

Federal Way Link Extension


Record of Decision
Federal Transit Administration



Table of Contents

1.1	Project Description	4
1.1.1	Route and Stations.....	7
1.2	Basis for the Decision	7
1.2.1	Planning and Project Development Process.....	7
1.2.2	Purpose and Need	8
2	Alternatives Considered In the Final EIS.....	9
2.1	No Build Alternative	9
2.2	Light Rail Alternatives	9
2.3	Environmentally Preferred Alternatives.....	10
3	Measures to Minimize Harm and Project Commitments.....	10
4	Monitoring and Enforcement.....	11
5	Opportunities to Comment	11
5.1	Final EIS Comments.....	12
6	Determination and Findings	12
6.1	Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes.....	12
6.2	Executive Order 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs and 23 USC 139 Coordination Requirements.....	13
6.3	Clean Air Act	13
6.4	Clean Water Act Section 404.....	14
6.5	Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402	14
6.6	Coastal Zone Management Act	15
6.7	Endangered Species Act	15
6.8	Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act	15
6.9	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	15
6.10	Order 12898 Environmental Justice.....	16
6.11	Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act	16
6.12	Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act	17
6.13	National Environmental Policy Act	17

List of Figures

Figure 1. Regional Setting for the Federal Way Link Extension5
Figure 2. Federal Way Link Extension Route 

Appendices

- A Alternatives Considered in the Final EIS
- B Mitigation Plan
- C Responses to Comments Received on the Final EIS

Decision

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), pursuant to 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.127, issues this Record of Decision (ROD) finding that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have been satisfied for the construction and operation of the Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) by the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit). This ROD also contains findings on other environmentally related federal statutory requirements.

This ROD is based on FTA's close review and independent evaluation of Sound Transit's planning and environmental processes in developing project alternatives and evaluating their effects. FTA recognizes that Sound Transit benefitted from the input and assistance of a number of cooperating and participating agencies:

Cooperating Agencies	Participating Agencies
Federal Highway Administration	U.S. Environmental Protection Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Washington State Department of Transportation	Washington State Department of Ecology
City of Des Moines	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
City of Federal Way	Puget Sound Regional Council
City of Kent	King County
City of SeaTac	Highline College
	Seattle Public Utilities

This process has produced the Federal Way Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (April 2015) and the Federal Way Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2016) (collectively referred to as the "environmental review documents") and has led to the determinations made in this ROD.

This ROD summarizes the key elements of the Federal Way Link Extension; the factors and process that led to its development; the alternatives that FTA considered; the various opportunities to comment on the project and project documents; the public, tribal, and agency comments and responses thereto; the basis for FTA's decision; and the mitigation measures the project requires. The ROD does not replace or negate any of the information or descriptions in the environmental review documents.

Based on its consideration of the environmental review documents, FTA finds that the project has met all applicable requirements. FTA further finds that this ROD is complete and supports the determination that all NEPA requirements have been met.

FTA expects the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to issue a separate ROD to support actions FHWA will take regarding the project. FTA expects those actions to include:

- Airspace lease(s) for use of interstate right-of-way.
- Breaks in access, including those determined necessary during the design process, as well as those requested during construction.
- An operations and maintenance agreement related to interstate right-of-way use.
- Project Design Approval.

1.1 Project Description

The Federal Way Link Extension will extend the Sound Transit Link light rail system from Angle Lake Station in SeaTac south to Des Moines, Kent, and Federal Way in King County. The 7.8-mile project alignment generally follows Interstate 5 (I-5), one of the major north-south routes through the project corridor. Figure 1 shows the regional setting and Figure 2 shows the project route. The project alignment and stations are described in more detail below.

The project will help implement the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2040 (PSRC 2009, updated 2014) and the Sound Transit Regional Transit Long Range Plan (Sound Transit 2005a, updated 2014) and is part of the Sound Transit 2 (ST2) and Sound Transit 3 (ST3) plans for regional transit investments.

The project approved in this ROD is substantially the same as the Preferred Alternative evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final EIS describes in detail the Preferred Alternative's alignment, profile, and the other project components, including:

- Stations
- Access
- Park-and-Ride facilities
- Noise control improvements
- Major utility relocations
- Traction power substations

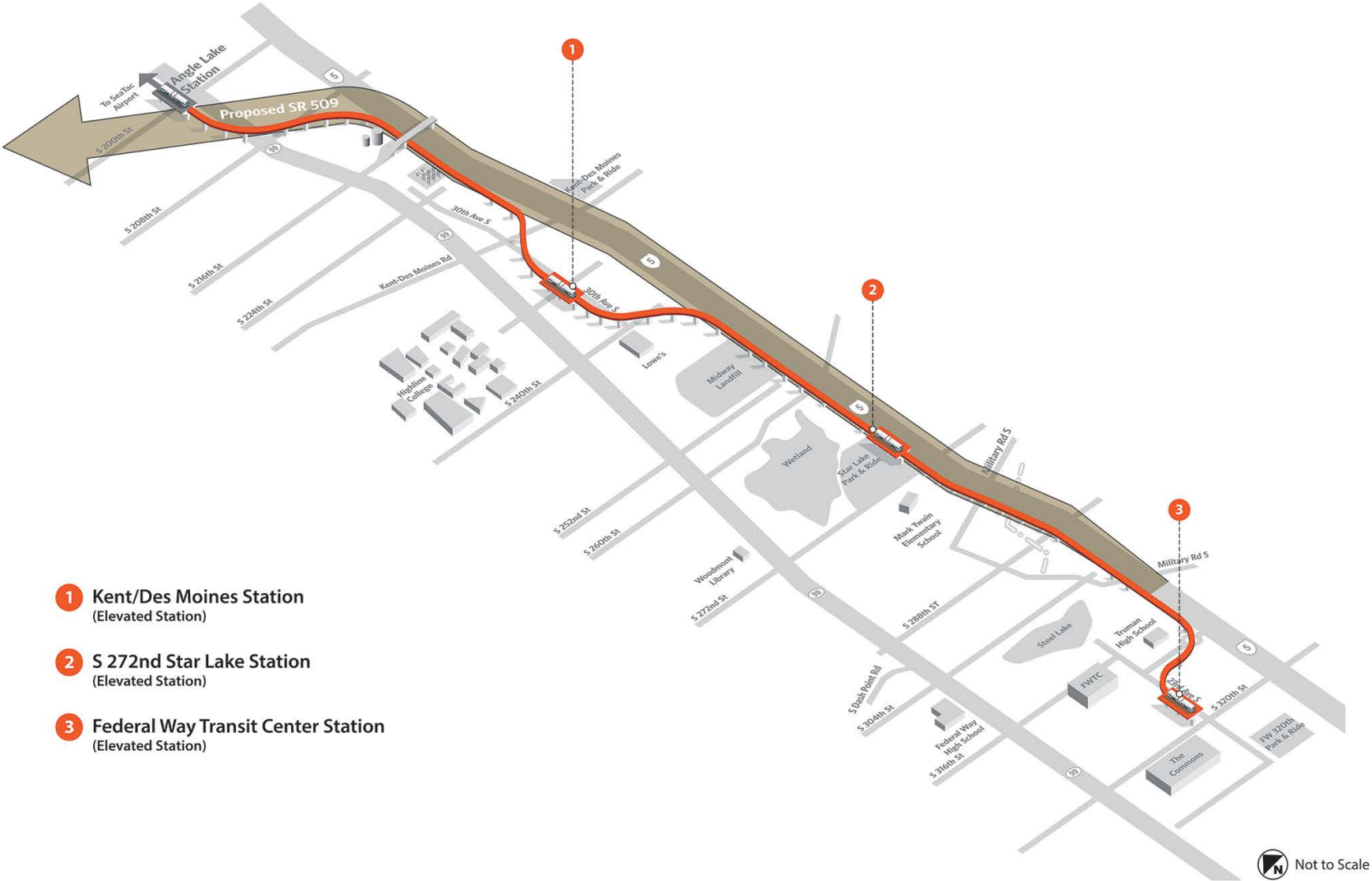
The final alignment selected in this ROD differs from that of the Final EIS Preferred Alternative in two respects:

- Instead of a trench profile, the route will have an elevated profile at the South 272nd Star Lake Station and across South 272nd Street.
- The route will cross South 317th Street in an elevated profile instead of a trench profile.

Figure 1. Regional Setting for the Federal Way Link Extension



Figure 2. Federal Way Link Extension Route



1.1.1 Route and Stations

The route will extend south from the Angle Lake Station in the City of SeaTac, cross SR 99 in an elevated profile, and continue along the south edge of the future SR 509 alignment to Interstate 5 (I-5). It will continue south along the west side of I-5, crossing under S 216th Street in a trench, and crossing over Kent/Des Moines Road (SR 516) in an elevated profile. In the Kent/Des Moines station area, it will transition west to be close to Highline College with an elevated station along the west side of 30th Avenue S. The Kent/Des Moines Station will include bus transfer and layover facilities, a parking structure with approximately 500 stalls, and non-motorized access improvements including a new S 236th Street connection to Highline College.

The route will then continue south along the west side of I-5, generally at-grade, and will cross over S 260th Street in an elevated profile. It will transition to an elevated profile at the S 272nd Star Lake Station in the City of Kent. The S 272nd Star Lake Station will include bus transfer and layover facilities and approximately 1,200 parking stalls. The route will cross S 272nd Street in an elevated profile.

South of S 272nd, the route will continue along the west side of I-5, generally at-grade. It will cross over Military Road S and S 288th Street in an elevated profile and then turn west and cross over S 317th Street. It will terminate at an elevated station at the Federal Way Transit Center in the City of Federal Way. The station, on the west side of 23rd Avenue S and north of S 320th Street, will retain the existing 1,190-stall parking garage, and will reconfigure the existing bus transit center and an additional 400 parking stalls. Elevated tail tracks from the station platform will extend over S 320th Street.

1.2 Basis for the Decision

1.2.1 Planning and Project Development Process

Decades of planning and investments have focused on the need for effective regional transit serving this corridor's communities. The "Forward Thrust" proposals of the late 1960s and early 1970s included fixed guideway transit along the I-5 corridor in King County, but funding was defeated at the polls. Since then, a largely commuter-oriented transit system of express bus infrastructure and services has developed to serve sustained population and employment growth along the I-5 corridor. Sound Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Pierce Transit, King County Metro, and Community Transit have also invested in high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, park-and-ride facilities, transit centers, direct access ramps, and freeway transit stations.

In 1993, Sound Transit was created, and in 1995 it made the Federal Way Link Extension project corridor part of a large proposal for developing regional rail and express bus service connecting King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The voters rejected that program but in 1996 they approved financing for a scaled-back program known as Sound Move. A Long-Range Plan Update in 2005 defined a second phase of investments called ST2, which voters agreed to finance in 2008, and generally defined a project connecting SeaTac to Des Moines, Kent, and Star Lake/Redondo. A 2014 Long-Range Plan update, Sound Transit 3 (ST3), included extending light rail to the Federal Way Transit Center and Tacoma. Voters approved its financing in 2016.

The environmental process for the Federal Way Link Extension (previously known as the Federal Way Transit Extension and the South Corridor High Capacity Transit Project) began with early scoping in October 2012 and an Alternatives Analysis in 2012 and 2013. On June 17, 2013 the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published. The Draft EIS was published in April 2015.

After considering the Draft EIS, public and agency comments, and supporting materials, the Sound Transit Board passed Motion M2015-56 in July 2015, identifying a Preferred Alternative for the project. The Final EIS was issued November 18, 2016 and on January 26, 2017, after consideration of the Final EIS, comments on the Final EIS, and other materials, the Sound Transit Board passed Resolution R2017-02, selecting the project to build.

1.2.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Federal Way Link Extension is to extend the Sound Transit Link light rail system south from the city of SeaTac to the cities of Des Moines, Kent, and Federal Way in King County in order to:

- Provide a rapid, reliable, accessible, and efficient alternative for travel to and from the corridor and other urban growth and activity centers in the region, with sufficient capacity to meet projected demand.
- Expand mobility by improving connections to the regional multimodal transportation system with peak and off-peak transit service.
- Provide the high-capacity transit (HCT) infrastructure and service to support the adopted regional and local land use, transportation, and economic development plans. Plans such as Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) VISION 2040 call for growth to be concentrated in designated urban centers connected to each other by HCT. Several individual cities have adopted land use plans to support this regional vision.
- Advance the Sound Transit Long-Range Plan's vision, goals, and objectives for high-quality regional transit service connecting major activity centers in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.
- Implement a financially feasible HCT system to help preserve and promote a healthy environment.

The project is needed because:

- Increasing congestion on I-5 and on the key arterials leading in and out of the study area will further degrade existing transit performance and reliability.
- North-south transit demand is expected to grow by about 80 percent by 2035 as a result of residential and employment growth in the FWLE study area. This growth will require additional and more reliable transportation options than currently exist.
- People in the corridor need reliable and efficient peak and off-peak transit service to connect with the region's growth centers.
- The corridor has a high concentration of transit-dependent populations who need efficient and reliable regional transit connectivity.
- Regional and local plans call for HCT in the corridor consistent with PSRC's VISION 2040 and Sound Transit's Long-Range Plan.

- The region and the state both have environmental and sustainability goals of reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THE FINAL EIS

The Final EIS analyzed the Preferred Alternative, three other build alternatives, and a no build alternative.

2.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative represented the transportation system and environment as they would exist without the project. It provided a basis for comparing impacts among alternatives and allows analysis of the potential impacts of not building the project. It assumed other committed highway, transit, and nonmotorized projects identified in PSRC's Transportation 2040 as amended in 2015, including ST2 extensions and facilities other than the light rail extension from SeaTac to Federal Way. The No Build Alternative also assumed PSRC population and employment growth through 2035.

2.2 Light Rail Alternatives

The EIS analyzes four light rail alternatives: the Preferred Alternative, the SR 99 Alternative, the SR 99 to I-5 Alternative, and the I-5 to SR 99 Alternative. It also summarizes other alternatives and why they were not carried forward for analysis. Each alternative in the EIS has between four and nine station or alignment options. *Station options* are alternate locations for each station area and generally have the same characteristics and serve the same population. An *alignment option* is an alternate route along a portion of the alternative. The SR 99, SR 99 to I-5, and I-5 to SR 99 alternatives also included *potential additional stations* that are not funded under the ST2 or ST3 plans and would require additional approvals.

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is the basis for the project described in Section 1.1 of this ROD. In the Final EIS, the Preferred Alternative includes two station options in the Kent/Des Moines station area, one station option in the S 272nd Street station area, and two station options in the Federal Way City Center station area. It also includes alignment options at the Midway Landfill and S 317th Street.

SR 99 Alternative

The SR 99 Alternative is an elevated alignment. It would exit the Angle Lake Station along 28th Avenue S, cross over WSDOT's planned SR 509 Extension and transition to the existing SR 99 median near S 208th Street. It would remain in the median of SR 99 except at station areas and at the crossings of Kent-Des Moines Road and S 272nd Street. This alternative includes three station options in the Kent/Des Moines station area, one station option in the S 272nd Street station area, and one station option in the Federal Way City Center station area. It also includes potential additional stations at S 216th Street and S 260th Street.

SR 99 to I-5 Alternative

The SR 99 to I-5 Alternative would have the same alignment as the SR 99 Alternative from the Angle Lake Station to just north of Kent-Des Moines Road. It would then transition to 30th Avenue S with a Kent/Des Moines 30th Avenue East Station north of S 240th Street. After leaving the station, the alignment would transition to the I-5 right-of-way and remain in the right-of-way to S 317th Street, where it would turn west to the Federal Way Transit Center Station.

It includes two station options in the Federal Way City Center station area, two options for a potential additional station at S 216th Street, and one alignment option at the Midway Landfill.

I-5 to SR 99 Alternative

The I-5 to SR 99 Alternative would exit the Angle Lake Station and head east, crossing SR 99 and following the future SR 509 Extension to just north of Kent-Des Moines Road. It would then transition to 30th Avenue S with a station north of S 240th Street. After leaving this station, the alignment would transition to the SR 99 median and be the same as the SR 99 Alternative to the Federal Way Transit Center.

It includes a station option in the S 272nd Street station area, a station option in the Federal Way City Center station area, and two options for a potential additional station at S 260th Street.

2.3 Environmentally Preferred Alternatives

All of the build alternatives in the Final EIS advance environmental and sustainability goals of the state and region by reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. They also support local and regional land use plans that call for high-capacity transit and for reducing people's reliance on automobiles, and all would improve the availability and reliability of public transportation for people in the corridor. These characteristics make all of the build alternatives environmentally preferable over the No Build Alternative.

The Final EIS discusses how impacts vary among the build alternatives. While there are trade-offs, none of the build alternatives is materially more environmentally preferable than another.

After considering the Final EIS, comments on the Draft and Final EIS, input from the public and affected jurisdictions, and other materials, Sound Transit identified the alternative it seeks to build as the Final EIS Preferred Alternative with two of its options: an elevated profile at the S 272nd Star Lake Station and an elevated profile at S 317th Street. FTA concurs with Sound Transit's decision.

3 MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM AND PROJECT COMMITMENTS

Sound Transit has designed the project to avoid and minimize harm. The Final EIS also identifies measures Sound Transit will take to mitigate impacts. Appendix B, Mitigation Plan, which is incorporated herein by reference, summarizes the mitigation measures that are required of Sound Transit under this ROD. Sound Transit will ensure the

implementation of all environmental mitigation identified in this ROD unless it receives concurrence from FTA to do otherwise.

Sound Transit shall meet the conditions of all applicable state, federal, and local permits and approvals; employ best management practices (BMPs); and implement the specific mitigation measures identified in Appendix B.

The mitigation measures described in Appendix B are conditions of this Federal Way Link Extension ROD. They will be incorporated in contracts that may be awarded for construction of the project and will be relied upon by other federal permitting agencies. FTA considers them to be material conditions of this ROD and will incorporate them in any future grant agreement that it may award Sound Transit for the construction of the Federal Way Link Extension. FTA finds that with the accomplishment of these mitigation commitments, Sound Transit will have taken all reasonable, prudent, and feasible means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from this project.

4 MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

To ensure compliance with required mitigation and to assist with FTA oversight, Sound Transit will use its mitigation monitoring program to track, monitor, and report the status of the project environmental mitigation actions identified in the ROD to FTA on a quarterly schedule. Upon FTA approval, the mitigation measures and monitoring program may be modified during the final design, permitting, and construction processes as warranted in order to implement similar effective mitigation.

5 OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT

Since the Federal Way Link Extension project was initiated in 2012, Sound Transit and FTA have provided frequent opportunities for interested members of the public, agencies, and tribes to engage, share concerns, and discuss specific project details with Sound Transit staff. Sound Transit's public involvement activities to date have included public open houses and workshops, community event participation, stakeholder briefings, email and website updates, web and print advertisements, mailers, and meetings with groups of interested businesses, residents, affected property owners, and others. Appendix B, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination, in the Final EIS contains more details on public engagement up to the release of that document on November 18, 2016.

FTA and Sound Transit notified the public of the Final EIS with a Notice of Availability published in the Federal and SEPA registers, legal notices in the Seattle Times and Tacoma News Tribune, a postcard sent to addresses within one-half mile of the alternatives (approximately 25,000 addresses), and an email notification to the project listserv (approximately 28,000 email addresses). Sound Transit also mailed a copy of the Final EIS Executive Summary with a CD of the complete Final EIS to parties who had commented on or requested a copy of the Draft EIS, and made the Final EIS available on the project website and at Sound Transit's office and public libraries in the project corridor.

5.1 Final EIS Comments

The Final EIS evaluated a station option (S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option) and an alignment option (S 317th Elevated Alignment Option) that were not analyzed in the Draft EIS. Both options relate to the Preferred Alternative. FTA held a 30-day comment period from November 18, 2016 to December 19, 2016 to solicit feedback on the new information. FTA received written comments from the following parties:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- City of Federal Way
- City of SeaTac
- Federal Way Public Schools
- Midway Sewer District
- Harsch Investment Properties
- McMichael, Barbara
- Pasta, Diane
- Strawser, Ruth
- Whisner, Jack

The substantive comments are summarized below. Appendix C to this ROD contains the comments in full and FTA's responses.

Federal Way Public Schools and the City of Federal Way were the only parties who commented on the new station and alignment options. **Federal Way Public Schools** indicated opposition to the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option because of its construction and permanent impacts to Mark Twain Elementary School property. They raised concerns regarding the elevated option's visual, noise, traffic, and access impacts to the school as well. The District believes the elevated guideway option would be incompatible with existing and future school uses. They also indicated opposition the S 317th Elevated Alignment Option.

The **City of Federal Way's** comment letter supported the Preferred Alternative. It also supported Federal Way Public Schools' preference for a trench profile at S 272nd Street instead of an elevated profile.

The **US EPA** identified concerns with the Preferred Alternative's impacts to ecosystems resources (wetlands and streams), residential displacements, and environmental justice communities. The **City of SeaTac** identified technical information that they would like more information or clarification on. **Midway Sewer District, Harsh Investment Properties, and two individuals** indicated support for the Preferred Alternative over alternatives along SR 99. Midway Sewer District also provided suggestions on pedestrian improvements near the Kent-Des Moines station area.

One individual commenter supported the SR 99 Alternative because it has less ecosystems impacts and residential displacements. **Another individual** suggested Sound Transit consider investments in bus service instead of light rail in the corridor.

6 DETERMINATION AND FINDINGS

6.1 Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes

Under Executive Order 13175 and other federal authorities, FTA conducted government-to-government consultation and coordination with the following federally recognized tribes:

- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Snoqualmie Indian Tribe
- Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians of Washington
- Suquamish Indian Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

In addition, consultation and coordination under provisions of Section 106 occurred with two non-federally recognized tribes, Duwamish Tribal Services and the Snohomish Tribe of Indians.

The Final EIS responds to and incorporates tribal comments and suggestions made in response to the Draft EIS, and tribal coordination continues. In particular, following several discussions with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Sound Transit and WSDOT are assessing the feasibility of replacing the WSDOT Bingaman Creek culverts in the future.

FTA finds that the requirements of Executive Order 13175 have been met.

6.2 Executive Order 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs and 23 USC 139 Coordination Requirements

Executive Order 12372 directs federal agencies to consult with and solicit comments from state and local governments whose jurisdictions will be affected by a federal action. Similarly, 23 USC 139 directs lead agencies to invite interested agencies and tribes to comment on the purpose and need for the project, the range of alternatives to be considered, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS. FTA accepted comments and offered briefings to agencies and tribes during the scoping period, development of the Draft EIS, and preparation of the Final EIS. Several agencies and tribes reviewed and commented on the Draft EIS. Appendix I, Responses to Draft EIS Comments, in the Final EIS contains responses to all public and agency comments received during the Draft EIS comment period. Appendix C to this ROD contains responses to substantive comments on the Final EIS.

Section 1 of this ROD identifies the state and local agencies that accepted invitations to be cooperating or participating agencies for the project. Appendix B, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination, of the Final EIS, provides more details.

FTA finds that the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and 23 USC 139 have been met.

6.3 Clean Air Act

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which specify maximum allowable concentrations for certain criteria pollutants. Washington State and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency have adopted these standards. Proposed transportation projects requiring federal funding or approval must demonstrate compliance with EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93), that is, that the project will not cause or contribute to any new violation of any NAAQS,

increase the frequency or severity of any existing NAAQS violations, or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS.

This project meets project-level air quality conformity in accordance with state and federal regulations. It is included in PSRC's Regional Transportation Plan demonstrating conformity to the State Implementation Plan. It also meets local hot-spot conformity requirements because it will not cause any new NAAQS exceedance or worsen any existing ones, and will not delay the timely attainment of any standard.

6.4 Clean Water Act Section 404

The Clean Water Act (33 USC § 1251 et seq.) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants (including dredged materials) into the waters of the United States, and for regulating quality standards for surface waters. Section 404 of the act applies to the project's wetland and stream impacts and stormwater discharges.

Sound Transit will fill approximately 1.3 acres of wetlands under the authority of a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). It may also need other state and local permits. The project will satisfy all requirements arising from these permits.

Accordingly, FTA finds that with the mitigation measures identified in Appendix B of this ROD, the project meets the requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

6.5 Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402

Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402 address discharges into water. Section 401 provides for EPA certification (delegated to the state) that a project's discharges to water or to wetlands will meet state water quality standards. Under Section 402, a discharge of domestic or industrial wastewater into surface water requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, including a General Construction Permit for applicable construction activities.

The project will not discharge any runoff from new point sources into a surface water body. Stormwater management will meet the requirements of the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington. Within the WSDOT right-of-way, Sound Transit will meet the requirements of the Highway Runoff Manual. Sound Transit will also meet the stormwater management requirements of local jurisdictions.

Sound Transit will apply on-site water quality and flow control treatment to all runoff from pollution-generating impervious surface before discharging it. Sound Transit shall obtain and comply with the requirements of a project-specific General Construction Permit, and will implement measures defined for the project through a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

Accordingly, FTA finds that with the mitigation measures identified in Appendix B of this ROD, the project meets the requirements of Sections 401 and 402 of the Clean Water Act.

6.6 Coastal Zone Management Act

Within Washington's 15 coastal counties, projects with a federal nexus require Coastal Zone Management Act (16 USC § 1451-1462) consistency certification.

Sound Transit shall coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Washington State Department of Ecology to obtain a determination confirming that the project is consistent and compliant with the state's Coastal Zone Management Program.

6.7 Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 USC § 1531 et seq.) is intended to protect threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend. Section 7 of ESA generally requires that any action authorized, approved, or funded by a federal agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or adversely modify any designated critical habitat of such species. Federal agencies must consult with federal wildlife agencies to ensure that their actions satisfy these requirements.

Sound Transit prepared a Biological Assessment (BA) that evaluated the project's potential effects on ESA listed species. Based on the BA, FTA determined that there are no species under National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) jurisdiction in the action area. FTA submitted the BA to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on August 12, 2016. In a letter dated September 8, 2016, USFWS concurred with FTA's determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect the streaked horned lark or western yellow-billed cuckoo.

FTA finds that the project meets the requirements of ESA.

6.8 Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act

The Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (16 USC § 1801 et seq.) directs agencies to identify and conserve habitat that is essential to federally managed fish species, defining "essential fish habitat" as "those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity."

FTA determined that the project will not affect essential fish habitat used by Pacific salmon. FTA finds the project meets the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

6.9 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 USC § 703-712) prohibits taking, killing, or possessing migratory birds. Sound Transit will establish schedule restrictions to have clearing activities occur outside the active bird nesting period, to the extent possible. If avoidance scheduling is infeasible, Sound Transit will work with staff at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conduct preconstruction surveys for nesting migratory birds in the corridor and help Sound Transit comply with the MBTA.

Accordingly, FTA finds that with the mitigation measures identified in Appendix B of this ROD, the project meets the requirements of the MBTA.

6.10 Order 12898 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations (1994), directs federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order No. 5610.2(a) to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations requires agencies to 1) explicitly consider human health and environmental effects related to transit projects that may have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and low-income populations; and 2) implement procedures to provide “meaningful opportunities for public involvement” by members of these populations during project planning and development.

As part of the project planning process and continuing through completion of the Final EIS, FTA and Sound Transit performed meaningful and extensive outreach efforts to minority and low-income communities to ensure their active participation. Chapter 7, Environmental Justice, of the Final EIS describes these outreach efforts.

While the study area includes populations that are predominantly low-income and/or minority, the Federal Way Link Extension will travel in existing transportation corridors, minimizing impacts to all populations. Most impacts would be limited in scope, with adverse effects further minimized by effective mitigation measures. Both negative and positive benefits will occur for minority and low-income populations. Based on the impacts described in the Final EIS, and taking into account the mitigation and enhancement measures that Sound Transit will implement and all offsetting benefits to the affected minority and low-income populations, FTA finds that the project will not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations.

FTA also finds that appropriate outreach has been conducted such that meaningful opportunities for public involvement for those populations have been achieved.

Therefore, FTA finds that with the mitigation measures identified in Appendix B of this ROD, the project meets the requirements of Executive Order 12898 and DOT Order 5610.2(a).

6.11 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 USC § 10010 et seq.) establishes government policy and procedures regarding “historic properties,” which include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties.

Sound Transit reviewed published literature, historical records, and historic-period maps to gather information on specific locations and land uses during the ethnographic period reflecting Native American use of the area. It also conducted pedestrian surveys and subsurface probes and did not identify significant archaeological resources in the project area. The corridor generally has a low-to-moderate probability for containing intact archaeological resources. Construction activities could encounter an unanticipated archaeological site, however, and so Sound Transit will implement an Inadvertent

Discovery Plan (IDP) to minimize the risk of damage to currently unknown archaeological resources.

FTA has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and others and has identified 11 historic resources in the area of potential effects that are eligible for listing on the NRHP. The project will not affect any of them.

Based on the cultural resources analysis, including consultation and coordination with the SHPO and tribes, and on the implementation of the IDP, FTA finds that the project is unlikely to have an adverse effect on resources eligible for listing on the NRHP, and meets the requirements of the NHPA.

6.12 Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (49 USC § 303) requires that the use of land from important public parks, recreation areas, wildlife refuges, or land containing historical sites of local, state, or federal significance be approved and constructed only if (a) there is no feasible and prudent alternative, and (b) the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to these resources. If resources protected by Section 4(f) are involved in a project's planning, a determination is required to confirm if there is a "use" of those resources.

Section 4.16, Historic and Archaeological Resources, Section 4.17, Parkland and Open Space, and Appendix E, Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Evaluation, of the Final EIS document the basis for finding that the project would not use Section 4(f) resources. Accordingly, FTA finds that the project meets the requirements of Section 4(f).

6.13 National Environmental Policy Act

Title 42, Sections 4321 through 4347 and 4372 through 4375 of the United States Code (USC), as well as Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, require that federal agencies evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions, integrate such evaluations into their decision-making processes, and implement appropriate policies.

The environmental record for the Federal Way Link Extension includes the Federal Way Link Extension Draft EIS (April 2015), the Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS (November 2016), and the supporting materials incorporated therein. These documents represent the detailed statement required by NEPA describing:

- The environmental impacts of the proposed action.
- The adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided, should the proposed action be implemented.
- Alternatives to the proposed action.
- Irreversible and irremediable commitments of resources that will be involved should the proposed action be implemented.

Having carefully considered the environmental record, mitigation commitments summarized in Appendix B of this ROD, public and agency comments, and the findings below, FTA has determined that:

- The environmental review documents include a record of: the environmental impacts of the proposal; adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided; alternatives to the proposal; and irreversible and irretrievable impacts on the environment.
- The environmental process included cooperation and consultation with EPA.
- The project meets its purpose and need and satisfies the requirements of NEPA.

**LINDA M
GEHRKE**

Digitally signed by LINDA M GEHRKE
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government,
ou=FTA FTASeattleWA, ou=DOT
FTASeattleWA, cn=LINDA M GEHRKE
Date: 2017.03.06 15:04:24 -08'00'

Linda M. Gehrke
Regional Administrator, Region 10
Federal Transit Administration

APPENDIX A
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THE FINAL EIS

Figure A-2. Federal Way Link Extension Alternatives

SR 99 Alternative



Diagrams are for illustration purposes only and are not to scale.

Figure A-3. Federal Way Link Extension Alternatives

SR 99 to I-5 Alternative

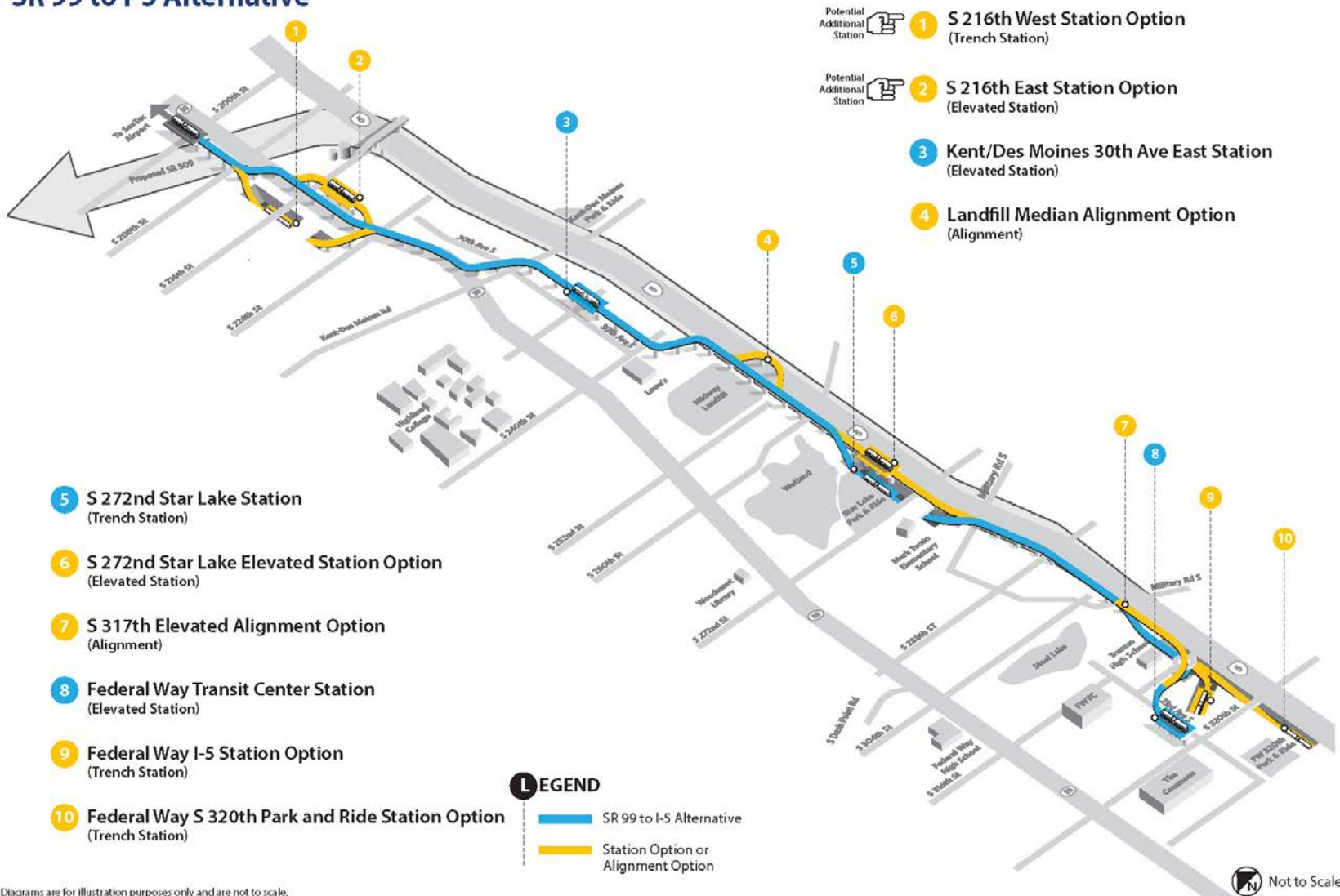
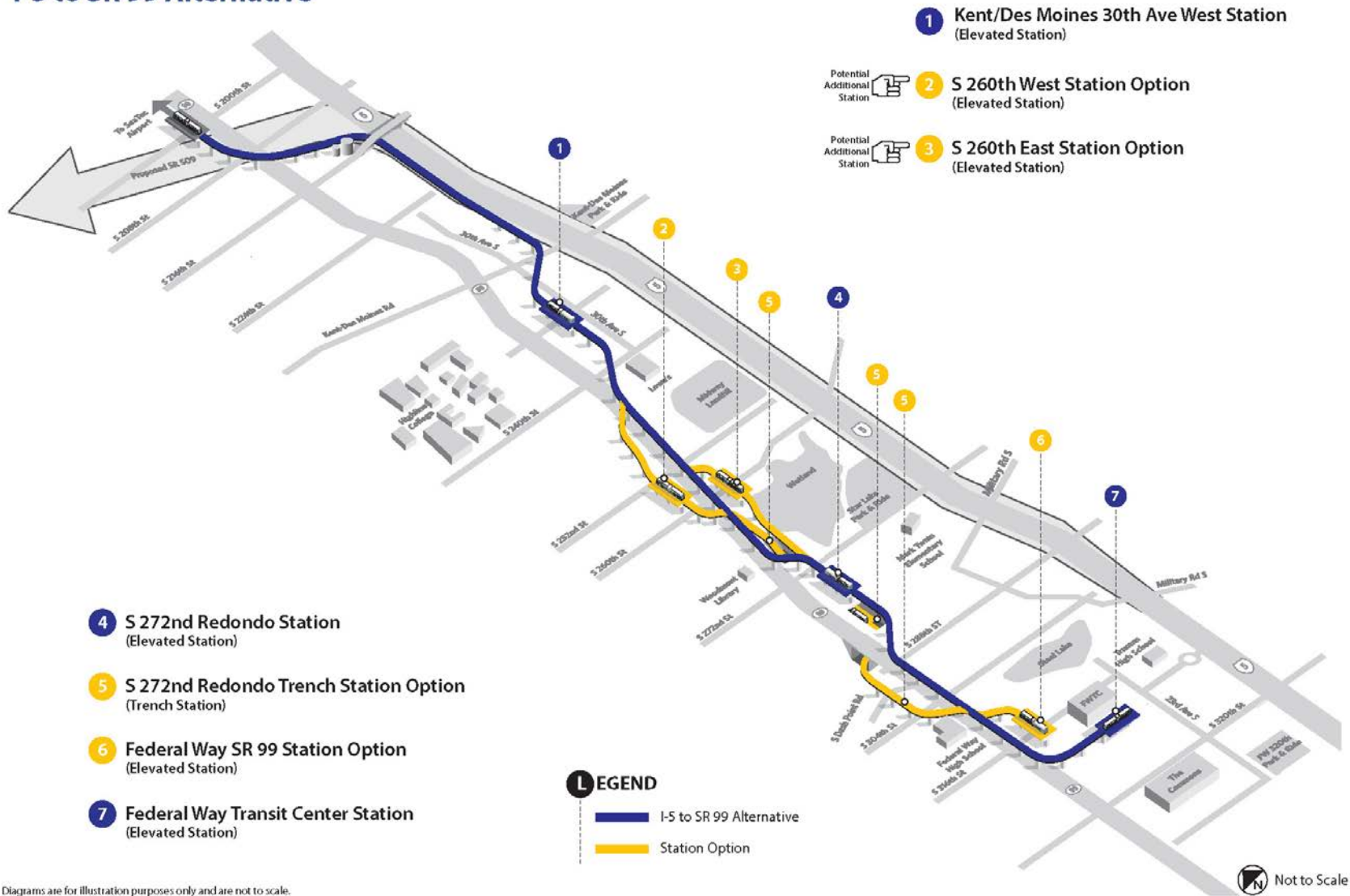


Figure A-4. Federal Way Link Extension Alternatives

I-5 to SR 99 Alternative



APPENDIX B
MITIGATION PLAN

MITIGATION PLAN

The mitigation plan for Federal Way Link Extension (Table B-1) describes Sound Transit's mitigation commitments that will be implemented to avoid or minimize the project impacts identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Many of the impacts identified through the EIS process have been mitigated through incorporation of avoidance, minimization, or improvement elements that are now included in the definition and design of the project.

The mitigation measures described in this appendix are based on measures identified in the Final EIS. This plan describes the mitigation measures associated with the operating (long-term) impacts of Federal Way Link Extension first, then the measures associated with construction. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) considers the mitigation measures to be conditions of this Record of Decision (ROD) and will incorporate them in any future grant agreement that FTA may award Sound Transit for construction of the project. Sound Transit will track these measures and report quarterly to FTA to ensure that the mitigation commitments are being met. Where appropriate, Sound Transit will incorporate mitigation requirements into its contracting documents for final design and construction.

Some measures listed here require the agreement of other parties. For instance, Sound Transit has identified certain intersection improvements, traffic management, safety, and parking strategies to mitigate project-related impacts, but Sound Transit does not have the sole authority to make those improvements when the facilities are owned and managed by others. Sound Transit will coordinate as appropriate with these other agencies and jurisdictions to further define and implement improvements to mitigate the project's impacts.

Finally, the Final EIS assumes that the SR 509 Extension Project is built as it is defined in that project's Final EIS and Record of Decision (2003). Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is currently evaluating several potential design modifications that could trigger reevaluation of certain elements of the Federal Way Link Extension impact analysis and possibly of some mitigation measures.

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
Transportation	3 and 5	Traffic	Long-term	<p>Mitigation will be required at intersections where the intersection level of service (LOS) will be worse than with the No Build Alternative and will not meet the applicable agency LOS standard. If an intersection is not expected to meet agency LOS standards with the No Build Alternative, Sound Transit will participate in mitigation if the FWLE substantially degrades the intersection performance further.</p> <p>The following measures will improve the AM and PM peak intersection delay to meet LOS standards, or to achieve the same LOS or better for intersections that will be below standards with the No Build Alternative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 99 and Kent-Des Moines Road: a second northbound right-turn pocket, a new northbound left-turn pocket on SR 99. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional mitigation for the interim terminus conditions: northbound right-turn signal overlap phase, restricted westbound U-turn movement • SR 99 and S 240th Street: protected plus permissive signal phasing for eastbound and westbound approaches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional mitigation for the interim terminus conditions: additional southbound left-turn pocket, widened S 240th Street, westbound and northbound right-turn pockets • SR 99/S 272nd Street: northbound right-turn pocket. • I-5 northbound ramps/S 272nd Street: northbound left-turn pocket. • I-5 southbound ramps/S 272nd Street: southbound right-turn pocket, rechannelized southbound approach to a shared left-through and right-turn-only lane. • Military Road S/S 272nd Street: southbound right-turn pocket. • Star Lake Road/S 272nd Street: eastbound and westbound left-turn pockets. • SR 99/S 320th Street: northbound right-turn pocket. • Military Road S/259th Place S/S Reith Road: westbound and southbound right-turn pocket. <p>Sound Transit will provide these improvements or other improvements agreed to with the agency of jurisdiction. As the project design advances, Sound Transit will continue to work with affected jurisdictions/agencies to evaluate mitigation strategies for safe, efficient operations. Final mitigation will be determined and agreed upon by Sound Transit and the affected jurisdiction(s) and agency(s). Sound Transit's contribution to improve intersections will be determined during the project permitting process. This may include contributing a proportionate share of costs to improve intersections affected by the FWLE, based on the project's proportionate ratio of trips at the intersection, or another equitable method.</p>
			Construction	<p>Sound Transit will develop a Maintenance of Traffic plan to address the effects of construction activities on the transportation system in the study area during construction. The plan will include at least the following measures, to address specific circumstances as necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (FHWA, 2009) and jurisdictional requirements for all maintenance of traffic plans. • Install advance warning signs and highly-visible construction barriers, and use flaggers where needed. • Consider a variety of traffic and travel demand management strategies.

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly sign and provide reasonable detour routes when cross streets are closed for elevated guideway and trench construction. The contractor will be required to keep nearby parallel facilities open to facilitate access and mobility. Use lighted or reflective signage to direct drivers to truck haul routes to ensure visibility during nighttime work hours. Use special lighting for work zones and travel lanes, where required. Communicate public information through tools such as print, radio, posted signs, websites, and e-mail to provide information regarding street closures, hours of construction, business access, and parking impacts. Coordinate access closures with affected businesses and residents. The contractor will be required to perform this task in coordination with Sound Transit staff. If access closures are required, property access to residences and businesses will be maintained to the extent possible. If access to the property cannot be maintained, the specific construction activity will be reviewed to determine if it could occur during non-business hours, or if the parking and users of this access (for example, deliveries) could be accommodated at an alternate location. Post advance-notice signs prior to construction in areas where construction activities will affect access to surrounding businesses. Provide regular updates to schools, emergency service providers, local agencies, solid waste utilities, and postal services, and assist public school officials in providing advance and ongoing notice to students and parents concerning construction activity near schools. Schedule traffic lane closures and high volumes of construction truck traffic during off-peak hours to minimize delays, where practical. Cover potholes and open trenches, where possible, and use protective barriers to protect drivers from open trenches. Place a temporary construction barrier near the southbound I-5 edge of pavement where barriers are not already present to separate construction activity from I-5 mainline traffic. To minimize potential freight impacts, coordinate with affected businesses throughout the construction period to notify them of lane and access closures and maintain business access as much as possible.
	3 and 5	Transit	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
			Construction	Construction of the Preferred Alternative will temporarily close the entire Star Lake Park-and-Ride. Sound Transit will mitigate this closure by routing transit riders to available spaces at other nearby park-and-ride lots or leasing parking lots and/or new parking areas in the vicinity. Sound Transit will coordinate with King County Metro on temporarily rerouting bus service as needed.
	3	Safety	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required for operation or construction.
	3 and 5	Parking	Long-term	Sound Transit will compensate business owners at fair market value for parking spaces it acquires. Sound Transit will work with local jurisdictions to evaluate and, if necessary, implement hide-and-ride mitigation around any of the stations. If requested by local jurisdictions, Sound Transit will inventory on-street parking around a station before and after the start of light rail revenue service, and will then determine where mitigation measures

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
				will be needed in coordination with the local jurisdiction. Potential parking-control measures include parking meters, restricted parking, passenger and truck load zones, and residential parking zones (RPZs). For those agreed-to parking controls, Sound Transit will pay for signage or other parking-control installations for 1 year after the FWLE begins operating. The local jurisdictions will be responsible for monitoring and providing all enforcement and maintenance, including ongoing RPZ-related costs. Owners of off-street private lots will be responsible for monitoring and preventing potential hide-and-ride parking in their own lots.
			Construction	No mitigation is required.
	3 and 5	Non-motorized facilities	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
	5	Freight mobility	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
			Construction	For any construction activities that might have I-5 impacts, Sound Transit will provide construction information to WSDOT for use in the state's freight notification system. Sound Transit will provide information in a format acceptable to WSDOT.
Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations	4.1	Acquisitions, displacements, and relocations	Long-term and construction	Sound Transit will compensate affected property owners according to Sound Transit's adopted real estate property acquisition and relocation policy, procedures, and guidelines (Sound Transit, 2014a, b). These policies and procedures comply with the federal Uniform Relocation Act and the State of Washington's relocation and property acquisition requirements, and in some cases provide advisory services above the minimum requirements of federal and state law.
Land Use	4.2 and 5	Land use	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
Economics	4.3	Economics	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
	5	Local businesses	Construction	<p>Sound Transit will develop a construction mitigation plan to address project affects to businesses in the study area during construction and will dedicate staff to work with the affected businesses. The plan will include at least the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 24-hour construction telephone hotline. • Provide business cleaning services on a case-by-case basis. • Provide detour, open-for-business, and other signage as appropriate. • Establish effective communications with the public through meetings and construction updates, alerts, and schedules. • Implement promotion and marketing measures to help affected business districts maintain their customer

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
				base. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain access to each business as much as possible and coordinate with businesses during times of limited access. Provide a community ombudsman to investigate and address complaints.
Social, Community, and Neighborhoods	4.4 and 5	Social	Long-term and Construction	No mitigation is required.
Visual and Aesthetics	4.5 and 5	Visual	Long-term	As Sound Transit develops the detailed design, it will incorporate a combination of the following measures as appropriate where the FWLE lowers visual quality at locations identified in Figures 4.5-1 to 4.5-3 in Section 4.5 of the Final EIS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mitigation Measure 1:</i> Remaining vegetation outside of WSDOT I-5 rights-of-way might screen some views of FWLE components along I-5 from adjacent and other nearby residences. Where remaining vegetation and/or sound walls do not effectively screen views of FWLE components, Sound Transit will add new landscaping adjacent to residential areas. As appropriate, Sound Transit will provide landscaping beyond code requirements (i.e., greater widths of planting strips or plant materials) to provide effective visual mitigation. Where appropriate and agreed upon with property owners, Sound Transit will add landscaping on private property (i.e., within the yards of adjacent residences) to help screen views of FWLE components. <i>Mitigation Measure 2:</i> In areas next to residences where there is not enough room to add landscaping that would screen views of FWLE sound walls, the sound walls will be treated with visually interesting elements such as design treatments that incorporate, textures, patterns, and/or color. Where appropriate, Sound Transit will consider adding lower-growing and smaller-scale landscaping along the base of sound walls adjacent to residences to soften the walls' appearance. <i>Mitigation Measure 3:</i> Vegetation removal along the I-5 corridor within the WSDOT right-of-way as well as within Resource Conservation Areas will be minimized to the extent practicable as determined in consultation with WSDOT. When mitigation is required, Sound Transit will consult with WSDOT staff to develop appropriate site-specific measures and offsite mitigation to provide effective visual mitigation, consistent with the WSDOT <i>Roadside Policy Manual</i> (WSDOT, 2015). The manual describes the extent of the mitigation that is required for lost vegetation, vegetation types, and replacement ratios, and where replacement can occur. The manual requires that "mitigation for lost or damaged RCAs must consist of an equal value exchange that provides appropriate performance values identified in the manual." This includes replacing RCA land impacted by the project, as well as replanting that land. The manual includes permanent irrigation requirements for impacted RCAs and specific plant establishment criteria. Sound Transit will also restore or replace impacted vegetation in the highway right-of-way outside of RCAs in accordance with the manual. Specific types, amounts, and locations for replanting will be identified in consultation with WSDOT and through development of a roadside master plan.
			Construction	During construction, Sound Transit will provide visual screening for station construction and staging areas adjacent to residential areas and schools, where required by local jurisdictions. Visual screening could include a solid barrier to screen ground-level views into the construction area. When possible, Sound Transit will preserve

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description			
				existing vegetation to assist in screening views. Sound Transit will shield construction lighting and direct it downward to avoid light spillover onto adjacent sensitive uses. Sound Transit will comply with local jurisdictions' requirements for controlling construction lighting.			
Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases	4.6 and 5	Air quality	Long-term	No mitigation is required.			
			Construction	No mitigation is required.			
Noise and Vibration	4.7	Light rail noise	Long-term	Noise mitigation measures will be provided consistent with Sound Transit's Light Rail Noise Mitigation Policy (Motion No. M2004-08) and the FTA Guidance Manual (2006). During final design, all potential impacts and mitigation measures will be reviewed for confirmation, and if it is discovered that mitigation could be achieved by a less costly means or if the detailed analysis shows no impact, a mitigation measure may be eliminated or modified. Mitigation will also be determined for any new impacts identified during final design. After light rail operations have started, if the resulting noise exceeds FTA criteria, more mitigation may be required. Sound walls will be built where feasible and reasonable, as determined by Sound Transit, based on specific site conditions. Sound walls will be along the side of the guideway structure for elevated profiles, and will be on the ground for at-grade, retained cut, or trench profiles. Based on the EIS analysis, sound walls between 4 and 18 feet tall will be needed for 20,700 feet along the west side of the alignment and sound walls 4 to 6 feet tall will be needed for 4,700 feet along the east side of the alignment. If sound walls are not effective, then sound insulation of the building will be evaluated and provided if the interior noise level does not meet the standard in the Sound Transit Noise Mitigation Policy. Special trackwork (e.g., movable-point or spring-rail frogs) will be used to eliminate the noise-causing gap between tracks at switches and crossovers at locations where this gap causes an impact.			
				4.7	Park-and-ride noise	Long-term	Noise mitigation for the park-and-rides will consist of design features such as sound walls within the parking structure or near the perimeter of the Kent/Des Moines station.
				4.7	Traffic noise	Long-term	The length and height of proposed light rail sound walls will be designed to mitigate traffic noise impacts as practical. The existing sound wall south of S 288th Street will be partially replaced east of the guideway where the guideway will be elevated over Bingaman Creek. A second sound wall will be constructed to the west of the guideway in this area as well if the SR 509 Extension is constructed in this area. All of the traffic noise impacts will be mitigated with sound walls.
				4.7	Vibration and groundborne noise	Long-term	No mitigation is required for groundborne noise. Vibration impacts will be mitigated with use of ballast mats or tire-derived aggregate below the light rail track or high-compliance direct-fixation (HCDF) track fasteners. If warranted, special trackwork with low-impact frogs will be used in place of a conventional frog where crossovers (the point at which two rails cross) would cause a vibration impact that cannot be mitigated through other measures. Sound Transit will confirm or modify the need for and effectiveness of the identified vibration mitigation measures during final design.
	5	Construction noise and vibration	Construction	Sound Transit will comply with applicable construction permits and BMPs to avoid and minimize temporary noise and vibration impacts; no additional mitigation is needed.			

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
Water Resources	4.8 and 5	Water resources	Long-term	The Preferred Alternative will realign approximately 1,000 feet of Bingaman Creek south and north of S 288th Street. Mitigation information for this impact is described below under Ecosystems.
			Construction	No mitigation is required.
Ecosystems	4.9 and 5	Wetlands and wetland buffers	Long-term	<p>Sound Transit will mitigate long-term impacts on wetlands and wetland buffers by replacing resources through one or more of the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved wetland mitigation banks • King County in-lieu fee program • Advance offsite compensatory mitigation • Project-specific mitigation developed by Sound Transit and approved by appropriate regulatory agencies and in consultation with affected tribes. <p>Sound Transit will implement compensatory mitigation in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements and guidelines. Publicly or privately owned portions of the McSorley Creek Wetland may provide opportunities for mitigation through enhancement, or by removing fill materials along the perimeter of the wetlands to create and reestablish wetland acreage and function. Sound Transit will determine final wetland mitigation actions during final design and permitting.</p>
			Construction	<p>Sound Transit will avoid impacting wetlands as much as practicable during construction. Where it cannot avoid impacts, it will restore wetlands and wetland buffers temporarily impacted by construction and will mitigate long-term temporary impacts as described above.</p> <p>Compensatory mitigation will be implemented in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements and guidelines. To the extent that impacts cannot be avoided, Sound Transit will provide compensatory mitigation to achieve no net loss of ecosystem function and acreage.</p>
	4.9	Streams	Long-term	Sound Transit will mitigate unavoidable impacts on Bingaman Creek by replanting affected areas with native vegetation to improve stream habitat and riparian function . If additional offsite mitigation is also needed, it will be developed by Sound Transit and approved by appropriate regulatory agencies and in consultation with affected tribes.
	4.9 and 5	Upland vegetation and wildlife	Long-term	<p>Sound Transit will mitigate tree removal in the WSDOT right-of-way according to the <i>WSDOT Roadside Policy Manual</i> (WSDOT, 2015). Specific types, amounts, and locations for replanting will be identified through development of a roadside master plan in consultation with WSDOT .</p> <p>Sound Transit will comply with local jurisdictions' tree replacement requirements for tree removal outside of WSDOT right-of-way. Because of the visual impacts of tree removal and visual mitigation measures described above, specific locations may have more plantings than the replacement ratio specified in local ordinances.</p>
Construction			Sound Transit will establish schedule restrictions for clearing activities in order to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Clearing activities will occur outside the active bird nesting period, to the extent possible. If avoidance scheduling is infeasible, Sound Transit will comply with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations related to preconstruction surveys. If nesting migratory birds are present, Sound Transit will take the appropriate measures to assure compliance with the MBTA.	

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
				Vegetation impacts from construction that occurs outside the long-term footprints will be temporary, as construction will be followed by site restoration and vegetation reestablishment. Sound Transit will mitigate for temporary impacts on forested vegetation using applicable guidance from WSDOT and local jurisdiction regulations. Vegetation plantings and restoration will only include native species.
Energy	4.10 and 5	Energy	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
Geology and Soils	4.11 and 5	Geology and soils	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
Hazardous Materials	4.12 and 5	Hazardous materials	Long-term	To mitigate potential impacts from hazardous materials sites, Sound Transit will perform a level of environmental due diligence appropriate to the size and past use at all properties along the corridor before they are acquired. Phase 2 environmental site assessments will be conducted where appropriate. Where identified hazardous materials are present, Sound Transit will be responsible for remediating contaminated soil and groundwater, including any previously unknown contamination found during construction.
			Construction	Sound Transit will implement BMPs to avoid or minimize potential spills of hazardous materials, including a Spill Prevention and Maintenance Plan. The project will comply with all applicable state and federal regulatory and permitting requirements for the handling of hazardous materials.
Electromagnetic Fields	4.13 and 5	Electromagnetic fields	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
Public Services, Safety, and Security	4.14 and 5	Public services	Long-term and construction	No mitigation is required.
		Public schools	Long-Term	No mitigation is required.
			Construction	Sound Transit will install a construction barrier between the construction zone and the rest of the Mark Twain Elementary school property (the playfield, school buildings, and driveways) designed to address safety, security, visual effects, and noise. It will also develop a construction plan for work at and near Mark Twain Elementary School. The plan will assure safe pedestrian access and safe schoolbus operations throughout construction, and it will identify a way for the project team to communicate with interested parents. Sound Transit will designate a liaison to work with the school administration on safety, noise, and other potential construction impacts.
Utilities	4.15 and 5	Utilities	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
			Construction	No mitigation is required.

TABLE B-1
Mitigation Plan

Resource	Final EIS Chapter/Section	Impact Topic	Period	Mitigation Description
Historic and Archaeological Resources	4.16 and 5	Historic and archaeological resources	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
			Construction	Sound Transit will develop and implement an Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) to minimize the risk of damage if a currently unknown archaeological resource is discovered. The IDP will include procedures that FTA and Sound Transit will follow if human remains or cultural artifacts are discovered during construction. FTA and Sound Transit will invite the State Historic Preservation Office and interested tribes to review the plan. Archaeologists will conduct training for contractors to help them identify potential cultural resources during construction, including protocols to implement if a potential resource is discovered.
Parkland and Open Space	4.17	Parks and open spaces	Long-term	No mitigation is required.
	5	Playfields	Construction	Sound Transit will restore temporarily impacted portions of the Mark Twain Elementary School field after construction.

APPENDIX C
RESPONSES TO COMMENTS RECEIVED
ON THE FINAL EIS

Letter 1

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Page 1



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
AND ASSESSMENT

December 19, 2016

Ms. Linda Gehrke, Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
Seattle, Washington 98174-1002

Mr. Perry Weinberg, Director
Office of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability
Sound Transit
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, Washington 98104-2826

Dear Ms. Gehrke and Mr. Weinberg:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Federal Way Link Extension project (EPA Region 10 Project Number 12-0058-FTA). We are submitting comments in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comment.

The Sound Transit Board has identified the I-5 Alignment as the Preferred Alternative. Among the three most prominent factors for decision making (cost, travel time, ridership), only the cost estimate differs between the I-5 and the SR 99 alignment alternatives. Other prominent differences between these two alternatives are the extent to which the alignments and/or the station options would (1) impact the natural environment, (2) result in business vs. residential displacements, and (3) have redevelopment potential, particularly transit oriented development (TOD).

Preferred alternative

We continue to have concerns regarding environmental justice and ecosystem impacts with respect to the I-5 (Preferred) Alternative as compared to the SR 99 Alternative. The FEIS indicates that the cost estimate for the I-5 Alternative is the lower of the two.¹ We acknowledge this difference, but recommend that additional cost factors be taken into account for environmental justice concerns (e.g., station location/access/convenience, safety, and residential displacements), and the values of ecosystem services and human welfare benefits² of the scarce remaining natural upland and aquatic habitats in the project area, which would be diminished by implementing the Preferred Alternative.

Ecosystem impacts. The Preferred Alternative would result in the loss of 35 acres of mature forested habitat along I-5, the majority of which is high value Category A and B forested habitat. It would also result in 1.3 acres of permanent impacts to 11 wetlands, including McSorley Creek Wetland, and permanently impact 6.6 acres of 7 wetland buffers, 2.5 acres of stream buffers, and 1,015 linear feet of

¹ Estimated cost for the I-5 Alternative is \$1.54 billion; for the SR 99 Alternative \$1.89 billion (page ES-30).

² Per the October 7, 2015 CEQ/OMB/OSTP Memo for Executive Departments and Agencies on Incorporating Ecosystem Services into Federal Decision Making, M-16-01.

Response to Comment 1-1

Sound Transit completed an Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis to compare alternatives in the Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (see Chapter 7). The analysis is consistent with Executive Order 12898, DOT Order 5610.2(a) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance for analyzing EJ impacts (FTA Circular C4703.1). The comment suggests that the Final EIS analysis fails to account for “additional cost factors” that may alter the comparison of capital cost estimates between alternatives as presented in the Final EIS. The cost estimates prepared do in fact capture differences related to displacements and ecosystem impacts. For example, while the Preferred Alternative has greater residential displacements than the SR 99 Alternative, the right-of-way and relocation costs are greater for the SR 99 Alternative because it displaces more businesses and requires much more acquisition of private property. Some of those businesses serve minority and low-income (MLI) populations. Mitigation costs for ecosystem impacts (e.g., vegetation and wetland impacts) are higher for the Preferred Alternative, commensurate with the differences in impacts. Replanting to address both visual quality impacts from removal of trees and tree replacement requirements per local and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) rules is likely to result in more area being vegetated after mitigation (i.e., greater than a 1-to-1 replacement per acre or number of trees). The EJ analysis considers both mitigation for impacts, and benefits (such as improved access to transit), and FTA finds that the project does not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on MLI populations, regardless of which alternative is selected to build.

Bingaman Creek. Bingaman Creek would either be realigned under the guideway with permanent tree removal or, if it is determined that the state-owned culverts would not be made fish passable by WSDOT, Sound Transit would reroute and permanently pipe this length of the Creek.³ The I-5 Alternative would also increase impervious surface in the project footprint by 73% vs. 14% with the SR 99 Alternative. The SR 99 Alternative would impact less than 0.1 acre of wetland, 0.2-acre wetland buffer, no linear feet of stream, less than 0.1 acre of stream buffer, and 2.9 acres of vegetation.⁴

1-2 While we appreciate Sound Transit has made modifications to the Preferred Alternative to minimize ecosystem impacts and would plan to offer some form of mitigation, avoidance and minimization of ecosystem impacts are best achieved through alternative selection. The SR 99 Alternative would have the fewest impacts on wetlands, buffers, and wildlife habitat, would avoid impacts on streams, and would better protect water quality and remaining natural hydrological function in the project area.⁵ The FEIS does not provide a 404(b)(1) analysis supporting identification of the I-5 Alternative as the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

Environmental Justice

1-3 Demographics of neighborhoods most affected by the proposed project are over 50% minority and over 50% low income. We appreciate that the FWLE project would provide transportation and access benefits for all residents, that the FEIS discusses the issue of affordable housing, the heightened awareness and efforts by local jurisdictions, the legislature, and Puget Sound Regional Council to address this issue, and the FEIS discusses the concerns raised by residents, including the Highline College community.⁶ Our concern is that, in addition to the higher level of ecosystem impacts discussed above, the Preferred Alternative would result in substantially higher residential displacements (196) vs. the SR 99 Alternative (36). We recommend additional consideration of factors, such as the need for affordable housing, the housing affordability trends recently identified by PSRC,⁷ and the community benefits of redeveloping low density, auto-oriented commercial areas within the project area. This consideration may affect the selection of the Preferred Alternative.

1-4 We note that community members voiced equity concerns regarding station locations, access, and safety. It is unclear whether station locations are as optimally located and designed to accommodate vulnerable and disadvantaged populations using the I-5 Alternative as they could be via the SR 99 Alternative. Residential areas would also experience heightened displacement, project construction and operational impacts with the I-5 Alternative. To address equity concerns, we recommend that the Record of Decision demonstrate and document community support for and satisfaction with the selected alternative. We also suggest that the decision be informed by a per capita cost comparison of Sound Transit projects in more affluent service areas vs. low income and/or minority areas. Any disparities should be identified and rectified to ensure equitable outcomes with respect to level of service, convenience, safety, construction/operation impacts, ecosystem protection, and improved quality of life for affected communities.

³ FEIS, page 4.9-19

⁴ FEIS, page 4.9-1

⁵ FEIS, page 4.9-1

⁶ FEIS, Chapter 7

⁷ More than 100,000 very low income renters in the region pay more than half their income on housing; the number of cost-burdened households is increasing; rents are increasing rapidly; and prices are rising faster than incomes. PSRC Regional Housing and Affordability Trends, 12-15-16.

Response to Comment 1-2

The wetland and stream analyses in the Final EIS were based on preliminary engineering level of design and technical methodologies widely accepted in Washington State. They estimate impacts conservatively, without attempting to judge the effectiveness of potential avoidance and minimization measures. The analyses lack the detail required to support an actual permit application because they are intended primarily to help decision makers compare the impacts of the alternatives. As noted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in its comment letter on the FWLE Draft EIS, the level of effort and accuracy of the wetland and stream assessment in the EIS is sufficient for planning purposes. While the Preferred Alternative has the highest total wetland impact (approximately 1.3 acres), that impact affects several different wetlands along the alignment, most of which are small, lower-quality wetlands. Sound Transit will work with the USACE to determine if a 404(b)(1) analysis is needed to permit the project.

Response to Comment 1-3

The Final EIS clearly describes the project's displacements in minority and low-income communities. It also shows that the SR 99 Alternative would have far more business displacements, some of which serve MLI communities, and would have more construction impacts on MLI communities than the Preferred Alternative. Moreover, even without the FWLE, about half of the Preferred Alternative's residential displacements will occur due to the upcoming WSDOT SR 509 Extension Project (please see page 4.1-6 of the Final EIS). Residential displacements are always difficult and can cause hardship; however, Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, describes how Sound Transit will mitigate the hardship with relocation benefits for displaced residents. In helping residents find suitable replacement housing, Sound Transit considers such factors as proximity to commercial and community facilities, schools (if applicable), an individual's place of employment, and access to transit.

The EIS takes into account the project’s housing implications for MLI residents as well. Section 4.1.5 describes the number of available rental units in the area, the vacancy rates, and the number of units available. It also discloses that despite a sufficient supply of housing in the area, reasonably priced and similar replacement property may be limited. Still, the EIS observes that Sound Transit has an affirmative duty to locate comparable replacement housing for displaced residents. If Sound Transit cannot find comparable replacement housing at the same price, Sound Transit must subsidize the tenant’s rent for up to 42 months. Chapter 7, Environmental Justice, considered how the housing analysis would affect MLI populations. It also considered offsetting factors, including the mitigation that Sound Transit will provide and the benefits to MLI populations of having increased access to jobs, education, health care, and other needs throughout the region. In an analysis complying with the U.S. Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898, FTA found that the project does not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.

Response to Comment 1-4

As discussed in the EIS, the project considered station access for MLI populations. Chapter 7, Environmental Justice, describes the benefits and impacts for MLI populations, along with outreach specifically targeted to these populations. After the Sound Transit Board heard and read the equity concerns about stations during the Draft EIS comment period, it directed Sound Transit staff to hold a series of workshops with community stakeholders before Sound Transit and FTA prepared the Final EIS. Section 2.1 of the Final EIS describes this process. The objectives of the workshops were to improve accessibility and security for all stations, including at Highline College and the Federal Way Transit Center. Participants represented a wide range of interests.¹ The discussions and work at those meetings produced a consensus on how to modify the locations and characteristics of those two stations from their Draft EIS descriptions. Also, FTA notes that the stations in the I-5 alignment are within a half-mile of the stations in the SR 99 alignment.

¹ Cities of Des Moines, Kent, and Federal Way; FutureWise; Highline College; Highline College students; King County Executive Office; King County Metro; OneAmerica; Puget Sound Regional Council; Sound Transit; Transportation Choices Coalition; Urban Land Institute; and WSDOT.

It is impossible to determine whether, as this comment states, “station locations are as optimally located and designed to accommodate vulnerable and disadvantaged populations using the I-5 Alternative as they could be via the SR 99 Alternative.” In any event, station siting must try to balance a number of considerations along with access for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, including terrain, existing streets, displacements, environmental factors, the extent of permissible horizontal and vertical curvature of a light-rail guideway, noise impacts, visual impacts, access for buses, and access for local residents and other potential riders. FTA finds that the Preferred Alternative adequately balances all of those needs, including the need to accommodate vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

The EJ analysis concluded (Section 7.6.4) that the SR 99 Alternative would have more construction impacts than the Preferred Alternative on businesses and residents because of lane closures on the area’s central artery. Lane closures would also impact transit throughout construction. Regardless of the alternative selected, the EIS describes measures necessary to avoid, reduce, or mitigate the construction impacts, and this FWLE Record of Decision (ROD) makes compliance with those measures a condition of FTA approval.

Response to Comment 1-5

FTA and Sound Transit received a number of comments on the Draft and Final EIS documents supporting the Preferred Alternative. They included letters of support from all four local jurisdictions; see Appendix I in the Final EIS and Appendix C in this ROD. Sound Transit also has continued to work with stakeholders (including representatives of EJ communities) since the Draft EIS and will do so through project completion. Sound Transit held more than 200 meetings with residents and stakeholders between the East Link ROD issuance and the completion of final design; it has held more than 50 for Lynnwood Link since the July 2015 ROD. FTA believes that Sound Transit’s track record shows that it will “continue to work with the community. The ROD makes that commitment a condition of approval.

The FWLE cost estimate is in the range of expected costs for a light rail project of its length. FTA anticipates, and FTA regulations require, that the project's operating performance satisfy a variety of equity requirements. However, FTA respectfully suggests that the per-capita comparison the comment suggests would not be meaningful in light of (a) the multitude of variables that affect cost and (b) the difficulty of comparing things like "convenience" and "improved quality of life" across time and space and different populations.

Midway Landfill

We appreciate the coordination with Sound Transit, FTA, Ecology, and Seattle Public Utilities regarding the Midway Landfill Superfund site. The Final EIS is responsive to EPA comments by incorporating statements regarding the need for continued coordination to evaluate Sound Transit's design and construction plans to ensure the integrity of the site remedy and to document any issues related to the remedy in the Midway Landfill Record of Decision under CERCLA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Final EIS for the Federal Way Link Extension. If you have questions or would like to discuss these comments, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or at littleton.christine@epa.gov, or contact Elaine Somers at (206) 553-2966 or at somers.elaine@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Christine B. Littleton, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit

No comments

Letter 2

City of Federal Way

Page 1



DD

CITY HALL
33325 8th Avenue South
Federal Way, WA 98003-6325
(253) 835-7000
www.cityoffederalway.com
Jim Ferrell, Mayor

December 15, 2016

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
Attention: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments
915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
Seattle, WA 98174-1002

Re: Comments on Federal Way Link Extension FEIS

Dear Reviewers:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Final EIS for this project. The City of Federal Way is excited about the potential for this project to augment our efforts to develop a vibrant City Center. We appreciate Sound Transit staff's responsiveness and creativity at addressing our concerns, particularly through the development of preferred station location at Federal Way Transit Center, which maintains proximity to the Transit Center, while preserving options for the extension of Link to Tacoma.

We also appreciate the Sound Transit Board's support for the i-5 alignment as the Preferred Alternative, despite opposition from advocacy groups that don't apparently appreciate that the marginal increase in TOD potential of a SR 99 alignment at S 272nd Street is not adequate to justify the right-of-way, visual, noise and vibration, and economic impacts between stations that are three miles apart along a corridor that was reconstructed only a few years ago.

2-1 The City of Federal Way also supports the Federal Way School District's position in maintaining the Trench Option at S 272nd Street rather than the Elevated Option in order to reduce the right-of-way and substantial impacts to Mark Twain Elementary School.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (253) 835-2402.

Sincerely,

Jim Ferrell
Mayor

RP:

cc: City Council (7)
Dow Constantine, Chair, Sound Transit Board
Marwan Salloum, PE, Public Works Director
Rick Perez, P.E., City Traffic Engineer
Day File

DEC 20 2016 4:21:10

Response to Comment 2-1

The Sound Transit Board selected the FWLE project to build in January 2017. The FWLE will include a S 272nd Street Star Lake Station in an elevated profile. The route will extend south from this station, crossing over S 272nd Street and the eastern edge of the Mark Twain Elementary School property on an elevated structure. Sound Transit will continue to work closely with Federal Way Public Schools as the project moves forward to address construction-period impacts and final design details related to landscaping, wall treatments, and noise mitigation.

Letter 3

City of SeaTac

Page 1



4800 South 185th Street
SeaTac, WA 98188-8605

City Hall: 206.973.4800
Fax: 206.973.4809
TDD: 206.973.4808

December 19, 2016

Attention: Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
Attn: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments
915 2nd Ave, Suite 3142
Seattle, WA 98174-1002

RE: Draft Environmental impact Statement for the Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE)

Email to: fa.troi@mail@dot.gov

To The Responsible SEPA Official,

The City of SeaTac has reviewed the November 18, 2016 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE), and is formally submitting this letter as our official comments on the FEIS.

The City offers the following comments and questions to be addressed in the consideration and issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).

LJ15-4: No Comment.

LJ15-5: No comment.

LJ15-6: ST's response is inadequate. Not providing parking at a potential S. 216th & Pacific Hwy station will have impacts that need to be addressed. Alternatively, the concept of a station at this location could be dropped, as there is no funding for this station in either ST2 or ST3. If one is ever constructed, it will need to undergo separate environmental review, given how far in the future that is likely to be.

LJ15-7: No Comment.

LJ15-8: No Comment.

LJ15-9: No Comment.

LJ15-10: ST's response is inadequate. The loss of sales tax revenues from a take of commercial property will not be adequately mitigated by the short-term construction sales taxes generated by FWLE construction.

LJ15-11: No Comment.

LJ15-12: No Comment.

LJ15-13: No Comment.

LJ15-14: No Comment.

Mayor
Michael J. Siefkes

Deputy Mayor
Pam Farnald

Councilmembers
Rick Forschlar
Kathryn Campbell
Peter Kwon
Tony Anderson
Erin Sitterley

Acting City Manager
Joseph Scorcio

City Attorney
Mary Mirante Bartolo

City Clerk
Kristina Gregg

The Hospitality City

Response to Comment 3-1

The S 216th Station options do not include parking because, if built, this station would be near both the Angle Lake Station (having over 1,100 parking stalls) and the Kent/Des Moines Station (having 500 to 1,000 stalls). Ridership projections for the station area are relatively low due to this proximity, and only 4 percent of riders would access the station by automobile drop-off (compared to 78 percent for non-motorized access). The EIS addressed non-motorized access and pedestrian level of service (Section 3.5.6.5) at this potential additional station as well as station area mode of access (see Section 4.2.5 in Appendix G1, the Transportation Technical Report). The Sound Transit Board selected the Preferred Alternative as the alternative to build. With this action, the S 216th Station options evaluated in the EIS as potential additional stations for the SR 99 Alternative are no longer under consideration.

Response to Comment 3-2

As described in the Final EIS, acquisition of private property for the Preferred Alternative will reduce the City's budgeted property tax revenue by approximately 0.1 percent (see Table 4.3-6). Actual or speculative effects on future sales tax revenue from commercial properties affected by the project cannot be reasonably estimated given the multitude of factors that affect sales revenue at any particular business enterprise. Further, as described in Sections 5.2.4.1 and 4.3.4, both construction-period retail sales and long-term indirect effects on commercial and retail development near the project would have a positive economic impact in the project corridor. The economic analysis found that impacts on sales tax revenue in SeaTac and other local jurisdictions would be insignificant and no mitigation is warranted.

LJ15-15: No Comment.

LJ15-16: No Comment.

LJ15-17: No Comment.

LJ15-22: No comment.

3-3 LJ15-23: The environmental impacts of the implementation of light rail are best examined through the lens of previous experience, regardless of the location within the impact area. Further, the demographic makeup of the area around TIB is not so different as to make the data regarding the crime impact of its opening meaningless. Please include the data for the TIB in the final EIS.

LJ15-24: No comment.

3-4 LJ15-25: CrimeReports.com is in no way a primary source for complete and thorough crime analysis, and the WASPC reports contain aggregate data that have no value for the kind of in-depth granular analysis necessary here. The data does exist however, with each individual agency, and we would like to see primary source data used for the analysis in the final EIS.

3-5 LJ15-26: This response makes no sense. If implementation will not affect police response times, it should not affect fire response times for the same reasons. The original comment still holds and mitigating factors for police need to be addressed in final EIS.

LJ15-27: No comment.

3-6 LJ15-28: Please clarify what the "similar staffing levels" are in the final EIS.

LJ15-30: No Comment.

Response to Comment LJ15-31

3-7 ST's response is incorrect. The fact that this parcel is not identified as a park or open space in the Comp Plan does not negate the deed restrictions that requires its use as such or its replacement with compensatory land dedicated to those uses in the event this property is acquired for the FWLE project.

LJ15-32: No Comment.

LJ15-33: No Comment.

LJ15- 34: No Comment.

LJ15- 35: No Comment.

LJ15- 36: No Comment.

3-8 LJ15-37: ST's response is inadequate. The concern raised was how station areas will safely accommodate non-motorized modes of travel as those users interact with the vehicular traffic attracted to the stations and their associated parking.

The Hospitality City

Response to Comment 3-3

Information for Tukwila International Boulevard station was not included in the Final EIS because it is outside the study area for the FWLE. As noted in Section 4.14 of the Final EIS, studies have consistently found that crimes and crime rates at transit facilities reflect the crime rates of the surrounding neighborhoods. This is why existing crime data at transit facilities near proposed FWLE stations are shown in the EIS, instead of crime data near other transit facilities in the region. Moreover, this methodology is consistent with the EIS Technical Analysis Methodologies report that was shared with cooperating agencies, including SeaTac, in 2014 before initiating work on the EIS.

Response to Comment 3-4

As noted in the Draft EIS Response to Comment LJ15-25 and in Section 4.14.4 of the Final EIS, the project team conducted a Threat and Vulnerability Assessment (TVA) for Preferred Alternative station areas. Sound Transit's facilities security staff leads this work in coordination with local law enforcement and the design team. It does not rely solely on publicly available crime data provided by CrimeReports.com. Since the FWLE will not include new stations in SeaTac, the SeaTac Police Department did not participate in the TVA workshops.

Response to Comment 3-5

The Final EIS states that emergency responder response routes or times should not be directly affected by the project because all build alternatives are grade-separated from city streets and intersections. It also discloses that congestion at station areas and park-and-ride lots could affect response times in these areas. While described under the subheading "Fire and Emergency Medical Services," these findings apply to fire, emergency medical, and police vehicles. Pages 4.14-6 through 4.14-8 describe potential effects on police services and the additional coordination that will occur between local law enforcement and Sound Transit as the design progresses. Mitigation is not warranted because the project will not have a significant adverse impact on police services.

Response to Comment 3-6

The function of Sound Transit contracted security personnel and/or law enforcement at facilities is described in the Final EIS (see pages 4.14-6 and 4.14-7). Staffing levels at individual facilities vary and are adjusted depending on the needs and trends at each facility. Stations operating as terminus stations, such as Angle Lake in SeaTac, have security personnel onsite 24/7. The intent of the Response to Comment LJ15-28 in the Draft EIS is to note that staffing levels would be similar among all the alternatives. There is no difference in how Sound Transit works with local law enforcement with regard to security or incident response among the alternatives evaluated in the EIS.

Response to Comment 3-7

The Response to Comment LJ15-31 acknowledges the deed restriction and notes that Sound Transit will work with the City to find replacement property of equivalent size and function. This property was added to the list of designated open space properties in Section 4.17-1 of the Final EIS in response to this Draft EIS comment as well. Since SeaTac has not managed the property as a park or recreational resource open to the public, it is not a “park.”

Response to Comment 3-8

See Section 4.6 of the Transportation Technical Report of the Final EIS document. In general, pedestrian level of service (LOS) would be acceptable, at LOS D or better, with all FWLE alternatives and station options. At the Kent/Des Moines Station area, the signal at the SR 99/S 236th Street intersection will include pedestrian crossings on all approaches. Pedestrian crossings will be built along S 272nd Street at 26th Avenue S and the I-5 northbound and southbound ramps in the S 272nd Star Lake Station area. At the proposed station areas, pedestrian safety enhancements will include street lighting, ADA curb ramps, accessible pedestrian systems, and wider crosswalks.

3-9 LJ15-38: While recognizing that screening measures have been proposed, the City at this time is uncertain if the measures will result in the desired outcome or will be acceptable to the community. The City reserves the right to conduct further review as part of its permit review regarding proposed screening measures.

LJ15-39: No Comment.

LJ15-41: No Comment.

LJ15-42: No Comment.

LJ15-43: No Comment.

3-10 LJ15-44 & LJ15-50: ST's responses are inadequate. While the potential for hide-and-ride would be greater within a ¼ distance of the station, that does not mean that activity will not occur at greater distances. Their analysis considers a ½ mile walkshed for pedestrians, yet assumes that individuals arriving by car will be unwilling to walk more than ¼ mile to a station. No proof of this is provided.

LJ15-45: No Comment.

3-11 LJ15-46: We were unable to locate within the analysis, the inclusion of the S. 200th Angle Lake station parking supply

LJ15-47: No Comment.

LJ15-48: No Comment.

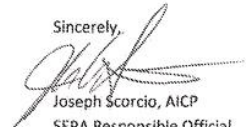
3-12 LJ15-49: The City is unsatisfied with the response and will require a detailed analysis for potential impacts to on street parking and hide and ride users.

LJ15-51: No Comment.

Comments pertaining to fire and emergency responses: Any outstanding comments will be addressed as part of plan review and the drafting of a Development Agreement.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to contact Planning Manager Steve Pilcher or myself know. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,



Joseph Scorcio, AICP
SEPA Responsible Official
Acting City Manager

Cc: SeaTac City Council
Steve Pilcher, AICP, Planning Manager

The Hospitality City

Response to Comment 3-9

The Final EIS's proposed screening measures to mitigate visual impacts are acknowledged as preliminary. Sound Transit expects and encourages the City to work collaboratively with the final design team and the affected neighborhoods to refine things such as landscape plans and architectural treatments of retaining walls and sound barriers.

Response to Comment 3-10

Hide-and-ride activity by transit users is generally high if insufficient parking is provided at a transit station. Historically, most transit users are willing to walk a half mile to/from their residence, place of employment, or other destination when they expect and plan to walk this distance. Drivers looking for parking try to find a space as close to the station as possible to minimize their walking distance. Therefore, the ¼-mile radius for hide-and-ride activity is appropriate for the parking analysis. The FWLE will provide parking to accommodate the forecasted parking demand from the project in the corridor. Although there is some potential for hide-and-ride at stations evaluated in the EIS that do not provide parking (such as the S 216th Station), drivers are generally not expected to hide and ride at these stations when parking is available at other stations.

Response to Comment 3-11

Information on how the Angle Lake Station parking was considered in the parking analysis was included in the Station Parking Assessment Technical Memorandum prepared for the Draft EIS and reviewed by the City through the Interagency Working Group. This memorandum has been updated for the Final EIS, but assumptions about parking at Angle Lake did not change. Sound Transit can provide a copy of this memorandum upon request.

Response to Comment 3-12

Potential mitigation measures related to on-street parking and hide-and-ride activity are described in Section 3.7.3 of the Final EIS and in Appendix

B to this Record of Decision. However, since city streets in SeaTac are more than one mile away from the nearest FWLE station, the mitigation measures are not likely relevant or applicable to SeaTac.

Letter 4

Federal Way Public Schools

Page 1



Office of the Superintendent

December 14, 2016

via of e-mail

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
 Attn: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments
 915 2nd Avenue, Suite 3142
 Seattle, WA 98174-1002

Re: Comments on Federal Way Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Sir or Madam:

Federal Way Public Schools ("FWPS") appreciates the opportunity to comment on Sound Transit's design proposals and alternatives as currently described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS") for the Federal Way Link Extension ("FWLE"). FWPS continues to support the "underground option" at the S. 272nd Star Lake Station as the preferred alternative for this portion of the project. FWPS restates and emphasizes its opposition and objections to the "elevated option" alternative under consideration by Sound Transit at this location. This above-ground alternative is incompatible with our continued use of the existing Mark Twain Elementary School ("Mark Twain") site for school purposes.

Trains and elementary schools do not mix. Placing the light rail in a covered trench under the school property may mitigate the majority of the adverse impacts of the FWLE. However, the alternative "elevated option" is an above ground crossing of Mark Twain. This alternative poses unacceptable educational and safety risks to our students, to our staff, and to our community. Nothing in the FEIS suggests that the "elevated option" is functionally superior as a light rail alternative. Rather, the difference between the two alternatives is cost. Please do not compromise the wellbeing of our school and the community that it serves for the sake of a cheaper alternative. FWPS strongly urges Sound Transit to select the "underground option" at the S. 272nd Star Lake Station for this portion of your project.

The elevated alternative is incompatible with Mark Twain Elementary School

A train behind a massive¹ concrete wall along the eastern perimeter of the Mark Twain playfield is incompatible with existing and future uses of the site for school purposes. Noise and vibration will adversely impact students and staff. Unlike vehicle traffic, which remains relatively constant, train noise and vibration is periodic and distracting. These noise and vibration impacts will disrupt students' attention in the classroom and interrupt playfield activities. The FEIS notes that the elevated option creates 64 more noise impacts than the covered trench option.² Yet, the FEIS seeks to assure us that, based upon Federal Transportation Administration criteria, we have no reason to be concerned about these additional impacts. Respectfully, we better understand the elements that comprise an

¹ Sound Transit states that the "retaining wall would be approximately 25 feet tall with fencing and a sound wall at the top." FEIS 4.17-6. The sound wall adds another six feet on top of the 25 foot retaining wall. FEIS 4.14-9.

² FEIS 4.7-11.

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33330 8th Avenue South, Federal Way, WA 98003 | p.253.945.2187 | f.253.945.2001 | www.fwps.org

Response to Comment 4-1

Sound Transit developed the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option in response to new information obtained after the Draft EIS was published. Geotechnical investigations identified groundwater levels near Mark Twain Elementary School that were higher than expected, which would result in additional short-term and long-term costs for the Preferred Alternative (covered trench). This is described in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, of the Final EIS in sections 2.1 and 2.2.3.6.

The S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option and the trench profile associated with the Preferred Alternative do not have at-grade crossings of tracks, so there is no potential for students to cross the guideway or otherwise come into contact with the active railway. The risk of derailment on a modern light rail facility is addressed by several standard design features incorporated into the track bed and light rail guideway structures.

During construction, Sound Transit will install a barrier to separate the active construction zone and the remainder of the school property. Sound Transit understands from coordination with your staff that the FWPS's typical practice is to maintain school operations onsite when expanding or constructing new buildings. Sound Transit expects and appreciates that your construction project managers will have a key role in helping identify measures to minimize disruption from construction while school is in session.

Sound Transit has also executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the school district and others in which the parties commit to working together to explore options to swap other property for the Mark Twain property. Such a swap could allow for future Transit Oriented Development at the existing school district site, if the district chooses to move the school.

Response to Comment 4-2

Section 4.14, Public Services, Safety, and Security, of the Final EIS describes impacts to the playfield from the FWLE. The S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option will permanently occupy approximately 0.1 acre of the 1.6-acre playfield. The portion of the property east of the playfield is a berm and slopes toward the I-5 southbound on-ramp. The amount of property needed west of the elevated structure for maintenance of the transit-way (generally 2 to 10 feet from the base of the light rail structure) and landscaping will be determined in coordination with FWPS. The remainder of the playfield will be useable up to the retaining wall and could accommodate two youth soccer fields.

Response to Comment 4-3

Section 4.7, Noise and Vibration, and Appendix G3, Noise and Vibration Technical Report, of the Final EIS describe the noise analysis completed for the project. Existing noise levels at the playfield are about 64 A-weighted decibels (dBA) hourly equivalent sound level (Leq). Noise from the light rail operation at the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option will be approximately 66 dBA without mitigation. With mitigation, consisting of a 6-foot-high sound wall, light rail noise will be approximately 53 dBA. With mitigation, operational light rail noise will not increase existing noise levels and will be 13 decibels below the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) impact criteria for schools. Depending on the ultimate configuration of the guideway and noise barrier, the elevated profile may also reduce traffic noise at the school from existing conditions.

While the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option will have 64 more noise impacts than the trench profile, all of these impacts will be mitigated to levels below FTA's impact criteria. This is shown in Table 4.7-1 in Section 4.7-1 of the Final EIS.



**FEDERAL WAY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Office of the Superintendent

environment that is conducive to learning and student safety. It is not a school with a train running through it.

4-4 Our concerns do not end here. Concrete walls are not attributes of safe and sufficient play areas. The proposed wall cuts across Mark Twain's playfield, replacing trees and natural vegetation with an unsightly and potentially dangerous barrier. A solid wall defining the edge of the playfield is not compatible with students using the playfield during recess, physical exercise, or after school games. Sound Transit has suggested that it would install a fence between the wall and the playfield to mitigate this risk. However, this would further limit the usable area of this property and create an area that will require greater maintenance by FWPS in order to keep the playfield clean and safe for children. There are also visual issues to consider. Rather than looking across the playfield to trees and natural vegetation, students would see a massive concrete wall. The wall will be more than an aesthetic blight. Graffiti on the wall remains a concern. Next-day graffiti removal (as the FEIS offers and assuming that this occurs) does not eliminate the issue of our grade school students seeing offensive markings outside their classroom. The harm occurs immediately and the school environment is tainted.

About the best that can be said about this massive wall is that (as now proposed) it is too high for our students to scale. Respectfully, installing prison-like barriers as "mitigation" may work well for trains, but this is not a desirable attribute of an elementary school.

4-5 Trains and elementary schools do not mix. Sound Transit projects that the "elevated option" will cost \$30M less than the "underground option." To our understanding, no transportation benefit will be realized by the "elevated option" as compared to the "underground option." A decision to move forward with the "elevated option" would appear to do nothing more than place cost savings ahead of the wellbeing of our staff and students. Please do not make this mistake. Please move forward with the "underground option" at this location.

Construction impacts

4-6 Noise during construction is stated to reach nearly 95 dBA,³ distracting students and competing with teachers in the classroom. It appears that a significant portion of the playfield will be occupied by construction equipment and vehicles, constricting students' options for physical activity and learning.⁴ Daily construction noise will further inhibit instruction of our students, as will construction dust and debris. Generators, excavators, trucks, and noise from a host of other heavy machinery will disrupt our classrooms, distracting our students and impeding our teachers. We understand that fencing will be erected around the construction site, yet FWPS maintains concerns about the construction impacts of the proposed project.

Vehicle and bus access to Mark Twain would be restricted in either option. We understand that the construction site would be accessed from S. 272nd Street, and not school property. We appreciate this decision by Sound Transit. Yet while access occurs from off school grounds, congestion will increase on

4-7 ³ FEIS 5-41, Table 5-4.

⁴ Wash. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, School Wellness Policy Best Practices, at 15 (2013) (available at www.k12.wa.us/ChildNutrition/SchoolWellness/SchoolWellnessManual.pdf).

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Response to Comment 4-4

The S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Option will permanently occupy 0.1 acre of the 1.6-acre playfield. A visual simulation of the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option is included in Appendix C, Visual Simulations, of Appendix G5, Visual Technical Report. The simulations provide a "before and after" comparison to illustrate generally the size, bulk, and scale of the option from a nearby school building. A discussion of changes in views from the school is in Section 4.5.4.2 of the Final EIS and in Appendix B of the Visual Technical Report. As described in Appendix B, vegetation and wall treatments would reduce the visual impacts of the light rail structure. At this early stage of design, details about landscaping or architectural treatments to the wall have not been developed. Sound Transit will coordinate with and seek input from FWPS to develop such details.

Response to Comment 4-5

Please see Response to Comment 4-1.

Response to Comment 4-6

Section 5.2.8.1 of the Final EIS states that maximum construction noise levels would be 82 to 92 dBA at approximately 50 feet for construction of a cut-and-cover trench such as the one at Mark Twain Elementary for the Preferred Alternative. Major construction activities for the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option, which the Sound Transit Board selected to build, will include construction of a retaining wall, and noise levels could reach 82 to 88 dBA at approximately 50 feet from the activity for short periods. Trench and elevated construction would be approximately 175 feet from the nearest classroom at Mark Twain Elementary.

Section 5.2.15 of the Final EIS states that 0.3-acre of the playfield will be unavailable for use during construction of either the trench or elevated profile. Barriers will be installed around the construction area for safety and to limit noise and dust outside of the construction area. The remainder of the playfield will be open for school and public use. Sound

Transit would appreciate input from FWPS's construction project managers to understand how FWPS manages construction at active school properties.

Response to Comment 4-7

In response to feedback from FWPS staff, Sound Transit has altered the construction haul routes and detours away from Star Lake Road to minimize potential effects or conflicts with the school's driveway and main entrance for students walking to school. Appendix G of the Transportation Technical Report (Appendix G1 of the Final EIS) includes detour and haul route maps, and Chapter 5 of the Final EIS includes an analysis of the impacts of these detours and haul routes on traffic and non-motorized users.

Although the Final EIS provides a robust analysis of construction-period effects on traffic, prior to construction, Sound Transit will need to develop maintenance of traffic plans for approval by local jurisdictions. As these more detailed plans are developed, Sound Transit will continue to coordinate with FWPS to understand school bus operations and the needs of students, parents, and faculty for safe and secure access to school.

Response to Comment 4-8

Chapter 3 of the Transportation Technical Report includes a full analysis of impacts on traffic from operation of the FWLE at intersections on S 272nd Street and Military Road near Mark Twain Elementary School. The analysis considers future traffic volumes (in 2035) and the trips generated by the S 272nd Star Lake Station. The project will improve the intersection at S 272nd Street nearest to the school, and traffic mitigation will be provided to maintain the Federal Way level-of-service standards. The analysis considers morning peak periods of traffic on S 272nd from I-5, which likely includes one of the most active periods of traffic accessing Mark Twain Elementary (faculty, parents, and school buses). The roadway improvements planned at S 272nd Street will provide a signalized, safe pedestrian crossing from the station area to the south side of S 272nd Street, closest to the school.

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

S. 272nd Street and S. Star Lake Road. Sound Transit will need to work with FWPS and our community to minimize congestion, especially during our peak drop off and pick up times.

Increased traffic

Adding a 1,240 vehicle parking garage⁵ across the street from the school creates additional traffic concerns. This facility will add traffic during morning peak times when busses, students and staff are arriving at school. Even if proposed improvements to minimize congestion will improve the status quo, as Sound Transit claims,⁶ increasing vehicle volume increases the risk to drivers and pedestrians. More traffic will (as the FEIS notes) "increas[e] potential conflicts" and could result in increased accidents at or near the I-5 interchange.⁷ Bringing these additional traffic volumes to the door step of Mark Twain will not improve the status quo. We remain very concerned that, with more vehicles, comes more risk to our staff and students.

The project's adverse impacts—both during construction and in the long term—to the safety of students walking to school have not been adequately addressed. Children walking to Mark Twain must cross S. 272nd Street. The additional traffic volumes associated with the proposed 1,240 vehicle parking garage place these children at higher risk. During construction, sidewalks may be closed.⁸ It is essential that safe walking routes remain available to our students both during and after construction. The FEIS does not adequately address how Sound Transit will mitigate these impacts.

South 272nd Street is also a school bus route for elementary, middle and high school students. School busses must have safe places on S. 272nd Street to pick up and drop off students. During construction, bus stops may be relocated,⁹ and S. 272nd Street would face closures.¹⁰ Vehicle and bus access would be disrupted.¹¹ The intersection at S. 272nd Street and S. Star Lake Road would degrade below jurisdictional standards.¹² The additional traffic volumes associated with the proposed 1,240 vehicle parking garage compromises the safety of this bus route. The FEIS does not adequately address how Sound Transit will mitigate these impacts.

The project limits future development of Mark Twain Elementary School

School sites in urban areas are a precious public resource. Ten acres is widely recognized as the minimum area required for an elementary school. The elevated option removes property at Mark Twain from the service for school purposes. This will diminish our site and negatively impact existing and future educational programs. No mitigation is proposed for this significant impact.

As noted in our initial comments, the underground option gives rise to questions that have not yet been answered by Sound Transit. Specifically:

In the case of the Underground Alternative, the District needs a better understanding of the limitations the tunnel places on above-ground construction. Will the District be limited

⁵ FEIS 3-46.
⁶ FEIS 3-59-61.
⁷ FEIS 3-2, Table 3-1.
⁸ FEIS 5-12, 13.
⁹ FEIS 5-12, 13.
¹⁰ FEIS 5-18, 19.
¹¹ FEIS 3-59.
¹² FEIS 3-41.

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Response to Comment 4-9

Please see Response to Comment 4-8 regarding safe crossings at S 272nd Street during operations. During construction, there will be temporary closures, detours, and construction access roads at S 272nd Street and Military Road South that could increase congestion near Mark Twain Elementary. As described in Section 5.2.15.2 of the Final EIS, Sound Transit will continue to coordinate with FWPS to ensure safe school bus and walking routes to schools during construction.

Response to Comment 4-10

Please see responses to Comments 4-8 and 4-9. Closures of S 272nd Street will generally occur during weekends (9:00 p.m. Friday to 5:00 a.m. Monday) and nighttime periods (9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.) when Mark Twain Elementary School is closed.

The project will degrade the level of service at the intersection at S 272nd Street and S Star Lake Road below the level of service standard. Section 3.7.1 of the Final EIS describes how Sound Transit will mitigate this impact. With mitigation, the intersection will meet the jurisdictional level of service standards.

Response to Comment 4-11

Please see Response to Comment 4-2. Mitigation for permanent impacts on the Mark Twain Elementary playfield from the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option are described in Section 4.1.7 and 4.17.5 of the Final EIS. Mitigation includes financial compensation or replacement land in consultation with FWPS. FTA has identified this mitigation in this Record of Decision. As noted in Response to Comment 4-1, Sound Transit has executed an MOA that commits the agency to exploring other options.

Response to Comment 4-12

In January, Sound Transit Board selected the Preferred Alternative with the S 272nd Star Lake Elevated Station Option as the project to build. Even though FWPS has no specific plans or designs for building on the

Mark Twain Elementary School playfield, Sound Transit understands the need to not preclude FWPS's ability to replace or expand the school in the future. Between the Draft EIS and Final EIS, Sound Transit shifted the alignment of the FWLE from the middle of the playfield farther east to minimize the amount of property affected. As noted in Response to Comment 4-1, Sound Transit executed an MOA that commits the agency to explore options to swap other property for the existing property of the district.



Office of the Superintendent

4-12 to a two-story building (most gymnasiums are three stories or more in height)? What other limitations or constraints on future site development will the tunnel create or exacerbate? Will the "ground water" problem referenced in § 2.1.3.1 present a problem for future above-ground development, or does the answer to that question depend in part upon how Sound Transit responds to this problem?

In response to these questions Sound Transit replied "we will continue to work with you on these issues." Thank you. However, the time to have these discussions is now, at the planning stage, when we can explore options and try to develop alternatives that work for both agencies. Mark Twain is an aging building. It has been identified by FWPS as a priority for modernization. We have responsibilities to our community and to our bond holders to act prudently and responsibly. We invite a discussion of further alternatives that will best serve the needs of this community.

FWPS continues to support the underground option near Truman High School

4-13 We continue to support the underground tunnel as the preferred solution for section near Truman High School. As with the construction activities impacting Mark Twain Elementary, appropriate measures for the mitigation and avoidance of construction noise, traffic, vibration and other activities interfering with educational programs and student safety will need to be developed in consultation with the FWPS. We appreciate Sound Transit's recognition of, and urge Sound Transit's sensitivity to, the multiple uses at this site as it moves forward with its project.

Conclusion

Trains and elementary schools do not mix. If Sound Transit is motivated to save money, we invite a discussion of further alternatives that will better serve the needs of both agencies and this community. Pending a further discussion of better alternatives, we urge Sound Transit to place the FWLE underground at the S. 272nd Star Lake Station. As for Truman High School, we continue to support the underground option as the preferred solution for this element of the project, and urge Sound Transit to move forward with a design that is sensitive to the multiple uses at this site.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on the FEIS. If you have any questions concerning these comments, or would like to follow up with the FWPS on any one or more of the matters addressed above, please contact Ms. Sally D. McLean, Chief Finance & Operations Officer at (253) 945-2042 or at smclean@fwps.org.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Tammy Campbell
Superintendent
Federal Way Public Schools

cc: on page 5

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Response to Comment 4-13

The Final EIS includes discussions of construction-period noise, vibration, and traffic at Truman High School in Sections 5.2.1, 5.2.8.1, 5.2.8.2, and 5.2.15.1. Because of the distance between the construction area and the Truman High School buildings (over 400 feet), there will not be construction noise or vibration impacts that affect indoor school activities. Depending on the construction techniques and sequencing, some traffic may be detoured onto 28th Avenue South, which Sound Transit understands is the main driveway access to the school property.



Office of the Superintendent

No comments

cc: Geoffery McAnallo, FWPS Board of Directors, President
 Claire Wilson, FWPS Board of Directors, Vice President
 Liz Drake, FWPS Board of Directors, Legislative Liaison
 Hiroshi Eto, FWPS Board of Directors
 Carol Gregory, FWPS Board of Directors
 Dow Constantine, King County Executive & Sound Transit Board Chair
 Paul Roberts, Sound Transit Vice Chair
 Marilyn Strickland, Sound Transit Vice Chair
 Nancy Backus, Sound Transit Board
 Claudia Balducci, Sound Transit Board
 Fred Butler, Sound Transit Board
 Dave Earling, Sound Transit Board
 Dave Enslow, Sound Transit Board
 Rob Johnson, Sound Transit Board
 John Marchione, Sound Transit Board
 Pat McCarthy, Sound Transit Board
 Joe McDermott, Sound Transit Board
 Roger Millar, Sound Transit Board
 Mary Moss, Sound Transit Board
 Ed Murray, Sound Transit Board
 Dave Somers, Sound Transit Board
 Dave Upthegrove, Sound Transit Board
 Pete von Reichbauer, Sound Transit Board
 Senator Karen Keiser, 33rd Legislative District
 Senator Mark Milosica, 30th Legislative District
 Representative Tina L. Orwall, 33rd Legislative District
 Representative Mia Su-Ling Gregerson, 33rd Legislative District
 Representative Linda Kochmar, 30th Legislative District
 Representative Teri Hinkel, 30th Legislative District
 In-coming Representative Mike Pellicciotti, 30th Legislative District
 In-coming Representative Kristine Reeves, 30th Legislative District
 Mayor Jim Ferrell, City of Federal Way
 Deputy Mayor Jeanne Burbidge, City of Federal Way
 Lydia Assafa-Dawson, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Kelly Maloney, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Susan Honda, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Mark Koppang, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Martin A. Moore, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Dini Duclos, City of Federal Way Council Member
 Dr. Dani Pfeiffer, FWPS Deputy Superintendent
 Sally McLean, Chief Finance & Operations Officer
 Dr. Ginger Callison, Learning Improvement Officer
 Marla Newton, Learning Improvement Officer
 Cathal Ridge, Sound Transit

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Letter 5

Midway Sewer District

Page 1

Commissioners

JACK W. HENDRICKSON
VINCE H. KOESTER
GEORGE LONDON
SCOT SANBORN
JIM BAILEY



MIDWAY SEWER DISTRICT

PO Box 3487 • Kent WA-98089-0209 • 3030 S 240 St.

Manager

KEN J. KASE
(206) 824-4960
FAX NO.
(206) 878-2692

December 14, 2016

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
Attention: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments
915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
Seattle, Washington 98174-1002

RE: FWLE Final EIS Comments of the Midway Sewer District

To Whom It May Concern:

Please consider the following comments concerning the FWLE Final EIS:

1. The preferred FWLE alternative appears to have the least impact to the Midway Sewer District sanitary sewer collection system, therefore it is the route supported by the District.
2. Many of the alternatives, including the preferred alternative, include a station in the vicinity of Kent-Des Moines Road. In the FWLE Final EIS some of the comments you received suggested the installation of a pedestrian bridge for crossing Pacific Highway South in the vicinity of this station. Table 9-6 common comment response number 4 indicates the following:

Proposed pedestrian improvements related to the station include wide sidewalks connecting the station to SR 99 and to Highline College. The intersection of S 236th Street and SR 99 would be signalized, and crosswalks would be designed to facilitate the projected pedestrian demand and to make the crossing safe and convenient for students as well as other Link rail users needing to cross here. Sound Transit is working with the stakeholders to evaluate other improvements for pedestrians, which may include enhanced pavements, curb bulb-outs, and lower speed limits. The Kent/Des Moines stakeholders agreed that a pedestrian bridge should not be pursued because:

- Travel times would be about the same for an at-grade crossing and a pedestrian bridge.
- Many pedestrians would likely cross at street level instead of going up and down to access a pedestrian bridge.
- Many at-grade improvements can enhance the pedestrian environment and improve safety for pedestrians crossing at S 236th Street.
- The pedestrian bridge would have relatively few users compared to other such bridges near Link stations.

We suggest that you reconsider the need for a pedestrian bridge at this location. Many people would be crossing Pacific Highway at S. 236th St. if there was a light rail station there. Pacific Highway is relatively wide at this location and it takes a while for a

5-1

Response to Comment 5-1

Response to Common Comment 4 in Chapter 9 of the Final EIS describes pedestrian access across SR 99 and the reasons why a pedestrian bridge was not proposed in this location. As noted in Response to Common Comment 4, Sound Transit held a stakeholder workshop with the cities of Kent and Des Moines, Highline College, King County Metro, and WSDOT to find way to maximize safety in this area. The intersection of S 236th Street and SR 99 will be signalized and pedestrian improvements will be made at this intersection to allow for safe crossing of SR 99. As shown in Table 4-9 of Appendix G1 to the Final EIS (the Transportation Technical Report), this future intersection will operate within acceptable level of service standards with the Preferred Alternative. In addition, most transfers from buses will occur on the east side of SR 99, where the station will be located. Only transfers to the southbound RapidRide A line will need to cross SR 99.

FWLE Final EIS Comments of the Midway Sewer District

Page 2
5-1

unsafe condition for pedestrians. It would also impede vehicular traffic on Pacific Highway. A pedestrian bridge would mitigate this change in the pedestrian environment created by the new light rail station.

3. [The streets in the vicinity of the proposed Kent-Des Moines Station (30th Ave. S. & S. 240th St.) are not adequate for the increased traffic and especially heavier vehicles including buses that a new FWLE light rail station will attract. The increased bus traffic would eventually damage the streets in the vicinity of the station. These streets need to be upgraded to standards that can withstand the new increased demand. Underground utilities that reside underneath the streets in this area should be upgraded to minimize the need to dig them up and disturb the newly constructed road.

5-2

We are confident that the Sound Transit Board will exercise sound judgement and wisdom in selecting which project alternative to build. Your decision will affect the growth and future of this entire region.

Sincerely,


Scot Sanborn, President


Jim Bailey, Secretary


Jack Hendrickson, Commissioner


George Landon, Commissioner


Vince Koester, Commissioner

Response to Comment 5-2

As described in Section 3.5.3.2 of the Final EIS, the Preferred Alternative includes two new east-west roads (S 234th Street and S 238th Street) between SR 99 and 30th Avenue S to improve station area access, circulation, and redevelopment potential. Additionally, from approximately Kent-Des Moines Road to S 240th Street, 30th Avenue S will be improved from a two-lane road to a three-lane road with a two-way left-turn lane. The pavement will be designed for the traffic levels and vehicle types planned to use these streets, including buses.

As described in Section 5.2.16.1, Sound Transit will work with utility providers regarding utility relocations, including design standards for relocated utilities, where FWLE would conflict with existing utilities.

Letter 6

Harsch Investment Properties

Page 1



December 8, 2016

VIA E-MAIL: fla.tro10mail@dot.gov

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
 Attention: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments
 915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
 Seattle, Washington 98174-1002

Re: Federal Way Link Extension Final EIS Comments

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to comment on the Federal Way Link Extension ("FWLE") Final Environmental Impact Statement dated November 18, 2016. Harsch Investment Properties is a family-held dynamic, expanding real estate investment company based in Portland, Oregon. We own and operate 16 properties in the state of Washington representing approximately 2.6 million square feet (as well as over 130 more in Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah). In the primary impacted area of the proposed FWLE, we are the proud owners of the (i) Pavilions II Shopping Center located at 31601 S. Pacific Highway, South in Federal Way, Washington, (ii) the SeaTac Village Shopping Center at 1700-1916 South 320th Street, Federal Way, Washington, and (iii) the Celebration Center at 1414 S. 324th Federal Way, Washington. We have closely examined the Summary of Alternatives evaluated in the Final EIS and endorse the Preferred Alternative over the SR 99, I-5 to SR 99 or SR 99 to I-5 alternatives.

In our comments to the Draft EIS, we stated that our Pavilions project has twenty (20) tenants with major anchors such as Best Buy, PetSmart and OfficeMax. The SeaTac Center has twenty-nine (29) tenants with major anchors such as TJ Maxx, Big 5 Sporting Goods, Tuesday Morning, HomeGoods, Ulta, DSW and Trader Joes. Celebration Center was renovated in 2012 and has major anchor tenants such as Ross Dress for Less, Rite Aid and Michaels. These properties add energy to the region and drive additional commerce to the area.

6-1 The SR 99 and I-5 to SR 99 alternatives will negatively impact our properties (as well as others), our tenants and members of the community. Specifically, the line development along SR 99 will obstruct accessibility, ingress and egress to the properties with the introduction of restrictive access on to and off of the center lane. For example, right turn lanes into and out of the properties would be severely altered to make access much more cumbersome. In addition, an elevated guideway along SR 99 would block views to the projects and specifically to the businesses. More likely than not, our projects will thereafter have significantly more vacancy and high quality national tenants will pull out of the market and look to more attractive projects with better visibility and accessibility. It 6-2

Response to Comment 6-1

Section 3.5.3.2 in Chapter 3, Transportation Environment and Consequences, of the Final EIS describes impacts on property access. In general, the SR 99 Alternative and the portion of the I-5 to SR 99 Alternative south of S 240th Street would operate in an exclusive, grade-separated right-of-way in the existing SR 99 median, widened where needed to accommodate guideway columns. All existing mid-block turn locations would be maintained, although they could shift slightly to provide adequate sight distance between the columns. All existing property access would be maintained. The Sound Transit Board selected the Preferred Alternative as the project to build. With this action, the SR 99 and the SR 99 to I-5 alternatives evaluated in the EIS are no longer under consideration.

Response to Comment 6-2

Section 4.3.4.2 in Section 4.3, Economics, describes potential indirect economic impacts on businesses from an elevated guideway. As described in that section, the presence of light rail facilities often has positive economic effects on the surrounding neighborhood, but it could also have negative effects. For example, elevated structures may reduce the visibility of adjacent business or retail signage, which could affect patronage. The Sound Transit Board selected the Preferred Alternative as the project to build. With this action, the SR 99 and the SR 99 to I-5 alternatives evaluated in the EIS are no longer under consideration.

No comments

is well settled that even a strong location with moderate visibility and without immediate access can render a site undesirable for tenants and consumers.

We are committed to the progress of the Puget Sound area and to make the lives of our employees and tenants better in every way. We look forward to working with Sound Transit as this project goes forward. If you would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

HARSCH INVESTMENT PROPERTIES



Jeff Nudelman
Vice President, General Counsel

cc: First Class Mail

Letter 7

Ruth Strawser

Page 1

From: RUTH L STRAWSER [mailto:rstrawser@msn.com]
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2016 3:05 PM
To: fta.tro1@mail
Subject: COMMENT ON FEDERAL WAY LINK EXTENSION FEIS Executive Summary

Good afternoon. Thank you for mailing me the Federal Way Link Extension FEIS Executive Summary. I know this project has behind it already an enormous amount of work. I submitted comments on the Draft EIS alternatives. This email is my comment on the FEIS.

As I noted in my comments a few months ago to the Draft EIS, I preferred the SR-99 to I-5 Alternative as it would have the least business and residential displacements. I am/have always been in favor of an alternative that aligns itself most closely with I-5 as it is an existing transportation corridor.

After reading the FEIS analysis for each alternative, I support of the Preferred I-5 Alternative with the identified Kent/Des Moines Station, S 272nd Star Lake Station and Federal Way Transit Center Station. I am concerned, however, about its impacts on wetlands, wetland buffers and upland habitat but trust the various ecology departments will provide vigilant oversight during and after construction of the rail system. Also, I trust again that the residences that will be impacted most by noise and vibration will be made whole. And, finally, I absolutely hate to see trees, mature or otherwise, removed but realize it is necessary. Again I trust ecology stewards will make sure the habitat both on and high above ground will be impacted as little as possible.

I urge approval of the Preferred Alternative described as the I-5 Alternative in the DEIS and discussed on pages ES-12-18 of the FEIS Executive Summary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please advise me that my comments will be made available to the decision makers and are also made a part of the permanent record.

Sincerely,

Ruth Strawser
 1435 South 263rd Place
 Des Moines WA 98198

Response to Comment 7-1

Thank you for your comments on the Final EIS Executive Summary. Sound Transit has been coordinating with ecological resource agencies during the project's design and environmental review, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others. Sound Transit will mitigate the impacts on wetlands, streams, buffers, and trees described in the Final EIS through the permitting process with resource agencies and local jurisdictions. Sound Transit will work with Washington State Department of Transportation to identify mitigation for trees removed in the I-5 right-of-way. Sections 4.8.5 and 4.9.5 of the Final EIS describe mitigation measures for these resources. Section 4.7.5 of the Final EIS describes mitigation measures for noise and vibration. These measures will reduce noise and vibration levels to below impact criteria established by the Federal Transit Administration. Sound Transit's mitigation commitments for these and other impacts are also described in Appendix B of this Record of Decision.

Letter 8

Diane Pasta

Page 1

From: diane pasta [mailto:dpasta@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, November 26, 2016 11:12 AM
To: fta.tro10mail
Subject: Federal Way Link Extension Environmental Impact Executive Summary

Saturday, November 26, 2016

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
 FTA.tro10mail@dot.gov

Dear Linda Gehrike and staff,

I am providing feedback about the Federal Way Link Extension Environmental Impact Executive Summary. (ES). I share the goal of a long-term solution that delivers high capacity transit to the region with the minimal negative impacts on the precious environment. I moved to Seattle in 1972 and currently reside in Des Moines, WA. I also commented on plans in May of 2015. The non-human environmental impact is of greatest concern, and the displacement of housing is my second concern. The real costs will occur over many years, including indefinite long lasting ecological impacts. The short-term displacement is perhaps the most personal issue for people and businesses, but the long-term picture is more important. Also, housing is more of a crisis in the region than employment/business.

I offer a few suggestions to improve the ES. Thank you for your clear charts and narrative that make the information accessible. The process balances many impacts; the environment includes ground water, wetlands, fauna and flora, people, businesses both current and potentially developed, homes, sound and sight impacts, vibrations and traffic and more. Environmental Impact Statements show the ecosystem effects, and aim to especially raise the issues that otherwise lack an effective voice. The non-human impacts may be the hardest to measure, so people need more information in the Executive Summary. For example, the region's acres of wetlands or upland habitats (compared to the original regional resources and to proposed options) would give perspective. Statistics about the number of species affected and the remaining habitats available would provide better information to help consider the impacts. Thank you for the extensive work that has gone into exploring the alternatives.

8-1 The eco-system impacts are a crucial consideration. Let's start our analysis with the categories at the bottom: habitat, wetlands, vibration and noise. Shifts like these change the non-human environment in complex and long term ways, as well as affecting the overall well-being of people. Let's not risk habitats or water flow in these days of climate change and resource shortages. If each local community made choices like in the preferred plan and the 99 to I-5 proposed plan, a significant loss to wildlife and ecosystems in our immediate area and beyond will be devastating. The changes in the Bingaman Creek area will allow for the environment to be improved "by others" to aid fish passage (p. ES-5); allowing others to mitigate damage is not fully addressing our concern. 8-2

The preferred plan and the SR99 to I-5 are unacceptable because of long term ecological impacts on: wetlands, wetland buffers, stream, upland habitat, and mature trees (the latter two admitted cannot be fully mitigated, per page ES-33).

8-3 Other considerations, such as the number of parcels impacted, residential and business displacements, may give a politic weight to vocal opponents; however, these numbers are not crucial. The impact on our population is better represented by numbers of people, employees and residents, rather than numbers of buildings. The Seattle housing market has encouraged people to move into our area, and this will increase with the light rail commute option. We can recognize that in the long run, the residential values, employment, and business profits should increase despite any initial losses since the new travel option improves access to remaining and

Response to Comment 8-1

Thank you for your comments on the Final EIS Executive Summary. We acknowledge that the summary of the environmental impact analysis necessarily contains a limited amount of information. Completeness and conciseness are competing goals. The Final EIS includes much more detail about the affected environment, which helps put the potential project impacts into context. Sections 4.8 and 4.9 of the Final EIS describe water resources and ecosystems (wetlands, streams, buffers, and upland habitat), impacts to these resources, and mitigation measures. For example, the Final EIS analysis categorized upland habitat according to their relative value in an urban setting. Wetlands are similarly categorized based on their size and ecological functions. The presence of protected fish and wildlife species in the study area is also described in Section 4.9. These methods help provide context for interpreting the severity of project impacts. Finally, Appendix G2 to the Final EIS, the Ecosystems Technical Report, provides additional detail about these resources.

Response to Comment 8-2

Sound Transit will mitigate impacts on Bingaman Creek as described in Sections 4.8.5 and 4.9.5 of the Final EIS and in Appendix B of this Record of Decision (ROD). The FWLE will not impact fish passage in Bingaman Creek or elsewhere. The FWLE is designed to allow the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to implement fish passage improvements on Bingaman Creek in the future, if WSDOT determines they are warranted.

growing businesses and increases the commute convenience of homes. This will support the tax base as well, eventually. Let's keep our attention on the longer term. Therefore, displacements are acceptable short term costs, provided we take care to retain the ecosystems that make our region so desirable. I acknowledge the voices heard, and the professional evaluation should emphasize the long-term impact on the whole community.

8-4 The preferred alternative has a disheartening human impact with the second most residential displacements; I weigh these much more heavily than jobs because with increased mobility, people can travel for jobs in Seattle, but we are suffering from increasingly competitive and costly housing alternatives, which this would make worse. The people and especially the poor, whose interests you protect, will suffer more under this plan than others.

Of the options, the SR 99 one has the most acceptable impact. Our non-human environmental impacts are too complex and long-term to accept the risks in the preferred and SR99 to I-5 plans. Though it is not unacceptable in terms of overall impact (it has less wetland, stream, habitat impacts), I am strongly concerned about the housing impact of the I-5 to SR 99 option. As I outlined above, employment can be found elsewhere but the housing market is a critical, increasing pressure on our region. The SR 99 plan has the best balance of concerns. I understand the SR 99 option has a huge negative sound and sight impact. It would impact my own home at the Saddlebrook apartments on 260th just off 99. I am pleased that attempts to mitigate these are included in planning. Nonetheless, I prefer these negative impacts to putting off harm to the delicate ecosystems and vulnerable wildlife that reside in our community.

I have some preference about alternate stations and alignments. Though a station at 260th where I live sounds convenient, the ecological impact make it not worth it. We would drive to the nearest station that is accessible (to people with disabilities as well as nearby). *Kent Des-Moines: The preferred option station for Kent-Des Moines is better than the others that have negative wetland and habitat impacts. Of course, I prefer the 99 options, especially 99 E with lowest cost, and best for the environment. *Landfill median alignment option appears good to me, the less habitat loss and decreased cost outweighing the noise increase. *I see no need to impact the habitats and increase noise for the S 272 Star Lake elevated option, even though it saves money up front. *The S 317th elevated alignment option has a very small savings for an increase in noise which seems unnecessary. *The Federal Way City Center options save money in the short term at the cost of ridership, with a bigger impact long term, so the preferred alternative is better. *I like the increased ridership at the S 216th ST. additional station option, preferring the East station option with less habitat impact and lower price. *The S 272nd Redondo trench option is not worth the ecological system impacts. *The Federal Way SR 99 station will cause a loss of ridership and noise increase that have long term impacts exceeding the decreased cost. Of all the optional stations, the S 216th ST. additional station option, East, seems the most valuable.

In summary, ecological concerns are most important, with residence impact a second concern; all the rest are overshadowed by these. Please let our assessment of impact effectively represent the ecosystems that do not have a voice in these decisions, and keep a view to the long term.

Sincerely,
Diane Pasta
2100 S 260th St Apt B103
Des Moines, WA 98198

Response to Comment 8-3

Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, of the Final EIS estimates the number of residential and business displacements to allow for a comparison between project alternatives. Residential displacements are counted by residential units; one apartment building may have several residential units. The number of persons living in an individual unit is not known and is not necessary to allow for a comparison between alternatives. For businesses, each individual business is counted regardless of the number of buildings affected. Several businesses may occupy one building. Further, Section 4.3, Economics, of the Final EIS estimates the number of employees that would be affected by business displacements. Mitigation for residential and business displacements is described in Section 4.1.6 of the Final EIS and in Appendix B of this ROD.

Response to Comment 8-4

Please see Response to Comment 1-3 above (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency comment related to residential versus business displacements, environmental justice, and affordable housing).

Letter 9

Jack Whisner

Page 1

From: eddiew@speakeasy.net [<mailto:eddiew@speakeasy.net>]
Sent: Saturday, December 17, 2016 9:00 PM
To: fta.tro10@mail
Subject: Federal Way Link EIS

Federal Transit Administration, Region 10
 Attention: Federal Way Link Extension EIS Comments
 915 Second Avenue, Suite 3142
 Seattle WA 98174-1002

FTA Region 10.

9-1 [The scope of the Sound Transit (ST) EIS seems too narrow. It seems only to ask what the Link alignment should be between Kent Des Moines and Federal Way. The ST Board did not ask themselves about many other ways to spend the ST2 and ST3 stream of revenue. I hope their objective is to maximize transit ridership attracted subject to fiscal and right of way constraints. If so, a wider set of alternatives for the south corridor could have been considered. The several billion dollars needed for Link could be used for a robust network of transit service using bus and using the Sound Move funded South 317th Street center access ramps and Federal Way Transit Center. The ST Board seems to have been fixated on the Link spine.

9-2 • [First, even if constructed, the Link spine will provide relatively slow service between Federal Way and downtown Seattle, the main employment market with paid parking. The approximate running time between the Tacoma Dome Station and downtown Seattle is 50 minutes by bus and 60 minutes by Sounder and is projected to be 70 minutes by Link. The marginal differences between bus and Link would be the same between Federal Way and downtown Seattle. When I-5 is not congested, the bus time is about 30 minutes. Given significantly better speed between downtown Seattle and Federal Way (and Tacoma), if the same service frequency was provided, a bus-based alternative might attract more ridership and more system benefits. It could be a combination of regional express bus and BRT similar to RapidRide. ST has not asked that question.

9-3 • [Second, Link will take longer to plan, construct, and implement than a bus-based network. In a benefit cost analysis, the stream of benefits and costs are discounted. The stream of benefits from a bus network would begin sooner and be discounted less than one from Link. (In Pierce County, its share of Link funds could be spent on improving transit within the urban center).

9-4 • [Third, a bus-based network could serve more of the pedestrian centers of King County than the Link spine would. Funds needed for costly Link capital could instead be used on more service. Conceptually, frequent routes could connect: Tacoma and SeaTac via Federal Way; Lakewood and downtown Seattle via downtown Tacoma and Federal Way skipping SODO, as served by Link; the Metro RapidRide A Line could be much more frequent (it serves the Link

Response to Comment 9-1

Please see Chapter 1 of the Final EIS for a description of the purpose and need for the project and how this project has been planned for at the regional and local levels since 1996. The chapter also describes how increased congestion will continue to affect the travel times and reliability of buses on I-5. Appendix C, Alternatives Analysis Reports and Scoping Summary, of the Final EIS describes the evaluation of other modes as part of the Alternatives Analysis. Non-light-rail alternatives were not carried forward because they did not meet the project purpose and need.

Response to Comment 9-2

Table 3-6 in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS shows estimated future (2035) PM peak period transit travel times between the Federal Way Transit Center and key regional Puget Sound destinations with and without the Preferred Alternative. While the travel times between all destinations would not decrease substantially, there would be noticeable benefits between some destinations, such as Federal Way and Sea-Tac Airport. In addition, other transit level of service measures would improve, including service frequency, hours of service, passenger load, and reliability. Detailed information about these measures is provided in Section 4.2.7 of Appendix G1, Transportation Technical Report, of the Final EIS. Sounder commuter trains will also continue to provide an alternative mode of transit for South King County residents to get to Seattle. See Response to Comment 9-1 regarding other modes.

- 9-4 market and connects with Link); Auburn and Twin Lakes via Federal Way; Kent and Kent Des Moines; and, Kent and SeaTac. The transit markets in South King County are dispersed and not centered along the Link spine. The best pedestrian markets are those with tight street grids developed before WWII (e.g., Renton, Burien, Kent, and Auburn); they are not along the I-5 Link alignment. A major objective of transit is to extend the range of pedestrians. The Link spine does not reach many.
- 9-6 Fourth, the Link ridership modeling may assume a bus network that is unfunded.
- 9-6 The PSRC 2040 plan includes region wide variable tolling. So, the EIS assumption of slow bus times may not be valid. Even short of tolling, if the state kept the center HOV lanes at the policy mandated 45 mph, bus travel times would be much better than those of Link. Center HOV lanes are under construction over the Puyallup River. In the short term, the WSDOT project to connect SR-509 with I-5 may draw traffic from I-5 and improve bus flow. The EIS assumption of inadequate bus capacity would be addressed by using the stream of ST2 and ST3 funds on bus instead of Link. WSDOT is a partner of ST.
- 9-7 The preferred alignment next to I-5 would probably never develop as pedestrian oriented transit markets. I-5 is a barrier to pedestrians, as dams are to fish. I-5 generates noise and traffic that will make the development market slow to respond in the station areas. The slower Link travel times will also degrade the market response.
- 9-8 Operationally, the very long Link alignments may be problematic. They seem longer than BART lines. The distances between Tacoma, Federal Way and downtown Seattle seem like good bus markets.

Thank you for considering this comment.

Jack Whisner
8325 11th Avenue NW
Seattle 98117
PCO 36-2168

Response to Comment 9-3

Please see Response to Comment 9-1 above.

Response to Comment 9-4

Regional growth and transit plans, listed in Table 1-1 of Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, call for high-capacity transit serving regional growth centers. Some of these regional growth centers are historic town centers, while others are areas where growth is planned, such as the Midway Subarea and the Federal Way City Center. While these plans call for connecting these growth centers, not all growth centers may be connected by the same modes. Link light rail is intended to be a “spine” serving some of the largest growth centers, with buses used to provide local feeder service. The Final EIS was developed in partnership with King County Metro as part of the project transit integration planning, and reflects components of the Metro Connects plan.

Response to Comment 9-5

Sound Transit coordinated with King County Metro and Pierce Transit regarding bus assumptions for the ridership model. Sound Transit was aware of funding limitations, which is why only some components of the Metro Connects plan were used.

Response to Comment 9-6

As described in Section 8.1 of Appendix G1, Transportation Technical Report, to the Final EIS, several transportation projects are assumed to be constructed by 2035 based on the latest state, regional, and surrounding local agencies’ transportation plans. These projects are included in the No Build and build alternatives transportation impacts analysis. The background project list includes the WSDOT Puget Sound Gateway Program, which includes the SR 509 and SR 167 extension projects, the I-5/SR 161/SR 18 Federal Way Triangle vicinity improvements, and other local agency intersection and roadway projects.

Beyond these projects, WSDOT could continue to implement lane-management strategies, such as express tolled lanes on the highway

system. Depending on how lane-management strategies were administered, managed lanes could improve travel conditions on the highway system for some travel modes. Since there have been no studies of lane-management strategies along I-5 nor specific legislative authorization or funding, Sound Transit has maintained the current I-5 HOV designation for the future analysis. Both WSDOT and FHWA agreed with this assumption for the EIS analysis.

Please see Response to Comment 9-1 above regarding a proposal of extended bus service instead of Link light rail.

Response to Comment 9-7

Transit-oriented development (TOD), which includes an emphasis on a pedestrian environment, could occur in station areas where existing or planned density provides a variety of destinations within walking distance of a station. The alternative alignments along I-5 are farther than the SR 99 alignments from many of the denser multi-family residential developments and commercial uses along SR 99. However, Kent/Des Moines and Federal Way stations would be in the same general locations (within 1,000 feet) regardless of the alternative. These stations are also in areas that the cities have identified for the most increased density, growth, and TOD. The Kent/Des Moines Station area is where Kent and Des Moines are targeting higher-density development through the Midway Subarea Plan, while Federal Way is planning increased mixed-use development near the Federal Way Station as part of its Federal Way City Center. While the S 272nd Star Lake Station has less TOD potential than the S 272nd Redondo Station, the Redondo area is not within a regional growth center and has not been targeted for increased density by the City of Federal Way.

Response to Comment 9-8

The Sound Transit Link System is designed as a regional transportation network and is therefore intended to connect regional destinations in the Sound Transit service area. Please see Chapter 1 of the Final EIS for a description of the purpose and need of the project.

Letter 10

Barbara McMichael

Page 1

From: Barbara McMichael [mailto:bkmonser@nwlink.com]
 Sent: Monday, December 19, 2016 11:09 AM
 To: fta.tro10mail
 Subject: Comment on EIS for Federal Way Link Extension

Good day - and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plans for the Federal Way light rail extension.

First of all, let me say that I absolutely love the new Angle Lake station! I participated on the panel that helped select some of the public art, so of course I take great pride in that. But even more, I love being able to make use of light rail at long last, and I talk it up every chance I get. This is a wonderful asset to our community.

With community in mind, I'd like to discuss light rail's service to the community. I've felt that when it comes to transportation, the communities with which I'm most closely associated -- Des Moines and SeaTac -- have always been regarded by planners as places to get through on the way to somewhere else. We've been divided by freeways and very negatively impacted by both freeway and airport noise. But of course, we who live here want to maintain and even enhance our way of life. When I look at the map for the Preferred Alternative and see 196 residential displacements, including what seems to be a fairly significant chunk of the long-established Mansion Hill housing development (just north of S 216th Street and east of Highway 99), I'm concerned that this proposal will negatively impact a stable neighborhood of home-owners who, surrounded by the development of so many apartment complexes over the last few decades, have provided continuity and "bedrock" for the larger community as taxpayers, parents of schoolchildren, etc.

I'm also deeply concerned that the Preferred Alternative has the most significant impacts on wetlands - this wildlife habitat, too, is a community we should be very careful to respect and preserve.

In November, I did vote to approve the light rail extension. If I now were given the opportunity to pick the optimum route, I would choose much of the route shown in Exhibit ES-3B - continuing light rail down Highway 99 by beginning down the green line (no tunnels, please). If there were a station at 216th, I think the east side option is better - there are some businesses there as well as an old trailer park that are due for removal or upgrade - development there could provide that opportunity.

To return to the issue of noise and vibration mitigation - as a taxpayer and a light rail supporter, my expectation is that you will provide solutions that are green (lots and lots of trees, please!!!) and aesthetically pleasing - if you're going to put up sound barriers, I'd really like to see something more delightful than those gray barriers you've put up at places in SeaTac and Tukwila.

Thanks for your consideration,

Barbara McMichael
 22810 Thunderbird Drive
 Des Moines, WA 98198
 206-878-6912

Response to Comment 10-1

The Preferred Alternative will displace the most residents, mostly concentrated north of S 240th Street and mostly on multi-family properties. One single-family residence and one four-unit multi-family building will be displaced in the Mansion Hill neighborhood. The Preferred Alternative will be primarily within Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) right-of-way already acquired for the WSDOT SR 509 Extension Project in this neighborhood.

As described in Section 4.1.3 of the Final EIS, even without the FWLE, about half of the total displacements will also occur with the SR 509 Extension Project based on the 2003 Final EIS for that project. Section 4.1, Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations, describes the relocation benefits for displaced residents (both owners and tenants).

Response to Comment 10-2

The Preferred Alternative will have the most impacts on wetlands, wetland buffers, and upland habitat. Sound Transit has been coordinating with ecological resource agencies throughout the FWLE project, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others. Sound Transit will mitigate the impacts on wetlands, buffers, and trees described in the Final EIS through the permitting process with regulatory agencies and local jurisdictions. Sound Transit will work with WSDOT to identify mitigation for trees removed in the I-5 right-of-way. Section 4.8.5 of the Final EIS describes mitigation measures for these resources. Sound Transit's mitigation commitments for these and other impacts are also described in Appendix B of this Record of Decision.

Response to Comment 10-3

As described in Section 4.5.5 of the Final EIS, visual mitigation measures will include landscaping as a visual screen for sound walls, and treatment of sound walls with visual interesting elements where appropriate. Sound Transit's mitigation commitments for these and other impacts are also described in Appendix B of this Record of Decision.