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**Social Effects  
Discipline Report**

**Project Name**

*Prepared for:*

**Washington State Department of Transportation**

Street Address

City, WA Zip

*Prepared by: (use if prepared by consultant)*

**Firm Name**

Street Address

City, WA Zip

**Month Year**

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*These are suggested categories and headers. They are consistent with NEPA and Plain Talk guidelines. These can be altered to fit the project, other formats and the level of effects.*

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### List of Exhibits

List any exhibits used in the discipline report after the table of contents. These exhibits can be included at the end of the discipline report or inserted appropriately in the text. The following is an example list of exhibits. These would vary depending on the project and report and would not necessarily be in this order.

- Exhibit 1. Project Area Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 2. Community Agencies and Organizations interviewed
- Exhibit 3. Study area showing Demographics<sup>1</sup> by Census Block Group
- Exhibit 4. Alternative 1
- Exhibit 5. Alternative 2
- Exhibit 6. No-Build Alternative

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<sup>1</sup> Demographics should show at a minimum, minorities, low-income, limited English proficient, disabled and elderly. Depending on situation, other data such as car ownership could be included to indicate transit dependency.

*If there are potential effects on social elements, based on the results of working through the Social Decision Matrix, a discipline report is likely the appropriate method of documentation. If the project is minor and it does not appear that there would be any effects on a project area's social elements, describing the steps taken to arrive at this conclusion in a letter to the project file may serve as adequate documentation. Use the following discipline report template for more detailed documentation. This document should be prepared using the guidance in the Environmental Procedures Manual and our [website](#). It is difficult to provide a template to fit all situations. Consider the project, level of effects and right size your document accordingly.*

*When transferring information to the DCE, EA or EIS, make sure you have a summary of community cohesion, how it was affected, a summary of public involvement showing it was inclusive, diverse in its methods and ongoing and any appropriate demographic data.*

## **Summary and Project Description**

Briefly describe the project, including the project study area, key points from this report, and proposed solution, for inclusion in the larger environmental document (e.g., EA, EIS, DCE). The summary should include the following information:

- study approach
- baseline conditions
- project effects (including build and no-build alternatives)
- measures to avoid or minimize effects
- project benefits
- unavoidable adverse effects

## **Regulations, Studies, and Coordination**

### **What regulations, studies, or coordination did we use in the social effects analysis?**

This section should briefly mention the following:

- NEPA and SEPA as they relate to the human environment if appropriate
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act as amended (if there are relocations)

- Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Act
- Presidential Executive Order 13166 – Limited English Proficiency if census block group populations meet the DOJ threshold<sup>2</sup>
- List other discipline reports reviewed such as noise, transportation, environmental justice, land use, economics, and air quality.
- WSDOT’s Environmental Procedures Manual Chapter 458 and Web site
- Other studies or coordination with local jurisdictions and social service providers

### **How will the public be involved?**

Describe any public meetings and outreach efforts, as well as outreach materials. Does the demographics analysis indicate the presence of populations with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) that meet the DOJ threshold? If so, consult the WSDOT [website](#) for assistance and mention any targeted outreach and materials printed in other languages in your document.

- Describe how the general public was involved in the decision-making process.

### **Existing Conditions**

Briefly discuss community cohesion<sup>3</sup>; population characteristics and growth, including any EJ populations; government, religious, and social facilities and services; pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities; parks and recreation activities and facilities. Briefly describe these elements as related to the project. Discussion of demographics should also include elderly and disabled. Include a map showing the demographics and the study area, which is usually between one half to one mile from the center line of the project depending on effects. Explain rationale for the study area. Discuss the study area and briefly describe any affected neighborhoods. Data should be presented at the block group level when available. Use at least two data sources.<sup>4</sup>

### **Potential Effects**

This section will vary in length depending on whether there are minimal effects or ones of significance. If there is any local controversy, consider adding more detail to address those areas. Make sure you document enough, both so the reader can clearly understand what the effects are

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<sup>2</sup> Five percent or 1,000 or more persons in a project area (by census block group) who speak a language other than English.

<sup>3</sup> See definition of community cohesion in the Environmental Procedures Manual Glossary, [Appendix B](#)

<sup>4</sup> Commonly used data sources are US Census and school data.

and to support any conclusions. Please right size your document. For information about how to determine project effects refer to our guidance in the Social FAQs on our website.

If more than one alternative is under consideration, describe the effects of each alternative as well as the no-build.

Describe, when appropriate, the following effects:

- **Construction effects** – Briefly discuss potential construction effects on neighborhood cohesion, safety, any bicycle and pedestrian issues, and noise and dust effects. Any public involvement feedback received pertaining to concerns about construction can also be mentioned here. Although any relocation or property acquisitions would take place prior to and during construction, those should be discussed in the next section.
- **Operational effects** – Briefly describe any permanent changes to neighborhoods and community cohesion<sup>5</sup> and resources. Discuss access changes to community facilities, services and any recreation in the areas. Changes in noise, air quality and visual effects should be discussed. Discuss any relocations or property acquisition along with any potential for dividing the community. If this report is combined with an analysis of economic effects, it should also discuss any effects on residences and businesses including access and visibility issues. If combined with Environmental Justice, it should discuss effects on Environmental Justice populations and effects on minority owned businesses, ones employing large numbers of minorities or low-income people, or filling a specific cultural niche.
- **Indirect effects** – Discuss any effects caused by the project that would or could happen later in time or further from the project area.
- **Cumulative effects** – Consider cumulative effects on social resources.<sup>6</sup>

## Measures to Avoid or Minimize Project Effects

### How will we avoid or minimize adverse effects from the project?

Briefly discuss strategies for avoiding and minimizing construction effects such as: construction closures timed to minimize inconvenience; information about construction and travel options posted using a method most appropriate for the project area; and methods that will be used to control dust, glare, and noise.

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<sup>5</sup> These could be positive or negative E.g. divisions in the community caused by the project, changes in livability, elimination of gathering places, addition of sidewalks etc.

<sup>6</sup> If cumulative effects are discussed in a cumulative effect discipline report, include a short summary here.

## **How will we avoid or minimize adverse effects from the project?**

Briefly describe how we avoided or minimized any permanent effects. If there are relocations or property acquisitions, discuss mitigation through the Uniform Relocation Act. Briefly describe how any permanent effects were minimized as well as any project benefits received by the affected neighborhoods. These benefits may be safety improvements, improved air quality due to less congestion, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, improved access, etc. All of these could have a positive effect on community cohesion.

## **Conclusion**

Summarize the social effects of the project along with effects addressed by any mitigation.

## **References**

Format references using the *Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*.

## **Documents and Publications**

Examples could include *Community Impact Assessment*, publication no. FHWA-PD-96-036; WSDOT Environmental Procedures Manual, Chapter 458 (use latest version), population estimates and trends, and relevant city, county and regional data.

## **Personal Communications**

Examples could include telephone, email, or interview communications with local officials, community leaders, and service providers. Any surveys done and results can be included here.

## **Internet Websites**

Examples could include U.S. Census Data, school data, and city and county information.

## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

Acronyms and abbreviations are defined in the text.

## **Glossary of Terms**

A glossary of terms is included in the EPM, which is available online:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/fulltext/M31-11/appendixb.pdf>



## Appendix A: Methods<sup>7</sup>

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Briefly describe the rationale for completing a discipline report to address project effects on social elements.

Describe the steps conducted for the social effects analysis. Examples of the types of data that can be used to determine the effects on the area's social resources are as follows:

- Resources reviewed, such as U.S. Census Bureau, school demographic data from National Center for Education Statistics or a local source, and local comprehensive plan(s).
- Feedback from public involvement that can verify demographic data, community characteristics, and community issues.
- Any interviews conducted and surveys distributed. (Include the survey and analysis of results in an appendix.)

Briefly discuss how you collected and analyzed data to evaluate potential effects on Social elements. The most important part of the methods section is to make sure that you explain the process you will follow to reach your conclusions.

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<sup>7</sup> This template shows methods in a separate appendix. If you are doing an EIS, SAFETEA-LU mandates that methods are shared. For an EA or DCE, this section should be included in the Regulations and Coordination section of the discipline report.