

I-5 Marvin Rd. to Mounts Rd. Planning & Environmental Linkages Study

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #5

May 16, 2023

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Agenda

- 11:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 11:10 Meeting Goals and Outcomes
- 11:15 Outreach and Coordination Summary
- 11:20 Alternatives Evaluation Results
- 11:30 Proposed NEPA Strategy
- 11:40 Review Draft PEL Report Outline
- 11:55 Next Steps
- 12:00 Adjourn

Welcome and Thank You

WSDOT is engaging project area jurisdictions, including tribes, counties, cities, and national and local resource agencies

Introductions

- We will call your organization name — please respond with your name
- To change your Participant Name in Zoom
 - Hover over your video and click on ellipses and "Rename"
 - Hover over your name under Participant List and click on ellipses "Rename"

TAG Participants

- Alliance for a Healthy South Sound Executive Committee
- Billy Frank Jr Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
- City of DuPont
- City of Lacey
- City of Lakewood
- City of Olympia
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Federal Highway Administration
- Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition
- ForeverGreen Trails
- Friends of Nisqually NWRC
- Intercity Transit
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Land Trust
- Nisqually River Council
- Pierce County
- Pierce Transit
- Port of Olympia
- Port of Tacoma
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Sound Transit
- South Sound Military & Communities Partnership
- Squaxin Island Tribe of Indians
- Thurston County
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Town of Steilacoom
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Washington Environmental Council
- Washington Farm Labor Association
- Washington State Patrol

Meeting Participation

Virtual Participation

- Mute yourself when you're not speaking
- “Raise your hand” or use chat box for questions or comments
- Say your name before speaking
- If calling in from your phone:
 - Dial *6 to mute/unmute
 - Dial *9 to raise your hand

Input Opportunities

- Chat open throughout the meeting
- Discussion opportunities at the end of each topic

Meeting Goals and Outcomes

Meeting Goals

- Input and active participation
- Understanding of the process

Outcomes

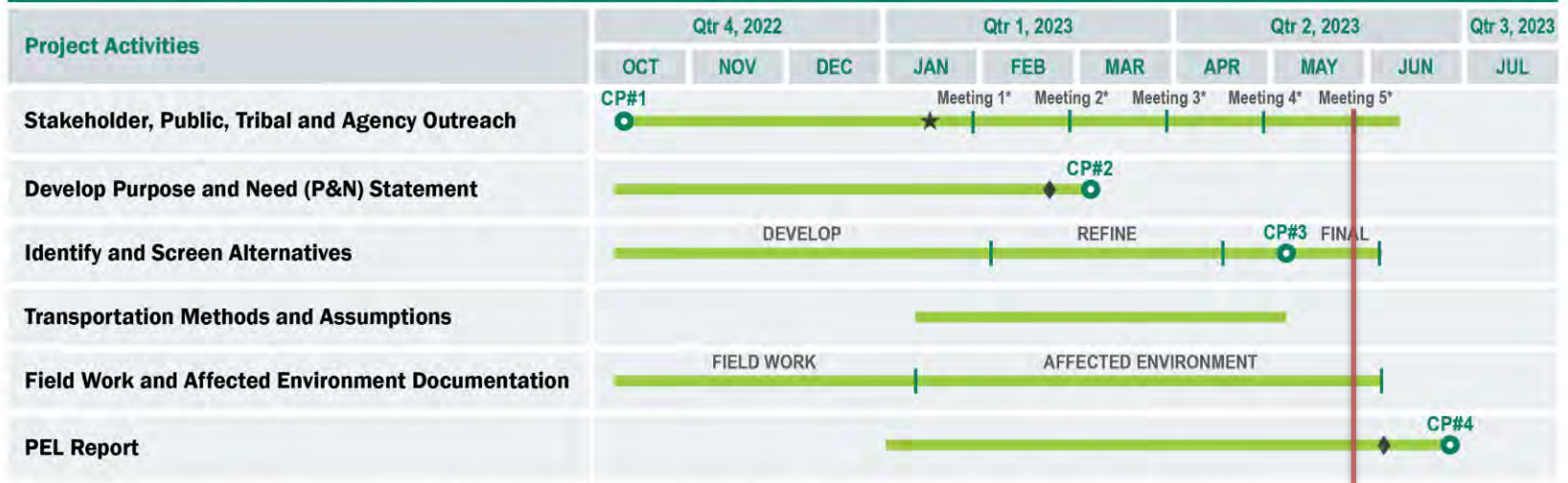
- Review Proposed Preferred Alternative w/ Bridge Options
- Review Proposed NEPA Strategy
- Prepare for the Draft PEL Report public review in June
- Celebrate your involvement!

Advisory Group Responsibilities

- Represent agency and communities in the study area
- Provide data and input on direction of study
- Advise on range of alternatives and alternatives evaluation criteria
- Help build consensus and support for alternative(s) selection

Schedule

WSDOT I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road Planning & Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study Project Schedule



- FHWA Concurrence Point #1 - Reason and Desired Outcomes
- FHWA Concurrence Point #2 - Purpose & Need
- FHWA Concurrence Point #3 - Alternatives Evaluation
- FHWA Concurrence Point #4 - Final Report

- *Meeting 1 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 1
- *Meeting 2 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 2
- *Meeting 3 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 3
- *Meeting 4 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 4
- *Meeting 5 - Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Series 5

- ★ Stakeholder Interviews
- ◆ Public Review

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Outreach and Coordination Summary

Community Engagement Tools

- WSDOT project site (Engage.wsdot.wa.gov)
 - 2 public review periods in January and February
 - Third review period in June
- Project email
- WSDOT blog
- Social media (Facebook, Reddit, and Twitter)
- Community briefings and interviews
 - 6 interviews with community-based organizations
- Project postcard being mailed to over 60,000 addresses



What we heard from community members

- Address any environmental effects from the project
- Be compatible with high-capacity transit, including rail
- Include a separated shared-use path
- Consider induced demand from additional capacity
- Keep I-5 open during construction
- Consider improved/new alternate routes around I-5
- Preserve access to the Nisqually interchange/Exit 114

What we heard from CBOs

- Maintain access through the corridor for people getting to work
- Increased traffic commuting north due to issues with affordable housing
- Concerns about construction impacts
- Curiosity around what the corridor changes will include and what they will look like
- Frustration over not enough transit in Thurston County and along this corridor

Outreach during NEPA

- NEPA to begin September 2023
- ACG, TAG, and EAG will continue
 - Reaffirm participation
 - Less frequent than during PEL
- Continue open houses to better understand effects
- Ongoing tribal consultation
- Additional community outreach
- What else?

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Detailed Alternatives Evaluation Results

Draft Detailed Alternatives Evaluation

Note: Bridge Option lengths: Option A=3,000', Option B=6,000', Option C=12,000'

Project Purpose Categories	Alternatives	Alternative 2 - Widen I-5 for <i>Managed/HOV</i> Lanes			Alternative 3 - Widen I-5 for <i>GP</i> Lanes		
	Design Options	A	B	C	A	B	C
Enhance mobility and connectivity on I-5 for passenger vehicles, freight, transit, and active modes and provide support for increased person and freight throughput	Accommodates Active Transportation Modes	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Accommodates Transit Modes	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Provides Congestion Relief for General Purpose (GP) Vehicles/Freight	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Provides Congestion Relief for Transit and High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV)	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Effects on Adjacent Roadways	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Increases Person and Freight Throughput	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Complementary to Local Planning	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Consistency with WSDOT Policies	High	High	High	High	High	High
Improve local and mainline I-5 system resiliency	Reduces the Risk of Infrastructure Failures	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Reduces the Risk of Infrastructure Failures Due to Seismic Activity	High	High	High	High	High	High
Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the Nisqually River Delta area	Enables Environmental Restoration	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Enables Ecosystem Resiliency	High	High	High	High	High	High
Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers	Freight Reliability	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Multimodal Access to Opportunities (Jobs, Services, and Recreation)	High	High	High	High	High	High
	River Navigability	High	High	High	High	High	High
Support Equitable Outcomes	Minimizes Business and Residential Impacts or Displacements	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Minimizes Negative Impact to Emergency Response	High	High	High	High	High	High
	Minimizes the Flood Risk Potential for EJ Populations	High	High	High	High	High	High
Relative Cost of Alternatives	Planning-level Cost Comparison	High	High	High	High	High	High

Meeting 4 Advisory Group Polls

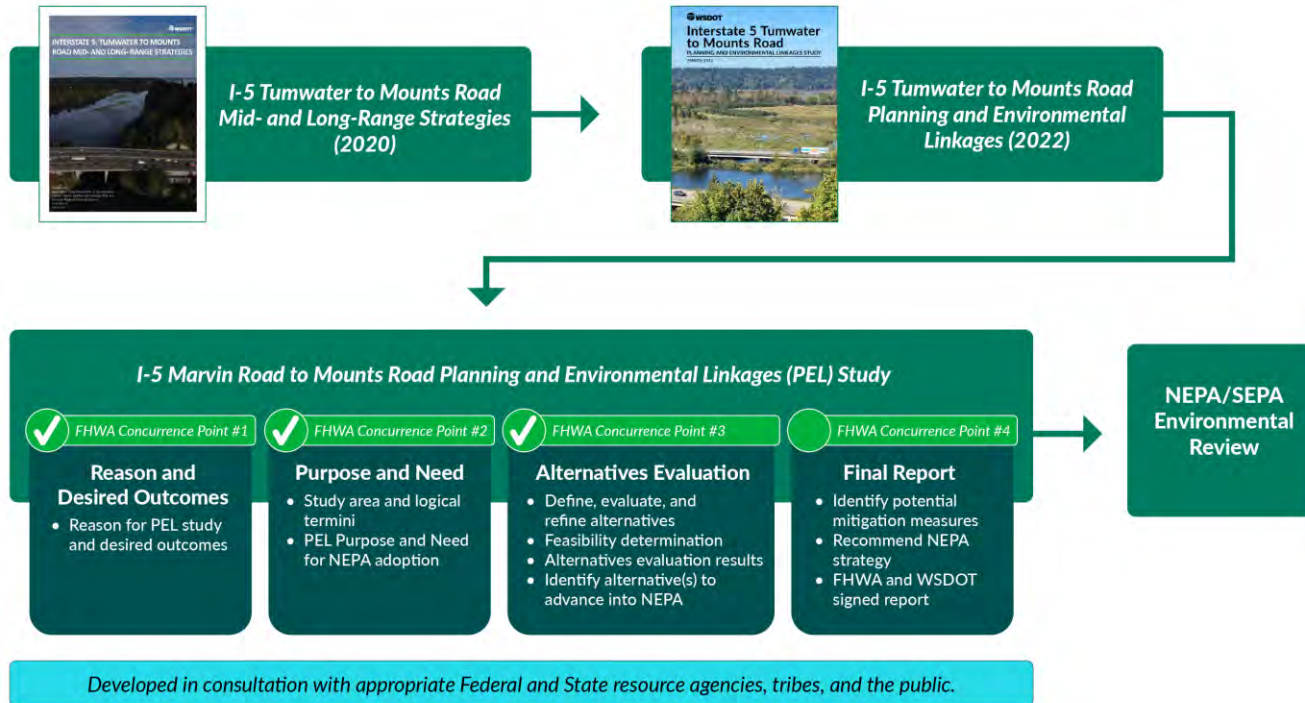
Based on the evaluation, which alternative do you support to be evaluated during NEPA? (Multiple choice)

- Alternative 2 – Widen I-5 for HOV lanes: 33/38 or 87%
- Alternative 3 – Widen I-5 for General Purpose lanes: 16/38 or 42%

Which options do you support to be evaluated during NEPA? (Multiple choice)

- Design option A – 3,000 ft: 15/35 or 43%
- Design option B – 6,000 ft: 25/35 or 71%
- Design option C – 12,000 ft: 29/35 or 83%

FHWA Concurrence Pt. #3



Preferred Alternative

- Alternative 2 – widen for *managed*/HOV lanes
 - Operational flexibility—vehicle occupancy (2+, 3+), evening/weekend general purpose use
 - Consistency with adjacent sections of I-5
 - I-5 Border to Border Master Plan and PEL
- Bridge Design Options A, B, C
 - Technical studies during NEPA will refine options
 - Preferred alternative may be a hybrid within the range of options
- Includes Shared-Use Path full length of project

Shared-Use Path



- Path located north of I-5 to maximize views to the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge
- Path will be minimum 14 feet wide
- Design will include rest and view areas
- Access provided to local streets at or near the 3 interchanges

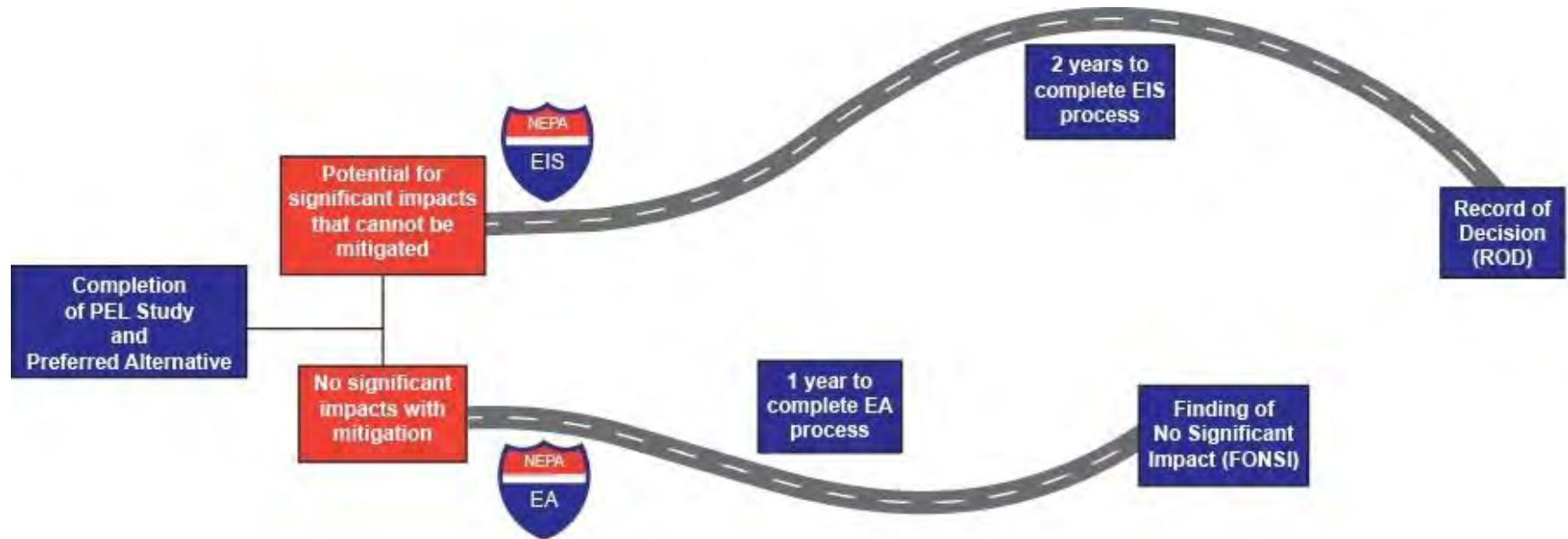
Comments and Questions



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Proposed NEPA Strategy

NEPA Process



Potential Environmental Effects and Benefits

<i>Environmental Discipline</i>	<i>Potential Effects</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
Stormwater and Water Quality	Construction, in particular the removal of fill, could cause periods of turbidity. Increased pollution-generating impervious surface from road widening could contribute stormwater runoff to waterbodies that are currently on the 303(d) list.	Stormwater runoff from all roadway surfaces within the study area (I-5 mainline and interchanges) would be treated before discharge, with the potential for significant improvements to water quality.
Wetlands and Other Waters	Temporary and permanent effects to wetlands and streams would occur. In-water work will be required. Potential upstream migration of saltwater could result from removal of I-5 embankment fill.	Removal of I-5 embankment fill would allow the creation of 20 or more acres of new wetlands and improve the hydrology, functions, and habitat value of existing wetlands. Fill removal would allow reconnection of historic distributary channels and restore more natural flow patterns.
Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation	In-water work could impact ESA-listed species and habitats. Temporary and permanent effects to wetlands and streams would occur, and some habitat is likely to be removed.	Creation of new wetlands and restoration of natural drainage patterns would restore ecosystem functions and improve habitat for fish and wildlife species.
Floodplains & Sea Level Rise	Project could result in changes to flood levels in the immediate vicinity. The extent of frequently flooded areas could increase due to the removal of fill, both in the near term and in the future as sea levels rise and peak stream flows increase.	I-5 would be more resilient to climate change and to the effects of channel migration.
Geology and Soils	There is the potential for landslides and seismic hazards in the study area.	The new roadway and bridge structures would be designed to stabilize potential landslide areas and to withstand seismic shaking and liquefaction.
Visual Quality	Changes in elevation and position of I-5 could have visual effects on surrounding viewers, especially those in the natural areas and residences in close proximity to the roadway.	The new bridge structures could give travelers on I-5 better views of the Nisqually Delta area.

Potential Environmental Effects and Benefits

<i>Environmental Discipline</i>	<i>Potential Effects</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
Air Quality, Greenhouse Gases, and Energy	Increases in traffic over time could contribute to pollution and GHG emissions causing effect on sensitive and nationally significant natural areas.	Decreases in traffic congestion could have a positive effect on localized air quality from reduced travel times.
Cultural Resources	Project could result in temporary effects to the Medicine Creek Treaty National Memorial Site. The project area has a high likelihood of encountering previously unknown archaeological sites.	Reconnection of historic stream channels and associated habitat would help restore a traditional cultural landscape and would also benefit tribal treaty fishing. Archaeological testing can be destructive; however, identification of resources can inform effective management.
Noise	Existing noise exceeds the WSDOT dBA noise criteria. Widening I-5 could move noise sources closer to sensitive receivers in the corridor requiring noise abatement measures.	None identified at this time.
Hazardous Materials	Moderate risk of encountering hazardous materials during construction due to five active cleanup sites and 37 sites of potential concern located within 0.5-mile.	None identified at this time.
Land Use, Farmlands, and Section 6(f)	Likely effects to wildlife refuge from construction and/or ROW acquisition. Potential effects to prime, unique and farmlands of statewide importance by removal of fill and changes to the channel migration zone.	Mitigation for temporary construction impacts could include improvements to affected properties, such as invasive species removal and stormwater system enhancements.
Section 4(f)	Likely effects to wildlife refuge and National Memorial site from construction and/or ROW acquisition. Potential effects to historic resources from construction and changes to I-5.	Improvements to the Wildlife Refuge's ecosystems through restoration of the Nisqually River system. See also Wetlands and Other Waters.
Socioeconomic and Environmental Justice	Project construction and changes to I-5 could create a hardship for businesses in the immediate vicinity of the project corridor, some of which include EJ populations.	Congestion relief and reduced travel times would make transit options more reliable.

NEPA Recommendation

- Anticipated NEPA Class of Action - Environmental Assessment (EA)
 - Project will have both adverse and beneficial effects
 - No effects identified that cannot be mitigated
 - No public controversy identified
 - Public Scoping
 - No Action and Preferred Alternatives analyzed

Comments and Questions



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Draft PEL Report

Report Outline

Draft Report is out for public review June 1-30

I-5 Marvin Road to Mounts Road PEL

1. Introduction and Purpose and Need
2. Agency and Public Coordination
3. Alternatives Description
4. Alternatives Evaluation Summary
5. Recommended Alternative and Bridge Options
6. Environmental Resource Considerations
7. Next Steps

Appendices

- A. *PEL Questionnaire*
- B. *Existing Environmental Conditions Memos*
- C. *Coordination and Public Participation Summary*
- D. *FHWA Concurrence and Support Letters*



1. Introduction and Purpose and Need

- Describes PEL requirements and streamlined connection to NEPA
- Provides contextual background and study area definition
- Defines the project purpose and related needs
- Provides a summary of current corridor conditions in the *Existing and Future Baseline Conditions Report*

2. Agency and Public Coordination

- Describes PEL outreach process with partners
 - Tribal Consultation
 - Agency Coordination Group
 - Technical Advisory Group
 - Executive Advisory Group
 - CBOs and Special Interest Groups
- Highlights community engagement findings

Create a separated shared-use path along the corridor

Consider an elevated roadway through this area to mitigate the impacts to fish and wildlife

Consider the impacts on induced demand from additional capacity

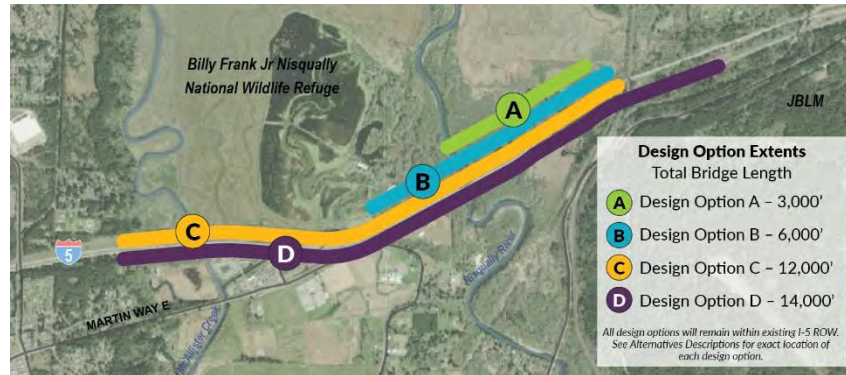
Maintain access to the Nisqually interchange (Exit 114)

Keep I-5 open during construction

3. Alternatives Description

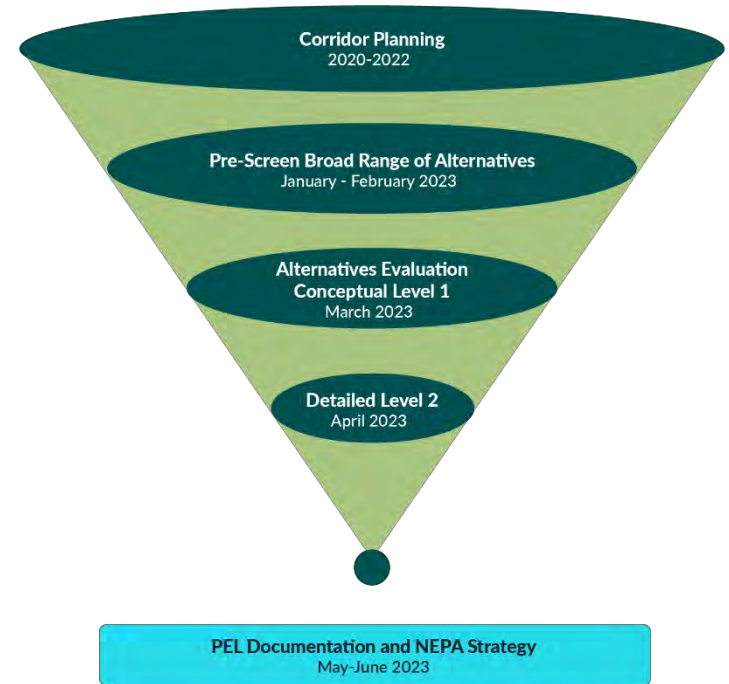
Summarizes a range of reasonable alternatives

- Alternative 1 — Operations Improvements (Bridge Options A, B, C)
- Alternative 2 — Widen I-5 for managed/HOV lanes (Bridge Options A, B, C, D)
- Alternative 3 — Widen I-5 for GP Lanes (Bridge Options A, B, C, D)
- Alternative 4 — Convert I-5 Lanes from GP to HOV Lanes (Bridge Options A, B, C)



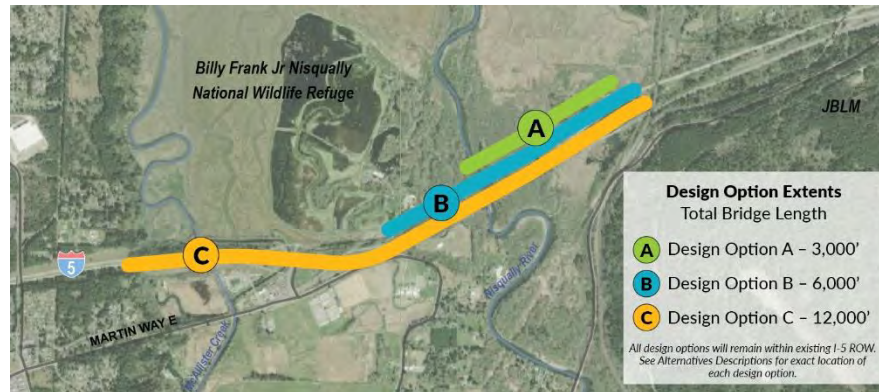
4. Alternatives Evaluation Summary

- Defines alternatives evaluation criteria
- Explains results for initial and detailed evaluations and reasons for eliminating alternatives/options
- Initial evaluation results
 - Eliminated Alternative 1, Alternative 4, and Design Option D
- Detailed evaluation results
 - Identified Alternative 2—widen for managed/HOV lanes was the highest performing alternative



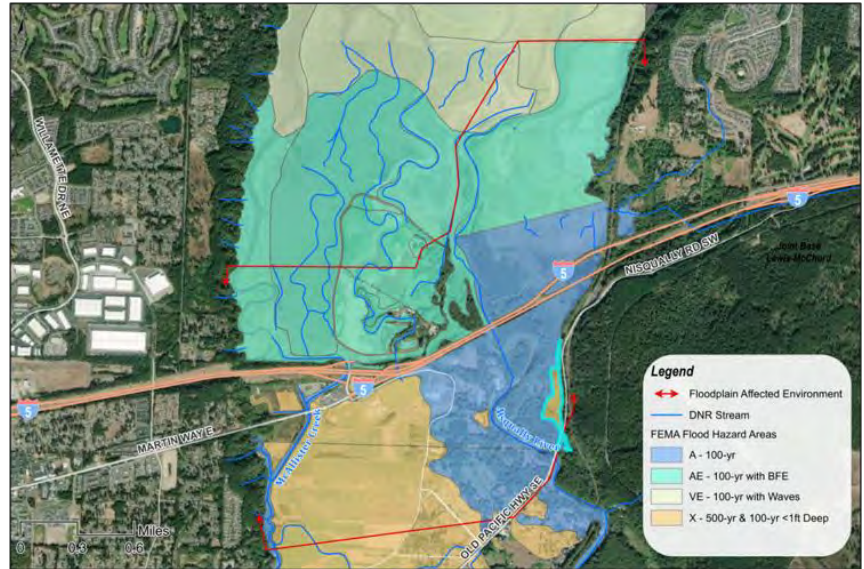
5. Recommended Alternative and Bridge Options

- Identifies Alternative 2 (widening for managed/HOV lanes) as the preferred alternative
 - Improves travel times and reduces congestion for general purpose and HOV travel
 - Performs high in ‘Access to Opportunity’ evaluation criteria
- Recommends Bridge Options A, B, and C for advancement to NEPA



6. Environmental Resource Considerations

- Documents existing conditions for each environmental discipline
- Describes potential environmental effects and benefits studied during NEPA review



FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

7. Next Steps

- Identifies anticipated federal, state, and local permits that will be required during NEPA review
- Outlines recommended coordination process with partners
- Recommends NEPA strategy

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Wrapping Up

What are you looking forward to in NEPA?



Next Steps

- Post meeting materials for review
- Online Open House June 1-30
- Publish Final Report in July
- CELEBRATE!!
- Begin NEPA in September

THANK YOU!