

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE LYNNWOOD LINK EXTENSION



Table of Contents

1 Decision	1
1.1 Project Description	2
1.2 Basis for the FHWA Decision.....	7
1.2.1 Planning and Project Development Process.....	8
1.2.2 Purpose and Need	8
1.2.3 Mitigation – for Permanent Impacts	8
1.2.4 Mitigation for Construction Impacts	8
2 Monitoring and Enforcement	9
3 Opportunities to Comment	10
3.1 Final EIS Comments.....	10
4 Determination and Findings	10

List of Figures

Figure 1. Project by Segment	4
Figure 2: IJR Areas	6

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DOT	Department of Transportation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
I-5	Interstate 5
IJR	Interchange Justification Report
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
ROD	Record of Decision
Sound Transit	Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

1 DECISION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as the federal lead agency, completed its Record of Decision (ROD) for the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority's (Sound Transit) Lynnwood Link Light Rail Transit Project in the cities of Seattle, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood, in King and Snohomish Counties, Washington. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as a cooperating agency under NEPA, issues this ROD to address FHWA's anticipated approval actions related to elements of the project affecting interstate right-of-way, including: an Interchange Justification Report (IJR); an airspace lease/cooperative agreement for use of interstate right-of-way; breaks in access, including those determined necessary during the design process, as well as those requested during construction; and an operations and maintenance agreement related to interstate right-of-way use.

This ROD is based on the review and independent evaluation of the planning and environmental process followed by FTA and Sound Transit that involved numerous cooperating and participating agencies, listed below, in developing project alternatives and evaluating their effects.

Lead Agency

Federal Transit Administration
Sound Transit

Cooperating Agencies

Washington State Department
of Transportation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
City of Edmonds
City of Lynnwood
City of Mountlake Terrace
City of Seattle
City of Shoreline
King County
Snohomish County

Participating Agencies

Department of Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
Homeland Security/Transportation Security
Administration
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Federal Railroad Administration
National Park Service
Seattle City Light
Washington Department of Archaeology
and Historic Preservation
Washington Department of Fish and
Wildlife
Washington Department of Ecology
Puget Sound Regional Council
Community Transit
Everett Transit
City of Mill Creek

This process has produced the *Lynnwood Link Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (July 2, 2013), the *Lynnwood Link Extension Final Environmental Impact Statement* (April 1, 2015), and the *Federal Transit Administration's Record of Decision* (July 10, 2015) and has led to the determinations made herein (collectively referred to as the "environmental review documents").

The Lynnwood Link Extension Project is described in the final environmental impact statement (EIS), approved by the FTA on March 16, 2015 and issued on April 1, 2015. FHWA served as a cooperating agency on the EIS and provided input during its development, including extensive written comments that were submitted on the administrative version of the Draft EIS and comments specific to interstate safety and operations on the administrative version of the Final EIS. FHWA has conducted an independent review of the Final EIS and concluded that our comments have been satisfied or will be addressed during final design activities. Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3, FHWA hereby adopts the Lynnwood Link Extension FEIS as it relates to the FHWA's decisions, which are detailed above. The FEIS Notice of Availability appeared in the Federal Register on April 3, 2015.

FTA, as the federal lead agency, completed its Record of Decision for the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority's (Sound Transit) Lynnwood Link Extension Light Rail Transit Project on July 10, 2015. With their Record of Decision, FTA issued its finding that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have been satisfied for the construction and operation of the Lynnwood Link Extension by Sound Transit Light Rail Project. FHWA, as a cooperating agency under NEPA, has prepared this ROD for elements of the project affecting interstate right-of-way requiring FHWA approvals. The Lynnwood Link Extension Project will affect I-5 in the cities of Seattle, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace, and Lynnwood in King and Snohomish Counties, Washington.

Based on its consideration of the environmental review documents FHWA finds that the project has met applicable NEPA requirements related to FHWA approvals.

1.1 Project Description

The Lynnwood Link Extension will extend the Sound Transit Link light rail system from Northgate in Seattle north into Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace, and Lynnwood in Snohomish County. The 8.5-mile project corridor generally follows Interstate 5 (I-5), the major north-south freeway through the state and the primary route serving a large commuter market in one of the most densely developed urbanized areas in the Pacific Northwest. Figure 1 shows the project by segment.

The project approved in FTA's ROD is substantially the same as the Preferred Alternative evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

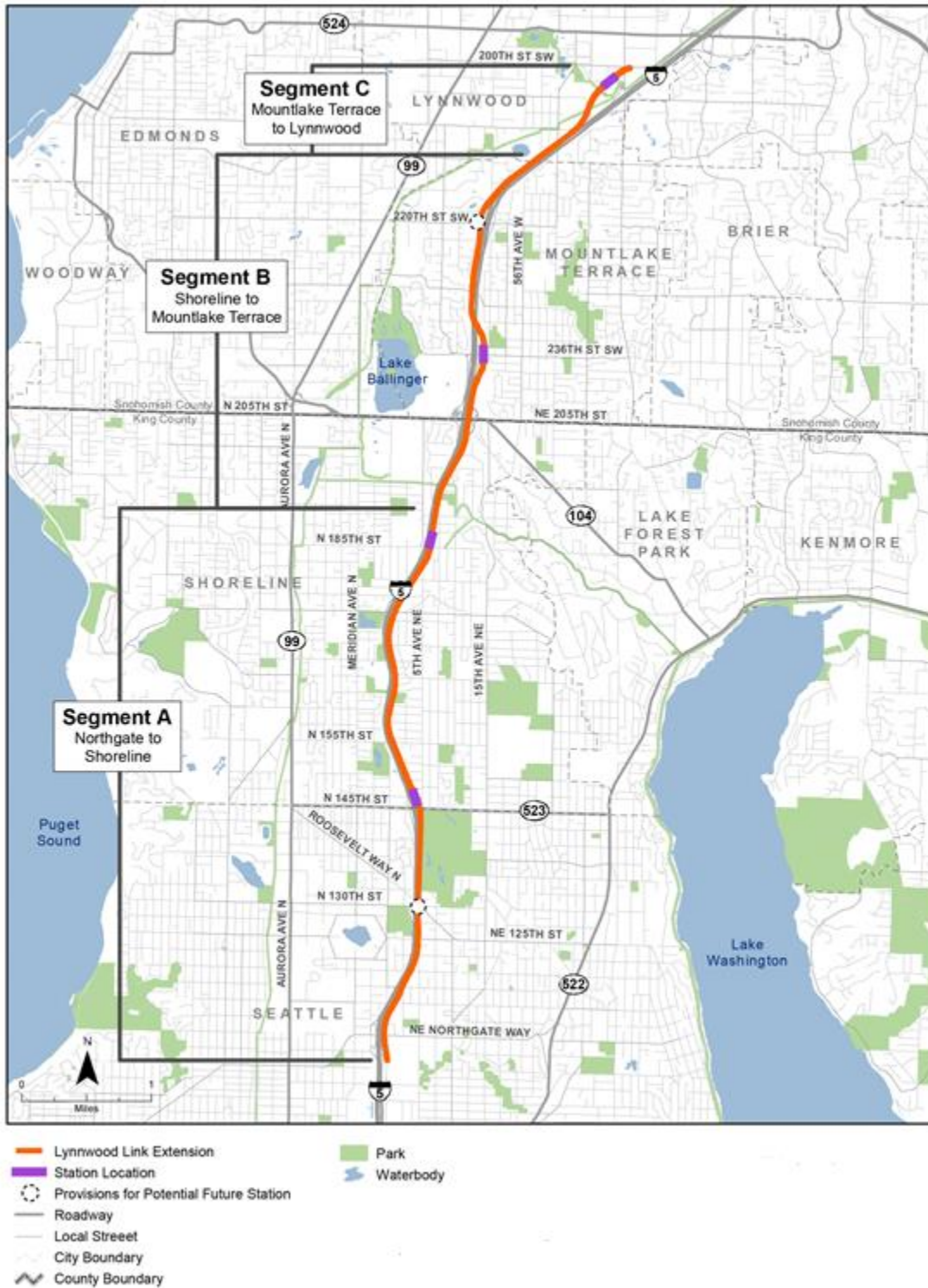
The final alignment selected in FTA's ROD differs from that of the Final EIS Preferred Alternative in these respects:

- Segment A – The project would cross over NE 130th Street on elevated structure, rather than in a retained cut, and it would not rebuild the NE 130th Street Bridge and ramps. In the area approaching NE 130th Street, the guideway alignment is designed without horizontal and vertical curves and with sufficient space to accommodate a potential future elevated station at NE 130th Street. The project includes underground work such as providing utilities and conduit for a potential future station to avoid major excavation and substantial disruption to future light rail operations.
- Segment B – In the area approaching 220th Street SW, the guideway alignment is designed without horizontal and vertical curves and with sufficient space to accommodate a potential future elevated station near 220th Street SW. The project

includes underground work such as providing utilities and conduit for a potential future station to avoid major excavation and substantial disruption to future light rail operations. The potential future station near 220th Street SW would include a 200-space surface parking lot to the west. The project would not modify the I-5 southbound on- and off-ramps.

For additional information please see the FTA ROD issued on July 10, 2015.

Figure 1. Project by Segment



Segment A

The route will begin on an elevated guideway at the terminus of the Northgate Link Extension. It will cross over 1st Avenue NE, enter the I-5 right-of-way, continue on an elevated guideway over NE Northgate Way adjacent to the east side of I-5, and proceed in a combination of retained cut, retained fill, and elevated structures. It will continue along the east side of I-5, partially in the interstate right-of-way and partially on adjacent properties, crossing over NE 130th Street to NE 145th Street. The guideway will be designed to accommodate a potential future elevated station at NE 130th Street.

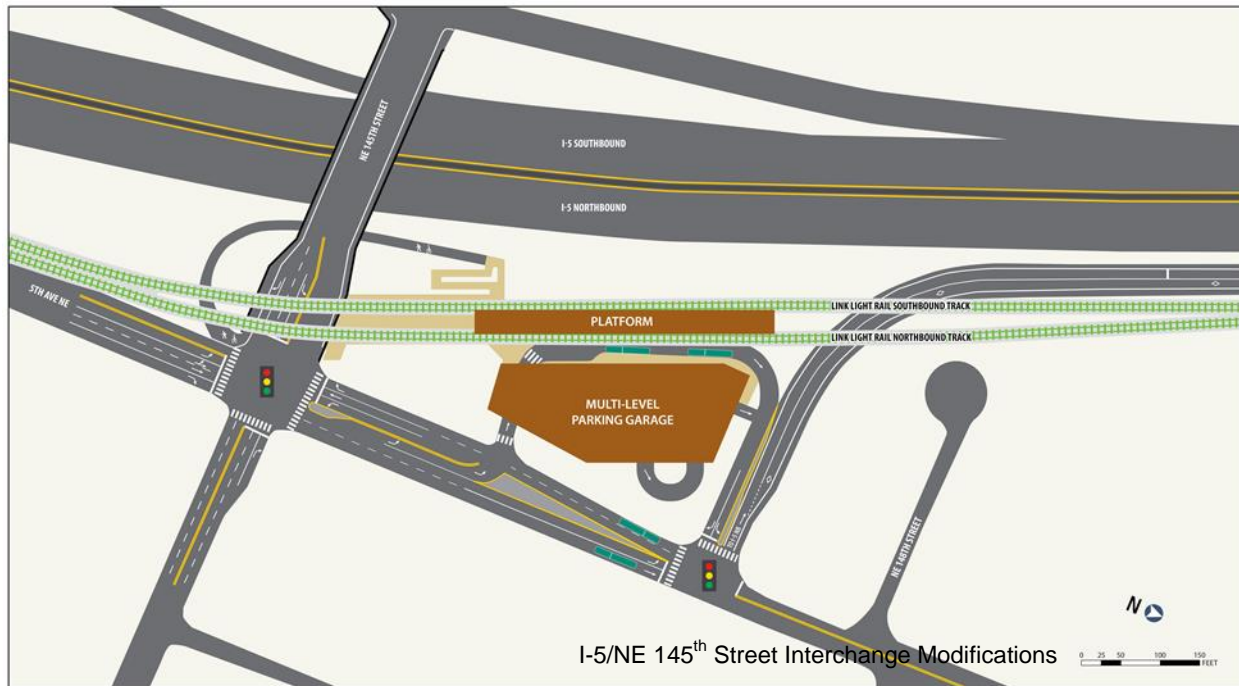
The route will have an elevated station just north of NE 145th Street, with an approximately 500-stall parking garage and bus transfer facilities. The project will provide intersection improvements in the station area to include turn lanes and street and signalization improvements (see Figure 2 below). The project includes:

- Improvements to the 145th NE Street and 5th Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE and NE 148th Street intersections;
- A driveway on 5th Avenue NE into the parking garage/bus facility;
- An exit from the parking garage/bus facility on 5th Avenue NE;
- A new signalized intersection for the I-5 northbound on-ramp from 5th Avenue NE; and
- Reconfiguration of the northbound I-5 on-ramp to accommodate the station, garage, and bus facilities.

The route will continue along the east side of I-5 to NE 185th Street, as before in a combination of retained cut, retained fill, and elevated structures, partially in the interstate right-of-way and partially on adjacent properties.

For I-5 near the NE 145th Street interchange, these improvements will result in the same or better conditions than would occur with the No Build Alternative. Sound Transit will be responsible for implementing these improvements, or other improvements as agreed to by the local jurisdictions, WSDOT, and FHWA, prior to Lynnwood Link Extension opening service.

Figure 2: IJR Areas



There will be a retained cut station and bus transfer facilities just north of NE 185th Street and east of I-5. An approximately 500-stall parking garage will be provided in the interstate right-of-way on the west side of I-5. Sound Transit will improve pedestrian connections between the station and garage, either on or adjacent to the existing NE 185th Street Bridge over I-5.

Segment B

The route will proceed along the east side of I-5 in a combination of retained cut, retained fill, and elevated structures, partially in the interstate right-of-way and partially on adjacent properties, to the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center at 236th Street SW. The existing transit center will be reconfigured to accommodate an elevated station bridging over 236th Street SW.

The route will continue on an elevated guideway and cross to the west side of I-5 north of the existing in-line station at Mountlake Terrace. It will then proceed in a combination of retained cut, retained fill, and elevated structures over 220th Street SW, partially in the interstate right-of-way and partially on adjacent properties. The guideway will be designed to accommodate a potential future elevated station near 220th Street SW with a 200-space surface parking lot to the west.

Segment C

The route will proceed along the west side of I-5 in a combination of retained cut, retained fill, and elevated structures to approximately 50th Avenue W, where it will turn north to cross over the Interurban Trail and Scriber Creek on an elevated guideway and enter the Lynnwood Park-and-Ride lot.

The terminus will have an elevated station and an adjacent parking garage with about 1300 stalls, which will increase total Lynnwood Park-and-Ride capacity to approximately 1,900 stalls. Elevated tail tracks for train layover and turn-back operations will extend beyond the station and over 44th Avenue W.

1.2 Basis for the FHWA Decision

FHWA's approval actions are needed to support FTA's Lynnwood Link project as documented in the DEIS, FEIS, and this ROD. For information on the basis for FTA's decision in selecting an alternative, please see FTA's ROD. As a cooperating agency, the decisions in this ROD are limited to those supporting FHWA's future approval actions for the Lynnwood Link Project.

The Lynnwood Link Extension Project Final EIS provides the transportation analysis to support FHWA decisions and it will be used as a basis for FHWA approvals necessary for the project. Additional information may be developed during final design to supplement the information in the Final EIS. FHWA approvals that will be required for Lynnwood Link Extension include:

- Interchange Justification Report (IJR), which contains the traffic, safety and operational analysis necessary for FHWA's approval of the change in access to the Interstate System at NE 145th Street. The IJR improvements are shown in Figure 2
- Airspace Lease/Cooperative Agreement to authorize Sound Transit's use of Interstate Right-of-Way
- Breaks-in-access occur when the light rail enters or exits the I-5 right-of-way. Approvals will include those breaks determined necessary during the design process as well as those requested during Construction
- Operations and Maintenance Agreement
- Design Approval
- Project Development Approval
- Interstate Design Standard Deviations, as needed

Chapter 3 and the Transportation Technical Report of the Final EIS contain analyses and results related to regional travel, transit service, highway operations and safety, arterials and local streets, non-motorized facilities, and freight mobility and access. The Final EIS also includes analysis of the project's consistency with regional land use and transportation plans. In addition, FHWA, FTA, WSDOT, and Sound Transit are working cooperatively to complete the Final IJR that will be approved after this ROD. On August 5, 2015, FHWA provided WSDOT a Finding of Engineering and Operational Acceptability.

The Lynnwood Link Extension Project would be accommodated within part of the I-5 right-of-way; modify the northbound on-ramp at the NE 145th interchange to accommodate a station and the light rail track; and require breaks in the limited access line since the light rail will not be fully built within I-5 right of way. These modifications are fully described in the Final EIS and the Final I-5 Interchange Justification Report for the NE 145th Interchange.

FHWA, as a cooperating agency under NEPA, and as the federal agency responsible for the anticipated project approvals noted above, has considered the findings in the Final EIS related to elements of the Lynnwood Link Extension Project affecting Interstate right-of-way.

1.2.1 Planning and Project Development Process

The FTA ROD includes detailed information on the planning and project development process.

1.2.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Lynnwood Link Extension is to expand the Sound Transit Link light rail system from Northgate in Seattle north into Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace, and Lynnwood in Snohomish County. Further details on the project are provided in the FTA ROD.

1.2.3 Mitigation – for Permanent Impacts

The following mitigation measures are applicable where the project either affects Interstate right-of-way, or that would be implemented within Interstate right-of-way. The following list clarifies certain mitigation measures for visual and aesthetic resources listed in Appendix B of the FTA ROD:

- Sound Transit will avoid removing trees as much as practical. Where trees are removed, Sound Transit will comply with tree replacement and landscaping policies of WSDOT and local jurisdictions.
- Sound Transit will develop a Roadside Master Plan, in accordance with WSDOT guidelines, for the portion of the route within the I-5 right-of-way,
- Sound Transit will replace converted federally designated highway Beautification Areas (also known as Resource Conservation Areas) with replacement property along I-5, or with other measures as agreed by WSDOT and FHWA. Replacement parcels will meet the intended function of the original Beautification Area/Resource Conservation Area.

In addition to the complete list of mitigation measures in Appendix B of the FTA ROD, the following mitigation is required by FHWA:

- If pedestrian accommodation at NE 185th Street is proposed by widening the existing bridge, the widening will meet Interstate vertical clearance standards.
- Sound Transit will coordinate project design with WSDOT and FHWA to avoid conflicts with culvert replacement and retrofit projects on I-5 needed to improve fish passage.
- Sound Transit will coordinate with WSDOT to design the project so as not to restrict WSDOT inspection of highway structures.

1.2.4 Mitigation for Construction Impacts

The following mitigation measures are applicable where the project either affects interstate right-of-way, or would be implemented within Interstate right-of-way. This list is a subset of mitigation listed in Appendix B of the FTA ROD:

- Sound Transit will mitigate the temporary loss of parking at park-and-ride lots through one or more of the following, determined in consultation with local jurisdictions, facility owners, and involved transit agencies:
 - Implement service increases or other measures to encourage transit trips that do not require automobile access.
 - Redirect transit riders that use these locations to other nearby park-and-ride lots.
 - Develop temporary parking for transit riders to use during construction.

- Build new park-and-ride spaces before removing existing spaces.
- Lease parking lots and/or new parking areas near the closed park-and-ride lots
- As part of the WSDOT and FHWA approval process for construction within I-5 right-of-way and to minimize safety and operational impacts during construction, Sound Transit will obtain WSDOT and FHWA approval of the project's Maintenance of Traffic plan for I-5.
- Sound Transit will coordinate construction with incident management, construction staging, and traffic control in places where the light rail construction will affect freeway traffic or involve changes to the roadside environment. Sound Transit will also coordinate with WSDOT to disseminate construction closure information to the public as needed.
- Sound Transit will develop and implement construction mitigation plans in coordination with local jurisdictions during the final design and permitting. Where conditions on arterials may affect freeway operations, Sound Transit will also coordinate with WSDOT. To mitigate impacts to arterials and local streets, Sound Transit will:
 - Develop the Maintenance of Traffic plan to conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and jurisdictional agency requirements for traffic control.
 - Use lighted or reflective signage to direct drivers to truck haul routes to ensure visibility during nighttime work hours.
 - Use temporary reflective truck prohibition signs on streets with a high likelihood of cut-through truck traffic.
 - Communicate public information about construction activities through tools such as print, radio, posted signs, Web sites, email and direct communication with other agencies and affected parties; ongoing communications will update interested parties regarding street or freeway lane closures, detours, hours of construction, business access, and parking impacts.
 - In areas with high levels of traffic congestion, schedule traffic lane closures and high volumes of construction traffic during off-peak hours to minimize delays where practical.
- Sound Transit will coordinate with freight stakeholder groups by providing construction information to WSDOT for use in the state's freight notification system. Sound Transit will provide information in a format required by WSDOT.

In addition to the mitigation listed in FTA's ROD, the following mitigation is required by FHWA:

- Sound Transit will prohibit contractor employee vehicles from parking within work zones that are accessed only from the I-5 mainline.
- Sound Transit will ensure construction activities on I-5 will adhere to Interstate vertical clearance standards.
- Sound Transit will compensate WSDOT for any direct costs associated with use of the freight notification system for Lynnwood Link Extension construction.

2 MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

To ensure compliance with required mitigation and to assist with FHWA oversight, Sound Transit will establish a mitigation monitoring program for the project that will track, monitor, and report the status of the environmental mitigation actions identified in the ROD to FTA on a quarterly schedule. This monitoring program will be approved by

FTA and may, upon FTA approval, be revised as necessary during the permitting process in order to implement mitigation measures during final design and construction.

If any additional monitoring is requested as a result of FHWA approval actions, FHWA will specify the specific conditions in the approval documentation associated with the approval action.

3 OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT

Since the Lynnwood Link Extension was initiated in 2010, Sound Transit and FTA have provided frequent opportunities for interested members of the public, agencies, and tribes to engage, share concerns, and discuss specific project details with Sound Transit staff. Public involvement activities to date have included public, agency, and tribal meetings; online meetings; stakeholder briefings; rotating information kiosks in the community; email subscription list; project Web site; printed materials; and resident, business, and property owner contacts. For more information, see the FTA ROD and Chapter 6, Public Involvement and Agency Coordination, in the Final EIS.

3.1 Final EIS Comments

In the 30 days following the April 3, 2015 announcement of availability of the Final EIS in the Federal Register, Sound Transit and FTA received five letters with comments. FHWA did not receive any comments regarding the project.

The comments FTA received primarily focused on matters related to features of the Preferred Alternative, and some encouraged further consideration of options that could reduce impacts. None of the letters contested the accuracy of the information in the Final EIS.

Responses to all comments received are included in FTA's Record of Decision.

4 DETERMINATION AND FINDINGS

FTA, as the federal lead agency, found that the Project has met all applicable standards and that all NEPA requirements have been met, as documented in FTA's Record of Decision. FTA's Record of Decision includes discussion of determinations and findings related to:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes
- Executive Order 12372 Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act and Executive Order 11990 on Protection of Wetlands
- Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 402
- Coastal Zone Management Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
- Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, Section 6(f)
- Americans with Disabilities Act and Architectural Barriers Act
- Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management
- Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act

FTA has completed a Section 4(f) Evaluation for this project. All of the FHWA approvals for this project relate to the portions of the project occurring within the Interstate ROW, and there are no Section 4(f) uses related to the FHWA approvals.

- Noise Control Act

FHWA used our policy as described in our Noise Policy Frequently Asked Questions to determine that the FHWA noise regulations (23 CFR 772) do not apply to the project because FHWA is a cooperating agency, the main transportation purpose of the project is transit related, and no highway funds are being used in the project. Per FTA's June 10, 2015 ROD, the Lynnwood Link Extension Project complied with FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration impact Assessment Guide Manual procedures to consider noise associated with the transit project and any highway elements directly affected by the project.



Daniel M. Mathis
Division Administrator
Washington Division
Federal Highway Administration



Date of Approval