

I-5 Marvin Rd. to Mounts Rd. Planning & Environmental Linkages Study

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #4

April 18, 2023

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Consultant Team Design Lead—Parametrix

Consultant Team Environmental/Outreach Lead—SCJ

Consultant Team Natural Environment Lead--Parametrix

Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 1:15 Meeting Goals and Outcomes
- 1:25 Review Existing Conditions
- 2:15 Review Alternatives Evaluation Criteria and Results
- 2:55 Next Steps
- 3:00 Adjourn

Welcome and Thank You

WSDOT is engaging project area jurisdictions, including tribes, counties, cities, and national and local resource agencies

Introductions

- We will call your organization name — please respond with your name
- To change your Participant Name in Zoom
 - Hover over your video and click on ellipses and "Rename"
 - Hover over your name under Participant List and click on ellipses "Rename"

TAG Participants

- Alliance for a Healthy South Sound Executive Committee
- Billy Frank Jr Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
- City of DuPont
- City of Lacey
- City of Lakewood
- City of Olympia
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Federal Highway Administration
- Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
- ForeverGreen Trails
- Friends of Nisqually NWRC
- Intercity Transit
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Land Trust
- Nisqually River Council
- Pierce County
- Pierce Transit
- Port of Olympia
- Port of Tacoma
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Sound Transit
- South Sound Military & Communities Partnership
- Squaxin Island Tribe of Indians
- Thurston County
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Town of Steilacoom
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Farm Labor Association
- Washington State Patrol

Meeting Participation

Virtual Participation

- Mute yourself when you're not speaking
- “Raise your hand” or use chat box for questions or comments
- Say your name before speaking
- If calling in from your phone:
 - Dial *6 to mute/unmute
 - Dial *9 to raise your hand

Input Opportunities

- Chat box and polls throughout the meeting
- Discussion opportunities at the end of each topic

Meeting Goals and Outcomes

Meeting Goals

- Input and active participation
- Understanding of the process

Outcomes

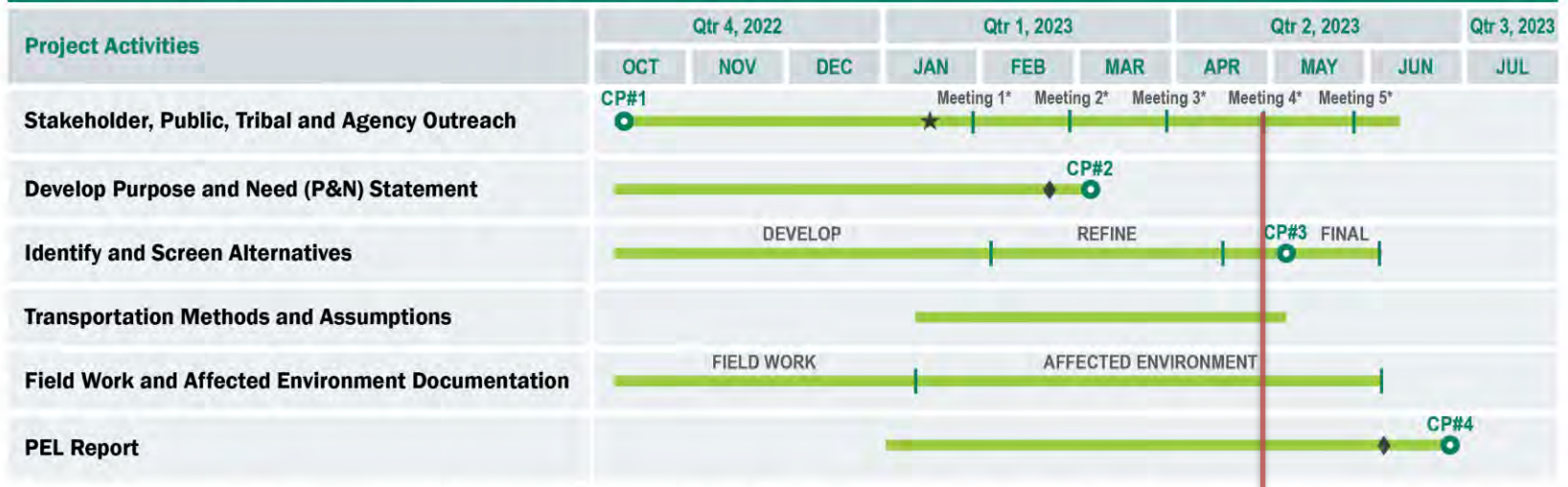
- Awareness of Environmental Existing Conditions
- Discussion of Initial (Level 1) Alternatives Evaluation Results
- Input on Detailed (Level 2) Alternatives Evaluation Results

Advisory Group Responsibilities

- Represent agencies and communities in the study area
- Provide data and input on direction of study
- Advise on range of alternatives and alternatives evaluation criteria
- Help build consensus and support for alternative(s) selection

Schedule

WSDOT I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Planning & Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study Project Schedule

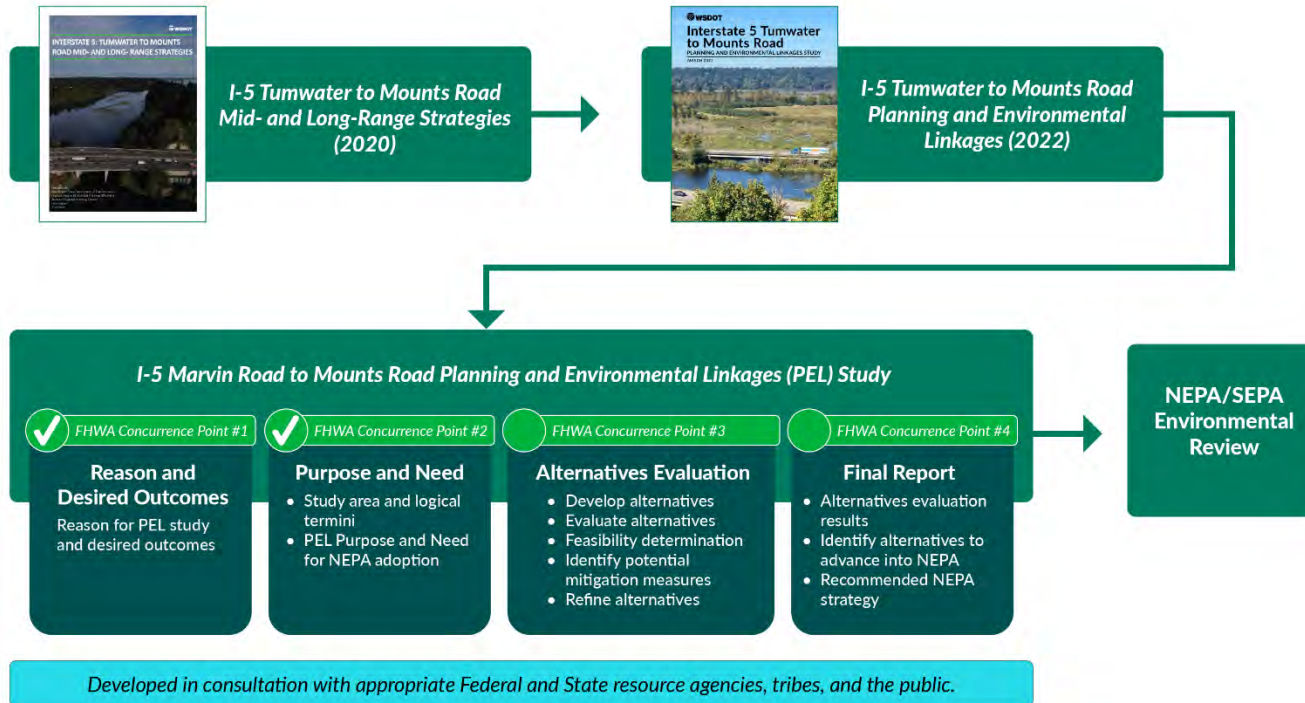


- FHWA Concurrence Point #1 - Reason and Desired Outcomes
- FHWA Concurrence Point #2 - Purpose & Need
- FHWA Concurrence Point #3 - Alternatives Evaluation
- FHWA Concurrence Point #4 - Final Report

- *Meeting 1 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 1
- *Meeting 2 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 2
- *Meeting 3 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 3
- *Meeting 4 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 4
- *Meeting 5 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 5

- ★ Stakeholder Interviews
- ◆ Public Review

PEL Process



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Existing Conditions

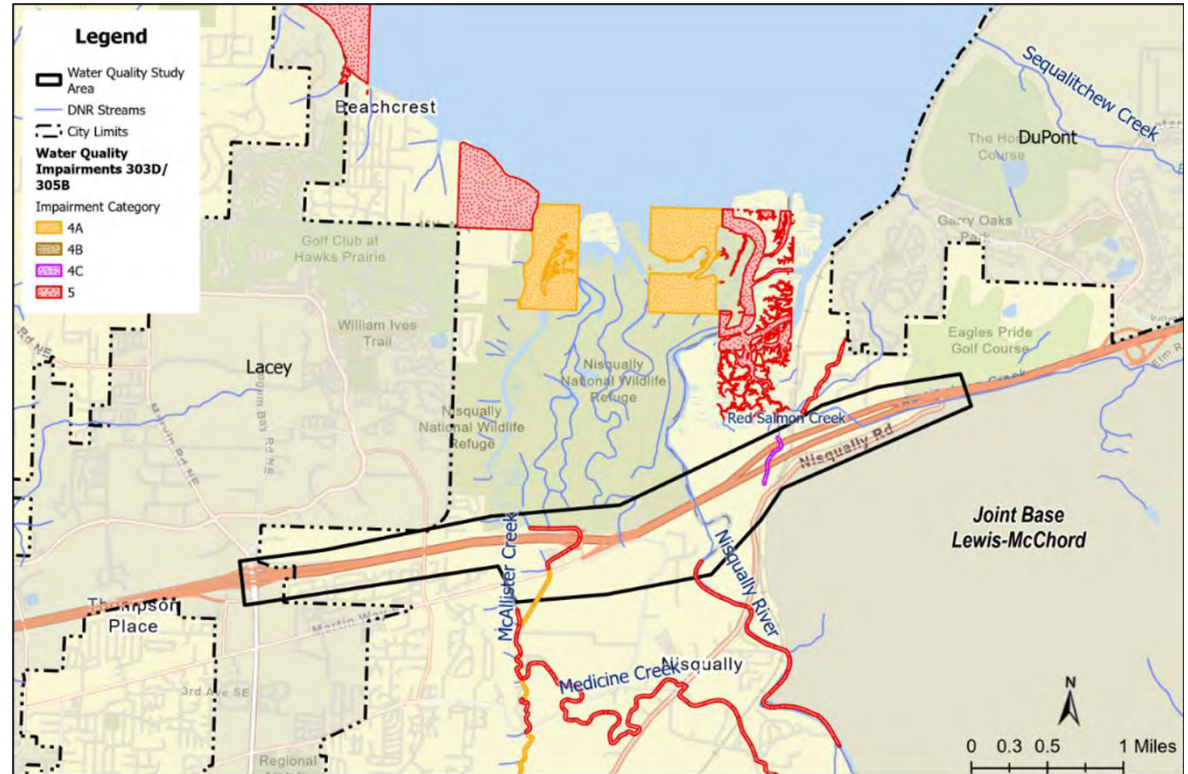
Stormwater and Water Quality

Stormwater

- Drainage is generally collected in catch basins and conveyed by ditches to nearby waterbodies
- No treatment except in vicinity of Exits 111 and 116

Water Quality

- Portions of Nisqually River, McAllister/Medicine Creek & Red Salmon Creek on 303(d) list for temperature, fecal coliform



Wetlands and Streams

Wetlands

- 23 wetlands identified:
 - 11 Category I
 - 6 Category II
 - 6 Category III
- Moderate to high biological, chemical, & physical functions

Streams

- Nisqually River, McAllister/Medicine Creek, Red Salmon Creek + unnamed tribs & backwater sloughs

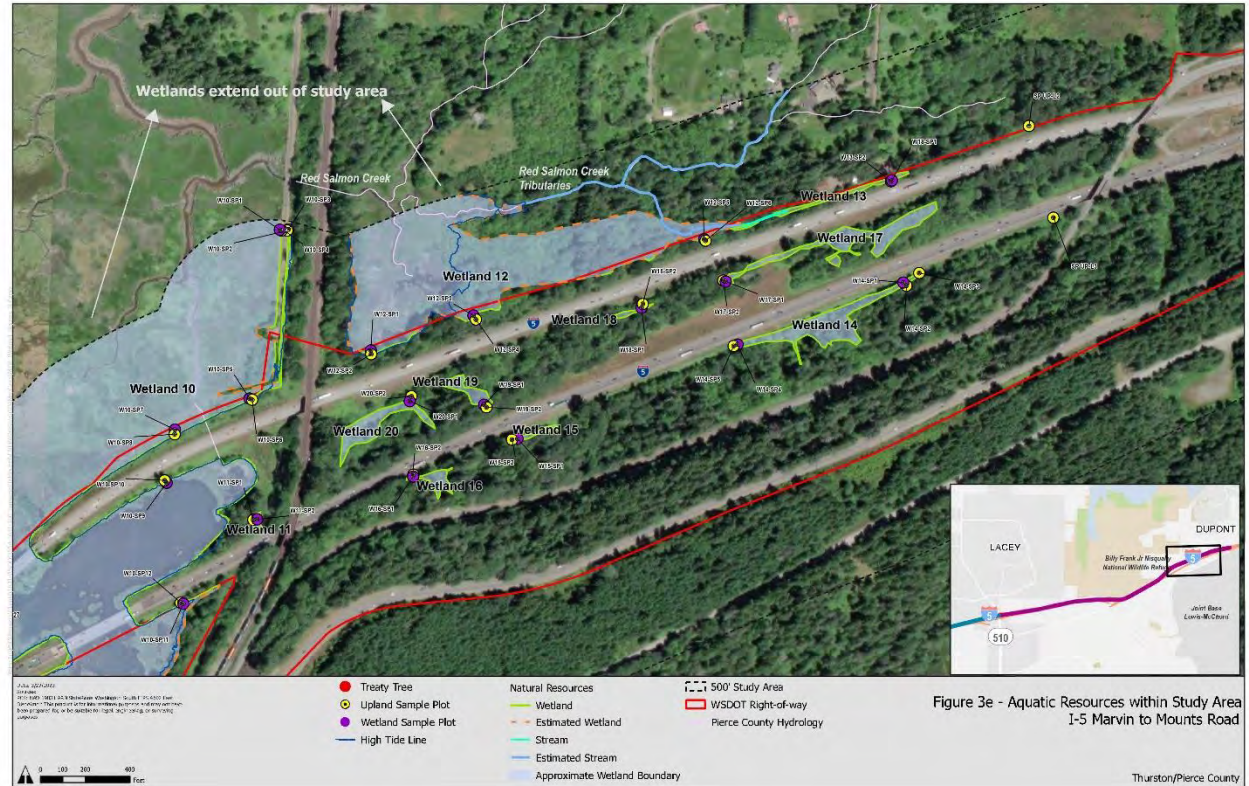


Figure 3e - Aquatic Resources within Study Area 1-5 Marvin to Mounts Road

Thurston/Pierce County

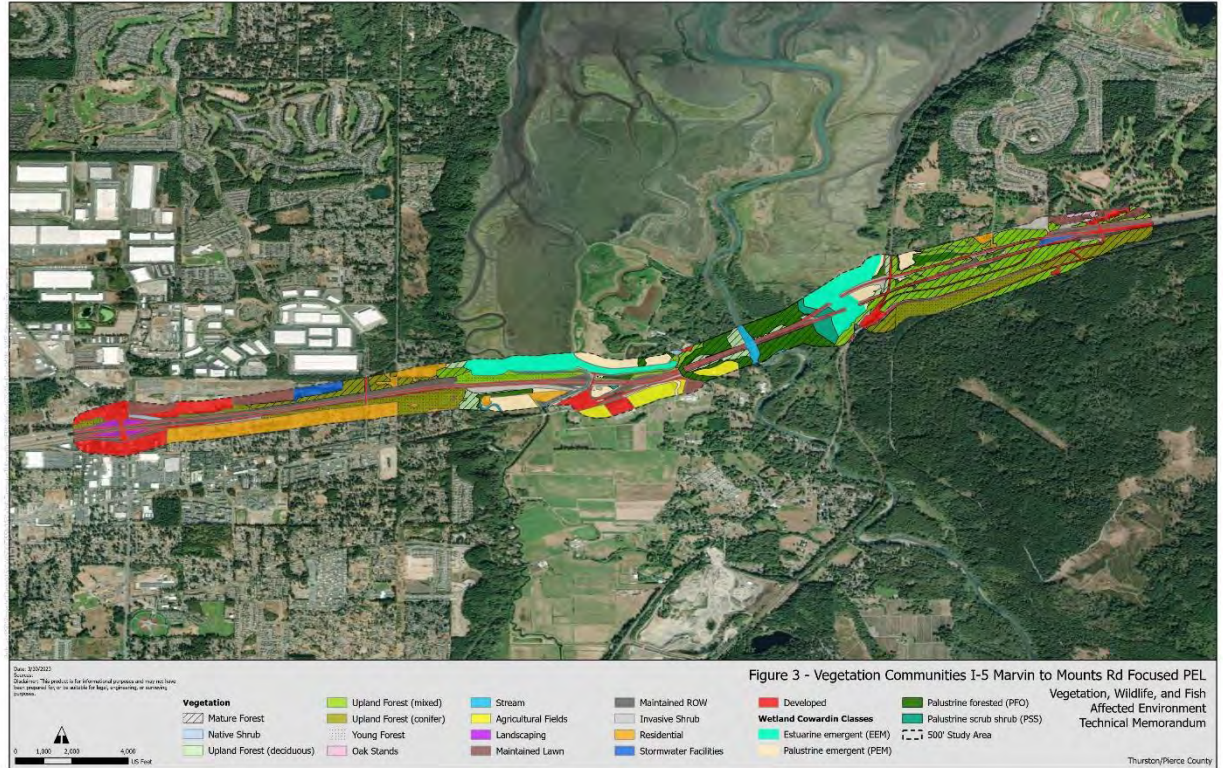
Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish

Vegetation

- Mature upland and riparian forest; estuarine and freshwater wetlands
- 2 ESA listed plant species

Wildlife

- Study area overlaps with 8 WDFW priority habitat areas
- 9 listed and 1 proposed wildlife species

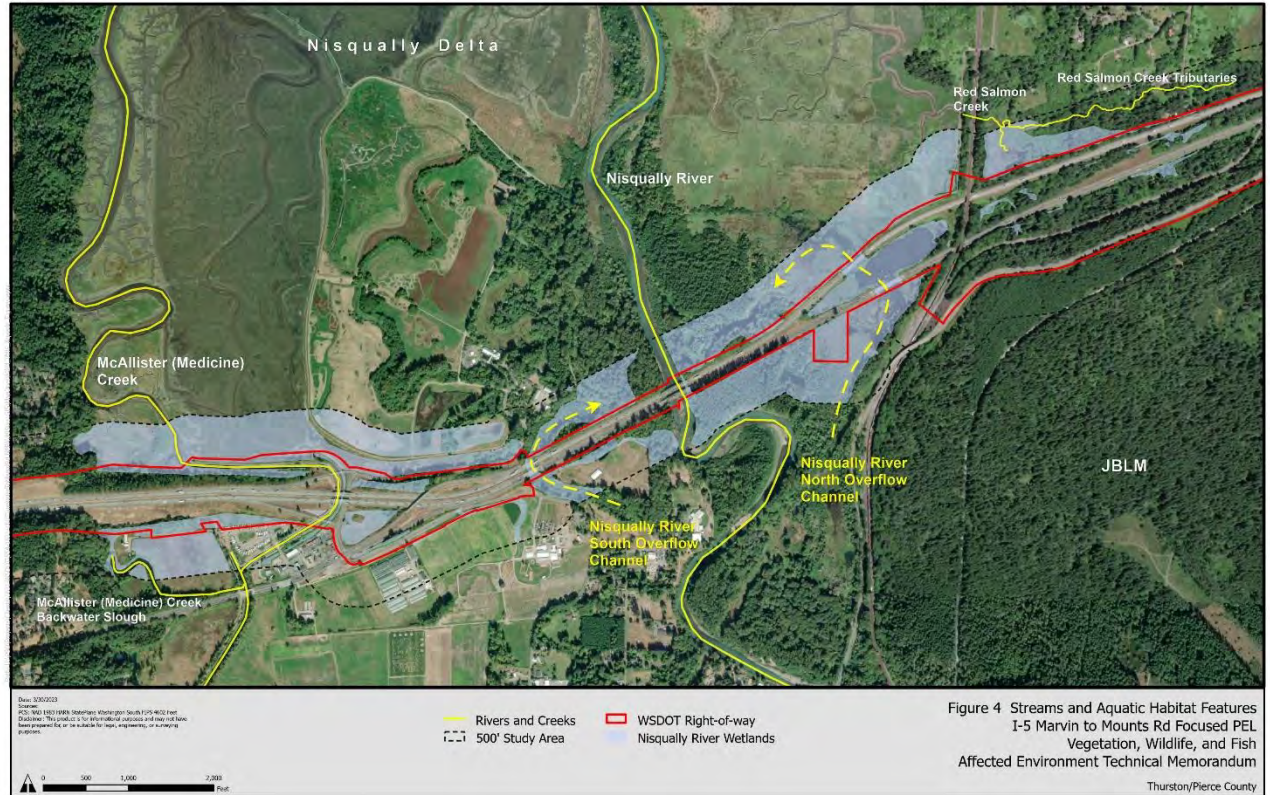


Vegetation, Wildlife, and Fish

ESA Listed Fish Species

- Bull trout*
- Chinook salmon*
- Steelhead*
- Boccacio rockfish
- Yelloweye rockfish

* = designated critical habitat in study area



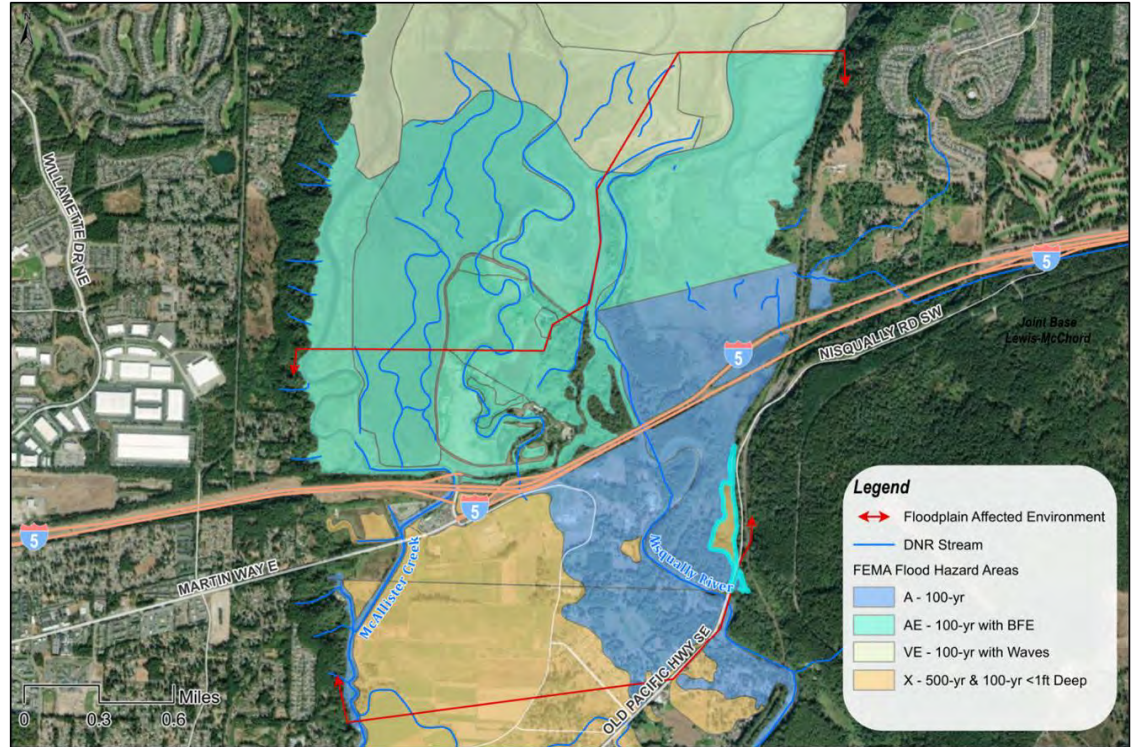
Floodplains and Sea Level Rise

Floodplains

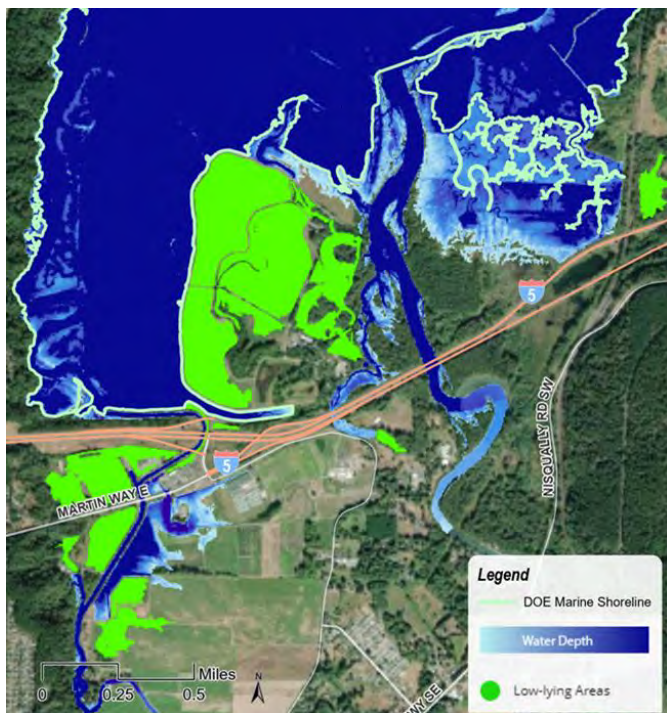
- Entire valley mapped as floodplain
- Base (100-yr) flood elevation = 15.7 feet at I-5
- FEMA maps are being updated

Channel Migration

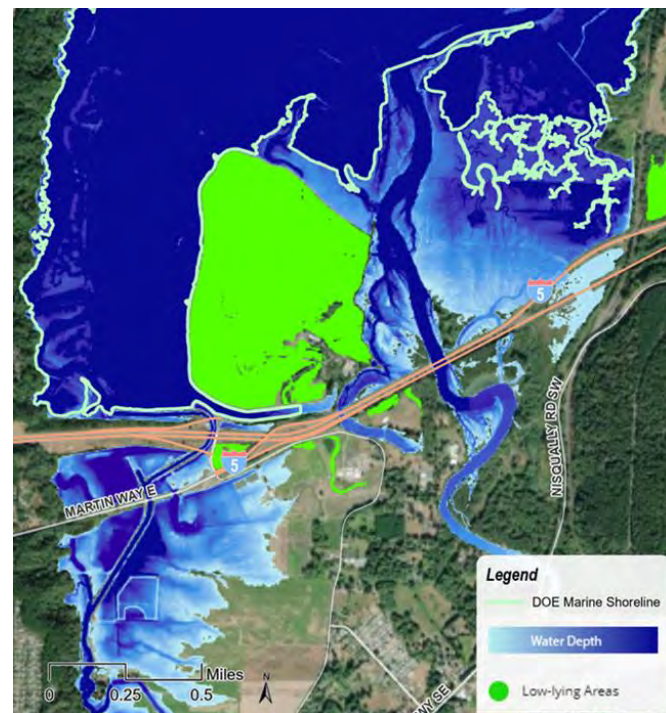
- WSDOT has documented Nisqually River migration; avulsion may affect I-5 in as little as 20 years



Floodplains and Sea Level Rise



2-foot Sea Level Rise



5-foot Sea Level Rise

Geology and Soils

Topography and Soil Types

- Upland soils: Vashon till and Vashon advance outwash
- Valley soils: Recent alluvial deposits

Geologic Hazards

- Landslides
- Liquefaction
- Volcanic Hazards

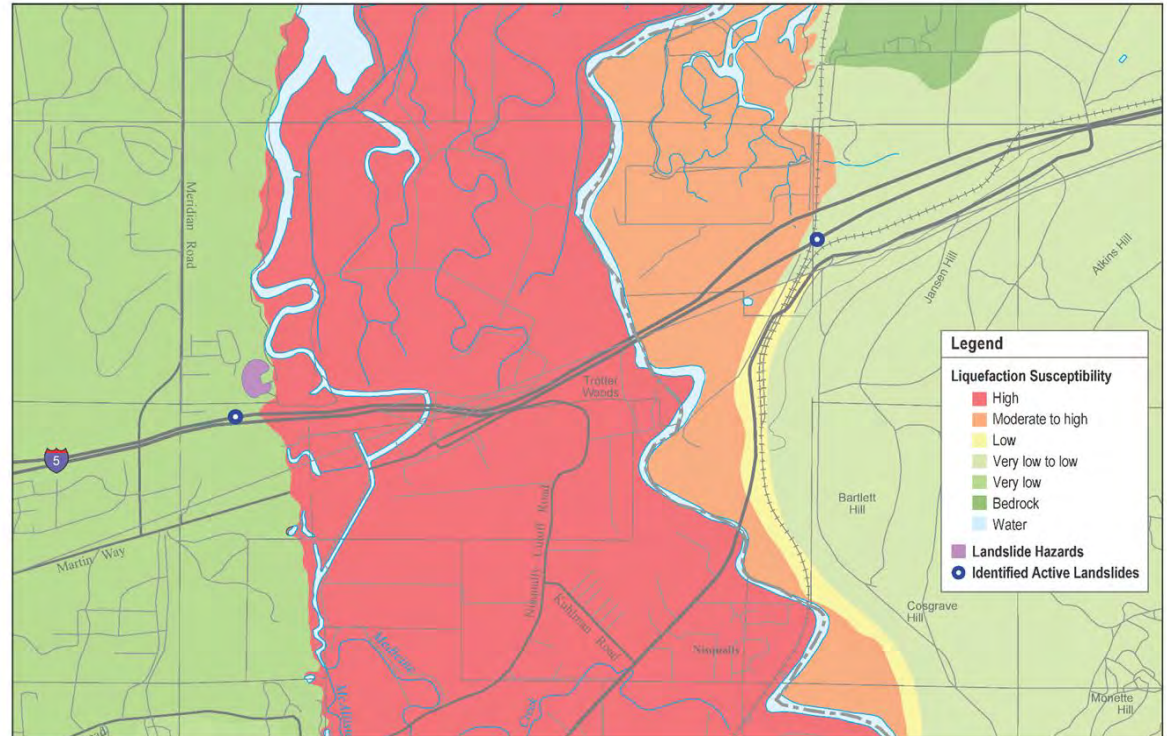


Figure 3-3: Study Area Geologic Hazards (WSDOT, DNR)

Visual Quality

Visual Resources

- Built environment around interchanges
- Forested areas
- Nisqually River Valley

Viewers

- Travelers on I-5
- Refuge users
- Homes and businesses closest to corridor



View from I-5 southbound, looking northwest

Air Quality

Air Quality

- Nisqually Valley is an environmentally sensitive area
- Area is currently in compliance with all AQ standards
- I-5 corridor currently exceeding highway design capacity during peak travel periods
- Traffic volumes are currently higher than pre-COVID



Sensitive Receiver - Nisqually Commercial Park, south of I-5, near Exit 114

Cultural and Historic Resources

Recorded & Known Resources

- 6 archaeological sites
- 5 inventoried historic resources
- Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial

Survey

- 5% of project area covered by previous intensive survey
- Unrecorded aboveground and belowground resources may be present



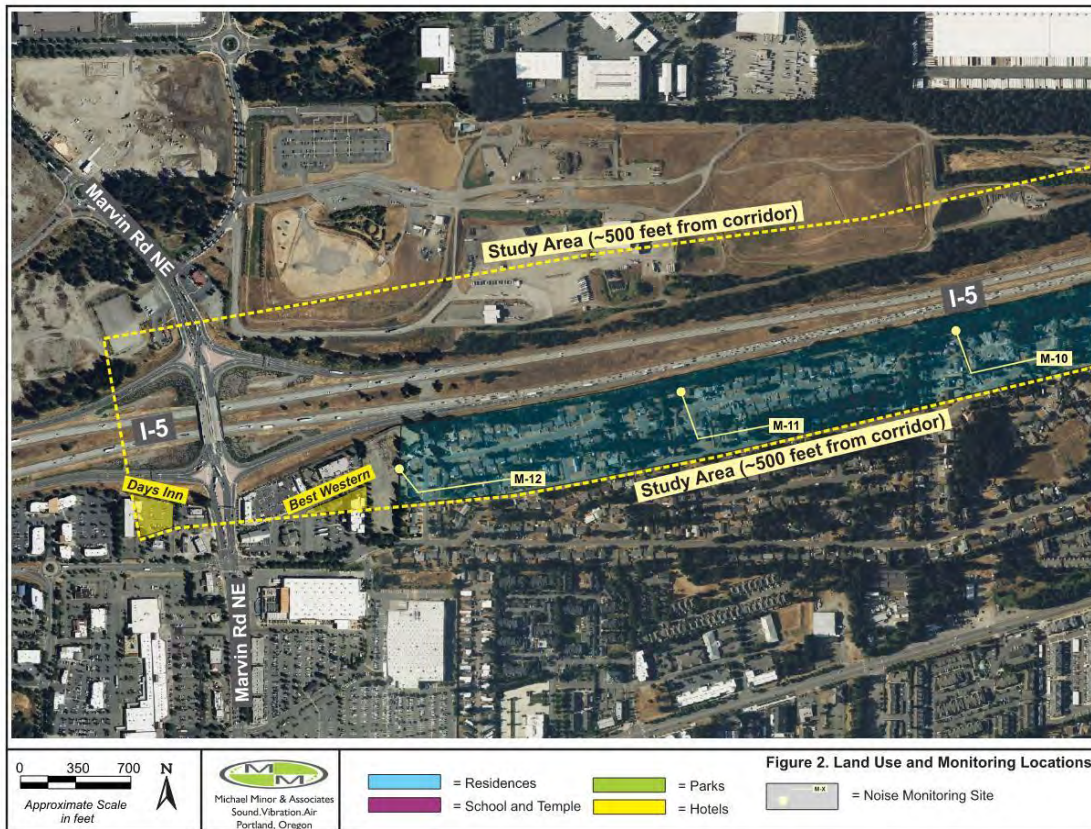
Noise

Noise Sources

- I-5 Traffic
- WSDOT dBA criteria = 66
- Existing noise levels range from 65-73 dBA

Sensitive Receivers

- Residences adjacent to corridor
- Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge



Land Use/Farmlands/6(f)

Land Use

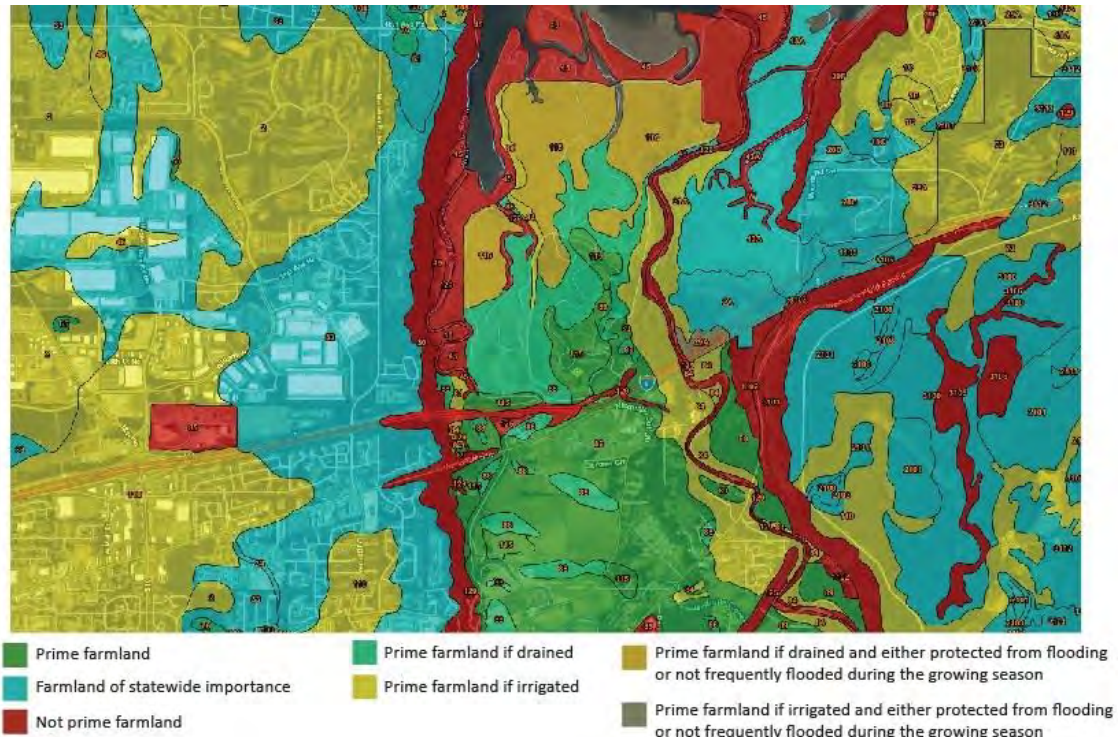
- City of Lacey
- Thurston & Pierce Counties

Farmlands

- Prime & Statewide Importance
- Active agricultural production south of I-5

Section 6(f) Resources

- Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge



Section 4(f) Resources

Recreation

- Eagle's Pride GC
- Hawk's Prairie Off-Leash Dog Park
- WSU Closed Loop Park
Demonstration Garden

Wildlife Refuge

- Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National
Wildlife Refuge

Historic Resources

- Medicine Creek Treaty National
Memorial



Hawk's Prairie Off-Leash Dog Park, near EXIT 111

Feedback



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Initial Alternatives Evaluation Results

Elimination of Unreasonable Alternatives

- Alternative 1 - Operations Improvements
- **Alternative 2 - Widen I-5 for HOV lanes**
- **Alternative 3 - Widen I-5 for General Purpose lanes**
- Alternative 4 - Convert I-5 lanes from General Purpose to HOV Lanes



Elimination of Unreasonable Alternatives

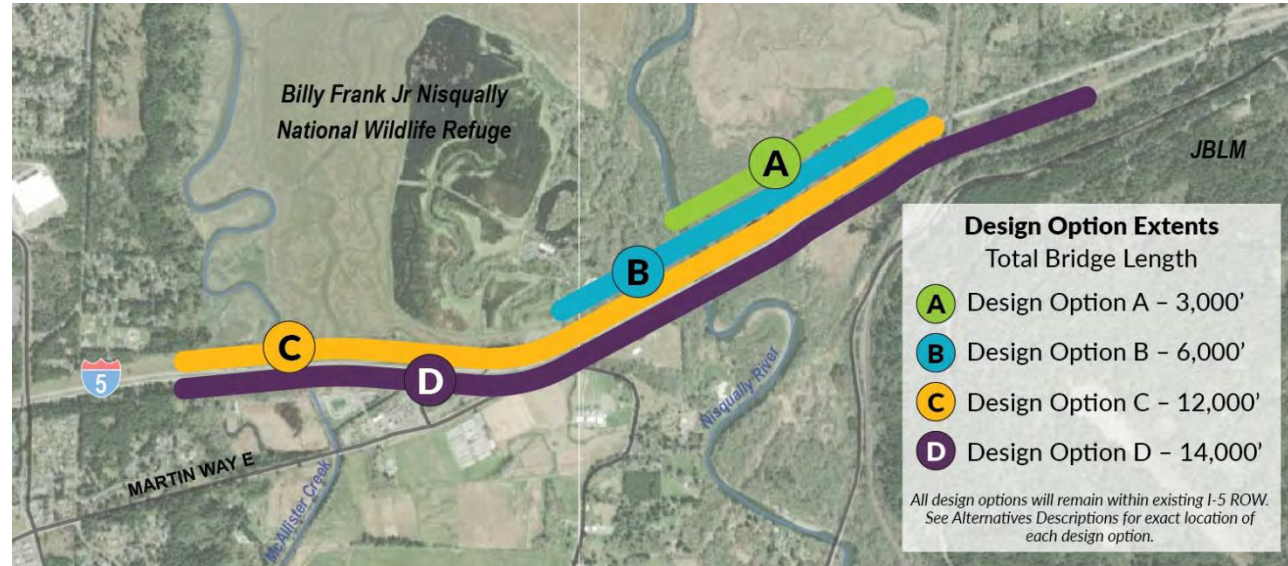
- **Alternative 1 (Operations Improvements)**
 - Alternative 1 performs poorly in 2 of the 4 Purpose and Need categories
 - Low performance in the **Enhance Mobility and Connectivity** category
 - Higher traffic congestion for GP vehicles, transit, and trucks
 - Does not improve transit travel time compared to GP vehicles
 - Highest traffic diversion to local roadways
 - Minimal increase in person and freight throughput
 - Low performance in the **Economic Vitality** category
 - Higher travel time on I-5 for trucks and freight movement
 - Similar performance to Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 in other categories

Elimination of Unreasonable Alternatives

- **Alternative 4 (Lane Conversion from GP to HOV lane)**
 - Alternative 4 performs poorly in 2 of the 4 Purpose and Need categories
 - Low performance in the **Enhance Mobility and Connectivity** category
 - Higher traffic congestion for GP vehicles and trucks
 - Some traffic diversion to local roadways
 - Minimal increase in person and freight throughput
 - Does not Compliment Local and Tribal Planning Efforts
 - Low performance in the **Economic Vitality** category
 - Higher travel time on I-5 for trucks and freight movement
 - Similar performance to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 in other categories

Elimination of Unreasonable Options

- **Design Option A—
3,000' Bridge length**
- **Design Option B—
6,000' Bridge length**
- **Design Options C—
12,000 Bridge length**
- Design Option D—
Long-span, high level
bridge—14,000' Bridge
length



Elimination of Unreasonable Options

- ***Design Option D (high-level, long span bridge)***
 - Removal of the Nisqually interchange
 - Ramp connections to the high-level bridge are not feasible
 - Impact to freeway-oriented businesses
 - Local street traffic increases
 - Higher emergency response times
 - Property impacts outside of WSDOT right-of-way
 - Highest estimated cost

Advisory Group Polls Summary

Which Alternative(s) do you support advancing in the next round of evaluation?

- Alternative 1 – Operations Improvements: 8/37 or 22%
- Alternative 2 – Widen I-5 for HOV lanes: 31/37 or 84%
- Alternative 3 – Widen I-5 for General Purpose lanes: 25/37 or 68%
- Alternative 4 – Convert I-5 lanes from General Purpose to HOV: 6/37 or 16%

Which bridge option(s) do you support advancing into the next round of evaluation?

- Design option A – 3,000 ft: 13/39 or 33%
- Design option B – 6,000 ft: 26/39 or 67%
- Design option C – 12,000 ft: 33/39 or 85%
- Design option D – 14,000 ft: 11/39 or 28%

Discussion of Alternatives and Options



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Detailed Evaluation Criteria Updates

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

Note: Bridge Option lengths: Option A=3,000', Option B=6,000', Option C=12,000'

Project Purpose Categories	Alternatives	Alternative 2 - Widen I-5 for HOV Lanes			Alternative 3 - Widen I-5 for GP Lanes		
	Bridge Options	A	B	C	A	B	C
Enhance mobility and connectivity on I-5 for passenger vehicles, freight, transit, and active modes and provide support for increased person and freight throughput	Accommodates Active Transportation Modes						
	Accommodates Transit Modes						
	<i>Provides Congestion Relief for General Purpose (GP) Vehicles/Freight</i>						
	<i>Provides Congestion Relief for Transit and High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV)</i>						
	Effects on Adjacent Roadways						
	Increases Person and Freight Throughput						
	Complementary to Local Planning						
	<i>Consistency with WSDOT Policies</i>						
Improve local and mainline I-5 system resiliency	Reduces the Risk of Infrastructure Failures						
	Reduces the Risk of Infrastructure Failures Due to Seismic Activity						
Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the Nisqually River Delta area	Enables Environmental Restoration						
	Enables Ecosystem Resiliency						
Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers	Freight Reliability						
	Multimodal Access to Opportunities (Jobs, Services, and Recreation)						
	River Navigability						
Support Equitable Outcomes	Minimizes Business and Residential Impacts or Displacements						
	Minimizes Negative Impact to Emergency Response						
	Minimizes the Flood Risk Potential for EJ Populations						
Relative Cost of Alternatives	Planning-level Cost Comparison						

Rating Scale

Lower Performing

Higher Performing

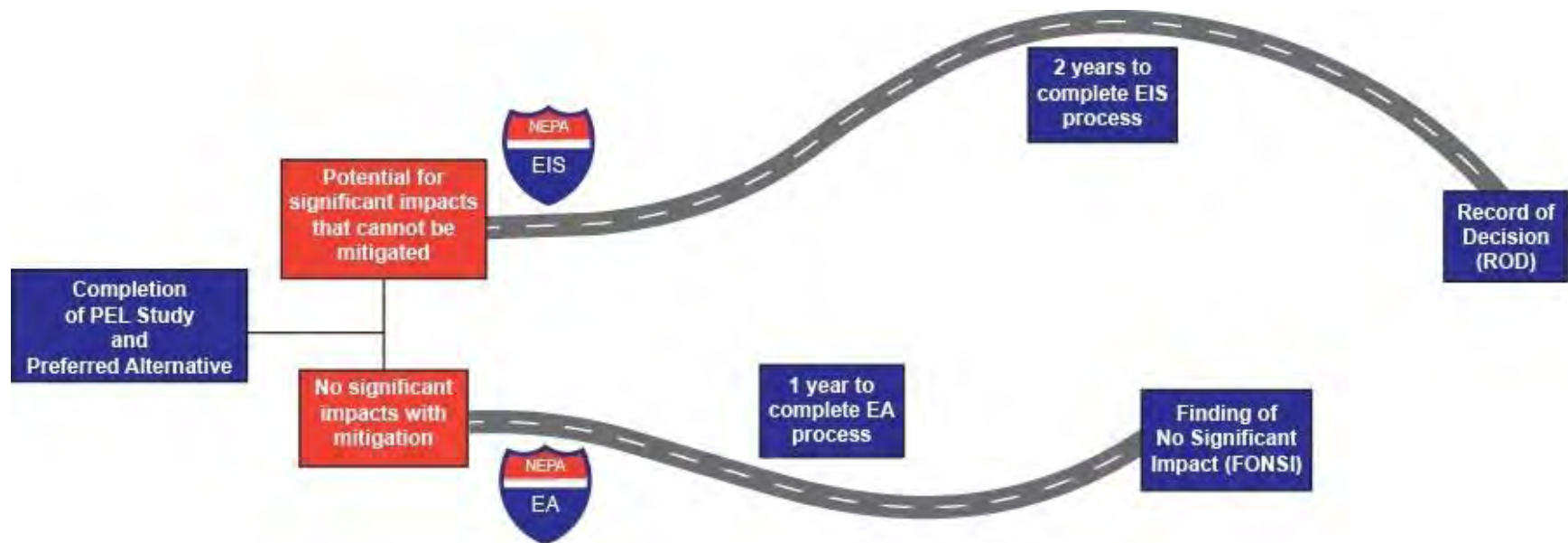
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Detailed Alternatives Evaluation Results

Detailed Evaluation Review Focus

- Determine a preferred transportation alternative with multiple bridge Options for more analysis in NEPA
 - Project will be an overall benefit to the environment
 - No significant environmental impacts identified that cannot be mitigated
 - No known controversy and project is supported for its combined transportation mobility and environmental benefits
- Environmental Assessment (EA) process may be appropriate for NEPA if a preferred alternative is recommended in the PEL process
 - FHWA decision on NEPA process with WSDOT input
 - Analysis of No Build and Preferred Alternatives (including Bridge Options)

NEPA Process



Alternative Descriptions and Common Features

Feature	Alternatives (2 and 3) and Bridge Options (A-C)					
	Alternative 2 – Widen I-5 for HOV Lanes			Alternative 3 – Widen I-5 for GP Lanes		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
I-5 Widening						
HOV/Lane Management						
Bridge Replacement						
Fill Removal						
Shared-use Path						
Modified Nisqually Interchange						
McAllister Creek Realignment						

Note: Bridge Option lengths: Option A=3,000', Option B=6,000', Option C=12,000'

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

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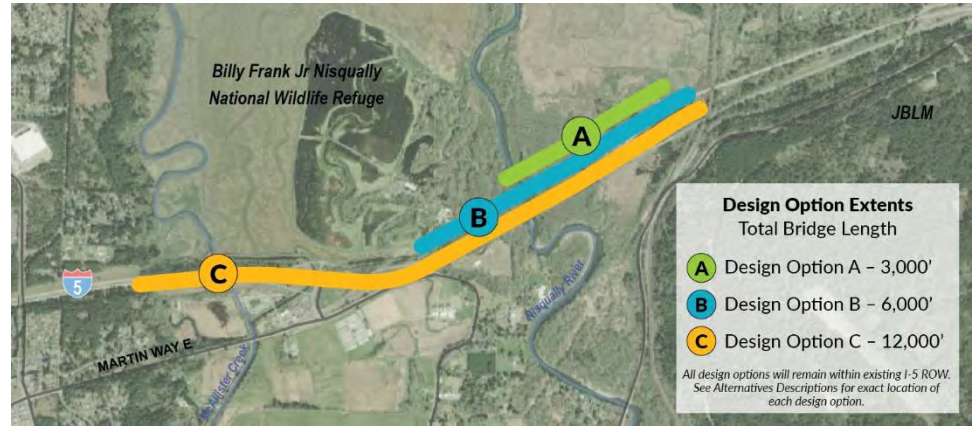
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Relative Cost of Alternatives	Planning-level Cost Comparison	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green

Relative Cost

Relative cost of the alternatives and options.

Initial Evaluation Results:

- Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 have the same cross-section and construction staging plan, and would result in the same cost depending on the Bridge Option A, B, or C
- The estimated cost for Option C is highest and Option A the lowest



Alternatives	Alternative 2 - Widen I-5 for HOV Lanes			Alternative 3 - Widen I-5 for GP Lanes			
	Design Options	A	B	C	A	B	C
Planning-level Cost Comparison							

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

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Detailed Evaluation: Alternatives Summary

- Alternative 2 rates higher than Alternative 3 overall, with higher ratings in the ***Enhance Mobility and Connectivity*** category
 - Alternative 2 rates higher in Accommodating Transit Modes and Providing Congestion Relief to HOV/Transit
 - Alternative 2 has a substantially higher degree of consistency with WSDOT Policy
 - Continuity with the funded I-5 HOV lanes north of Mounts Road
 - Consistency with Statewide climate change and greenhouse gas emission reduction goals

Detailed Evaluation: Alternatives Summary

- In the ***Economic Vitality*** category
 - Alternative 2 is rated higher than Alternative 3 for the Multimodal Access to Opportunities Category
 - Alternative 3 is rated slightly higher than Alternative 2 for the Freight Reliability criteria
- All ratings in other categories are the same with differences among Options A, B, and C only

Detailed Evaluation: Options Summary

- Option C rates slightly higher than Option B and Option A overall, with higher ratings in the **System Resiliency**, **Environmental Restoration**, and **Equitable Outcomes** categories
- Option C rates lower (highest cost) than Option B and Option A (lowest cost) in the **Planning Level Cost** category. The incremental environmental benefit of Option C compared to other options may not be commensurate with the added cost of Option C.
- Option A and Option B both address **System Resiliency and Environmental Restoration** by providing a natural connection from the Nisqually River to the north overflow channel.

Poll 1: Based on the evaluation, which alternative do you support to be evaluated during NEPA? (Multiple choice)

- Alternative 2 – Widen I-5 for HOV lanes
- Alternative 3 – Widen I-5 for General Purpose lanes

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

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Relative Cost of Alternatives	Planning-level Cost Comparison	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green

Poll 2: Which Options do you support to be evaluated during NEPA? (Multiple choice)

- Design option A – 3,000 ft
- Design option B – 6,000 ft
- Design option C – 12,000 ft

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

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	Reduces the Risk of Infrastructure Failures Due to Seismic Activity	High	High	High	High	High	High
Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the Nisqually River Delta area	Enables Environmental Restoration	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Enables Ecosystem Resiliency	High	High	High	High	High	High
Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers	Freight Reliability	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Multimodal Access to Opportunities (Jobs, Services, and Recreation)	High	High	High	High	High	High
	River Navigability	High	High	High	High	High	High
Support Equitable Outcomes	Minimizes Business and Residential Impacts or Displacements	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Minimizes Negative Impact to Emergency Response	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Minimizes the Flood Risk Potential for EJ Populations	High	High	High	High	High	High
Relative Cost of Alternatives	Planning-level Cost Comparison	High	High	High	High	High	High

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Next Steps

Next Steps

- Post meeting materials for review
- Request Existing Conditions Memo for early review
- Updated Detailed Alternatives Evaluation Results will be sent before May meeting
- Let us know if you haven't received the May 16 calendar invite

Final Comments and Questions



Contact

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