FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
SR 520 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND HOV PROGRAM

DECEMBER 2010

SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Washington State
Department of Transportation

Executive Summary

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAD	computer-aided design
CD	compact disc
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CTC	Concrete Technology Corporation, Inc.
DAHP	Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
EIS	environmental impact statement
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	geographic information system
HOV	High-Occupancy Vehicle
IDD #1	Port of Grays Harbor Industrial Development District #1
NAD 83	North American Datum of 1983
NAVD88	North American Vertical Datum of 1988
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PCPACT	SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project Agency Coordination Team
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SR 520 Program	State Route 520 Bridge Replacement and High-Occupancy Vehicle Program
SR	state route
USDA-FSA	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

Introduction

In 2006, with the State Route (SR) 520 Evergreen Point Bridge nearing the end of its useful life and vulnerable to catastrophic failure, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) began preparing for a possible failure of the floating portion of the bridge before its planned replacement. As part of the process, these agencies identified measures that might speed up replacing the floating bridge should a catastrophic failure occur and determined that building new pontoons would require the longest lead time of any single activity related to bridge replacement.

WSDOT and FHWA propose building a new pontoon construction facility and then constructing pontoons needed to replace the Evergreen Point Bridge in its current configuration. No marine facilities are available in the Pacific Northwest where these pontoons could be built expeditiously (in less than 12 years). A new, larger facility would allow WSDOT to construct several large pontoons at the same time and complete all pontoons in 3 to 4 years.

This executive summary of the *SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project Final Environmental Impact Statement* (Final EIS) provides an overview of the proposed project, including the project description and key findings. Readers should refer to the Final EIS and appendices for more detailed, complete information on the project (see the enclosed CD). To help readers understand how this summary corresponds to the Final EIS, exhibits in this summary are numbered the same as they are in the Final EIS.

In 2006, a windstorm led to the closure of the Evergreen Point Bridge during the peak afternoon traffic period.

What is the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project's relationship to the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program?

The SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is one of four projects in the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program. Listed below are the other three projects:

- **SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.** Improvements to SR 520 from I-5 to Medina, including replacing Portage Bay and Evergreen Point bridges.
- **SR 520, Medina to SR 202: Eastside Transit and HOV Project.** Improvements to SR 520 from Medina to SR 202 in Redmond.
- **SR 520 Variable Tolling Project.** Installation of variable tolling on SR 520 across Lake Washington.

What is the proposed project?

The proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is one of four projects in the proposed SR 520 Bridge Replacement and High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Program (SR 520 Program), which is a collection of roadway improvements designed to improve mobility and enhance safety throughout the SR 520 corridor and improve operations on SR 520 and surrounding highways. The SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project involves building 33 pontoons needed to replace the Evergreen Point Bridge in its current configuration as a four-lane bridge. To accomplish this, WSDOT would build a new facility for pontoon construction in Grays Harbor, Washington. The project also includes storing all pontoons until they are needed. If the floating section of the Evergreen Point Bridge did not fail due to a catastrophic event, then all pontoons built during the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project would be stored and then could be used for the proposed SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. Exhibit 1-3 shows the general location of these proposed sites within the region.

Exhibit 1-3. **Proposed Pontoon Construction Facility Sites**

These pontoons were under construction for the now-completed SR 104 Hood Canal Bridge Project.

(Note: WSDOT considered the option of using the Concrete Technology Corporation, Inc. [CTC] facility in Tacoma. However, this option is not part of either build alternative described later in this Executive Summary. See details about this option under *What is the CTC facility option?)*

WSDOT would construct a separate casting basin on Grays Harbor large enough to allow multiple large pontoons to be built at the same time. This new facility would produce 23 large pontoons and 10 small pontoons, which would be moored in Grays Harbor.

A casting basin is a construction facility built on a navigable waterway (such as Puget Sound or Grays Harbor) consisting of a concrete slab floor and built partially or entirely below ground level. When pontoons are cast and fully cured, the casting basin would be gradually flooded until the pontoons float. Next, a gate separating the casting basin from the waterway would open and the pontoons would be towed from the basin out into navigable waters for mooring until needed. For a general idea of what the proposed casting basin could look like, Exhibit 1-1 depicts a cross-section of a conceptual casting basin with pontoons, and Exhibit 1-2 shows a three-dimensional overview.

WSDOT has extensive experience constructing pontoons in a casting basin; they have used this proven method for building other floating bridge pontoons. WSDOT engineers have a high level of confidence that building pontoons in a casting basin would proceed efficiently, with a low risk of delays and unforeseen costs.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is to accomplish the following: (1) expedite construction of the pontoons needed to replace the existing traffic capacity of the Evergreen Point Bridge, if a catastrophic event occurs, and (2) store these pontoons in case they are needed for catastrophic failure response or until they are incorporated into the proposed SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

A secondary purpose of the proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is to ensure access to the proposed facility if it were needed to build pontoons for unforeseen WSDOT floating bridge repairs or replacements

Why is the project needed?

The proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is needed now to shorten the time required to replace the Evergreen Point Bridge if the bridge were ever damaged beyond repair. If pontoons were not built and ready for emergency bridge replacement, then WSDOT would need 5 years to reconstruct the floating bridge. With the SR 520

Pontoon Construction Project completed, WSDOT could replace the bridge in just 1.5 years.

The Evergreen Point Bridge is a critical component of the Puget Sound region's transportation infrastructure; currently, about 115,000 vehicles cross the bridge each day. A long-term bridge closure would impair moving goods (such as merchandise to stock retail stores) and people (such as employees traveling to work) across Lake Washington. Travel times, miles traveled, and travel costs would increase as cars, trucks, and buses switch to alternate routes, thereby causing a domino effect of increased congestion on other roads across and around the lake.

The pontoons that support the existing Evergreen Point Bridge have approximately 6,000 linear feet of cracks, which decrease the bridge's structural integrity. Although WSDOT made repairs to the bridge between 1993 and 1999, the life and strength of these repairs are limited by the capacity of the original pontoons, inadequate pontoon floatation, and cumulative storm damage sustained by the bridge since it opened in 1963. These safety and maintenance improvements do not provide sufficient protection during major windstorms

Exhibit 1-1. **Casting Basin with Pontoons Conceptual Cross-Section Design**

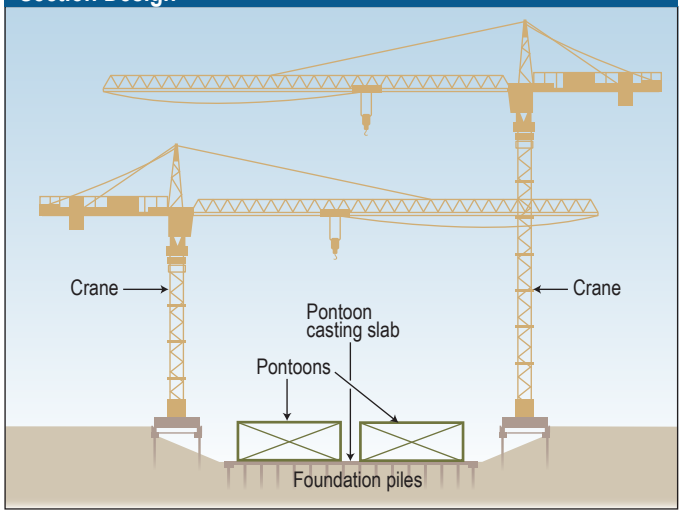
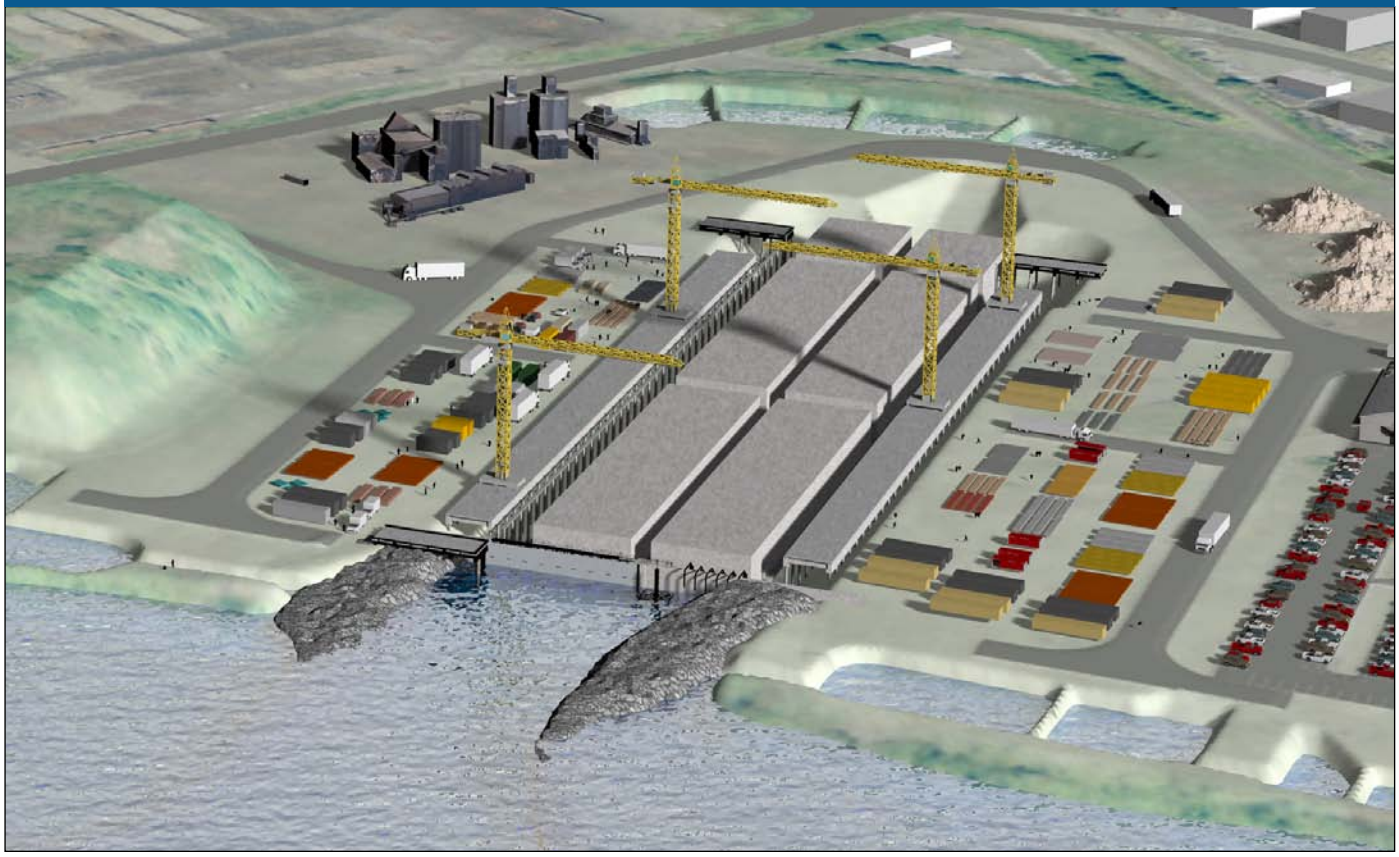


Exhibit 1-2. **Casting Basin Three-Dimensional Overview**



When would construction begin, and how long would it take to build all the pontoons?

WSDOT anticipates that pontoon construction activities at either proposed casting basin facility in Grays Harbor would begin in summer of 2011. The current schedule shows that WSDOT would finish building all 33 pontoons for this project in 2014. WSDOT anticipates that approximately 5 months would be needed to complete each pontoon construction cycle. Exhibit 1-4 shows the proposed project construction schedule

What project alternatives is WSDOT evaluating in the Final EIS?

The Final EIS evaluates three alternatives:

- Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (in Aberdeen, Washington), the Preferred Alternative
- Anderson & Middleton Alternative (in Hoquiam, Washington)
- No Build Alternative

The two Grays Harbor build alternatives propose the same actions, which are listed below:

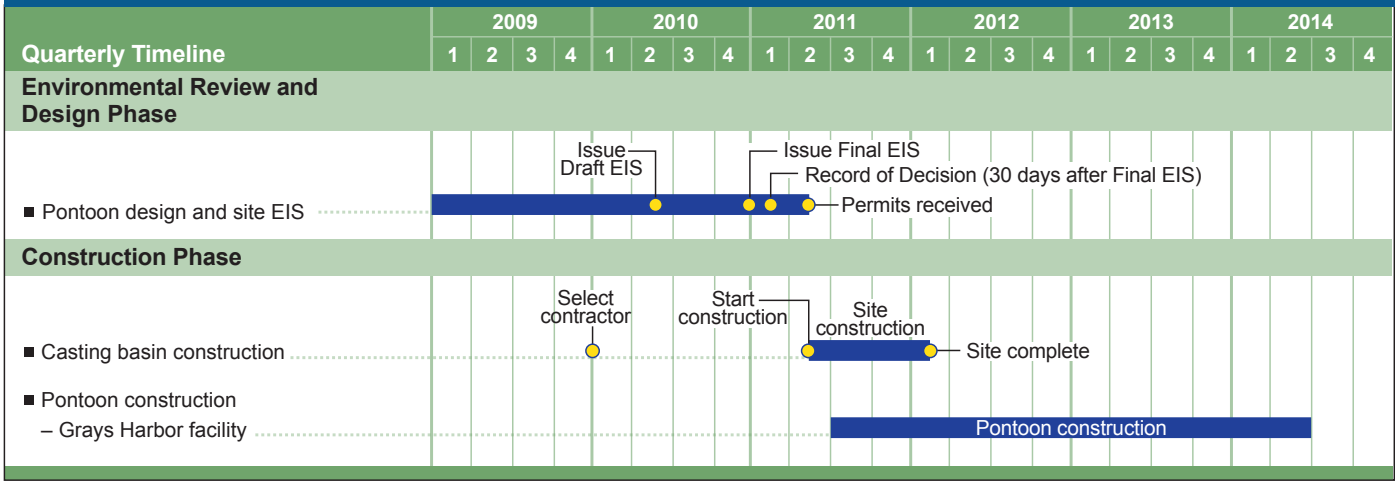
- Constructing a new casting basin facility
- Constructing the 33 pontoons needed to replace the existing capacity of the Evergreen Point Bridge

WSDOT has discovered and repaired cracks in the Evergreen Point Bridge pontoons.

- Storing the 33 pontoons built for this project
- Transporting pontoons from the casting basin to approved moorage locations in Grays Harbor
- Maintaining the Grays Harbor casting basin facility while owned and operated by WSDOT

The differences between the two build alternatives are their locations, their physical characteristics, and jurisdictional regulations that would apply to the sites (that is, City of Hoquiam versus City of Aberdeen). The design of the proposed Grays Harbor casting basin would be the same at both alternative sites, with variations depending on site-specific features (such as geology and soil characteristics),

Exhibit 1-4. **Proposed Pontoons Construction Project Schedule**



shoreline characteristics, site geometry, adjacent truck haul routes, and different municipal codes and requirements. With either alternative, the construction phase would involve building the new casting basin on Grays Harbor, and the operation phase would involve building the pontoons at the new Grays Harbor facility.

What is the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)?

The 51-acre Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative site lies on the north shore of Grays Harbor in Aberdeen (Exhibit 2-2) and has recently been used for log storage. The generally flat site, which is undeveloped except for unpaved access roads, is bounded by industrial land uses to the west and east and railroad tracks along the northern boundary; the casting basin and support facilities would occupy the entire site. The shoreline at this site is a mix of small patches of vegetation, small and large rocks heavily embedded in mud, and driftwood on the face of a short berm covered with shrubs and alder saplings. WSDOT would purchase the whole property, and the casting basin and support facilities would occupy the entire site.

Project Features

Exhibit 2-3 shows the conceptual site design layout of both proposed build alternative sites on Grays Harbor. To support pontoon construction activities at the casting basin, the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative would require support facilities, such as access roads, a concrete batch plant where concrete for the casting basin and pontoons would be produced, large flat laydown areas to store and assemble pontoon construction materials, stormwater handling and water treatment areas, office space, a rail spur, and a parking area for workers. Trucks would likely be used to bring construction materials to the site and haul excavated soils and construction debris away from the site along designated haul routes (Exhibit 2-2).

The casting basin would be positioned 150 to 200 feet from the shoreline and connected to the water by a launch channel. The launch channel would consist of an onshore

Exhibit 2-2. **Project Vicinity Map**

Source: Grays Harbor County (2006) GIS Data (Waterbody and Street). Horizontal datum for all layers is State Plane Washington South NAD 83; vertical datum for layers is NAVD88.

portion excavated between the casting basin and shoreline, a breach in the shoreline berm, and a dredged channel extending offshore to deep water near the navigation channel in Grays Harbor. Completed pontoons would be stored in outer Grays Harbor outside the navigation channel until needed (see the proposed mooring location in Exhibit 2-8). Water, sanitary sewer, communication, and electrical service would be extended to serve the project site as needed, and local utility providers would provide service.

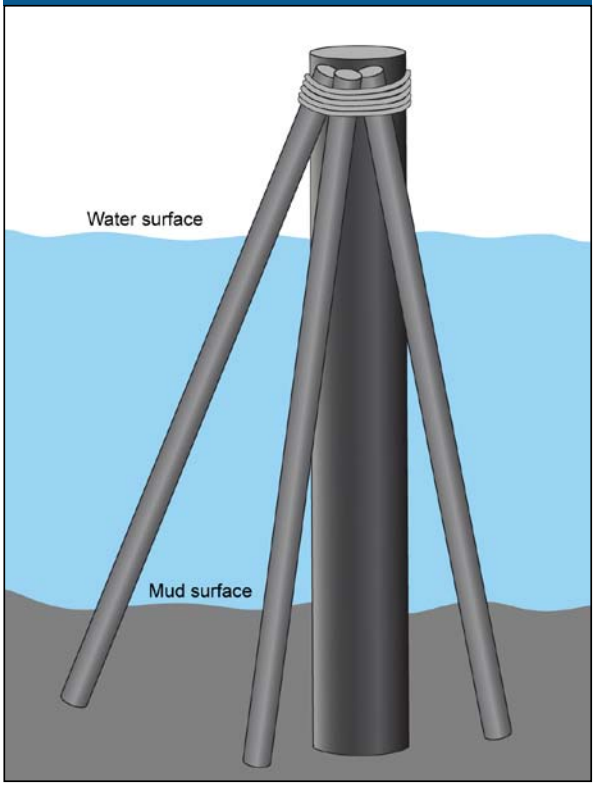
WSDOT would install a row of piles (also called pilings) connected by a steel rail on both sides of the launch channel (about 70 piles total in the launch channel) to aid in maneuvering pontoons out of the casting basin. Two turning dolphins (in-water structures used to guide ships; (see Exhibit 2-5) would be placed at the mouth of the launch channel to help maneuver the pontoons into the navigation channel.

Types of Pontoons

WSDOT would construct three types of pontoons needed for a four-lane replacement of the Evergreen Point Bridge. Exhibit 2-6 (on page 8) lists the types of pontoons to be built, how many of each would be built, and their approximate dimensions, and Exhibit 2-7 (on page 9) illustrates how these pontoons would be configured to replace the Evergreen Point Bridge in the event of catastrophic failure. Based on the current schedule for the planned bridge replacement, pontoons built at the new proposed casting basin could be stored in Grays Harbor for an estimated 1.5 years if there is no catastrophic bridge failure (see Exhibit 2-8).

Exhibit 2-3. **Conceptual Layouts for Build Alternative Site**

Exhibit 2-5. **Example Mooring Dolphin Construction**

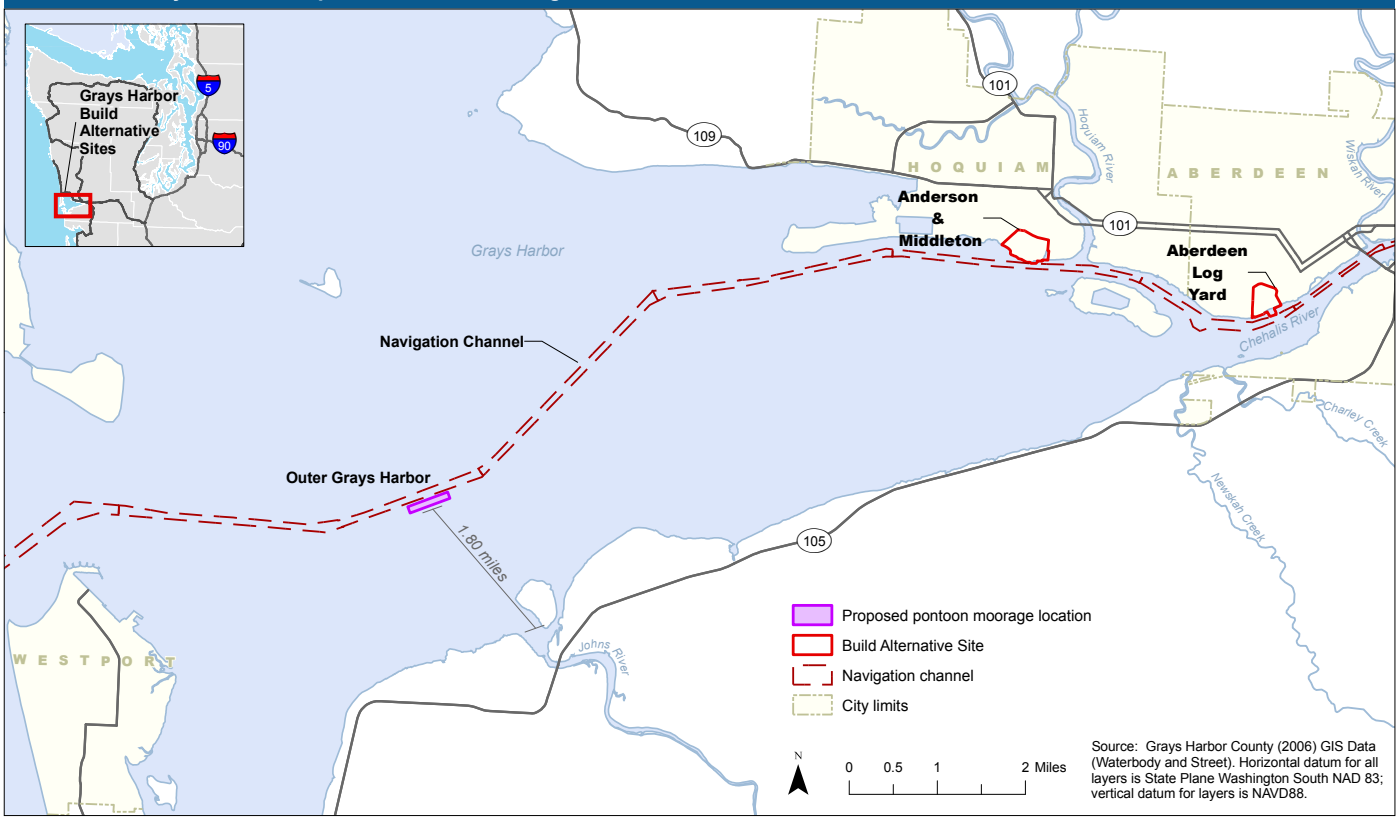


All pontoons would be anchored in at least 25 feet of water outside of maintained and marked navigation channels and identified with navigation lighting in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard requirements. The proposed Grays Harbor moorage location could moor up to 33 pontoons by rafting pontoons in groups of three and attaching them to anchors. The moored pontoon rafts would require approximately 15 acres of water surface area.

What is the Anderson & Middleton Alternative?

Exhibit 2-2 shows the location of the Anderson & Middleton Alternative site in Hoquiam. The site is surrounded by industrial land uses and is currently vacant except for a small office building on the northern edge of the property, some gravel roads, an asphalt pad, and a truck scale; a rock berm borders the shoreline of the 105-acre property. In accordance with the prepurchase agreement with the current owner, WSDOT would purchase 93 acres of this property, and the casting basin and support facilities would occupy about

Exhibit 2-8. **Grays Harbor Proposed Pontoon Moorage Location**



55 acres. The basic components of the Anderson & Middleton Alternative would be the same as described above for the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative; differences between these alternatives are described in the following section

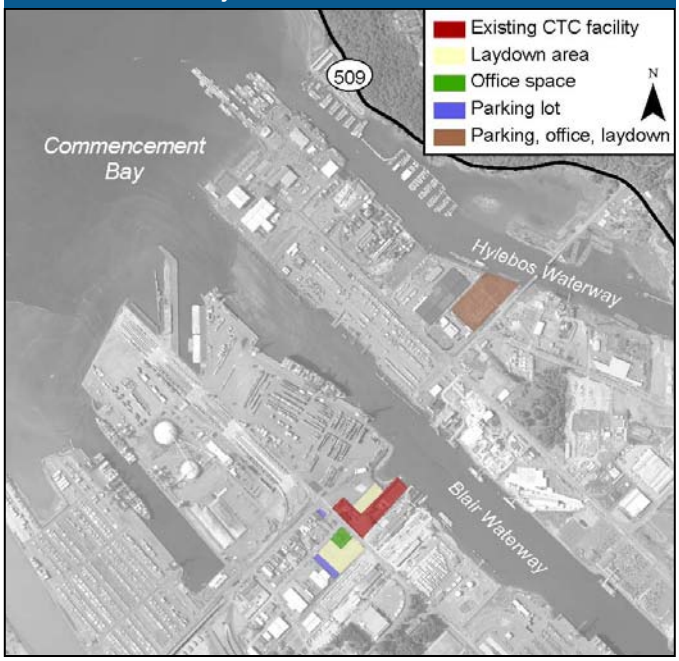
What is the CTC facility option?

WSDOT analyzed the possible use of the CTC facility in Tacoma to build additional pontoons. WSDOT has determined that the use of the CTC facility would not provide sufficient cost, schedule, and logistics advantages to support this option and meet the proposed project's purpose and need. Therefore, the CTC facility is not part of the Aberdeen Log Yard (Preferred Alternative) or the Anderson & Middleton Alternative.

Although WSDOT does not plan on using the CTC facility option at this time for the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project, if this facility were to be used in the future for pontoon-building operations, additional environmental documentation would be needed and completed. Under this option, WSDOT considered building up to ten smaller supplemental stability pontoons and up to three large longitudinal pontoons at the CTC facility. Exhibit 2-10 shows the existing CTC facility and other nearby parcels WSDOT leased to support the SR 104 Hood Canal Project pontoon construction activities at the CTC site. WSDOT would again lease those and/or other nearby properties if the CTC facility were used.

If the CTC facility is used, then WSDOT would moor pontoons built in Tacoma at existing available marine berths within Puget Sound for up to 1.5 years.

Exhibit 2-10. **Aerial view of CTC Facility as used for the Hood Canal Project**



What is the No Build Alternative?

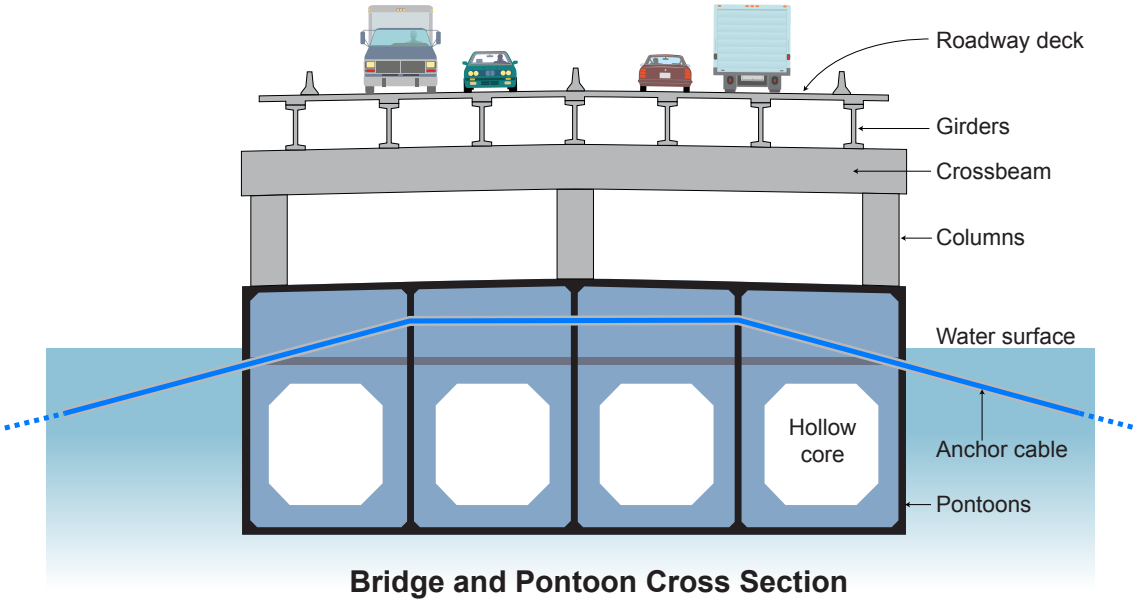
With the No Build Alternative, pontoons would not be available for catastrophic failure response, and emergency replacement of the Evergreen Point Bridge would take approximately 5 years instead of 1.5 years with the project. The consequences would be severe for regional traffic congestion and economic conditions.

WSDOT assumes that, if unused by this project, the build alternative sites would continue to be used as they are today: the Aberdeen Log Yard would remain a log yard, the Anderson & Middleton site would remain largely inactive.

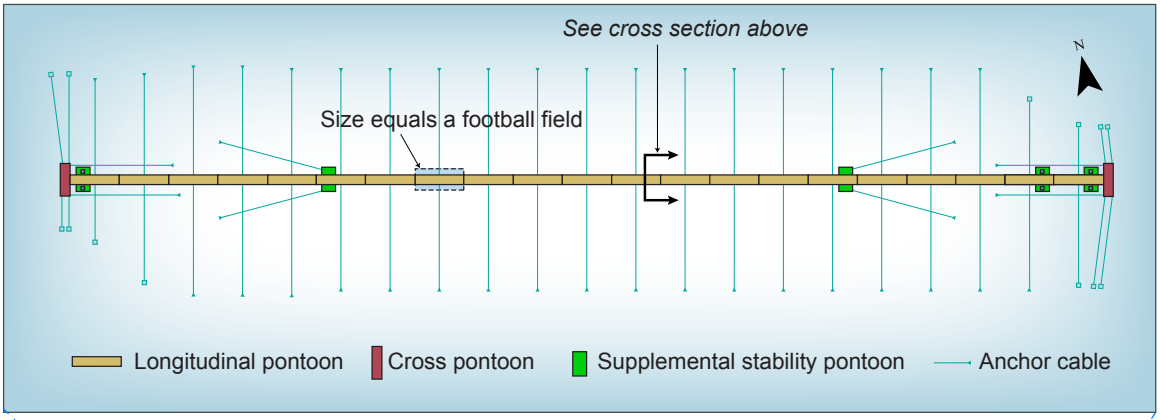
Exhibit 2-6 . **Pontoon Types, Quantity, and Approximate Dimensions**

Pontoon Type	Quantity	Width (feet)	Length (feet)	Depth (feet)	Weight (tons)
Cross (western portion of bridge)	1	75	240	34	10,100
Cross (eastern portion of bridge)	1	75	240	35	10,550
Longitudinal	21	75	360	29	11,100
Supplemental stability	10	60	98	29	2,650 to 3,000 (depending on whether an anchor cable is attached)

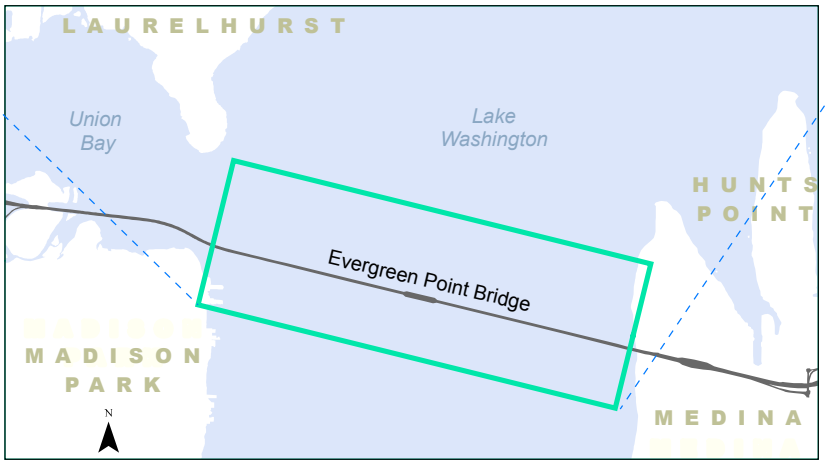
Exhibit 2-7. **Pontoon Configuration to Replace the Existing Evergreen Point Bridge**



Bridge and Pontoon Cross Section



Aerial View of Pontoon Configuration



Area of Detail

What are the primary differences between the build alternatives?

Each build alternative would require construction and design modifications tailored to the unique physical characteristics of the selected site. Exhibit 2-11 presents examples of potential construction differences based on the current preliminary design completed for each alternative analyzed in the Final EIS. For example, at the Aberdeen Log Yard site, a substantially greater volume of material would be excavated to create the pontoon launch channel. This is because the mudflats along the Aberdeen Log Yard site extend farther out from the shoreline, thus requiring a longer launch channel to reach the navigable waterway for towing pontoons. Also, the total number of piles in the launch channel would be fewer with the Anderson & Middleton Alternative (about 23 versus about 70 with the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative) because of the shorter launch channel at that site. Total loaded and unloaded truck trips for excavation, site construction, and material import and export during pontoon construction are estimated to be 192,500 for the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative and 174,200 for the Anderson & Middleton Alternative.

These total truck trips are worst-case scenario estimates used to conduct a conservative traffic analysis for local streets. A peak number of truck trips would occur during site excavation and construction. Exhibit 2-3 shows the proposed haul routes for each site; where possible, the haul routes primarily would be on established state routes.

Why did WSDOT and FHWA select the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative as the Preferred Alternative?

WSDOT and FHWA have identified the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for pontoon construction. Preliminary investigations and analyses indicate that WSDOT could build a casting basin facility at the Aberdeen Log Yard site with lower risks of effects on environmental resources and for less money than at the Anderson & Middleton site.

WSDOT and FHWA considered many factors while evaluating the two Grays Harbor build alternative sites. Preliminary analyses indicated that environmental factors at the two sites are similar. Key factors supporting the Preferred Alternative are mostly engineering-based and include cost and risks. Conceptual engineering estimates indicate that constructing a casting basin facility at the Aberdeen Log Yard site would cost notably less than at the Anderson & Middleton site. Higher development costs at the Anderson & Middleton site are associated primarily with foundation requirements. At the Aberdeen Log Yard site, shorter foundation piles could be used to reach the underlying soil layer on which the piles would rest because

Exhibit 2-11. **Examples of Potential Construction Differences between Grays Harbor Build Alternatives**

Component	Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	Anderson & Middleton Alternative
CASTING BASIN		
Approximate volume material excavated from casting basin	475,000 cubic yards	423,000 cubic yards
Average pile length	100 to 120 feet	135 to 150 feet
LAUNCH CHANNEL		
Approximate launch channel size	Onshore: 200 feet long, 63,000 square feet Offshore: 470 feet long, 125,000 square feet	Onshore: 150 feet long, 66,000 square feet Offshore: 120 feet long, 16,000 square feet
Approximate volume material excavated for launch channel	Onshore: 63,000 cubic yards Off shore: 87,000 cubic yards	Onshore: 43,900 cubic yards Offshore: 6,900 cubic yards

What is precontact?

Precontact refers to the period before European explorers and settlers established contact with the indigenous native American people who inhabited the region.

this layer as about 30 feet shallower than the comparable underlying soil layer at the Anderson & Middleton site. Since up to 2,200 piles would be needed for the proposed deep-pile foundation, shorter piles would result in substantial cost savings. Another factor contributing to higher costs with the Anderson & Middleton Alternative would be the need to install a berm or sound wall to shield adjacent residences from project-generated noise.

Dewatering at the Anderson & Middleton site could have a greater effect on adjacent wetlands because there are more than 30 acres of known wetlands adjacent to this site. Potential dewatering effects would be less of an issue at the Aberdeen Log Yard site because there is only one small area of palustrine wetlands (less than 0.5 acre) nearby this site.

Investigations to date have identified a cultural resource on the Anderson & Middleton site that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): a complex of precontact Native American fish traps. Investigations indicate that the Aberdeen Log Yard would not adversely affect any cultural resources.

What is the environmentally preferable alternative?

The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources and that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment, as expressed in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Section 101(b) (42 USC § 4331). The environmentally preferable alternative is not necessarily the same as the Preferred Alternative.

While both Grays Harbor build alternatives provide opportunities to meet NEPA requirements to protect the environment for succeeding generations, the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative would better preserve cultural and natural resources. Specifically, fewer wetlands would be eliminated by the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative than the Anderson & Middleton Alternative (1.1 acres affected, with the potential to affect less than 0.5 acre of nearby wetlands, versus 4.8 acres affected with the potential to affect over 30 acres of nearby wetlands, respectively). Although more dredging would be required for the longer launch channel at the Aberdeen Log Yard site than at the Anderson & Middleton site, WSDOT plans to compensate for the loss of intertidal zone habitat at the Grass Creek mitigation site. In addition, as noted above, the Anderson & Middleton site contains remnants of a precontact fish trap complex that WSDOT has determined—and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) has concurred—is eligible for listing in the NRHP. The Aberdeen Log Yard site does not contain historic or cultural resources that are eligible for listing on the NRHP, and the DAHP concluded that "the project will not have an adverse effect on historic properties if the Preferred Alternative is selected" (see Appendix B to Appendix I, Cultural Resources).

Also, residences adjacent to the Anderson & Middleton site would be affected by project-generated noise, and WSDOT would need to build a barrier, such as a wall or berm, to protect these residences from noise exceeding the state noise control ordinance. There are no residences near the Aberdeen Log Yard site where project-generated noise would exceed the state noise control ordinance. Therefore, WSDOT has identified the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (the Preferred Alternative) as the environmentally preferable alternative because it could better meet the criteria outlined in NEPA, Section 101(b) (42 USC § 4331).

How did WSDOT and FHWA identify candidate sites to evaluate?

The following describes the process WSDOT and FHWA used to identify the candidate casting basin facility sites:

- Distributed a request for proposals (sent to port districts, private landowners, land development companies, and tribes, and advertised in relevant media such as the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce)

WSDOT staff presented project information and answered questions at a public open house in Hoquiam.

- Solicited suggestions from expert review panels
- Conducted independent real estate property searches

Based on the project's purpose and need, WSDOT established several key criteria for identifying candidate sites for initial consideration. The search for potential casting basin facility construction sites resulted in a list of 39 candidate sites in Washington and Oregon to consider for further analysis.

How did WSDOT screen and select potential alternative sites for analysis?

WSDOT identified the range of alternatives after considering concerns and issues raised during public scoping, coordination with participating and cooperating agencies, and consultation with interested tribes. To determine which candidate sites would comprise the range of alternatives to be fully analyzed in the Draft EIS, WSDOT developed criteria to screen the sites with the help of an advisory environmental review panel and participating agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribes. The screening criteria included required physical site characteristics, logistical constraints, and consideration of unacceptable adverse effects and regulatory constraints.

Before developing site-screening criteria with the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project Agency Coordination Team (PCPACT), WSDOT had identified the casting basin method as the preferred pontoon construction method. Sites that could not accommodate the casting basin method were not included on the list of candidate sites to be screened. Of the 39 sites evaluated, the screening process eliminated 36 sites because they failed at least one of the screening criteria. Three sites—Port of Grays Harbor Industrial Development District #1 (IDD #1), Anderson & Middleton, and Aberdeen Log Yard—were further analyzed. Based on public comments and regulatory concerns, WSDOT and FHWA subsequently removed IDD #1 as a potential alternative site because adverse effects on wetlands would be too great relative to the other two sites identified for further analysis in the EIS.

How have WSDOT and FHWA involved agency partners and tribal nations in developing the project?

General Coordination

WSDOT and FHWA invited agencies and tribes with a potential interest in the project to serve as cooperating and/or participating agencies throughout the environmental review process. Since the project kickoff meeting for agencies and tribes in December 2007, the cooperating and participating agencies were actively involved as members of the PCPACT and met numerous times through August 2010, after the Draft EIS was released. During the Draft EIS preparation, this group met regularly to consider the project's purpose and need, the range of alternatives, and the analysis methodology. The agencies made recommendations for the project's purpose and need statement and the screening criteria for the range of alternatives. They also received regular updates on the environmental process, proposed construction methods, and key findings. The PCPACT was also apprised of the types of comments received on the Draft EIS before the Final EIS was issued.

WSDOT assembled technical working groups within the PCPACT to consider and address specific technical issues of agency or tribal concern. These groups comprised appropriate project, agency, and tribal staff to address issues such as ecosystems, pontoon moorage, water resources, and the built environment. WSDOT scheduled

What is a cooperating agency?

A cooperating agency is any federal agency—other than the lead agency—that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. A state or local agency or a Native American tribe might, by agreement with the lead agencies, also become a cooperating agency. Accepting designation as a cooperating agency does not indicate project support.

What is a participating agency?

A participating agency is any agency with an interest in the project. Accepting the designation as a participating agency does not indicate project support nor provide an agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond its statutory limits, if applicable.

additional briefings with individual agencies and tribes as requested to discuss specific topics, such as permit coordination. Agencies and interested tribes also had the opportunity to provide formal comments on the Draft EIS during the 45-day public comment period.

Tribal Coordination

In addition to the PCPACT and technical working group meetings, WSDOT has and continues to conduct frequent outreach with tribes in the Grays Harbor area. WSDOT is committed to government-to-government consultation with interested tribes on actions potentially affecting identified treaty rights and tribal issues as well as throughout the process required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This consultation addresses tribal interests, including usual and accustomed fishing grounds, potential adverse effects on tribal cultural resources and rights, and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate such adverse effects. WSDOT will continue to keep tribes informed of project activities through regular updates and material distribution. As noted previously, interested tribes had the opportunity to review and provide formal comments on the Draft EIS.

How has WSDOT involved the public in developing the project?

For the proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project, WSDOT developed and implemented a comprehensive public involvement program at the onset of the decision-making and environmental analysis process. As part of this ongoing program, WSDOT held public informational meetings about the project, sent project staff to attend local government meetings, briefed different community groups and local business organizations, and hosted informational booths at community events.

A key component of the public involvement program was soliciting public comment during the project scoping period at the project's initial stages in January 2008, January and February 2009, and again in March and April 2009 when WSDOT and FHWA dropped the Port of Grays Harbor's IDD #1 site in Hoquiam from the proposed range of alternatives. During these scoping periods, the public was given the opportunity to comment on the project's purpose and need statement and range of alternatives. Throughout the public involvement process, WSDOT has incorporated the comments and concerns expressed by the public into the overall project comment database for documentation and response. On May 28, 2010, the Draft EIS was published and WSDOT initiated a 45-day comment period, during which the public, agencies, and interested tribes had the opportunity to provide formal comments on the document. WSDOT reviewed and prepared responses to all comments received during the 45-day comment period, including all written comments and comments submitted to a court reporter at the June 24, 2010 project open house in Aberdeen. In the Final EIS, these comments are summarized in Chapter 7 and presented in their entirety in Appendix T.

What is project scoping?

The EIS scoping process is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. The process is used to develop the project's purpose and need statement and identify the range of alternatives, environmental elements, effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIS. Scoping allows resource agencies, tribes, and the public to identify and comment on potential environmental concerns or controversy early in project development.

What are the project-related concerns and issues that were raised during the Draft EIS comment period, and how is WSDOT addressing them?

General Public Concerns

WSDOT received 32 submittals during the public comment period, some of which contained multiple comments. Overall, the general public and the Grays Harbor community support the proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project; many of the comments received echoed this support. In addition to comments of support, other comment themes included the following:

- Future use of the casting basin facility site after the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is completed
- Economics: local or regional economy, project employment opportunities
- Project alternatives: preferred alternative choice, site-selection process
- Funding and cost: specifically, project cost or funding, tolling
- Public involvement: public coordination, public participation

WSDOT will continue to work closely with the public through final project design and during casting basin and pontoon construction to ensure that best management practices are used to minimize traffic and noise-related effects and effects on local fishing. After all pontoons are built for this project and the proposed SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, WSDOT would continue to communicate to interested parties and the general public about the fate of the proposed casting basin facility.

Participating Agency and Tribal Concerns

WSDOT has closely coordinated with agencies and tribes throughout the project environmental process. Agency and tribal comments were useful in helping WSDOT develop the Draft EIS into the Final EIS, and their comments did not raise new topics or issues of which WSDOT was not already aware. The main themes of the agency and tribal comments are listed below:

- Permits: permits for project construction and operation
- Ecosystems: comments about the ecosystem and habitats, ecological benefits
- Ecosystems Mitigation: mitigation measures for ecosystem effects
- Alternatives: preferred alternative choice, site-selection process
- Agency Coordination: coordination with agencies or jurisdictions
- Construction: casting basin or pontoon construction

WSDOT and FWHA have continued to consult with participating agencies through the development of the Final EIS and will continue to do so through the issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD). WSDOT is also working closely with the Quinault Indian Nation to ensure effective communications about tribal fishing and ensure that best management practices are implemented to minimize project effects on tribal fishing.

WSDOT assessed all the comments received from the public, agencies, and tribes. As needed, some factual corrections and language clarifications were made in the Final EIS. WSDOT did not receive any new information that would lead the agency to modify the alternatives

or to develop and evaluate alternatives not previously seriously considered. WSDOT believes its responses to comments, as presented in Appendix T of the Final EIS, offer sufficient explanations as to how each comment was considered and reflected in the Final EIS.

What would happen to the new casting basin site after the project is complete?

After building all the pontoons planned for this project, WSDOT would retain ownership of the casting basin facility until it is determined whether the facility would be needed for constructing the additional pontoons needed as part of the proposed SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, which would require more pontoons than the proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project would provide. When the facility is no longer needed to build Evergreen Point Bridge pontoons, WSDOT would maintain the facility—adhering to applicable environmental regulations –until decisions are made about the facility's future. WSDOT might reopen the facility for currently unforeseen WSDOT projects, sell the property with the improvements, or decommission the facility and restore the site to as close to its condition before this project as possible before selling it.

WSDOT has identified two points in time when a decision about the future use of the casting basin facility could potentially be made: (1) when the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project is completed, and (2) if and when the decision is made to use the facility to build pontoons for the proposed SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, at the end of pontoon construction for that project. Further use or decommissioning of the site would be a separate action that would require its own environmental process, permits, approvals, and consultation with agencies and interested tribes.

How would the project affect the environment?

The proposed SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project would have both beneficial and adverse environment effects. Exhibit 4-1a (excerpted from the Final EIS) compares the build alternatives' effects on ecosystems and cultural resources because these resources would likely be the most affected. The potential project effects on the other resources analyzed in the Final EIS are summarized briefly following Exhibit 4-1a. For most resources, the potential effects of the build alternatives would be similar, with only minor variations between the two alternatives.

In general, effects on the remaining resources evaluated are expected to be minimal and are summarized below:

- **Hazardous materials.** Dewatering water could contain contaminants unsuitable for discharge but would be treated before being discharged. Areas of localized upland soil contamination might be encountered but would be disposed of properly. Data collected to date suggests that dredged materials would be suitable for open-water disposal.
- **Geology and soils.** By using best management practices, the project would avoid adverse effects on geology and soils.
- **Water resources.** The project would result in a net benefit to water resources since there is currently no stormwater treatment at either build alternative site and there would be treatment with the project. Process water would be treated before being discharged.
- **Air quality.** Both build alternatives would meet regional air quality standards and requirements and, therefore, would not adversely affect air quality.

What are best management practices?

Best management practices are effective and practical policies, managerial practices, maintenance procedures, and structural or nonstructural methods, that when used singly or in combination, prevent or reduce adverse environmental effects. Best management practices are designed and implemented to protect ecosystems, water resources, communities, structures, and landscapes. Best management practices include physical structures, such as silt fences or settling ponds, and construction approaches, such as conducting certain activities during dry periods.

- **Energy and climate change.** According to the Washington State Department of Commerce, the estimated average level of energy consumption during the project represents a fraction (approximately 0.2 percent for casting basin construction and less than 0.02 percent for pontoon-building operations) of total annual energy consumption in Washington as of 2007, which would be a negligible effect on energy resources. Total greenhouse gas emissions resulting from constructing and operating the casting basin facility would contribute a negligible effect on climate change.
- **Economics.** At either Grays Harbor build alternative site, up to 150 workers would be needed for facility construction and up to 350 workers would be needed to operate the facility. Noise and traffic congestion during the project could result in decreased sales for some businesses along the haul routes. Overall, however, the region would benefit economically in the short term from the new jobs created and the likely increase in spending and tax revenue during the project.
- **Navigable waterways.** The level of vessel traffic within Grays Harbor is light enough that any use of navigation channels and of Grays Harbor navigation pilots would have only a minor to negligible effect.
- **Noise.** At either Grays Harbor build alternative site, project construction would noticeably increase noise levels in the project vicinity. Without mitigation measures to reduce noise levels, noise during pontoon-building operations at the Anderson & Middleton site would exceed the Washington Administrative Code noise regulation limits at four residential locations; operations at the Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative would not result in residential noise limit exceedances. With noise mitigation measures, noise levels would not exceed the noise limits; however, noise levels would still be noticeable. As a result, there would be a minor project effect from noise.

Exhibit 4-1a. **Summary Comparison of Build Alternative Project Effects**

Alternative Site	Summary of Potential Effects	Unavoidable Adverse Effects
ECOSYSTEMS		
Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	This alternative would affect approximately 1.04 acres of palustrine wetlands and 0.06 acre of estuarine (tidal) wetlands. The launch channel would excavate approximately 3 acres within the shoreline, including mudflats and subtidal habitat. There would be some effects on fish and wildlife associated with facility construction and operation. Fish and wildlife in the project vicinity might be affected by noise associated with pile-driving during casting basin facility construction.	Approximately 1.1 acres of wetlands and 3 acres of intertidal zone would be removed.
Anderson & Middleton Alternative	This alternative would affect approximately 4.8 acres of palustrine (nontidal) wetlands. The launch channel would require approximately 0.38 of excavation within the shoreline area. There would be some effects on fish and wildlife associated with facility construction and operation. Fish and wildlife in the project vicinity might be affected by noise associated with pile-driving during casting basin facility construction.	Approximately 4.8 acres of wetlands and 0.38 acre of intertidal zone would be removed.
CULTURAL RESOURCES		
Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	WSDOT does not expect that the project would adversely affect cultural resources.	None.
Anderson & Middleton Alternative	The potential for effects would include disturbing one NRHP-eligible archaeological site—a precontact fish trap complex.	Constructing the casting basin would disturb and adversely affect the data potential of the archaeological site.

- **Public services and utilities.** There could be an increase in demand for police and emergency medical services typical of an industrial work site and from possible traffic accidents along the haul routes with the substantial increase in truck trips, but this would not result in a substantial adverse affect.
- **Land use.** Developing a casting basin facility would be compatible with the general plan provisions of both Hoquiam's and Aberdeen's comprehensive plans and zoning regulations and would not adversely affect land use.
- **Social elements.** The project would not cause adverse effects on community cohesion; regional and community growth; community resources; or recreational facilities. Pedestrians, cyclists, and transit operations might experience some delay in travel time because of increased traffic congestion along the haul route. WSDOT is working closely with interested tribes on actions that could potentially affect identified treaty rights and tribal resources, including usual and accustomed fishing grounds.
- **Environmental justice.** The project would not likely result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and/or low-income populations or tribal interests.
- **Transportation.** Due to increased truck trips during site construction and pontoon-building operations, drivers might experience side-street delays at unsignalized intersections where vehicles are required to stop or yield to traffic on the major street (for example, US 101). However, even without intersection modifications, most of these intersections would likely still operate at acceptable levels and with reasonable delays.
- **Visual quality and aesthetics.** Cranes and, potentially, a batch plant at either Grays Harbor build alternative site would be visible from residences on the south-facing hillsides in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. The Aberdeen Log Yard site would be slightly less visible because of the distance to the site from the hillside residences. Pontoon moorage could have long-term adverse effects on visual quality in Grays Harbor and along the shorelines of Grays Harbor because the pontoons would be visible above water and would be illuminated at night.
- **Section 4(f) resources.** There would be no use of Section 4(f) resources, and therefore, WSDOT could avoid adverse project effects.

How would WSDOT and FHWA reduce any adverse effects on the environment?

In accordance with regulations and in collaboration with permitting agencies and tribes, WSDOT has designed the project to limit environmental effects. Steps in this process include the following:

1. Avoiding effects to the extent possible through measures like selecting the sites for analysis with fewest wetlands that could be affected by site development.
2. Minimizing effects by using best management practices such as erosion control, water quality monitoring and treatment, and environmentally sensitive timing of certain construction activities.
3. Identifying appropriate mitigation measures to offset project effects that cannot be avoided or minimized.

Exhibit 4-1b (excerpted from the Final EIS Exhibit 4-1) describes measures that WSDOT has identified to potentially mitigate for project effects on ecosystems and cultural resources. Measures to reduce adverse effects, if any, on the other resources analyzed are summarized briefly after this exhibit.

- **Geology and soils.** During casting basin facility development, WSDOT will implement best management practices, such as requiring silt fences downslope of all exposed soils, to avoid and minimize effects on geology and soils.

- **Hazardous materials.** WSDOT will use best management practices to avoid or minimize the effects of hazardous materials. Contaminated materials will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations.
- **Water resources.** WSDOT will treat stormwater and process water prior to discharge. WSDOT will implement required best management practices, such as temporary erosion and sediment control, stormwater pollution prevention and spill prevention control, and countermeasure plans, to avoid or minimize effects.
- **Air quality.** WSDOT will reduce vehicle and equipment idling and use newer construction equipment with add-on emission controls to reduce project-related emissions. WSDOT will also use standard mitigation measures to control dust.
- **Energy and climate change.** WSDOT will adhere to construction and operation best management practices to encourage efficient energy use. WSDOT will reduce vehicle and equipment idling and use newer construction equipment with add-on emission controls to reduce project-related emissions.
- **Economics.** To avoid or minimize negative economic effects on local businesses during project construction and operation, WSDOT will consider work closely with local businesses to ensure customer access is maintained and notify the public that businesses will remain open during construction. WSDOT will also implement a traffic management plan to reduce or eliminate economic effects that could result from traffic congestion.
- **Navigable waterways.** WSDOT will coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard and potentially affected ports to avoid conflicts with arriving or departing vessels. WSDOT will also light the moored pontoons appropriately, as required by the U.S. Coast Guard, to limit effects on recreational vessel movement outside the navigation channel.
- **Noise.** WSDOT will implement noise abatement measures, such as requiring that all engine-powered equipment have mufflers and comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency noise standards, FHWA construction noise regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 772.19), the Washington Administrative Code, and local ordinances. Installing a sound wall or berm at the Anderson & Middleton site will reduce noise levels at nearby residences to below noise ordinance limits. Various measures will be used to mitigate the effects of pile-driving, such as limiting the hours of operation for pile-driving activities or using a bubble curtain on in-water piles.
- **Public services and utilities.** By coordinating with public service and utility providers on a continuous basis, WSDOT will ensure that any potential project effects are understood in advance, planned for, and kept to a minimum.
- **Land use.** If acquisitions are necessary beyond the casting basin facility site, the project will comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, that provides for certain relocation payments and advisory assistance for businesses and personal property-only relocations. The only anticipated acquisition is the casting basin facility site, and no relocations will be required for the project.
- **Social elements.** WSDOT will use the project Web site and newsletters to inform the public of upcoming activities and to provide contact numbers where residents can voice concerns about the project. WSDOT will implement measures mentioned for noise, air quality, and transportation that will also mitigate for effects on social elements. WSDOT will also work closely with tribes to coordinate timing of pontoon floatouts and other nearshore activities to minimize or avoid conflicts with tribal fishing.
- **Environmental justice.** Project communication materials will be translated in other languages, such

as Spanish, when necessary. WSDOT will work with interested tribes to identify measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any adverse effects on tribal fishing and cultural resources.

- **Transportation.** Transportation effects minimization measures will include best management practices such as restriping to improve channelization at certain intersections, signal timing adjustments, or using barge or rail to transport materials to and from the site.

Exhibit 4-1b. **Potential Measures to Reduce Effects**

Alternative Site	Potential Avoidance, Minimization, and Compensatory Mitigation
ECOSYSTEMS	
Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	Shoreline armoring would be avoided except within the launch channel. The project would restore degraded habitat at a site on Grass Creek in Grays Harbor County as compensatory mitigation for project effects on jurisdictional wetlands and special aquatic resources. Mitigation would meet all federal, state, and local requirements. Mitigating pile-driving noise could include limiting the pile-driving activity time. Pile-driving effects on fish could be mitigated by using bubble curtains, which attenuate underwater sound pressure by absorbing and dissipating sound energy generated by pile-driving. (Bubble curtains are air bubbles discharged around the entire circumference of a single pile to attenuate the sound pressure close to the noise source.) Dewatering effects could be limited by discharging groundwater into trenches along the site perimeter for reinfiltration back into the ground.
Anderson & Middleton Alternative	Locating casting basin and ancillary facilities in central portion of site would avoid 6.5 acres of palustrine and 2.5 acres of high-quality estuarine wetland on the western portion of site. The project would restore degraded habitat at the Grass Creek wetland mitigation site on north Grays Harbor as compensatory mitigation for project effects on jurisdictional wetlands and special aquatic resources. Mitigation would meet all federal, state, and local requirements. Mitigating pile-driving noise could include limiting the pile-driving activity time. Pile-driving effects on fish could be mitigated by using bubble curtains, which attenuate underwater sound pressure by absorbing and dissipating sound energy generated by pile-driving. (Bubble curtains are air bubbles discharged around the entire circumference of a single pile to attenuate the sound pressure close to the noise source.) Dewatering effects could be limited by discharging groundwater into trenches along the site perimeter for reinfiltration back into the ground.
CULTURAL RESOURCES	
Aberdeen Log Yard Alternative (Preferred Alternative)	WSDOT would implement an unanticipated discovery plan that would be followed if potential archaeological resources are encountered during construction
Anderson & Middleton Alternative	WSDOT would develop and implement an archaeological treatment plan to mitigate effects on the known archaeological resource on this site. Mitigation might include, but is not limited to, data recovery (scientific excavation and analysis) of the archaeological sites and archaeological monitoring during construction to ensure that no (previously unknown) cultural resources are affected. WSDOT would implement an unanticipated discovery plan that would be followed if potential archaeological resources are encountered during construction. Mitigation for the identified precontact fish trap complex would require working closely with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and interested Indian tribes and might require preservation in place.

- **Visual quality and aesthetics.** WSDOT will use best management practices, such as shielding temporary construction site lighting or designing facilities to blend with surroundings, to avoid or minimize negative effects.
- **Section 4(f) resources.** The project would not use Section 4(f) resources, and therefore, no mitigation will be required.

What are WSDOT's and FHWA's mitigation commitments?

Mitigation commitments are project actions and performance standards often established by law to address project effects. To meet these commitments, FHWA and WSDOT would carry out specific compensatory mitigation to offset unavoidable effects on natural resources, such as loss of wetland function or area. FHWA and WSDOT, working in collaboration with regulatory agencies, selected the Grass Creek mitigation site as the location where anticipated compensatory mitigation for loss of wetlands would be constructed if one of the build alternatives is selected. The intent of the wetland mitigation is to reestablish a range of estuarine wetland habitats along an increasing elevation gradient, from mudflat to upper intertidal salt marsh, and restore natural tidal influence on the site. In addition to wetland mitigation, the proposed project would mitigate for effects on fish and aquatic resources and their habitat by rehabilitating a portion of the shoreline of the Grass Creek estuary and rehabilitating existing tidal channels at Grass Creek to provide transitional habitat for out-migrating salmonid smolts and to support typical estuarine salt marsh flora and fauna.

WSDOT would monitor the proposed mitigation site for 10 years. Monitoring, contingency, and site management plans would be provided and used to adaptively manage the mitigation site.

WSDOT has completed the Conceptual Wetland and Aquatic Resources Mitigation Report, Grass Creek, and this plan is subject to regulatory review and will be finalized as part of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (the Clean Water Act) Section 404 permit and other applicable permits. WSDOT has ensured that the plan complies with federal, state, and local requirements for effects on natural resources subject to regulation.

What are the next steps for this project?

WSDOT will continue engineering and design work for the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project and will continue to work closely with participating and cooperating agencies and tribes throughout the project. Interested individuals can find the current project status on the project Web page at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520/Pontoons.htm.

FHWA and WSDOT will prepare and issue the Record of Decision for the project 30 days after the Final EIS is issued. If a project build alternative were selected in the Record of Decision, WSDOT would proceed with final project design and permitting and then construction.

What permits and approvals would be needed for the project?

Exhibit ES-1 lists the anticipated permits and approvals required for the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project, as well as the agencies from which these would be obtained.

How can I obtain a copy of the Final EIS?

Printed copies of the Final EIS, which is accompanied by this Executive Summary, are available at the local libraries and city halls in Hoquiam and Aberdeen, Washington, and other locations in the affected communities. The printed Final EIS and appendices are available for purchase at the SR 520 Program Office, 600 Stewart Street, Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98101. The price for the hard copy Final EIS is $57, and this cost does not exceed the cost of printing. CDs are available free of charge.

Exhibit ES-1. **Required Project Permits**

Agency	Required Permit or Approval
FEDERAL	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	• Clean Water Act, Department of the Army Section 404 Permit • Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10 Permit
U.S. Coast Guard	• Private Aids to Navigation Permit
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	• Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, National Marine Fisheries Service	• Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Consultation
Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	• National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Consultation
STATE	
Department of Ecology	• Clean Water Act, Section 401 Certification • Coastal Zone Management Consistency Certificate • National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Sand and Gravel Permit • National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction Stormwater General Permit
Department of Fish and Wildlife	• Hydraulic Project Approval
Department of Natural Resources	• Aquatic Lands Use Authorization • Dredge Disposal Site Use Authorization
LOCAL	
To be determined with decision of Preferred Alternative (either City of Aberdeen or City of Hoquiam)	• Street Use Permit • Noise Variance • Shoreline Substantial Development Permit/Variance/Conditional Use • Critical Areas Compliance • Building/Grading Permit

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Washington State Department of Transportation

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