

Economics

COPY TO: Project File
PREPARED BY: Puget Sound Gateway Program Team
DATE: November, 2017
SUBJECT Phase 1, SR 509 Completion Project NEPA Re-evaluation

1. Introduction

This memorandum was prepared in support of the Phase 1, SR 509 Completion Project National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) re-evaluation. It compares the changes to the project and resultant impacts (beneficial and/or adverse) against the Record of Decision (ROD) issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2003 to determine if Phase 1 of the SR 509 Completion Project would result in any new significant impacts not evaluated in the *SR 509: Corridor Completion/I-5/South Access Road Final Environmental Impact Statement* (2003 FEIS). This Re-evaluation Memo makes many references to the 2003 FEIS, including the maps and mitigation measures that are still relevant to the updated analyses. The SR 509: Corridor Completion/I-5/South Access Road FEIS can be found on WSDOT's website at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR509/completion/Library.htm>.

1.1. Project History

The State Route (SR) 509 Completion Project is based on more than two decades of project planning and development. In 1995, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) released the *Tier I Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DEIS), which recommended extending SR 509 from S 188th Street southward to connect with Interstate 5 (I-5) and adding a spur roadway, the South Access Road, to connect with Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac Airport). Within the SR 509 corridor, three routes and a No Build Alternative were evaluated in a project level (Tier II) Draft EIS published in 2002. The Final EIS (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) issued in 2003 identified a six-lane Preferred Alternative (Alternative C2) that included two general purpose (GP) lanes and one high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane northbound and southbound on SR 509. It also included interchange connections at S 188th Street, S 200th Street, 24th/28th Avenue, and I-5 and a new South Access Road. Since the ROD was issued, project progress has included actions such as the purchase of needed right-of-way (ROW), construction of an advanced wetland mitigation site, construction of work elements in coordination with local agencies, and refinements in preliminary design. The project area is shown in Figure 1.

With the passing of the Connecting Washington Transportation Package in 2015 by the state legislature, funding has become available for the first phase of the SR 509 Completion Project (Phase 1 Improvements) to proceed through environmental review, design, and into construction. WSDOT undertook a Practical Solutions design approach for the project which allowed a fresh look at the previous project plans to ensure that the revised project is designed according to actual demand and needs. Part of the Practical Solutions approach included reengaging stakeholders to review design and potential changes. The purpose of this document is to reevaluate the Phase 1 Improvements to determine whether they have the potential to result in any new significant environmental impacts that were not previously evaluated in the 2003 FEIS and 2003 ROD. Table 1 provides a comparison of Alternative C2 with the Phase 1 Improvements.

Figure 1 Project Vicinity

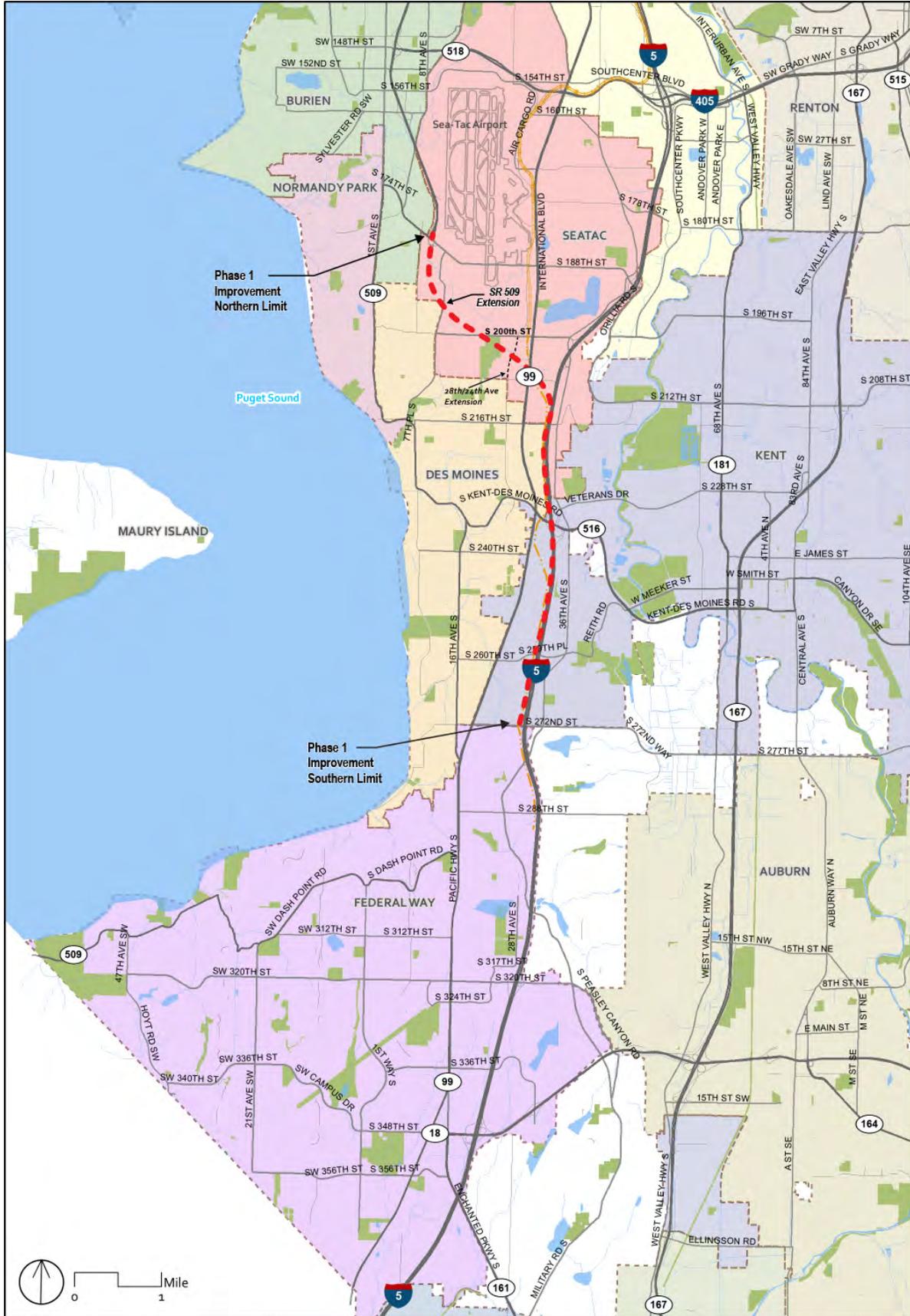


Table 1. Comparison of Design Components		
SR 509	Alternative C2 (2003 FEIS and ROD)	Phase 1 Improvements (Re-evaluation)
SR 509: I-5 to S 188th Street	Six lanes (120 feet), 60 mph – 2 GP lanes in each direction and 1 HOV lane each direction	Four lanes (78 feet), 60 mph – 2 GP lanes in each direction
S 188th Street	Full single-point urban interchange (SPUI)	1/2 diamond (ramps to/from north) – but doesn't preclude future construction of full diamond with additional funding.
S 200th Street	1/2 diamond (to/from north) ^a	None– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
South Access Roadway	Four-lane limited access facility to S 200th Street	None– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
24th Avenue S/28th Avenue S	1/2 diamond (to/from south)	1/2 diamond (ramps to/from south)
Tolling	None	2 GP lanes in each direction
Toll Points	None	One south of 24th Avenue S/28th Avenue S
Interstate 5	Alternative C2 (2003 FEIS and ROD)	Phase 1 Improvements (Re-evaluation)
I-5/SR 509 GP connection	60 mph	50 mph
I-5 SB: SR 516 to SR 509	Southern braid – three-lane C/D	Northern braid and two-lane C/D
I-5 NB: SR 516 to SR 509	two-lane C/D	Auxiliary lane– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
I-5/SR 509 HOV Direct Connection	I-5/SR 509 center-to-center HOV direct access roadway	None – but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
I-5/SR 516 Interchange ^b	Full diamond and at grade intersection with Veterans Drive connector	Full diamond and at-grade intersection with Veterans Drive connector
I-5 SB: SR 516 to S 272nd Street	Two auxiliary lanes	One auxiliary lane– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
I-5 SB: 272nd to S 320th Street	One auxiliary lane	None– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding
I-5 NB: S 272nd Street to SR 516	One auxiliary lane S 272nd Street to SR 516	None– but doesn't preclude future construction with additional funding

^a 1/2 diamond interchange has an on and off ramp that serves traffic to and from one direction.

^b The Phase 1 Improvements would also maintain pedestrian connections on both sides of the I-5/SR 516 interchange and construct a new pedestrian path from Veterans Drive to SR 516/Kent Des Moines Road, which would help facilitate pedestrian trips to and from the transit centers around this interchange.

C/D = collector/distributor lanes; GP = general purpose; HOV = high-occupancy vehicle; mph = miles per hour; NB = northbound; SB = southbound

2. What are the Phase 1 Improvements and how do they compare with the 2003 FEIS Alternative C2?

The purpose and need of the proposed action remains the same as described in the 2003 FEIS.

- The purpose of the proposed action is to improve regional highway connections with an extension of SR 509 to serve current and future transportation needs in southwest King County and to enhance southern access to Sea-Tac Airport. The project area is shown in Figure 1.
- The proposed action is needed to create system linkages, accommodate travel demand and capacity needs, and improve intermodal relationships. The SR 509 freeway currently terminates at S 188th Street and does not connect to the regional transportation highway system; this leaves a major gap in the system. As a result, local streets and major transportation routes like I-5 are at or over capacity given current travel demand. This situation is expected to worsen as travel demand for Sea-Tac Airport and major roadways increases.

FHWA issued a ROD in 2003 for the SR 509 Project FEIS that analyzed the extension of the SR 509 corridor. The 2003 SR 509 Project ROD selected Alternative C2. Alternative C2 included a six-lane extension of SR 509 from S 188th Street to I-5. New interchange improvements were proposed at four locations: S 188th Street, S 200th Street, 24th Avenue, 28th Avenue S, and I-5. A four-lane limited access roadway (South Access Road) was also proposed to connect SR 509 at 24th Avenue S/28th Avenue S with the Sea-Tac Airport Terminal Drive system, and an interchange on the South Access Road was proposed at S 200th Street. Improvements on I-5 included adding northbound and southbound collector-distributor (C/D) lanes between SR 509 and SR 516, and adding auxiliary lanes between SR 516 and S 320th Street. Interchange improvements which included a new undercrossing of I-5 to connect to Veteran's Drive were also proposed at SR 516.

The Phase 1 Improvements are essentially a subset of the improvements that were proposed in the 2003 FEIS (Table 1 and Figure 2). The Phase 1 Improvements would include a four-lane SR 509 extension (compared to six lanes as analyzed in the 2003 FEIS) from S 188th Street to I-5. Interchange improvements would occur at three locations (compared to four locations as analyzed in the 2003 FEIS): S 188th Street interchange, 24th Avenue S/28th Avenue S, and I-5. In addition, there would be no South Access Road or interchange at S 200th Street, and improvements on I-5 would be less extensive than those proposed in the 2003 FEIS (see Figure 3). The Phase 1 Improvements also assumes that the extension of SR 509 between S 188th Street and I-5 would be fully tolled. A toll point would be located on SR 509 south of the 24th Avenue S/28th Avenue S interchange. Figure 3 provides an overlay comparison of the Phase 1 Improvements and the 2003 FEIS.

Figure 2 – Design Components of FEIS Preferred Alternative (Alternative C2) and Phase 1 Improvements

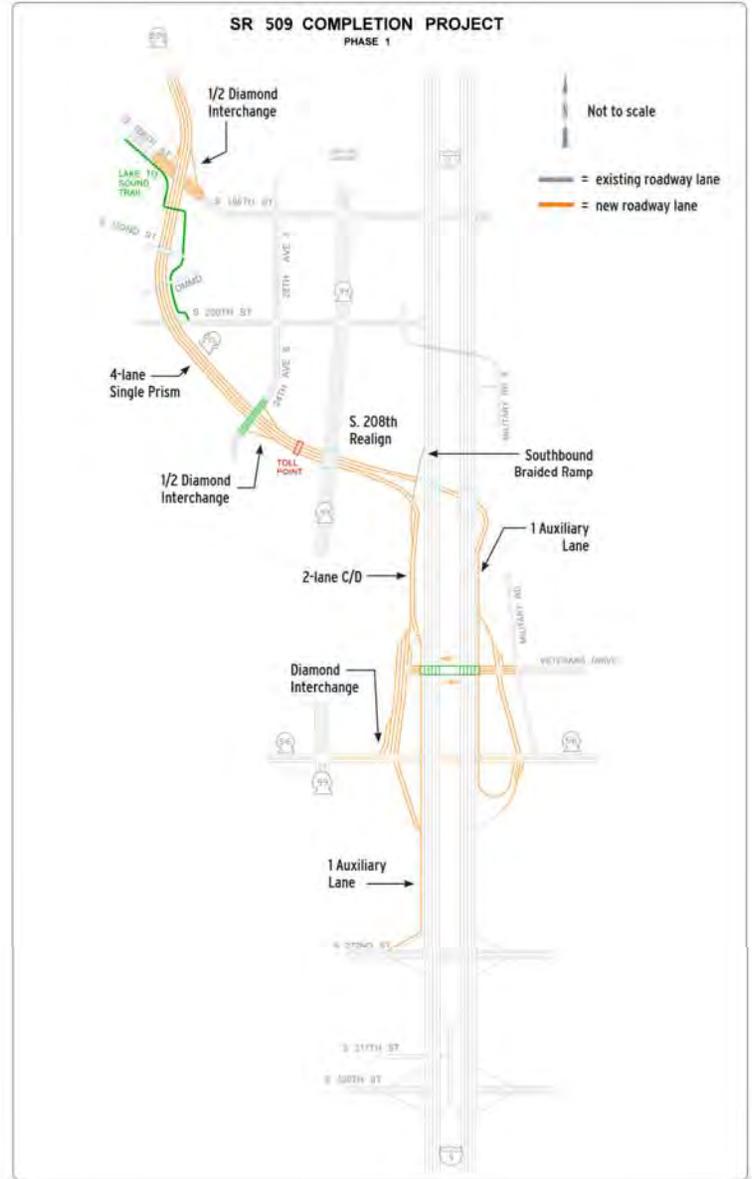
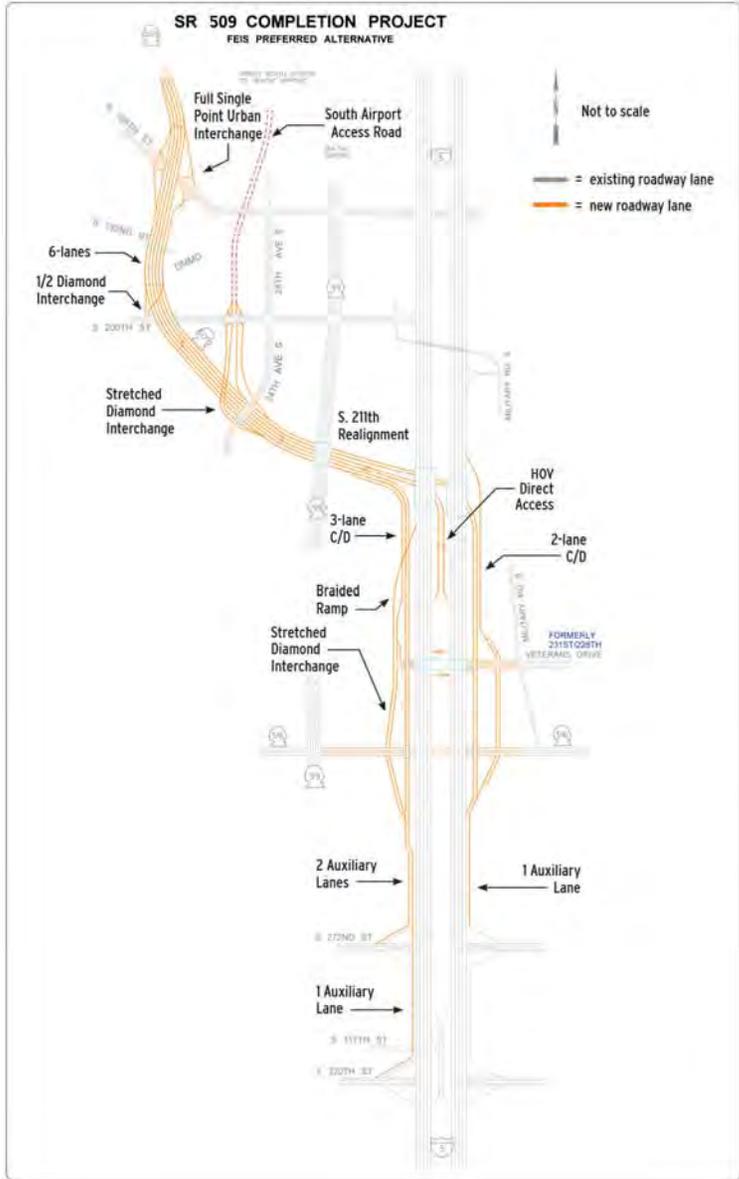
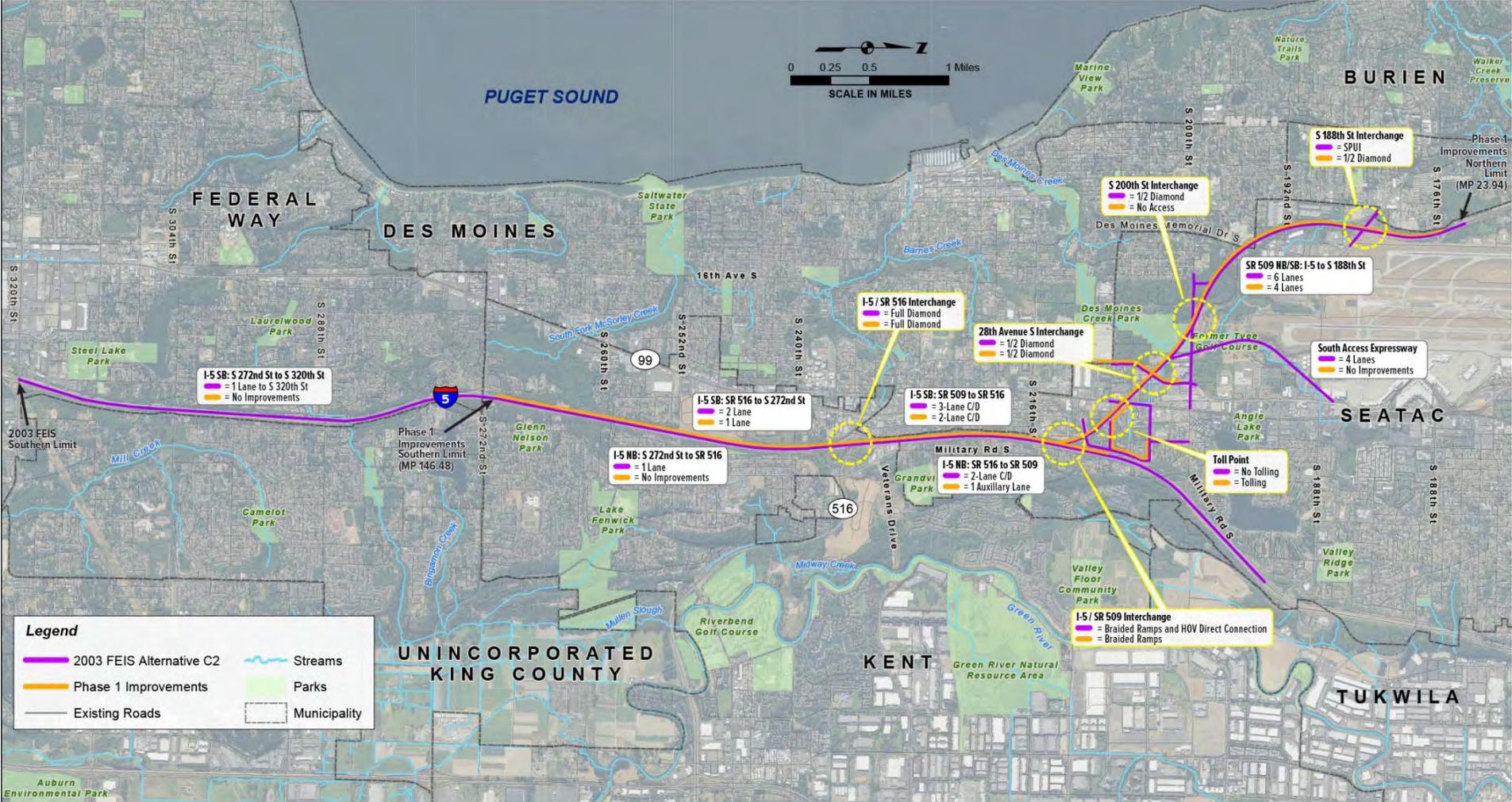


Figure 3 Overlay Comparison of Alternative C2 and the Phase 1 Improvements



3. What has changed in the affected environment since 2003?

The economic affected environment was described in Section 3.11.2 of the 2003 FEIS. The following sections compare the economic environment at that time to current economic conditions in the project area. Key study parameters include the study area’s population, housing, and employment figures. Current general fund revenue sources for affected cities are also provided. A project update for some of the large commercial and transportation-related projects that were in the planning phases when the 2003 EIS was published is also presented.

Overall, the project area continues to support a wide variety of economic activities, ranging from Sea-Tac Airport, with its major airline and air freight operations and surrounding hotel, motel, and rental car facilities, to the locally oriented shopping, restaurant, and service businesses located along and extending several blocks east and west of SR 99.

Population and Housing Units

The 2003 FEIS, included year 2000 population and household data for the cities of Des Moines, Sea Tac, and Kent. The City of Kent had a population of approximately 79,524, and the cities of Des Moines and SeaTac had populations of 29,267 and 25,496, respectively. Population growth since the 2003 FIES has occurred primarily in the City of Kent which has experienced the largest amount of growth, growing by 56.6 percent since 2000 to nearly 125,000. In contrast, the city of Sea Tac grew by 9.1 percent and the city of Des Moines by only 4.5 percent. The same growth trend was experienced in the number of housing units.

Population	2000	2016	% Change 2000–2016
Des Moines	29,267	30,570	4.5%
Kent	79,524	124,500	56.6%
SeaTac	25,496	27,810	9.1%
Total	134,287	182,880	36.2%
Housing Units	2000	2016	% Change 2000–2016
Des Moines	11,777	12,777	8.5%
Kent	32,488	46,997	44.7%
SeaTac	10,176	10,512	3.3%
Total	54,441	70,286	29.1%

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2017.

Employment

Employment levels in the cities of Sea Tac, Des Moines and Kent were estimated in the 2003 FEIS. Employment levels were estimated to grow at an annual rate of 1.8 percent over a 30-year horizon between the years of 1990 and 2020. Table 3 shows the actual employment growth levels in the overall project area as well as future employment levels. As shown the level of growth in the project area between 2000 and 2010 did not reach the levels that were originally estimated in the 2003 FEIS.

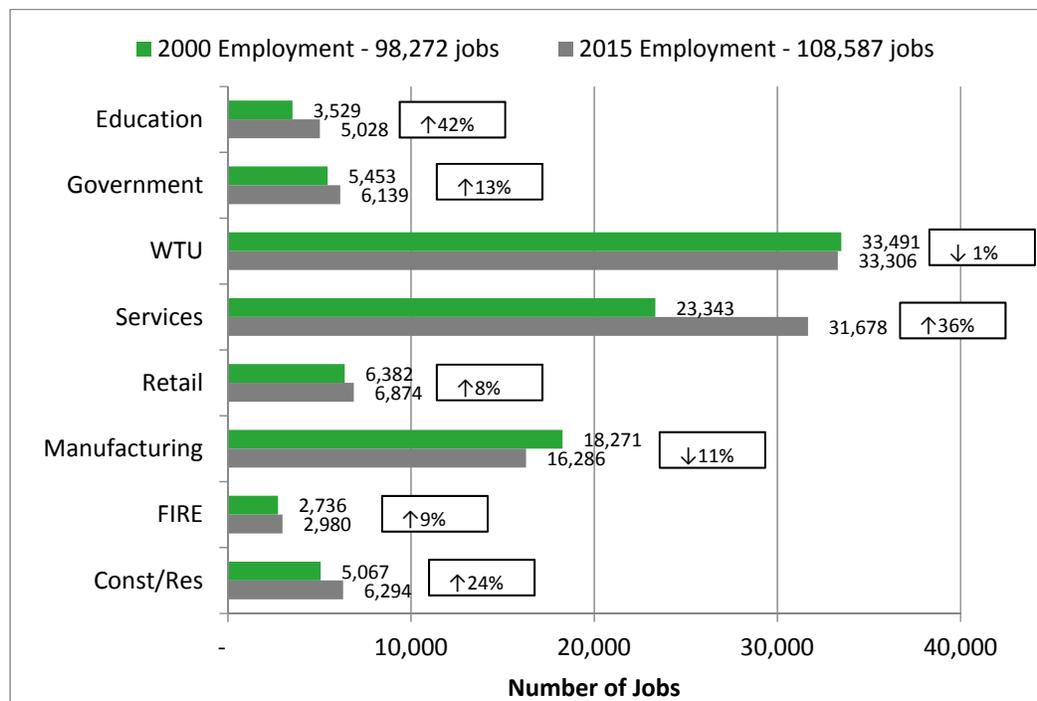
Table 3. Employment Levels					
Jurisdiction	Employment Levels			Average Annual Growth Rate	
	2000	2010	2016	2000–2010	2010–2016
Des Moines	5,810	5,717	6,334	-0.2%	2.1%
Kent	60,685	60,316	70,846	-0.1%	3.3%
SeaTac	31,777	24,635	31,407	-2.5%	5.0%
Project Study Area	98,272	90,668	108,587	-0.8%	3.7%
King County	1,149,642	1,099,639	1,290,210	-0.4%	3.2%

Source: PSRC (2017)

Note: Project Study Area is the total employment for Des Moines, Kent, and Sea Tac

Figure 4 shows the actual employment levels in the overall project area in 2000 and 2015. The study area added approximately 10,300 jobs from 2000 to 2015. The largest center of employment is Kent, which accounted for approximately 71,000 jobs in 2015. All sectors of the economy added jobs except for the manufacturing sector. The sector of the economy that experienced the greatest amount of growth is the services sector, accounting for 8,300 new jobs over the 15-year period.

Figure 4. Study Area Employment by Sector



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2017. WTU = Warehouse, Transportation, and Utilities; FIRE = Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

As indicated in the 2003 FEIS, the primary retail businesses in the project area are located in Des Moines and Kent. Industrial development in the project area is limited to scattered light-industrial and small-scale manufacturing enterprises located along major arterials, such as Des Moines Memorial Drive, South 200th Street, and South 188th Street.

The largest economic influence in the project area, as well as the largest generator of vehicle trips, is Sea-Tac Airport. According to the Port of Seattle, operations at the airport create over 100,000 jobs in the Puget Sound region and generate over \$500 million in state and local sales taxes (McIntosh, 2016).

Sea-Tac Airport is the fastest growing among the top 20 U.S. airports, serving nearly 46 million passengers and over 410,000 aircraft operations in 2016 (Port of Seattle, 2017). In 2034, forecasts project Sea-Tac Airport will accommodate 66 million annual passengers (an increase of 20 million from 2016) and 540,000 annual flight operations (up from 410,000 in 2016).

Since publication of the 2003 FEIS, a number of larger commercial and transportation-related projects that were identified 2003 FEIS have either been completed or still being considered:

- South Aviation Support Area.** The 2003 FEIS reported that the South Aviation Support Area (SASA) proposed to relocate existing line maintenance facilities, locate new maintenance expansion facilities (primarily hangars), and accommodate major base maintenance facilities and air cargo uses on approximately 100 acres south of S 193rd Street and north of S 200th Street. The SASA proposal is still being evaluated as part of the Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) and to date has not been adopted.
- 28th/24th Avenues South Arterial Project.** The 2003 FEIS described this proposed project that involved the cities of SeaTac and Des Moines, the Port of Seattle, King County, Equitable Capital Group, and Alaska Airlines. The project was in the process of being constructed and involved modifying the alignment of 28th Avenue S/24th Avenue S to accommodate local access traffic generated by anticipated development within the cities of SeaTac and Des Moines. The 2003 FEIS reported that construction of the project from S 188th Street to S 202nd Street (which began in April 2000) was substantially complete when the FEIS was completed. The project is scheduled for completion in 2017.
- Third Runway at Sea-Tac Airport:** Since the 2003 FEIS, Runway 34L-16R (the “third”) runway at Sea-Tac Airport was completed (in 2008).
- Sound Transit Light Rail Station:** Since the 2003 FEIS, Sound Transit has completed the construction of a light rail station at Sea-Tac Airport and at Angle Lake.
- Federal Way Link Extension.** Sound Transit recently completed preliminary design and environmental study of the Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE). Construction and ROW requirements of the FWLE and Phase 1 Improvements abut in some areas.
- Des Moines Creek Business Park.** The Des Moines Creek Business Park has started the final phase of construction. The completed business park is planned to total 1.6 million square feet of office, industrial, and retail space on the 87-acre site just south of the Sea-Tac Airport in Des Moines. In total, the City of Des Moines will see more than 6,000 new jobs from the business park, which will diversify their economic base.

City Revenue Sources

As was the case in 2003, the cities of SeaTac, Des Moines, and Kent receive the majority of their revenues from property, retail sales and use, and other taxes. Tax revenues accounted for approximately 80 percent of general fund revenues for Kent and SeaTac. Des Moines tax revenues represented approximately 63 percent of general fund revenues.

Revenue Source	Des Moines	Kent	SeaTac
Property Tax	\$4,725,045	\$22,210,229	\$13,000,000
Sales and Use Tax	\$3,182,600	\$22,361,012	\$11,760,000
Other Taxes	\$4,607,332	\$21,432,839	\$5,080,000
Subtotal Taxes	\$12,514,977	\$66,004,080	\$29,840,000

Other Revenue			
Licenses and Permits	\$2,597,670	\$3,934,130	\$1,037,658
Intergovernmental Revenues	\$642,875	\$2,569,955	\$1,069,100
Charges for Goods & Services	\$3,308,986	\$5,334,055	\$1,606,497
Fines and Forfeits	\$221,350	\$1,565,961	\$580,275
Misc Revenue	\$481,800	\$1,285,374	\$252,200
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$900,000	\$1,843,796
Subtotal Other Revenue	\$7,252,681	\$15,589,475	\$6,389,526
Total Revenues	\$19,767,658	\$81,593,555	\$36,229,526

Source: City of Des Moines, 2017; City of Kent, 2017; City of SeaTac, 2017.

All three communities have experienced growth in tax revenues since the 2003 FEIS. Table 4 compares the tax revenues for each community from 1999 to 2017.

City	1999	2017	% Change
Des Moines	\$6,052,639	\$12,514,977	107%
Kent	\$38,243,951	\$66,004,080	73%
Sea Tac	\$21,694,482	\$29,840,000	39%

Source: 2003 SR 509 FEIS: Economics; City of Des Moines, 2017; City of Kent, 2017; City of SeaTac, 2017

4. Would the Phase 1 Improvements result in any new significant impacts?

Although the Phase 1 Improvements would increase roadway capacity to a lesser extent than Alternative C2, it would still result in improved reliability of goods movement. Extending SR 509 will ease congestion on I-5, add a southern access point to Sea-Tac International Airport and improve service between industrial districts by allowing general purpose traffic and trucks to bypass I-5, SR 99 and local streets.

Improvements will result in decreased travel times for several routes along the Seattle to Tacoma corridor, and improved access to a large amount of industrially zoned land, including the Des Moines Business Park south of Sea-Tac Airport. The level of congestion on north/south arterial corridors within the project area, including SR 99 (International Boulevard) and Des Moines Memorial Drive, would decrease as trips currently made on surface streets divert onto SR 509. Overall mobility along these arterials would improve, resulting in better access to businesses.

When finished, SR 509 will become a key component of the Seattle and South King County transportation network. When considered in conjunction with the newly constructed Alaskan Way Viaduct improvements, the project provides a critical north-south corridor alternative to I-5 through Seattle and South King County.

Because the Phase 1 Improvements would not construct the South Access Road, commercial vehicles and individual passengers traveling to and from Sea-Tac Airport would not experience the same travel time savings as Alternative C2.

Businesses

The Phase 1 Improvements would result in the acquisition of fewer commercial properties and the relocation of fewer businesses than estimated for Alternative C2. An estimated 23 businesses and their employees would be displaced as compared to the 27 to 31 businesses estimated for Alternative C2. These displacements would not affect the regional economy; the businesses are service oriented, and because the types of businesses are common in the project area, similar commercial space (as well as employment opportunities) exist nearby. Retail and industrial (warehouse) space would be the two types of commercial space needed for relocation.

As discussed in the 2003 FEIS, businesses in the project area are generally engaged in airport operations, tourism, retail, restaurant, and services that cater to neighborhood residents and the surrounding communities, as well as Sea-Tac Airport. Business displacements might reduce the sales tax revenue collected by the affected jurisdictions, depending on where, when, or whether the affected businesses relocate. Similarly, the employment represented by those displaced businesses would also be affected.

Commercial and industrial vacancy rates have been decreasing, which may make it difficult for businesses that would potentially be displaced to find similar space in the project area. The Sound Transit Federal Way Link Extension (FWLE) stations, can be a catalyst for transit oriented development and redevelopment when local jurisdictions have planned for a higher density of land use and/or mixture of uses. The land surrounding the future station sites would become more desirable for development purposes with increased commercial exposure and walkability.

The Phase 1 Improvements would not affect the regional economy, except through beneficial effects of transportation efficiency in the SR 509 corridor. Overall the effects from investments in transportation infrastructure would be beneficial to businesses and consumers because of improved accessibility. Factors that influence accessibility include travel times, safety, and the transportation choices available to users. In particular, businesses that rely on the efficient movement of goods and services (such as business supply companies, service providers, and freight operators) would benefit.

Sales and Property Tax Revenue Impacts

According to the 2003 FEIS, the initial property tax impact of Alternative C2 was not expected to be substantial. The fiscal impacts associated with the initial loss of property tax revenues would represent less than 1 percent of each jurisdictions' total tax revenues. The Phase 1 Improvements would acquire less ROW than Alternative C2 and as such would result in fewer fiscal impacts. The initial impact to property tax revenues from the Phase 1 Improvements is not expected to be substantial and would likely be less than Alternative C2.

5. How would effects on employment and overall economic activity during construction compare to the 2003 FEIS Alternative C2?

The temporary construction effects discussed in the 2003 FEIS remain applicable to the Phase 1 Improvements except construction would occur over approximately 10 years. As discussed in the 2003 FEIS, construction activities would temporarily affect businesses and residences with increased congestion, noise, dust, and access and parking restrictions related to construction.

Project construction would result in positive impacts on employment and overall economic activity in the project area. These impacts are generally consistent with the type of impacts discussed in the 2003 FEIS. Phase 1 Improvements construction costs are estimated to be approximately \$747 million and would result in direct effects associated with the construction of the project, such as project

employment opportunities. Project construction would also result in so-called multiplier effects. Indirect impacts would occur as construction firms purchase materials from local suppliers, who in turn would employ workers and purchase materials. Induced impacts would occur when wages paid to workers in construction trades or supporting industries are spent on locally produced goods and services.

The magnitude of the indirect and induced impacts within the project area would depend on many factors, including:

- Where construction workers live and spend their income
- Where equipment and material needed for construction would be purchased
- The extent to which the proposed project is funded by out-of-region sources

When local funds are used, residents and businesses have that much less income to spend on other goods and services in the regional economy, thus representing a shift in the local economy's product mix rather than net new economic activity. At the state level, project construction would result in economic benefits to the extent that federal funding is received.

Phase 1 Improvements are expected to result in smaller employment impacts when compared to those presented in the 2003 FEIS because the scope of construction would be less than under Alternative C2.

6. How would mitigation measures compare to the 2003 FEIS Alternative C2?

The mitigation measures discussed in the 2003 SR 509 Project FEIS remain applicable to the Phase 1 Improvements. The 2003 FEIS indicated that right-of-way would be acquired in phases. Because the impacts would be staggered, WSDOT would be able to identify suitable replacement facilities as and if they develop. As discussed in Section 3.9.4 of the 2003 FEIS, WSDOT would conduct property acquisition and relocations in accordance with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Property owners would receive compensation for their properties at fair market value, and relocation resources would be available to all displaced business owners without discrimination. WSDOT will work closely with all displaced businesses to find suitable properties to accommodate their needs.

Because the types of businesses displaced are common in the project area, similar commercial space (as well as employment opportunities for any displaced jobs) exists nearby. Retail and industrial (warehouse) space would be the two types of commercial space needed for relocation purposes. Displaced businesses occupying warehouse space near Sea-Tac Airport would be relocated with similar proximity to the airport, so that they could maintain their essential close access. The success of these businesses depends on proximity to the airport. The most desirable locations for commercial retail space are in shopping centers, such as the Midway Crossing complex at the intersection of SR 516 and SR 99 (Pacific Highway South). Planned redevelopment in each of the four closest jurisdictions to the proposed project (Cities of SeaTac, Des Moines, Kent, and Federal Way) is also expected to increase retail space, as well as residential units.

The follow mitigation measures, which were also presented in the 2003 FEIS, would apply to Phase 1 Improvements:

- Install temporary signage to inform drivers that access to businesses during construction is unchanged, temporarily changed, or restricted.
- Require contractors to submit and receive approval of a construction plan to maintain reasonable access for all properties and businesses adjacent to construction activity.

- Coordinate with affected business owners to develop and implement strategies to maintain access to businesses during construction.
- Inform businesses or tenants displaced by new ROW acquisition or other construction activities that they would be entitled to relocation assistance in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 and RCW 8.26.
- Minimize construction period.
- Minimize the number of major traffic detours.

7. Conclusion

With adherence to the mitigation measures described above, no new significant impacts to economics from construction and operation would occur as a result of the Phase 1 Improvements that were not previously identified in the 2003 FEIS. No new or revised mitigation measures would be required.

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