

There is a steep drop off in people who commute by bike on the east and west sides of I-5. On the east side of the highway, biking mode share is high, at around 20%. On the west side of I-5, the rate is nearly cut in half at around 10% despite not being much further away from downtown. A major factor is in the poor infrastructure on the most direct routes to downtown, especially as you approach the Broadway and Steel Bridges.

Forty percent of people who live in the zip code closest to the west side of I-5 in North Portland and who have commutes of less than 10 miles are traveling south or southeast. For many of these people, the most direct route to their destination is down Interstate Avenue to get onto the Broadway Bridge, ride to the Esplanade, across the Steel Bridge, or through the Rose Quarter to cross over I-84.

A lot of people refuse to ride this route because of one section between Tillamook Street and the Rose Quarter. The worst spot is the southbound approach to Larrabee and underneath the Larrabee overpass. This section of road has poor bike facilities and an alignment that introduces many opportunities for conflicts between different modes, particularly since there is a lot of heavy truck traffic coming from Lower Albina Industrial District that also passes through this section on the way to Broadway to get onto I-5.

As you travel southbound and cross over Tillamook, there is an extended conflict area where a bike lane runs between two lanes of accelerating and merging car and truck traffic for over 400 feet. The best option to make this section safer is to add a curb extension for most of the distance that now has two lanes to add predictability for when vehicles will cross the bike lane and also direct them to yield to bikes in the bike lane.

For riders who don't use the Broadway Bridge and continue down Interstate, PBOT's Traffic Engineering report describes that "bridge columns narrowed the pavement width by approximately two feet for a length of approximately 70 feet. That width was taken entirely out of the bike lane [...] I recommend referring the request to a CIP list for future consideration". The solution here is to have a path built on the other side of the columns, and it is on the C-I-P list but currently not funded.

These two projects would not fix Interstate, but would do a lot to lower the risk of a serious crash leading to serious injury or death in this section in the next 10 to 20 years until the North Portland Greenway is constructed.