



SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



Pontoon Construction Project

December 2009

Making environmentally sound decisions

WSDOT is responsible for more than 20,000 roadway lane-miles, nearly 3,000 bridges, and more than 500 other structures in our state. Along with construction and maintenance, we strive to deliver effective transportation solutions while minimizing effects on natural surroundings and the communities in which we live, work and build.

We are now in the planning stages of the Pontoon Construction Project. The project will advance pontoon construction to restore the SR 520 floating bridge in the event of a catastrophic failure, and will store these pontoons until needed.

To maintain our commitment to the environment, we are supported by and abide by national and state environmental regulations before, during and after construction. As we move forward to build a new pontoon construction site, we must carry on our responsibility to closely investigate possible environmental effects of pontoon construction and storage.

For the Pontoon Construction Project, our team will prepare a formal environmental document called an environmental impact statement, or EIS, to analyze each of three potential site alternatives.



What is the environmental review process?

There are four critical steps in the environmental review process:

1. Public and agency scoping

During the public and agency scoping phase, we ask for comments from the public, Tribal nations, 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 EIS. The purpose and need statement and range of alternatives define the boundaries for the project and what will be studied in the EIS.

2. Draft environmental impact statement

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. Final environmental impact statement

In the final EIS, we respond to the agency and public comments we received on the draft EIS. The final project recommendation – known as the “preferred alternative” – is also identified.

4. Record of decision

After the final EIS is published, the Federal Highway Administration will prepare a Record of Decision, a public document that describes the project's course of action and specific mitigation measures. Once the Record of Decision is issued, we will have completed the environmental review process and can obtain construction permits.

For more information on environmental regulations, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/compliance/



Public comment period update

During the 2009 scoping periods, we received more than 200 public and agency comments. We heard a wide variety of questions and comments, including:

- Support for particular site alternatives.
- Expected economic benefits and job opportunities from the project.
- Potential traffic and noise effects.
- Environmental effects on shorelines and wetlands.

A summary of all comments will be included in the draft environmental impact statement. Additional opportunities for public comment will be available when the draft environmental impact statement is published in 2010.

If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail us at pontoons@wsdot.wa.gov.



What environmental topics will we evaluate?

- Air quality
- Community effects
- 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
- Transportation
- Tribal fisheries and cultural resources
- Visual quality
- Water resources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife

For more information:

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