

# Chapter 1. Introduction to the Project

Chapter 1 introduces the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project and describes the project context, location, purpose and need, and joint-lead agencies. It also introduces the environmental review process for the project, public involvement activities, next steps, and ways to become involved.

## 1.1 What is the project and where is it located?

Longview, Washington, was established in the early 1900s to support the bustling timber industry in the Pacific Northwest. Since then, Longview's waterfront has undergone dramatic physical modifications with its long history of industrial development, connecting road and rail-based industries with marine transport on the Columbia River. The Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project is located in the heart of Longview's industrial waterfront area where State Route (SR) 432 and SR 433 intersect (Figure 1-1). SR 432 and SR 433

are both Highways of Statewide Significance and part of the National Highway System, which support regionally-significant passenger and freight truck movement and connect major communities across the state of Washington.

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection is an economically-critical junction within the Washington-Oregon bistate trade corridor, and is one of Washington State's busiest truck tonnage intersections. Located on the Columbia River and joining major highway and rail freight routes, this location provides businesses with access to local, state, national, and international markets that attract businesses and economic development to the area. The past three decades

Figure 1-1: Project Intersection Vicinity Map

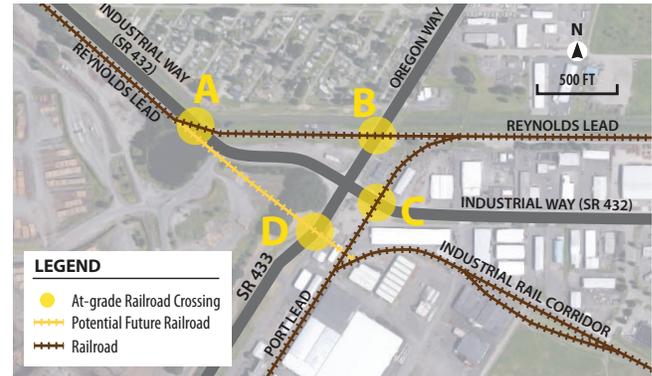


have seen continual investments by local municipalities and businesses that have incrementally enhanced the area’s industrial- and manufacturing-driven economy, including the dredging of the Columbia River Channel. Completed in 2010, the deeper channel enhances navigation access and waterborne commerce, which has since spurred billions in regional economic growth and resulted in companies investing hundreds of millions of dollars in company infrastructure along the Columbia River. Industrial development in the Longview area is anticipated to continue growing as large vacant lands are primarily planned for industrial development. The largest vacant lands would likely involve multimodal transfer of imported and exported goods from the rail and roadway network to/from the marine network.

Existing highway infrastructure deficiencies were identified by the State of Washington Department of Highways (predecessor to WSDOT) along the SR 432 corridor as early as 1968. Several studies followed in the 1980s through 2014 when the SR 432 Highway Improvements and Rail Realignment Study identified over \$356 million dollars in improvements along the SR 432 corridor. The study identified significant traffic operational and safety deficiencies along the SR 432 corridor and selected the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project to move forward through environmental review, design, and construction because it would have the greatest benefit to congestion, freight truck mobility, and safety.

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection is a four-legged intersection with Industrial Way (SR 432) as the east and west legs, Oregon Way as the north leg, and SR 433 as the south leg. SR 433 crosses the Lewis and Clark Bridge south of the intersection and terminates at US 30 in Rainier, Oregon. Additionally, there are three at-grade roadway/railroad crossings in the vicinity of the intersection (Figure 1-2): the Reynolds Lead (owned jointly by the BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad) crosses Industrial Way just west of the intersection (Crossing A) and crosses Oregon Way just north of the intersection (Crossing B); the Port Lead crosses Industrial Way just east of the intersection (Crossing C). A future extension of the Port of Longview’s Industrial Rail Corridor (IRC) is proposed to cross SR 433 south of the intersection (Crossing D) and connect to the Reynolds Lead. The specific alignment for the IRC extension has not yet been established, so a conceptual crossing alignment is shown in Figure 1-2.

**Figure 1-2: Rail Crossings at the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection**



### Logical Project Termini

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project would address intersection deficiencies that are degrading traffic operations and causing significant congestion, travel delay, and safety issues. Project improvements would improve safety and emergency access for first responders, reduce congestion, and facilitate regional economic development by keeping freight trucks, employees, residents, and tourists moving through the corridor. More reliable and timely freight truck service would support the area’s business base, keeping it financially healthy and vibrant. As a result, the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project would enhance the area’s regional and national economic competitiveness.

The scope of the proposed improvements is limited to the intersection as well as several nearby surface streets to retain access to as many properties in the vicinity of the intersection as possible. Thus, the project termini, which serve as logical end points, are defined to capture all proposed project improvement locations under each project alternative and include the area where most impacts and benefits to the environment would occur. As shown in Figure 1-1, the project termini are defined as:

- » Beech Street – northern location where the elevated roadway and rerouted traffic would reconnect with the existing Oregon Way
- » Columbia Boulevard – eastern location where the elevated roadway and rerouted traffic would reconnect with the existing Industrial Way
- » Lewis and Clark Bridge – southern location where the bridge structure begins and no further intersection improvements would be proposed
- » 21st Avenue – western location where the elevated roadway would reconnect with the existing Industrial Way.

## Independent Utility

FHWA considers an action to have independent utility or independent significance when that action would be useable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made (23 CFR 771.111(f)). The proposed improvements for the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection have independent utility from other proposed actions for the following reasons.

The scope of the two build alternatives presented in the draft EIS comprise the full build-out of the intersection improvements, and no staggered phasing of the project outside this scope is proposed. The scope of the build alternatives includes all necessary elements to construct and operate the proposed action, such as right-of-way acquisition, utilities relocation, temporary road closures and traffic detours, railroad realignment (GSA Alternative only), access provisions for affected properties, stormwater management, and environmental mitigation measures for adverse impacts. Modifications to local surface streets would be implemented to reconnect or redirect traffic as a result of the intersection improvements; these improvements are also included in the scope of the project. Therefore, both build alternatives do not require any other transportation improvements for the project to be fully usable upon completion of construction. Moreover, this project would comply with the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995 (49 United States Code §10101 et seq.) as it would not have any effects that would prevent or unreasonably interfere with railroad transportation.

Both of the two build alternatives evaluated in the draft EIS would reconstruct the intersection and provide independent benefit to vehicular traffic operations regardless of whether any other transportation projects are undertaken. In particular, two other transportation projects were questioned as potentially having some interdependence with the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project during the public scoping process and subsequent public outreach.

» **Lewis and Clark Bridge:** The Lewis and Clark Bridge is located directly south of the intersection and acts as a traffic bottleneck that meters traffic heading northbound from US 30 and entering the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection as well as frequently causes southbound traffic to spillback into the intersection as traffic merges onto the bridge. Some public commenters questioned whether improvements that would alleviate the bridge capacity constraint would also resolve the congestion at the intersection. Although no agency or other entity has any plans to address the constrained capacity of the Lewis and Clark Bridge, a traffic analysis was undertaken for the project to evaluate the effect of sequencing intersection improvements and any future bridge improvements. As presented in Section 3.1 of the

draft EIS, implementing intersection improvements before any bridge improvements would yield significant reductions in congestion (40–60 percent compared to the No Build Alternative). In contrast, if bridge improvements were implemented before any improvements to the intersection, average vehicle delay would be reduced by 15 percent. Furthermore, improvements to the bridge would not address other project needs such as maintaining or improving emergency service response times, addressing impairments to freight truck mobility, and increasing safety for all vehicles traveling through the intersection. The cost of implementing intersection improvements is substantially less than adding capacity to the Lewis and Clark Bridge. Thus, there is a greater benefit to the intersection operations to make the intersection improvements; and, the intersection improvements provide a significant operational benefit to the transportation system even if no further action is taken on the Lewis and Clark Bridge.

» **Industrial Development on Nearby Waterfront Properties:** The project is located along the Columbia River and in the Longview industrial area, serving as a multimodal transportation hub for freight movement and transfers by truck, rail, and ship. Current planning actions are being undertaken for two large, waterfront industrial properties that are within 4 miles of the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection: 1) the Port of Longview is in the process of completing a master plan for its 282-acre Barlow Point site which is expected to support one large liquid or dry bulk commodities operation with several smaller operations (Port of Longview 2016); and 2) the Millennium Bulk Terminals-Longview private development is in its planning/permitting phase to establish a 190-acre coal export terminal at the former location of the Reynolds Metal Company facility. Both developments are anticipated to export bulk commodities, which would be transported to the sites by rail. Rail service to these sites would occur on the existing Reynolds Lead and the future extension of the Port of Longview's Industrial Rail Corridor (IRC). Up to 24 new unit trains are projected to operate on these rail facilities when these industrial properties are developed, either by the proposed operations or by other bulk commodity operations. The additional trains would cause more roadway blockages to three of the four legs of the intersection in its current configuration with surface roadways and at-grade roadway/railroad crossings. The vehicular congestion at the intersection is projected to severely fail by 2040 based on traffic volumes alone, resulting in 194 seconds (3.2 minutes) of average delay per vehicle. When roadway blockages by train crossings at the intersection are factored in, the average delay per vehicle is further exacerbated to 247 seconds (4.1 minutes). The intersection improvements proposed by the project would

address the 40–50 percent increase in traffic volumes<sup>1</sup> and resulting failing congestion that are independent from any roadway blockages by trains. Recognizing that the increased rail service in the future would further deteriorate congestion and other traffic operations at the intersection, the draft EIS expanded the traffic analysis to consider two vehicular traffic scenarios: 1) a ‘no train crossing’ scenario presents the vehicular traffic operations when no trains interrupt roadway traffic; and 2) a ‘with train crossing’ scenario presents the vehicular traffic operations when one or more trains cross through the intersection and block the roadway (see Section 3.1 for more detail). The results of this analysis demonstrate that vehicular traffic operations would deteriorate to an unacceptable level for the community by 2040 even when no trains pass through the intersection (the ‘no train crossing’ scenario).

### No Restriction of Other Reasonably Foreseeable Transportation Improvements

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project considers past, present and future transportation improvements, which are incorporated into the assumptions for the No Build Alternative (Section 2.1) and/or evaluated in the cumulative effects analysis (Section 3.19). Moreover, the intersection project would not preclude or restrict future transportation improvements to roadway, bridge, or rail facilities implemented by other agencies or private development.

## 1.2 What is the purpose of the project and why is it needed?

### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection Project is to develop an affordable long-term solution that:

- » Maintains or improves emergency response
- » Improves travel reliability for all vehicles
- » Accommodates current and future freight truck and passenger vehicle movement through the intersection and across the region and states.

### Needs for the Project

#### Growing Vehicular Demand and Congestion

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection generally accommodates the existing number of vehicles using the roadway; however, the intersection experiences heavy congestion during the afternoon (PM) peak period with backups that are longer than available turn lanes for most turn movements. The westbound dual left turn backups are so long that vehicles frequently use the two-way left turn lane in the median that begins at Columbia Boulevard to bypass the queues that have formed in the westbound through lanes. Traffic volumes are expected to increase 40 to 50 percent by 2040, which results in failing conditions where vehicle drivers experience significant backups that develop from a high number of vehicles attempting to move through a signalized intersection. In the scenario where no trains are crossing on the rail facilities on any leg of the intersection, drivers would experience an average delay per vehicle (slowing or stopping time) of 3.2 minutes, which can be equated to two or more signal cycles to pass through the intersection. This congestion adversely affects local travel along Industrial Way within Longview for all vehicle types. Furthermore, the intersection is unable to accommodate the number of vehicles traveling between Washington State and Oregon via the Lewis and Clark Bridge (see Appendix O, Transportation Discipline Report).

#### Reduced Reliability for Vehicles

Much of the land south of Industrial Way is zoned industrial and abuts the Columbia River (City of Longview Comprehensive Plan 2006; City of Longview Municipal Code 2015b), which is compatible with manufacturing and export/import operations due to the river’s deep-draft navigation channel. Approximately 70 percent of these waterfront properties have active industrial operations whereas the

<sup>1</sup> Projected traffic volumes are based on based on the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments travel demand model, which considers population and employment growth.

remaining 30 percent are expected to develop within the next 5 to 20 years. With projected industrial growth and development of these waterfront properties, including lands west of the intersection as noted in the Port of Longview's Master Plan Phase I Feasibility for Barlow Point (2016) and the Millennium Bulk Terminals-Longview SEPA Final EIS (Cowlitz County and Washington State Department of Ecology 2017), an increase in train operations on the railroads in the vicinity is similarly anticipated. Currently, an average of 4 trains cross Industrial Way (Crossing A, Figure 1-2) and Oregon Way (Crossing B, Figure 1-2) per day. By 2040, 28 to 30 trains per day are anticipated to cross the intersection and will be unable to avoid the peak periods. Trains will routinely block the roadways for 5 to 11 minutes depending on train speed and length. This blockage and the time it takes to recover will substantially increase vehicle travel times compared to travel times when no trains are present. The frequency of this train activity increases the probability that freight truck and passenger vehicles will be blocked or encounter congestion. All travel through this intersection and throughout the industrial corridor and nearby roadways will be less reliable, including commuting to and from work, making freight deliveries, and providing school bus and transit service.

### **Delayed Response for Emergency Service Providers**

Emergency service providers routinely travel through the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection. The Longview Fire Department (located 1 mile north of the intersection) travels Oregon Way to respond to fire and emergency calls in the industrial areas southwest and southeast of the intersection; ambulance service returns through the intersection to transport patients to the PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center located approximately 1 mile north of the intersection. Additionally, Columbia River Fire & Rescue frequently transports patients from Columbia County, Oregon across the Lewis and Clark Bridge (SR 433) and travels north on Oregon Way to PeaceHealth. Increased congestion at the Industrial Way/Oregon intersection will impede and delay critical response and transport times for emergency service providers.

### **Impaired Freight Truck Movement**

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection is one of Washington State's busiest freight intersections with over 20 million annual gross truck tonnage. Trucks typically comprise over 20 percent of the traffic volume on Industrial Way and the intersecting SR 433, both designated as Highways of Statewide Significance by the Washington State Legislature. Freight truck movement will become increasingly

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF NOTHING IS DONE AT THE INTERSECTION?**

By 2040, congestion during the afternoon rush hour would be **four times worse** than today's conditions.

#### **Average Delay per Vehicle**

(when no trains cross through the intersection)

2015 PM Peak Hour: **49** seconds

2040 PM Peak Hour: **194** seconds (3.2 minutes)

impaired as roadway traffic volumes grow in the future, overall congestion worsens, roadway blockages due to train crossings become more frequent, and travel times become less reliable. Costs and travel times associated with freight truck movement will increase and have an adverse impact on truck-dependent business operations and viability. This adverse impact to freight truck travel reliability will be detrimental to the financial health of local industries, Port of Longview, and Pacific Northwest businesses that are dependent on truck travel through this corridor, which in turn will impact local and regional employment.

### **Decreased Safety**

The Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection serves the largest volume of vehicles and has the highest number of reported crashes on the Industrial Way corridor between Tennant Way and Washington Way. Seventy-five (75) crashes were documented at the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection from 2012 to 2016, which averages 15 crashes per year. Most are rear-end, angle, and sideswipe crashes. Congestion at intersections has been shown to correlate to increased vehicle crashes. As projected growth of traffic volumes occurs and the number of train crossings substantially increases over the next 20 years, drivers' risk-taking and crash rates and severity may increase, resulting in an overall decrease in safety for all travel modes.

## 1.3 Who is involved in the environmental process?

For the Industrial Way/Oregon Way Intersection project, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Cowlitz County are joint-lead agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The lead agencies oversee the environmental review process and coordinate input from other partners, including the following cooperating and participating agencies and tribes:

### Cooperating Agencies

- » City of Longview
- » Federal Railroad Administration
- » U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

### Participating Agencies

- » Chinook Tribe
- » Consolidated Diking Improvement District No. 1 (CDID #1)
- » Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- » Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
- » National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- » Port of Longview
- » U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- » U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- » Washington State Department of Ecology
- » Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- » Washington State Department of Historic and Archaeological Preservation (DAHP)
- » Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

The lead agencies also coordinate with the project's Technical Advisory Committee and the Executive Committee, which provide technical direction, leadership, and decision-making for the project. The Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of senior technical staff representing the public agencies and local port most immediately affected by the project, including Cowlitz County, City of Longview, City of Kelso, Port of Longview, and WSDOT. The Executive Committee is represented by one elected official and senior administrators from the same agencies and port involved on the Technical Advisory Committee as well as the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments and Cowlitz Economic Development Council.

FHWA and WSDOT will address concerns of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and Chinook Tribe by following the process specified by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the 2003 WSDOT Tribal Consultation Policy, and the 2008 WSDOT Model Comprehensive Tribal Consultation Process for NEPA.

## 1.4 Why was an environmental impact statement developed?

NEPA requires projects with potential for significant adverse environmental effects be reviewed through the environmental impact statement (EIS) process.

The EIS identifies a range of alternatives for meeting the project's purpose and need, evaluates the beneficial and adverse effects of these alternatives on the community and environment, and identifies measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate negative effects. This process allows decision-makers to consider effects on the environment along with other important factors, such as need, feasibility, and cost. The EIS process is intended to disclose the likely effects of a project at an early stage in project development so that decisions can still consider the results of the environmental analysis and public and agency review comments.

This draft EIS summarizes a series of technical analyses prepared for the project. It is designed to be easily accessible to readers and to present information concisely in text, graphics, and tables. Readers interested in more detailed information on a particular topic can refer to the technical analyses in the appendices, which cover the topics addressed in this draft EIS.

This draft EIS is organized by the following major topics:

- » **Introduction to the project (Chapter 1)** – project description, purpose and need for the project, EIS process, public involvement
- » **Developing the alternatives (Chapter 2)** – development of the alternatives, description of alternatives considered but dismissed from further review, identification of alternatives for study in the EIS
- » **Comparing the alternatives (Chapter 3)** – existing resource conditions, project direct and indirect impacts and benefits on resources, including temporary construction effects, cumulative effects, and other considerations such as irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources
- » **Environmental commitments (Chapter 4)** – mitigation measures
- » **Supporting materials (Chapters 5 to 8)** – references, glossary, list of project team members (EIS preparers), and index
- » **Additional project detail and technical analyses (Appendices)** – range of alternatives report, public involvement summary, and resource technical analyses.

Following the review of the NEPA process and resulting draft EIS, WSDOT has determined the NEPA analysis is adequate for the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). No separate statement is required to comply with the procedural requirements of SEPA.

## 1.5 How have stakeholders, agencies, and the public been involved in the project?

The project team has regularly engaged residents, businesses, public agencies, and other stakeholder groups, such as emergency service providers, public schools, business groups, and social service providers, to develop a project that involves the community. All public involvement activities have provided information (sharing information and updates) and gathered input (collected comments and feedback). Moreover, the project team has published contact information at all events so the public can request additional time with the project team to discuss any concerns. Public involvement efforts and results are summarized below and described in detail in the Public Involvement Summary Report (Appendix B).

### Scoping

Scoping is an open process involving agency and public outreach and a public comment period early in the development of a project. Scoping shares preliminary information about the proposed action and the range of possible alternatives to seek input on potential issues, concerns, and the overall technical scope of analysis that should be considered for the project.

The project's 30-day scoping period began on September 10, 2015, when the Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register, and ended on October 12, 2015. The project team held an agency scoping meeting followed by a public open house on September 17, 2015. Flyers, public service announcements, a newspaper advertisement, and a press release were used to advertise the public open house.

Appendix B provides a summary of scoping comments received from agencies and the public during the project's 30-day scoping period. Topics raised in these comments included:

- » Potential direct and indirect impacts on environmental justice (low income and minority) populations, natural resources (e.g., surface waters, air quality, fish and wildlife), children's health and safety, residential and business properties, induced growth, economy, public transportation, and contaminated site cleanup
- » Project purpose and need
- » Indirect and cumulative effects
- » Mitigation and monitoring
- » Range of alternatives, including options other than grade-separation of the project intersection
- » Other potential future projects in the area, including Lewis and Clark Bridge upgrades, Barlow Point, and Millennium Bulk Terminals

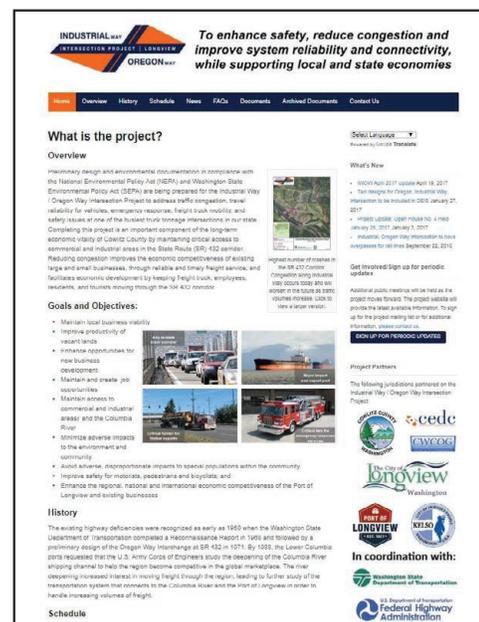
- » Future growth, traffic, and safety-related projections for the intersection and surrounding area
- » Opportunities for expanding project benefits, including visual improvements and Highlands Trail extension
- » Safety and emergency access
- » Construction impacts

### Engagement Activities

Public engagement activities have included materials in both English and Spanish. Activities conducted to date include:

- » Project website ([www.industrialoregonway.org](http://www.industrialoregonway.org))
- » Project mail and email distribution list
- » Project flyers distributed at local businesses, St. Rose de Viterbo Catholic Church, and mobile food bank
- » 12 project updates distributed via project website, mail, and email between January 2016 and November 2017
- » 4 public open houses
- » 47 stakeholder meetings with businesses/business groups (26); emergency service providers (3); public school transportation /transit providers (3); mobile home park (3); community groups/residents (8); service/political organizations (6)
- » 5 meetings with Highlands Neighborhood Association including attendance at their National Night Out event
- » 4 interviews conducted with ethnic food retailers
- » 1 residential survey and 2 business surveys

A detailed summary of public engagement activities is provided in the Relocation, Social, Economic, Public Services, and Environmental Justice Technical Analysis (Appendix L).



Project website homepage ([www.IndustrialOregonWay.org](http://www.IndustrialOregonWay.org))

## Comments/Issues Raised by Stakeholders and the Public

Substantive comments and issues raised during these public engagement activities are summarized into major topics below. Public comments have been considered, addressed, and/or incorporated into the project process and/or design. All substantive comments received to date are included in Appendix B.

The Relocation, Social, Economic, Public Services, and Environmental Justice Technical Analysis (Appendix L) itemizes and addresses a subset of these public comments relevant to traditionally underserved populations (low-income, racial or ethnic minority, disabled, elderly, youth, transit-dependent, or limited English proficient).

### Process-Related Concerns

- » Conduct a fair and transparent decision-making process that provides the most overall benefit to the community
- » Consider a range of alternatives to address the purpose of and need for the project

### Construction-Related Concerns

- » Minimize construction duration and cost, and describe the benefits of expending taxpayer resources
- » Provide advanced notification of construction schedules and detour routes
- » Continue to prioritize emergency responder movement
- » Minimize adverse impacts to public transit and school bus travel
- » Minimize adverse impacts to quality of life such as noise, vibration, dust, exposure to hazardous materials, visual impacts, cut through traffic and disruption to bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- » Minimize adverse impacts to natural areas such as infill, runoff, sedimentation or fragmentation
- » Maintain business viability and minimize delays to freight trucks
- » Maintain reasonable access to/from neighborhoods and businesses
- » Create construction jobs, especially for locals

### Long-Term Concerns

- » Provide congestion relief and travel reliability for people and goods
- » Consider whether improvements to the Lewis and Clark Bridge would resolve congestion at the intersection
- » Improve safety and enhance connectivity for all vehicles, trains, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- » Minimize residential displacements from neighborhoods and mobile home parks
- » Minimize business displacements and maintain reasonable access to businesses and industrial areas
- » Minimize disproportionate, adverse effects to low-income and minority residents and minority-owned businesses
- » Avoid or minimize adverse effects to natural resources including water, plants and animals, soil and air
- » Maintain access to/from neighborhoods, including the Alabama Street connection at Oregon Way
- » Support economic development opportunities and economic competitiveness
- » Consider the cumulative effects of this project with other reasonably foreseeable projects

### Tribal Consultation

FHWA, WSDOT, and Cowlitz County have followed the federally mandated tribal consultation process for this project. Early on, a Tribal Coordination Plan was shared with seven tribes that have an interest in the project area, and those tribes were invited to engage as participating agencies. The Chinook Tribe and Cowlitz Indian Tribe accepted the invitation to serve as participating agencies while the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Nez Perce Tribe, and Yakama Nation declined this invitation. All seven tribes have been asked to review and provide comments on the area of potential effects for cultural resources, the methodology for assessing impacts to cultural resources, and a draft copy of the cultural resources report. In addition, the two tribes serving as participating agencies have received regular project updates and been asked to review and provide comments on the range of alternatives considered for the project. None of the tribes



Project information distributed at a mobile food bank in Highlands Neighborhood



September 2016 open house

---

have submitted substantive comments to-date; the Cowlitz Indian Tribe confirmed that the project would not affect any tribal housing.

## 1.6 What are the next steps?

### Public Review of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The draft EIS will be available for public review and comment for 45 days (March 2, 2018 through April 16, 2018). Section 1.3 lists the agencies and tribes involved and to whom the document will be distributed. The Fact Sheet at the beginning of this draft EIS lists the locations where copies will be available for review by the public and describes how the public can obtain and provide comments on the document.

### Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Comments on the draft EIS from agencies, tribes, and the public will be an important factor in the selection of a preferred alternative by the lead agencies. The lead agencies will also consider input received from the Technical Advisory Committee and the Executive Committee.

### Final Environmental Impact Statement

A final EIS will be prepared to identify and evaluate the preferred alternative, which may incorporate additional design refinements. Additional environmental studies, if needed, will also be completed and specific environmental commitments will be developed. The final EIS will include and address comments received on the draft EIS received during the public comment period.

### Record of Decision and Project Implementation

After the final EIS is issued, a record of decision will be prepared to document the course of action for implementation. The record of decision identifies the selected preferred alternative, the other alternatives considered, and the plan for environmental commitments. The environmental commitments stipulated in the record of decision will become a formal part of the project record as obligations required for the project owner or contractor to implement.

After the record of decision is issued and funding becomes available, right-of-way acquisition, final design, and construction will occur.

## 1.7 How can I be involved and how will the project continue to communicate with the public?

The project team will continue to share information with stakeholders and the public throughout the duration of the project. General ways to get connected and/or be involved with the project include:

- » Visit the project website for the latest project updates ([www.industrialoregonway.org](http://www.industrialoregonway.org))
- » Join the project mailing list by completing the "Contact Us" form on the project website or by calling Cowlitz County at (360) 577-3030
- » Email the project team directly at [IndustrialOregonWay@co.cowlitz.wa.us](mailto:IndustrialOregonWay@co.cowlitz.wa.us)
- » Send a letter via U.S. Postal Service to the project lead agencies (refer to the Fact Sheet for agency contacts and mailing addresses)
- » Visit the local WSDOT and Cowlitz County offices (refer to the Fact Sheet for agency office locations)

As detailed in the Fact Sheet, the project team will hold a public hearing and open house during the 45-day public comment period for this draft EIS. Comments on the draft EIS can be submitted by mail, email, via the project website, or at the public hearing during the public comment period. After the public comment period, the project will proceed as previously described in Section 1.6. The publication of the final EIS and record of decision will be advertised in advance.

---

This page intentionally left blank.