



I-90 Hyak to Easton Project

THE BULLETIN

Spring 2000

Issue 1 Volume 1

Public Meeting Held

On Wednesday, February 23, 2000 the Washington State Department of Transportation held a public meeting for the I-90 project in Cle Elum. This was the third in a series of public meetings planned for this project. The main purpose of this meeting was to promote early public involvement in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

According to Paul Gonseth, I-90 Project Engineer, "The meeting was a success. We were happy with the public turnout and received a lot of great information that will play a large part in the EIS process."

Approximately 80 people including citizens and agency representatives attended the meeting. A variety of issues, concerns and questions were brought up at this event. The concern voiced most frequently related to the split route option that would place the eastbound alignment on the south side of Lake Keechelus. Interference with the existing John Wayne Trail and impacted homes at the Hyak area are two major issues in this alternative.

Currently we are assembling comments from the meeting and compiling them with those received at our office from the public and agencies. We plan on responding to these comments in a timely manner by future newsletter and mail.

Environmental Impact Statement Started

WSDOT and FHWA, in partnership with the United State Army Corps of Engineers, has initiated the Environmental Impact Statement for the I-90 project. The primary purpose of the EIS is to ensure that state and national environmental policies are adhered to and documented. The EIS analyzes environmental impacts and the process enables interested citizens, as well as government agencies to review and comment on the proposed actions. This encourages the resolution of potential concerns prior to the issuance of the final report. It is also expected to summarize significant impacts that cannot or will not be mitigated.

Several existing documentation procedures can be incorporated into the EIS. The Snoqualmie Pass area is a sensitive corridor and requires thorough and intense study. Some of the considerations include the Endangered Species Act, the Archeological Historic Preservation Act and national as well as state environmental policies. A few of the issues already raised include animal/biological connectivity, disruptions to state waters, and

the status of the John Wayne Trail.

Currently, we are finishing the scoping phase of the EIS process. Scoping is a process used to identify all significant issues and alternatives for the EIS and to have them presented as early as possible. Specific scoping objectives are:

- To identify the affected public and agency concerns.
- To facilitate an efficient EIS preparation process by identifying the cooperating agencies, ascertaining which related permits and reviews need to be scheduled concurrently, and setting completion time limits.
- To define the issues and alternatives to be examined in detail in the EIS.
- To save time by ensuring that draft statements adequately address relevant issues and that a statement will not have to be rewritten or supplemented.

In this stage, we will decide the issues relevant to the EIS and research these elements to find the best alternatives and to implement appropriate practices. Although the public comment phase of this officially ended on March 20, we will continue to welcome input from the public. This date allows us to focus on the relevant issues and begin the analysis process.

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**Where to Find Information on this Project
Interdisciplinary Team Appointed**

Interdisciplinary Team Appointed

In accordance with WSDOT policy, the South Central Region (SCR), has appointed an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT). Consisting of several members from various disciplines, this group will function in an advisory and consultation role. They will provide objective analysis, reports, recommendations and guidance in social, economic and environmental issues relating to this project.

The IDT will develop an inventory of engineering, social and environmental data to aid in refining options and to help implement the least environmentally damaging alternatives. Following a review of reports including technical studies and citizen responses, various alternative benefits and impacts will be weighed. The members will present preliminary recommendations to the WSDOT Regional Administrator.

The duties and responsibilities of the IDT are immense and var-

ied. Ultimately, their biggest role will be to facilitate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement that will identify all significant issues, affected groups and alternatives.

Currently, the I-90 Interdisciplinary Team consists of members from Washington State DOT, Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the United States Forest Service.

Get on our mailing list !!

Sign up at our website and receive our project newsletter.

Other features coming soon to our website:

- Alternatives information including the southside option
- Summary of comments received at our toll free phone line
- Schedule of upcoming meetings, events and milestones
- List of available information

Where To Find Information

It is a major emphasis of the WSDOT to keep the public well informed of ongoing projects. To ensure that the public has access to all the current information, and answers to their questions we have put together a variety of informational resources.

- Newsletter: **The Bulletin**
- Web Site:
www.wsdot.wa.gov/regions/southcentral/I90Snoqualmie
- Telephone (toll free):
1-888-535-0738

Transcripts Available

Transcripts from the public meeting held on February 23 in Cle Elum are available for viewing and printing from our website. If you would like us to mail you a copy of the transcripts they are available from the Project Office at a cost of \$13.50 to cover copying costs. You may request a copy by calling the toll free telephone number or sending a request to the return address on the newsletter.

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