SR 3 Gorst Area Planning and Environmental Linkages Study

PURPOSE AND NEED

Final

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Acronym and Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DOD	Department of Defense
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FGTS	Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
LOS	level of service
MP	milepost
mph	miles per hour
MTA	Mason Transit Authority
NBK-BR	Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
PSIC	Puget Sound Industrial Center - Bremerton
PSRC	Puget Sound Regional Council
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
SR	State Route
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USC	United States Code
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WSF	Washington State Ferries

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is developing a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study[1] under the 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450 PEL Authority[2] for the State Route (SR) 3 and SR 16 corridors through Gorst, an unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA) in Kitsap County. A PEL study is a collaborative approach to transportation decision-making that integrates environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process. PEL studies provide an opportunity to identify transportation needs and potential solutions before project development, allowing potential environmental impacts and community priorities to inform decisions from the start. By engaging partners, agencies, and the public early on, PEL studies aim to streamline the project development process, effectively serving as a bridge between planning and environmental studies.

This PEL study is a partnership between WSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). WSDOT PELs operate under two different authorities, depending on the study's purpose and desired outcomes. Under 23 United States Code (USC) 168 PEL Authority, final PEL products, such as the Purpose and Need statement or the range of alternatives, may be adopted or incorporated by reference in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. PELs under the 23 CFR 450 Authority are broader, allowing planning products developed during the study to be used or incorporated by reference in future NEPA documents; products developed under 23 CFR 450 are subject to future analysis during the NEPA process. The *SR 3 Gorst Area PEL Study* will follow the 23 CFR 450 Authority. The PEL process, including tribal and local agency involvement, public review, and federal agency review, enhances the likelihood that the Purpose and Need and range of alternatives will lead to a more robust NEPA process.

[1] Planning and Environmental Linkages. WSDOT.

[2] 23 CFR 450 PEL Authority.

The *SR 3 Gorst Area PEL Study* will develop transportation solutions that align with Washington state's transportation system policy goals (preservation, safety, stewardship, mobility, economic vitality, and environment), which were established by the Washington State Legislature to guide the planning, operation, performance, and investment in the state's transportation system.[3]

Study Area

The study area, shown in orange and grey in Figure 1, encompasses segments of SR 3, SR 16, SR 166, SR 304, local roads, and areas where impacts from alternatives may occur. This area serves as a key transportation junction to the Olympic Peninsula, with connections to Port Orchard via SR 166 and Bremerton via SR 304.

The portions of SR 3 and SR 16 being studied are located within Kitsap County along the Sinclair Inlet. There are several creeks terminating at the inlet that support chum, coho, and cutthroat trout, as well as Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Chinook and steelhead (United States Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries ESA Threatened and Endangered Species Directory). Sinclair Inlet is within the exclusive Usual and Accustomed fishing grounds (U&A) of the Suquamish Indian Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation (Suquamish Tribe) and supports the Tribe's terminal Chinook fishery. The topography in the vicinity varies, with some areas having steep slopes, including the portion of SR 3 that travels between Gorst and Bremerton. Sinclair Inlet and the United States Navy rail line are located to the east of the corridor. Challenging topography, including large rock bluffs, is located to the west.

[3] Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.04.280**.** Transportation System Policy Goals, Washington State Legislature.

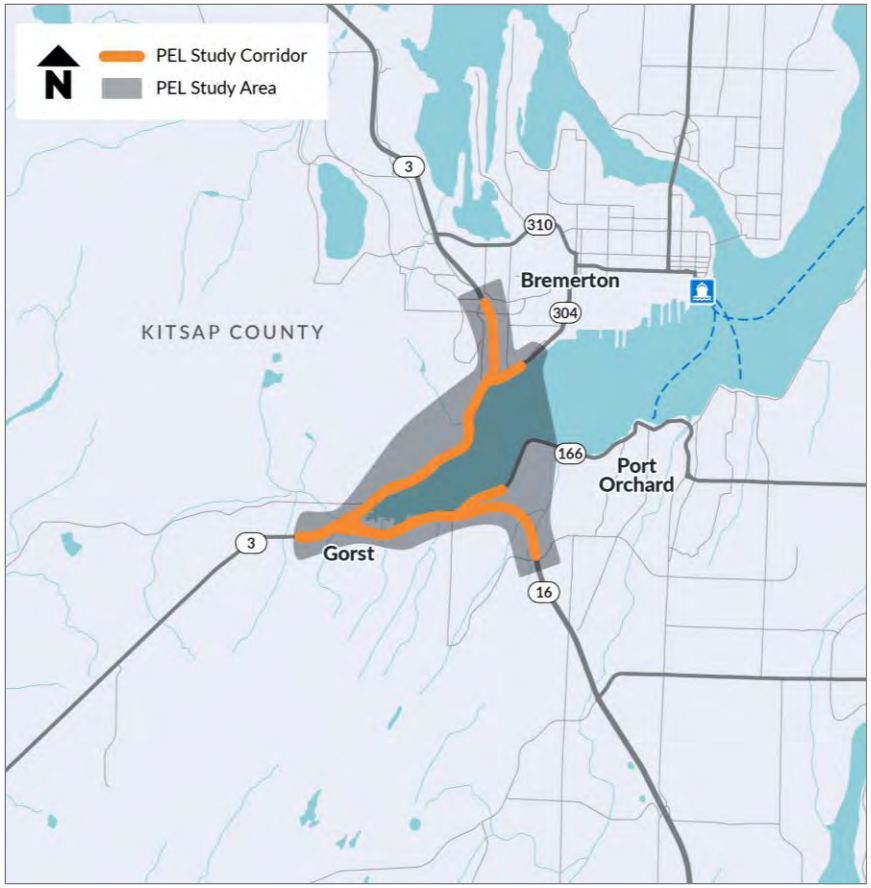

Figure 1. SR 3 Gorst PEL Study Area Map

The study area is adjacent to Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton (NBK-BR), which includes the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and homeporting of Navy aircraft carriers. Other military installations located in Kitsap County are north of the study area. Urban areas in the vicinity include Bremerton, Gorst, and Port Orchard. The Bremerton National Airport is located just southwest of the PEL study vicinity. A ferry terminal located in downtown Bremerton serves the Washington State Ferries (WSF) Bremerton-to-Seattle route as wells as the Kitsap Transit routes from Bremerton to Seattle, Anapolis, and Port Orchard.

Proposed Corridor Study Limits

The proposed corridor study limits for the PEL study, shown in Figure 2, are from (1) West Pleasant Street/Division Avenue West, (2) just north of the SR 3/West Loxie Eagans Boulevard interchange, (3) just east of the SR 3/SR 304 interchange, (4) SR 166 just east of the Kitsap Marina, and (5) just east of the SR 16/SR 166 Interchange. The proposed corridor study limits capture the portions of roadway where potential traffic impacts would be expected. The broader study area captures the area where potential environmental impacts would be expected from potential alternatives.

- **South end terminus**: The intersection of Division Avenue West with SR 3 (milepost [MP] 33.8) is the south end terminus (1). This location captures the future planned roundabout at West Sam Christopherson Avenue and is also the location where the alternate parallel route via West Belfair Valley Road/Sherman Heights Road returns to SR 3.
- **North end terminus**: The SR 3/Loxie Eagans Boulevard (2) and SR 3/SR 304 interchange (3) provide access to Navy Yard City, downtown Bremerton, East Bremerton, the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, and the Bremerton Ferry Terminal. The SR 3/Loxie Eagans Boulevard interchange (MP 37.3) is used as a bypass to congestion along SR 304 and is the location of a merge in both the northbound and southbound directions. In the southbound direction, traffic from West Loxie Eagans Boulevard merges onto the two-lane southbound SR 3. In the northbound direction, the merge lane from the SR 3/SR 304 interchange (MP 0.3) onto SR 3 transforms into the exit lane for Loxie Eagans Boulevard. The SR 3 mainline is two lanes.
- **East end terminus**: SR 166, just east of the Kitsap Marina (4) and just east of the SR 16/SR 166 interchange (5) to the east of Gorst, carries traffic coming from Port Orchard, Southworth, and areas further to the south, including Tacoma. The termini at SR 166 (MP 0.6), just east of the Kitsap Marina (4), and the SR 16/Tremont Street West interchange (MP 24.6) (5) capture the area needed to accommodate potential alternatives to address issues in Gorst.

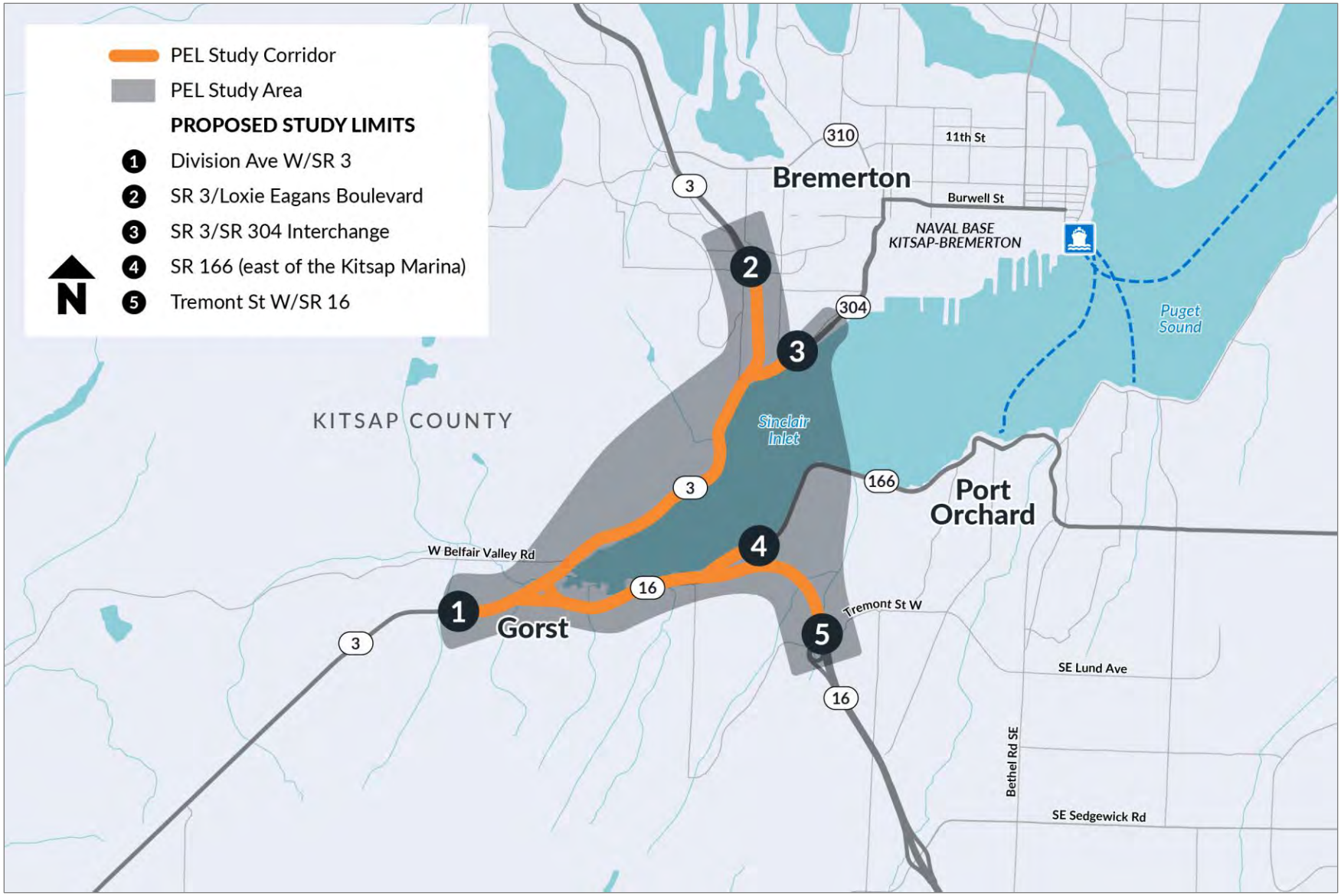

Figure 2. Proposed Study Limits

STUDY GOALS

There are overarching goals that will guide the *SR 3 Gorst Area PEL Study* and development of alternatives:

Improve Access: Meet the transportation needs of communities that face social and economic obstacles.

Economic Vitality: Efficiently move people and goods, while improving access to businesses in the study area.

Environmental: Avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential environmental impacts, including on cultural and archaeological resources.

These overarching goals are used in the development and evaluation of alternatives as part of the *SR 3 Gorst Area PEL Study*.

Information That Supports Study Goals

Improve Access: Meet the transportation needs of communities that face social and economic obstacles.

Provide additional resources for populations and communities that face social and economic obstacles to serve their transportation needs.

There are five census tracts in the study area where over 10 percent of the population does not have access to a personal vehicle and may rely on other forms of transport as a primary mode of transportation. These communities may be impacted by transportation burdens, transportation improvements, or require additional transportation resources. The communities near the Naval base and around the study area are also identified as having barriers to transportation. These communities often rely on public transportation and face barriers to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation. Factors that can impact these communities include transportation insecurity, transportation cost burden, long commute times, and limited access to transit, which can further impact potential barriers to employment and resources. The Environmental Health Disparity Index[4] estimates a cumulative environmental health impact score

[4] Environmental Health Disparities. Washington Department of Health.

for each census tract by combining indicators of pollution burden and population vulnerability, reflecting how environmental exposures interact with socioeconomic and biological factors to create disparities. Areas north and south of the Sinclair Inlet ranked high in the study area for Environmental Health Disparities, with a ranking of 7, indicating it is more impacted than 60 percent of communities, with only 30 percent facing similar or greater environmental health risks.

Economic Vitality: Efficiently move people and goods, while improving access to businesses in the study area.

Efficiently move goods and people for economic growth.

Population and employment growth is expected to increase the need for efficient movement of people and goods in the Gorst area. Population is expected to grow by between 23 and 25 percent in Bremerton and Port Orchard by 2044. Employment in Port Orchard and Bremerton is expected to grow even more substantially, with an increase of between 53 percent (Port Orchard) and 175 percent (Bremerton) in jobs near Gorst. Countywide, population and employment are expected to grow by 16 percent and 44 percent, respectively. Designated by Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), the Puget Sound Industrial Center - Bremerton (PSIC) is Kitsap County's only Manufacturing and Industrial Center. PSIC is located just south of the SR 3 Gorst study area near the Bremerton National Airport. This area is positioned to be a focus area for industrial development and jobs, which could lead to additional employment and growth in freight traffic.

Environmental: Avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential environmental impacts, including on cultural and archaeological resources.

Environmentally sensitive habitats and resources need to be protected.

Gorst Creek, Sinclair Inlet, and surrounding areas are home to natural and cultural resources that are already impacted by current transportation infrastructure. For example, stormwater runoff from roadways contains toxic chemicals that are harmful to salmon and other species. Shoreline armoring, tideland filling, shading, tree removal, and roadway construction may also affect sensitive aquatic and terrestrial species and habitats as well as cultural resources. Gorst Creek and Sinclair Inlet support important fishery resources for the Suquamish Tribe. Streams in the Gorst area support Chum, Coho, Chinook as well as ESA-listed Steelhead and cutthroat trout. The Tribe operates the Gorst Creek Rearing facility, which releases 1.8 million Chinook and 300,000 coho salmon annually. Sinclair Inlet is within the exclusive U&A of the Suquamish Tribe and supports the Tribes terminal Chinook fishery. WSDOT's Stormwater Retrofit Prioritization[5] index also identifies portions of SR 3 and SR 16 in the *SR 3 Gorst PEL Study* as a high priority for stormwater retrofits to address impacts to salmon recovery and ecosystem health, reducing pollution, and addressing health disparities.

Fish passage barriers need to be corrected.

There are fish passage barriers in the study area that are subject to correction under the 2013 United States District Court Federal Injunction (*United States v Washington*). WSDOT is currently in the process of correcting several fish passage barriers in the vicinity of Gorst. Regardless of this PEL study, these barriers must be corrected per WSDOT policy. The study will evaluate opportunities to correct barriers during design and construction.

[5] WSDOT Stormwater Retrofit Prioritization Webmap. WSDOT.

Reduce vehicle emissions to help meet state environmental health and climate targets.

Vehicle emissions are highly correlated with vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Within Washington state, transportation accounted for 39 percent of emissions in 2019.[6] According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the emissions for an average passenger vehicle is 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, assuming the average fuel economy is 22 miles per gallon and the average VMT is 11,500 miles per year.[7] Reducing single occupancy vehicle demand helps reduce per capita VMT and emissions.

Data on transportation modes for state employees in the study area are included in the state Commute Trip Reduction Program, which requires local jurisdictions and major employers to collaborate in reducing drive-alone commutes, improving air quality, and lessening traffic congestion. Among the weekly commute trips recorded, 54 percent were drive-alone trips, with 22 VMT per employee. SR 3 and SR 16 are congested during the weekday peak commute periods, resulting in higher vehicle emissions and more harmful pollutants than would be produced under uncongested conditions. In the morning peak period, northbound SR 3 is typically congested from the SR 304 off-ramp to the SR 16/Southeast Sedgwick Road interchange in Port Orchard. During the afternoon peak period, southbound SR 3 is regularly congested from the Sherman Heights Road off-ramp in Gorst through the SR 310/Kitsap Way interchange.

Engage in meaningful consultation with Suquamish Tribe.

The study area lies within the exclusive usual and accustomed treaty area of the Suquamish Tribe, and there are significant archaeological, cultural, and spiritual sites as well as Tribal treaty natural resources in the study area. In 2023, the Washington State Legislature passed ESSB 1125, which provides specific direction on how WSDOT must conduct its government-to-government consultation with the Suquamish Tribe.

Access to treaty areas in and near the study area is critical to the exercise of treaty rights. Safe access to Sinclair Inlet by Tribal members should be one of the primary considerations in the development and evaluation of alternatives.

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[6] Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Washington State Department of Ecology, 2019.

[7] Greenhouse Gas Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle. U.S. EPA, 2022

Cultural resources require consideration and consultation.

The Gorst area has been the home to Native peoples since time immemorial and contains cultural and archaeological resources associated with this history. Additionally, there are a range of federal, state, and local regulations that recognize the public's interest in cultural resources that apply to the study. The study area contains known cultural resources that can be impacted by roadway improvements during construction and operations, including resources that may be traditionally important to Native peoples. WSDOT recognizes the importance of such resources and will consult with affected Indian Tribes, the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and other affected parties to integrate consideration of cultural resources into project planning.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Overview

The first step in the PEL process is to develop the study's Purpose and Need. The purpose explains the objectives that the study aims to achieve to address existing transportation deficiencies. It is defined through a set of specific purpose statements that establish a clear vision of what the study intends to accomplish, such as reducing congestion or improving multimodal access. Needs were identified to support each purpose statement by outlining the specific transportation deficiencies and safety considerations that have been identified through previous studies or through the existing conditions analysis of the *SR 3 Gorst PEL Study*. These needs and considerations justify the necessity of the study by identifying the critical items that require attention and solutions. These purpose and need statements are foundational to the PEL process, guiding the development of evaluation criteria used to differentiate among potential alternatives. Table 1 summarizes the purpose and need statements, and the following sections provide further detail.

Table 1. Overview of PEL Study Purpose, Need, and Supporting Data

Purpose	Need
Mobility: Improve person throughput and reduce congestion and delay for all vehicle modes.	The SR 3 and SR 16 corridors experience high travel demand and congestion during peak travel periods, and the corridors have limited capacity to accommodate additional future vehicle travel demand.
	The SR 3 and SR 16 corridors provide important transportation and mobility for Department of Defense facilities and operations in Kitsap County, which are essential for troop deployment and military logistics support during a national emergency. Congestion and delay in the corridors have the potential to reduce military mobility during a national emergency.
	SR 3, SR 16, and SR 304 experience freight truck reliability and delay issues and are key freight corridors in the state, connecting key freight hubs and military facilities, including the Port of Bremerton, the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Bangor, Naval Base Manchester, and other ports located in Kitsap and Jefferson counties.
	Emergency response times are impacted by traffic congestion and a lack of shoulders along SR 3, which emergency services use to respond to emergencies and connect to regional medical facilities.
	Transportation infrastructure in the SR 3 corridor that does not meet modern vertical clearance standards hinders the movement of freight and military vehicles.
Safety Performance: Improve existing safety performance in terms of fatal and serious injury crashes and promote designs with fewer conflicts and greater separation for vulnerable roadway users.	Crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries have occurred in the SR 3, SR 166, and SR 16 corridors, including crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.
	The Gorst area lacks safe access and parking for the Tribal fishers along Sinclair Inlet.
Active Transportation: Provide active transportation access with connections to local active transportation facilities.	The SR 3, SR 16, SR 166, and SR 304 corridors lack dedicated active transportation facilities.
System Resiliency: Implement a resilient design that supports anticipated future travel demand growth.	SR 3 and SR 16 in the Gorst area are vulnerable to coastal hazards that include tsunami inundation, flooding from multiple sources, future sea level rise, and heavy precipitation events due to extreme weather. High tides combined with heavy rainfall cause periodic flooding along SR 3 that impacts mobility and resiliency of the transportation system.
	The Gorst area may contain deficient structures that are vulnerable to failure following an earthquake, which would exacerbate mobility impacts to the region.

**Active transportation refers to human-scale transportation options, including walking, biking, using assistive mobility devices such as wheelchairs or walkers, and other small devices that are powered by human effort or electricity, such as e-bikes and e-scooters.*

Purpose

The PEL study purpose guides the study's direction and ensures alternatives address broader transportation and environmental issues. Specific purpose statements were created as study objectives to improve conditions and address existing deficiencies. The purpose statements complement existing state, regional, and local transportation and growth policies, aligning with both WSDOT's policy goals and the PSRC Regional Growth Strategy.[8]

The purpose statements are structured to be distinct as they will be used to develop the evaluation criteria that analyze which alternatives best address the study's objectives and overall needs in the corridor.

Purpose statements for the *SR 3 Gorst Area PEL Study* include:

Mobility: Improve person throughput and reduce congestion and delay for all vehicle modes.

Safety Performance: Improve existing safety performance in terms of fatal and serious injury crashes and promote designs with fewer conflicts and greater separation for vulnerable roadway users.

Active Transportation: Provide active transportation access with connections to local active transportation facilities.

System Resiliency: Implement a resilient design that supports anticipated future travel demand growth.

Need

The SR 3 and SR 16 corridors in the Gorst area have been the focus of several studies to evaluate transportation improvement options, with identified needs emerging from previous analyses of traffic patterns, safety considerations, environmental impacts, and community priorities. Study needs were identified to support the study purpose statements and ensure alignment of the study with Washington state's transportation system policy goals. Needs are categorized below by the purpose statement they support.

[8] Vision 2050. PSRC, 2020.

Mobility: Improve person throughput and reduce congestion and delay for all vehicle modes.

The SR 3 and SR 16 corridors experience high travel demand and congestion during peak travel periods and the corridors have limited capacity to accommodate additional future vehicle travel demand.

In 2018, the *SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge to SR 3 Congestion Study* revealed substantial congestion issues and capacity constraints, particularly affecting travel times and system performance during peak hours. The peak hour travel delays along SR 3 were found to be driven primarily by relatively high volumes of regional trips passing through the study area combined with traffic demand to and from NBK-BR. This combined peak period traffic demand exceeds SR 3 freeway capacity, resulting in long delays and heavy congestion at a failing level of service (LOS) for northbound travel in the morning and southbound in the evening. The congestion duration often extends beyond the morning and evening peak hours. The morning peak hour on SR 3 (7:15 to 8:15 a.m.) is characterized by slow moving northbound vehicles approaching the off-ramp to SR 304, where more than 30 percent of vehicles exit the highway. Relatively high off-ramp demand for the naval base results in moderate congestion and slow-moving vehicle queues that can extend back to Gorst. Westbound SR 16 through Gorst is congested as vehicles react to a mainline lane capacity reduction and lower posted speed limit. Vehicles also slow down to accommodate the turning movements at driveways and lane change maneuvers at the SR 3 ramp connections. Congestion often extends back to the SR 16/Tremont Street West interchange for most of the peak hour and average vehicle travel speed is just 28 miles per hour (mph) on average, which is approximately 30 percent slower than the posted speed limit of 40 mph.

In the southbound direction, SR 3 is highly congested during the afternoon peak hour (4:30 to 5:30 p.m.). Congestion begins at the SR 304 on-ramp merge (which adds roughly one-third of the downstream highway mainline volume) and extends back through the SR 310/Kitsap Way interchange. From the SR 310/Kitsap Way interchange to Port Orchard during the PM peak hour, the average travel time (17.0 minutes) is approximately 130 percent higher than off-peak free flow conditions (7.4 minutes). Average travel speeds on southbound SR 3 and westbound SR 304 approaching the SR 3/SR 304 interchange are substantially lower than the posted speed limits. Vehicles on southbound SR 3 travel at just 15 mph on average during the congested peak hour while vehicles on westbound SR 304 travel at 21 mph on average, less than half the 45-mph posted speed limit. The SR 3 corridor through Gorst is the only state route connecting all areas of Kitsap to one another. Traffic diversion related to congestion occurs on local roadways. Some vehicles seeking to avoid congestion on SR 3 use a bypass route on local streets, which include Union Avenue West, Third

Avenue West, Kent Avenue West, Sherman Heights Road, West Belfair Valley Road, West Sam Christopherson Avenue and Division Avenue West. WSDOT[9] has identified segments of the SR 3 corridor as a highly critical asset, meaning that it provides a lifeline route or is the sole access to a population center or critical facility.

Forecasted increases in vehicle demand would exacerbate peak hour congestion in the future. In the morning, northbound traffic through Gorst would operate poorly with severe congestion. The existing bottleneck on northbound SR 16 at the merge point with the SR 3 flyover on-ramp could cause significant standing queues extending back to at least the SR 16/Tremont Street West interchange. Vehicle operating speeds on westbound SR 16 through and approaching Gorst would decrease to approximately 10 mph or less on average. Travel times on northbound SR 16 through Gorst would more than double by 2035 and would be approximately three times greater than existing conditions by 2050. Approaching the SR 3/SR 304 interchange, northbound SR 3 would be congested as vehicles diverge to the naval base, resulting in slow-moving vehicle queues extending back to Gorst.

In the afternoon, heavy congestion on southbound SR 3 is expected to persist in future conditions with severe queues extending back through the SR 310/Kitsap Way interchange. The existing bottleneck at the SR 3/SR 304 interchange would worsen and would constrain vehicle progression on southbound SR 3 to Gorst. As a result, future operations on southbound SR 3 and eastbound SR 16 through Gorst are expected to be only moderately worse than existing conditions. Future PM peak period travel times on southbound SR 3 (from just downstream of the SR 304 on-ramp merge) through Gorst are estimated to be within one minute of existing travel times.

Transit operates within traffic in the SR 3 corridor and experiences the same delay and congestion. In the study area vicinity, fixed-route transit services are provided by Mason Transit Authority (MTA) and Kitsap Transit. Two MTA routes — Route 3 (Belfair to Bremerton) and Route 23 (Belfair to Bremerton Express) — operate along the SR 3 segment through Gorst. Six additional fixed bus routes operated by Kitsap Transit — Routes 4 (Tremont), 5 (Sidney), 220 (Sunn Fjord), 24 (Olympic College), 226 (Bay Vista), and 212 (Bremerton/Silverdale West) — include crossings of either SR 3 or SR 16 within the study area. Kitsap Transit's *2022 Long-Range Plan* includes an express route from Bremerton to Tacoma, which would include segments along the study area.

[9] WSDOT Climate Risk Assessment Model, 2023. Asset Criticality Index.

Kitsap Transit and MTA also provide a program for worker/driver buses, operated by naval base employees. Operating like a large carpool on a fixed route, the worker/driver buses transport employees living in or near the study area to and from the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton and Bangor. Ferry service is also accessible nearby in both Port Orchard and Bremerton. Kitsap Transit operates fast ferries for walk-on passengers at both locations, while WSF provides a drive-on service at the Bremerton Ferry Terminal. In 2023, the WSF Bremerton-Seattle ferry route accounted for approximately 5 percent of the total WSF system ridership, with around 953,000 passengers. Kitsap Transit's Port Orchard to Bremerton Foot Ferry carried 183,140 passengers in 2024, while the Annapolis to Bremerton Foot Ferry carried 106,984 passengers in the same timeframe. The Seattle to Bremerton Fast Ferry carried 517,270 passengers in 2023. Reducing congestion and delay for transit services would support service expansion and increased transit ridership.

The SR 3 and SR 16 corridors provide important transportation and mobility for Department of Defense facilities and operations in Kitsap County, essential for troop deployment and military logistics support during a national emergency. Congestion and delay in the corridors have the potential to reduce military mobility during a national emergency.

The SR 3, SR 16, and SR 166 corridors are part of the Strategic Highway Network, designated for national defense and troop deployment during emergencies, providing an essential mobility connection for Department of Defense (DOD) operations in Kitsap County, including in Bremerton, Bangor, Keyport, and Manchester Fuel Depot. These corridors are critical to the DOD's operations, providing critical mobility of heavy armor, fuel, ammunition, repair parts, food, and other commodities during emergencies as well as during peacetime, to support United States military operations.

SR 3, SR 16, and SR 304 experience freight truck reliability and delay issues and are key freight corridors in the state, connecting key freight hubs and military facilities, including the Port of Bremerton, the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Bangor, Naval Base Manchester, and other ports located in Kitsap and Jefferson Counties.

There are several important freight routes through the area classified as Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS). Designated by WSDOT, FGTS corridors within the SR 3 Gorst PEL study area include only truck corridors, as the railroad within the study area is used for military purposes only. FGTS roadway corridors are classified into five categories (T-1 through T-5) based on annual tonnage of freight moved, with T-1 carrying the highest volumes of goods annually. SR 3 is designated as a T-1 freight corridor from Gorst to SR 308, carrying over 10 million tons of freight annually. The segment of SR 3 from Gorst to

Sunnyslope Road is classified as a T-2 facility, handling approximately 4 million tons per year. The relatively high truck volumes observed on SR 3 just west of Gorst, between Riverside Avenue West and Division Avenue West, highlight additional commercial and industrial activity along this segment. These freight movements are crucial not only for the economic vitality in Kitsap County but also for supporting military operations, making the study area a key link in both the county's freight network and the national defense infrastructure. WSDOT's Washington *State Freight System Plan* shows SR 3 and SR 16 in Gorst as corridors that experience freight truck reliability and delay issues.[10]

Emergency response times are impacted by traffic congestion and a lack of shoulders along SR 3, which emergency services could use to respond to emergencies and connect to regional medical facilities.

SR 3 provides a critical connection between South Kitsap Fire and Rescue stations and local hospitals and medical facilities sited in Bremerton, Silverdale, and other locations in Kitsap County. Traffic congestion in the SR 3 Gorst corridor impacts emergency response times, a critical issue that influences health outcomes as well as monetary damages related to fires and other emergencies. The physically constrained portion of SR 3 adjacent to the Sinclair Inlet has minimal to no shoulders in places, which exacerbates emergency response delays during congested travel periods and provides minimal space for vehicles involved in crashes to move out of the way of traffic. This also amplifies the impacts of crashes on mobility when they occur in this segment of SR 3. South Kitsap Fire and Rescue has protocols that direct first responders who are east and south of Gorst to transport patients to hospitals in Gig Harbor or Tacoma rather than to the hospital in Silverdale to avoid impacts from congestion. This results in first responders being away from their response areas for longer periods of time.

Between 2021 and 2023, South Kitsap Fire and Rescue responded to a total of 3,723 incidents, with 31 percent of these occurring within the study area. There were many responses to incidents located at the intersection of SR 3 and SR 16 in Gorst and in Navy Yard City, locations accessible only by traveling through the study area. The average response time for all incidents is approximately 14 minutes. During the afternoon peak travel period (3 to 6 p.m.), average response times increase by 121 percent to approximately 31 minutes. Within the study area, 20 percent of responses occurred during afternoon peak hours, while 10 percent occurred during the morning peak hours (6 to 9 a.m.).

[10] *Washington State Freight System Plan*.

Transportation infrastructure in the SR 3 corridor that does not meet modern vertical clearance standards hinders the movement of freight and military vehicles.

The study area includes the U.S. Navy-owned railroad traveling from Shelton to Naval Base Kitsap Bremerton and on to Bangor. BNSF Railway, under an agreement with the DOD, provides rail service restricted to military use, with an average of one train per day passing through the Gorst area and paralleling SR 3 and Sinclair Inlet. This rail line is also part of the Strategic Rail Corridor Network, which is the system of rail lines critical for national defense. Just east of the SR 3 southbound exit to West Belfair Valley Road, the rail line includes a bridge that crosses over SR 3. Built in 1945, the bridge has an existing vertical clearance of 15 feet 2 inches in the northbound direction and 14 feet 11 inches in the southbound direction, which does not meet the current standard of 16 feet 6 inches. This hinders the movement of oversized vehicles conveying freight goods and/or military equipment exceeding the clearance. Oversized vehicles instead use a bypass route along local streets, including Union Avenue West, Third Avenue West, Kent Avenue West, Sherman Heights Road, West Belfair Valley Road, West Sam Christopherson Avenue and Division Avenue West, to travel between Gorst and Bremerton.

Safety Performance: Improve existing safety performance in terms of fatal and serious injury crashes and promote designs with fewer conflicts and greater separation for vulnerable roadway users.

Crashes resulting in fatalities and serious injuries have occurred in the SR 3, SR 166, and SR 16 corridors, including crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.

From 2019 through 2023, there were 1,103 crashes in the study area. During the study period, there were four fatal crashes and 12 serious injury crashes. Three crashes involved active transportation users, including one pedestrian-involved crash and two bicyclist-involved crashes.

The Gorst area lacks safe access and parking for Tribal fishers.

Sinclair Inlet is within the exclusive U&A of the Suquamish Tribe. The Gorst area lacks safe access and parking for the Tribal fishers along Sinclair Inlet.

Active Transportation: Provide active transportation access with connections to local active transportation facilities.

The SR 3, SR 16, SR 166, and SR 304 corridors have no dedicated active transportation facilities.

Active transportation refers to human-scale transportation options, including walking; biking; using assistive mobility devices, such as wheelchairs or walkers; and other small devices that are powered by human effort or electricity, such as e-bikes and e-scooters. There is no existing dedicated bike or pedestrian infrastructure to accommodate active transportation users along state routes within the study area. The corridor is not designated as one of WSDOT's State Route Permanent Bike Restriction areas and does not specifically restrict access by pedestrians. However, the current facility with high traffic volumes and numerous driveways creates uncomfortable conditions for active transportation users who are present along the corridor and in the study area. Gorst is also

identified as a population center and is therefore subject to Complete Streets[11] requirements for providing active transportation facilities.

In addition, improved active transportation options, particularly along the segment adjacent to Sinclair Inlet, are reflected in several local planning documents. Kitsap County's *2018 Non-Motorized Facilities Plan* and *2001 Mosquito Fleet Trail Master Plan*, as well as Bremerton's *2007 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*, acknowledge this area as a priority for future development of active transportation facilities. Kitsap County identifies SR 304, SR 3, and SR 16 between Bremerton and Port Orchard as non-motorized routes, as well as West Belfair Highway in Gorst, which connects to the Jarstad to Kitsap Lake Trail. Bremerton's plan designates the corridor along Sinclair Inlet as a future bike route that would provide active transportation connections extending to the city's southern boundary.

System Resiliency: Implement a resilient design that supports future anticipated travel demand growth.

SR 3 and SR 16 in the Gorst area are vulnerable to coastal hazards that include tsunami inundation, flooding from multiple sources, future sea level rise, and heavy precipitation events due to extreme weather. High tides combined with heavy rainfall cause periodic flooding along SR 3 that impacts mobility and resiliency of the transportation system.

Portions of SR 3 and SR 16 in the study area may be vulnerable to coastal resiliency impacts, particularly sea level rise and associated coastal erosion, and compound flooding from local creeks and drainages that discharge to Sinclair Inlet. WSDOT ranks corridors by potential impacts such as temperature changes, extreme weather events, sea level rise, and increased fire risk. Sections of SR 3 and SR 16 in Gorst were ranked high risk for potential coastal resilience impacts, with a risk of complete failure that could necessitate major repairs or reconstruction with closures exceeding 60 days following an extreme weather event. In addition, the Gorst area and most of SR 3 is subject to inundation from local Seattle Fault tsunamis, based on recent Washington State

[11] WSDOT Complete Streets Policies.

Department of Natural Resources studies.[12] Geographically, the corridor faces constraints due to Sinclair Inlet and the United States Navy railroad on the north shore and residential neighborhoods, local businesses, rock cliffs, unstable slopes, and challenging topography on the upland side. This limited space contributes to vulnerabilities, including flooding exacerbated by rising sea levels and increased storm intensity.

The Gorst area may contain deficient structures that are vulnerable to failure following an earthquake, which would exacerbate mobility impacts to the region.

Structures in the study area may not meet modern standards for seismic activity, making them vulnerable to failure following an earthquake. Built in 1945, the naval rail bridge is approaching 80 years old and may be nearing the end of its service life, resulting in the need for replacement and/or significant retrofits in the near future.

[12] Dolcimascolo, Alexander; Eungard, D. W.; Allen, Corina; LeVeque, R. J.; Adams, L. M.; Arcas, Diego; Titov, V. V.; González, F. I.; Moore, Christopher, 2022, *Tsunami inundation, current speeds, and arrival times simulated from a large Seattle Fault earthquake scenario for Puget Sound and other parts of the Salish Sea:* Washington Geological Survey Map Series 2022-03