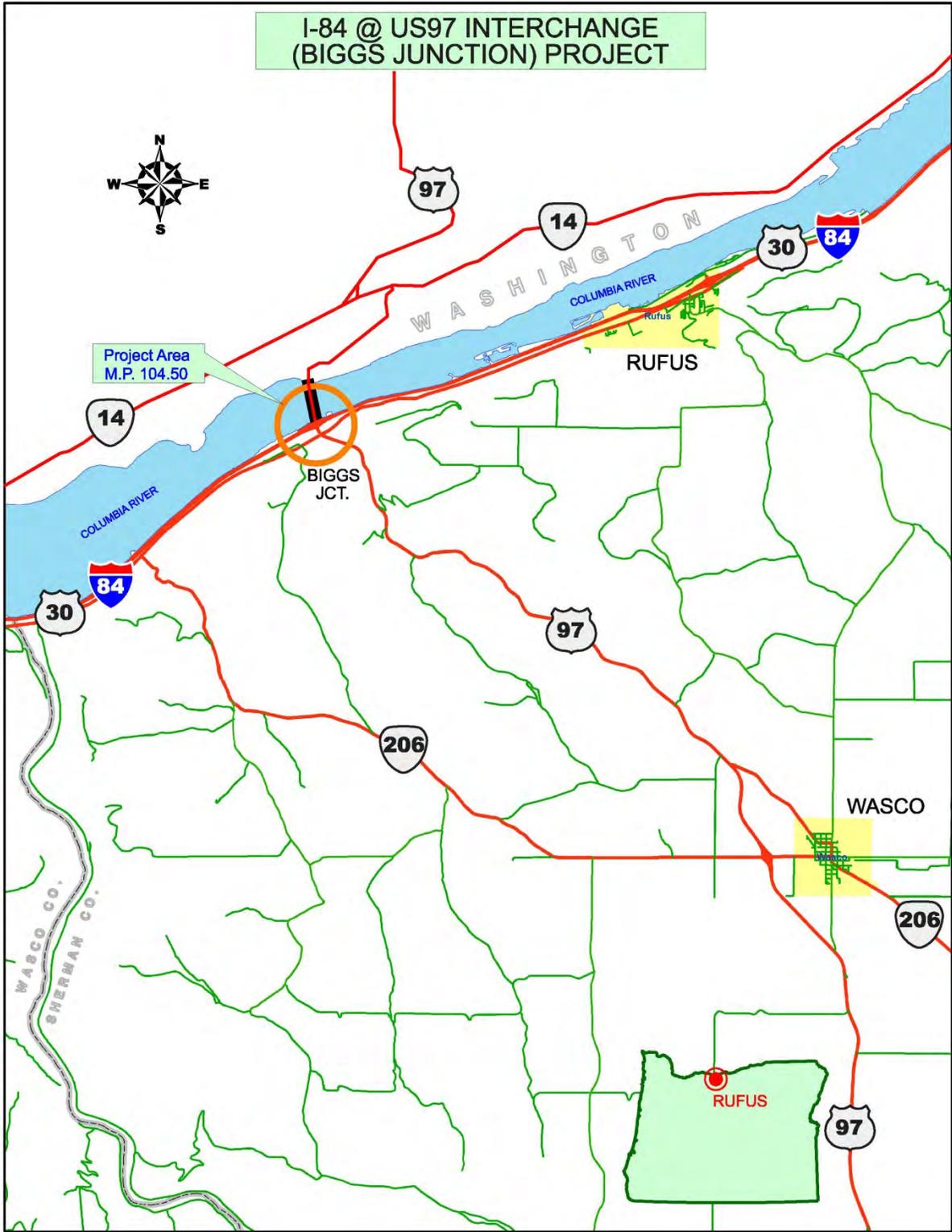
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Biggs Junction during construction, 2014.

I-84 @ US97 INTERCHANGE
(BIGGS JUNCTION) PROJECT





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COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY
SHERMAN COUNTY

REVIEW COPY ONLY
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