

Corridor Sketch Summary

I-82: Union Gap to Oregon Border (Umatilla)

Highway No. 082

Mileposts: 38.62 to 132.6

Corridor 513

Length: 93.98 miles

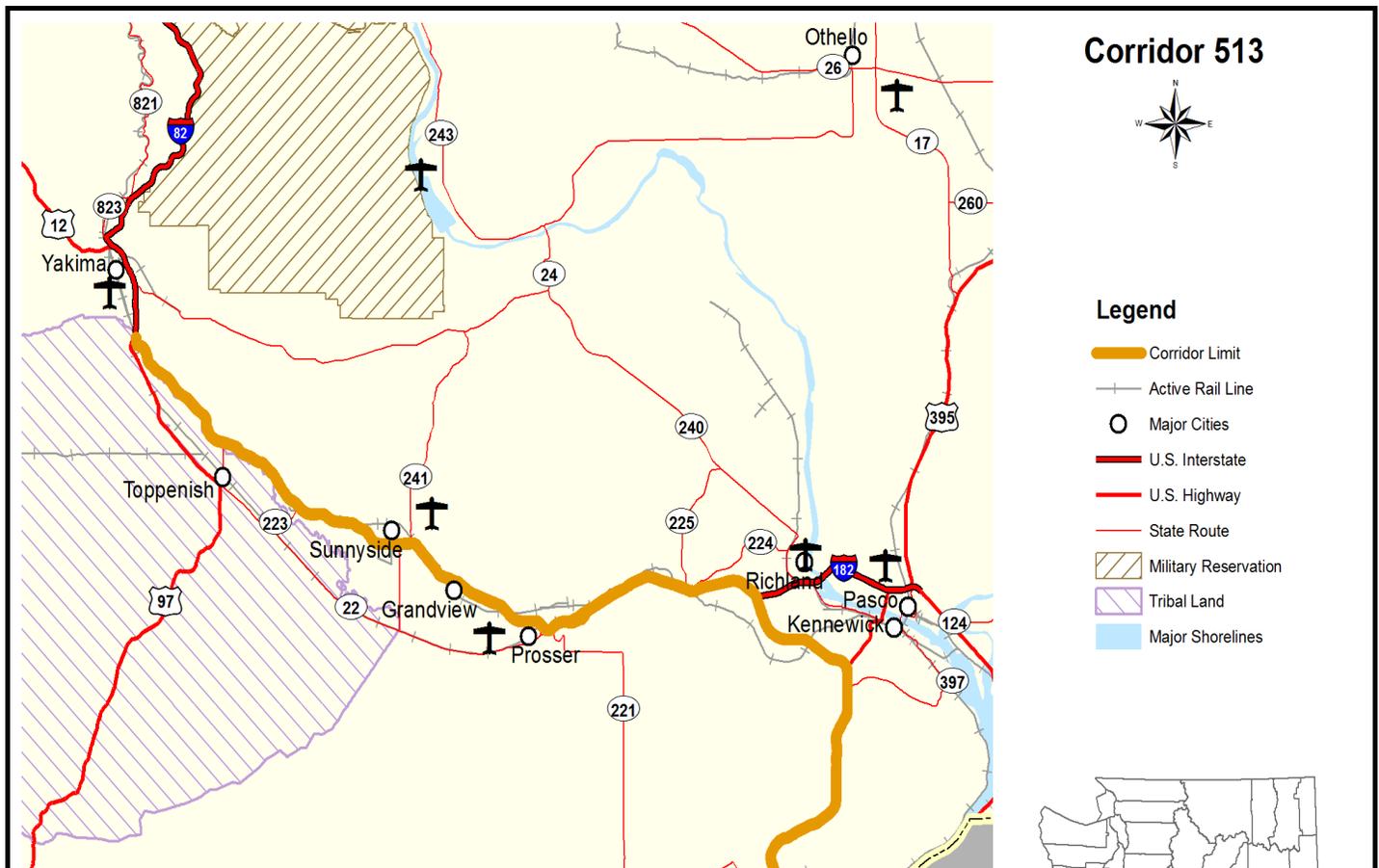
Corridor Description

The 94 mile long corridor begins at Union Gap then travels Southeast to the Washington/Oregon State line (Columbia River) near Umatilla. Signed route US 12 runs concurrent with I-82 from Yakima to the I-182 Interchange in the Tri-Cities. Signed route US 395 runs concurrent with I-82 from the US 395 Interchange (Exit 113) at the south end of Kennewick to Umatilla.

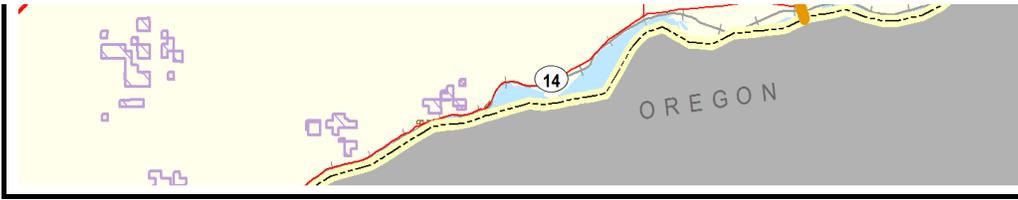
The corridor begins at Union Gap, which is a narrow opening between Ahtanum Ridge and the Rattlesnake Hills, two ridges separating the upper and lower Yakima Valley, and through which the Yakima River flows. I-82 follows the Yakima River through much of the lower Yakima Valley until Benton City where the highway no longer follows a river corridor. Going through Union Gap, I-82 enters the Lower Yakima Valley with highly productive and diverse irrigated agricultural land including orchards, dairies, field crops, pasture, and specialty crops. There are several smaller cities and unincorporated communities; Sunnyside and Grandview are a couple of the larger cities. This segment is about 57 miles long.

I-82 enters the Tri-Cities region distancing itself from the Yakima River and skirting the cities of Richland and Kennewick. This segment is about 19 miles in length. I-82 has junctions with I-182 and US 395 in the Tri-Cities metropolitan area, but are outside the urban core areas.

The last segment travels through a dry ridgeland before descending into irrigated cropland near the Columbia River. This segment is entirely rural with no communities and extends for about 18 miles. I-82 begins crossing the Columbia River before the corridor terminates at the center of the river at the Oregon border.



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Corridor Function

Current Function

I-82 is the principal transportation corridor for the Yakima Valley and the Tri-Cities providing critical high-speed travel and freight hauling for heavy freight volumes. The corridor is essential to the economic vitality and overall quality of life for residents in the central and south central regions of Washington. This segment is part of the I-82 corridor, which serves south central Washington and connects Ellensburg and the Kittitas Valley, Yakima and the Yakima Valley, the Tri-Cities, and Oregon. I-82 links I-90 in Kittitas County with I-84 in Oregon and the Columbia Gorge.

The Lower Yakima Valley is a major center for diversified agricultural production, processing, storage, and shipping with I-82 is the major transportation corridor for these goods within and outside the valley. The Walmart Distribution Center in Grandview as well as other freight-related industries utilize I-82 for transporting freight to and from their facilities. I-82 is a Highway of Statewide Significance and is part of the National Highway System.

I-82 is a four-lane, divided, limited access high speed facility. The speed limit is 70 mph except for the SR 14 junction and the Columbia River crossing where it is 65 mph. I-82 is classified as a T-1 freight route by the Freight & Goods Transportation System hauling between 17 and 22 million tons annually. There are 2,700 to 3,500 trucks per day on this route accounting for 14% to 20% of the traffic. Average daily traffic varies from 10,000 to 27,000 vehicles per day averaging around 20,000 vpd through the corridor.

The corridor serves many small, rural communities, often with access to those communities provided by highways or county roads that intersect with I-82. Much of the corridor is located adjacent to the Yakama Nation Indian Reservation, providing the Yakama Nation Tribes with essential transportation access. I-82 goes along the southern edge of the Tri-Cities with access via system interchanges for I-182, US 395, SR 397, SR 224/SR 225 and to two local roads.

The I-82 bridges over the Columbia River into Oregon are on the National Register of Historic Places. I-82 from US 395 to the Oregon border is designated a scenic and recreational highway by RCW 47.39.020.

Future Function

I-82 will continue to be the principal north-south transportation corridor through the Yakima Valley providing critical high-speed travel and hauling heavy freight volumes. Truck freight volumes and tonnage will continue to increase along with local growth caused by population and economic growth. The Tri-Cities area will continue to see population and economic growth.

Freight rail traffic will continue to increase on BNSF's Yakima Valley/Stampede mainline rail line. There is some discussion about returning passenger rail service through the corridor, but is unclear if this will happen and if it would happen within the next 20 years.

Comments or feedback on function

Preservation

Policy Goal: To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation system and services.

What's Working Well?

75% of the pavement does not need resurfacing until far into the future and another 8% just needs it in the near future. Only 2% of the pavement was not surveyed for pavement resurfacing needs. 10% of the pavement mileage is

overdue for resurfacing and another 6% is needed now.

What Needs to Change Today?

10% of the pavement mileage is overdue for resurfacing and another 6% is needed now.

The Region has identified the need to re-pave the shoulders adjacent to the concrete sections of I-82 as an important priority.

What Needs to Change in the Future?

Comments or feedback on preservation

Safety

Policy Goal: To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.

What's Working Well?

The existing full limited access control is consistent with the existing and planned land uses providing unique high-speed long-distance travel for the Yakima Valley, Tri-Cities, and eastern Benton County.

What Needs to Change Today?

Variable message signs could be installed south and possibly west of the Tri-Cities to warn of dust storms, wildfires, and other travel concerns. There is an existing sign eastbound just north of Exit 131 (the SR 14 Interchange), and an existing sign westbound just south of the interchange.

Recent City of Kennewick and Benton County projects at Exit 109 (Badger Rd) created operational conflicts within the limited access boundaries of I-82. To the south, the intersection of Wiser Pkwy and Badger Rd was constructed immediately outside the limited access boundary resulting in a staggered intersection. The Leslie Rd roundabout created a merge point opposite the WB ramp terminals. The existing width of Badger Rd will allow an additional SB lane (dropped at Wiser Pkwy) with restriping. This should be implemented now and plans should be made to widen the roadway to accommodate growing bicycle and pedestrian usage from the residential area to the south.

Trucks park at the Prosser Rest Area (Exit 80) filling up the rest area and creating congestion. It is hoped that the construction of a new truck stop just west of the rest area will alleviate the truck parking issues.

Trucks are parking on the Badger Rd (Exit 109) eastbound on- and off-ramps. This is one of the worst truck parking problem areas in Maintenance Area 3.

Safety could be improved by replacing the 3-strand median cable barrier between Gibbon Rd and Yakitat Rd (milepost 88.51 to 92.14) with 4-strand cable barrier.

What Needs to Change in the Future?

I-82 has several short segments with steep grades (over 3%) between Kennewick and Oregon, several between Prosser and Benton City, and two between Benton City and the Tri-Cities, which are longer. With heavier freight volumes on I-82, auxiliary lanes may be needed in some locations.

An undeveloped safety rest area site called Sillusi Butte Safety Rest Area is located at Weigh Station #54 (mp 129.97 to 130.86) site in the westbound direction only.

Comments or feedback on safety

Mobility

Policy Goal: To improve the predictable movement of goods and people through Washington State, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility.

WSDOT currently defines congestion for system screening as locations that currently or are projected to operate below 70% of the posted speed limit during peak hour. Statewide analysis is preformed to screen at three time periods: current year, ten year and twenty year.

What's Working Well?

The traffic volumes are medium. There is adequate capacity now and into the future. However, over time, there may a need for spot improvements especially on the ramps.

What Needs to Change Today?

What Needs to Change in the Future?

There is adequate capacity now and probably for the next 20 years. However, over time, there may a need for spot improvements especially on the ramps. There are several short segments with steep grades (over 3%) between Kennewick and Oregon, several between Prosser and Benton City, and two between Benton City and the Tri-Cities, which are longer. Freight volumes are heavier on I-82. There could be need for auxiliary lanes in some locations.

Comments or feedback on mobility

Environment

Policy Goal: To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.

What's Working Well?

The corridor has no high priority habitat connectivity investment sites. I-82 has no completely blocked fish passages in the corridor and five fish passages are not barriers to fish.

What Needs to Change Today?

One site, near Zillah, has been nominated as a chronic environmental deficiency.

What Needs to Change in the Future?

The corridor has seven known fish passage barriers (mp 68.32, 70.12, 70.90, 72.08, 72.38, 78.47, and 80.32) all located between Sunnyside and Prosser. All are at least partially passable. The corridor also has three medium priority habitat connectivity investments sites and six low priority ones.

Comments or feedback on environment

Economic Vitality

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Corridor 513

Policy Goal: To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

What's Working Well?

I-82 has significant freight truck traffic on this segment. The traffic volumes are low to moderate. The capacity is adequate now and for the next 20 years. It is expected that both freight truck traffic and general traffic volumes will increase into the future.

What Needs to Change Today?

Exit 104 (Dallas Rd) has been an area of intense residential growth. Potentially, this minor interchange may need capacity improvements in the near future.

Construct a new interchange and improve connections to SR 224. This interchange and connection will provide direct interstate access for rapidly growing West Richland while improving emergency response times to the entire area. Ultimately, this connection would travel through Richland, cross the Columbia River and terminate at US 395 probably at the Foster Wells Rd intersection.

What Needs to Change in the Future?

I-82 has several short segments with steep grades (over 3%) between Kennewick and Oregon, several between Prosser and Benton City, and two between Benton City and the Tri-Cities, which are longer. With heavier freight volumes on I-82, auxiliary lanes may be needed in some locations.

The City of West Richland and the Red Mountain community have expressed a strong desire to construct a new interchange ahead of the Exit 96. This would provide more direct access to West Richland and possible long-range plans to extend SR 224 across the Columbia River to connect to US 395 possibly at the Foster Wells Rd intersection. The City of Kennewick has similar interests in a new crossing of I-82 between Exit 109 and Exit 113 (US 395 Jct) and ultimately a new interchange.

Comments or feedback on economic vitality