Washington State Department of Transportation

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE AND ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

March 13, 2013

Description of current proposal: The proposed project consists of railroad track and support facility improvements to facilitate rerouting Amtrak's intercity passenger rail to the Point Defiance Bypass route and relocating the existing Tacoma Amtrak Station. Specific actions include:

- Constructing new track adjacent to the existing main line from South 66th Street in Tacoma, to between Bridgeport Way Southwest and Clover Creek Drive Southwest in Lakewood;
- Reconstructing and rehabilitating the existing main line from just southwest of Bridgeport Way Southwest in Lakewood, to a location southeast of the Interstate 5/Mounts Road Southwest interchange at Nisqually Junction;
- Improving several grade crossings within the proposed project area, and;
- Relocating the existing Tacoma Amtrak Station from its current Puyallup Avenue location, to the Tacoma Dome Station at Freighthouse Square in Tacoma.

Proponent: Washington State Department of Transportation

Location of current proposal: The proposed project is located within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Pierce County along an existing approximately 20-mile rail corridor between Tacoma and Nisqually that generally parallels and is west of the Interstate 5 (I-5) transportation corridor. The northern limit of the proposed project is TR Junction near the I-5 overcrossing of the Puyallup River and East Bay Street in Tacoma. The southern limit of the proposed project is at Nisqually Junction where Nisqually Road crosses the Nisqually River.

Title of documents being adopted and relied on: Point Defiance Bypass Project National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA); NEPA Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); SEPA Environmental Checklist.

Date adopted documents were prepared:

- NEPA Environmental Assessment: February 22, 2013
- NEPA Finding of No Significant Impact: March 1, 2013
- SEPA Environmental Checklist: March 13, 2013

Description of documents (or portion) being adopted: The Point Defiance Bypass Project NEPA Environmental Assessment and NEPA Finding of No Significant Impact are being adopted in their entirety. Staff also prepared a document using the SEPA checklist to show where each topic is addressed in the NEPA documents. Where the SEPA checklist contains questions not specifically addressed in the NEPA EA, additional information is provided. The SEPA checklist will circulate with this notice.

The documents are available electronically: At the project website www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/rail/pnwrc_ptdefiance/

The Compact Disk (CD) containing the NEPA documents and their appendices is available at no cost by contacting the State Rail and Marine Office **at (360) 705-7900.**

Hard copies can be viewed at WSDOT's Headquarters Building, 310 Maple Park Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501, Monday through Friday between 8 am and 4:30 pm.

Public and Agency Review:
The scope of the environmental review was determined by FRA and WSDOT after considering input from the public and agencies. Chapter 5 of the EA summarizes the public outreach as well as local government and tribal consultation efforts conducted for the Project between spring 2010 and fall 2012. Coordination efforts included input from technical and executive advisory team meetings and direct agency interaction.

The EA was issued by FRA and WSDOT for public review on October 9, 2012 for a period of 30 calendar days (comment period closed on November 9, 2012). WSDOT mailed notices of public meetings to 27,000 residents within a quarter mile of the proposed project. WSDOT translated notices in four languages to reach non-English speakers. During the comment period, the public was invited to provide input through various methods, such as a written comment form, court reporter, e-mail, and mail. WSDOT and FRA explained that both agencies would review and respond to all comments received during the 30-day EA comment period. The joint agency response to the 62 comments received is contained in the environmental decision document issued by FRA (FONSI Appendix B).

WSDOT is relying on the NEPA documentation and concurs with the findings contained in the Federal Rail Administration's decision document. The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

As described in the EA and FRA's decision document, an EIS is not required because the construction and operation of the project will not significantly harm the environment. The adopted documents show that the project would improve travel time of the Amtrak Cascades service, decrease train delays, and allow more frequent and reliable intercity passenger rail along the corridor. The project would also improve the safety of at-grade crossings and nearby intersections, adding way-side horns, median barriers, sidewalks, pre-signals, and more advanced signal controllers. Upgrades to intersections and signaling would maintain or improve overall traffic flow at existing substandard intersections. Relocating the Tacoma Avenue Amtrak Station to Freighthouse Square would improve multimodal connections. WSDOT and FRA considered the project's effects on low-income and minority populations and determined that there is no disproportionately high or adverse effect, and that the project meets the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

WSDOT has identified and adopted these documents as being appropriate for this proposal after independent review. These documents meet WSDOT's environmental review needs for the current proposal and will accompany the proposal to the decision maker.

If the documents being adopted have been challenged (WAC 197-11-630), please describe: The documents have not been challenged.

This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on the proposal for 14 days from the date on which this DNS is being issued. Comments can be sent to rail@wsdot.wa.gov or mailed to WSDOT Rail Office, P.O. Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407

Comments must be submitted by March 26, 2013.

Name of agency adopting documents: Washington State Department of Transportation

Responsible official: Megan White, PE

Position/title: Director, WSDOT Environmental Services

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Date: March 13, 2013

Signature: Megan White

Contact person, if other than responsible official: Carol Lee Roalkvam (360) 705-7126