

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE

Description of proposal:

Background: The proposed Point Defiance Bypass Project will improve safety, reduce rail congestion, and, as a result, support more frequent and reliable Amtrak Cascades service.

Freight and passenger train traffic has increased on the existing main line in the Tacoma vicinity and the rail system is operating at or near its maximum capacity. By removing the passenger traffic from the existing main line and diverting that traffic to the shorter, more direct Point Defiance Bypass route, travel times for the passenger trains will be reduced. In addition, since the Point Defiance Bypass will primarily be used by passenger trains, the reliability of the train schedules will be improved. By using this alternate route, congestion on the existing main line will be reduced, thereby freeing capacity for freight trains.

Proposed Project: The Point Defiance Bypass Project consists of three major track elements: construction of a new track adjacent to the existing main line; reconstruction of the existing main line track; and rehabilitation of the existing track.

New Track Adjacent to the Existing Main Line

A new track adjacent to the existing main line will be constructed from South 66th Street (rail milepost 6.92) to one quarter mile south of Bridgeport Way SW (rail milepost 10.67). This new 2.5 mile track will be constructed parallel to and east of (with 15-foot track centers) the existing Sound Transit track. In some places, due to curves, track centers may be wider, particularly in the vicinity of Lakewood Station, Bridgeport Way and Clover Creek. Sound Transit's Sounder trains and freight trains will predominately use the eastern main track (new track, main line 2) as it operates in its service area (northern terminus of Point Defiance Bypass Project to Bridgeport Way SW).

The second main line will be built on new embankment which has already been upgraded by Sound Transit. The new second main line to be constructed in this area will require minimal grading work. There will be no in-water work as part of this new construction.

Reconstruction of the Existing Main Line

Starting at Steilacoom Boulevard SW (rail milepost 8.36), the existing track will be reconstructed to a location just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89). This will involve removal of the existing track and minor re-grading of the existing sub-grade to provide a slightly wider, re-graded and compacted, stable surface top on which to construct a new track. This reconstructed segment is approximately nine miles in length.

For a short segment, between rail milepost 8.88 and 9.96, the existing track and the new track will be on a new alignment. Therefore, the existing track will be removed and both main lines constructed on a new sub-grade alignment. Upon

removal of the track structure, the existing sub-grade will be graded and cleared of debris to match existing ground conditions in the general area. There will be no in-water work as part of this reconstruction.

Rehabilitation of the Existing Line

Just north of Mounts Road SW (rail milepost 19.89), for approximately two miles (to rail milepost 21.23), the existing single main line track will be rehabilitated. This work will consist of replacing existing, worn, or otherwise defective ties with new ties, and adding ballast. These activities are typical of the maintenance work regularly performed on most railroads and is accomplished without removing the track. Existing drainage paths will be cleared of blockages. Little or no new grading work will be required. There will be no in-water work as part of this rehabilitation.

Proponent:

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Location of proposal, including street address, if any:

The Point Defiance Project is located along Sound Transit's Lakeview Subdivision rail line in Pierce County (Township 18N through 20N, Range 1E and 2E). The project area extends approximately 18 miles from South 66th Street (in Tacoma), through Lakewood and DuPont, to just east of I-5, where it connects with the BNSF Railway Company's (BNSF) main line. (Please see the enclosed map.)

Lead agency:

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

For engineering questions, please contact:
Kevin Jeffers, P.E., Rail Projects Engineer
WSDOT Rail Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia WA 98504-7407
360-705-7982; jefferk@wsdot.wa.gov

For environmental questions, please contact:
Elizabeth Phinney, Rail Environmental Manager
WSDOT Rail Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia WA 98504-7407
360-705-7902; phinnee@wsdot.wa.gov

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date below.

Comments must be submitted by August 8, 2008.


Please send comments to:
Elizabeth Phinney
WSDOT State Rail Office
PO Box 47407
Olympia WA 98504-7407
phinnee@wsdot.wa.gov

Responsible official: Scott Witt

Position/title: Director, WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office

Phone: 360-705-6903

Address: PO Box 47407
Olympia WA 98504-7407

Date: August 1st, 2008 **Signature:** 

PART 1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION							
WIN	SR (WIN)	OTHER SR(S)?	REGION	COUNTY	RECORD CREATED	DATE FORM REVISED	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Olympic	Pierce			
PIN	Title (WIN): Point Defiance Bypass Project					TOWNSHIP	
P01008C	Type of Work: Track and railbed maintenance and improvements					18N - 20N	
					RANGE		
					R1E; 2E		
BEGN (WIN)		END (WIN)		CENTERLINE LENGTH	W/MAIN PUSSET SOURCE BASIS?	WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY AREA (WRIA) NO. & NAME	
KP Rail MP		KP Rail MP		KM		WRIA 12 Chambers/Clover Creek	
MP 6.92		MP 21.23		Miles 18	Yes	WRIA 11 Nisqually River	

PART 2. PERMITS AND APPROVALS REQUIRED	
<p>Permit or Approval</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Corps of Engineers <input type="checkbox"/> Section 404 <input type="checkbox"/> Section 10</p> <p>COE Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Nationwide</p> <p>Individual Permit #: _____</p> <p>Nationwide Type: _____</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Coast Guard</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Coastal Zone Management Certification</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) Permit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Flood Plain Development Permit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Forest Practices Approval</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Hydraulic Project Approval</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Local Building or Site Development Permits</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Local Clearing & Grading Permits</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Nat. Historic Preservation Act - Section 106</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No (NPDES) Municipal Stormwater Discharge</p>	<p>Permit or Approval</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No Nat. Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Baseline General for Construction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater Site Plan</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Temporary Erosion Sediment Control Plan (TESC)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Shoreline Permit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No State Waste Discharge Permit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Temporary Modification of Water Quality (TWQM) standards</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Tribal Permit(s) (Any)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Section 4(f)/6(f): Wildlife Refuges, Recreation Areas, Historic Properties</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Water Use Permit</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No Water quality certification — Sec. 401 Issued By: _____</p> <p>Other Permits List:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p>

PART 3. ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATION	
<p>NEPA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Categorically excluded per 23 CFR 771.117()</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documented CE (DCE) 23 CFR 771.117 (d)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (EA)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental EIS (SEIS)</p>	<p>SEPA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Categorically exempt per WAC 197-11-800</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Action <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption <input type="checkbox"/> Addendum</p>

APPROVAL SIGNATURES	
<p>DATE</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> 3/26/08</p>	<p>REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONTACT</p> <p>Elizabeth Phinney 360-705-7902</p>
<p>FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FOR ECS USE ONLY)</p> <p>DATE</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> 5/5/2008</p>	<p>COMPLETED BY</p> <p>Same as above</p> <p>Telephone: _____ FAX: 360-705-6821</p>

PART 4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

WIN

Will the project involve work in or affect any of the following? Identify proposed mitigation. Attach additional pages or supplemental information if necessary.

1. Air Quality Identify any anticipated air quality issues.

Is project included in Metropolitan Transportation Plan?

Yes No

Located in an Air Quality Non-Attainment Area (for carbon monoxide, ozone, or PM 10)?

Yes No

Exempt from Air Quality conformity requirements?

Yes No

[Empty box for Air Quality mitigation details]

2. Critical/Sensitive Areas Identify any known Critical or Sensitive Areas as designated by local Growth Management Act ordinances.

a. Aquifer Recharge Area, Wellhead Protection Area, or Sole Source Aquifer

Central Pierce County Aquifer System (Designated Sole Source Aquifer 1994);

Chambers/Clover Creek Aquifer Recharge Area; Wellhead Protection Area, 10-year time of travel

b. Geologically Hazardous Area

None

c. Habitat List known species.

(1) Threatened/Endangered Species or Priority Habitat or Species. Indicate state or federal listing.

None, please see Biological Assessment for this project.

(2) General fish and wildlife habitat

Coho, cutthroat trout in Murray Creek. Coho, cutthroat trout, steelhead, and rainbow trout in Clover Creek.

d. Wetlands. Estimate impacted categories and acreage.

Are wetlands present?

Yes No

Estimated Acres Impacted: Acres

[Empty box for Wetlands details]

3. Cultural Resources/Historic Structures Identify any historic or archaeological resources.

Please see Cultural Resources Survey/Discipline Report, March 2008.

4. Flood Plains or Ways

Is the project located in a 100-year flood plain?

Yes No

If yes, is the project located in a 100-year floodway?

Yes No

Will the project impact a 100-year flood plain?

Yes No

5. Hazardous and Problem Waste

Identify potential sources and type.

Is project likely to involve site clean-up?

Yes No

[Empty box for Hazardous and Problem Waste details]

6. Noise Identify potential sensitive receptors or previous mitigation commitments.

Please see Noise and Vibration Discipline Report, March 2008.

[Empty box for Noise details]

PART 4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS (CONTINUED)		WIN
7. Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Historic Properties, or Scenic Rivers/Byways, 4(f)/6(f) Lands Identify areas of impact.		
None		
8. Resource Lands Identify areas of impact.		
a. Agricultural		
None		
b. Forest/Timber		
None		
c. Mineral		
None		
9. Rivers, Streams (continuous, intermittent), or Tidal Waters		Fisheries WA Stream No. _____
a. Identify by name, proximity to project, and Washington Stream Catalog Number.		Ecology 305b Report No. _____
b. Identify stream crossing structures by type		
The rail line crosses five streams: Murray Creek, Chambers Creek, and three unnamed streams Please see Point Defiance Bypass Project Hydrology and Water Quality Technical Memorandum		
10. Tribal Lands Identify.		
None.		
11. Visual Quality	Will project impact roadside classification or visual aspects?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
12. Water Quality/Storm Water	Is project likely to increase runoff or affect water quality?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
	Will project include water quality/quantity treatment for the new pavement?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
	Will project include water quality/quantity treatment for existing pavement?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
	Has a NPDES municipal general permit been issued for this WRIA?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
13. Have previous environmental commitments been made in project area?	Identify.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
14. Are long-term maintenance commitments necessary for this project?	Identify.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No

**Additional Required Information
for the
Implementing Agreement
between
The Washington State Department of Transportation
and
The Washington State Department of Ecology
Concerning Adoption of NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusions**

1. **Project name** Point Defiance Bypass Project
2. **Applicant** Washington State Department of Transportation
3. **Address and phone number of applicant and contact person**

Applicant

Washington State Department of Transportation
State Rail Office
310 Maple Park Avenue SE
PO Box 47407
Olympia WA 98504-7407

Contact

Kevin Jeffers, P.E.
360-705-7982
or
Elizabeth Phinney
360-705-7902

4. **Proposed timing or schedule**

Land acquisition to take place in late 2007 and early 2008; construction and rehabilitation to begin October 2008. Phasing may occur for both the Sound Transit and WSDOT projects if funding is insufficient.

5. **Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal?**

No.

6. **Environmental information that has been prepared**

- Point Defiance Bypass Project NEPA Documented Categorical Exclusion (approved by FHWA on May 5, 2008) (Attached)
- Point Defiance Bypass Project Environmental Summary (May 2008) (Available upon request)
- Environmental technical reports (air quality; cultural resources; energy; fish, wildlife and vegetation; geology and soils; hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use; noise and vibration; public services; relocation; social elements; transportation; visual quality; and wetlands)

- Biological Assessment (No Effect Letter, May 16, 2007; Project Update Letter, also No Effect, October 29, 2007)
- Cultural Resources Report – SHPO Concurrence with No Adverse Effect Determination, March 28, 2008.

7. Other governmental approvals

Sound Transit owns the rail line, and will be sharing it with the Amtrak *Cascades* trains sponsored by the state via WSDOT. Sound Transit will be improving portions of the line and is also building a *Sounder* commuter train station and a *Sounder* maintenance facility along the line. Sound Transit has already received approvals from the Federal Transit Administration for their project.

8. Government approvals or permits that will be needed

WSDOT is contracting with Sound Transit to construct the WSDOT portion of the project along with Sound Transit's project construction. Therefore, Sound Transit and their rail contractor will be responsible for obtaining all permits.

9. Project Description

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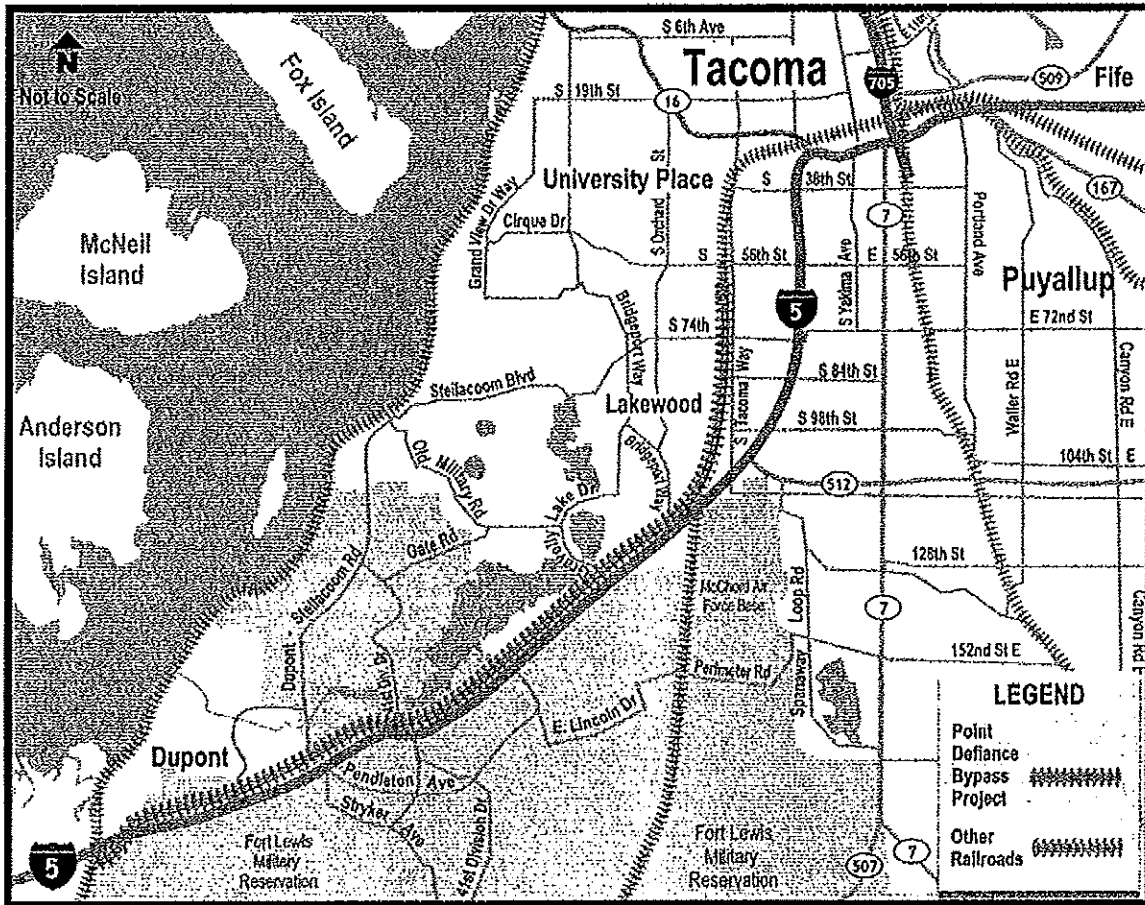
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General Vicinity of the Point Defiance Bypass Project



Additional Required Information

Earth

- a. **General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:**

The existing rail bed is standard railroad right-of-way. The tracks are placed on level fill above a standard railroad embankment.

- b. **What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?**

The existing railroad bed is elevated up to 4 feet above the bottom of the railside ditch, with 2H:1V sloping sides (50% slope).

- c. **What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.**

The site is underlain with Spanaway gravelly sandy loam.

- d. **Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.**

The railroad track has been in its present location for over 90 years. At the southern end of the rail line before it re-connects with the BNSF main line, there has been some recent sloughing of the uphill slope due to drainage problems. Hillside drainage will be installed as part of this project.

- e. **Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.**

From railroad mileposts 8.88 to 9.96, it is anticipated that approximately 67.88 acres will be cleared and grubbed for the relocation of the existing rail line and the construction of a new main line. The two rail lines will be placed atop 137,238 tons of clean engineered sub-ballast and ballast.

- f. **Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

Soil erosion is not probable on the site because of the nature of the construction practices involving compacted stabilized material. Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used appropriately to prevent any construction-related erosion. The finished project has been designed to preclude erosion.

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?**

The only impervious surface for the rail line will be the rail, ties, and signal bungalows. The ties are spaced at 16 to 23 inches apart with pervious crushed rock ballast between rails. The ballast is designed so any precipitation striking the rail or ties infiltrates into the ballast and the subballast.

A signal bungalow will be added to each grade crossing for a total of 10 bungalows, with an additional bungalow needed for each of the two railroad control points. Each bungalow is an 8 x 8 foot structure. There will be minimal stormwater runoff from these structures.

There will be minimal additional impervious surfaces resulting from the grade crossing improvements.

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.**

Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be designed and implemented according to the most recent version of the Stormwater Management Manual for Puget Sound. The BMPs used will be those most appropriate for the project site, and could include such items as construction entrances, filter fabric fences, sediment ponds or basins, check dams, filter berms, and permanent seeding.

Water

- a. Surface:**

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

The rail line crosses five streams: Murray Creek, Chambers Creek, and three unnamed streams.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters?**

Yes. The rail line that crosses over the streams on trestles will be rehabilitated with new ties. There will be no in-water work.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

None.

- 4) **Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No surface water withdrawals or diversions will be required.

- 5) **Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

No.

- 6) **Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

No waste will be discharged to surface waters. Best Management Practices will be employed, which will prevent construction erosion and sedimentation.

b. Ground:

- 1) **Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities, if known.**

No ground water will be withdrawn, nor will water be discharged to the groundwater.

- 2) **Describe waste material that will be charged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage, industrial, containing the following chemicals; agricultural; etc.) Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

There will be no waste discharged to ground water.

c. Water Runoff (including storm water):

- 1) **Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (including quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

The only source of runoff will be precipitation in the form of rain and/or snowmelt. During construction, to prevent sediments from traveling beyond the construction zone, a series of Best Management Practices have been designated for the site. These best management practices include such items as construction entrances, filter fabric fences, sediment ponds or basins, check dams, filter berms, and permanent seeding. No runoff will be allowed to flow off the construction site until the quality of the discharge is at or below acceptable water quality limits.

Since the grade crossing improvements will only add minimal impervious surfaces, the current collection and disposal methods will not need additional capacity or improvements.

2) Could waste materials endanger ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

No. Best Management Practices for erosion control will be applied for handling any possible waste materials.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, or runoff water impacts, if any:

Best Management Practices will be used during construction, and seeding, fertilizing and mulching of disturbed soil after construction will be performed to reduce and eliminate surface water runoff impacts.