

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This executive summary describes why this project is important and lists some of the benefits. It presents a brief description of the alternatives that were considered but rejected, the No Build, and the Build Alternative. It presents the project *purpose and need*. It also summarizes the effects of the No Build Alternative and the Build Alternative on the built and natural environment.

## **ES1 Where is the SR 3 Belfair Bypass project located?**

The proposed State Route 3 Belfair Bypass project (Bypass) would be constructed to route regional, through traffic around the town of Belfair. The major portion of the Bypass would run through Mason County and the northern end would be in Kitsap County. The proposed alignment would diverge from existing State Route (SR) 3 at milepost (MP) 22.81, running parallel 3,000 feet to the east until reconnecting with existing SR 3 at MP 29.49. See Exhibit 1-1 on page 1-3.

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The primary function of an environmental assessment (EA) is to help the lead agencies make an informed decision on the Proposed Action

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## **ES2 Why is this project important?**

The Bypass would move regional traffic between Shelton and Bremerton in a manner that bypasses the City of Belfair. The proposed bypass highway would carry through traffic and would be the main line. The existing SR 3 would become a *business loop* serving downtown Belfair and as a connection to SR 106, SR 300, and Old Belfair Highway. Implementation of this project would provide safe and reliable access to regional jobs, goods and services, improve efficiencies for all public service providers, and lower the current accident rate on SR 3 through the Belfair commercial area.

### **ES3 What is the purpose of the project, and why is it needed?**

The purpose of constructing a bypass around the Belfair urban area is to provide a reliable high speed regional route between Kitsap and Mason Counties. It also reduces congestion and improves safety through Belfair, and provides an alternate route during recurring highway closures from accidents. A bypass around Belfair is needed in order to improve regional mobility, increase capacity, reduce congestion through Belfair, and improve safety.

### **ES4 Is this project included in the adopted planning documents for the region?**

The need for highway improvements on a new roadway alignment in northeast Mason County to improve mobility and capacity was identified in the *WSDOT Reconnaissance Study, 1966* and in the *WSDOT 20-year State Highway System Plan* in 1998. Mason County prepared the feasibility study to determine the best way of providing a better and safer flow of freight, goods, and people between Shelton, Belfair and Bremerton. The study identified the need for a Belfair bypass.

In September 2000, traffic analysis was performed by Transpo, a consultant for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Another consultant, Skillings Connolly, performed the transportation discipline study in 2001 and concluded that SR 3 will be unable to accommodate future traffic volume at an acceptable level of service (LOS).

In November 2001, Mason County published the *Mason County Belfair Bypass Environmental Assessment* and proposed a bypass as an undivided two-lane principal arterial with a design speed of 60 mph.

### **ES5 What benefits would the Build Alternative provide?**

The proposed project would provide a solution to the immediate and long-range regional transportation mobility and safety needs of the SR 3 corridor in northeast Mason and southwest Kitsap Counties. The completed project would provide a two-lane highway on a new alignment with the proposed design speed of 60 mph that would move regional traffic from Shelton to Bremerton through Belfair. It would ensure efficient movement of freight, commute trips between Kitsap and Mason Counties,

accommodate seasonal influxes of tourist traffic and serve general traffic needs through to the design year 2035. It would also serve as an alternate route during recurring highway closures from accidents on existing SR 3 in Belfair.

### **ES6 Who is leading the project?**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency for the National Environmental Protection Act environmental compliance process. WSDOT is a co-lead agency. Both are involved with the roadway design guidance and environmental review oversight.

### **ES7 Who else participated in developing this environmental assessment?**

The State Legislature provided funding in the 2010 supplemental budget for WSDOT to advance work related to preliminary design and the Bypass environmental assessment (EA).

### **ES8 What alternatives are evaluated in this EA?**

This EA compares the No Build Alternative and the Build Alternative.

### **ES9 What is the No Build Alternative?**

Under the No Build Alternative, no new major construction activities described in the project Build Alternative below would occur. Short-term minor construction necessary for continued operation of the existing roadway facility would be accomplished, and minor safety improvements could be constructed as required.

The No Build Alternative includes other currently funded or planned transportation improvement projects expected to be in operation in the project area by the year 2035. These baseline transportation improvement projects are identified in the Mason and Kitsap County Transportation Improvement Programs. These baseline transportation improvement projects are not specifically addressed in this environmental document and will be the subject of separate project specific environmental review. These projects are considered in the analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts.

## **ES10 What is the Build Alternative?**

The Build Alternative would construct a two-lane limited access highway with a design speed of 60 mph on a new alignment to the east of existing SR 3. The proposed bypass highway would carry regional, through traffic from Shelton to Bremerton and would be the main line State Route 3. The proposed alignment would begin at MP 22.81 on SR 3 and connect back at MP 29.49. An intersection in the vicinity of Alta Road (MP 23.79) is included as an element of the project.

## **ES11 When would the project begin and end?**

Present funding will allow WSDOT to complete this EA. There is no funding for the final design and construction of the Bypass. It is not known when the State Legislature will approve funding of this project. When funding becomes available, it would take three years to complete design and acquire environmental permits. Bypass construction would take an estimated two years.

## **ES12 What would happen if the Build Alternative is not constructed?**

Under the No Build Alternative, the section of SR 3 in the project area would experience additional congestion, increased duration of delay, longer travel times, exacerbation of safety issues, and potential impacts to air quality precipitated by idling engines in very long queues at signalized and minor street intersections.

## **ES13 How would the Build Alternative affect the project environment?**

### **ES13.1 Transportation (see Section 3.5)**

Current conditions are labeled as level of service D (the ability to maneuver is severely restricted due to traffic congestion) and LOS E (unstable traffic flow). Appendix E further explains the concept of LOS with words and photographs.

Currently, there are intersections that are at, or are approaching failing operating conditions. The current accident rate in the

project vicinity is greater than the statewide average for this class of highway.

Under the Build Alternative, forecasting for year 2035, the Belfair Bypass is likely to be at a LOS D/E threshold with the travel demand model growth rates, maintaining a comparable LOS to current conditions. Under the No Build Alternative, the existing SR 3 is likely to degrade to LOS E/F as the result of additional congestion, increased duration of delay, and longer travel times.

A bypass would reduce congestion and travel time through the project area. It would also have safety benefits by reducing congestion related to rear-end collisions.

### **ES13.2 Highway Sound (see Section 3.6)**

Three noise walls were considered at the south end of the project but they were not recommended for construction. The walls have to be feasible and reasonable to build along the right of way. Two of the three proposed evaluated walls, to protect affected homes, were found to be not feasible and the third one, to protect North Mason School District property, was found to be not reasonable. Noise walls are not recommended for this project.

### **ES13.3 Air Quality (see Section 3.7)**

The Air Quality Conformity Analysis shows that the Build Alternative will not cause new exceedances nor will it contribute to any existing exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Build Alternative will have a beneficial effect on greenhouse gases. The project improves operations of the highway without creating a facility that is likely to meaningfully increase the thresholds of the *Mobile Source Air Toxics* emissions rules.

### **ES13.4 Wetlands (see Section 3.8)**

Forty-seven wetlands were identified in the project area. Seventeen of these wetlands are considered Category II and thirty are considered Category III. These wetlands generally provide low to moderate levels of biological, chemical, and physical functions. Eighteen wetlands would have permanent impacts under the Build Alternative. Permanent wetland impacts of 0.81

acre would result from cut and fill activities. Temporary impacts to wetlands have not been calculated due to the current limited level of design.

**ES13.5 Fish (see Section 3.9)**

There is only one stream that occurs within the study area, located at the southern extreme of the project limits. The stream was surveyed by the project biologist and is considered to be non-fish bearing within the project limits. Therefore, no habitats that are potentially used by listed, threatened and endangered fish species, as primary resources, would be affected by the Build Alternative.

**ES13.6 Wildlife (see Section 3.10)**

Potential direct effects of the Build Alternative range from wildlife displacement, loss of nesting and foraging habitat, as well as loss of thermal cover and predator avoidance cover. Wildlife would also be impacted by increased exposure to vehicular traffic and the increased likelihood of vehicle collisions.

**ES13.7 Vegetation (see Section 3.11)**

Approximately 79.61 acres of potentially vegetated areas would be permanently impacted by the Build Alternative. Affected areas are broken down into the following habitat types:

- Coniferous Forest (33.04 acres)
- Regeneration (31.45 acres)
- Roadways and Right of Way (9.98 acres)
- Rural and Residential (6.70 acres)
- Mixed Forest (4.63 acres)
- Clear-cut (1.94 acres)
- Commercial and Developed (1.04 acres)
- Wetlands (0.81 acres)

Although there would be unavoidable impacts to vegetation, the impacts would be relatively minor in scope. Noxious weed control would occur under both the No Build and the Build Alternative.

**ES13.8 Water Resources (see Section 3.12)**

For the Build Alternative, work below the Ordinary High Water Mark is anticipated to occur that may include culvert installation and possible wetland impacts. The additional paved area would affect stormwater runoff and water quality in the study area. The proposed project is outside the mapped floodplain boundaries and is not anticipated to change floodplain or flooding characteristics throughout construction.

**ES13.9 Land Use, Farmland (see section 3.13)**

Construction equipment and activities could likely affect adjacent businesses and property owners over the length of construction time needed to complete the Build Alternative. Approximately 92 parcels would be directly impacted by the Build Alternative, depending on the project's final design. Effects include acquiring a portion of the ball fields on the North Mason High School property and a five-acre portion of St Albans Girl Scout Camp, owned and operated by the Girl Scouts of Western Washington. Other impacts as a result of construction would include access to businesses and/or residences, and vehicle delays or detours.

**ES13.10 Relocation (see Section 3.14)**

The only impact to Section 4(f) property is to the ball fields at North Mason High School. The total impact to Section 4(f) property would be 0.65 acres from one of the fields. FHWA has determined that after mitigation, the use of the North Mason High School property is *de minimis* as defined in 23 CFR 771.17, in that it will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f).

**ES13.11 Relocation (see Section 3.15)**

The Build Alternative would relocate four residential units: three single-family residences along with associated out buildings (sheds, garages, barns, etc.) and one single-wide mobile home. See Appendix F for a discussion of the Property Acquisition process. Both state and federal laws protect the rights of sellers.

**ES13.12 Social, Economics, and Environmental Justice  
(see Section 3.16)**

There would be no adverse nor disproportionate effects to low-income or minority populations with the Build Alternative. The analysis illustrates that WSDOT has chosen the Build Alternative without prejudice. No demographic group would be adversely and disproportionately impacted, and the project would benefit all demographic groups in and beyond the study area.

**ES13.13 Hazardous Materials (see Section 3.17)**

Seventeen properties were identified that have, or might have soil or groundwater contamination. All but four of these sites were excluded from further consideration based on area topography. Four sites were considered close enough to the Bypass connection points to warrant Washington State Department of Ecology file reviews. Two of these sites near the southern end of the project have been cleaned up. Two sites were incorrectly plotted. The incorrectly plotted sites are north of the project and are considered unlikely to affect the project. Hazardous material clean up liability for any of the proposed WSDOT property acquisitions is not expected.

**ES13.14 Archaeological and Historic Resources  
(see Section 3.18)**

The Build Alternative is unlikely to affect significant archaeological resources within the *area of potential effects* (APE). Most of the APE has low potential for significant cultural resources. The only eligible historic property identified by this survey within the APE is the Shelton-Kitsap No. 2 115-kV Transmission Line. The Bypass would pass under the transmission lines, which would continue to function as originally intended and would not require alterations to any towers.

**ES13.15 Public Services and Utilities (see Section 3.19)**

**Public Services** – The Bypass connections with SR 3, near SR 302 at the south end and near southwest Lake Flora Rd at the north end, would experience construction impacts to existing public services. Traffic delays and congestion during construction

periods, would affect levels of service and access to public services. Upon completion, the Build Alternative will allow for faster response times from emergency services and provide an alternate route for service providers, such as local transit.

**Utilities** – Existing utilities within the project area would experience limited construction impacts, mainly in the two locations where a bypass would connect with SR 3. Impacts include relocation of utilities, interruption of service, and increased demand requiring additional improvements of utilities.

#### **ES13.16 Visual Quality (see Section 3.20)**

The existing visual quality in this study area ranges from moderately high to high. With the Build Alternative, five key viewpoints along the proposed corridor show slightly decreased visual quality ratings. Decreased ratings are a result of clearing and grubbing of desirable native vegetation and removal of mature trees that provide visual screening for adjacent residential dwellings.

#### **ES13.17 Geology and Soils (see Section 3.21)**

The Build Alternative will result in potential impacts such as increased erosion, possible effects to nearby shallow water wells, and the partial depletion of local aggregate resources. Based on the current project description, the Build Alternative would involve new cuts and fills, retaining structures, new intersections and intersection modifications, ditches, storm sewer systems, stormwater treatment facilities, culverts, possible culvert extensions or replacements along the existing SR 3 and SR302 segments, and a bridge across an existing ravine between MP 24.32 and 24.38

Structure site data and earthwork quantities for the proposed alignment are not available at this time.

### **ES14 What mitigation is proposed for the Build Alternative?**

Mitigation is a way for a project to lessen the negative effects or impacts of development. Gathering environmental information early and integrating

it into the roadway engineering design process makes it possible to avoid some impacts. In other cases, unavoidable impacts can be minimized. When impacts are unavoidable, the project evaluates ways to compensate for these impacts. Chapter 3 and Appendix A – *Preliminary Commitments* of this EA have more information on mitigation measures proposed under the Build Alternative. Mitigation measures include:

- **Wetlands (see Section 3.8)** – Compensatory mitigation would occur to compensate for the 0.81 acre of permanent wetland impacts. Additional mitigation would also be needed to compensate for the 5.88 acres of permanent buffer impacts. Types of mitigation that may be used include re-establishment, rehabilitation, establishment (creation), enhancement, and preservation. However, mitigation measures have not been finalized at this time due to the limited level of design.
- **Fish (see Section 3.9)** – Prior to upland work that could possibly affect water quality, *best management practices* would be in place to protect fish.
- **Wildlife (see Section 3.10)** – As the design of the bypass progresses, crossing structures should be included to conserve terrestrial connections to the Kitsap Peninsula allowing for movement of wildlife. Examples of these features include: installing one or more over-sized box culverts to provide safe passage to a wide range of wildlife, oversized smaller culverts to accommodate smaller animals and creating effective barriers to small animals attempting to cross on the highway at grade.
- **Vegetation (see Section 3.11)** – Impacts would be minimized by the use of *best management practices*, through replacing noxious, invasive weeds with native plants, and through enhancing the vegetation through the wetland mitigation site development.
- **Water Resources (see Section 3.12)** – The new impervious surfaces would be treated and highway runoff controlled with such features as compost-amended vegetated filter strips (CAVFS), media filter drains and treatment ponds.
- **Visual Quality (see Section 3.19)** – Native vegetation would be replanted on all disturbed roadside areas to help offset any effects.

### **ES15 What issues are controversial?**

Support for the Build Alternative, expressed through public comments, has been good. The subject raised most through public comment has been the cost of the proposed project. WSDOT will continue to coordinate with agencies, tribes and the public.

### **ES16 How can you get involved?**

You are invited to participate in this project by reviewing the EA, attending public meetings, and providing comments on the information. The input you provide will be given careful consideration by the lead agencies.

Comments are to be sent to:

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