The EIS Process: Discipline Reports

The City of Seattle has determined that alternatives for the Magnolia Bridge Replacement Project are likely to have a significant impact on the environment. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared to satisfy both the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Four alternatives are being evaluated in the EIS including three different alignment alternatives (A, D, and H) and a No Build alternative.

What is a discipline report?

Discipline reports study the impacts of the project on various aspects of the environment. These discipline reports will be used to write the Draft EIS, which will be released in Fall 2004. The EIS will contain all the analysis currently being prepared by the project team. When the Draft EIS is released, the public will have a chance to comment on the document.

Discipline Reports:

Geology and Soils

A general description of existing geology, soils, and topography for the project study area is being prepared. This report will evaluate impacts from seismic hazards, slope stability, and construction.

Air Quality

Air quality impacts are associated with changes in vehicle emissions within the project study area. Traffic information will be used to quantify air quality impacts.

Energy

The project is not anticipated to have substantial energy impact. An energy section will be prepared for the Draft EIS without a supporting discipline report.

Water Quality

The analysis of impacts to water resources is looking at surface water, groundwater, marine conditions, coastal flooding, and storm water. The impacts of both bridge operation and construction will be assessed. The shoreline impacts will include a separate analysis of Alternative A due to the impacts to the shoreline specific to this alternative.

Noise

Existing noise levels will be measured at up to twenty locations. Future noise levels at these locations will be predicted for each bridge replacement alternative.

Wildlife, Fisheries, and Vegetation

A survey of the study area will identify any potential habitat or plant species that may be affected by the project, including any threatened or endangered species in the area. By examining the vegetation, soil, and hydrologic conditions, this report will also identify wetlands that could be impacted by construction.

Hazardous Materials

The hazardous materials analysis is looking at known and suspected hazardous material releases in the study area and will identify probable impacts of construction on hazardous materials. The report will recommend mitigation measures that could be used to avoid impacts from hazardous materials.

Land and Shore Use

General land use characteristics and development patterns will be documented through field investigation and review of city and neighborhood plans. Potential new land uses in the study area are being identified through interviews with landowners. The following documents will be reviewed to help understand the project's impact on land and shore use:

- City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan
- Seattle Land Use and Zoning Code
- Seattle Critical Areas Ordinance
- City of Seattle Shoreline Master Program
- Port of Seattle Harbor Development Strategy
- BINMIC Plan
- Neighborhood Plans

Parks and Recreation

Park and recreation resources in the project study area will be identified through field investigation and review of City of Seattle mapping systems. Representatives from the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department have been consulted about ongoing and planned facilities and activities in the study area. No direct impacts to any park or recreation facility are anticipated from the proposed build alternatives.

Cultural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric and historical uses of the area and cultural and historic resources have been identified through library and archival searches. Native American groups will be contacted to identify resources significant to their heritage in or near the study area.

Social and Economic Conditions

Demographic information will be based on the 2000 U.S. Census data and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) forecasts. Local land use plans and studies, as well as field investigations, will provide information on existing development patterns and community characteristics.

Displacements and new right-of-way requirements will be determined for each alternative. Impacts on residential and business properties as well as potential business disruption will be identified. Economic analyses will include effects on employment, tax collections, and marine cluster industries.

Environmental Justice

This report identifies who has the benefits and who has the burdens of the project. Demographic information is being compiled to identify the proportion of minority populations and low-income populations in the study area, and whether any specific impacts are disproportionate to minority or low-income populations.

Visual Quality

To illustrate the “view of” and the “view from” the road, approximately ten viewpoints are being prepared for each alternative. This report compares the aesthetic characteristics of each alternative.

Traffic and Transportation

In order to assess the impacts on transportation, traffic volumes and levels of service, transit routes and ridership, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and truck and rail operations are all being examined.

Public Services and Utilities

Locations and service area boundaries are being identified for police, fire and emergency services, and schools. Providers and service area boundaries are being identified for both publicly owned and Port owned water, sewer, natural gas, electric, and telecommunications lines. Changes in response times, detour routes, and access to public services will be described for each alternative.