

Adoption of Existing Environmental Document

Adoption for: NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) for the Point Defiance Bypass Project, per the terms of the “Implementing Agreement between The Washington State Department of Transportation and The Washington State Department of Ecology Concerning Adoption of NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusions,” signed in 1996 by both parties. **The SEPA classification for this document is a DNS (attached).**

Description of current proposal:

Background: The proposed Point Defiance Bypass Project will improve safety, reduce rail congestion, and, as a result, support more frequent and reliable Amtrak *Cascades* service.

Freight and passenger train traffic has increased on the existing main line in the Tacoma vicinity and the rail system is operating at or near its maximum capacity. By removing the passenger traffic from the existing main line and diverting that traffic to the shorter, more direct Point Defiance Bypass route, travel times for the passenger trains will be reduced. In addition, since the Point Defiance Bypass will primarily be used by passenger trains, the reliability of the train schedules will be improved. By using this alternate route, congestion on the existing main line will be reduced, thereby freeing capacity for freight trains.

Proposed Project: The Point Defiance Bypass Project consists of three major track elements: construction of a new track adjacent to the existing main line; reconstruction of the existing main line track; and rehabilitation of the existing track.

New Track Adjacent to the Existing Main Line

A new track adjacent to the existing main line will be constructed from South 66th Street (rail milepost 6.92) to one quarter mile south of Bridgeport Way SW (rail milepost 10.67). This new 2.5 mile track will be constructed parallel to and east of (with 15-foot track centers) the existing Sound Transit track. In some places, due to curves, track centers may be wider, particularly in the vicinity of Lakewood Station, Bridgeport Way and Clover Creek. Sound Transit’s Sounder trains and freight trains will predominately use the eastern main track (new track, main line 2) as it operates in its service area (northern terminus of Point Defiance Bypass Project to Bridgeport Way SW).

The second main line will be built on new embankment which has already been upgraded by Sound Transit. The new second main line to be constructed in this area will require minimal grading work. There will be no in-water work as part of this new construction.

Reconstruction of the Existing Main Line

Starting at Steilacoom Boulevard SW (rail milepost 8.36), the existing track will be reconstructed to a location just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89). This will involve removal of the existing track and minor re-grading of the existing sub-grade to provide a slightly wider, re-graded and compacted, stable surface top on which to construct a new track. This reconstructed segment is approximately nine miles in length.

For a short segment, between rail milepost 8.88 and 9.96, the existing track and the new track will be on a new alignment. Therefore, the existing track will be removed and both main lines constructed on a new sub-grade alignment. Upon removal of the track structure, the existing sub-grade will be graded and cleared of debris to match existing ground conditions in the general area. There will be no in-water work as part of this reconstruction.

Rehabilitation of the Existing Line

Just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89), for approximately two miles (to rail milepost 21.23), the existing single main line track will be rehabilitated. This work will consist of replacing existing, worn, or otherwise defective ties with new ties, and adding ballast. These activities are typical of the maintenance work regularly performed on most railroads and is accomplished without removing the track. Existing drainage paths will be cleared of blockages. Little or no new grading work will be required. There will be no in-water work as part of this rehabilitation.

Proponent: Washington State Department of Transportation

Location of current proposal:

The Point Defiance Project is located along Sound Transit's Lakeview Subdivision rail line in Pierce County (Township 18N through 20N, Range 1E and 2E). The project area extends approximately 18 miles from South 66th Street (in Tacoma), through Lakewood and DuPont, to just east of I-5, where it connects with the BNSF Railway Company's (BNSF) main line. (Vicinity map included with required additional information)

Title of document being adopted: Point Defiance Bypass NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion

Agency that prepared document being adopted: Washington State Department of Transportation

Date adopted document was prepared: Prepared and submitted to FHWA on March 26, 2008; signed by FHWA on May 5, 2008.

Description of document being adopted: Point Defiance Bypass Environmental Classification Summary (ECS) for a NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion; signed by FHWA on May 5, 2008.

If the document being adopted has been challenged (WAC 197-11-630), please describe: The document has not been challenged.

The document is available to be read at (place/time):

WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office, 310 Maple Park Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98504 during business hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please call ahead at 360-705-7900.

Additional information is available on the project web site at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/Rail/PNWRC_PtDefiance/. Also, the Point Defiance Bypass Project Environmental Summary can be downloaded from the site.

We have identified and adopted this document as being appropriate for this proposal after independent review. The document meets our environmental review needs for the current proposal and will accompany the proposal to the decisionmaker.

Name of agency adopting document: Washington State Department of Transportation

Contact person, if other than responsible official:

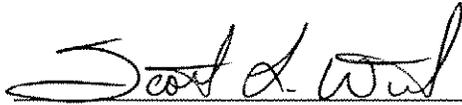
Elizabeth Phinney
Rail Environmental Manager

Phone: 360-705-7902

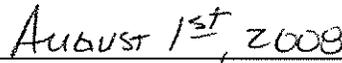
Responsible official:

Scott Witt
Director, State Rail and Marine Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia, WA 98504-7407

Phone: 360-705-6903



Signature



Date