

Fact Sheet

Project Name:

I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project

Project Description:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) prepared a 2005 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a 2008 Final EIS for proposed improvements to a 15-mile portion of Interstate 90 (I-90) immediately east of Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascade Mountains, from Hyak at milepost (MP) 55.1 to Easton Hill at MP 70.3. Consistent with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture) and Bureau of Reclamation (Department of Interior) were cooperating agencies in preparing these documents. Following the 2008 Record of Decision (ROD) by FHWA and concurrence from the cooperating agencies, WSDOT proceeded with implementation of the Selected Alternative and construction of the I-90 project has continued since 2009.

In fall 2011, the contractor constructing the portion of the I-90 project that encompasses the snowshed along Keechelus Lake (Existing Snowshed) proposed a design modification that would replace the Existing Snowshed with eastbound and westbound avalanche bridges (Proposed Bridges) instead of the expanded snowshed included in the Selected Alternative (Selected Snowshed). FHWA and WSDOT prepared this Avalanche Structures Draft Supplemental EIS (Supplemental EIS) to compare and contrast the benefits and impacts of constructing, maintaining, and operating the Proposed Bridges instead of the Selected Snowshed.

FHWA and WSDOT will decide which option to construct based on the results of this Supplemental EIS. Both design options meet the I-90 project purpose and need, cost about the same to construct, occupy roughly the same footprint, and result in similar impacts to natural resources. Therefore, the basis for a decision rests on the cost of long-term maintenance and operation. The Selected Snowshed would minimize the need for highway closures due to avalanches,

avalanche control, and rock fall. However, this enclosed structure requires fire and life-safety systems that are expensive to operate and maintain. The Proposed Bridges would provide comparable avalanche and rock fall protection and avoid the need for fire and life-safety systems. As a result, the Proposed Bridges would save the state approximately \$48 million in operations and maintenance costs over the next 75 years.

Project Proponent:

WSDOT

SEPA Lead Agency and Contact Person:

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This Draft Supplemental EIS was prepared under the direction of the WSDOT South Central Region Environmental Office. Research and analysis was performed by numerous individuals listed in Chapter 7.

Date Document Issued:

October 5, 2012

Date Draft Supplemental EIS Comments are Due:

November 19, 2012

Public Hearings:

October 23, 2012	October 24, 2012	October 25, 2012
4:00 to 7:00 p.m.		
Lewis Creek Visitors Center 5808 Lakemont Boulevard SE Bellevue, WA 98006	Summit Inn 603 State Route 906 Snoqualmie Pass, WA 98068	Hal Holmes Community Center 209 N Ruby Street Ellensburg, WA 98926

Projected Date of Issue of Final Supplemental EIS:

The Final Supplemental EIS is expected to be circulated in early 2013.

Document Cost and Availability:

The Draft Supplemental EIS is available on the I-90 project web site:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/I90/SnoqualmiePassEast

A limited number of hard copies or DVDs may also be obtained free of charge by contacting:

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Paper copies of the Draft Supplemental EIS are available for review at King County libraries (Bellevue Regional, Issaquah, Lake Hills, Newport Way, North Bend), Ellensburg Library, Cle Elum Library, Central Washington University Library, Seattle Public Library (Downtown Branch only), and the Washington State Library.

Permits and Approvals:

Highway improvements are subject to federal, state, and local permit processes. If FHWA and WSDOT select the Proposed Bridges in the ROD, the approvals and permits listed below would require modification or amendment prior to construction. The Selected Snowshed is already permitted and approved. WSDOT intends to

proceed with construction of the Selected Snowshed if the Proposed Bridges are not selected in the ROD in spring 2013.

Permits and Approvals for the Proposed Bridges

Agency	Statute	Permit/Approval
Federal		
US Fish and Wildlife Service/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries	Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation and concurrence (impact to listed species) Migratory Bird Treaty Act	Consultation and Biological Opinion (<i>re-initiation of consultation based on new design information</i>)
US Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act	Section 404 Individual Permit (<i>regulatory update and/or reissuance</i>)
US Forest Service	Acquisition of Rights-of-Way – Interstate System [Title 23 US Code 107(d)]	Consistency determination with the US Forest Service Forest Plan(s) (<i>review and update</i>)
US Forest Service	Organic Act of 1897, National Forest Management Act of 1976	Access Permit(s) and Special Use Permit(s) (<i>review and update</i>)
US Bureau of Reclamation	Use of Bureau of Reclamation Land, Facilities, and Waterbodies (Title 43 CFR Part 423) Reclamation Act of 1902 (Public Law 57-161) Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 (Title II of Public Law 97-293)	Use Authorization (<i>review and update</i>) US Forest Service Permit(s) (<i>review and concur</i>)
State		
Washington State Department of Ecology	Clean Water Act Section 401	Water Quality Certification (<i>modification</i>)
Washington State Department of Ecology	Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58)	Consider administrative appeals
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Construction Projects in State Waters (RCW 77.55)	Hydraulic Project Approval (<i>modification</i>)
Local		
Kittitas County	County Code (Title 17 and 18) and Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58)	Substantial Development Permit(s) and/or exemption, Critical Areas Ordinance review, and limited zoning review (<i>review and update</i>)

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

RCW – Revised Code of Washington