

US2 West Plains Corridor Study – Environmental

US 2 between Fairchild Air Force Base East to Sunset Highway is a 4 lane Highway with a center turn-lane and wide shoulders throughout the study area. The majority of the area affected by the corridor study is within the City of Spokane and the City of Airway Heights, and all within Spokane County. Land use along the corridor includes industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural and Federal property.

Environmental elements that may need to be considered with the development of additional transportation options within the corridor include:

Air quality – the area from Sunset highway to Hayford road along US 2 are within maintenance areas for Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Particulate Matter 10 micrometers or smaller (PM10). Any modification of the corridor will likely require an air quality analysis to ensure we meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Water Quality – The area is wholly within an existing Total Maximum Daily Load area. Pollutants of concern would potentially affect the Spokane River. These pollutants include Dissolved Oxygen, Total Phosphorous, Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD), and Ammonia-nitrogen. Development would need to ensure discharges able to reach the Spokane River would not affect water quality of the river.

Wetlands – Wetlands identified using the National Wetland Inventory Maps are mostly concentrated easterly of Spotted road, both north and south of US 2. These are small emergent wetlands dotted between the Spokane Airport and the Spokane River. If impacted by development the need for mitigation per the jurisdictional Critical Area Ordinance and potentially the Army Corps of Engineers would be required.

Wildlife – Spokane maintains a healthy population of deer and other wildlife especially near surface waters. Wetlands and the Spokane River provide suitable habitat drawing wildlife into urban environments. Wildlife strikes along this corridor and carcasses removed from the corridor (typically deer) are more concentrated along the eastern portion of the corridor study. This area is nearer the wetlands, and less dense residential development. This is a safety concern, a wildlife crossing or control structure should be considered for this heavily travelled area.

Stormwater – This area is not conducive to stormwater infiltration due to basalt formation close to the surface (thus the abundance of wetlands). Treatment to date has typically been through evaporative ponds or swales. Shallow flooding is common in this area after winters with heavy snow followed by wet springs. A “paleo channel” (historic drainage that has filled over time with gravels) has been identified through watershed analysis in the vicinity of the Spokane Polo Field that may be useful for treated stormwater disposal. This would need to be a joint effort between the affected cities and WSDOT to develop a suitable plan for stormwater disposal.

The Spokane County Rathdrum Prairie Sole Source Aquifer is at the eastern edge of the corridor limits. Any development considered in this area, or draining to this area would need to comply with federal standards for protecting water quality of the aquifer.

Cultural Resources – the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Spokane Tribe of Indians both have historic connections with this area. Consultation with these Tribes will be required for any development within the study area. Cultural Resource Surveys will be needed prior to development.

Hazardous Materials – there are no identified “Confirmed or Suspected Contaminated sites within the Corridor. The Spokane Airport and Fairchild Air Force Base do have a number of identified sites; however, they are beyond the extents of the corridor analysis.

Socio/Economic - Environmental Justice analysis may be needed to address certain areas along the corridor. Basic information indicates the area between Hayford and Rambo Roads, both north and south of US 2 has higher populations of minorities and higher poverty rates. Data shows the area south of US 2 has a 14% minority rate, and has 58% in poverty. The area to the north of US 2 (and generally east of Craig Rd) has a 33% minority population and 29% poverty level, while the population to the north of US 2 and west of Craig Rd has a 19% minority population and 20% poverty level.

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment shows this area to be at low risk for impacts from climate change.