

SR 520, Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project

Appendix P

Social Elements Technical Memorandum

**SR 520, Medina to SR 202:
Eastside Transit and HOV Project
Environmental Assessment**

**Social Elements
Technical Memorandum**



Prepared for
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Federal Highway Administration

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November 11, 2009

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ECDC	Eastside community design collaboration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	geographic information system
HOV	high-occupancy vehicle
kV	kilovolt
LEP	limited English proficiency
NAC	noise abatement criteria
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
SR	State Route
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WSP	Washington State Patrol



1. Introduction

Why are social elements considered in an environmental assessment?

The National Environmental Policy Act (42 United States Code 432) requires a systematic, interdisciplinary approach when considering environmental and community factors in decision-making; the social effects of transportation projects can be substantial and often play an important role in the quality of life for those who live in the affected communities. To understand the costs and benefits associated with a transportation improvement, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) analyzes how a project could affect the surrounding communities, and ensures full compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Community factors include cohesiveness of the neighborhoods; social, recreational, and civic elements; and established travel behaviors. This report provides information, as identified in Chapter 458 of WSDOT's *Environmental Procedures Manual* (WSDOT 2008), needed to document potential effects on social elements in the study area related to the Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative.

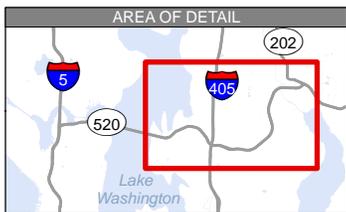
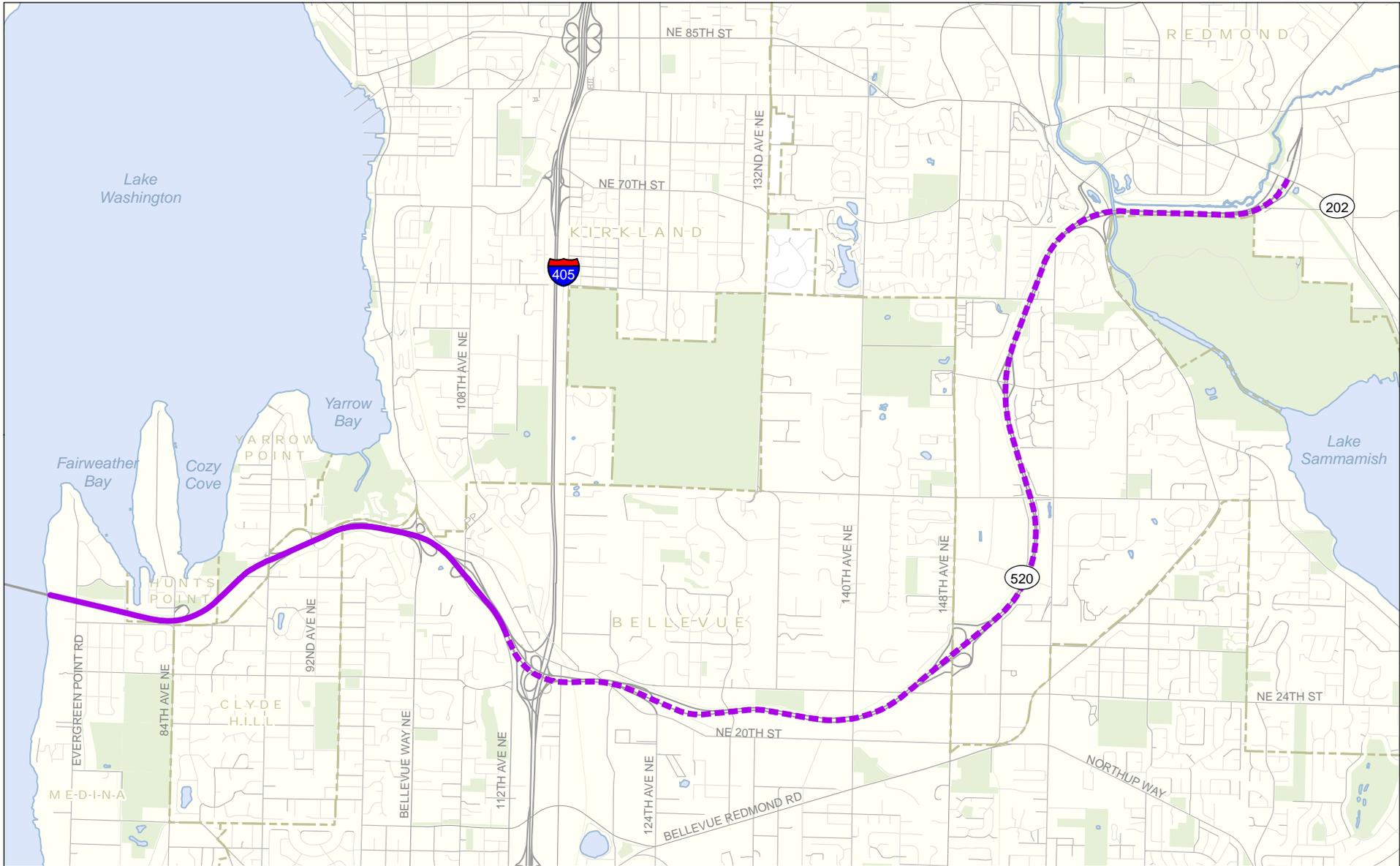
What is the project?

WSDOT is proposing to construct the SR 520, Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project to reduce transit and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) travel times and to enhance travel time reliability, mobility, access, and safety for transit and HOVs in rapidly growing areas along the State Route (SR) 520 corridor east of Lake Washington. Exhibit 1 shows the project vicinity. Some of the improvements included in this project were originally part of the SR 520 Bridge and HOV Project. On June 18, 2008, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) authorized WSDOT to develop the SR 520, Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project as an independent project. The project includes building a complete HOV system between Lake Washington and 108th Avenue NE and restriping the existing HOV lanes from the outside lanes to the inside lanes between the 108th Avenue NE interchange and SR 202 in Redmond.

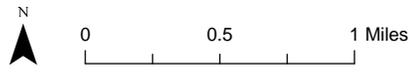
The portion of the project between Evergreen Point Road and 108th Avenue NE was previously part of the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. The SR 520, Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project has been an independent project to address needs specific to the portion of SR 520 east of Lake Washington. The project limits extend approximately 8.8 miles along SR 520 from the east shore of Lake Washington (vicinity of Evergreen Point Road) to the interchange with SR 202 in Redmond.

WSDOT is considering two alternatives for the project: the Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative.





- Construction Extent
- - - Restriping Extent
- Park
- City Limits



Source: King County (2005) GIS Data (Streets), King County (2007) GIS Data (Waterbody) and CH2M HILL (2008) GIS Data (Parks and Streams). Horizontal datum for all layers is NAD83(91); vertical datum for layers is NAVD88.

Exhibit 1. Project Vicinity
 Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project

Build Alternative

Under the Build Alternative, the proposed project would include the improvements described below.

SR 520 Improvements from Lake Washington to I-405

The proposed project would reconstruct SR 520 from just west of Evergreen Point Road to just east of 108th Avenue NE. Elements constructed as part of this section include the following:

- Construct a new eastbound HOV lane from Lake Washington to the existing eastbound HOV lane west of the I-405 interchange. This improvement would complete the currently discontinuous HOV network on the Eastside and improve travel time reliability for buses and carpools.
- Relocate the existing westbound HOV lane from the outside lane to the inside lane from Lake Washington to I-405. This change would enhance safety by eliminating the need for merging vehicles to weave across the faster-moving HOV lanes to reach the general-purpose lanes.
- Construct a lid with inside transit stop over SR 520 at Evergreen Point Road.
- Construct a new lid and modify the existing half-diamond interchange at 84th Avenue NE.
- Construct a new lid with inside transit stop over SR 520 at 92nd Avenue NE and modify the existing interchange.
- Reconfigure the existing interchange at Bellevue Way NE.
- Construct new HOV direct access ramps at 108th Avenue NE. This improvement would create a more efficient connection for transit and HOV from SR 520 to the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride via local streets.
- Add a bike/pedestrian path from Lake Washington to approximately 108th Avenue NE. This improvement would facilitate nonmotorized use of SR 520, provide transit connections for bikes and pedestrians, and complement the existing nonmotorized transportation network on the Eastside.

What is a lid?

The term "lid" is short for "lidded highway". Lids are long bridges that cover a length of highway. Lid surface areas can carry paths and trails to connect communities across the highway, landscaping to create open space and places for passive recreation, and items such as pergolas, seating, and transit waiting areas.

SR 520 Improvements from I-405 to SR 202

- Restripe existing eastbound and westbound HOV lanes from the outside to the inside lane. This change would enhance safety by eliminating the need for merging vehicles to weave across the faster-moving HOV lanes to reach the general-purpose lanes.



Other Improvements

- Provide noise walls between Evergreen Point Road and Bellevue Way NE.
- Provide retaining walls and stormwater management system improvements.
- Improve stream habitat by realigning portions of the Yarrow Creek channel and shortening some culverts.
- Improve fish passage culvert crossings to restore fish passage and open up habitat that was previously inaccessible to salmon and other fish species.
- Mitigate the project's effects on wetlands and streams at a site or sites as determined through future negotiations with permitting agencies.

No Build Alternative

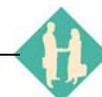
Under the No Build Alternative, the project would not be built. Only routine maintenance, repair, and minor safety improvements would take place on SR 520 in the study area over the next 20 years. The No Build Alternative would not improve transit reliability and transit and HOV travel times on SR 520. Also included in the No Build Alternative for traffic modeling purposes is the assumption that the SR 520, Bridge Replacement and HOV Project would not be built until this project is complete.

WSDOT is evaluating the No Build Alternative to provide a reference point for comparing the effects, both positive and negative, associated with the proposed project.

What are the key points of this technical memorandum?

Effects related to social elements are anticipated, and most of the effects would be temporary and would occur as a result of construction. After the project was completed, many of the effects would be positive. The project would have the following effects on social elements:

- The construction of lids over SR 520 would reconnect neighborhoods in Medina, Hunts Point, and Yarrow Point that were bisected in the 1960s with the original construction of SR 520. These lids would include landscaped open space areas, providing opportunities for area residents to interact with one another.
- Noise walls would lower noise levels below the noise abatement criteria (NAC) for many of residences in the study area. In those locations where noise walls are not reasonable or feasible noise levels would be similar to existing conditions.
- The project would not displace affordable housing or community services, nor would it create any physical impediments that made it more difficult for residents to access community services or affordable housing.
- The project would not change the delivery of public services within the study area or create the need for additional public services.



- The project would improve response and travel times for fire, emergency medical, police, and other public service providers in the study area.
- There would be no long-term negative effects on recreational facilities.
- The project would provide a continuous bicycle and pedestrian path, a new linkage in the regional bike/pedestrian path.
- The transit improvements associated with the project (eastbound HOV, continuous HOV lanes, inside transit stops, and direct access ramps from SR 520 connecting to the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride) would improve transit travel times, access, and safety. These benefits would also accrue to carpools and vanpools.

2. Methodology

This section describes the methods of analysis, the relevant laws and regulations, and the public involvement outreach used to provide information and encourage comments about the proposed project.

How was the information collected and what methods were used to evaluate effects?

The study area for social elements was defined as the neighborhoods adjacent to the SR 520 corridor from Lake Washington to the SR 202 interchange in Redmond. The social analysis primarily focused on neighborhoods from the Lake Washington shoreline to 108th Avenue NE where roadway construction would occur. These neighborhoods include portions of the cities and towns of Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, Yarrow Point, and the Lakeview neighborhood in Kirkland and the Northtown neighborhood in Bellevue. East of 108th Avenue NE to SR 202 through neighborhoods in Bellevue and Redmond, the project improvements would be limited to restriping of the HOV lanes, only affecting those services that travel SR 520 and having no effect on the adjacent neighborhoods. The analyst reviewed the neighborhood characteristics and identified those community services within an approximate 1/2-mile radius of the project limits.

Recreational facilities in the study area include those within 500 feet of the proposed highway footprint. The presumption is that any recreational facility within 500 feet could be affected by an alternative, either through acquisition or other effects related to proximity to the project. For the project elements that would extend eastward from the 108th Avenue NE interchange to SR 202 through neighborhoods in Bellevue and Redmond, the analyst reviewed the area within the WSDOT right of way along SR 520. This area was limited to the WSDOT right of way since the project improvements in this area would be limited to restriping of the HOV lanes.

Social elements analyzed included community cohesion; regional and community growth; community services; recreational resources; and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. The analyst collected information from a variety of federal, state, and local sources and used the following methods to identify and evaluate the projects' potential effects:



- Visiting the study area to characterize the current neighborhood environment.
- Reviewing data from federal, state, county, and local agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Puget Sound Regional Council, Washington State Office of Financial Management, and the jurisdictions of Medina, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point, Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond.
- Reviewing existing documentation relevant to social conditions in the study area, including comprehensive plans and other planning documents, relevant Web sites, and geographic information system (GIS) and other maps to identify community services, recreational resources, and existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities in the study area.
- Creating GIS maps to identify the locations of social elements in the study area.
- Contacting staff from the parks and recreation departments in the study area, as needed, to collect additional data.
- Reviewing and analyzing other reports prepared for the project to determine any potential effects related to social elements, including noise, air quality, visual quality, hazardous materials, transportation, and land use.
- Reviewing the public involvement plan to identify the outreach strategies used to inform the surrounding area about the project.

What are the laws and regulations that apply to the social elements analysis?

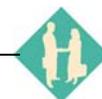
A number of federal acts require that federally funded projects consider social factors in the project development and decision-making processes. In addition to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this analysis takes into consideration laws and regulations that apply to limited-English-proficient, disabled, and elderly populations. Refer to the Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum (WSDOT 2009a) for information on Executive Order 12898 and the analysis of effects on minority populations and low-income populations.

What are the applicable laws and regulations?

Applicable laws and regulations include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987; Executive Order 13166 Limited English Proficiency; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; and the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21).

What types of public involvement has WSDOT implemented?

WSDOT has employed a variety of techniques to update the public on the status of the project and to collect public input. WSDOT's goal is to understand the needs and concerns of the public and to incorporate these concerns into the planning process. Public meetings have been and will be held in facilities that comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and have adequate parking and access to transit. At each of the public meetings, WSDOT staff is available to answer questions and present information either in a formal presentation or at individual stations with informational displays. WSDOT has analyzed census and demographic data to determine under-represented



communities in the study area and will use this information to reach out to minority, low-income, and limited-English-proficiency populations in the study area.

WSDOT held a scoping meeting for the project in September 2008. A number of methods were used to reach the public, including mailing postcards to stakeholders within 1 mile of the project corridor, displaying advertisements in local newspapers, providing information on the WSDOT project Web site, sending e-mail announcements, distributing information at area transit centers and stations, and performing outreach at area farmers' markets. WSDOT has also formed the Eastside community design collaboration (ECDC) with the communities in the study area. Workshops have been held with the ECDC, allowing the residents the opportunity to provide input on the design of the three lids, transit stop environment, and wall treatments.

Refer to the Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Discipline Report (WSDOT 2009i) for additional information on how WSDOT coordinated with the various agencies and the tribes invited to participate in the environmental review.

3. Affected Environment

This section describes the social elements in the study area, which include neighborhood characteristics, population, regional and community growth, community services, and recreational resources, and pedestrian, bicyclist, and transit resources. The study area for the social elements was defined as the neighborhoods adjacent to the SR 520 corridor from Lake Washington to the SR 202 interchange in Redmond. As previously mentioned, the study area included portions of the cities and towns



Evergreen Point Road in Medina

of Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, Yarrow Point, the Lakeview neighborhood in Kirkland, and the Northtown neighborhood in Bellevue (see Exhibit 2). The analyst reviewed the neighborhood characteristics and identified those community services within an approximate 1/2-mile radius of the project limits. For the study area east of the 108th Avenue NE interchange, the analyst identified only those social elements that provide service within the WSDOT right of way because the project improvements relate solely to SR 520 restriping.

What are the characteristics of the study area?

From Lake Washington eastbound, the SR 520 corridor crosses Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, Yarrow Point, Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond in King County (Exhibit 2). The study area north and south of SR 520 consists primarily of urban single family residential neighborhoods between Lake Washington and the Bellevue Way NE interchange. Construction of SR 520 in the 1960s

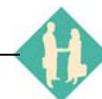


bisected communities, which created a barrier to interaction between the northern and southern portions of the study area. The highway also isolated the southern portion of Hunts Point. Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, and Yarrow Point offer few commercial services or any multifamily housing. Most of the houses in these areas are located on large lots that are typically treed, landscaped, and well maintained. A number of these houses are located on the shoreline of Lake Washington.

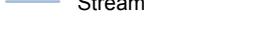
As the study area transitions to the neighborhoods of Lakeview in Kirkland and Northtown in Bellevue, land uses become more diverse, with a mixture of single family and multifamily residential and commercial and office uses.

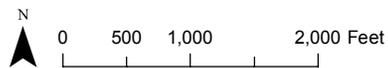
The area is well connected to the surrounding transportation network. SR 520 is the primary travel route in the study area. The highway provides access to the large employment centers of downtown Seattle and downtown Bellevue, as well as access to I-405 and other communities on the Eastside. The north-south arterials in the study area consist of 84th Avenue NE, 92nd Avenue NE, Lake Washington Boulevard, Bellevue Way NE, and 108th Avenue NE. These arterials give residents direct access to and from SR 520. The arterials also connect to the downtown cores of Bellevue and Kirkland, which provide a mixture of uses. These transportation facilities provide linkages to and within the study area. The north-south arterials provide crossings of SR 520 that allow residents access across the state highway. In addition, a pedestrian crossing over SR 520, approximately 1,000 feet east of Evergreen Point Road, provides another access point across the highway for pedestrians and bicyclists. Many of the roadways in the surrounding neighborhoods do not include sidewalks or bicycle lanes, but these roadways tend to have slower speed limits and carry only local traffic, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists the opportunity to travel along the right of way.

As described in the section *What community services are located in the study area?*, relatively few places (i.e., religious institutions, community centers) exist where area residents can gather to interact; however, one of the few businesses in the study area includes a coffee shop, located in Clyde Hill, which residents use as a gathering place. As described below under *What are the recreational facilities and what are their characteristics?*, there are five facilities where residents have the opportunity to interact.





-  Religious Institution
-  Government Building
-  Park-and-Ride
-  School
-  Construction Extent
-  Restriping Extent
-  Stream
-  Park/Trail
-  City Boundary



Source: King County (2006) Aerial Photo, King County (2005) GIS Data (Street), CH2M HILL (2008) GIS Data (Stream and Park), and City of Bellevue (1999) GIS Data (City Limit). Horizontal datum for all layers is NAD83(91); vertical datum for layers is NAVD88.

Exhibit 2. Social Elements

Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project

What are the population characteristics of the study area?

The analysts used U.S. Census Tract Block Group data to compare the study area population characteristics with those of the larger geographic areas of Kirkland, Bellevue, and King County. The information in Exhibit 3 indicates the Census Tract Block Groups that comprise the study area.

What is a Census Tract Block Group?

A subdivision of a Census Tract, a Block Group consists of all the blocks within a Census Tract with the same beginning number. In urban areas, a Block Group typically encompasses two to four city blocks.

Exhibit 3. Study Area Census Information

Census Tract	Block Group
227.01	2
240	1,2,3,5,& 6
241	1,2,3,4, & 5
242	2,3, & 4

As indicated in Exhibit 4, the population in the study area has a higher median age and a greater percentage of the population over the age of 65. These data suggest that many of the households contain older populations. However, the study area also has a larger household size compared with the other areas. This could indicate that while there are a number of households with higher populations, those households with children likely have more than one child. The study area also has a much higher median household income (two times that of the larger geographic areas) and a relatively small percentage of the population at or below the poverty level. More of the residents are homeowners, with a low percentage of the households having no vehicle. These data are indicators of low percentages of individuals and householders living below the poverty level.

Because the census data are almost 10 years old, the analyst reviewed public school data for elementary schools in the study area to look for any changes in study area population characteristics. The analyst used data from two elementary schools in the Bellevue School District because of the availability of limited-English-proficiency (LEP) data and because the attendance boundaries closely resemble the study area. Based on Bellevue School District Web site information, 10 percent of the students at Medina Elementary spoke a first language other than English during the 2006–2007 school year (Bellevue School District 2008a), and 27 percent of the students at Clyde Hill Elementary spoke a first language other than English during the 2008–2009 school year (Bellevue School District 2008b). At both schools, the Asian population accounted for the greatest percentage of minority students. This may indicate that since the 2000 Census, the LEP population has increased within the study area along with the need to provide information in additional languages. The Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum (WSDOT 2009a) includes additional information on student demographics.

Limited English Proficiency: Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter. Federal laws particularly applicable to language access include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Title VI regulations, prohibiting discrimination based on national origin, and Executive Order 13166 issued in 2000 (WSDOT 2008).



Exhibit 4. Population Characteristics

Characteristic	Study Area ^a	Kirkland	Bellevue	King County
Total Population	13,600	45,054	109,569	1,737,034
Median Age	42.9	36.1	38.2	35.7
People over 65 Years of Age	2,514 (18.5%)	4,612 (10.2%)	14,689 (13.4%)	181,772 (10.5%)
Owner-Occupied Housing	71.6%	57.0 %	61.5%	59.8
Renter-Occupied Housing	28.4%	43.0%	38.5%	40.2
Median Household Income	\$113,992	\$60,332	\$62,338	\$53,157
Households at or below Poverty Level	107 (1.8%)	1,078 (5.2%)	2,439 (5.3%)	55,739 (7.8%)
Individuals at or below Poverty Level (population for whom poverty status is determined)	244 (1.8%)	2,337 (5.3%)	6,162 (5.7%)	142,546 (8.4%)
Average Household Size	2.5	2.13	2.37	2.39
Households with No Vehicle	160 (2.7%)	875 (4.2%)	2,574 (5.6%)	66,244 (9.3%)
Persons with Disability (population 5 years and over)	1,519 (11.7%)	5,479 (13.0%)	15,487 (15.1%)	259,843 (16.1%)
Limited-English-Proficient Populations (population 5 years and over)	295 (2.3%)	958 (2.3%)	5,070 (4.9%)	299,620 (18.4%)

^a The study area is comprised of portions of Medina, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point; portions of Clyde Hill; the Lakeview neighborhood in Kirkland; and the Northtown neighborhood in Bellevue.

Source: U.S. Census 2000

How is the area projected to grow?

As shown in Exhibit 5, it is estimated that the population has decreased in Medina, Clyde Hill, and Yarrow Point since 2000. The area's population has not grown and is not expected to grow because there is very little buildable land, which consists of only single-family residential lots. Some of the population loss could be a result of combining parcels into a larger lot with only one household. Growth in Kirkland has been similar to that in Hunts Point, but the percent change has been less than in King County. The population in Bellevue did increase by the same percentage as King County, but that takes into consideration 2,747 new residents due to annexation.



Exhibit 5. Population Forecast

City/Town	2000	2008 (Estimate)	Change in Population
Medina	3,011	2,955	-56 (-1.9%)
Hunts Point	443	475	32 (7.2%)
Clyde Hill	2,890	2,805	-85 (-2.9%)
Yarrow Point	1,008	970	-38 (-3.8%)
Kirkland	45,054	48,410	3,356 (7.4%)
Bellevue	109,827	119,200	9,373 (8.5%)
King County	1,737,034	1,884,200	147,166 (8.5%)

Source: OFM 2008

What community services are located in the study area?

Community services include schools, religious institutions, social institutions, government facilities, fire and emergency medical, police, and utilities. No cemeteries or defense institutions are located in the study area. Because the majority of the study area consists primarily of single-family residences with relatively small population bases, there are relatively few community services.

Schools

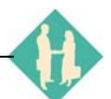
The Bellevue School District and the Lake Washington School District serve the study area. While there are no public schools located in the study area, there are seven schools in these two districts with attendance boundaries that cross the study area.

There are two private schools (Bellevue Christian School/Three Points Elementary in Medina and Eastside Preparatory School in Kirkland) and one public post-secondary school (Bellevue Community College – North Campus) in the study area (Exhibit 2). In addition, there are private child care facilities and preschools located in the study area.

Buses for public school transportation use many of the arterials in the study area to transport students to and from school, including the roadways across SR 520 at Evergreen Point Road, 84th Avenue NE, and 92nd Avenue NE.



Bellevue Christian School/Three Points Elementary in Medina



Religious Institutions

Only one religious institution is located in the study area. The Saint Luke's Lutheran Church is located at 3030 Bellevue Way NE (Exhibit 2) in the Northtown neighborhood of Bellevue. The parking lot is used as a King County Metro park-and-ride facility during weekdays.

Government Facilities

The only government facilities in the study area are two town halls: Hunts Point Town Hall, located at 3000 Hunts Point Road, and Yarrow Point Town Hall, located at 4030 95th Avenue NE (Exhibit 2).

Fire and Emergency Medical

The Bellevue Fire Department, Kirkland Fire Department, and Redmond Fire Department all provide service to the study area. In addition to serving Bellevue, the Bellevue Fire Department provides service to Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, and Yarrow Point. No fire stations are located in the study area. The nearest station to the study area is Bellevue Fire Department Station #5, located at 9621 NE 24th Street in Clyde Hill. The Kirkland Fire Department Station #22, located at 6602 108th Avenue NE, and the Bellevue Fire Department Station #6, located at 1850 132nd Avenue NE, also respond to calls in the study area. The Bellevue Fire Department and Redmond Fire Department respond to calls in the eastern study area where only restriping of the HOV lanes is to occur. The response time (the time a call is dispatched to the moment a fire unit arrives on the scene) averages between 5 to 6 minutes for the three fire departments. All fire departments have paramedics that provide basic life support. The Bellevue Fire Department and Redmond Fire Department are part of King County Medic One. Medic One provides advanced life support to the residents of King County.

Overlake Hospital Medical Center, located at 1035 116th Avenue NE, and Group Health Bellevue Medical Center, located at 11511 NE 10th Street, are the closest hospitals serving the study area. A Bellevue Medic One unit is based out of Overlake Hospital and would respond to any calls along SR 520.

Police Departments

The police departments of Medina, Clyde Hill, Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond serve and protect the residents in the study area. The Medina Police Department provides service to the residents of Hunts Point, and the Clyde Hill Police Department provides service to the residents of Yarrow Point. There are no stations in the study area. In addition to these police departments, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) serves the study area. The WSP patrols and investigates all collisions within the study area along SR 520, I-405, and SR 202.

Utilities

The following provides information on utility providers in the study area and includes information on major utilities that cross under SR 520.



Electricity

Puget Sound Energy provides service to the entire study area. Power is carried on 115-kilovolt (kV) and 230-kV transmission lines to the two substations (Medina Substation and Clyde Hill Substation) located in the study area. From these substations, overhead and underground distribution lines supply customers. One 115-kV transmission line crosses SR 520 at 92nd Avenue NE.

Natural Gas

Puget Sound Energy also supplies natural gas to the entire study area. Gas is distributed from large high-pressure mains to smaller distribution pipes. No high-pressure gas mains cross SR 520 in the study area.

Telephone Service

Qwest and Verizon provide telephone service to the study area. Qwest supplies all areas except Kirkland, where Verizon provides service. Qwest has a main feeder route that crosses under SR 520 at 92nd Avenue NE. Both Qwest and Verizon also provide Internet service. There are a number of cellular phone providers in the study area, and cellular towers are located on the north side of the Evergreen Point Road bridge and on the north side of 92nd Avenue NE in Yarrow Point.

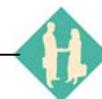
Cable

Comcast provides cable television and Internet service to the study area. Comcast has a major cable trunk route that connects to many smaller links that branch out to other areas. The trunk route travels north–south along Hunts Point Road, then heads east and parallel to the north side of SR 520 to NE Points Drive, and continues to Lake Washington Boulevard.

Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater

The Bellevue Utilities Department provides water and wastewater service to all areas in the study area except Kirkland, which receives service from the Kirkland Public Works Department. Both departments purchase water from the Cascade Water Alliance and distribute it through water mains owned, constructed, operated, and maintained by the respective city departments. A number of water mains cross under SR 520 in the study area, including at Evergreen Point Road (76th Avenue NE), near Fairweather Place, 84th Avenue NE, and 92nd Avenue NE. Both departments also own, construct, operate, and maintain wastewater lines that carry wastewater to interceptors owned and maintained by the King County Wastewater Treatment Division.

Stormwater is managed by each of the cities or towns in the study area. Numerous methods are used to maintain stormwater, discussed in greater detail in the Water Resources Discipline Report (WSDOT 2009b).



Garbage and Recycling Service

Allied Waste provides curbside garbage and recycling service for residences along with commercial service in Medina, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point, Clyde Hill, and Bellevue. Waste Management Northwest provides garbage and recycling service for residences and businesses in Kirkland and Redmond.

What are the recreational facilities and what are their characteristics?

Parks and recreation facilities are important resources, highly valued by local governments and community members. In all, five recreational facilities were identified. Exhibit 2 shows the locations of these facilities in the study area. Each of these recreational facilities is protected by Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. WSDOT intends to pursue making *de minimis* impact findings on all affected recreational facilities. Refer to the Section 4(f) Technical Memorandum (WSDOT 2009h) for complete information

Section 4(f) Applicability

The intent of the Section 4(f) statute and U.S. Department of Transportation policy is to avoid the use of significant public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and historic sites as part of a project unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land.

Points Loop Trail

The Points Loop Trail lies within the jurisdictions of Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, and Yarrow Point. The trail is 5.4 miles long and is comprised of 1.6 miles of off-street trails, 2.4 miles of streets with sidewalks, and 1.4 miles of trail along residential streets. There are two trail crosses over SR 520: one at the pedestrian crossing east of Evergreen Point Road, and the other at 92nd Avenue NE using the sidewalk. The trail is situated within the WSDOT right of way on the north side of SR 520 and along the south side of Fairweather Park, Hunts Point Park, and Wetherill Nature Preserve. Portions of the trail do not meet the current ADA requirements.



Points Loop Trail connects Medina and Hunts Point.

Fairweather Park

Fairweather Park consists of 11 acres of woods, streams, and wetlands in the heart of Medina. The park also includes tennis courts and open space for users. This unique component of the Medina community has an ecological diversity remarkable in a suburban setting, with over 53 species of plants, 6 species of mammals, and 20 species of birds. The terrain ranges from upland forest to wetland, and the park is bisected by a spring-fed stream. The Points Loop Trail is located immediately south of the park within WSDOT right of way.



Fairweather Park



Hunts Point Park

Hunts Point Park, also known as D.K. McDonald Park, encompasses roughly 2.5 acres in the south part of town. Park amenities include tennis courts, a children's play area, an open sports area, and benches. The parkland was originally acquired from the Bellevue School District and named after long-time resident D. K. McDonald, who purchased enough bonds to finance construction of the park. The park also contains the Town Hall. The Points Loop Trail is located immediately adjacent to the south side of the park within WSDOT right of way.



Hunts Point Park

Wetherill Nature Preserve

The 16-acre Wetherill Nature Preserve was donated to the towns of Hunts Point and Yarrow Point in 1988 with the requirement that the towns protect the land in perpetuity from development and preserve its native wildlife and plants. Today, many trees and shrubs in the park are labeled, and extensive plant and animal lists are provided at the entrance kiosk. A number of pedestrian-only trails wind through the park and provide waterfront views. The parkland is privately maintained through volunteer efforts and contributions. The Points Loop Trail is located immediately adjacent to the south side of the park within WSDOT right of way.



Wetherill Nature Preserve

Yarrow Bay Wetlands

Yarrow Bay wetlands is a 73-acre wildlife conservancy area, which can be explored either by nonmotorized craft, such as canoes and kayaks, or by following one of two trails that border the park. The park is located at the south end of Kirkland.

Although most of the Yarrow Bay wetlands can only be explored by boat, a land route is accessible from a small parking lot at 101st Way NE and NE Points Drive just north of 520. The parking lot leads to a trail with interpretive signs.



Yarrow Bay wetlands

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities in the Study Area

The neighborhoods in the study area include a variety of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities. As described in the preceding section, the Points Loop Trail travels through Medina, Hunts Point, and Yarrow Point and is used by pedestrians and bicyclists.



Pedestrian

Within the study area, sidewalks are found primarily on the busier streets including 84th Avenue NE, NE 24th Street, and Northup Way. Where there are no sidewalks, some streets have paved walkways or wide shoulders that pedestrians can use. Elsewhere there are no pedestrian facilities and residents must use the street; however, the streets tend to have minimal traffic, and low speeds minimize conflicts. The roadways over SR 520 all have a sidewalk on at least one side that provides safe access across SR 520. Also, a pedestrian crossing over SR 520 connects the Bellevue Christian School/Three Points Elementary school to Fairweather Park. Current ADA requirements allow a maximum grade of approximately 8 percent; the ramps to the crossing are currently too steep to meet these requirements.

Bicycle

Bicycle lanes are located on the busier roadways in the study area, including 84th Avenue NE in Medina and Clyde Hill, and Lake Washington Boulevard, NE 38th Place, and 108th Avenue NE in Kirkland. Where there are no bicycle lanes, bicyclists travel either in the street or on the shoulder. Many of the streets in the study area tend to have low volumes of traffic and slow speed limits that minimize conflicts.

Transit

King County Metro, Sound Transit, and Community Transit provide transit service in the study area. Residents can access transit routes along SR 520 at the transit stops located at Evergreen Point Road, at 92nd Avenue NE, and from the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride. King County Metro provides local service, with many of the routes located in Bellevue and Kirkland. Routes provide service within Clyde Hill, and other routes travel along 84th Avenue NE to provide service to Medina residents.

Three park-and-ride facilities are located in the study area (Exhibit 2). The South Kirkland Park-and-Ride at 10610 NE 38th Place includes 596 parking spaces, bicycle lockers, and racks, and is serviced by 8 transit routes. The Saint Luke's Park-and-Ride facility includes 30 parking spaces and is serviced by 3 routes. The Evergreen Point Bridge lot has 51 spaces and includes access to 25 routes.

Do the local comprehensive plans address pedestrian, bicyclist, or transit facilities?

Most comprehensive plans for the communities identify new facilities in the study area. The comprehensive plan for Hunts Point does not identify any improvements related to pedestrians, bicycles, or transit. Exhibit 6 provides information on the proposed improvements identified in local comprehensive plans that would connect with the project improvements.



Exhibit 6. Proposed Improvements

City/Town	Type	Location/Description
Medina	Nonmotorized	Sidewalks located along Evergreen Point Road connecting to the improvements associated with the lid.
Bellevue	Nonmotorized	Off street paths on the south side of NE Points Drive from Yarrow Point limits to Lake Washington Boulevard, and along SR 520 connecting NE Points Drive to Northup Way over the Bellevue Way interchange; and bike lanes along Bellevue Way, Northup Way, 108th Place NE, and 112th Avenue NE.

Sources: City of Medina Comprehensive Plan (2005); City of Bellevue Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2008)

4. Potential Effects of the Project

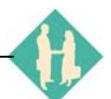
This section discusses the positive and negative effects associated with construction and operation of the Build Alternative and the No Build Alternative on social elements in the study area.

How would construction of the project affect social elements?

Effects during construction are considered short-term when compared with the operational life span of the proposed project. While the duration of construction activities associated with the project may seem long for affected residents, most of the construction activities would occur within existing WSDOT right of way, minimizing the extent of the construction effects on the surrounding area. Construction is expected to last for approximately 4 years (2010 to 2014), and the project would be constructed in stages, which would lessen the amount of time any individual area would be disturbed. Construction activities would include demolition of existing structures, where necessary; construction of temporary bridges; roadway widening; construction of retaining and noise walls; construction of lids over SR 520 at three locations; reconfiguration of the Bellevue Way NE interchange; and construction of direct access at the 108th Avenue NE interchange.

Typical construction activities would result in increases in noise and dust levels, detract from views and visual quality due to staging of construction equipment, and create glare from lighting during any required nighttime construction. Construction noise would be short term and generally occur during the day. The noise levels would depend on the type, amount, and location of activities. WSDOT will comply with all local and/or county noise restrictions or apply for variances with the jurisdictions. Refer to the Noise, Air Quality, and Visual Quality and Aesthetics technical memoranda (WSDOT 2009c, 2009d, and 2009e) for additional information on construction effects.

Restriping the eastbound and westbound HOV lanes from 108th Avenue NE to SR 202 would occur at night outside peak traffic periods, and would take at least 5 nights. Up to one lane of SR 520 would be closed each night. Because the restriping effort would be limited to the area within existing WSDOT right of way, the only effects during construction would be related to public service vehicles and transit vehicles that may be traveling that portion of SR 520.



Build Alternative

Community Cohesion

Construction of the project would occur primarily within or adjacent to existing WSDOT right of way and would not bisect or isolate any established communities or change the existing community character. The project would require approximately 10 acres of land to allow construction. Property acquisitions include 10 full and 23 partial property acquisitions and require the relocation of five residences. The partial acquisitions are narrow strips of land from the backyards of residences adjacent to SR 520 that would bring the right of way closer to the homes. Of the five residential properties that need to be relocated, two have already been acquired by WSDOT, and two other property owners are considered to be willing sellers. These acquisitions would not have a negative effect on community cohesion since the acquisitions are located along the SR 520 corridor. For the residential displacements, WSDOT will conduct acquisitions through its Relocation Assistance Program and will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970, as amended. No changes to either the existing categories of land use or existing zoning would occur as a result of the project. Refer to the Land Use, Economics, and Relocations Technical Memorandum (WSDOT 2009f) for complete information on the residential acquisitions and effects on land use.

Travel through construction zones, lane closures, and detours could increase travel times along the SR 520 corridor, making it more difficult for residents to get from place to place. To maintain access because of the demolition of existing crossings and construction of new bridges and lids, temporary bridges would be built across SR 520, and construction at interchanges would be staged to maintain continual access over SR 520. The areas near the bridges over SR 520 would likely experience greater construction noise, dust, and visual effects because of the construction activities associated with the demolition of the existing bridges and construction of the lids and new bridges.

Regional and Community Growth

Construction of the project would not affect regional and community growth. The project would require acquisition of five residential properties, but this would not result in any declines in population affecting community growth. The project would also require construction workers during the 4-year construction period, but it is expected that many of these workers would come from the surrounding region and would not require workers to move to the area.

Community Services

Construction activities would not result in physical impediments that would make it more difficult for people to reach community services or affordable housing. Since the project would be primarily constructed within existing WSDOT right of way, and the local roadway network would not be altered, all existing connections would be maintained. The temporary bridges would ensure that access was maintained during construction. Construction of the project would not result in the relocation of any community resources or affordable housing. There would be no construction-related effects on the religious institution or government facilities located in the study area.



Schools

There could be increased noise and dust around the Bellevue Christian School/Three Points Elementary playfields and outdoor space during construction. Students who live in the neighborhoods north of SR 520 could realize a temporary increase in travel times if there are any lane closures associated with the roadways across SR 520.

Fire, Emergency Medical, and Police

Construction activities could require temporary lane closures along SR 520, and road closures could be necessary to complete various aspects of the project. Any closures would likely increase congestion and could affect access. Closures may affect the response and travel times of fire, emergency medical, and police vehicles, as well as the travel times of public service providers. Any required detour routes would be developed with these providers to minimize the effects on response, travel times, and access.

Restriping of the travel lanes on SR 520 east of 108th Avenue NE would require lane closures. However, this work would occur during nighttime hours when the roadway was not as heavily used. Lane closures could result in additional travel and response times for public service providers' vehicles (e.g., fire, emergency medical, and police vehicles).

Utilities

Construction activities may affect utilities located below and above grade. During construction, rerouting or protecting in-place utility lines and/or cables that could cause temporary outages may be needed. Prior to construction, the exact location and depth of utilities would be verified with utility providers, and construction methods would also be developed. For utilities with WSDOT franchise agreements, any relocations would be addressed under the provisions provided in each of the provider's agreements.

Garbage and Recycling Service

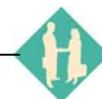
Effects on garbage and recycling service vehicles would be the same as described above under Fire, Emergency Medical, and Police.

Recreation Facilities

Construction would directly affect four of the five recreational facilities in the study area. The Yarrow Bay wetlands would not be affected. Based on a preliminary evaluation of use of park and recreation resources in accordance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (49 USC 303), WSDOT intends to pursue making *de minimis* impact findings on all affected recreational facilities.

Points Loop Trail

Because the Points Loop Trail lies within the WSDOT right of way, the trail would be within the limits of construction in places and thus would be closed and relocated. During construction, local streets would be used for detour routes, thus ensuring the continued use and continuity of the trail. The trail would not be closed during the entire 4-year construction timeline, only during construction of the project elements in the adjacent area.



Fairweather Park

A small portion of the southwest corner of the park (approximately 0.03 acre) would be occupied by a temporary bridge to accommodate continued use of the street and provide access north of SR 520. It is anticipated that the bridge would remain in this portion of the park for up to 20 months, until Evergreen Point Road was relocated to its permanent alignment over SR 520. Additionally, reconstruction of the Points Loop Trail would result in the temporary fencing/closure of the southwest corner of the park, as well as any additional area required to accommodate construction activities. Because the park entrance is at the north boundary of the park, access and use of the park would continue during construction.

Hunts Point Park and Wetherill Nature Preserve

Reconstruction of the Points Loop Trail and construction of retaining walls would result in the temporary fencing and closure of a small sliver of Hunts Point Park and Wetherill Nature Preserve along their southern boundaries adjacent to SR 520. The temporary occupancy of these areas, however, would not affect access or use of either park.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities

Pedestrians and bicyclists on any of the crossings over SR 520 would be affected by noise, dust, and visual effects. Construction activities would also require the temporary closure of the Points Loop Trail; however, detour routes would be established.

Transit operations along the SR 520 corridor and along the arterials that cross over SR 520 could be affected, and resulting increases in travel times would affect schedules. Transit riders would also be affected by the additional noise, dust, and visual effects near any stations in close proximity to the bridge demolitions and lid construction. None of the park-and-ride facilities would be closed, but Evergreen Point Park-and-Ride would operate at a diminished capacity. As described above under Community Services, the restriping of SR 520 could result in additional travel times for transit vehicles. Since restriping would occur in the evening, many of the routes may no longer be running or the service hours would not be as frequent.

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, there would be no construction-related effects on any of the social elements in the study area because no action would be undertaken. The residents in the study area would not be adversely affected by noise, dust, and increased traffic congestion.

How would operation of the project affect social elements?**Build Alternative*****Community Cohesion***

The project would not negatively affect community life, persons, or groups, or displace any affordable housing or community resources, or impede access for those who live and work in the study area. The

Community Cohesion: The ability of people to communicate and interact with each other in ways that lead to a sense of community, as reflected in the neighborhood's ability to function and be recognized as a singular unit.



project would result in a number of positive changes for the areas adjacent to SR 520 in the study area. The project would result in beneficial changes to social patterns by reconnecting the communities. The new physical connections in Medina, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, and Yarrow Point due to the construction of lids over SR 520 at Evergreen Point Way, 84th Avenue NE, and 92nd Avenue NE would allow for a reconnection of the areas previously bisected when SR 520 was originally constructed. The lids would include landscaping, open space, and pathways, and would provide new areas for the residents to interact with one another. The project would provide travel time benefits for those who use transit, carpools, or vanpools along the SR 520 corridor in the study area. The project would also enhance public safety as a result of safer and more efficient operation of SR 520 in the study area.

For the majority of residences in the study area, the construction of the noise walls would lower noise levels beneath the noise abatement criteria (NAC). This would benefit the majority of the residents.

Noise levels would decrease by at least 3 decibels, the level at which a decrease would be perceptible to most humans, at the majority of locations in the study area. In at least 30 locations, noise levels would decrease by over 10 decibels, the level when noise is considered to be half as loud. In areas where noise walls are not

reasonable and feasible, the noise levels would exceed the NAC; however, the noise levels would either be lower than existing conditions or would remain the same as today. Refer to the Noise Technical Memorandum (WSDOT 2009c) for complete information on noise effects and noise walls.

For those properties where acquisition would be required and the widening would bring the roadway closer to homes, there could be negative effects related to visual quality and aesthetics as a result of vegetation loss and changes in views. However, this would not adversely affect community cohesion because the effects would occur only to those residences adjacent to the existing SR 520 right of way. Replanting or enhancing vegetation could minimize the effects on the adjacent residents.

Regional and Community Growth

The project would not negatively affect any planned regional or community growth. Many of the neighborhoods are well established, and there is no more land to allow new development. The project would improve travel times for transit, carpools, and vanpools and improve safety. The project would not induce any unwanted growth, and would not result in any changes to population.

Community Services

No effects are anticipated during operation on the religious institution, government facilities, or utilities located in the study area. The project includes noise walls adjacent to Bellevue Christian School/Three Points Elementary, which would decrease noise levels on the school grounds. The project would result in improved response and travel times for fire, emergency medical, and police along SR 520 with the addition of the new HOV lane in the eastbound direction, widened shoulders, and continuous HOV lanes from Lake Washington to SR 202. These improvements would enhance mobility and allow the vehicles the ability to bypass any traffic congestion in the general-purpose

Noise Abatement Criteria

Noise abatement criteria are noise standards that specify exterior noise levels for various land activity categories. For residences, parks, schools, churches, and similar uses, the noise abatement criterion is 67 A-weighted decibels at the sensitive receptor.



lanes. The project would not require any changes to existing community services or the need for additional services.

Recreational Facilities

The project would result in primarily beneficial effects on the recreational facilities in the study area. Because of the proposed noise walls, future noise levels in all four parks and along the Points Loop Trail are expected to be lower than current levels. The proposed lids at Evergreen Point Road and 84th Avenue NE would serve as an extension of the Fairweather and Hunts Point parks and enhance the open space and community connections that these parks provide.

The character of the Points Loop Trail could be negatively affected as a result of vegetation removal and the placement of noise walls. In many cases, the existing vegetation enhances the recreational experience for trail users by buffering them from the highway. A small area, 0.2 acre of the southwest corner of Fairweather Park (grassy playfield), would be permanently converted to the Points Loop Trail. This affected area comprises roughly 2 percent of the total park area.

Pedestrian, Bicyclist, and Transit Facilities

The project would have beneficial effects for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, especially those who are transit-dependent. The addition of the ADA-compliant continuous pedestrian/bicycle path between Evergreen Point Road and 108th Avenue NE would provide new trail capacity along with the potential to separate bicyclists from pedestrians.

Transit in the study area would improve as a result of the completion of the eastbound HOV lane from Lake Washington to just east of I-405, construction of the inside transit stops at Evergreen Point Road and 92nd Avenue NE, the HOV direct access ramps at 108th Avenue NE to the South Kirkland Park-and-Ride, and the restriping of the HOV lanes from the outside lanes to the inside lanes to SR 202. Transit would no longer need to merge with general-purpose traffic and safety would improve. The HOV lanes would be continuous and travel times would decrease. Many of these benefits would also accrue to carpools and vanpools. Access to the transit stations located in the lids at Evergreen Point Road and 92nd Avenue NE would include elevators or stairs designed to comply with ADA requirements.

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, none of the improvements would be constructed. There would be no reconnection of areas originally bisected by the construction of SR 520 in the 1960s, no improvements in transit and HOV travel times, no reduction in noise levels for many of the residences adjacent to the SR 520 corridor, and no improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The No Build Alternative would not require the acquisition of any properties, minimizing any effects on these properties.



5. Mitigation

The project would include a number of measures to avoid or minimize any negative effects in the study area including continuing to work with the Eastside community design collaboration to develop specific mitigation measures and meet with these groups to inform them about any construction activities and ensure that mitigation measures are effective.

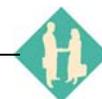
How would adverse effects from construction be avoided or minimized?

Construction would not affect regional and community growth; therefore, no mitigation is proposed. Additional mitigation measures to reduce traffic congestion, noise, dust, and visual effects during construction are identified in the Transportation, Noise, Air Quality, and Visual Quality and Aesthetics reports (WSDOT 2009g, 2009c, 2009d, and 2009e).

WSDOT could implement the following mitigation measures to avoid or minimize construction effects:

Community Cohesion

- Continue to use the project Web site and send out newsletters providing information about the project. Newsletters would be sent out in the appropriate languages to ensure effective communication with study area residents.
- Schedule neighborhood meetings, as often as needed, to keep residents informed of any construction activities before and during construction.
- Develop a traffic management plan to help minimize the effect on transit schedules and arterial movements during construction.
- Work with local communities for their input on design and landscape treatments associated with the lids.
- Ensure that temporary road and lane closures are minimized and detour routes are well signed.
- Minimize, as much as possible, any land acquisitions that may be required, especially where it would result in negative effects on residential property.
- Limit construction activities associated with the highest noise levels (i.e., jack hammering and other demolition equipment) to between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. to reduce construction noise levels during sensitive nighttime hours.
- Require all equipment to have mufflers, limit idling of equipment, and locate equipment away from sensitive receptors as much as possible.
- Require loads to be covered to reduce dust and windblown debris, and to spray exposed soil with water or other suppressant to reduce dust.



Community Services

- Coordinate with public service providers before construction, including proposed detour routes, and work with them to establish alternative detour routes, if necessary.
- Coordinate with school officials during construction.
- Notify residents of any disruptions or changes to services well in advance.
- Prepare a consolidated utility plan that lists existing locations of potential temporary locations, potential relocated locations, schedule for utility work, and detailed information on any service disruptions.
- Verify the exact location and depths of underground utilities prior to construction.

Recreational Facilities

- Identify and sign detour routes for the temporary closures and rerouting of Points Loop Trail.
- Restore landscape conditions to those park properties that would be temporarily affected during construction.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit

- Identify and sign detour routes on bicycle/pedestrian pathways.
- If temporary transit stops are required, clearly mark the stops and provide additional signage indicating location.
- If there are any alternative routes and/or temporary transit stops, ensure that stops are accessible for those with disabilities.

How would adverse effects from operation of the project be avoided or minimized?

During operation, no adverse effects are anticipated on any of the social elements; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.

6. Conclusion

The project would not result in any significant effects on social elements after mitigation measures were implemented. While there would be temporary negative effects during construction, these would be considered short-term compared with the operational lifespan of the project. During operation, the project would result in beneficial effects on the social elements.



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