

**Additional Required Information  
for the  
Implementing Agreement  
between  
The Washington State Department of Transportation  
and  
The Washington State Department of Ecology  
Concerning Adoption of NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusions**

1. **Project name** Point Defiance Bypass Project
2. **Applicant** Washington State Department of Transportation
3. **Address and phone number of applicant and contact person**

**Applicant**

Washington State Department of Transportation  
State Rail Office  
310 Maple Park Avenue SE  
PO Box 47407  
Olympia WA 98504-7407

**Contact**

Kevin Jeffers, P.E.  
360-705-7982  
or  
Elizabeth Phinney  
360-705-7902

4. **Proposed timing or schedule**

Land acquisition to take place in late 2007 and early 2008; construction and rehabilitation to begin October 2008. Phasing may occur for both the Sound Transit and WSDOT projects if funding is insufficient.

5. **Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal?**

No.

6. **Environmental information that has been prepared**

- Point Defiance Bypass Project NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion (approved by FHWA on May 5, 2008) (Attached)
- Point Defiance Bypass Project Environmental Summary (May 2008) (Available upon request)
- Environmental technical reports (air quality; cultural resources; energy; fish, wildlife and vegetation; geology and soils; hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use; noise and vibration; public services; relocation; social elements; transportation; visual quality; and wetlands)

- Biological Assessment (No Effect Letter, May 16, 2007; Project Update Letter, also No Effect, October 29, 2007)
- Cultural Resources Report – SHPO Concurrence with No Adverse Effect Determination, March 28, 2008.

## **7. Other governmental approvals**

Sound Transit owns the rail line, and will be sharing it with the Amtrak *Cascades* trains sponsored by the state via WSDOT. Sound Transit will be improving portions of the line and is also building a *Sounder* commuter train station and a *Sounder* maintenance facility along the line. Sound Transit has already received approvals from the Federal Transit Administration for their project.

## **8. Government approvals or permits that will be needed**

WSDOT is contracting with Sound Transit to construct the WSDOT portion of the project along with Sound Transit's project construction. Therefore, Sound Transit and their rail contractor will be responsible for obtaining all permits.

## **9. Project Description**

*Background:* The Point Defiance Bypass Project will improve safety, reduce rail congestion, and, as a result, support more frequent and reliable Amtrak *Cascades* service. Freight and passenger train traffic has increased on the existing BNSF main line in the Tacoma vicinity and the rail system is operating at or near its maximum capacity. By removing the passenger traffic from the existing main line and diverting that traffic to the shorter, more direct Point Defiance Bypass route, travel times for the passenger trains will be reduced. In addition, since the Point Defiance Bypass will primarily be used by passenger trains, the reliability of the train schedules will be improved. By using this alternate route, congestion on the existing main line will be reduced, thereby freeing capacity for freight trains.

*Proposed Project:* The Point Defiance Bypass Project consists of three major track elements: construction of a new track adjacent to the existing main line; reconstruction of the existing main line track; and rehabilitation of the existing track.

### **New Track Adjacent to the Existing Main Line**

A new track adjacent to the existing main line will be constructed from South 66<sup>th</sup> Street (rail milepost 6.92) to one quarter mile south of Bridgeport Way SW (rail milepost 10.67). This new 2.5 mile track will be constructed parallel to and east of (with 15-foot track centers) the existing Sound Transit track. In some places, due to curves, track centers may be wider, particularly in the vicinity of Lakewood Station, Bridgeport Way and Clover Creek. Sound Transit's *Sounder* trains and freight trains will predominately use the eastern main track (new track, main line 2) as it operates in its service area (northern terminus of Point Defiance Bypass Project to Bridgeport Way SW).

The second main line will be built on new embankment which has already been upgraded by Sound Transit. The new second main line to be constructed in this area will require minimal grading work. There will be no in-water work as part of this new construction.

*Reconstruction of the Existing Main Line*

Starting at Steilacoom Boulevard SW (rail milepost 8.36), the existing track will be reconstructed to a location just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89). This will involve removal of the existing track and minor re-grading of the existing sub-grade to provide a slightly wider, re-graded and compacted, stable surface top on which to construct a new track. This reconstructed segment is approximately nine miles in length.

For a short segment, between rail milepost 8.88 and 9.96, the existing track and the new track will be on a new alignment. Therefore, the existing track will be removed and both main lines constructed on a new sub-grade alignment. Upon removal of the track structure, the existing sub-grade will be graded and cleared of debris to match existing ground conditions in the general area. There will be no in-water work as part of this reconstruction.

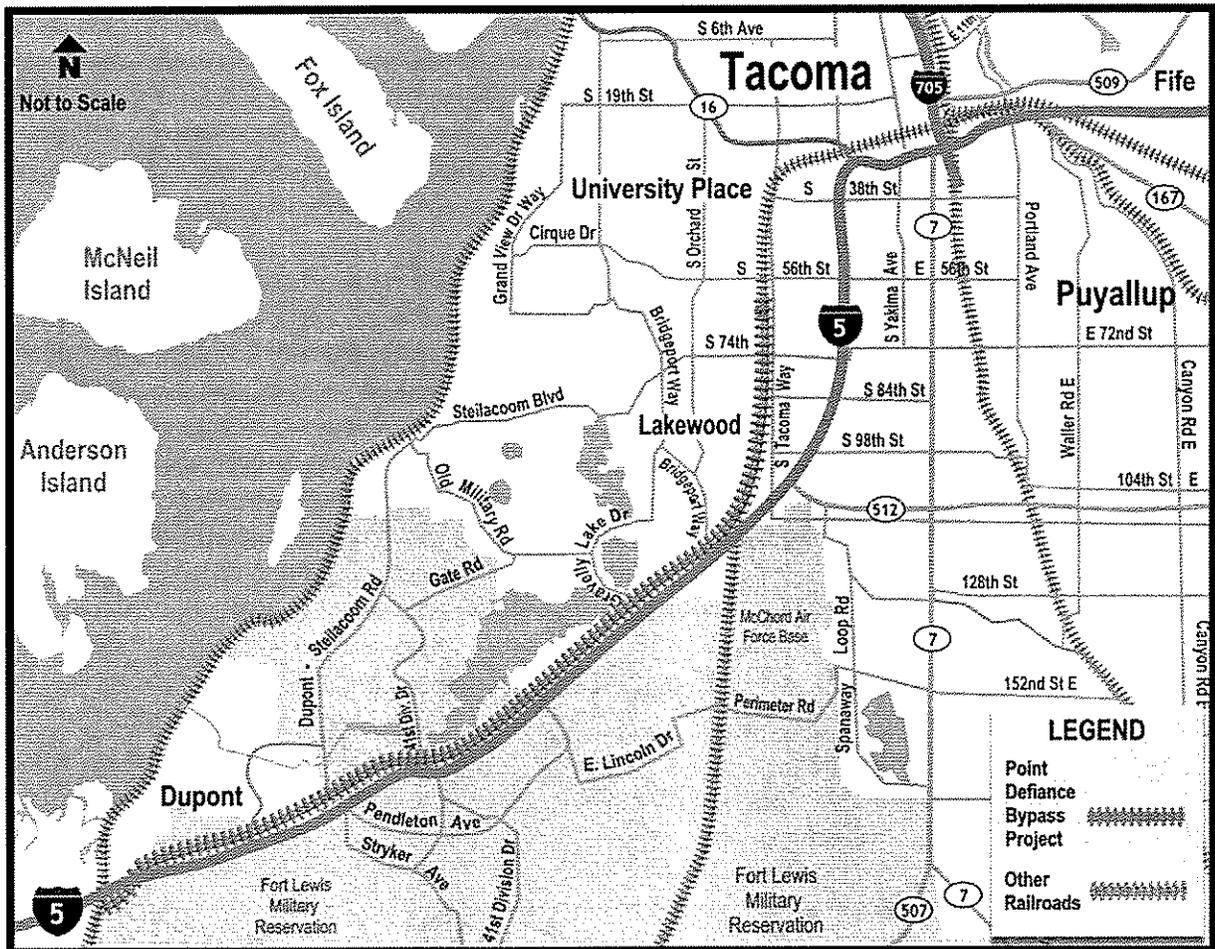
*Rehabilitation of the Existing Line*

Just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89), for approximately two miles (to rail milepost 21.23), the existing single main line track will be rehabilitated. This work will consist of replacing existing, worn, or otherwise defective ties with new ties, and adding ballast. These activities are typical of the maintenance work regularly performed on most railroads and is accomplished without removing the track. Existing drainage paths will be cleared of blockages. Little or no new grading work will be required. There will be no in-water work as part of this rehabilitation.

## 10. Project Location

The Point Defiance Project is located along Sound Transit's Lakeview Subdivision rail line in Pierce County (Township 18N through 20N, Range 1E and 2E). The project area extends approximately 18 miles from South 66<sup>th</sup> Street (in Tacoma), through Lakewood and DuPont, to just east of I-5, where it connects with the BNSF Railway Company's (BNSF) main line.

General Vicinity of the Point Defiance Bypass Project



## Additional Required Information

### Earth

- a. **General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:**

The existing rail bed is standard railroad right-of-way. The tracks are placed on level fill above a standard railroad embankment.

- b. **What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**

The existing railroad bed is elevated up to 4 feet above the bottom of the railside ditch, with 2H:1V sloping sides (50% slope).

- c. **What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.**

The site is underlain with Spanaway gravelly sandy loam.

- d. **Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.**

The railroad track has been in its present location for over 90 years. At the southern end of the rail line before it re-connects with the BNSF main line, there has been some recent sloughing of the uphill slope due to drainage problems. Hillside drainage will be installed as part of this project.

- e. **Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**

From railroad mileposts 8.88 to 9.96, it is anticipated that approximately 67.88 acres will be cleared and grubbed for the relocation of the existing rail line and the construction of a new main line. The two rail lines will be placed atop 137,238 tons of clean engineered sub-ballast and ballast.

- f. **Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

Soil erosion is not probable on the site because of the nature of the construction practices involving compacted stabilized material. Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used appropriately to prevent any construction-related erosion. The finished project has been designed to preclude erosion.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

The only impervious surface for the rail line will be the rail, ties, and signal bungalows. The ties are spaced at 16 to 23 inches apart with pervious crushed rock ballast between rails. The ballast is designed so any precipitation striking the rail or ties infiltrates into the ballast and the subballast.

A signal bungalow will be added to each grade crossing for a total of 10 bungalows, with an additional bungalow needed for each of the two railroad control points. Each bungalow is an 8 x 8 foot structure. There will be minimal stormwater runoff from these structures.

There will be minimal additional impervious surfaces resulting from the grade crossing improvements.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.**

Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be designed and implemented according to the most recent version of the Stormwater Management Manual for Puget Sound. The BMPs used will be those most appropriate for the project site, and could include such items as construction entrances, filter fabric fences, sediment ponds or basins, check dams, filter berms, and permanent seeding.

## Water

- a. Surface:**

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

The rail line crosses five streams: Murray Creek, Chambers Creek, and three unnamed streams.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters?**

Yes. The rail line that crosses over the streams on trestles will be rehabilitated with new ties. There will be no in-water work.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

None.

- 4) **Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No surface water withdrawals or diversions will be required.

- 5) **Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

No.

- 6) **Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

No waste will be discharged to surface waters. Best Management Practices will be employed, which will prevent construction erosion and sedimentation.

**b. Ground:**

- 1) **Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities, if known.**

No ground water will be withdrawn, nor will water be discharged to the groundwater.

- 2) **Describe waste material that will be charged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage, industrial, containing the following chemicals; agricultural; etc.) Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

There will be no waste discharged to ground water.

**c. Water Runoff (including storm water):**

- 1) **Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (including quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

The only source of runoff will be precipitation in the form of rain and/or snowmelt. During construction, to prevent sediments from traveling beyond the construction zone, a series of Best Management Practices have been designated for the site. These best management practices include such items as construction entrances, filter fabric fences, sediment ponds or basins, check dams, filter berms, and permanent seeding. No runoff will be allowed to flow off the construction site until the quality of the discharge is at or below acceptable water quality limits.

Since the grade crossing improvements will only add minimal impervious surfaces, the current collection and disposal methods will not need additional capacity or improvements.

**2) Could waste materials endanger ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.**

No. Best Management Practices for erosion control will be applied for handling any possible waste materials.

**d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, or runoff water impacts, if any:**

Best Management Practices will be used during construction, and seeding, fertilizing and mulching of disturbed soil after construction will be performed to reduce and eliminate surface water runoff impacts.