

# How do we protect the environment?

The SR 520 program touches highly valued natural areas and numerous neighborhoods. WSDOT strives to deliver the best transportation solutions with the least possible negative effects on the community and natural surroundings.

## What are the goals of environmental review?

- Identifying a project's environmental effects.
- Finding ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate those effects.
- Coordinating with regulatory agencies to ensure statutory compliance.
- Involving the public and resource agencies to ensure environmentally sound projects.



## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA went into effect in 1969. It established a process to ensure that information on the environmental effects of a federally funded project is available to the public and decision makers before a project is implemented. For major projects with potentially significant environmental effects, NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement that evaluates these effects.

## State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Washington's SEPA legislation went into effect in 1971 and established an environmental review process similar to NEPA for all state projects that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. WSDOT typically uses a single environmental document to meet requirements of both SEPA and NEPA.

## Four Environmental Processes

**Urban Partnership Environmental Assessment** – to study effects of tolling on SR 520 for congestion management.

**Eastside Transit and HOV Project Environmental Assessment** – to evaluate improvements for transit and HOV from the eastern shore of Lake Washington to the corridor's eastern end at SR 202.

**Pontoon Construction Project Draft EIS** – to evaluate options to expedite construction of pontoons to be used to restore the floating section of the SR 520 Evergreen Point Bridge in the event of a catastrophic failure, and to construct and store these pontoons until needed.

**Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Supplemental DEIS** – to study new alternatives for the SR 520 west side interchange; construction techniques, staging and durations; and mitigation.



# Addressing Program Effects

WSDOT is committed to good stewardship of the environment. We avoid, minimize or mitigate our projects' environmental effects in order to find the most reasonable way to address these effects.



**Examples of approaches to address environmental effects:**

EXAMPLES	AVOID	MINIMIZE	MITIGATE
<b>Wetlands</b>	Move project away from wetlands.	Shift roadway alignment; use fewer columns.	Create new wetlands to replace functions of affected wetlands.
<b>Fish migration</b>	Avoid construction in water.	Limit or halt construction when fish are migrating.	Enhance habitat to mitigate habitat loss.

# What environmental topics do we study?

## We evaluate the following topics during environmental review:

- Air quality
- Construction effects
- Economics
- Energy
- Environmental justice
- Fisheries
- Geology and soils
- Hazardous materials
- Historical and archaeological resources
- Indirect and cumulative effects
- Land use
- Mitigation
- Navigable waterways
- Noise
- Public services and utilities
- Recreation
- Social elements
- Transportation
- Tribal fisheries and cultural resources
- Visual quality
- Water resources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife



# Next Steps for the Environmental Process

