



Introduction

The vehicle transportation network provides access and economic vitality to local and regional communities. Changes in traffic patterns due to local projects can affect public safety and the quality of life in a community. Traffic can also create indirect impacts such as air pollution, economic costs incurred by delays, or traffic diversion resulting in trips being added to local roads. This fact sheet summarizes the potential impacts the proposed project would have on vehicle traffic and transportation.

What was studied?

The study examined the proposed project to determine if any of the following impacts were present:

- Increase in the average time that a vehicle must wait before moving through an intersection
- Increase in the length of the line of cars waiting to cross the intersection
- The temporary increase in truck traffic on area roadways during construction

What was the study area?

- Roads and intersections that construction vehicles would use to access the proposed project and wetland mitigation sites as well as the proposed haul routes to dispose of debris (see Figure 3.16-1 of the draft EIS)
- Roadway intersections and at-grade railroad crossings that could be affected by an increase in train traffic on the rail corridor (Anacortes and Bellingham subdivisions) (see Figure 3.16-2 and 3.16-3 of the draft EIS)
- Eight state highway at-grade crossings along the rail corridor that are considered sensitive to increases in rail traffic (see Figure 3.16-5 of the draft EIS)

See the Proposed Project Fact Sheet for a map of the site.

An **at-grade crossing** is defined as a junction or intersection where two or more transport axes cross at the same level or grade.

How were impacts on vehicle traffic and transportation analyzed?

Overall, 49 intersections, 12 at-grade rail crossings, and eight rail/state highway crossings were analyzed to determine traffic volumes and movements (the number of vehicles making left or right turns or passing through an intersection). The analysis

modeled current (2016), opening year (2018), and future (2038) conditions. The study calculated the average time that a vehicle must wait before moving through an intersection and the length of the line of cars waiting to cross the intersection. The study used the worst-case assumption; that the train would travel through the study area during the evening rush hour.

What are the potential impacts?

Construction Impacts

Short-term impacts on vehicular transportation would occur during proposed project construction. Construction activities would result in up to an additional 652 vehicles per day on local roads for the seven-month excavation period, and up to an additional 203 vehicles per day on local roads for the 15-month nonexcavation period. These additional vehicles would degrade the level of service at the SR 20 / Oak Harbor / SR 20 Spur intersection at Sharpes Corner.

Operation Impacts

During operations, the proposed project would add six unit trains in each direction per week, on average, through the study area. This would result in delays at at-grade crossings. However, no significant impacts are anticipated because the crossing blockage time of 8 minutes is less than the maximum allowed blockage time of 10 consecutive minutes (WAC 480-62-220).



A vehicle waiting for a train to pass at Pease Road and E. Whitmarsh Road

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project, combined with the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, would have a cumulative impact on traffic delays at at-grade crossing along the rail corridor (Bellingham Subdivision). One identified reasonably foreseeable future action would add a total of 18 train trips per

day to rail traffic on the Bellingham Subdivision. Combined with the proposed project, this would increase the daily train volume from 21 to 41 trains per day, which would lead to additional delays at at-grade crossings. Although they would represent a small portion of existing and projected traffic, the additional proposed Shell unit trains would contribute to a cumulative impact on traffic delays.

On the rail corridor (Anacortes Subdivision), no other reasonably foreseeable future actions are associated with specific crossings or intersections. The direct impact of the proposed project is additional intersection traffic delays at crossings. There are no other reasonably foreseeable future actions on the Anacortes Subdivision, that would impact vehicle delays; therefore, the cumulative impact to intersection delays would be the same as the direct impact.

What mitigation measures are proposed?

Avoidance and Minimization

Impacts to vehicle traffic and transportation would be minimized by the implementation of the best management practices recommended as part of the Shoreline Substantial Development Permit. For example, degradation of the level of service at the SR 20 / Oak Harbor / SR 20 Spur intersection at Sharpes Corner would be minimized by the following measures:

- Making arrangements for vanpools, or providing incentives for carpools among construction employees
- Encouraging construction employees to arrive and depart at variable times
- Switching start and end shift times to time periods outside of the AM and PM peak periods

In addition, Shell has incorporated engineering and operational measures into the design of the proposed project to avoid and minimize impacts to vehicle traffic and transportation.

Mitigation

The proposed project, when considered with other reasonably foreseeable future projects, would increase delays at at-grade crossings along the rail corridor (Anacortes and Bellingham subdivisions). This potential cumulative impact would be mitigated by:

- Shell funding a study to evaluate the feasibility of implementing signal timing revisions at at-grade crossings along the rail corridor (Bellingham and Anacortes subdivisions in Skagit County). Revisions to the timing of traffic signals can reduce the time for trips through the

intersection, thereby reducing overall delays. If the revisions are feasible, and the jurisdiction agrees, Shell would provide the funding for implementation.

CROSSINGS THAT WOULD BE ANALYZED IF THE JURISDICTIONS AGREE:

- Christianson Road / SR 20
- LaConner Whitney Road / SR 20
- Avon Allen Road / SR 20
- Pulver Road / SR 20
- Old Hwy 99 North / Cook Road
- Garrett Road / I-5 Southbound Ramp / SR 20
- North Burlington Boulevard / SR 20 / Fairhaven Avenue
- South Burlington Boulevard / SR 20 / Rio Vista Avenue
- I-5 Southbound Ramps / SR 538
- I-5 Northbound Ramps / SR 538
- Riverside Drive / SR 538
- 3rd Street / Kincaid Street
- I-5 Northbound Ramps / East Kincaid Street

Recommended signal timing revisions to the intersections would be prepared in a report format and would be submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation and the appropriate local jurisdictions for review and comment. Staff at these agencies would provide comments and decide upon implementation.

Are there unavoidable significant adverse impacts?

Implementation of signal timing revisions would not completely mitigate traffic delays at at-grade crossings. However, this is not considered an unavoidable significant adverse impact from the proposed project as Shell unit trains would only represent a small portion of the existing and projected rail traffic that would lead to the additional traffic delays.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOPIC?

Chapter 3.16 – Vehicle Traffic and Transportation of the draft EIS

The information in this fact sheet summarizes content from the draft Environmental Impact Statement; please review the full document for more detailed and complete information.

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