



US 2 Trestle Capacity Improvements and Westbound Trestle Replacement PEL Study

Resource Agency Committee Meeting #2 Summary

January 29, 2025; 9:00 a.m.

Microsoft Teams

Meeting Purpose

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the second meeting of the Resource Agency Committee (RAC) for the US 2 Trestle Capacity Improvements and Westbound Trestle Replacement PEL Study. The objectives for the meeting were to seek input on the environmental existing conditions report, share concept pre-screening and Level 1 screening results, and introduce the process to develop preliminary system-level alternatives.

RAC attendees:

- Allyson Brooks, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Dennis Wardlaw, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Elisa Albury, Federal Highway Administration
- Emma Oliver, Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Kirk Lakey, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribes
- Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation District
- Matthew Pahs, Federal Highway Administration
- Maureen Elenga, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Melynda Beam, US Environmental Protection Agency
- Michael Villnave, Federal Highway Administration
- Penny Kelley, Washington State Department of Ecology
- Rustin Director, US Coast Guard
- Ryan Shaw, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Consultant team attendees:

- Anne Broache, WSP
- Chris Wellander, WSP
- Jared Nakamoto, WSP
- Jennifer Rash, PRR
- Larissa King-Rawlins, WSP
- Laurence Idos, PRR

WSDOT participants:

- Alan Black, WSDOT
- Anne Conrad, WSDOT
- April Delchamps, WSDOT
- Elizabeth McGovern, WSDOT
- Glen Mejia, WSDOT
- Jason Cooper, WSDOT
- Josh Shippy, WSDOT
- Kyengo Ndile, WSDOT
- Laura Lloyd, WSDOT
- Lindsay Taylor, WSDOT
- Lisa Sakata, WSDOT
- Oteberry Kedelty, WSDOT
- Seana Fournier, WSDOT

Welcome and Introductions

WSDOT and the study team welcomed attendees to the second RAC meeting with a safety moment, introductions, and a review of the meeting purpose and agenda.

Study progress and updates

April Delchamps recapped the first RAC meeting, reviewed community engagement milestones and shared a summary of survey results from the spring 2024 online open house, which focused on the draft NEPA Purpose and Need. Lisa Sakata reviewed the revised draft NEPA Purpose and Need statements. She noted that the purpose statement was simplified, emphasizing that WSDOT's goal is to equitably serve communities rather than treat all transportation modes equally. She also explained the following Need statement changes:

- Multimodal Mobility Need statement: Few changes were made to the statement. The word "equitable" was removed because survey respondents found it confusing, interpreting it as a directive to treat all travel modes the same way. To address this misunderstanding, adjustments were made to the purpose statement to clearly convey that "equity" refers to populations rather than transportation modes.
- Resilience Need statement: The earlier version of this statement was much shorter and focused solely on the westbound trestle. After gathering more data, the statement was expanded to include the entire US 2 trestle, covering both directions of travel. Additionally, more specific points were added to align with WSDOT's Strategic Plan, emphasizing seismic resilience, asset management, climate and natural hazard resilience, and operational resilience.

Lisa noted that FHWA provided concurrence on the draft NEPA Purpose and Need statement through the Concurrence Point #2 memo in August 2024.

Environmental Existing Conditions

Lisa Sakata reviewed some findings from the draft Environmental Existing Conditions Report, which was provided to RAC members for initial review and comment in advance of the meeting. She noted that the report provides a summary of a desktop review (using readily available information sources) of 16 different environmental topics within the PEL Study preliminary study area:

1. Earth (geology and soils)
2. Air quality
3. Greenhouse gas emissions
4. Stormwater best management practice sites and retrofit priorities
5. Wetlands and other waters (including mitigation sites and navigable waters)
6. Chronic environmental deficiencies
7. Climate vulnerability
8. Special flood hazard areas
9. Habitat connectivity
10. Fish passage barriers
11. Threatened and endangered species (plants and wildlife)
12. Noise walls
13. Hazardous materials contamination sites
14. Publicly owned parks, recreational areas, and refuge
15. Cultural resources
16. HEAL Act (community profile)

1. Earth (geology and soils)

The preliminary study area includes multiple waterbodies that receive stormwater runoff from the US 2 trestle, including sensitive tidal marshes in the Snohomish River Estuary. Some nearby waters, such as Ebey Slough, do not meet state water quality standards for bacteria. Stormwater treatment in the area primarily relies on ponds, as shown in the study figures.

WSDOT has identified the entire US 2 segment within the study area as a priority for stormwater retrofits in its draft list.

Comments/questions:

Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribe, shared that he is not aware of farmlands in Lake Stevens. Lisa acknowledged the comment and shared that it is from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) data. She added that the team is interested in hearing any discrepancies.

Linda Lyshall, Snohomish Conservation District, asked if the study team has engaged with Snohomish County, including the Chinook Marsh area planned for restoration. Lisa confirmed that the team is in coordination with the county (via the TWG).

Penny Kelly, Department of Ecology, asked if there was a list of projects in the area. Lisa reminded everyone in the last meeting, the presentation included a “sandbox.” The study team will review the list, and she asked that the attendees send projects that were missed.

2. Stormwater best management practice sites and retrofit priorities

The preliminary study area crosses multiple waterbodies that receive stormwater runoff from the US 2 trestle, including sensitive tidal marshes in the Snohomish River Estuary. Some nearby receiving waters, including Ebey Slough near the US 2 trestle, do not currently meet state water quality standards for bacteria (fecal coliform). Stormwater treatment near the US 2 trestle primarily provided by ponds (as shown in the figure on the left showing south end of study area – north end is in the report). WSDOT identifies all of US 2 in the preliminary study area on its draft list of stormwaters retrofit priority segments.

3. Wetlands and WSDOT Environmental Mitigation sites

The study team identified numerous wetlands within the preliminary study area, mapped by the National Wetland Inventory and local jurisdictions. Most are freshwater emergent wetlands, with smaller areas of forested and scrub-shrub habitats. The largest systems, including the Snohomish River and its sloughs, form a tidally influenced network connected to Possession Sound. Three WSDOT mitigation sites are adjacent to the trestle, with three more in the broader study area, compensating for past project impacts to wetlands and streams.

Comments/questions:

Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribes, asked if the study team considered City of Everett’s and Ecology’s wetland inventory study. Lisa thanked Kurt for mentioning it and shared that the study team would look into it. Kurt asked if the team is studying all wetlands within the study area. Lisa said the team anticipates using a smaller, more refined study area for the future analysis of environmental effects and benefits associated with system-level alternatives.

4. Streams and Navigable Waterways

The study team mapped 13 named streams and rivers, along with several unnamed streams, in the preliminary study area. The Snohomish River, Ebey Slough, and unnamed streams account for the longest stream lengths. During the first RAC meeting, the US Coast Guard highlighted that navigation, including clearances, is an environmental resource. It was confirmed that the Snohomish River and Ebey Slough, near the US 2 Trestle, are navigable, along with Union Slough and Steamboat Slough in the broader study area. Additionally, a part of the lower Snohomish River is part of a federally authorized project, subject to Section 10 and Section 408 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Comments/questions:

Penny Kelley, Department of Ecology, asked why the report did not refer to the US Coast Guard Section 9 permit and suggested that the team should include it if relevant to the study.

Rustin Director, US Coast Guard, shared his appreciation that the study team included this section in the study. He shared that this is an important piece of the bridge permitting process. He suggested that as the study moves forward, completion of a Navigation Impact Report is a key step in coordinating with the Coast Guard. They then do a Preliminary Navigation Clearance Determination, which sets limits for vertical and horizontal navigational clearances on waterways, that can be used in the NEPA scoping and alternatives development process. Lisa thanked Rustin for outlining the process and said it would make sense to touch base with the Coast Guard in the near future.

5. Climate Vulnerability

In 2011, WSDOT conducted a climate impact vulnerability assessment, which rated the criticality and potential impacts to roadways. The assessment identified US 2, I-5, SR 9, and other roadways in the preliminary study area as highly critical assets, meaning they are essential state routes with no alternatives. The US 2 trestle, however, was determined to have a low potential for climate impacts. Despite much of the surrounding area being projected to be below sea level by 2050, the elevation of the US 2 trestle makes it unlikely to be affected by sea level rise, temperature changes, or fires. The primary climate concern for the trestle is the increased frequency of heavy rain or extreme weather events.

Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribes, said this assessment is likely correct for the US 2 trestle structure itself, but some features, such as stormwater facilities on the ground, may be vulnerable to climate considerations. Lisa said the team has been considering this issue as part of the resiliency need statement for the study.

6. Climate Vulnerability and Flood Zones

Extreme weather events, particularly heavy precipitation, are expected to increase near the US 2 trestle, with a higher change in storm magnitude from 1980-2009 to 2020-2049, leading to more frequent and intense flooding events. The US 2 Trestle is in a 100-year floodplain, crossing the Snohomish River floodway and levee fringe areas. Additionally, FEMA has noted that the adjacent levees are uncertified, and flood mapping may be updated after levee recertification.

7. Essential Fish Habitat and Fish Passage Barriers

Within the Preliminary Study Area and the US 2 Trestle corridor, a network of waterways, including creeks and streams, has been identified as essential fish habitat for species like coastal pelagic fish, groundfish, and Pacific salmon. ESA-listed species, such as Steelhead Trout and Chinook Salmon, are present in the Snohomish River and Ebey Slough, including areas crossed by the US 2 Trestle. More information on critical habitat and listed species is available in Chapter 12 of the EEC Report.

Comment/questions:

- Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribes, shared that the list of fish barriers does not look complete, noting, for example, a pump station on Deadwater Slough as a blockage. He suggested the study team look more closely at the WDFW database. He also asked for an example of coastal pelagic and fish shown on the Essential Fish Habitat map. Lisa Sakata and

Glen Mejia clarified these fish include market squid, mackerel, and anchovy, and the data came from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

- Penny Kelley, Department of Ecology, asked what assessment was done in tribal areas and how WSDOT has been coordinating with tribes regarding their usual and accustomed fishing areas. Kurt said the preliminary study area is in the Tulalip Tribes' usual and accustomed fishing area. He said there needs to be specific coordination with the tribes and that he will check whether this study is part of existing tribal coordination meetings with WSDOT. Penny added that more can be included in the report about engagement with tribes. Lisa shared that there is regular tribal engagement and outreach, and WSDOT has offered study-specific meetings to tribes. Everything in the report is based on publicly available data, and WSDOT defers to tribes on what is OK to share publicly.
- Kirk Lakey, Department of Fish and Wildlife, added in the chat: This is a complete list that includes barriers that are not part of the WDOT Fish Passage Injunction Barriers. <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/fishpassage/index.html>
- Larissa King-Rawlins thanked Kirk for sharing. She added Figure 11-2 in the report is a map of fish passage barriers identified by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Kurt Nelson, Tulalip Tribes, added: Unfortunately, WDFW Fish Passage Inventory is good but not complete, lots of unknown, and missing culverts, generally speaking.
- Elizabeth McGovern, WSDOT, shared that WSDOT contracts with DFW to re-inventory within our ROW when we have corridor improvement projects to address data issues/changes in status.

8. Noise

There are twelve existing noise walls in the preliminary study area, but none are found immediately next to the US 2 Trestle or its connections. No added noise walls are planned. The potential for noise-sensitive receptors in the area was assessed, with the figure showing FHWA's noise abatement activity categories, which are detailed in the report.

9. Hazardous Materials and Parks and Recreational Areas

There are one hundred identified hazardous materials contamination sites in the preliminary study area, based on a review of Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Map. Six sites are found near the US 2 Trestle's west end connections with I-5, with four undergoing cleanup and two awaiting cleanups. The EEC Report includes maps for more detailed site locations. Additionally, the Everett Smelter Plume overlaps with the study area, where lead and/or arsenic contamination in shallow soils is being addressed through a cleanup effort funded by a legal settlement with Asarco.

10. Cultural Resources

The US 2 trestle and its immediate vicinity do not have any historic bridges, though four historic bridges are found farther north on SR 529. Six historic resources near the trestle's west end connection are listed or eligible for state or federal historic registers.

11. HEAL Act

The study team analyzed four measures of disadvantaged communities at the census tract level, identifying overburdened and vulnerable populations using June 2024 Governor's Office Guidance. Everett and Mukilteo communities face the highest risks, including access and safety burdens. North of US 2, Marysville and the Tulalip Reservation also experience transportation disadvantages and environmental risks. Communities near Lake Stevens and Snohomish

primarily face transportation access challenges. Most community resources are concentrated in downtown and south Everett, with fewer in northern and eastern areas. Growing populations east of the US 2 trestle rely on it for essential services to the west.

Comments/questions:

Penny Kelley, Department of Ecology, asked for clarification about the content of the Environmental Existing Conditions Report and next steps. Lisa explained that the purpose of the PEL process is to understand existing conditions to inform decisions about alternatives to move into the NEPA process. She noted that the Environmental Existing Conditions Report is based on a desktop analysis, which is relevant and appropriate for the PEL process, but somewhat limited. If there are other data sources from the members, the team will welcome the input and can consider integrating it into the report. The study team will then move into an analysis of environmental effects and benefits of potential proposed projects. The study team is looking for confirmation that scope and scale of the report are appropriate. The RAC members can provide comments by email, and the study team can set up follow-up meetings or calls to discuss as needed.

Concept Evaluation

Josh Shippy, WSDOT, reviewed the concept evaluation process. He explained that it involves developing multimodal improvement concepts for both directions of the trestle and its connections, along with separate active transportation concepts. Using 19 criteria based on the Purpose and Need, concepts underwent pre-screening (pass, neutral, or fail). The highest-scoring concepts were paired with compatible active transportation options for further qualitative evaluation (high, medium, low). After gathering input in Level 1, up to five system alternatives will advance to Level 2 for more quantitative screening, identifying alternatives for the NEPA process.

He also shared how Active Transportation (AT) we are incorporated into the roadway concepts. After Active Transportation concepts were developed and scored separately, the study team paired the highest Active Transportation concepts with roadway concepts and did a full Level 1 assessment.

Summary of Preliminary Level 1 Screening Results

For the west interchange area, the study team looked at 14 concepts and carried forward six that scored above average. For the trestle, the study team looked at 13 concepts and eight moved forward. And for the east end, the study team looked at 14 concepts and seven moved forward.

West Interchange- Westbound (WB)

The study team identified five westbound connection concepts at the west end that received above-average scores. All concepts include a two-lane ramp to I-5 southbound, an additional ramp into Everett, and compatibility with a three- or four-lane westbound trestle. Each concept also supports a potential transit priority path to downtown Everett via California, Hewitt, or Pacific Avenue. The California route aligns better with a north-side trestle HOV lane, while the Hewitt and Pacific routes are more compatible with a south-side trestle HOV lane.

West Interchange- Eastbound (EB)

The study team identified five westbound connection concepts at the west end that received above-average scores. All concepts include a two-lane ramp to I-5 southbound, an additional ramp into Everett, and compatibility with a three- or four-lane westbound trestle. Each concept

also supports a potential transit priority path to downtown Everett via California, Hewitt, or Pacific Avenue. The California route aligns better with a north-side trestle HOV lane, while the Hewitt and Pacific routes are more compatible with a south-side trestle HOV lane.

Trestle – Westbound (WB)

There were four westbound trestle concepts that received above average scores, all of which assumed a new trestle structure, three full-time travel lanes and standard shoulders, and the potential for a full-time or peak-use shoulder HOV/transit lane on either the north or south side of trestle. One concept assumed peak shoulder use in addition to the 3 full-time lanes, making it four lanes during the peak period. Another concept assumed two lanes plus a barrier-separated reversible HOV/transit lane. All of the concepts are compatible with multiple active transportation concepts.

Trestle – Eastbound (EB)

The evaluation of eastbound trestle concepts identified four options with above-average scores, all of which assume a new structure with standard design width shoulders. One concept, TE4, closely resembles the current configuration, featuring two full-time lanes with a peak shoulder use lane, but it incorporates a standard inside shoulder for improved safety and functionality. Three other concepts propose expanding to three full-time travel lanes, enhancing capacity and reliability. Additionally, TE7 introduces peak shoulder use, either for high-occupancy vehicles (HOV) or general-purpose traffic, in conjunction with the three full-time lanes. A key assumption in the planning process is that the eastbound trestle replacement would follow the completion of the westbound trestle replacement.

East Interchange- Westbound (WB)

The evaluation of east end westbound connection concepts identified five options with above-average scores, each offering variations in how SR 204, 20th Street, and US 2 connections merge. All concepts include the option for a rebuilt two-lane 20th Street local bridge over Ebey Slough and are compatible with either a three- or four-lane westbound trestle. Additionally, three of the concepts align with a north side trestle HOV lane, while the remaining two are designed to accommodate a south side trestle HOV lane. These options aim to enhance connectivity and traffic flow while ensuring flexibility in future design considerations.

East Interchange- Eastbound (EB)

The evaluation of east end eastbound connection concepts identified two options with above-average scores, both assuming a two-lane ramp to SR 204 and compatibility with a two-, three-, or four-lane eastbound trestle. One of the concepts also includes a grade-separated connection from northbound SR 204 to Sunnyside, enhancing traffic flow and reducing potential congestion points. These options provide flexibility in design while supporting improved connectivity and capacity for future eastbound travel.

System-level Alternatives Development

Josh Shippy gave a high-level overview of the process on developing Level 2 System Alternatives. He shared that the Level 1 screening focused on corridor concept components by area (west end, trestle, east end) and by direction. Based on the results, the highest-rated concepts will be analyzed for compatibility with each other across the three geographical areas. More traffic analysis tests will be conducted to confirm the operational viability of certain concepts and how they connect with others. This will help identify the best pairings and any potential operational issues. The aim is to develop up to five non-tolled system alternatives and two tolled system alternatives for the Level 2 evaluation. Since tolling is not assumed as a given for this study, alternatives will be carried forward to reflect both tolled and non-tolled scenarios.

Comments/questions:

Penny Kelley, Department of Ecology, asked for clarification on what type of input is expected from the RAC and when throughout the process. Lisa explained the information shared in each PEL committee/group, noting that the intent is to focus the Technical Working Group (TWG) primarily on the details of the design concepts that Josh just shared, whereas the intent is to focus the RAC on the environmental aspects of the study where their agencies have jurisdiction and a greater level of interest. April added that more detailed materials describing the draft concepts are available for any of the committees to review, and the study team welcomes input.

Penny also asked when the environmental aspects will start to tie into the design concepts. April said the study team will be evaluating the environmental effects and benefits of the system alternatives once developed.

Next Steps

April Delchamps, WSDOT, shared that the study team will hold two more RAC meetings as part of this study. The next meeting, scheduled for the summer, will focus on sharing Level 2 evaluation results, including potential environmental effects and benefits. The final RAC meeting, planned for later this year, will provide an opportunity to review the draft PEL Study findings and gather final input before moving forward. These meetings will ensure continued engagement and collaboration throughout the process.

Action items:

- RAC members may send feedback on the draft environmental existing conditions report to WSDOT by February 14, 2025.
- The study team will look into whether the City of Everett's previous wetland study was referenced in the environmental existing conditions report.
- The study team will look into whether it is appropriate to include a reference to the Section 9 permit in the wetlands and other waters section.