

# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have proposed the State Route (SR) 167, Puyallup to SR 509 Extension project. The SR 167, Puyallup to SR 509 Extension project (hereafter referred to as the *167 Extension project*) is located in Pierce County, Washington, within the Cities of Fife, Puyallup, Edgewood, Milton and Tacoma. The environmental analysis for this project was completed in two tiers (stages). The Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzed the location and environmental aspects of different corridor options and selected the environmentally preferred corridor. The Tier II EIS selected the preferred alignment within the corridor and the interchange configuration. The 167 Extension project includes an interchange between SR 167 and SR 161, just north of the Puyallup River, which necessitates the reconstruction of the Puyallup River Bridges, 167/20E and 167/20W. Since Bridge 167/20E, also known as the Meridian Street Bridge, has been recently determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the 167 Extension project would have an additional impact to archaeological and historic resources. Therefore the EIS for the 167 Extension project must be supplemented with this information. This Draft Supplemental EIS provides updates and additional analyses, and a comparison of impacts and benefits associated with a proposed design change for the Puyallup River crossing aspect of the 167 Extension project.

## **1.1 What is the Reason for the SR 167 Extension Project?**

The 167 Extension project will complete the SR 167 freeway by building four miles of new six-lane freeway from its current terminus in Puyallup at SR 161, through the Puyallup River valley, connecting to Interstate 5 (I-5) near the 70th Avenue undercrossing, and another two miles of four-lane divided freeway from I-5 west to connect to SR 509 near the Port of Tacoma. (**Exhibit 1: SR 167 Extension Project Alignment**)

The 167 Extension project will include one direct highway connection, four interchanges, two weigh stations, two park and ride lots, and the reconstruction of the Puyallup River Bridges. The project will also include an innovative stormwater management approach, known as the Riparian Restoration Proposal (RRP), which reduces potential flooding while improving local stream conditions. In addition to important traffic benefits such as increased mobility, improved safety, and accessibility; the SR 167 Extension project will include measures to avoid or minimize impacts, enhance wetlands, connect wildlife habitats, abate traffic noise, and other efforts to protect the environment.

### **1.1.1 Purpose and Need**

The purpose and need for the 167 Extension project is not changed with this Draft Supplemental EIS. The purpose and need of the 167 Extension project is to improve regional mobility to serve multimodal local and port freight movement and passenger movement between (1) the Puyallup termini of SR 167, SR 410, and SR 512 and (2) the I-5 corridor, the new SR 509 freeway, and the Port of Tacoma. The existing non-freeway segment of SR 167 has high levels of congestion at surface street intersections and includes many connecting driveways. Trucks transporting freight from the Port of Tacoma and the Puyallup industrial area add to the congestion. These conditions contribute to relatively high accident rates, and increased air pollution from the stop-and-go traffic conditions. In 1999, the Port of Tacoma projected that truck traffic would double to 600,000 trucks annually by the year 2014. Traffic modeling in 2008 and intersection counts in 2011 were analyzed to update traffic forecasts for this Draft Supplemental EIS also indicate problems will continue to worsen out to the year 2035. (**See Appendix A**)

The project is intended to reduce congestion and improve safety on the arterials and intersections in the study area, provide improved system continuity between the SR 167 corridor and I-5, and maintain or improve air quality within the corridor to ensure compliance with the current State Implementation Plan and all requirements of the Clean Air Act. Benefits of the proposed project include:

- Reduces congestion
- Improves safety for traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- Improves regional mobility of the transportation system

- Serves multi-modal freight and passenger movement
- Improves continuity between SR 167 and I-5
- Reduces flooded area along local creeks
- Maintains or improves air quality in the corridor
- Improves fish habitat in nearby streams

The Tier II Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 167 Extension project was issued in November 2006, (hereafter referred to as the 2006 FEIS) and FHWA issued the Record of Decision (ROD) in October 2007. While there was not sufficient funding available to construct the project at that time, WSDOT received funding for preliminary engineering and purchase of right of way. Since then, WSDOT has acquired 103 properties, which comprise 70% of the corridor right of way. WSDOT received additional funding to continue with right of way acquisition and preliminary engineering as part of the 2012 legislative supplemental budget. Construction, however, remains unfunded.

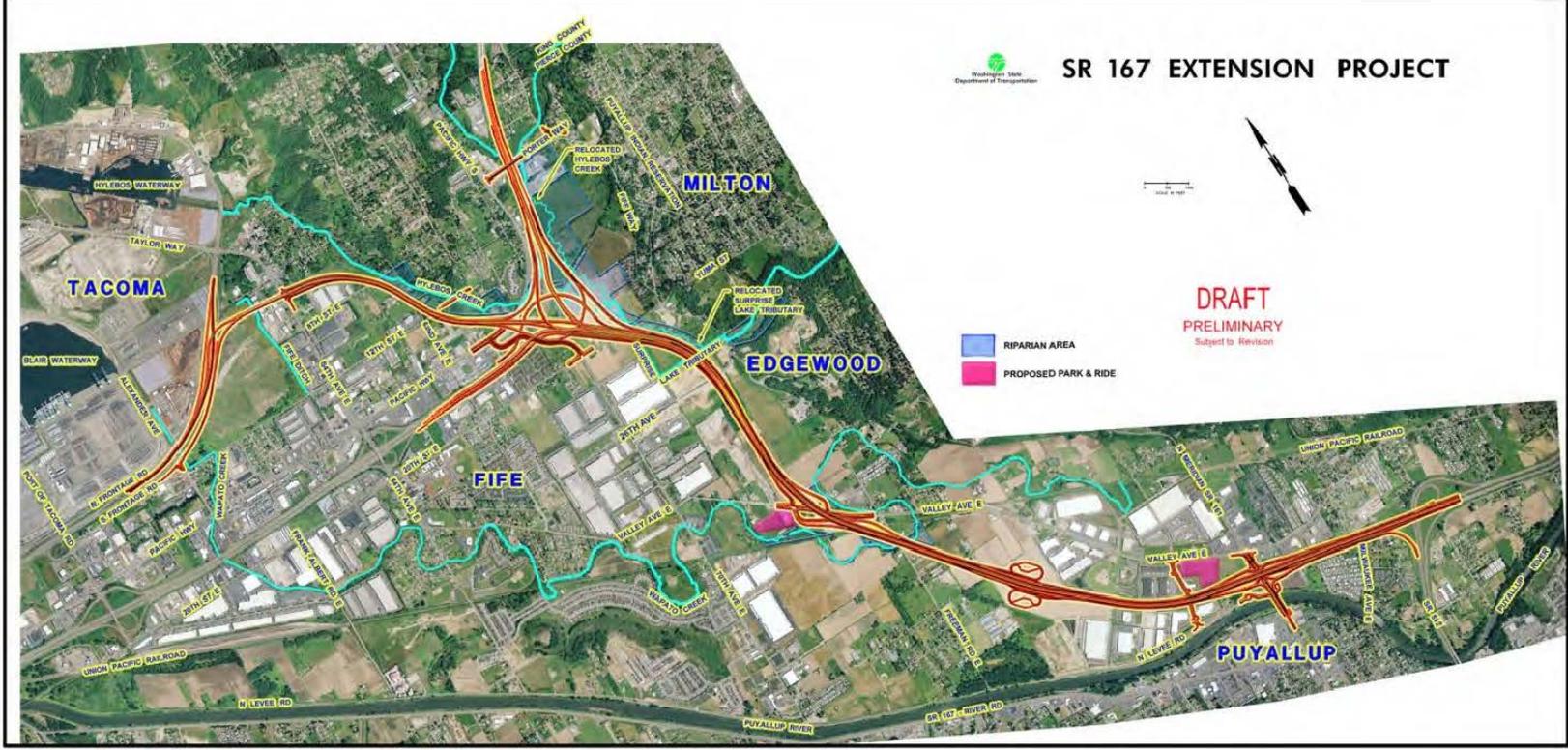


Exhibit 1: SR 167 Extension Project Alignment

## 1.2 Why is a Draft Supplemental EIS needed?

The SR 167 Puyallup River Bridge Replacement project, which is a small phase of the 167 Extension project, has recently been funded. The Meridian Street Bridge is prioritized on the WSDOT Preservation Program list for Bridge Replacement during the 2013-2015 biennium, when the Legislature made the bridge a priority by funding the project for the 2011-2013 biennium. The legislature has mandated the design-build process for delivery of this phase, hereafter referred to as the Puyallup River Bridge Replacement project (PRBR). To prepare this phase for design-build, WSDOT reviewed the design and environmental documentation, and noted the conditions that have changed since the 2006 FEIS was completed. During recent inspections, the Meridian Street Bridge was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While it had been determined not to be eligible in 2006, the bridge is now eligible for the NRHP. The replacement of this bridge will be an *adverse effect* on a historic resource, which must now be added to the list of effects. The 2006 FEIS for the 167 Extension project must be supplemented with this information. Also, the design for the Puyallup River crossing as part of the 167 Extension project has been modified in response to this finding, and all environmental aspects of the changed design need to be evaluated. The design changes are detailed in Chapter 2, *Puyallup River Crossing Design Changes*.

## 1.3 What is included in this document?

This document and the attached discipline reports supplements the 2006 FEIS by describing the impacts expected from revised design of the Puyallup River crossing portion of the Extension project. Each category of potential environmental impact presented in the 2006 FEIS was reviewed to determine the potential for impacts and benefits that would be different from those reported in the FEIS. This Draft Supplemental EIS presents only the information and analyses that were determined to be pertinent to the differences associated with the proposed Puyallup River crossing design changes:

- Archaeological and historic resources
- Threatened and endangered species
- Water resources
- Traffic

This document also describes the current proposed construction project, the Puyallup River Bridge Replacement project, which would construct a portion of the ultimate river crossing design. This phase would construct a new bridge for southbound lanes, and temporarily move the northbound lanes to bridge 167/20W. It would then remove the Meridian Street Bridge. The deteriorating condition of the Meridian Street Bridge has made this construction project critical.

## 1.4 What is not included in this document?

The following categories of potential environmental impacts are not discussed further in this document, since they are either not present in the Puyallup River crossing study area, or there are the same effects with the design revision presented in the 2006 FEIS.

The minor revision in alignment of the bridge replacement and traffic pattern for the Puyallup River crossing does not warrant an update to the analyses for the following:

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Energy
- Hazardous Materials
- Visual Quality
- Public Services and Utilities

- Land Use
- Wetlands
- Farmland
- Displacement
- Pedestrian and Bikes

**Environmental Justice:**

The 2006 FEIS discussed environmental justice issues in Chapter 3 (3.11.3). Based on the analyses performed, the project was not expected to disproportionately impact minority and/or low-income populations within the project area, and project impacts were not considered to be high and adverse after proposed mitigation measures were implemented. The proposed design revisions for the Puyallup River crossing will not change the overall SR 167 Puyallup to SR 509 Extension project impacts on minority populations or low-income populations.

**1.5 Who will lead the project?**

FHWA is the lead federal agency for the project, providing guidance and oversight to WSDOT. WSDOT is the lead for the supplementary environmental analysis phase.

**1.6 How is the public involved?**

The public was involved in the SR 167, Puyallup to SR 509 Extension project in the Tier I EIS and the Tier II EIS processes through public meetings, newsletters, e-mail notifications, project websites and open houses. The Citizen’s Advisory Committee was formed to assist in recognizing local issues and concerns. The project team frequently made presentations to Chambers of Commerce, business associations and civic organizations. The 2006 FEIS summarizes the public involvement in the Tier I and Tier II processes.

The public will now be invited to participate in the SR 167, Puyallup River Bridge Replacement project by reviewing the Draft Supplemental EIS and providing comments. The input from the public will be carefully considered in agency decision making.

Current and future public involvement opportunities include:

- Project Web site: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR167/PuyallupRiverBridge>
- E-mails and telephone
- Project meetings with individuals and groups
- Project meetings with agencies and Tribes
- Comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS during the comment period

**1.7 What is the expected schedule and cost for the proposed construction project?**

The preliminary engineering for the PRBR project is scheduled to be complete by the summer of 2013. The next phase of the project will be environmental documentation and permits that will be finished by the fall of 2013. The bridge design will begin in the late summer of 2013 and be complete by the summer of 2014. Construction will begin in the summer of 2014 and be complete by the fall of 2015. The PRBR project is currently funded and will cost approximately \$30 million for design, environmental analyses and mitigation, right of way, and construction.

**1.8 What permits or approvals are needed before beginning construction?**

**Federal Agencies**

- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) & U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) - Endangered Species Act consultation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) - Nationwide Permit

#### **State Agencies**

- WA Department of Archaeological & Historical Preservation (DAHP) - Section 106 Concurrence
- WA Dept of Ecology (WSDOE) - Section 401 Water Quality Certification, Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, & Coastal Zone Management Certification
- WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) - Hydraulic Project Approval

#### **Local Agencies**

- Pierce County - Critical Area Ordinance Review, Flood Plain Development Permit & Shoreline Substantial Development Permit

### **1.9 What information is provided in the remainder of this document?**

- Chapter 2 – Puyallup River Crossing Design Changes: *Details the design changes proposed for the Puyallup River crossing.*
- Chapter 3 – Affected Environment, Impacts and Mitigation: *Details the potential benefits, environmental impacts, and mitigation associated with the proposed Puyallup River crossing design, that are different from the previous design.*
- Chapter 4 – Public Agency and Tribal Coordination: *Details past consultations with regulatory agencies and interested parties through the 2006 Final EIS, and continuing consultations for this Supplemental EIS.*
- Chapter 5 – Section 4(f) Evaluation: *Details the Section 4(f) Evaluation of the Meridian Street Bridge.*

#### Appendices:

- A. Discipline Reports and List of Preparers
- B. Addendum to Section 4(f) Evaluation
- C. Biological Assessment
- D. Bridge Preliminary Plans
- E. Commitment List
- F. Circulation List