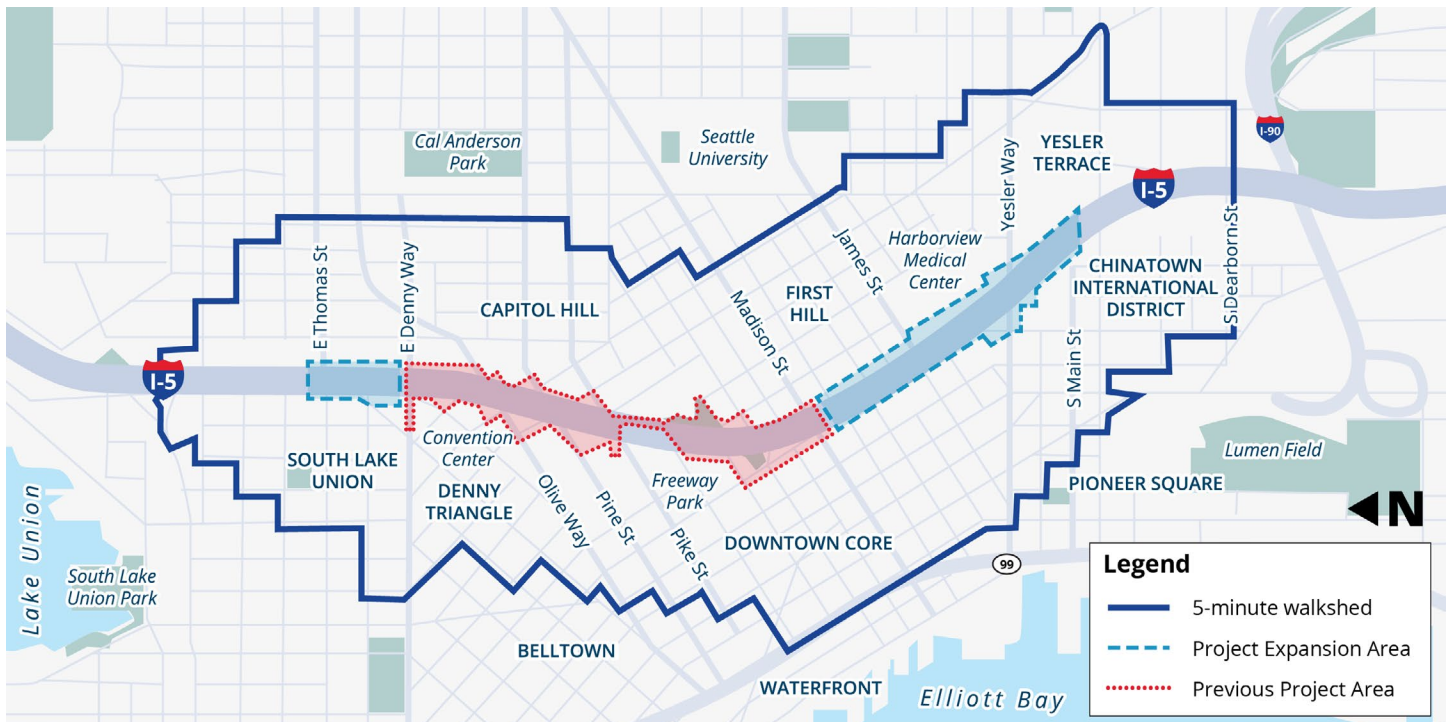




Downtown Seattle I-5 Lid Community-Building and Planning Studies

Background

The Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) is leading a community-driven project to reimagine the I-5 corridor through downtown. Building on a grassroots movement, this visioning process explores ways to reconnect neighborhoods that have long been divided by the freeway and create a healthier, better connected, and more prosperous future for Seattle.



The expanded project area spans from South Lake Union to the Chinatown International District and includes four city council districts and seven neighborhoods.

History

The construction of I-5 displaced homes, businesses, and communities, leaving many central Seattle neighborhoods divided for generations. Decades later, the freeway still affects nearby residents with pollution, noise, and physical barriers that limit access, connection and opportunity.



View north from Beacon Hill before I-5 construction.
(Seattle Municipal Archives, #45545, Series 2613-07)



The construction of I-5, looking north from Beacon Hill.
(WSDOT Photograph Collection: Washington State Archives)

Timeline

2010

A bold idea emerges

A community group called Lid I-5 came together around a big idea: finding ways to reconnect Seattle neighborhoods that were divided when I-5 was built through downtown.

2020

Exploring what's possible

An early feasibility study took a closer look at the idea and found strong potential to bridge neighborhoods separated by the freeway.

2023

Reconnection gains support

Seattle City Council formally endorsed I-5 lid planning and directed City departments to pursue funding opportunities.

2024

Investment in next steps

The project secured \$2.2 million in federal and state funding to support planning, technical analysis, and community engagement.

2026-2028

Shaping the future together

Community members will help shape a shared vision for reconnecting Seattle across I-5. The vision will guide future project phases such as planning, environmental review, design, and construction.

Get involved

The stories, values and priorities of people most affected by I-5 will help shape both the vision and the project's identity. Starting in late 2026, OPCD will host community events to hear what matters most to people. Additional opportunities in 2027 will help shape a shared vision for reconnecting neighborhoods.



Stay informed by signing up for project alerts on the OPCD website.

bit.ly/4xwtlQi

Contact us

Tiernan Martin, OPCD Project Manager
Tiernan.Martin@seattle.gov

