

The heavy industrial zone north of the commercial strip transitions to light manufacturing between UPRR and Mission Avenue. There is a community college and vacant land between the industrial area and the Spokane River. North of the river to Francis Avenue, there is a predominance of single-family neighborhoods with some interspersed industrial and commercial land (see Figure 3-3).

North of Francis Avenue, the project is within the county where development is more sparse. The project area's eastern edge is characterized by a rural environment. Large tracts of vacant industrial land are to the west, buffering the Kaiser Mead plant (see Figure 3-4).

There are urban residential regions between US 2 and US 395 characterized by subdivision development. The north end of the project corridor is wooded, with scattered single-family residences and businesses.

There is both prime and unique farmland and farmland of statewide and local importance within the project area. All these areas are designated for urban, suburban, and semi-rural use in the current county comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances.

Social and Economic Environment

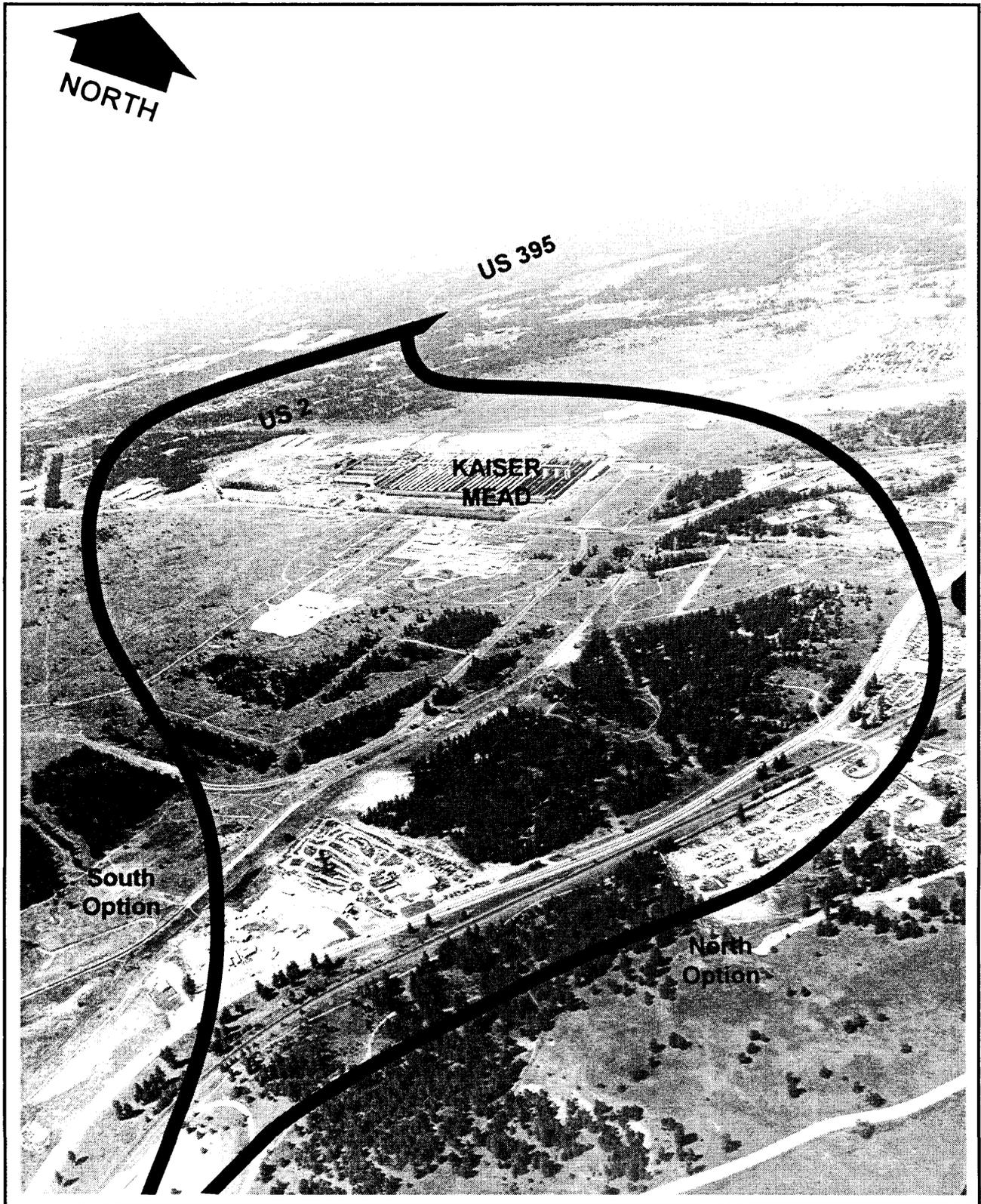
Social Elements

The Spokane area is rich in recreational facilities and parks. Within the project area, there are numerous playgrounds, and one publicly owned and two privately owned golf courses. The city of Spokane's Parks and Open Spaces Plan recognizes two recreation trails within the area bounded by the build alternatives. There are also several city parks and recreational properties adjacent to or within the project area.

With an approximate 1993 population of 384,000, Spokane County is eastern Washington's most populous county. The 1990 census indicated an increase of 20,250 residents over the 1980 population total. The city of Spokane had a 1990 population of 177,196, an increase of about 5,896 over the 1980 total. Although Spokane's economy was relatively stagnant and population growth slow during the 1980s, the growth rate has increased considerably in the past several years. This is evident in the fact that the county has seen a population increase of about 22,236 between 1990 and 1993.

There are numerous religious, social, and governmental institutions within the project area. At least 22 churches are either near or within the study area. Several social services are located west of Market. However, very few social services are within the project area boundaries.

The project area lies within two school districts: Spokane School District No. 81 and Mead School District No. 354. Combined enrollment for both districts is over 38,000. Spokane Community College, located at Mission Avenue and Greene Street, is inside the study area.



There is a transition from open, mostly undeveloped land surrounding the Kaiser-Mead Aluminum Plant to forested land in the northern portion of the Project. (Looking Northwest)

Northern Portion of the Project

Figure 3-4

The city of Spokane Fire Department and three Spokane County Fire Districts are responsible for emergency services inside the project area.

Economic Elements

Spokane has historically served as the regional market area for the “Inland Empire,” which consists of northern Idaho, northeastern Washington, western Montana, and portions of southern Canada. The 1991 civilian labor force in Spokane County was 171,000, including 162,000 employed in various industries. Consistent with a regional market concept, the wholesale/retail sector employs 41,000 and reflects the most growth in employment numbers.

Primary economic activities in the project area are repair and construction services, wholesale trade, transportation, utilities, and manufacturing. Federal and private utilities and federal, state, and county institutions are also within the project area.

The Spokane region housing market has experienced strong growth in recent years. The project corridor crosses three formal Community Development Neighborhoods in its southern half — the East Central, Chief Garry Park, and Hillyard Neighborhoods. The northern area has several residential neighborhoods. All of these communities are primarily single-family residential housing.

Biological and Physical Environment

Air Quality

The North Spokane Freeway project is located within a nonattainment area for both carbon monoxide and particulate matter smaller than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}). The project must conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for both of these pollutants and to the provisions of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 51.

Noise

Major sources of noise in the project area are primarily vehicles, trains, and aircraft. Industrial land uses also contribute noise to the project area. Vehicle traffic is the predominant source of noise and includes traffic on I-90, US 395, US 2, Sprague Avenue, Trent Avenue (SR 290), Mission Avenue, Euclid Avenue, Wellesley Avenue, Francis Avenue, Freya Way, Market/Greene Street, and Farwell Road.

There are rail-related activities along the Burlington Northern Railroad (BNRR) tracks that parallel Market and Greene Streets from Buckeye Avenue to Stoneman Road. Several BNRR spur lines are located between Wellesley and Francis Avenues and adjacent to Market Street. Another BNRR yard and a UPRR yard are located at the south end of the project within the industrial area between I-90 and the Spokane River.

Aircraft related noises are associated with air traffic patterns at the three Spokane area airports.

Urban and rural residential neighborhoods, including sensitive locations such as schools and churches, are present in several areas of the project corridor and are affected by noise from the above sources.

Water and Soil

The two main hydrologic features inside the project area are the sole source aquifer and the Spokane River. Other hydrological systems in the study area include the Little Spokane River, several wetlands areas of various sizes, and intermittent runoff channels. The Spokane Aquifer, which is formed by a deep, wide zone of highly porous, extremely permeable gravel and sand, underlies the entire project area.

All soils in the project area are well drained and have good engineering qualities, with a favorable shear strength and load carrying capacity. The area appears to be geologically stable. There are no known ancient landslide areas or other geological hazards such as geologic faults or volcanoes in the project area.

Sensitive Locations and Issues

Residential Neighborhoods

Though homes families in the project corridor would gradually be displaced, this remains a sensitive issue affecting several areas. Recent escalation of housing costs for both new and older homes has resulted in a loss of low cost housing in the greater Spokane area.

- The East Central Neighborhood, with the lowest median incomes, a high percentage of residents living below the poverty level, and the highest percentage of minorities in the study area, would be inside the project area for both build alternatives.
- The Hillyard residential neighborhood has housing values lower than the city norm. The Market/Greene Alternative runs between the Market commercial strip and low density residential and light and heavy industrial regions. The Havana Alternative runs along the eastern edge of Hillyard's light density residential and light industrial areas.
- The northernmost developments have high median income levels and low minority percentages. Owner occupied housing is higher than throughout the county as a whole.

4(f)

~~Several properties, including Your Place Park, Minnehaha Park, and Esmerelda Golf Course, are either partially or completely within the project area.~~

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act states that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site, unless a determination is made that: (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property. Table 3-1 lists all the recreational properties within or adjacent to the proposed right of way for the build alternatives.

Market/Greene Alternative (Preferred Alternative)		
Parks Your Place Park Liberty Park J. J. Hill Park/Wildhorse Playground	Recreation Area Libby Center Centennial Trail Tuffy's Trail	Historic Site Libby Center
Havana Alternative		
Parks Esmeralda Golf Course Your Place Park Liberty Park	Recreation Area Libby Center Centennial Trail	Historic Site Libby Center Minnehaha Park Stone Building in Minnehaha Park
South Option		
Parks	Recreation Area	Historic Site BPA #3 and #4 Power Lines
North Option (Preferred Alternative)		
No 4(f) Properties Within or Adjacent to the Proposed Right of Way		

4(f) Properties Within or Adjacent to the Proposed Right of Way
Table 3-1

Historic and Archaeological Elements

Several properties within the project area are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The study area traverses lands traditionally occupied by the Upper Spokane Indian peoples and the Coeur d'Alene Lake-Spokane River Group of the Coeur d'Alene Indians. Four potential archaeological sites are recorded as having existed in the project area. The location of these potential sites is not precisely known, and a field survey provided no indication that they exist in the proposed right of way.

Hazardous Waste

In the older residential neighborhoods, such as along I-90, there is no known history of hazardous waste problems. Areas where contamination has been or is most likely to be identified are: the industrial area between I-90 and the Spokane River from east to west across the project area; former rail yards such as the Hillyard Railroad shop; Koch Materials; the North Market Superfund Site; and the area north of Hastings Road where the Kaiser cyanide plume is located.