

Chapter 6. Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
At-grade roadway/ rail crossing	Crossing of a railroad with a surface roadway.
Attainment	A geographic area that meets or does better than the national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS).
Area of potential effects	The geographic area within which the project may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties and cultural and archaeological resources. This is a term that specifically applies to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
Best management practices	Physical, structural, and/or managerial practices that, when used singly or in combination, prevent or reduce pollutant discharge.
Biological assessment	A document that is prepared for compliance with the Endangered Species Act in cases where the potential exists for a project to affect federally listed species. Its purpose is to document the project's potential to affect listed species, to document measures taken to avoid adverse effects, and to make a provisional effects call. Scientific data used to prepare Biological Assessments are generally gathered through a combination of field reconnaissance surveys, and scientific literature research; and provisional effects determinations are established based on an analysis of project design details. The biological assessment is submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Critical habitat	Specific geographic areas that contain features essential to the conservation of an endangered or threatened species and that may require special management and protection. Critical habitat may also include areas that are not currently occupied by the species but will be needed for its recovery.
Cumulative effect (cumulative impact)	The effect on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.
Decibels	A unit for relative sound intensity. For highway traffic noise, an adjustment, or weighting, of the high and low-pitched sounds is made to approximate the way that an average person hears sounds. The adjusted sounds are called "A-weighted levels" (dBA).
Delay	The additional time that a vehicle must slow down or stop in traffic compared to freely-flowing traffic conditions; used to measure congestion levels.
<i>De minimis</i> impact	An impact that involves the use of Section 4(f) property that is generally minor in nature. A <i>de minimis</i> impact is one that, after taking into account avoidance, minimization, mitigation and enhancement measures, results in no adverse effect to the activities, features, or attributes qualifying a park, recreation area, or refuge for protection under Section 4(f). For historic properties, a <i>de minimis</i> impact is one that results in a Section 106 determination of "no adverse effect" or "no historic properties affected." A <i>de minimis</i> impact determination requires agency coordination with the officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property and opportunities for public involvement. A <i>de minimis</i> impact determination may not be made when there is a constructive use.
Disabled	A person having a long-lasting condition, such as severe vision or hearing impairments, or a condition that substantially limits basic physical activities. It may also include people with conditions that make other activities such as learning, getting around inside the home, working at a job, or going places outside the home difficult.

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Displacement	An individual, family, partnership, association, corporation, or organization, which moves from their home, business, or farm, or moves their personal property, as a direct result of acquisition, demolition or rehabilitation for a project. Displaced persons from federally funded projects are eligible for relocation assistance under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.
Easement	A legal right to use property owned by someone else for a designated purpose.
Elderly	A man or woman aged 65 or older.
Elevated roadway	A roadway that is raised up above the ground level.
Embankment	A bank, mound, dike, or the like, raised to carry a roadway or hold back water.
Emergency response time	The amount of time that it takes for emergency responders to arrive at the scene of an incident after the emergency response system was activated.
Endangered species	Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Environmental justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means: people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health; the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.
Erosion	The wearing away of soil and rock. This may be by weathering and the action of streams, glaciers, waves, wind, and underground water.
Floodplain	The 100-year floodplain is an area with a one percent chance of being flooded in any given year.
Full acquisition	A property acquisitions where the entire property would be acquired for the project.
Fugitive dust	A particulate emission made airborne by forces of wind, man's activity, or both. Unpaved roads, construction sites, and tilled land are examples of areas that originate fugitive dust.
Grade-separation	A process used to improve traffic flow at intersections and junctions. With grade-separation design, each road or rail surface is placed at a different grade, or elevation. This difference in elevation is accomplished using tunnels, ramps, bridges and interchanges at every point where the two roads or rail lines cross one another.
Greenhouse gases	Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. These include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.
Groundwater	Water found below the water table.
Hazardous materials	A substance or mixture of substances having properties capable of producing adverse health or safety effects.
Highways of Statewide Significance	Interstate highways and other principal arterials that are needed to connect major communities in Washington State. The designation helps assist with the allocation and direction of funding.

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Hispanic/Latino	A self-designated classification for people whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Caribbean, or those identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, etc. Origin is viewed as ancestry, nationality, or country of birth of the person or person's parents or ancestors. Hispanic/ Latino persons may be of any race, White and non-White.
Impervious surface area	A hard surface area that either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as occurs under natural conditions (prior to development) and from which water runs off at an increased rate of flow or in increased volumes. Common impervious surfaces include but are not limited to rooftops, walkways, patios, driveways, parking lots, storage areas, concrete or asphalt paving, gravel roads, packed earthen materials, and oiled or macadam surfaces.
Indirect effects	Effects are caused by the proposed action or alternative and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems.
Industry train	A train comprised of rail cars that haul various commodities and have different origins and destinations. For this project, typical industry trains are assumed to be 2,000 feet or less in length. An industry train is also referred to as a manifest train.
Intersection approach leg	Segment of roadway used by traffic approaching the intersection.
Landscape unit	The geographic unit on which impacts on visual character, viewers, and visual quality are assessed.
Limited English proficient	Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
Low-income	A person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
Minority	A person who is: Black (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa); Hispanic (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or the Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race); Asian/Pacific Islander (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition).
Mitigation	The measures that could be taken to lessen the negative effects predicted for each resource. These measures may include reducing or minimizing a specific negative effect, avoiding it completely, or rectifying or compensating for the negative effect.
National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)	The maximum allowable level, averaged over a specific time period, for a certain air pollutant in the outdoor air.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	The federal policy that requires agencies to incorporate environmental considerations into decision making by preparing an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement that consider the effects of proposed actions.
National Register of Historic Places	A list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects maintained by the National Park Service, each determined by the National Park Service to be of historic, cultural, architectural, archaeological, or engineering significance at the national, state, or local level.

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Noise abatement criteria	If future noise levels with a project are predicted to approach or exceed the FHWA noise criteria at a sensitive receptor, abatement is evaluated at the receptor. For residences, the criterion is 67 dBA. WSDOT considers a noise effect to occur if the noise level is within 1 dBA of the 67 dBA criterion.
Noise barrier	A solid wall or earth berm located between the roadway and receiver location, which breaks the line-of-sight between the receiver and the roadway noise sources.
Out-of-direction travel distance	Out-of-direction travel distance is the increased distance traveled for trips made from an original to a destination due to changes in the existing roadway.
Partial acquisition	A property acquisition where a portion of the property would be acquired for the project and the remainder would be retained by the current owner.
Particulate matter (PM₁₀ or PM_{2.5})	Naturally-occurring and man-made particles with a diameter less than 10 microns or 2.5 microns respectively. Sources of particulate matter include sea salt, pollen, road dust, agricultural dust.
Peak period	A part of the day with the highest traffic volume during which traffic congestion on roads is worst.
Phase II environmental site assessment	An on-the ground assessment that includes sampling and laboratory analysis to confirm the presence of hazardous materials.
Pollutant	Any substance that upon reaching the environment (soil, water, or air), is degrading in effect so as to impair the environment.
Programmatic agreement	A document that spells out the terms of a formal, legally binding agreement between a state Department of Transportation (DOT) and other state and/or federal agencies. In the context of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, programmatic agreements are used when the effects of an undertaking are not fully known.
Queue	The number of vehicles (measured in distance) lined up and stopped in travel lanes at an intersection or railroad crossing.
Recovery times from train crossings	The time it takes for traffic to return to traffic flow conditions that were occurring prior to the train crossing.
Retaining wall	A retaining wall is a wall that is built to prevent the earth behind it from moving.
Right-of-way	Land set aside for use as a highway. Rights of way are purchased (acquired) prior to the construction of a new road. Usually enough extra land is purchased for the purpose of providing safety clearances, building retaining walls, and implementing other mitigation features.
Roadway blockage	Any impedances to traffic flow that are not related to normal intersection control influences. Examples could include train movements, vehicle crashes, temporary lane closures, etc.
Scoping	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.
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966	Section 106 of the NHPA applies to undertakings by any federal agency, undertakings receiving federal assistance, and undertakings requiring the issuance of a license from any federal agency. In the event of any of the above undertakings, the head of the acting, assisting, or licensing federal agency must “take into account” the possible effects the undertaking will have on any district, site, building, structure or object that is included in or is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places prior to the approval of expenditure of federal funds or issuance of a license. In addition, the head of any such agency must afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on the undertaking.

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Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966	Section 4(f) states that the Secretary of Transportation may approve a transportation program or project requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance only if there is no “prudent and feasible alternative” to the use of that land, and the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the public land involved.
Sediment	A general term for any unconsolidated particulate material that has been deposited by an agent of transport, such as water, ice, or wind.
Seismic hazard	Refers to the probability and amount of ground movement expected from an earthquake.
Shared-use path	Paved, off-road facilities designed for travel by a variety of nonmotorized users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, joggers, and others.
Signalized intersection	A junction of two or more public roads that is controlled by a traffic signal.
Spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan	A plan that includes site information regarding hazardous materials, sensitive environmental receptors, spill prevention and containment methods, response procedures, and equipment and material to carry out preventive and response measures, and reporting requirements. These plans ensure that all harmful and/or deleterious materials are properly stored and contained. Contractors are required to prepared and implement the spill prevention, control, and countermeasures plan in accordance to WSDOT Standard Specification 1-07.15(1).
Stormwater	The portion of precipitation (rainwater or snowmelt) that does not naturally percolate into the ground or evaporate, but flows via overland flow, interflow, pipes, and other features of a stormwater drainage system into a defined surface water body or a constructed infiltration facility.
Stormwater treatment	Stormwater treatment (or management) reduces or eliminates the negative impacts of stormwater runoff by controlling flooding, reducing erosion, and improving water quality through the implementation of structural, vegetative or managerial practices used to treat, prevent or reduce water pollution.
Study area	The area in which effects from the project may occur.
Surface roadway	A road that is located at ground level.
Temporary erosion and sediment control plan	A plan to prevent and minimize soil erosion. A temporary erosion and sediment control plan includes measures that may include, but are not limited to, the following (as necessary, depending on site conditions): temporary plastic cover, coir fabric (and/or wattles), seeding and mulching, temporary vegetated filter strips (i.e., for construction site stormwater control), slope drains, silt fence, sand, or geotextile-encased triangular silt dikes.
Traditionally underserved populations	Individuals who are low-income, minority, disabled, elderly, youth, transit-dependent and/or those who are limited English proficient.
Traffic congestion	A condition on road networks that occurs as use increases, and is characterized by slower speeds, longer trip times, and increased vehicular queueing.
Travel time	The total time spent traveling from one point to another point.
Travel time reliability	The level of consistency in travel times for repeated trips (same time of day but different day).
Truck tonnage	An index that measures the gross tonnage of freight that is transported by motor carriers for a given month. The truck tonnage index serves as an indicator of shipping activity in the U.S., and it can be used by analysts to help determine the state of the economy.

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Two-phase signal	A traffic signal that provides only two separate green (right-of-way)/yellow (change)/red (clearance) phases. Non-conflicting movements can occur in each phase. In the case of the PGSB Alternative, the proposed two-phase traffic signal would have one phase for westbound traffic to flow onto the elevated intersection while eastbound traffic from the surface roadway is stopped. The second phase would stop the westbound movement while the eastbound movement could proceed.
Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended	<p>A federal law that establishes minimum standards for federally-funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real property (real estate) or displace persons from their homes, businesses, or farms. The Uniform Act's protections and assistance apply to the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for federal or federally-funded projects.</p> <p>The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act requires that comparable decent, safe, and sanitary replacement housing within a person's financial means be made available before that person may be displaced. When such housing cannot be provided by using replacement housing payments, the Uniform Relocation Act provides for "housing of last resort."</p>
Unit train	A train comprised of rail cars that haul the same commodity and have a single origin and destination. For this project, typical unit trains are assumed to be 6,800 to 8,000 feet in length.
Unsignalized intersection	A junction of two or more public roads that is not controlled by a traffic signal.
Visual quality	Character of the landscape, which generally gives visual value to a setting.
Wetlands	Areas that are saturated with groundwater near the surface or areas that are flooded for extended periods of time and that support vegetation that can live in saturated soils. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.