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Cross-Base Highway (State Route 704), I-5 to SR 7

Lakewood and Pierce County, Washington

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Submitted pursuant to Section 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)

by the

U.S. Department of Transportation,
Federal Highway Administration,

and the

Washington State Department of Transportation

and

Pierce County

9/15/03

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Abstract

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Pierce County, in cooperation with the City of Lakewood and McChord Air Force Base, plans to construct a highway to improve transportation system linkage and capacity between mid-Pierce County and destinations along the I-5 corridor. These areas are expected to grow substantially and are designated by local and regional land use plans as centers for future development. The Cross-Base Highway project would provide a direct route and shorter travel times between residences, employment sites, and retail shopping opportunities in Pierce County, Lakewood, and DuPont. It would also provide a more direct east-west connection for efficient movement of freight, people, and goods between I-5 (north and south), State Route (SR) 7, SR 161, and the Frederickson, Thun Field, and Sunrise employment centers, saving time and energy. The new highway is designated SR 704. The analysis and impacts assessment in this FEIS includes consideration of the potential environmental consequences for water resources, wetlands, wildlife, fisheries, vegetation, air quality, noise, land use, and recreation. The analysis also considers construction impacts and cumulative effects.

Commenting on the FEIS

Comments on this FEIS are due by the close of business on November 14, 2003 and should be sent to:

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Comments can be made in writing (by sending a letter to the above address) or orally (at a public meeting). Public meetings will be held on October 14 and 16 from 4-7 PM at the Woodbrook Middle School and the Camas Prairie Elementary School, respectively.

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Included in this Volume:

- A Distribution List
- B Acronyms and Abbreviations
- C Terms and Definitions
- D List of Preparers
- E References
- F Index

Included in Volume 2:

- G Transportation Discipline Report
- H Alternatives Considered but Rejected
 - Technical Memorandum (Parametrix, Inc., October 2001)
 - Correspondence (McChord Air Force Base, October 2001)
 - Correspondence (McChord Air Force Base, February 2000)
 - Technical Memorandum (Parametrix, Inc., February 2002)
- I Rail Corridor Coordination
- J Wetland Discipline Report
- K Wildlife, Fish, and Vegetation Discipline Report
- L Air Quality Discipline Report
- M Noise Discipline Report
- N Preliminary Site Assessment Technical Memorandum
- O Section 106/Section 4(f) Documentation
- P Secondary/Cumulative Effects Report

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- Comment Letters and Responses

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This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared for the Cross-Base Highway project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the guidelines of the FHWA.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cross-Base Highway project was issued in May 1998. Additional studies on oak habitat and the genetics of western gray squirrels were issued in 1999. A Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was issued in June 2002 to update the 1998 DEIS. This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is intended to:

- Combine the information contained in the 1998 and 2002 documents to provide a complete discussion of impacts and mitigation measures, updated as necessary based on current conditions and additional analysis.
- Respond to comments received on the 1998 DEIS, the Oak Habitat Study, the Western Gray Squirrel Genetic Study, and the 2002 SDEIS.
- Supplement the information contained in the prior documents as needed to respond to comments received.

The FEIS is organized as follows:

Volume 1

The **Executive Summary** provides a comparison of likely environmental impacts between the alternatives.

Chapter 1, **Purpose and Need**, describes the purpose of the project and the goals and objectives for the Cross-Base Highway project.

Chapter 2, **Alternatives Considered**, discusses alternative investment strategies to building the proposed highway, presents the range of alternatives considered, provides the rationale for rejecting some of these alternatives and for selecting the preferred alternative, and describes the alternatives evaluated in the FEIS.

Chapter 3, **Affected Environment**, provides an overview of the regional setting in which the project would occur.

Chapter 4, **Environmental Consequences**, identifies the potentially affected environment, impacts, and mitigating measures for both built and natural conditions.

Chapter 5, **Section 4(f) Evaluation**, identifies and describes resources in the project vicinity the potential impacts to which are regulated by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. The chapter further describes potential impacts, how these impacts have been reduced through avoidance, and the proposed mitigation.

Chapter 6, **Comments and Concerns**, provides summary responses to the most commonly asked questions or concerns expressed by the public and agencies during the environmental review process.

The **Appendices** in Volume 1 provide additional information, including the distribution list, acronyms and abbreviations, terms and definitions, a list of preparers, references, and an index.

Volume 2

Appendix G, **Transportation Discipline Report**, discusses in detail the need for transportation improvements in the study area, the interconnection of roadway segments that compose the local transportation network, current capacity utilization of roadways, roadway deficiencies in the project area, and current and predicted traffic volumes and congestion.

Appendix H, **Alternatives Considered but Rejected**, provides supporting information and correspondence regarding the elimination of alternatives from further consideration.

Appendix I, **Rail Corridor Coordination**, presents correspondence documenting the ideas, concerns, and requests of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, regarding current and future use of rail corridors crossing the proposed highway.

Appendix J, **Wetland Discipline Report**, provides the more detailed, scientific research and investigations, including field data sheets, that were used to evaluate the potential impacts of the project.

Appendix K, **Wildlife, Fish, and Vegetation Discipline Report**, provides the more detailed, scientific research and investigations, including the classification and mapping of vegetation and habitat, that were used to evaluate the potential impacts of the project.

Appendix L, **Air Quality Discipline Report**, provides a more detailed discussion of the modeling methods and results upon which potential impacts were evaluated.

Appendix M, **Noise Discipline Report**, provides a more detailed discussion of the modeling methods and results upon which the potential impacts were evaluated.

Appendix N, **Preliminary Site Assessment Technical Memorandum**, describes in more detail the research upon which the potential hazardous material impacts were evaluated.

Appendix O, **Section 106/Section 4(f) Documentation**, presents supporting documentation such as official forms and correspondence.

Appendix P, **Secondary/Cumulative Effects Report**, describes in more detail the modeling methods and results used to determine the area where secondary development could reasonably be expected to occur because of the added transportation capacity.

Volume 3

Provides comment letters and responses to each letter and comment received on the 1998 DEIS, the 1999 genetic and oak habitat studies, and the 2002 SDEIS.