

Prepared for:



**I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvements Project**

*Environmental Assessment Scoping Public Comment
Summary*

Fall 2024

Prepared by:



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Introduction

This document summarizes public comments received by the Washington State Department of Transportation as part of the scoping comment period for the I-5 Marvin Rd. to Mounts Rd. Corridor Improvements Project. WSDOT is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate the project's potential impacts on the natural and built environments. WSDOT will study two scenarios in the EA: the proposed project (Build Alternative) and doing nothing (No Build Alternative).

The scoping comment period ran between Aug. 12 and Sept. 12, 2024. Scoping is when federal agencies, state agencies and the public work together to determine what areas of the environment to evaluate and what issues to address in the EA.

Overview

The I-5 Marvin Rd. to Mounts Rd. Corridor Improvements Project team offered an in-person and online open house engagement opportunity to share information and collect input on the scope of the EA. Through both opportunities, participants could review information on the project and submit questions and formal comments on the scope of the project's EA.

Information from public comments will help evaluate potential benefits, impacts and mitigation strategies for the following proposed improvements:

- Widening I-5 by adding one high-occupancy vehicle lane in each direction from approximately Marvin Road in Thurston County to Mounts Road in Pierce County.
- Replacing existing bridges and constructing new bridges across the Nisqually Delta to increase the resiliency of I-5 to flooding and sea level rise and to support habitat enhancements.
- Constructing a new grade-separated crossing of the BNSF Railroad east of the Nisqually River.
- Realigning McAllister Creek where it crosses I-5 to improve tidal exchange, water quality and fish habitat.
- Building a shared-use path adjacent to I-5, providing a nonmotorized connection between Lacey and DuPont, and improving access to the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.
- Removing two existing fish passage barriers under I-5 in the Red Salmon Creek drainage.
- Installing new storm water treatment areas to treat runoff from I-5 within the project.
- Improving the surrounding habitat and enabling the creation of new habitat in areas where the existing I-5 embankment would be removed.

Approach

Scoping period promotion

The project team promoted the scoping period through a variety of channels to reach community members, project partners, property owners and interested parties. Notification methods included:

- A postcard was sent to 60,990 residents in the project area and translated into Korean, Spanish and Tagalog.
- A WSDOT press release.

- Social media posts on WSDOT social media accounts.
- Event page for the in-person open house on Facebook.
- Email invitations sent to the project listserv.
- Targeted email invitations to property owners in the project area, advisory group members and tribal partners.
- Project website updates.

See [Appendix A](#) for examples of promotional materials.

In-person open house

The drop-in open house was held at the Lacey Community Center on Aug. 20, 2024, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. The project team used display boards, fact sheets and a roll plot map of the project area to share information at the in-person open house. Displays set up around the room, staffed by the project's subject matter experts, covered the following topics:

- Welcome and sign-in – attendees had an opportunity to register for the project listserv, take fact sheets, and get more information about project materials in language other than English.
- Project introduction – attendees were provided with an overview of the project purpose and timeline.
- PEL and NEPA – attendees learned more details about the results of the project's PEL study and what the NEPA process includes.
- Natural resources and creek realignment – attendees received more information about realigning McAllister Creek.
- Bridge options and BNSF crossing – attendees heard more about the project build alternatives and design options for how the project will cross the BNSF rail line.
- Shared-use path – attendees learned more about the design and value of adding a shared-use path along the corridor.
- Detailed project map – attendees could review a detailed project roll plot and ask questions to the project team.
- Community engagement and next steps – attendees had the opportunity to provide input on the EA scope and learn more about how to stay involved with the project.

The in-person open house provided language services for people who use Korean, Spanish and Tagalog. WSDOT offered translated fact sheets and had interpreters available to guide participants through the open house and help answer questions. In addition, WSDOT provided a court reporter to transcribe attendees' verbal comments.

The in-person open house attracted 127 attendees, garnered 72 new project listserv sign-ups, and collected 25 written or verbal formal comments.

Online open house

An online open house was live on engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5nisqually from Aug. 12, 2024, to Sept. 12, 2024. The online open house received 7,809 views and 155 survey responses. The online open house shared the same information presented during the in-person open house.

Some open house materials and content are included in [Appendix B](#).

Accessibility

The project team prioritized making project information accessible through several formats, including online and printed materials. The in-person open house provided language services for people who use Korean, Spanish and Tagalog. WSDOT offered translated fact sheets, comment forms and had interpreters available to guide participants through the open house and help answer questions.

In addition, WSDOT provided a court reporter to transcribe attendees' verbal comments. In-person open house attendees were invited to share comments verbally, through written comment forms and by identifying areas of interest using voting stickers. QR codes and links to the online open house allowed in-person attendees to type comments into the online comment forms if they preferred.

The online open house was also available in Korean, Spanish and Tagalog. The online open house presented the same information shared at the in-person open house, including opportunities to provide formal scoping comments.

Summary of questions and comments

The EA scoping period provided the opportunity for community members and project partners to ask questions and share comments directly with WSDOT staff and subject matter experts. The project team collected 180 comments during the 30-day public comment period.

Questions and comments are organized by key themes below. A catalog of all scoping comments can be found [here](#).

Environmental

- Effects of climate change and sea level rise in flood modeling.
- Desire to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from idling traffic.
- Environmental concerns around potential highway expansion.
- Desire for wildlife protection in and near the refuge.
- Preference to prioritize natural habitat, reducing flood risk, and mitigate barriers to fish.

Noise

- Information on how noise levels from I-5 will affect people who use the shared use path and wildlife refuge.
- Interest in noise abatement tactics.

Design

- Design aesthetics, particularly in visual impacts of the proposed bridge options and Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway crossing.
- Construction coordination and other logistics related to proposed BNSF crossing.
- Questions around the need for a shared-use path.

Traffic

- Desire for solutions that reduce travel times, especially for commuters and weekend travelers.
- Competing preferences around additional lanes or prioritizing multi-modal connectivity.

- Consideration of incentives for carpooling and skepticism that high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes will effectively alleviate traffic.

Schedule

- Timing and duration of project phases.

Other topics

- Coordination with future transit expansion, especially future rail development.
- Consideration of fiscal management and keeping project costs low.
- Interest in construction effects on local water systems.
- Concerns about hazardous material, largely from freight, spilling in the corridor during inclement weather events.
- Encouragement to coordinate with tribal partners on cultural interests in the area.
- Plan to ensure resiliency of the corridor.

Next steps

WSDOT plans to complete the draft EA in summer 2025. The final environmental assessment is expected to be done in 2026.

Appendix

Appendix A: Notifications

Postcard mailer:

You're invited!

There are planned improvements to I-5 from Marvin Road (Exit 111) to Mounts Road (Exit 116). WSDOT will host an in-person and online open house so people can learn about proposed I-5 improvements to address flood risks and improve mobility through the corridor and provide input on the environmental review process.

In-person open house

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024
Lacey Community Center
6729 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA

Online open house

Open now through Sept. 12

engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually

Meet with members of the project team and provide input. No formal presentation is scheduled at in-person open house.

프로젝트 팀원을 만나고 의견을 제공하세요. 대면으로 진행되는 오픈 하우스에는 공식 프레젠테이션이 예정되어 있지 않습니다.

Conozca a los miembros del equipo del proyecto y comparta su opinión. Durante el evento abierto al público no habrá ninguna presentación formal.

Makipagkita sa mga miyembro ng pangkat ng proyekto at magbigay ng mungkahi. Walang naka-iskedyul na pormal na presentasyon sa personal na open house.

I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Corridor Improvements Project

Project website linking to online open house:

Washington State Department of Transportation
Get help in your language:

Travel
Construction & planning
Business with WSDOT
Engineering & standards
About

Home > Construction & planning > Search projects > I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Planning and Environmental Linkage/NEPA

Project

I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Planning and Environmental Linkage/NEPA

We want to hear from you. Please visit our [online open house](#).

Project overview

This project began with a federal Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study focused on Interstate 5 from Marvin Road to Mounts Road. The PEL considered additional technical analyses and stakeholder input to arrive at a final purpose and need and recommended alternatives to study in the environmental review phase. WSDOT initiated the National Environmental Policy Act environmental review, studying I-5 from Marvin Road (Exit 111) to Mounts Road (Exit 116) in summer 2024.

Funding is provided to accelerate work along I-5 through the Nisqually River Delta for preliminary engineering, design and right of way acquisition to address flood risk, improve mobility through the corridor between Mounts and Marvin Roads, and enhance the ecosystem at the I-5 Nisqually Delta crossing.

Facebook event page for the in-person open house:

The image shows a Facebook event page. At the top left, there is a calendar icon with the number '20' on a red background. To its right is a landscape photograph of a road crossing a river. Below the calendar, the text reads 'Tuesday, August 20, 2024 at 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM PDT'. The event title is 'Open House: I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Corridor Improvements Project' in a large, bold font. Below the title is the location 'Lacey Community Center'. There are two tabs: 'About' (selected) and 'Discussion'. To the right of the tabs are 'Invite' and 'Share' buttons. The 'Details' section on the left lists: '81 people responded', 'Event by WSDOT', 'Lacey Community Center', 'Duration: 2 hr', and 'Public - Anyone on or off Facebook'. Below this is a short description: 'We're talking I-5 in Nisqually. The deep dive covers 4.7 miles where I-5 crosses the Nisqually River Delta. We're proposing to improve mobility and resiliency. We previously came u... See more'. A location tag 'Lacey, Washington' is at the bottom left of the details. On the right, there is a map showing the event location with a red pin. The map labels include 'Lake Lela Habitat Reserve', 'Woodland Creek Community Park', 'KIMWOOD RD SE', 'PACIFIC AVE SE', '8TH AVE SE', and 'CARPENTER RD SE'. Below the map is the address: 'Lacey Community Center, 6729 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA'.

20

Tuesday, August 20, 2024 at 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM PDT

Open House: I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Corridor Improvements Project

Lacey Community Center

About Discussion

Invite Share

Details

- 81 people responded
- Event by WSDOT
- Lacey Community Center
- Duration: 2 hr
- Public - Anyone on or off Facebook

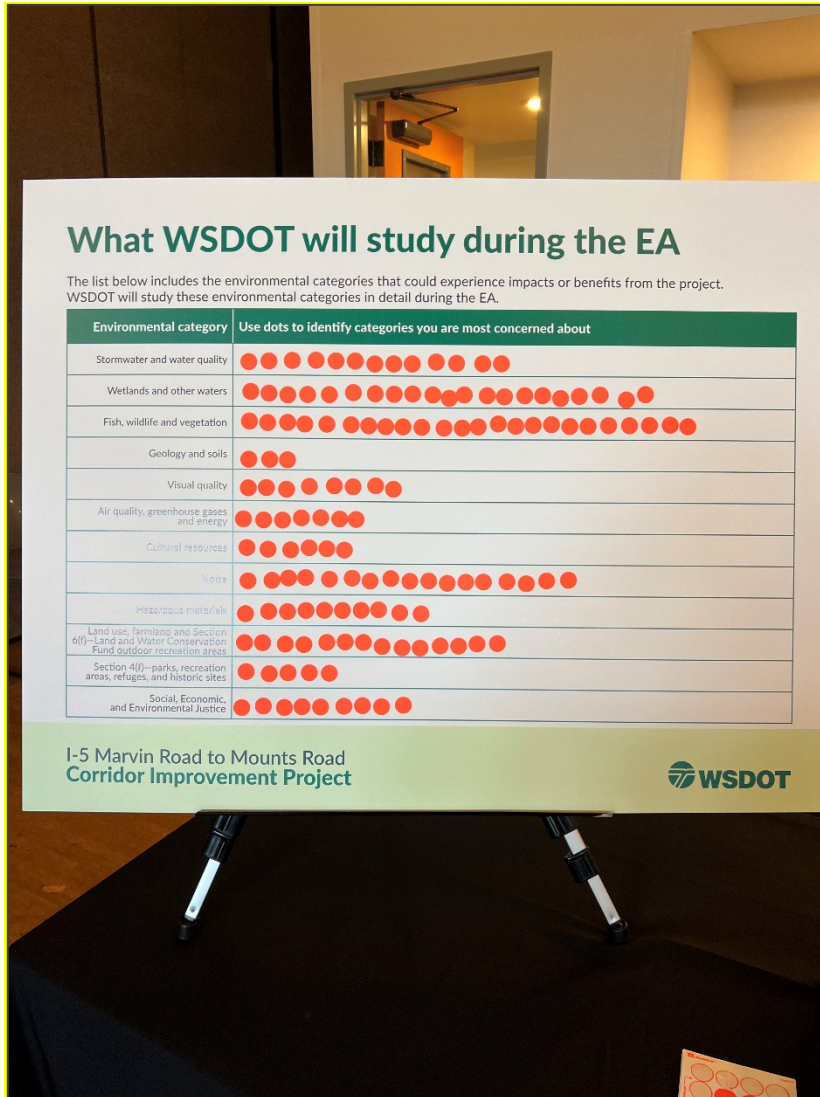
We're talking I-5 in Nisqually. The deep dive covers 4.7 miles where I-5 crosses the Nisqually River Delta. We're proposing to improve mobility and resiliency. We previously came u... See more

Lacey, Washington

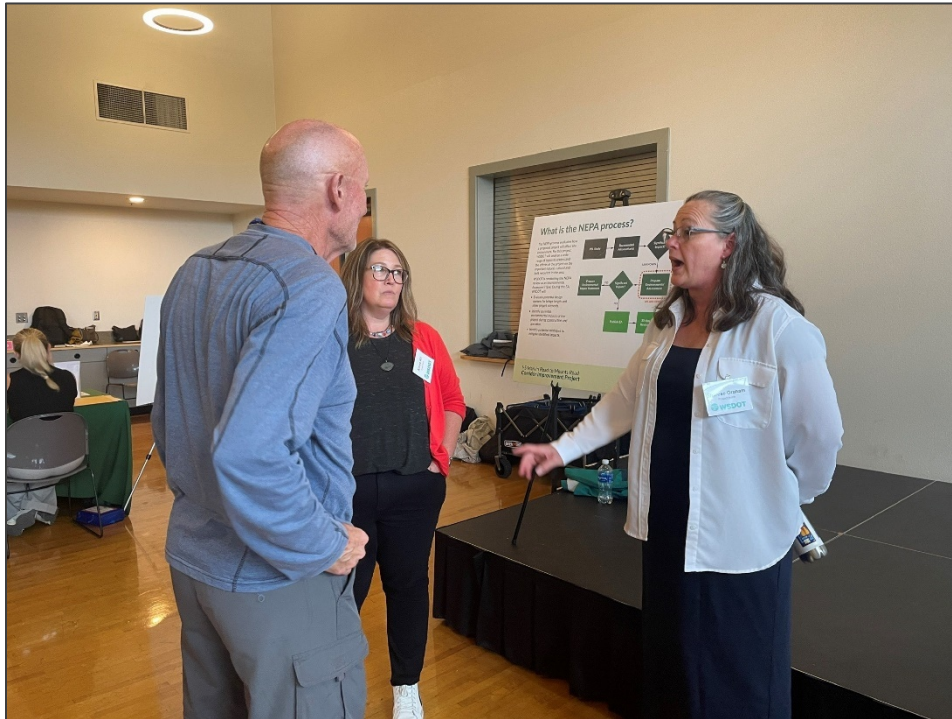
Lacey Community Center
6729 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA

Appendix B: Open house photos and materials

Photos from the in-person open house:



Attendees could vote on the EA categories they were most concerned or interested in. Fish, wildlife and vegetation received the most sticker votes, followed by wetlands and other waters.



Project team members talking to a community member about the NEPA process.



Community members gathered around display boards and the project roll plot at the open house.

I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Corridor Improvements Project

English | [한국어 \(https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-korean/\)](https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-korean/) | [Español \(https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-spanish/\)](https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-spanish/) | [Tagalog \(https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-tagalog/\)](https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-tagalog/)

Welcome

This online open house allows people to learn more about and comment on the environmental assessment (EA) for the I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd project. The Washington State Department of Transportation is conducting a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of 4.7 miles where I-5 crosses the Nisqually River Delta. The project's goals are to ease traffic congestion, reduce delays and support environmental restoration. The project also aims to make I-5 more resilient to weather and other changing conditions.



The project focuses on the section of I-5 between the Marvin Road interchange (Exit 111) and the Mounts Road interchange (Exit 116).

English home page of the online open house.

Comparta su opinión

Sus comentarios son importantes para nosotros. Agradeceremos sus preguntas, ideas y comentarios a lo largo de este proyecto.

Comparta su opinión con nosotros en los siguientes cuadros de comentarios. Queremos que nos diga qué temas son los más importantes para usted y si hay alguno más que debemos tener en cuenta. El WSDOT estudiará cuidadosamente todos los comentarios para incluirlos en la EA de la NEPA.

Consulte la página anterior para obtener más detalles sobre los elementos del proyecto que tenemos previsto evaluar como parte de la EA.

Manténgase al tanto

Esperamos que siga en contacto con nosotros a medida que avanzamos hacia la siguiente fase del proyecto.

- Suscríbese a nuestra [lista de correo \(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_710\)](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_710) para recibir información actualizada por correo electrónico o mensaje de texto.
- Visite nuestra [página web del proyecto \(https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/i-5-marvin-rd-mounts-rd-planning-and-environmental-linkage-nepa\)](https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/i-5-marvin-rd-mounts-rd-planning-and-environmental-linkage-nepa) para obtener información actualizada durante el proceso de planificación.

Comparta sus comentarios aquí

Spanish survey page of the online open house.

Display boards:

Project overview

WSDOT is proposing to improve mobility and resiliency of I-5 through the Nisqually River Delta, opening the doors for environmental restoration. The project focuses on the section of I-5 between the Marvin Road interchange (Exit 111) and the Mounts Road interchange (Exit 116).



The purpose of the project is to:

- Enhance mobility and connectivity on I-5 for passenger vehicles, freight, transit, and for people who walk or roll.
- Increase capacity for vehicles, freight and active transportation.
- Improve local and I-5 system resiliency.
- Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at I-5 across the Nisqually River Delta.
- Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers.

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Access to translated content



이 온라인 오픈 하우스 자료를 한국어로 보시겠습니까? 이 QR 코드를 사용하거나 웹사이트 링크를 방문하여 번역된 콘텐츠를 확인하세요. 대면 오픈 하우스에는 한국어 통역 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다.
engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-korean

¿Quiere ver los materiales del evento abierto al público en español?
Utilice este código QR o visite el enlace del sitio web para ver el contenido traducido. En este evento habrá intérpretes de español.

engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-spanish



Gusto mo bang maranasan ang mga materyales ng open house sa Tagalog?
Gamitin ang QR code na ito o bisitahin ang link ng website para sa isinalin na nilalaman. Maghanap ng Tagalog na tagapagsalin na magagamit sa kaganapang ito.
engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually-tagalog

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project

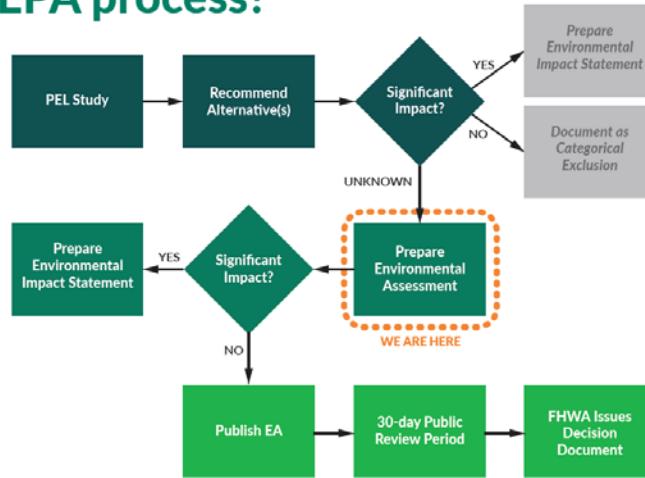


What is the NEPA process?

The NEPA process evaluates how a proposed project will affect the environment. For this project, WSDOT will analyze a wide range of topics to understand the effects of the project on the important natural, cultural and built resources in the area.

WSDOT is conducting the NEPA review as an Environmental Assessment (EA). During the EA, WSDOT will:

- Evaluate potential design options for bridge length and other project elements.
- Identify potential environmental impacts of the project during construction and operation.
- Identify potential strategies to mitigate identified impacts.



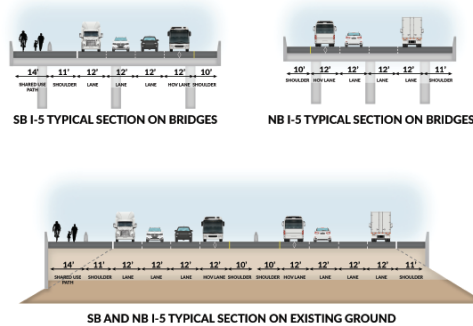
I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvement Project



Results of the PEL Study

WSDOT identified **Alternative 2, Widen I-5 for HOV Lanes**, as the recommended alternative based on the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. This is the alternative advancing into the NEPA EA phase. This alternative adds one HOV lane in each direction from Marvin Road to Mounts Road.

- Alternative 2 would improve travel times and reduce congestion for general-purpose vehicles, trucks, HOV vehicles, and transit to a greater extent than the other alternatives.
- Alternative 2 would provide greater access to economic opportunities than the other alternatives.
- Alternative 2 would include a shared-use path along the north side of I-5 that extends from Exit 111 to Exit 118.



I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvement Project



Shared-use path

- Path located north of I-5 to enhance views of the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge.
- The path will be at least 14 feet wide. Design will include rest and view areas.
- The path will provide access to local streets at or near the three interchanges (Exits 118, 116, 114, and 111).

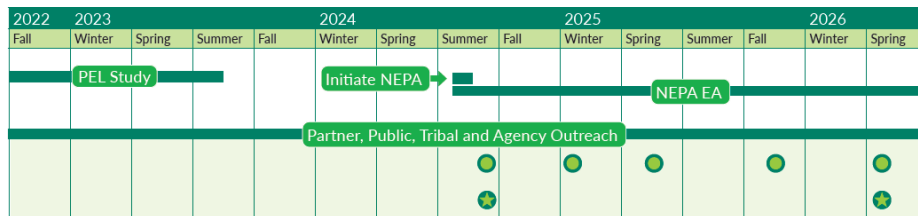


I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Project timeline

WSDOT initiated the NEPA EA phase in July 2024 and expects to complete this phase in spring 2026. WSDOT will continue to engage advisory groups and the public throughout the project.



● Advisory Group Meetings ★ In-Person and Online Open Houses

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



What WSDOT will study during the EA

The list below includes the environmental categories that could experience impacts or benefits from the project. WSDOT will study these environmental categories in detail during the EA.

Environmental category	Use dots to identify categories you are most concerned about
Stormwater and water quality	
Wetlands and other waters	
Fish, wildlife and vegetation	
Geology and soils	
Visual quality	
Air quality, greenhouse gases and energy	
Cultural resources	
Noise	
Hazardous materials	
Land use, farmland and Section 6(f)—Land and Water Conservation Fund outdoor recreation areas	
Section 4(f)—parks, recreation areas, refuges, and historic sites	
Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



No Build Alternative

NEPA also requires the evaluation of a No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative:

- Maintains the highway in its existing configuration.
- Describes what the effects would be if the project is not built, including studying the risk of not updating aging structures.
- Serves as the baseline to compare to the Build Alternative.



I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Realigning McAllister Creek

The project proposes realigning McAllister Creek where it crosses below I-5 to improve water quality and habitat.

- The realignment would allow the creek to move more naturally and support the growth of native wetlands and streamside vegetation.
- WSDOT is working with the Nisqually Indian Tribe to develop these proposed enhancements.



I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Build Alternatives



6,000-foot bridge length option

- Replaces the Nisqually River bridges.
- Removes some of the soil and dirt that supports I-5 through the delta.
- Adds approximately 6,000 feet of new bridge structure on the eastern side of the delta.
- Realigns McAllister Creek to provide a more natural stream channel.

12,000-foot bridge length option

- Replaces the Nisqually River bridges.
- Removes all the soil and dirt supporting I-5 through the delta.
- Adds approximately 12,000 feet of new bridge structure to span the entire width of the delta.
- Realigns McAllister Creek to provide a more natural stream channel.
- Includes a new elevated I-5 interchange at Exit 114.

~~3,000-foot bridge length option~~—concept eliminated

- Does not fully span the Nisqually River's historical channels.
- Lowest ability to restore the natural water flow in the delta compared to the 6,000- and 12,000-foot options.
- Potentially vulnerable to future channel erosion.

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Building a new BNSF crossing

WSDOT studied two options for the I-5 crossing of the BNSF rail line. The existing BNSF bridges over I-5 are not long enough to accommodate the proposed I-5 HOV lanes and the shared-use path.

Option 1: I-5 over BNSF—proposed concept

- Construct an elevated I-5 bridge in each direction over the BNSF rail line.
- The bridge structure would be about 1,700 feet long.
- The structure would slope down to the west to connect with the new 6,000-foot or 12,000-foot bridge.



Option 2: I-5 Under BNSF

This option would reconstruct the existing railroad bridges as a single bridge spanning northbound and southbound I-5. Potential impacts for this option include:

- Permanent impacts to wetlands and floodplain areas to make room for new stormwater sites.
- Requires building temporary railroad trestles and retaining walls, and temporarily relocates railroad tracks to maintain operations during construction.
- Temporary structures for the railroad detour would require clearing trees and impacting wetlands near the existing track.

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Share your comments and stay informed

We are currently in the scoping stage of the process. This stage is when we determine what WSDOT will study in the environmental assessment (EA).

We want your input on what topics are most important to you and if there are any more topics we should consider. WSDOT will carefully consider all comments for inclusion in the NEPA EA.

How to provide comments

- Visit the comment table at this event to share written or verbal comments.
- Visit the online open house to share comments online.



[engage.wsdot.wa.gov/
i-5-nisqually](https://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/i-5-nisqually)

Stay informed

We appreciate your time and hope you'll keep in touch as we move into the next phase of the project.

- Sign up for our project listserv to receive updates via email or text.



[public.govdelivery.com/
accounts/WADOT/subscriber/
new?topic_id=WADOT_710](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOT/subscriber/new?topic_id=WADOT_710)

- Visit our project website for updated information during the planning process.



[wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/
search-projects/i-5-marvin-rd-mounts-rd-
planning-and-environmental-linkage-nepa](https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/i-5-marvin-rd-mounts-rd-planning-and-environmental-linkage-nepa)

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road
Corridor Improvement Project



Project fact sheet:



Summer 2024

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvements Environmental Assessment

Project overview

The project focuses on I-5 between the Marvin Road interchange (Exit 111) and the Mounts Road interchange (Exit 116). WSDOT is proposing to improve mobility and resiliency of I-5 through the Nisqually River Delta. This will open the doors for environmental restoration.



Background

WSDOT completed a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study in 2023. The study identified a long-term solution for I-5 between Marvin Road and Mounts Road to study in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental assessment.

Purpose

- Enhance mobility and connectivity on I-5 for passenger vehicles, freight, transit, and people who walk or roll.
- Increase capacity for vehicles, freight, and active transportation.
- Improve local and I-5 system resiliency.
- Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at I-5 across the Nisqually River Delta.
- Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers.

Proposed improvements

WSDOT is conducting a National Environmental Policy Act review. WSDOT will assess potential benefits, impacts and mitigation strategies for the following:

- Widen I-5 by adding one high-occupancy vehicle lane in each direction from approximately Marvin Road in Thurston County to Mounts Road in Pierce County.
- Replace existing bridges and construct new bridges across the Nisqually Delta to increase the resiliency of I-5 to flooding and sea level rise and to support habitat enhancements.
- Construct a new grade-separated crossing of the BNSF Railroad east of the Nisqually River.
- Realign McAllister Creek where it crosses I-5 to improve tidal exchange, water quality and fish habitat.
- Build a shared-use path adjacent to I-5.

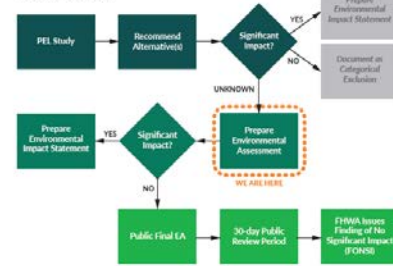
What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process evaluates how a proposed project will affect the environment.

WSDOT is conducting the NEPA review as an environmental assessment (EA). The EA will study environmental effects related to transportation, noise, natural resources, parks and recreation, and other environmental considerations.

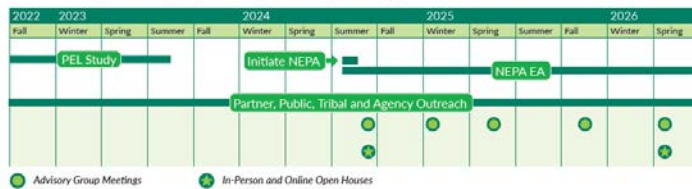
WSDOT will study two scenarios in the EA: the proposed project (Build Alternative) and doing nothing (No Build Alternative).

NEPA process



Timeline

WSDOT initiated the NEPA EA phase in July 2024. WSDOT expects to complete this phase in spring 2026. WSDOT will continue to engage advisory groups and the public throughout the project.



Stay informed

WSDOT is committed to keeping you informed throughout the project.

Visit the project website

Sign up for email updates and review project information



wsdot.wa.gov/i5NisquallyDelta

Questions or comments?

Whitney White
Design Lead
Whitney.White@wsdot.wa.gov

Title VI Notice to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OECR's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.



Appendix C: Scoping comments

General comments
<p>The part where the rail line fits into the alternatives is rather limited in its scope. It would continue to be a tight turn for AMTRAK as well as for freight trains. Greater consideration for on-time reliability for AMTRAK would help with reduced demands for I-5 vehicles through this bottleneck.</p>
<p>I appreciate the rigor of these environmental assessments, but abhor the mismanagement of the Yelm Bypass, seemingly owing to a never-ending series of "environmental assessments" that have unnecessarily delayed this critical rural connector, which will be inadequate upon eventual completion (not extended over the Nisqually River). Shame on DOT!</p>
<p>A significant part of the comments below have direct impact on the preposed I-5 changes between Exits 114 and 116.</p> <p>Nisqually Sub-Area Issues By Howard Glastetter</p> <p>I submitted a variation of this document to the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan in early May 2024. It is a better fit in the county's Nisqually Sub-Area Plan. So, I'm resubmitting this slightly adjusted version to the Sub-Area Plan. There are a variety of areas that need attention in the Sub-Area. The major one is avoidable flooding in the Sub-Area. The county simply points out that we receive frequent flooding. This is not the result of an act of God. The first two following topics address an easy solution to the unnecessary flooding experienced by lower valley folks. The last multi-topic section shows a variety of current issues that also need addressing to balance and protect interests in the Sub-Area.</p> <p>Alder Dam & Nisqually Valley Flood Avoidance</p> <p>Thurston County's Nisqually Valley had no Pineapple Express or Atmospheric River floods from Hawaii last fall / winter. Mother Nature sent last season's storms to California. However, we don't need to hope that our misery gets passed to other states to avoid it. This season, we did have one serious storm, but Mother Nature first provided us with a spring / summer season drought. The Alder Lake reservoir was 40 feet below capacity when the storm hit and simply absorbed the potential flood runoff. Thank you, Mother Nature!</p> <p>Most of the flooding in Nisqually Valley from severe storms is the result of how the Tacoma Power Utility (TPU) runs Alder Lake Dam. They have no flood mitigation responsibilities in their Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license. TPU's goal is energy production. They attempt to keep the reservoir as full as possible, even in fall / winter. Often little action is taken even when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) graphics https://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov/river/station/flowplot/flowplot.cgi?ALRW1 predict a storm on the horizon. NOAA produces three graphs that predict Alder Lake flood dangers 10 days in advance, with increasing accuracy until the storm hits. Simple evasive actions by TPU, (e.g., running the La Grande generators below Alder Dam at the full capacity of 2,350 cubic feet a second (cfs) for a few days prior to a predicted storm), would easily lower the reservoir and avoid or strongly mitigate potential Nisqually floods.</p> <p>Paying close attention to these graphic predictions would allow simple protection of the valley below the dam. This is becoming an</p>

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even bigger issue as the proposal to rebuild I-5 across the lower valley nears. This simple evasive action can be done at no financial disadvantage to TPU.

Some Nisqually Flood History

The above information has been sent to news media, TPU management, various local governments, and other groups. It shows how to protect assets below Alder Dam. Below is a short view of two reservoir levels that could have been mitigated but weren't. Also, is a view on one that was mitigated.

A 'net' flow of 10,000 cfs (Inflow 20,000 – 10,000 discharge = 10,000 net flow) will raise the reservoir 8' in 24 hours. This occurred on December 15, 2015, at the end of a drought year. The flood was exacerbated by attempting to top off the reservoir in early winter and by waiting too long to begin evasive action. This evasive action did not occur until the storm hit. The reservoir was 2' from capacity at storm's end. Moderate flooding occurred along the whole river. The river shifted 65' to a new bed, undermining a home (out of the flood plain above Yelm) that was later demolished. Outflow from the Mashel tributary also contributed.

The severe February 8, 1996 lower valley flood of record was the result of a forecasted three day storm. The reservoir was 17' below capacity when the storm hit. The river in the lower valley did not rise within its banks until a day and a half into the storm. TPU simply topped off the reservoir before beginning evasive action. This was devastating to the valley and did \$20,000,000 damage to TPU's La Grande facilities just below Alder Dam. The above and other floods could have been mitigated or even avoided, at no disadvantage to TPU.

The most significant flood to hit the valley in recent years was the upper valley flood-of-record in November 2006. I recall, it was considered a 128-year event. It closed the entrance to Mount Rainer above Alder Lake for a year. The reservoir was 53' below capacity when the storm hit. Eighteen inches of rain fell in 36 hours. The reservoir rose 37' to be 16' below capacity. If we condense the event to 24 hours, the reservoir would rise almost 25' in that time. This would calculate a net flow of 30,000 cfs. If TPU had been following their license to keep the reservoir above 10' below capacity through spring / summer, the river valley would have been devastated in 2006. However, the river stayed between the banks below Alder dam during that event.

Interestingly, the Alder Lake Dam FERC license allows the reservoir to be 37' below capacity from Labor Day to Memorial Day.

So, if an unusual extreme event is in the forecast, strong evasive action can begin 4 or 5 days before the forecasted storm hits.

So, TPU can easily mitigate and even prevent flooding by using NOAA graphics, protecting their facilities and the rest of the valley at no personal disadvantage.

Current Issues

There are a variety of unrelated issues going on that will affect the lower valley delta area. These changes are not being directly shared with valley property owners. Some of the activity is not easily accessible and might cause some of my conclusions here to miss the mark, but Delta change is near.

Proposed Delta Farm-Land Changes

The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan has been reworked. A significant change is proposed for the Nisqually Delta.

Preservation of farmland, which had been a top priority of the 1992 Nisqually Sub-Area Plan (which includes the delta) is now being reconsidered. Page 3-12 of the Comprehensive Plan concludes that designation should change if "site-specific scientific evidence conclusively indicates the land no longer meets the criteria for designation as agricultural land." The document goes on

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to indicate aquaculture (e.g., salmon hatcheries, oyster farming, etc.) may be the preferred future use.

Current Flood Mitigation Views

The Thurston County Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan (FHMP) participants met on October 3, 2023. This normally involves discussing how to react to flood events. We normally don't try to pressure outside entities (e.g., TPU) to adjust their techniques. TPU doesn't like it. Their actions have been viewed like an act of God. The results were different this time around. Paul Bruster, meeting chair, resolved to seek proactive flood mitigation involvement by all other major valley entities (e.g., JBLM, Pierce County, TPU and the Nisqually Tribe. This is a proactive step towards real flood mitigation.

Nisqually Tribe Hopes

I've recently observed a Nisqually Tribe created map (not attached) that shows their fish enhancement expectations for the entire Nisqually Valley. It shows the entire Delta from Puget Sound to south of the rail line as part of the "Salmon Habitat Restoration and Protection Initiative Areas". I look at that as an expectation to depopulate the Delta, either legally or by a future Nisqually flood. A recent November 2023 Nisqually River Council meeting confirmed that this Delta change is a Nisqually Tribe goal.

I-5 Bridge Issues

When WSDOT finishes rebuilding I-5 across the delta, it is their intention to remove the old I-5 and its underfill. This will allow Puget Sound waters to flow more freely into the Delta. The Nisqually tribe strongly encourages this. WSDOT has no plans to purchase delta property for the I-5 project. They planned to have experts study the impact of this, as well as to contact TPU and discuss flood mitigation. I'm not sure this is still in the works. Ashley Carle is the contact for the I-5 project.

The I-5 replacement is expected to include an expensive / redundant eleven-foot-wide pedestrian lane. Does this mean the popular four-mile nature walk and perhaps the Billy Frank Jr Nature Center, itself, will be replaced by the new bridge pedestrian lane? Exit 116 is the current south end of Puget Sound's lite rail development. Wouldn't a lite rail lane from Exit 116 that would eventually reach Olympia make more sense? Wouldn't a pedestrian lane that is attached to a rebuilt I-5 Exit 116 overpass to Old Pacific Highway make a safer, more relaxed, less expensive, superior view pedestrian / bicycle lane? The route would be safer, less expensive and have the most spectacular view of the Nisqually Valley Delta available. It would also leave things open for a lite rail extension from Exit 116 directly to Olympia.

What's Missing?

The above shows lack of consideration towards the current larger landowners on the Nisqually Delta who sold their development rights for modest amounts to Thurston County around 30 years ago. Their motive was to preserve the rural character of the lower valley, which was the result. This is poor payback for their sacrifice.

Conclusion

The Thurston County 1992 Sub-Area Plan is about to be updated after more than 30 years. However, it was very well written and has protected the ecology and interests in the valley. There is room to include much of the Nisqually Tribe's wants and needs while still symbiotically protecting other interests. The Delta occupies much of the Sub-Area. Will the plan still be the thoughtful symbiotic work of art that balances all lower valley interests and allows none to overwhelm the others? I suspect not.

So, will all those with financial interests in Delta homes and property be treated fairly? By far, the majority here don't have a clue about what is imminent. However, Thurston County recently indicated that there will be a comment period and participants will be

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<p>allowed to help guide the Sub-Area Plan update. There was a meeting in January that Sub-Area residents were invited to. About 60 attended and written resident comments were given. Will this result in a better balance of valley sub-area interests, or are things about to become lop sided? May 25, 2024 - by Howard Glastetter</p>
<p>Widen this part of I5. One more lane for vehicles would do wonders for the congestion. I live on JBLM and going south on I5 is a cluster.</p>
<p>Option 2 seems best.</p>
<p>The 12,000-foot-long bridge alternative with the 1,200' long railroad overpass option seems like the best route to go hands down. This best protects the interstate from flooding, sea level rise, and liquefaction of the valley soils during a major earthquake (the current fill embankments will just collapse in such an event). The 12,000-foot bridge option also does the most to restore the environment, wetlands, creeks, sloughs, and estuary that the interstate filled in. Further, this option best protects against any major lahars from a future Mount Rainier eruption that results in a dam break at the Alder Lake Reservoir. Such a major disaster is a grave and very real threat to the existing interstate but appears to be completely missing from your current analysis. A long and high-span bridge like the 12,000-foot option is the only way you could safely mitigate such a disaster.</p> <p>Also, I strongly question the need for an interchange in the valley? Interchange 114 will be expensive to rebuild, especially if it's all elevated. Instead, I'd recommend building a new interchange to the west at the overpass for Meridian Rd NE, this is also a major area of existing development and would directly serve a lot more people (and help reduce congestion at Marvin Rd). You'd need to widen Meridian Rd from the new interchange south to Martin Way, and in the valley, just reconfigure the Nisqually Cutoff Rd and Refuge Rd to connect directly to Martin Way. Relocating this interchange would allow you to further elevate the 12,000' long bridge to help reduce the steep grades for trucks on either end of the valley (these grades also contribute to a lot of accidents) and this would also allow you to straighten the alignment out, so it has a much gentler horizontal curve in the valley center. Keep in mind, a new interchange at Meridian Rd NE is in a cut section with solid ground, it's going to be a heck of a lot cheaper to build than a fully elevated interchange in the middle of a flood and liquification prone river valley. The relocation of interchange 114 to the west could also give you enough room to reconnect the Nisqually River floodplain overflow channel's directly to the McAllister Creek side of the valley and estuary... since a straightened interstate bridge with no on/off ramps gives you a lot of room to create a new flood channel to the west. The McAllister side has been cut off from the Nisqually floodplain for a long time by the interstate and interchange, so this would give you the golden opportunity to fix this.</p>
<p>Making a new off and on-ramp at deuterio would help a lot with congestion. There is also currently no bike path there. People will be riding in traffic to access the new bike path.</p>
<p>WSDOT: I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Corridor Improvements Project</p> <p>I prefer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 12,000-foot Bridge Length Option which would replace the Nisqually River bridges.

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2. This option would realign McAllister Creek and would include a new elevated I-5 interchange at Exit 114.

3. The proposal of building I-5 over the BNSF tracks.

Thank you for letting me give you my comments.

David F Nash

A shared use path along i-5 is a huge, unnecessary waste of money! the focus needs to be on motorized commuters and nothing else! If you want walkers and bicycle riders to use a path funded by motorists you need to charge them a toll to use this area! Not only is it a waste of time, money and resources it is also a danger to anyone that would be on it!

Do not widen the highway. No new capacity.

I believe option C would be the best option. Would the plan also include adding three lanes on the bridge to help traffic flow.

The shared use path should have a vertical view and noise suppression separation structure on the highway side of the path.

Yes that's what needs to be done you need to do

No expansion of lanes on I-5 should be conducted. WSDOT's own analysis shows that such an expansion would massively increase emissions, something that needs to be reduced everywhere on Earth in order to curb climate change. No build.

It's critical that we do not widen the freeway here. Adding more lanes induced further demand, which ultimately leads to increased GHG emissions and pollution. This also promotes sprawling development, which further exacerbates GHG emissions and reduces the pressure to build in a denser, community-oriented fashion.

How can WSDOT say with a straight face that they are operating to reduce carbon emissions when your own models and evaluation found the preferred alternative performing the very worst in terms of *increasing* carbon emissions and VMT? Please do not waste our money counteracting the major wins we have made towards a carbon-free future. Please go back to the drawing board and select a design that does not balloon carbon emissions.

In the original review expanding the road to add an hov lane was given the worst possible environmental score and the worst possible land use scores. This should not be the proposed build alternative. Given the choice between building this environmental disaster and no build, the project should go with no build and return with a more realistic alternative.

It seems to me that you would be more concerned with the actual flooding of i-5 in the Centralia-Chehalis area versus the potential for flooding in the Nisqually area. Yes, that corridor is important but the flooding in Lewis County is a reality. Not to mention the bottleneck in that area due to poor planning of adequate lanes. Normal daily driving is stop and go, but Sunday is horrid. So what is happening? Stop lights at the ramps. What a joke. You don't have a clue as to what we need down here. Thank you.

Please do not widen I-5. The environmental impact of this project would cause the greatest possible environmental impact of all possible approaches. Additionally, it would set back urban development within the area by over 15 years. Why use the worst option as identified in 2020 as the preferred option now?

General comments

Dear WSDOT,

I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County.

We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.

I applaud WSDOT's efforts to improve and protect the I-5 corridor at the Nisqually bridge. Obviously the project will be a traffic nightmare for everyone. My suggestion is to build a temporary bi-pass for traffic during the construction of the permanent bridge solution. This would allow traffic to continue to flow. City of Olympia did this when replacing their 4th Street bridge in downtown. A much smaller but possibly useful example. Thanks for allowing public comment.

In the train derailing at mounts road a few years ago, it is clear that an alternative I-5 bypass would be a better use of the funds, at least at this time. Routes 510 and 507, are not sufficient to handle the amount of traffic diverted from I-5 should the freeway be closed. I'm not sure where the bypass would be located as JBLM takes up a lot of land.

the approaches to the Nisqually River bridges rest on alluvial soils that may liquify in the event of a major earthquake. If the approaches are to be replaced I suggest you install stone piles under the embankments.

Widening I-5 will be an environmental disaster by increasing GHG emissions and increasing total vehicle miles traveled. WSDOT studied this in 2020 and has now eliminated this from the EA. This is in contradiction to the state's climate goals. Personally, I do not understand how an EA doesn't once mention emissions. Alternative 2 is clearly detrimental to the environment and should be rejected. Of the Alternatives proposed, Alt 4 (convert GP to HOV) appears to be the most in line with the goals set forth by the state.

See below.

This project area includes the Sound Transit railway bridges across i5 (the Point Defiance Bypass). Originally the Point Defiance Bypass project proposed re-aligning/replacing the railroad tracks over i5 to improve safety and increase the rail speed limit. Ultimately to reduce costs, this re-aligning/replacing of the railroad bridges wasn't completed, and this in part contributed to the December 18, 2017 Amtrak Cascades derailment.

Currently trains using this stretch of track are speed restricted down to 30mph.

I would like to see this project take into consideration the future routing of the Point Defiance Bypass, including for future plans that may have the route double tracked.

General comments

Looking at the graphics in this online open house, it seems that the option where i5 is routed over the BNSF main line would open the possibility of Point Defiance Bypass route being re-aligned under the interstate as well. (To be clear, having the Point Defiance Bypass cross i5 further South than it's current crossing, and underneath the interstate. But I'll admit I don't know much about the ground elevations in this area, and what kinds of grades are allowed for passenger rail.

Please build it ASAP. It is an essential link between our biggest metropolitan area and the capitol and also Portland, one important destination for both freight and people

What the hell are you waiting for. Get the new bridges done.

I oppose large freight trucks on I-5. They are dangerous. The drivers are reckless and lack sufficient training and qualifications to ensure safety standards. To think my federal tax dollars are going to be use to encourage more trucks on our interstate highways is unacceptable. Send ALL freight traffic back to the rails. Get trucks off our highways. Will my voice change your plans? Not likely. But at least plan these highway "improvements" so that trucks have a bypass lane to separate them from automobile traffic and/or guard lanes to protect automobile drivers from profit driven truck drivers and their companies. And, hey, why not attempt to add more rail lines? Maybe one day we will come to our senses and put trucks back on rails.

I prefer Design C. I realize it is the longest option, but it solves the most problems & protects the fish & wetlands

Hello,

As we all know I-5 is a major artery between Seattle and Portland (in fact all the way from Vancouver BC to Los Angeles/San Diego/Mexico). The I-5 bridges over Nisqually delta are such a choke point that, the lahar from future Mt Rainier eruption would either runover I-5 OR damage it enough to disconnect the I-5 from north and south. It could be a matter of life and death of motorists crossing at that time. Please keep that in mind! The new bridge ** must be strong and high enough** to endure lahar and volcanic flows underneath it. Hence I feel Option-C would be preferable although it might be the most expensive of the three options.

There is no alternative path for I-5 right now. Any impact on the bridge will disconnect the areas north and south of it. Google Maps showing city roads as workarounds which is bad as it is. Even with regular traffic issues the I-5 gets jammed and map users start using city roads. I also suggest making I-5 bridge five (5) lanes wide keeping future I-5 expansion in mind. In fact bring an alternative route from Olympia to Seattle into your consideration, i.e., creating a parallel route to I-5, if possible. Appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments, and Thank you for listening.

I do not think their is a need for pedestrian or bike traffic on this bridge.

Whatever is decided. You should future proof the project. Utility ducts for electricity or fiber optic internet. More importantly light rail. Connecting Lacey, Dupont, Lakewood and Tacoma. You are at the difficult section of connecting South to North. Might as well get it over with.

I agree the wisdom of option 'C'. It may be more costly and time consuming, but it's needed. I also, EMPHATICALLY, believe a second minor driving option MUST be introduced between the Nisqually and JBLM (possibly for military ID card holders only, marked/signed/guarded when open) and only when needed!

General comments

This is an important and necessary step forward to right old wrongs and to restore degraded habitat. Yes it will be expensive, but sometimes you just have to suck it up, and do the right thing!

This is one of the most beautiful areas in the entire I5. Producing huge bridges would be awful. I understand the bridges need to be repaired and re- built at some point, but with the only corridor it is entirely unreasonable to do that without another corridor. Bring the light rail down to Olympia, and build a new bridge before removing the existing bridges - you cannot stop traffic without other solutions, there are simply no other roads.

There should have been replacements for these venerable old bridges a long while back. Glad to see it at least in the planning. I would like to see the best option in the long run, which I think is the longest and most expensive. I'm tired of seeing "band aides" for traffic issues. Specifically for Nisqually, plan a route that leaves the existing structure to move traffic until the new bridges are complete. New structures should keep in mind how much growth is clearly going to happen in this region. The JBLM factor should have much of the funding coming from the military. Another thing to consider is the ineffective carpool lanes. As they are supposed to entice drivers to use them during high traffic (some do). It has essentially failed. Too many time its clear the carpool lane is no faster (sometimes slower) than the normal left lane . One way to make more efficient use of that lane would be to raise the speed limit for those lanes. I'd go so far as to have separate speed limits for all the lanes. I am personally tired of getting in the left lane to pass slower cars and end up behind someone who will not move right, as the law states: Keep right except to pass. That law is seldom enforced. Skipping to SR 3, time and time again someone holds up 6, 7, 19... vehicles, and almost never pulls into the pull offs. (and usually driving under the speed limit, and rarely enforced) That road would be an excellent one to create passing lanes periodically along the route. I have also noted that previous areas where passing was allowed, have been eliminated, AND the speed reduced. Very frustrating when a single vehicle can drive just a little under the speed limit, and no one else will pass it. Traffic should move at a consistent speed commensurate to the engineering of the road, not some politician who wants to be re-elected getting speed limits reduced to claim "better safety". Driving has never been inherently safe. People who drive that route and others don't get to say if the speed limit is correct for a given stretch of road. Roads are designed to move people and freight expeditiously, not lolly gagging along with people behind them. Back to Nisqually area, I'd like to see old Mounts Road re-connected to Nisqually road where it used to, next to the railroad tracks. Well, this is long enough. Glad to find a place to comment on driving issues, and hope it makes the PTB (Powers that be) at least think about those of us who drive regularly. Thanks,

Option C for Nisqually. Go big, you will have to later anyway.

Option C. Do it right this time.

Would be interesting to see a "living barrier" along the shared path to block out noise and some pollution from the roadside and create a natural feeling while using the path for walking or biking.

Hi, I'm an avid birdwatcher at the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge. The Nisqually River delta is the only river delta in the Puget Sound that hasn't been industrialized, and as a result, it is an irreplaceable resource for organisms in the Puget Sound waterway. The creatures that live, reproduce, and regenerate that land would be deeply harmed by the expansion of the highway. The refuge draws many human visitors as well--when visiting, I typically hear three or more languages spoken between visiting parties. It's a place that brings the best of Washington together. Please do not go forward with expanding I-5 at Nisqually.

Will the old bridge still be used while the new one is being built.

General comments
I moved back to this area when I retired from King Co. It is bad for traffic even now and friends hate driving through Tacoma and JBLM. I will die in my house by myself because friends wont come to visit and people won't be able to go to the Seattle area for medical attention that isn't available in Lewis and Thurston Co. What about semis delivering goods? Perhaps they should have put more thought into the "temporary" fix they built originally. I see no easy way to fix it but am open to suggestions.
Regarding a new bridge over the Nisqually River, along with mitigating adverse effects on wildlife and habitat, any new construction needs to include capacity for mass transit like the Link Light Rail in King County.
We need to fix the mess of Marvin road and freeway access by semi trucks. There is constant back up on Marvin road since the semis must use two lanes to get around the roundabouts causing backups on Marvin Road. When they cause accidents, the whole road and freeway access is heavily compromised.
This is long overdue. WILL IT BE DONE IN OUR LIFETIME? Are there plans to build it large enough to account for future growth and commuter rail?
Shared path seems like a waste of resources - who on earth is walking or biking between Lacey and Dupont? It won't get used, and at what cost to taxpayers?
Why an HOV lane? Seems silly to have in Olympia, this isn't Seattle. It won't make anyone carpool, just all the families will use it on the weekends, which is fine, but it just also just sit unused during traffic jams.
These old bridges have needed replacement for several years, it will be an expensive, multi-year nuisance, but is a good investment for the long term. I don't actually care what it costs within reason, just please do a good job, hire the right contractors, etc. Many, many thousands of cars and especially semi-trucks pass over these bridges every day, so to avoid biblical grade backups and unwanted media attention, DOT needs to plan for extensive, high capacity, well lit, diversion lanes that do not include just lane splitting one of the existing bridges as is common in more rural, low volume locations unlike this one. DOT has every opportunity to hit a home run here, don't whiff it!
It is time to correct the mistakes of the past in this important biological area.
How will cold weather and icing affect this span of I5 if elevated? Will there be heated pavement to overcome this? This section of I5 is already a problem in the ice and snow. This design seems to increase that danger by elevating the road for vehicles to fall off of it during icy crashes. Not to mention semis hitting the edge and dangling from this elevated roadway. It makes sense to fix this road for the environmental impact. That should happened. But there will need to be a new bypass route constructed for cold weather days when this road is shut down from icy crashes.
I am in support of replacing the Nisqually bridge with one that restores the salmon habitat and hunting and fishing resources of the tribes. I would like to ask that adding high speed public transit, such as the light rail, Sounder or a faster commuter train also be seriously considered. I believe this would be beneficial to people across economic backgrounds, the environment and our economy.
We should do this right the first time and not build something that will need to be replaced in 20/30 years due to sea level issues. Option 1 with a bridge over the whole area seems like the best answer for everyone and thing involved. Substantially, wildlife health, heritage reclaimed and recreation opportunities can all be achieved with the total bridge options.

General comments
Is there any way that fort Lewis will offer an exchange of range land to divert olympia completely and use yelm highway?
Will more foot traffic increase homeless traffic to Lacey and DuPont?
How is there going to be a guarantee to be complete by 2026, any checks and balances or will it be strung out like Tacoma's corridor.
I plan on using the shared path. This has been needed for so long. We need a bike trail through there. We might like to get on at Carpenter and at Nisqually. Also it could pickup at Steilcoom Dupont Rd. Thank you
Long awaited. Please widen I-5 not only through this section, but al the way to the 101. Those who are hoping for a better future (better traffic management) under stand that a few eggs have to be broken to make the cake.
Perhaps a legitimate bypass route to I-5 should also be considered if you are worried about the economy and national security instead of relying on one route (remember the train incident).
As a Lacey resident, I see the need for improvements to the corridor. I often wondered what the future of the steel bridge over the river would be in terms of wear & tear, rust and corrosion . Then the ability of this structure to endure a strong earthquake which could have catastrophic impact on the north south link for both cars and large freight trucks. We would need to replace the steel structure with a different type of bridge- one that would not impede the free flow of migrating salmon, yet could survive a cat. 9 earthquake. Elevated roadways seem like a logical option by passing over the effected areas, but a collapse of one of the sections again could cut off the flow of traffic and goods necessary for life in the south sound region. The challenge of roadway collapse is a challenge for design and roadway engineers to determine . We see that a large number of Lewis/McCord employees live south of the Nisqually river and to have their access to work on the bases could be detrimental to even our national security. This project is a very big deal in so many ways, and if it were to start today, it would already be late, I prefer the option 2 proposals with the elevated road ways as long as we can be reasonably assured that under catastrophic situations it will survive. I'm sure the engineers putting their collective heads together could figure out what strengths would need to be in place for this option to work!
I recommend that the existing bridges stay in tact even after construction. They could be used as HOV, toll, or semi-truck lanes as well as an alternative if there is a major accident/incident on the new bridge.
We had an incident a few years ago with a train that rerouted traffic all the way to Shelton and Yelm because a nearby stretch of I5 was closed.
As this project is so far out, structure for transit alternates (light rail) should also be considered.
Well done. I think the longer bridge is a better option and over the railroad. Reduce the up and down would allow trucks to flow safely rather than speeding down hill to slow down going uphill. Extra lanes will be and are needed for more traffic in the future.
JBLM should fund some of this project. They're unable to house all of their troops, people live off-base, resulting in massive amount of commuters from Lacey and Olympia.

General comments

Making the entire way 5 lanes on either side is the only way I see this traffic nightmare being resolved. Often times the traffic is triggered and made worse by cars merging onto an already congested highway, providing five lanes might solve this dilemma.

I think along with I5 improvements, maybe providing another route around the freeway might be really helpful. Even an extension of Old Nisqually past Mounts Road into Dupont might make a significant difference.

JBLM only opens their Mounts Rd gate on weekdays in the morning, perhaps having them make this a 24/7 gate thru-and-outbound would be a major and easy relief for both the freeway as it exists now, and for commuters using the freeway to simply get to work.

JBLM needs to share responsibility for this problem, as they're a big part of why it's so bad.

Getting this project done right, and as efficiently as possible benefits commuters, logistic routes, the US military, travelers, politicians, and the entire west coast. It should be well-funded and done with longevity in mind.

Fuck Jay inslee

Main issue with this project is the lack of rail expansion, The long-term environmental impact and transportation needs to be addressed through investments in rail for the region. Spending millions to continue making the same mistakes is incredibly stupid.

A pedestrian/mixed use lane right next to the freeway?

Surely you are joking...the noise and pollution (not to mention traffic risk) would make it nearly unusable.

I drive this route daily (sometimes more than once a day). I support the project and would vote for option C, while the construction would impact heavily, once it's complete it will provide transportation benefits as well as environmental and cultural.

I'm really concerned about what this means for sustainability; widening a freeway induces traffic demand, and therefore necessarily introduces more polluting vehicles to an environmentally sensitive area. While I do understand the retrofitting of the freeway *is* important for the health of the Nisqually Delta, introducing more traffic to it then invalidates much of the work done to improve conditions.

In regards to the BNSF crossing, I feel the overpass option is unnecessarily complicated and expensive. While the embankment I-5 is currently on is bad for the estuarial health, replacing the embankment with a low-elevation viaduct without changing the routing of the freeway would seem to be more cost-effective, and avoids conflict with canopy-nesting birds and the WSDOT/Amtrak/Sound Transit Point Defiance Bypass bridge.

While the pedestrian/cycle trail is an excellent addition, the lack of environmental protection worries me; as someone with a noise

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sensitivity, the lack of sound barriers would make it effectively impossible for someone like me to use the trail. And with our climate, the lack of rain/sun protection would also discourage use in such occurrences.
Do it right and go with the 12,000 ft bridge
Due to excessive traffic on Meridian Road NE, which includes excessive Semi traffic, I am suggesting on/off lanes to I-5 from Meridian north and south. This would give relief to traffic to Marvin Road.
Overall I'm pleased with the proposal and think it will ease congestion on I-5. Potential adverse effects to the environment are chief among my concerns . I have confidence in WSDOT to address these concerns and engineer solutions to prevent lasting damage to the greater Nisqually ecosystem
We like option 1, I-5 over the railroad bridge. What is your estimated time-line, and what will this do to current traffic flow while doing this project? Also, what does the Nisqually tribe think of this?
It is good to be proactive in this situation as it only a matter of time before the berms wash out or the bridges experience extensive flooding. The bridge/berms are a bottleneck to traffic at peak times, and lack bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. And elevating and widening the bridges will open up increased habitat for a very important national estuary.
Option 2 looks OK. I don't think you should have a shared path fir anyone, given that it too dangerous and a distraction to drivers; AND, who is going to be walking riding between Dupont and Marvin rd... there's nothing really there as a destination. Besides, it has always been law that bikes must exit I-5 @ the end of Pac Hwy. and take Old 99 to go further south... it's a bad idea.
How does raising the bridges effect the north bound entry at 114?
Will that entrance to I-5 be reconfigured, too?
The shared use path so close to the freeway, while an interesting idea, seems like it would be very uncomfortable to be on at the 'street level'. 11 feet of buffer between the path & freeway doesn't seem like enough. I personally would not want to walk on a path that's less than a dozen feet from a roadway where people are driving 70+ miles per hour, unless there was a major buffer between. Even with a buffer, I'm worried about the road noise being overwhelming for people on bikes, etc. Not to mention the concern about unhoused people walking onto the freeway - which happens around here more often than it should. What are your plans to make this path more comfortable for users? It may be time to scrap that part of the project altogether.
This is huge and very expensive project but it does not resolve the traffic issues of i5 in Lacey Olympia and Tumwater. Those can only be addressed by bypassing and deve
I hope you go for the bigger option. I would hate to have to suffer through this again.
These are some well-developed solutions focused on a sensitive environmental bed of micro-ecosystems. Well done so far. There are a few features and functions that could further improve one of the solutions.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Widen Old Nisqually Rd slightly into JBLM property at the Mounts road lighted entrance (adjacent to the tracks) that includes a much longer turn lane (capacity 300 vehicles per hour?). Improve the throughput of JBLM Mounts gate proper (JBLM straighten out a road for better on-Base throughput)

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2. A precast 8 for wall to divide traffic from the foot path that includes at least 10dBA of sound attenuation. Some research has shown that small openings on the traffic side can considerably improve sound attenuation without limiting physical protection.
Go big or go home!!!
I'm unclear on why the railway would need adjustment if the current hwy structure were maintained. There is no mention of adjustment with the purposed plan for heightening the hwy. On that note about the heightened hwy, I agree it is much needed and I'm on board. When might the project start, supposing it gets approved?
Hi. I enjoyed talking last night about the restoration of McAllister Creek as part of the i5 Nisqually Delta project.
I appreciate the depth of investigation and interest in limiting environmental impacts. We have an opportunity to create roadway and railroad crossings that minimally impact the environment, thank you!
Maintaining current infrastructure is important but is it wrong to continue adding more highway lanes and increasing VMT and carbon emissions. WSDOT should be investing more in Amtrak cascades and making it easier to travel through the state without a car.
This is a terrible idea, I would rather the bridge collapse with me on it than to deal with the traffic this will cause for the next 10 years. I live in yelm and this will cause even worse traffic than what is already here when something happens on i5. This will be nothing but a bad way to spend money. On top of everything else, why would you design it for bikes and pedestrians? Bikes and pedestrians are not allowed on the freeway
The Nisqually Bridge on I-5 has been a choke point my entire 38 year WA residency so any "cost cutting" needs to happen elsewhere. Get the money, take the time, DO IT RIGHT. While you are doing that, another study needs to examine the growing traffic volume coming from South Thurston County. A business route off I-5 near Maytown cutting across to perhaps 512 has been needed for decades. Yeah, its a big project well beyond what we can do but it must be done. There is no more options to make I-5 big enough to handle the traffic thru the Olympia area especially when most if it is just passing thru.
Increasing the number of lanes with an HOV lane makes sense, as the Nisqually valley is the source of congestion and this will benefit many. I understand this will have some negative environmental impact, and it appears the project team has done a good job balancing the two. However, the addition of the shared use path adds more environmental impact and more cost to benefit very few, and walking along the side of the freeway will not be a pleasant experience. I would strongly recommend removing the shared path if at all possible for both environmental and cost reasons; it will be extremely underutilized.
I-5 Nisqually project: I am a 25-year resident of Nisqually Reach. I very much favor the 12,000-foot option and am willing to pay more in tax to do so. Why, because I am passionate about restoring Medicine/McAllister Creek area as well as minimizing human effect of I-5 on the Nisqually River. Thanks for reading this!
I endorse the longest span to go over the BNSF RR. Let's get this project going ASAP. Thank you!
Plan 1 with raised Hwy above the railroad looks best.
South Puget sound needs light rail access - not more lanes of traffic. This is environmentally devastating and not productive for future growth.
Studies have shown time and time again that highway expansion only relieves travel times in the short term, causing the phenomenon known as 'Induced Demand', as that added capacity is filled with more private vehicles, returning travel times back to

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what they are presently.

While I do support the fact that a less restrictive estuary flow would provide ecological benefits, a massive highway widening project would create negative effects, adding more traffic past the Billy Frank Jr Nisqually NWR. The 2020 study showed that adding an HOV lane in both directions would cause a 2.1% increase in greenhouse gas emissions ("Interstate 5: Tumwater to Mounts Road Mid- and Long-Range Strategies Report" (April 2020)).

I would rather see my tax dollars be used to fix the railway alignment at the site of the 2017 Amtrak train derailment and adding additional rail capacity and passenger rail service to the area than defaulting to "solving" road congestion by expanding the highway.

The steep incline going NB towards Mounts Rd together with the location of the weigh station on top of the hill is causing heavy truck traffic to slow down to 40mph and slower, which constantly causes dangerous situations with passenger vehicles. I would like to see a longer, more level bridge for increased safety. Maybe even relocate the weigh station towards Maytown or Centalia

1-The pedestrian lane is dangerous and expensive.

Traffic adjacent to the pedestrian lane may be easily distracted by the presence of pedestrians close to the outermost lane of traffic.

Construction of a lane dedicated to pedestrians/bikes is an unnecessary expense - such lanes are not standard.

2-Elevating the roadway to clear the BNSF railroad bridge requires an excessive amount of elevating a significant amount of I-5. The simplest option of constructing a new BNSF Bridge slightly offset from the current track/bridge with a span sufficient to accommodate the additional width of the I-5 project (and some work to support the tracks leading to the new bridge) and then removing the current/obstructing railroad bridge would reduce the length of roadway that needs to be elevated while still providing the added width required for all the lanes of traffic.

3-Failure to address how the traffic that cannot be accommodated during construction is a significant planning failure. Simply notifying Thurston County/Lacey of the general construction plan is abrogating DOT's responsibilities.

4-How the increased width of the Interstate between Marvin and the Nisqually River bridges is to be accommodated is not addressed.

I am opposed to the 12000 foot bridge and to the proposed height of the bridge. It removes too much topsoil, affects the quality of life for the animals and humans in the nature preserve park and poses a potential disaster in the event of an earthquake in the region like the one that hit

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Olympia in 1949 or 1950. Look at alternatives to long and high bridges on I-5.
I am opposed to the 12000 foot bridge and to the proposed height of the bridge. It removes too much topsoil, affects the quality of life for the animals and humans in the nature preserve park and poses a potential disaster in the event of an earthquake in the region like the one that hit
Olympia in 1949 or 1950. Look at alternatives to long and high bridges on I-5.
Option 1 looks good to me. My only suggestions would be 1) to include room for the light rail that will (hopefully) someday connect Tacoma and Olympia and 2) make sure construction is robust enough to withstand the 9.0 earthquake science says is inevitably on its way sooner or later. Question: would cable-stay bridges require fewer pilings than the bridges shown in your illustration?
A new set of bridges and much higher road over the delta. It's an accident waiting for a rising tide.
Isn't there a way to add more travel capacity without having to add more lanes, which don't help reduce traffic? Wouldn't investments into more passenger rail capacity be a better investment for our future?
This is a really terrible idea. No.
Please consider high speed transit options to connect Olympia and Seattle. This would decrease traffic on I-5
I'm curious how all this extra infringement on space of land, noise and pollution will be beneficial to the wildlife and bicyclists. It would seem that a connected rail system along the route would be more suitable. It's already elevated above any water table worries. C'mon, use the taxpayers money wisely, please.
I like the 12,000 foot bridge concept best
I think it's cool that the construction will help alleviate our current traffic issues and will help keep the floodplain in mind for the future.
I favor the 12,000 ft bridge option and bridging I-5 over the railroad.
The project seems to be thoroughly and thoughtfully conceived. There is no question that we need an additional lane. The congestion in this area is only getting worse. Some say passenger rail should be expanded to deal with the problem. This might make sense if the congestion was caused by commuters. However the worst of the congestion occurs on the weekends. These people are not commuting to and from work, they are traveling to weekend destinations. The types of trips that take them to locations all over the place and well far from railroad stations. It would be a great blunder and would negatively effect all of Western Washington to not proceed with adding an HOV lane in both directions on this section of freeway. I strongly support and urge this plan proceed as outlined.
I do not support a longer bridge, disruption to Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, more noise and more cars, nor the rerouting of the tributaries that are required to expand I-5 over the Nisqually river. Rather, I support building the Dupont rail curve revision, expanded rail bridge over the river, and more passenger-only track in rail right-of-way to the south, as the best alternative.
furthermore, a walk/bike trail over the river and right next to the freeway sounds terrible. I would not want to walk nor ride my bike next to traffic that has a 60mph speed limit when we know most people drive 70mph whenever they can and that there are even

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crazier drivers on the road.

I want WA to support mass transit which is long overdue. It is time to move to using our financial resources to create train lines that are fuel efficient for transporting people. Creating more car capacity not he roads will only encourage more driving, more cars.

= 1. SCRAP SHARED PATHWAY "ADJACENT TO I-5"

I seriously doubt that that element could pass the Benefit: Cost ratio criterion on its own. Bicycling or walking that close to 60 MPH vehicular traffic for 4.7 mi or more is neither healthful nor aesthetic.

Have you ever pedaled a bicycle from Mercer Island to Seattle along the I-90 floating bridge? I have. Once. That was enough. What an unpleasant experience.

I hope you don't think that there is a viable population of people who will get out of their cars and onto bicycles if a shared pathway is built. This is Thurston County, not Mercer Island/Seattle.

SCRAP THE PATHWAY; it is an unnecessary cost.

= 2. DON'T LABEL THE ADDED LANE CAPACITY as "HOV".

That is elitist, privileged, and ABUSED. Don't tell us how to use the freeway. We'll figure it out. Save the paint. Spare the confusing signage. Protect us drivers from the commotion caused by designating HOV lanes.

Are provisions being made for possible expansion of Seattle's light rail system coming further south from Lakewood and then Tacoma?

I support adding only HOV lanes to increase motorized capacity.

I support adding the bike/ped lane on the SB side as this area is all but inaccessible to bicyclist travel due to lack of space on existing surface roads.

I support fully involving the Nisqually Tribe in this planning process.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

1. Shared pass. Who wants to walk pass or ride bic. From which point to which point? Can not see how to get to the pass entries. Should they be connected to public bus or train? 2. Widening of I5 : should there be connected to local road or emergency road pass in case this section of i5 is closed ? Construction of these work should consider inclusion of future public transportation connections such as high speed or local commuter transportation other than buses? Extend or connect to Sound Transit between

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Olympia and Seattle base work to be included so there will be less disruptions and cost to build / link public transportation along west coast of WA.

NISQUALLY I-5 COMMENT TO WSDOT

Lael and Tom White

Climate Rail Alliance

9/6/24

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to WSDOT's I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvement project.

It is paramount that the Nisqually I-5 project not preclude the Point Defiance Bypass rail alignment change from being built without excessive added cost. The rail project has already been specified by WSDOT in the Long Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades (2006), and should be updated for cost and alignment to match current conditions on the corridor. The rail alignment change is essential to support fast, reliable, and more frequent passenger rail service along the corridor, as well as more efficient freight rail transport through the area.

Current I-5 project elements include adding one high-occupancy vehicle lane to I-5 in each direction from approximately Marvin Road in Thurston County to Mounts Road in Pierce County, and replacing existing bridges and constructing new bridges across the Nisqually Delta to increase resiliency of I-5 to flooding and sea level rise and habitat enhancement. We object to widening the highway.

The efforts to protect the wetland habitat and provide resiliency are necessary and appreciated but could be accomplished without widening the highway.

Washington state could better match statutory goals by designating existing lanes as HOV 2+ or 3+ lanes at least for peak commute periods rather than adding more lanes, which we all understand induces more vehicle miles traveled. The new concrete paving proposed for the project is 150' wide, 5 miles long, from MP 111 to MP 116. That is more than twice the size of Sea-Tac Airport's longest runway. Plus, more tires on the roadway contribute more runoff of 6-PPD quinone salmon-killing tire preservatives, which contradicts the intention to preserve and protect the sensitive delta habitat. The proposed non-motorized pathway is not a pleasant place to walk or cycle directly alongside an 8 lane highway. A more healthy and enjoyable active transportation element should be considered.

We also need to prioritize getting trucks off the highway and onto rail. Trucks contribute enormous wear and tear to roadways and

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are even heavier and more damaging to roadways when electrified. We have a statutory obligation to use the best strategies for moving freight. An effective way to improve freight movement is to invest in passenger rail improvements which have co-benefits for freight.

Specifically, instead of widening the highway, invest in changing the rail alignment between Mounts Road and the south bank of the Nisqually River to accommodate passenger train speeds up to 100 mph, contributing to increased use of our intercity rail service that would be faster, more reliable, and could effectively accommodate more trains. A commuter service linking Tacoma and Lakewood with urbanized Thurston county could also be added to an improved, dedicated passenger rail alignment.

Critical to all rail and roadway improvement benefits is well-planned transit connectivity which would require careful coordination by all the involved jurisdictions.

All of these improvements would serve to reduce greenhouse gas from transportation and vehicle miles traveled, and would broaden the potential for true resiliency and needed redundancy as we anticipate increased changes in climate and weather patterns, and a massive increase in population in our region.

Please see the Climate Rail Alliance legislative request (2024) for the Nisqually project:

Nisqually Delta Project (Excerpt from the Climate Rail Alliance 2024 Legislative Agenda)

Develop the I-5 highway project over the Nisqually Delta from Marvin Road to Mounts Road in conjunction with the Point Defiance Bypass rail alignment change, for the purposes of restoration and resilience, and effective mode shift to rail transportation.

The I-5 Marvin Rd to Mounts Rd Planning and Environmental Linkages project for the Nisqually River crossing must be integrated with the Point Defiance Bypass rail alignment change, to allow 100 mph speeds over the PDB rail bridges that cross I-5 south of Mounts Road. An alignment change at this location represents a smart investment in multimodal solutions through the Nisqually Delta. The Legislature must support only those infrastructure improvements to the I-5 crossing that would contribute to the restoration of the Nisqually Delta ecosystem and prevent highway flooding, contributing to essential resiliency and encouraging mode shift to rail with greater reliability and shorter trip times. Highway widening is in conflict with the state's legal requirement to reduce VMT.

Please also see the PEL comment letter from Sierra Club Washington, June 30, 2023, which we fully support.

In summary, the I-5 Nisqually project must not preclude building the essential Point Defiance Bypass rail alignment change that would support faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger travel as well as more fluid and efficient freight rail operation.

General comments

We will again request that this vital rail project be included for funding in the 2025-2027 Washington Transportation Budget.

Thank you for your attention.

Lael White

Thomas White

Climate Rail Alliance

info@climaterailalliance.org

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Merribeth Greenberg

General comments

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

As one of the substantial portion of people in our state who cannot drive, I need our region to have a variety of transportation options, including better rail and transit. Please design this project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service. Ample, reliable transit options ensure that nondrivers like myself can get around our region and can help ease congestion, reduce emissions, and reduce serious injuries and fatalities effectively and efficiently by offering people who would prefer not to drive robust, reliable options for doing that.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation. Widening only begets more traffic, and there is no more room to keep widening. Transit addresses congestion and mobility much more effectively so I ask that WSDOT spend our public resources to facilitate the safest, most equitable, most efficient options that transit and regional rail offer.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Kimberly Huntress-Inskeep

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and

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the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation. Adding more lanes to highways is in direct contradiction to the need to mode shift both passenger and freight traffic from highways to rail.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

-Demian

- Due to I-5's vital role as an evacuation and emergency supply route, Option 1 should be given the biggest consideration.

- During the Tri-Service Disaster Preparedness Conference in the mid-1990's, it was determined by State emergency planners that I-5 through Fife and Nisqually as well as the approaches to the Tacoma Narrows bridge would succumb to liquefaction leaving the Tacoma Metro area essentially an "island". A robust Nisqually corridor would solve this.

- Any Nisqually viaduct/bridge piers should be reinforced to be able to withstand a lahar from Mt. Rainier or a Cascadia Quake-related tsunami .

- Consider a truck-only lane for northbound commercial vehicles that bypasses merging traffic and prevents the subsequent slowdowns caused by commercial trucks merging to the right lane for the WSDOT Commercial Vehicle Weigh Station and related scanners. OR consider moving the Weigh Station to the large median south of exit 111 preventing the need for trucks merging right in the Nisqually valley.

- Planning should also factor in improving the alignment of the passenger rail corridor from Dupont down to Nisqually in order to better prevent another 2017-style derailment and increase passenger train speeds.

Thank you.

General comments

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thanks,

Jason Li

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

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Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thank you.

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I join with many others in these three critical asks:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway! And certainly not to 8 lanes. Study after study show these widening projects result in more traffic every time, and it will delay us in reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks

General comments

Regarding the I-5 Nisqually Project:

Please design this project to include or at least allow for better rail and transit options.

Specifically, the following three points are very important:

1. Please design the highway to include accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.
2. Please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.
3. Please DO NOT widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Dustin Branham

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

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Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Sara Bliss

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements and not to fall into the trap of induced.

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Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River because i really like the possibility of high speed rail and other non-car methods of transit.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, please don't widen this or any highway to 8 lanes because of induced demand any reduction of congestion will be temporary and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and transportation emissions goals (as good as low and zero emissions cars are the infrastructure needed to support them have a lot of negative externalities)

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future,the best way to reduce Vehicle miles traveled is to make other modes of transit more convenient then cars. Thanks

Ian Morris

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing

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vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thanks,

Nick

Please consider a divergent diamond overpass as the current Meridian bridge (MM113). The vast majority of vehicles exiting at Nisqually (Exit 114) proceed directly up the hill into Lacey. A similar rebuilt exit at Mounts Rd (Exit 116) including a divergent diamond would facilitate better movement along Nisqually Rd SW for the remaining Exit 114 traffic. If both Exit 113 is built and Exit 116 is improved there would be no need to redevelop a challenging and expensive Exit 114 to come down from the higher bridge and the valley could be mostly restored for environmental and ecological values.

Hello,

I submitted a lengthy comment last Friday, but I didn't get any confirmation. Is there a way to email my comment instead?

Thank you,

Meghan Anderson

Dear WSDOT Nisqually team,

Please add to your design process to plan for a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River. Make sure this highway bridge won't block a faster rail alignment. Let's plan for the future we want!

Why do I care? I travel I-5 by car, I visit the Nisqually Reach, and I also travel by train. I want faster and more reliable Amtrak, Cascades and Sounder service. I understand the new highway bridge being planned may render a new, faster-speed rail bridge impossible if we don't plan for the the locations and grades and curves now.

I wish we would build the new rail connection now at the same time as we build the highway project, but even if we don't build them both together, please make sure we eventually CAN build an efficient rail connection. Don't short-change or undercut future generations' transportation options.

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I understand that the current rail alignment through this area is a bottleneck on the Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations. That's what I want for our future and for the planet my son will inherit.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Brandon Bowersox-Johnson, Seattle, WA

WSDOT Public Comment

Sept 6, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the WSDOT I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvement project. I have studied some of the PEL Final Report.

It is clear to me the PEL Study has a narrow scope. The need provides evidence that supports the defined transportation problem. I feel it completely overlooks a comprehensive evaluation which would include public transit and how this project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

First, I'd like to talk about public transit as it relates to this segment. The discussion on page 14 talks about Amtrak Cascades indicating that "passenger rail service schedules do not align with peak communities travel times. . . and only provide a travel benefit compared to single occupancy vehicle trips when there is traffic congestion on I-5."

I would suggest that the fact that the Amtrak schedule doesn't align with peak commuter events is because Amtrak Cascades has been historically starved of funding and hasn't managed to complete planning goals. Cascades planning was supposed to provide 2.5 hour service from Seattle to Portland since 2006 planning as well as have hourly service. This would mean for 16 hours each day service would arrive in Lacey at Centennial Station. With improved on-time service, another mandate by the legislature, Amtrak would be competitive with driving times.

That has been the intent since at least the 2006 Amtrak Cascades Long Range Plan which reflects the legislative directive of RCW 47.79.010 of 1993:

"Legislative declaration.

The legislature recognizes that major intercity transportation corridors in this state are becoming increasingly congested. In these

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corridors, population is expected to grow by nearly forty percent over the next twenty years, while employment will grow by nearly fifty percent. The estimated seventy-five percent increase in intercity travel demand must be accommodated to ensure state economic vitality and protect the state's quality of life.

The legislature finds that high-speed ground transportation offers a safer, more efficient, and environmentally responsible alternative to increasing highway capacity. High-speed ground transportation can complement and enhance existing air transportation systems. High-speed ground transportation can be compatible with growth management plans in counties and cities served by such a system. Further, high-speed ground transportation offers a reliable, all-weather service capable of significant energy savings over other intercity modes.”

One of the improvements necessary for Cascades to have competitive times with driving times is the realignment of the 100-year old rail curve segment at this exact location. This needs to be fixed to support higher speeds. You can read a comprehensive analysis of the history of Cascades planning and all these details in the “Amtrak Cascades Improvement Program 2024” by VTD Consulting.

On page 37 of the VTD Consulting report it details: “South of Dupont, the (2006 Amtrak Cascades) Long Range Plan provides for a 100 mph alignment change between Mounts Road and the south bank of the Nisqually River, connecting the 110 mph passenger track south of there.” This is the line as constructed in 1914: .2 miles of 30 mph curve; 1.4 miles of 42 mph; a 35 mph switch connecting tracks; and 1.1 miles of 63 mph over the Nisqually River bridge. The report says “This is the most restrictive segment of the Seattle-Portland line. Improving this section to 100 mph on a new alignment is essential to achieving a 2 hour 30 minutes Seattle - Portland travel time.”

The new WSDOT 2023 Service Development Plan for Cascades omits these kinds of infrastructure improvements promised since the 2006 Amtrak Cascades Long Range Plan.

Continuing with the PEL report comments on rail, page 17 says “. . . light rail ridership potential is low and commuter rail may be cost prohibitive.” It goes on to then say that “commuter rail may not be competitive for federal funding support and may be cost prohibitive from a purely local funding perspective”. I don't believe these assessments are correct. Federal funding for rail is available in a variety of forms. Light rail ridership may be low because there isn't enough effort to connect commuters to buses. I don't know, but I would like to know, and I would think major expansions of any infrastructure should be part of comprehensive planning for all transit modes, rather than stand-alone segment analysis like the PEL report.

Second, The climate crisis is not represented, except that GHG emissions are mentioned once that I found. WSDOT is a state agency that must support the goals of the 2021 Washington State Energy Strategy which clearly defines how Washington must reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

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By 2030 reduce emissions 45%

By 2045 reduce emissions 75%

By 2050 reduce emissions 95%

I would suggest that adding more lanes will actually add more pollution and greenhouse gasses, even though the conclusion in the report is the weak assessment that the plan will reduce congestion and therefore short-term air pollution. This hardly seems a careful evaluation, when it is obvious that as the population grows, single vehicle occupancy and freight traffic will increase as well unless robust planning for public transit and mode shift from semi freight to rail freight happens instead. Freeway studies have proven that adding lanes induces more traffic. This is a cycle that must be broken.

We should investigate instead optimizing our public transit systems, both rail and bus because of these reasons:

Mobility - we expect 3 - 4 million more people in our region - highway expansion won't solve the problem of congestion or provide climate resilience

Mobility justice - 25% - 30% of Washingtonians don't drive and need an effective alternative

Reduced emissions - trains generate at least 2/3 fewer emissions than highway traffic per passenger or ton-mile

Saving energy - trains are at least 3x more efficient using any kind of energy (electric or diesel)

Better land use - rail uses only 1/5 the land of highways

Protecting habitat - less pollution such as tire toxicity that kills salmon

Rail is much safer than driving

Rail can be a much better alternative to driving and short flights than it is now

WSDOT needs to instead prioritize Amtrak Cascades, Sounder and robust bus transit.

Resilience planning is necessary. Raising the bridge deck seems reasonable planning. That planning should include improvements

General comments

to rail to support both passenger and freight.

I am disappointed that this plan seems intent on adding lanes to freeways, without comprehensive analysis for public transit and emission reductions.

Sincerely,

Meghan Anderson

cwclimateneeds@gmail.com

1 2006 Amtrak Cascades Long Range Plan

https://www.aawa.us/site/assets/files/7322/2006_washington_state_long-range_plan_for_amtrak_cascades.pdf

2 Wa State Legislature RCW 47.79.010

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=47.79.010>

3 VTD Consulting "Amtrak Cascades Improvement Program 2024"

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HwB3QqqX8G8jSiMCgwLNFPgc7g2y_eg/view

4 Washington State Energy Strategy 2021

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/2021-state-energy-strategy/>

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I have three requests for the I-5 Nisqually project:

1. Be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph passenger rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River for Amtrak Cascades improvements.
2. Don't widen the freeway to 8 lanes. This will just induce more traffic.

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3. Work with transit agencies for better multimodal connections among Amtrak Cascades, Sounder, bus service, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. As just one specific example, the train station for Olympia is far from downtown Olympia, without a coordinated bus connection. There should be a bus waiting for every passenger train to take folks directly to downtown Olympia.

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I ride the train to visit my daughter in San Francisco and would like this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

1. Please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.
2. Please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.
3. Don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

These are important because the current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations. As a passenger, I have experienced the disruptions that train delays can cause.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thank you for your attention.

Kimberly Sims

9512 30th Ave NE

Seattle WA 98115

This comment is for the I-5 Nisqually project team:

With 2030 just over 5 years away and emissions goals/energy use goals not on schedule to be met, I urge you to revise the I-5

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Nisqually project as currently planned. Western Washington needs a rapid mode shift away from cars and trucks to transit and rail. You must therefore design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements, specifically:

- 1) Highway planning must accommodate a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River. If Virginia can fund an entirely new passenger rail bridge over the Potomac because it's the most cost-effective thing for them to do, then Washington can plan an interstate-raising that does not preclude a new rail bridge over the Nisqually.
- 2) WSDOT must work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service, all of which have an interest in the I-5 Nisqually project and must be brought to the table.
- 3) While it makes ecological and flood-planning sense to elevate the I-5 Nisqually crossing, it does not make sense to widen the crossing to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation by 2030 and 2040.

Including rail planning in the I-5 planning is important now because the current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Mode shift to rail is far and away the best chance we have to reduce emissions and energy use, both of which are required according to the International Panel on Climate Change. Washington is not on track to do its part, and the current plan for the I-5 Nisqually crossing is emblematic of our failure to date. WSDOT can change course -- for the public good, you must!

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 110 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

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Three, don't widen the highway to eight lanes, which will result in more traffic and delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Jon Morgan

Greetings and thanks for accepting comments!

For the I-5 Nisqually project team:

Our region needs to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Support rail - it is so important to our future! Include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to WSDOT's I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Corridor Improvement project.

It is paramount that this project not preclude the rail alignment revision that has already been specified by WSDOT in the Long Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades (2006), which could and should be updated to match current conditions on the corridor. This project, in the same area as the I-5 revision, is essential to support faster, more reliable and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more fluid and efficient freight rail through the area.

Current I-5 project elements include widening I-5 and constructing new bridges across the Nisqually Delta to increase resiliency of I-5 to flooding and sea level rise and habitat enhancement.

The efforts to protect the wetland habitats and provide resiliency are appreciated but could be accomplished without widening the highway.

A more healthy and enjoyable active transportation element could be considered.

We also need to prioritize getting trucks off the highway. The best way to improve freight movement is to invest in railway improvements, providing for dedicated passenger traffic which has largely been neglected, but which we understand has enormous co-benefits for freight rail efficiency and overall effective management of rail traffic on the corridor.

Specifically, instead of widening the highway, invest in revising the rail alignment from Mounts Road to the south bank of the Nisqually River to accommodate train speeds up to 100 mph, contributing to increased use of our intercity rail service that would be faster, more reliable, and could effectively accommodate more trains. A commuter service through Thurston county could also be added to an improved, dedicated passenger alignment.

All of these improvements would serve to reduce greenhouse gas from transportation and vehicle miles traveled, and would broaden the potential for true resiliency and needed redundancy as we anticipate increased changes in climate and increased population in our region.

Rail transportation uses only up to 1/3 the energy of any highway vehicles and generates only up to 1/3 the emissions of highway vehicles, per passenger or ton mile. To mode shift a significant amount of highway traffic to rail would honor our state commitments to quickly reduce emissions from transportation.

Develop the I-5 highway project over the Nisqually Delta from Marvin Road to Mounts Road in conjunction with the Point Defiance Bypass rail alignment change, for the purposes of restoration and resilience, and effective mode shift to rail transportation. Again, the I-5 Nisqually project must not preclude the essential rail alignment revision through the area that would support faster,

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more reliable and more frequent passenger travel as well as more fluid and efficient freight rail operation. We will request that these vital projects be again considered during the 2025-2027 Transportation Budget session.

Thank you for your attention.

Carole Geddes-Engel

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

My comments are focused on proper environmental stewardship, climate friendly modes of travel, and providing equitable, accessible to all and reliable regional transportation options by properly managing what capacity is carved out across this part of the region.

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Kathryn Keller

Seattle, 98122

General comments

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

1. Please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.
2. Please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.
3. Don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thank you.

Elaine Hickman

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

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Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Ankur

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

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Sylvia Shriner

Please include transit and trains in the Nisqually analysis.

This project must include rail and transit planning - not just highway widening!

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Hannah

Dear I-5 Nisqually Project Team,

Our region must embrace a future of diverse and accessible transportation options, including rail and transit. As you move forward with this highway project, please prioritize designs that allow for future rail and transit improvements while ensuring we are not contributing to more vehicle use and habitat destruction.

I ask that you focus on three critical points:

1. Plan for future rail: It's essential to accommodate a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually

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River. This will help reduce the bottleneck in the current rail system and support faster, more efficient passenger and freight rail, which is key to reducing vehicle emissions.

2. Create strong transportation linkages: Work closely with transit agencies to ensure better multimodal connections, including rail, bus, light rail, and active transportation options. We need an integrated system that allows people to easily transition between different modes of transportation.

3. Do not widen to 8 lanes: Expanding the highway encourages more vehicle use, which is neither sustainable nor feasible in the long term. It leads to increased emissions, chemical runoff (like 6-PPD from tires that harms salmon), and further destruction of sensitive habitats. Instead, focus on strategies that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and prioritize rail and transit.

Additionally, placing bike and pedestrian paths next to highways is not a solution. These are unpleasant and unhealthy places to be. We should instead create enjoyable, safe routes for active transportation that encourage people to choose these modes.

Now is the time to make bold, forward-thinking choices that align with our climate goals and protect our communities. Please ensure that future rail and transit options are part of this project, and avoid steps that would lock us into more vehicle dependency.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Grace Stahre

Seattle resident and member of Climate Action Families -Seattle

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active

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transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thanks,

Elisabeth Marcus

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

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Ryan Driscoll

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I want our region to have a variety of transportation options including better rail and transit. Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically, I ask you to do three critical things:

One, please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

Two, please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

Three, don't widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

Why is this important now? The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future. Thanks,

Jess

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

I am concerned about the planning for the Nisqually project. I understand there is a proposal to widen the freeway over the delta to 8 lanes - a bad idea because it is already an environmentally sensitive area and more lanes just means more cars and traffic, therefore more pollution, including tire fragments which harm fish.

We need planning for rail through that area to enhance our transportation options and reduce car traffic by giving people a more viable option. We can serve so many more people more efficiently by improving intercity rail rather than limiting us to our cars.

Specifically,

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1) Please be sure that highway planning includes accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.

2) Please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.

This planning is necessary now because the current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914. A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning so that we are not locked into a self-defeating configuration.

Thank you very much for your consideration of a more healthy and efficient way forward than the 1950's Eisenhower freeway approach. More lanes of freeway seemed like such a good idea at the time; we know better now, so please plan for the future. Thanks!

Margie Bone

WA Physicians for Social Responsibility opposes WSDOT Nisqually Delta project for I 5, due to health harms such as asthma and heart disease it will cause.

This expensive highway project ignores the obvious rail-bridge alternative to rapidly mode-shift freight and passengers from lanes and planes, onto trains; that use only 1/3 the energy, and cause only 1/3 the pollution and health harms. The project would increase, rather than decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled, required by WA Law and climate imperatives to cut GHGs, PM 2.5 and 6-PPD quinone salmon-killing tire preservatives. Finally, it will increase the sight and sound of traffic past Billy Frank Jr Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, just where it should be limited. And the proposed 7-mile bike lane (14 round trip) is right next to 8 lanes of health-harming noise & fumes. Environmental benefits are outweighed by health harms. We call for immediate formal Health Risk Assessment in addition to NEPA process.

WA Physicians for Social Responsibility opposes the Nisqually Delta highway widening project as described; rather supports Dupont rail curve revision, new passenger-only rail bridge over the river, and new tracks to the south for Amtrak Cascades and Sounder service extended to Olympia/Lacey. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We stand ready to collaborate with WSDOT to wisely choose transportation for a healthy future. www.wprs.org/transportation

The Thurston County League of Women Voters (LWVTC) support the aspect of this project that would realign McAllister Creek where it crosses below I-5 to improve water and habitat. Realignment will allow the creek to move more naturally and support the

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growth of native wetland and plants. This will improve salmon habitat. We support WSDOT working in partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe to develop proposed enhancements.

Dear I-5 Nisqually project team,

Please design this highway project to allow for future rail and transit improvements.

Specifically:

1. Highway planning should include accommodating a future 100 mph rail alignment between Mounts Road and the Nisqually River.
2. Please work with transit agencies to plan for better multimodal connections including light rail and bus transit, active transportation, Sounder, and Amtrak Cascades service.
2. Do NOT widen the highway to 8 lanes, which will result in more traffic and will delay reaching the state's goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing emissions from transportation.

The current rail alignment through this area is the worst bottleneck on the entire Amtrak Cascades route, requiring trains to slow down for a section of tight curves built in 1914.

A new rail alignment will allow faster, more reliable, and more frequent passenger rail travel as well as more efficient freight rail operations.

Please include the rail alignment change in planning now so we don't limit our options in the future.

Thank you,

Sarah Shifley & Tyrell Hedlund

The change to the I-5 structure across the Nisqually River and delta is necessary. The detrimental effect of the current configuration of the roadway upon the river and tidelands is unacceptable.

However, the addition of lanes, regardless of purpose, is not necessary or desirable. The project description includes the construction of two additional lanes between Marvin Road and Mounts Road, 4.75 miles. That represents 13.8 acres of pavement. The additional lanes are contrary to enacted legislation and would be unnecessarily environmentally detrimental.

General comments

The increased impervious surface are will contribute to increased runoff that will include particulate matter from worn tires, including but not limited to 6ppd chemicals, vehicle lubricating oils and spilled fuels.

RCW 47.01.440 (2008) adopted a statewide Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction goal of 18 percent by 2020. Vehicle Miles Traveled in 2020 was only two percent less than in 2008. Continued highway expansion and continued limitation on mass transit are the most significant contributors to the failure.

Numerous studies have led to the conclusion that increasing roadway capacity increases demand and generally does not reduce congestion for an extended time. The ratio of traffic to capacity is never "fixed" by a highway expansion project. Ultimately, projects to increase highway capacity and reduce congestion lead to other projects to increase highway capacity and reduce congestion.

Leaving the current number of general purpose lanes unchanged and constructing additional lanes for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) defeats the purpose of HOV lanes. The object of HOV lanes must be induce public transit and carpool use out of the general traffic lanes, not provide for more traffic.

RCW 70A.45.020 (2008) establishes limits on greenhouse gas emissions that have not been met. Greenhouse gas emissions have increased since 2010.

RCW 43.392.020 requires that all publicly owned and privately owned passenger and light duty vehicles of model year 2030 or later that are sold, purchased, or registered in Washington state be electric vehicles (EV). This legislation will not have a substantial effect on emissions for many years, likely over a decade from 2030, The average age of motor vehicles registered in Washington is 14.3 years. The national average is 12.2. The national average age of motor vehicles registered in 2030 is projected to be 14.5 years. There is no reason that the increase in average vehicle age in Washington will not increase similarly. There will be a substantial number of Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles (ICEV) for many years beyond 2030.

In 2023, two percent of registered vehicles were EV. Five percent were battery hybrid, most of which use internal combustion engines. 93 percent of vehicles were ICEV. The EV requirement of RCW 43.392.020 will not offset the induced demand of new lanes for many years.

The EV mandate does not make additional highway capacity acceptable. The state must adhere to the limits imposed by RCW 47.01.440 and RCW 70A.45.020 by not increasing highway capacity.

In lieu, the state must induce demand for transit through substantial improvement. The responsibility for paving and the responsibility for public transit must not remain in competition for funding. HOV lanes do little to reduce VMT when transit service

General comments
<p>remains at the current minimal level. In conjunction with limiting one current lane in each direction HOV, there must be funding for the increased transit that would offset the VMT of the converted lane.</p>
<p>To that end, the highway construction must not preclude or cause substantial cost increase to a new 100 mph Amtrak Cascades alignment between Mounts Road and the south bank of the Nisqually River. Any change to the current highway configuration must incorporate the Amtrak alignment change.</p>
<p>As a taxpayer please keep it w/in a reasonable budget, build it strong, sturdy and NOT a "Taj Mahal" after all it is a roadway. I like the plan of getting above the waterways and "flood plain". I also like the plan to keep the existing I-5 roads open for as much of the project as possible. Thank you for hosting this open house, the presentations, maps... your D.O.T. representatives were kind and well informed. P.S. I like the 12,000 ft bridge proposal.</p>
<p>I believe that rail, specifically in the form of a new Sounder or other heavy rail line, should be more seriously considered & studied. This corridor would be perfect for a new rail alignment, as passenger numbers would be almost guaranteed if rail reaches all the way to Olympia, but even just to Hawk's Prairie could generate ridership. Working with ST to create a new electrified (or DEMU or BEMU) service every +20 minutes could give the south sound a new breath of mobility & an alternative to driving that doesn't involve walking several miles (without meaning to downplay the importance of the new path)</p>
<p>Lengthening the ramp (NB) from Martin Way to I-5. The existing ramp is too short. Causing back-ups on both Martin Way & I-5. Additional lanes over the Delta is an excellent idea.</p>
<p>[In regards to categories at the top of comment form]: Add Mass transit, separate Floodplains and sea level. Add Light Rail, or have the pedestrian path reinforced so that it could be covert to Light Rail in the future. Widening the road will , and will be black where we started with traffic. There must be a plan to incorporate mass transit and to say that this design does not restrict Light Rail is a as it will have to go under and over all the obstacles and without a original plan on how it is going to fit between North/South land and around all the other obstacles will make Rail or other mass transit. A LOT more expensive in the future. The cost short and long term maintenance [life cycle] must be a direct factor K. Long term expandability need to be part of the plan. Bridges are next to impossible to widen and this will cause a similar problem in the future.</p>
<p>Primary concerns: 1. Restoration of the Nisqually Delta& Wetlands and minimizing damage as a result of construction. 2. And the health of the wildlife ecosystems and minimizing interruptions/damage during and as a result of long term damage to ecosystems. 3. respecting the ideas and wishes of the Nisqually Tribe for scheduling and alternative solutions in design, planning and construction aspects of the project!</p>
<p>Noise wall or buffer between 1-5 and the wildlife refuge between McAllister Creek and Nisqually River. No shared use trail - invest in refuge trail system. Foot trails not e-bike trails.</p>
<p>The environment is always important! One additional thing to keep in mind is the Natural Disaster Event (Mt. Rainier and Nisqually basin) being over run with a lohar that wipes out all bridges. We experienced this when a train fell onto I-5 causing the entire SB roadway to be closed for multiple days</p>
<p>Priorities: 1. river/stream restoration to estuary by removing I-5 impediments (raise I-5) - 12,000 ft option 2. provide multimodal path 3. do not widen to provide for increased traffic; rather encourage/incentivize carpooling (enforce HOV lanes - maybe 1/10</p>

General comments
actually have 2 or more passengers) and promote public transportation. 4. provide for light rail infrastructure. 5. provide stormwater treatment Phylis Farrell
You will do what you want anyway, It must be about bikes cause who is going to walk or bike across freeway to Steilacoom or where it ends. Just widen the freeway both sides without all this other garbage. I don't like any plan.
All III soil levels may increase due to construction and further effect local fresh water systems
I am mostly concerned about the projects cost
move planning and thought is needed to find a way for traffic to get around the construction zone other than going on SR507, through Yelm and the communities South. Every time there is a problem on I5, navigation systems and traffic to 507 and it becomes completely clogged. I live on the 105th Ave SE and can't even get out into the line of traffic and sometimes it isn't even moving at all.
In regards to the multi-use path: The wall closest to the highway could pose some safety concerns - could perhaps make taller or add some sort of fence to keep people from climbing in or over? Also, some educational or interpretative signage along the side facing the Delta would be superb! Could be a great opportunity to share little known info or facts. Thanks!!
Consider a real benefit cost regarding bicycles. How much more are we paying for 20 bicycle trips per year? Why 14 feet for foot/bike traffic? Need noise buffers/walls. Distinguishable between construction noise and traffic noise. Spend money on noise buffers not HOV or bicycle paths. Noise due to increases traffic
1. Re alignment of McAllister Creek - Impact on upstream communities, bank erosion increases? 2. Traffic on [indiscernible writing] Road hill, safe + easy access for subdivision accessing the hill. Traffic is already increasing due to new developments. Also problems on I5 cause heavy usage on the hill + roads off of Nisqually cut off Rd. 3. Ensure protection of wildlife in + around the refuge. 4. Consideration of Sounder type rail development to connect Olympia with Tacoma/Seattle. 5. Floodplains + sea level rise
For the proposed shared use path: There needs to be a barrier structure between the path and the highway. This would be a visual and sound diminishing feature that would make a separation which would improve the experience of walkers and bikers etc. More importantly, it would be a safely feature preventing people from climbing over into the highway. Would save lives. Similar to those over highways for walkers and bikers.
We think it should be 4 lanes both ways!!!
Mostly worried you won't finish on time - maybe incentives to the contractor will work. Also worried you will make some mistake like in Tacoma to Gig Harbor when someone missed a support.
I would like the project to get together with Sound Transit and consider light rail all the way through to -- or at least make consideration for adding light rail, because I don't like the Sound Transit and then having to jump trains and all that just to get to the airport from down here. We -- really no really good way you get to the airport from here. But we kind of -- I know we play second fiddle, but...There's no public, you know -- you know, three buses, you know. A light rail all the way through from Olympia to the airport, over the bridge of course, so that would have to be consideration. And maybe Sound Transit could fund part of that or help funding part of that.
From analysis in the PEL study, I believe that the noise monitoring was not as well-done as it could have been, specifically knowing that monitoring sites at the maintenance buildings at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge are not places

General comments

on the refuge where the greatest noise impacts from the existing freeway occur. I'm very concerned about future noise impacts from this project at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, and I would strongly advocate for including noise abatement structures as part of this project. I think that the refuge is a place that is unique in that it is a rare habitat for wildlife and a rare place in our region where residents can interact with nature in a peaceful and calming setting, that adding considerable freeway noise to this can have negative impacts not only on the wildlife at the refuge but also on the value of the resource to the community and the region.

So my name is Loretta, and I live one mile north of the freeway along Meridian Road, and the freeway noise is already bad. It's going to be worse when they put in the casino resort. And so my biggest concern about this is, one, money: How much money's going to be spent on it. And I would rather money be spent on noise buffers -- walls, whatever it is -- instead of bicycle lanes or HOV lanes. Because we have, you know -- I don't know -- tens of thousands of people living along there, and even when you walk in the Nisqually Refuge, it's all traffic noise, freeway noise. So please do something about the noise and to mitigate it.

I would like the project to get together with Sound Transit and consider light rail all the way through to -- or at least make consideration for adding light rail, because I don't like the Sound Transit and then having to jump trains and all that just to get to the airport from down here. We -- really no really good way you get to the airport from here. But we kind of -- I know we play second fiddle, but... There's no public, you know -- you know, three buses, you know. A light rail all the way through from Olympia to the airport, over the bridge of course, so that would have to be consideration. And maybe Sound Transit could fund part of that or help funding part of that

So Idea No. 1 is, if they can turn the weigh station into a rest area, that would be helpful. And then Idea No. 2 is, as a runner, the bike lane or the running lane, I think it would be better if it hooked up to the Yelm trail system and the Chehalis Western rather than go right next to I-5. If they could make that go through Yelm and on the other -- the scenic side of JBLM. So I think that having a bike or running trail right next to I-5 in that area, I think that's going to be a distraction for drivers and create more accidents, which is why I'd like to see it on the other side of JBLM.

.From analysis in the PEL study, I believe that the noise monitoring was not as well-done as it could have been, specifically knowing that monitoring sites at the maintenance buildings at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge are not places on the refuge where the greatest noise impacts from the existing freeway occur. I'm very concerned about future noise impacts from this project at the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, and I would strongly advocate for including noise abatement structures as part of this project. I think that the refuge is a place that is unique in that it is a rare habitat for wildlife and a rare place in our region where residents can interact with nature in a peaceful and calming setting, that adding considerable freeway noise to this can have negative impacts not only on the wildlife at the refuge but also on the value of the resource to the community and the region.

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General comments
HOV lanes. Because we have, you know -- I don't know -- tens of thousands of people living along there, and even when you walk in the Nisqually Refuge, it's all traffic noise, freeway noise. So please do something about the noise and mitigate it.

Comments on stormwater management
I am a volunteer for the Nisqually Land Trust. Environmental protection is a concern, but so is responsible fiscal management.
For the 12,000-foot bridge option, stormwater should be funneled from either side of the valley to the center of the valley and treated in stormwater ponds to the south of the 114 interchange. There are a lot of farmlands there that could be used as stormwater treatment areas.
water quality leaves a lot to be desired
Stormwater runoff needs to be controlled and water quality protected in this environmentally sensitive area. The Nisqually River and even more so the delta and the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually NWR are still in a recovery period. Please do everything you can to not harm this area during and after the bridge project.
DOE requirements will likely make these options of equal impact.
Will be improving from current.
This is vital and seems like the elevated option proposed fits this best.
Crap. Water is poor quality and taste funny compared to the water I had in Kirkland area for 40 years. too many charges for too little services.
Reduce the hazards of spills and materials that would contaminate water.
Fuck Jay inslee
I haven't seen how this proposal addresses 6PPD-quinone specifically. The storm water catchment plan sounds adequate, but what kind of monitoring and treatment for 6PPD-quinone and other hazardous or toxic contaminants will be necessary to protect the refuge and human/environmental health?
Of course all stormwater and water quality conditions must be met.
I would assume tiered bioswales will be part of the SWPP solution with maybe local plant/tree species that especially like consuming hydrocarbons that could also help with sound control.
Your proposal is approved
Plan 1 is obviously better for storm water management.
Stormwater runoff from more vehicle traffic will affect the wildlife refuge despite attempts to remedy runoff.
Widening highways will increase driving and make climate change worse. Climate change is bad for stormwater and water quality. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on wetlands
This project should do its utmost to restore the historic estuary and wetland complexes in the valley. The massive fill slope on the west side of the valley cut off several major tidal sloughs associated with McAllister Creek and these sloughs should be restored to historic conditions. Only the 12,000-foot bridge option fully opens up and restores this critical section of the estuary, the 6,000-foot option still severely constricts the tidal opening and creek, causing increased velocities. Proper estuary restoration absolutely needs to reduce channel velocities and allow free-flowing overbank flow during high tides, floods, and storm events, something that can't happen when massive fill slopes remain in place. As part of the mitigation work, farmlands upstream along McAllister Creek should be acquired and converted back to estuary and wetlands. Ideally, you could also pursue the removal of the Martin Way fill slope and replace that with an unconstrained bridge to allow for estuary and channel restoration there as well.
We need to do what needs to be done
Dear WSDOT, I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County. We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.
The wetlands in Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually NWR need to be protected during and after this project! They are essential to the health of the Puget Sound. So much work has been done to restore this area. Please do everything you can to protect this area. In my opinion, this should be your highest priority.
No comment, but both options will be an improvement.
Should help restore.
Same as above. Creating new space for habitat and increasing existing habitats or ones that had been blocked in the past.
I truly believe with weather changes, etc., the world is coming to its inevitable end. We can't save everything but need to think before we destroy it.
I'm sure your plans are better than the current situation.
Wetlands are important for water, aquatic life along with water birds.
Fuck Jay inslee
How do construction plans address sediment loading and other potential adverse effects from earth moving and other activities on water quality? Are the erosion control measures adequate to prevent sedimentation of Nisqually Reach from construction?
It would be great to see an increase in estuary and presumably adjacent wetlands for this important national estuary. It is also an important salmon run.
Same as above

Comments on wetlands
I'm unclear about McCallister Creek. Was it bent into its current shape in order to accommodate the current hwy build? Or did it form that way due to the hwy build? What is considered and meant by a more "natural" shape? There are no visuals to show what that shape might look like nor if it will involve human power and equipment to readjust it and/or if doing the elevated highway build will already mold it into the way it should (or "naturally" would) be flowing.
With property that borders McAllister Creek (Medicine Creek) and I5 I have interest in the restoration of the creek and surrounding water sources.
Concerns are addressed
Anytime we can expand and improve wetlands the choice is obvious.
I'm all for improving and restoring the wetlands
Widening highways will increase driving and make climate change worse. Climate change is bad for wetlands and other waters. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on fish, wildlife, and vegetation
More effort should be made into restoring the vegetation of tidal marsh lands along both the McAllister and Nisqually estuaries. Also, the 12,000-foot-long bridge does the best job of improving wildlife connectivity across the entire valley and estuary, but especially along the forested hillsides on either end of the valley, which are often used by larger mammals to bypass the farmland in the valley.
It's not what it was 20 years ago when I moved here
Don't build another lane- this induces further demand for driving, which leads to tire particulate harming fish in the delta and the sound. This will be especially bad as we move towards electric vehicles, which are heavier and emit more tire particles per mile.
Dear WSDOT, I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County. We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer. You should coordinate with groups all along the river on protecting the salmon habitat. I live in a neighborhood overlooking the Deschutes River and there are environmental groups here coordinating from the sound to upstream areas. The same needs to be done for this project to protect the salmon and other wildlife habitat up and down the whole river.
No comment, but both options will be an improvement.

Comments on fish, wildlife, and vegetation
Is extremely important to the North West.
Remove the fish barriers to allow for a revitalization of the area through its natural process.
I am tired of tearing down dams that are renewable power resources and giving all the fish to the Indians. I know people who have lived here for years and they say the Indians abuse their status to keep the fish they want and discard the others because they don't want them because of size, etc. Yes, they were here 1st, but every place in the world had someone who was here 1st. We can't undo history.
Will definitely hope this helps the Nisqually refuge more than harming it.
Increase the natural environment for all wildlife.
Washington deserves to be a red state
Invasive plants like blackberry, ivy, holly, and broom are a problem in upland portions of the Nisqually, and aquatic weeds like yellow flag are a problem for the lowlands. Does this plan include increased treatment of weeds in the rights of way?
This is already such an important area for shore and wetland birds - and increasing the amount of habitat will only continue to help with that.
Concerns are addressed
Widening highways will increase driving and make climate change worse. Climate change is bad for Fish, wildlife and vegetation. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on floodplains and sea level
The 12,000-foot-long bridge does the best job of reconnecting the floodplain and protecting the highway from sea level rise. It also mitigates any potential catastrophic flooding, and lahar flows from a dam break at the Alder Lake Reservoir resulting from an eruption and large lahar from Mount Rainier. Also, if you were to relocate the 114 interchange west to Meridian Rd NE, depending on how you reconfigure Martin Way, Nisqually Cut off Rd, and the Refuge Rd, this could give you enough room to reconnect the Nisqually River floodplain overflow channels east of the existing interchange directly west to the McAllister Creek side of the valley and estuary... since a straightened interstate bridge with no on/off ramps gives you a lot of room to create a new flood channel to the west. The McAllister side has been cut off from the Nisqually floodplain for a long time by the interstate and interchange, so this would give you the golden opportunity to fix this.
Please fix it
While the more elevated option would be higher, it's unclear what level of sea level rise the lower (under the railroad) option would accommodate. If it would accommodate less than 5 meters of SLR, it might be advisable to go with the elevated option. While who knows if it'll survive to see that level of SLR, if it does then I-5 is critical road to keep above water to the extent possible.
Back to nature.
Don't worry. These projections are always overblown to manipulate the public.

Comments on floodplains and sea level
Elevated bridge seems to fit best here.
Surprise, the end is coming. We can't fix everything.
Is this whole section of I5 through the Nisqually valley corridor going to be raised up enough to allow room for sea level rise for the next 100 years and possibility of floods due to mountain eruption?
Sea levels will rise. A long higher bridge is a great option.
Taxpayer money should not feed someone's fentanyl addiction
From what I've seen, it is only a matter of time before the bridges/berms wash out with the oxbow behind the bridge. Sea level rise will continue to put pressure on this area, and if there is a chance to increase the floodplain area, it will be better in the long run.
The new span and creek realignment takes this into account
Information as to how much higher the roadway needs to be was not presented in the webpage or at the public meeting.
I think the raised bridge version is smart in that it can accommodate the rising sea levels in the area. Floodplains are floodplains for a reason. It is important that I-5 be available in the event of the kind of emergency.
Widening highways will increase driving and make climate change worse. Climate change is bad for floodplains and sea level rise. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on geology
The entire valley is highly susceptible to liquefaction in the event of a major earthquake. Any fill slopes that remain will absolutely fail during a Cascadia 9.0 Earthquake or even a smaller scale magnitude 7 or 8. The 12,000-foot-long bridge is the only option that removes all weak fill slopes susceptible to liquification with a bridge anchored to bedrock that can withstand such powerful earthquakes. Lahars and Alder Lake dam failures resulting from Mount Rainier erupting are also a major threats to the interstate and the 12,000-foot-long bridge is the only option that fully mitigates this threat. Your study needs to determine what the maximum height of future lahar and dam break flood flows could be so that the new bridge is built high enough to prevent overtopping and strong enough to resist being washed out.
Dear WSDOT, I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County. We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.

Comments on geology
No comment.
It wasn't addressed in the open house documentation, but how resilient are the soils currently under i5 to liquefaction in the event of an earthquake? Remembering the 2001 Nisqually earthquake was near this section of the interstate, it could be easier to move the highway to elevated spans (the 12,000 ft bridge section) instead of stabilizing the soils for future earthquakes.
I would be interested in hearing what the analysis is regarding the new bridge options and the impacts a Lahar might produce should Mt Rainier erupt.
Don't know.
NA
Fuck Jay inslee
Could the new structure be destroyed in the unlikely event of a lahar? Also, could there be any landslide potential in disturbed areas, especially those with steep slopes. I'm not a geengineer, but I'm sure that there are good people working on these possibilities.
Your proposal addresses this concern

Comments on visual quality
Option 2 looks less visually different. Construction of option 1 would be problematic I am sure more for wildlife to raise the road.
Most new WSDOT bridges are extremely utilitarian, following an almost brutalism approach to aesthetics and architectural design. The days of making beautiful structures seems long past. But, it would be nice if the bridge facade and pillars at least attempted to match the natural beauty / aesthetic around it. I don't have high hopes though.
needs to be done
It's a highway over an environmentally sensitive area it's going to look terrible even in the best case.
A beautiful bridge over the span that so many visitors to our state cross would be wonderful. Hopefully that can be accomplished while still meeting the project goals.
No comment.
Should be pleasing driving over.
The lower bridge option seems more visually appealing, but a raised bridge could look good with design in mind.
Some visual flair would be nice to pay tribute to the Nisqually tribe and sea fairing history of the south sound.
Please make sure to include roadway width for future expansion, including adequate shoulders and safety barriers for emergencies.
Employ native artists to help design and decorate the bridge
Democrats are ruining our state

Comments on visual quality
How will restoration work plans for disturbed areas include aesthetic considerations? Are any proposed plantings ornamental, and how are thickets of invasive plants being addressed?
Image proposal on the longer elevated span looks good
Providing a pedestrian path is not a common element of Interstate highways in Washington. The view provided to potential users is both excessively expensive and dangerously distracting to interstate traffic moving at speed just a few feet from proposed pedestrian path.
I have enjoyed the Nisqually National Refuge since prior to being officially a wildlife refuge. The traffic noise is already appalling. increased traffic will make it worse. We need mass transit not increased road size to accommodate more people.
The aesthetics of the 12k foot bridges are good. They show a harmonious use of the existing (restored) terrain rather than an overtaking of it.
Highways are ugly. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on air quality
While HOV lanes are a good start, ideally, we need a new mass transit line from Tacoma to Olympia. It would be great if the new 12,000-foot-long bridge is built to allow for future light rail expansion (the bridge grades will likely be too steep for passenger rail otherwise I'd recommend that too). Could save any future extensions of Sound Transit's Link Light Rail hundreds of millions by simply designing future load capacity into the bridge now.
Don't expand highways it's 2024 and Rainier is melting we're better than this
Don't build another lane! WSDOT's own analysis in 2020 identifies this problem, but it appears to be ignored here.
This plan is climate arson! Gov Inslee is a fraud if he allows this design to move forward.
The proposed build alternative, which is a highway widening project, would lead to additional traffic and increase greenhouse gas emissions. Alternatives that did not expand the road should have been moved forward.
Dear WSDOT, I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County. We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.

Comments on air quality
Widening I-5 will be an environmental disaster by increasing GHG emissions and increasing total vehicle miles traveled. WSDOT studied this in 2020 and has now eliminated this from the EA. This is in contradiction to the state's climate goals. Personally, I do not understand how an EA doesn't once mention emissions. Alternative 2 is clearly detrimental to the environment and should be rejected. Of the Alternatives proposed, Alt 4 (convert GP to HOV) appears to be the most in line with the goals set forth by the state.
Crossing under the railroad may lead to increased fuel efficiency with a less deviation in grades for vehicles driving along I-5.
See first comment about light rail.
Air quality is horrific here. Some days I have to stay inside all day because when I step outside, I have horrible reactions to the air.
The Nisqually Bridge is almost always backed up. I'm wondering about the impact on air quality with having so many idling or slowed down vehicles on the immediate environment.
Please light the bridge!
What will be the GHG impact from idling cars waiting for crashes to clear on this icy crash prone design?
Jay inslee is a bitch
I'm concerned that yet another highway project increases our dependence on cars, which will only increase dependence on oil and degrade air quality. Will there be a corresponding increase in public transit options and promotion of alternative to single-occupancy vehicles?
Adding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as an HOV lane will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage.
This is being addressed
Including the Amtrak into this plan would help with air quality and climate change.
If there are more people taking the train there are less cars putting out CO2.
whatever you can do in order to make wildfires less likely and often would be good, i am also very in favor in making it more likely that cruise ships docked in Seattle have to use shore power and not emit pollutants whenever possible
Widening highways will increase driving and make climate change and air quality worse. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on cultural resources
See above comments.
The project should limit impacts to the Wildlife Refuge. Any cultural artifacts found should be given to the Nisqually tribe, and any burial sites found in design work should be avoided.
I'm assuming extensive tribal consultations will be a part of the planning process, so no comment.
Should improve.

With the proposed bike trail on the north side of I-5 there could be an opportunity for it to access not only the Billy Frank wildlife estuary, but also what remains of the Nisqually treaty tree. There could be a plaque or area around the stump accessible by bike and pedestrians if okay with the Tribe.
Employ native artist.
Washington should be more like Texas and less like California
None
This is a very important area to the Nisqually Tribe, and they have completed such great work along the entire river area in support of salmon recovery. Please keep them as partners in every step moving forward.
N/A

Comments on noise
If we merely enforced existing, but unenforced, noise from modified vehicles and jake-brake trucks, the resulting noise levels would be tolerable. Defunding the police has had this and many other effects.
Option 2 would be less noisy as it is lower down.
The higher the bridge the less noise impacts you'll have to the estuary, wetlands, and adjacent homes and businesses. A noise wall fully separating the shared use pathway from the interstate would go a long way to encouraging people to use it, make them feel a lot safer using it as well.
No comment.
Have you met the neighbor JBLM???
Noise is horrific also but part of it could be controlled if we enforced laws that are the books, but not enough police officers to enforce current laws.
They will be noise. Tree native plants will help lessen the noise
Fuck Jay inslee
Will Thurston and Pierce County sheriffs patrol the area more frequently than they do currently to enforce speed and noise laws if the lanes are widened and traffic increases?
Sound abatement walls and fast-growing trees?
Not concerned
I'm worried the bike lane would get rarely used, 4.7 miles is a long ways. And right next to the interstate isn't ideal for a bike path.
Individual cars are so noisy! give us the ability to substitute trips with much more efficient, fast rail travel someday!
Widening highways will increase driving and make noise worse. Please don't widen the highway

Comments on hazardous materials
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The new bridge drainage systems should be capable of handling the spill of any hazardous materials and preventing them from directly entering the river, streams, or wetlands.
No comment.
Truck drivers are reckless and always in a hurry to make profits with little to no regard for safety of automobiles and the environment. How will you folks protect our treasured Delta from the trucking industry's hazardous spills that occur regularly all around our country?
Can't be worse than when it was originally built.
Use the best practice.
Republicans will save our state
Will there be any restrictions on hazardous cargo over the Wildlife Refuge like there are on the I-90 tunnels in Seattle? The last thing we need is a hazardous chemical spill into the sensitive waters of the Nisqually Delta?
Not concerned

Comments on land use
See above.
Some of the farmland along McAllister Creek upstream of I-5 should be converted back to estuary and wetlands as part of this project. As mentioned previously, the 114 interchange doesn't really make sense to keep in its current location, the surrounding land use of the valley does not justify or support the need for that when a new interchange on Meridian Rd NE could serve the same purpose for local residents while also benefiting Hawks Prairie (worth noting local residents in the valley also have easy access to the 116 interchange via the Nisqually Valley Rd / Pacific Highway.) This project can preserve, protect, and enhance the existing land uses and do a better job reflecting the more rural lifestyle of this area by not re-building the 114 interchange.
WSDOT's own analysis in 2020 found that this will lead to further sprawling development over more urban, dense development. Don't build another lane here- sprawl is a disaster for the environment in the long run.
The addition of highway capacity will lead to pressure to develop as housing farmland and other rural land resources.
Dear WSDOT, I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County.

Comments on land use
We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.
Widening I-5 will be an environmental disaster by increasing GHG emissions and increasing total vehicle miles traveled. WSDOT studied this in 2020 and has now eliminated this from the EA. This is in contradiction to the state's climate goals. Personally, I do not understand how an EA doesn't once mention emissions. Alternative 2 is clearly detrimental to the environment and should be rejected. Of the Alternatives proposed, Alt 4 (convert GP to HOV) appears to be the most in line with the goals set forth by the state.
United States
Don't know.
Impacts will be greater at first but ling term less impact
Fuck Jay Inslee
Removing trees for a project like this should require some replacement of forest cover somewhere nearby. How does this plan address deforestation and loss of canopy?
This valley may become quieter with the right combination of materials and assembly
Not concerned as it is being addressed
expanding highways and infrastructure related specifically to cars (like parking lots) is bad land use
United States

Comments on section 4(f)
What the heck is Section 4(f)????
No comment.
Don't know.
Fuck Jay inslee
idk what 4(f) is all about
I have no idea what this means.

Comments on socioeconomic and environmental justice
Are you human?
The current interstate has negative impacts on local health, the environment, and residents. Its existing fill embankments act as a dam across the valley during flooding, causing worse flooding upstream. Noise and air pollution do impact residents as well. Elevating the interstate well above the existing valley with the 12,000-foot-long bridge option and removing the 114 interchange

Comments on socioeconomic and environmental justice

would go a long way to helping address some of these impacts while also improving safety for those driving. It should also be noted the shared use path could be very beneficial for reconnecting cut-off communities by foot and bike if, and only if, it's designed to be attractive to those users. People are not going to want to bike very long along an interstate if they're only separated from heavy traffic by a short low barrier where noise, debris, fumes, and wind from traffic can still make it across.

Dear WSDOT,

I want to express my concerns regarding the proposal to add a fourth lane to I-5 at the Nisqually Delta. In 2020, WSDOT found that this option would be an environmental disaster, receiving the "most negative score possible" for projected GHG emissions. Beyond the environmental impact, the 2020 Nisqually Corridor study also looked at land use—something most highway studies overlook—and revealed that adding a lane to I-5 (even as an HOV lane) would erase 15 years of more urban-focused land use planning in Thurston County.

We need to prioritize sustainable transportation solutions that protect our environment and respect the careful planning that's been done to support urban growth. Adding more lanes isn't the answer.

This is a nationally significant project and while we need not to repeat the mistakes of the past, it should be recognized that there are far more communities, generally and disadvantaged, that rely on I-5 being in good working order than there will be affected by the construction of this project.

Should improve.

More manipulation... "Environmental Justice" is just plain silly. LeftWorld is a cult. Words matter... "Socioeconomic Justice" is code for communism which has gripped Washington state. Income redistribution for the minions. How about just building a bridge now. Do it for 10% of the dollars... and leave out the left wing indoctrination.

Just use common sense and best practice will go a long way

Fuck Jay inslee

HOV lanes are extremely important for efficient county to county transit viability.

The Lacey/Olympia/Tumwater metroplex is a fast growing area. This growth will add traffic southbound out of L/O/T. The bridge design does nothing to address capacity to I-5. In fact, it forces more traffic into the 3 general purpose lanes to accommodate the HOV. Without added capacity, traffic will continue to bog down. The additional travel times adds to pollution. There is also the added cost of transportation between Thurston and Pierce Counties, which effects the lower income citizens. For the users of I-5, the additional travel time is time not at work or time with family, friends. This is especially true for the low income. Because of high cost of living and housing, many L/O/T residents, work in Pierce.

Widening highways will increase driving and provide no options for those without a car. Please invest the money in public transit.