

Chapter 7 Next Steps

This chapter describes next steps and key milestones.

1 What are next steps and key milestones?

Publishing this Draft EIS is an important step in the decision-making process required to fulfill the purpose and need of the Rhodes Lake Road Corridor Study. As noted earlier in this document, four years of study and meetings have preceded the publication of this Draft EIS. As part of this process, Pierce County has considered a wide spectrum of alternatives and analyzed them in the context of issues and concerns brought forth by several stakeholder groups. At the end of this Draft EIS we are left with four possible futures: the Baseline (Alternative A), which assumes that the County will not construct a specific project, and three potential build alternatives.

Pierce County will consider all public comments received during the formal review process of this Draft EIS. These comments will be reviewed and responses will be issued and presented to the public in the Final EIS expected in late 2007.

At that time, the recommendation of a preferred alternative will be reviewed. The County Engineer will prepare a report to the County Council. At this point, the Pierce County Council could decide to formally establish a roadway corridor. This would allow the County to move forward with a project-specific environmental process that would involve additional and specific design detail, environmental impacts analysis, and the development of specific mitigation strategies. The overall process is shown on Exhibit 7-1.

How can I make comments on this Draft EIS?

You are encouraged to provide comments to Pierce County by attending our upcoming open house or by providing comments in writing.

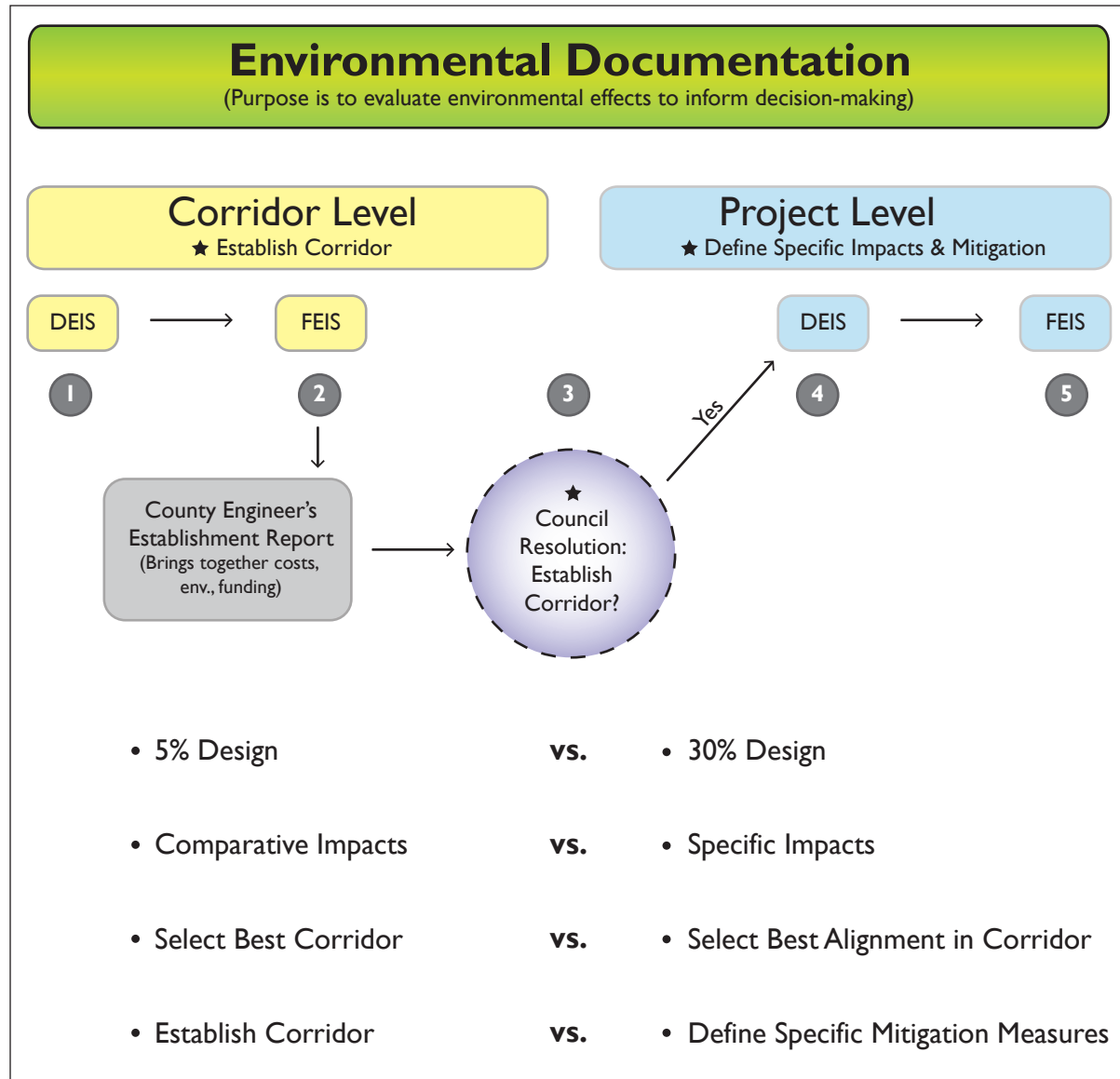
A public open house will be held on Thursday, June 21, 2007 from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm at McAlder Elementary School, 15502 96th Street E, Puyallup, WA 98372.

You may submit written comments to:

Environmental Official
c/o Jan Verone
Pierce County Department of Public
Works and Utilities
Transportation Services
3619 Pacific Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98418-7921

Written comments must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on July 23, 2007.

Process to Establish a Rhodes Lake Road Corridor



2 Could the Preferred Alternative change?

This Draft EIS designates a build alternative (Alternative D) as the preferred alternative. However, the Pierce County Council will make the final decision on whether to establish a corridor, and on which corridor to establish.

The environmental issues play a key role in the County Council's decision. The primary purpose of the environmental process is to present information on the range of alternatives, solicit feedback on those alternatives, and finally to support the implementation of a preferred alternative. The County encourages public input to the decision by commenting on the Draft EIS during the public comment period and/or by attending public meetings.

3 What are the next steps in the environmental process?

This Draft EIS is only a first-step milestone in the overall environmental process for establishing a corridor and constructing a new roadway. As required by State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) regulations, the Rhodes Lake Road Corridor Study Draft Programmatic EIS will be submitted for appropriate agency and public review. Following a review period ending July 23, 2007, all comments will be addressed and incorporated into a Final Programmatic EIS for presentation to the Pierce County Council; the County Council will decide whether or not to establish a Rhodes Lake Road Corridor. If a Corridor is established, a new Draft EIS process will begin, to analyze project-level detail of specific impacts and mitigation. Exhibit 7-1 provides a general illustration of not only where we are in the process, but the remaining steps that must be taken before a new roadway may be constructed.