

Making environmentally sound decisions



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. NEPA requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) that evaluates environmental effects and identifies any reasonable alternatives that would eliminate or reduce these effects.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Washington's SEPA legislation went into effect in 1971 and established an environmental review process consistent with NEPA for all state projects that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

WSDOT is committed to designing, building and maintaining efficient transportation systems in an environmentally sensitive way. We will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and conduct an environmental review process for the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project.

What is the environmental review process?

There are four milestones in the environmental review process:



- 1 During the public and agency scoping phase, we ask for comments from the public, Tribes, and federal, state and local agencies on the purpose and need, range of alternatives, and the environmental topics we will evaluate in the project's environmental impact statement (EIS).
- 2 The next step is to prepare and publish a draft EIS that includes the results of our analysis for the alternatives and identifies ways we can mitigate the environmental effects of the project. We will hold a public hearing when we publish the draft EIS to gather comments on the results of our evaluation and proposed mitigation measures.
- 3 In the final EIS, we respond to the agency and public comments we received on the draft EIS. The final project recommendation—know as the “preferred alternative”—is also identified.
- 4 The Record of Decision explains the reason for the project decision. It also includes the mitigation measures that have been incorporated into the project.

How can you give your comments to the project team?

Your comments are important to us.

In January 2008, we asked for public input on what issues should be considered and evaluated in the environmental impact statement. On Jan. 17, 2008, we held agency and public scoping meetings that were well attended. During the scoping comment period between Jan. 3 and Feb. 1, 2008 we received a range of comments expressing interest in employment opportunities to addressing potential issues regarding wetlands and endangered species.

We are reviewing all comments received during the public comment period and a summary of the comments will be included in the draft EIS. Additional opportunities for public comment will be available when the draft EIS is released, planned for early 2009. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at the information below.

What environmental topics will we evaluate?

- air quality
- construction effects
- economics
- energy
- environmental justice
- fisheries
- geology and soils
- hazardous materials
- historical and archaeological resources
- 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



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