

Hayden Island, SR-14, Mill Plain, Fourth Plain and SR 500. Related enhancements to the local street network.

- Improvements to the existing I-5 mainline bridge over North Portland Harbor; three new structures over this waterway associated with I-5; and one new multi-modal bridge carrying light rail transit, local traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists.
- A variety of bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the project corridor. A multi-use path connecting to the existing system. The path would allow users to travel from north Portland, over Hayden Island and the Columbia River into downtown Vancouver.
- Extension of light rail transit from the Expo Center in Portland to Clark College in Vancouver and associated transit improvements. Transit stations would be built on Hayden Island, in downtown Vancouver, and a terminus near Clark College. Three park and rides are to be built, Columbia (near the SR 14 interchange), Mill (in uptown Vancouver) and Clark (near Clark College). Improvements would be made to the tracks on the Steel Bridge. Also, bus route changes and the expansion of the Ruby Junction light rail transit maintenance facility.
- Transportation demand and system management measures to be implemented with the project, including the use of tolls, subject to the authority of the Washington and Oregon Transportation Commissions.

See Appendix B for an illustration of the SA. A detailed description of the SA is included in Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

### **Environmentally Preferable Alternative**

40 CFR Section 1505.2(b) of the Council of Environmental Quality's regulations that implement NEPA require that the ROD shall "identify all alternatives considered by the agency in reaching its decision, specifying the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable." The environmentally preferable alternative is generally the alternative that has the least impact to the environment, as described in the EIS.

The Environmental Review Documents evaluate the environmental effects of the SA and the other build alternatives. The analysis finds that, among the build alternatives, the SA provides the greatest benefit to traffic safety, bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility, land use and development. The SA has the fewest impacts to Section 4(f) resources, fish, wetlands, geology and soils, and traffic noise. Other build alternatives have fewer displacements and fewer transit noise impacts. However, all transit noise impacts can be mitigated by the measures described in this document. The SA would have similar impacts as the other build alternatives in the other environmental metrics analyzed in the FEIS.

Compared to the other build alternatives, the SA has the most environmental categories in which it is the least impactful alternative. FTA and FHWA find that the SA is the alternative with the least adverse environmental effects and the most feasible and prudent alternative in meeting the project Purpose and Need. Therefore, FHWA and FTA consider the SA to be the environmentally preferred alternative and it is the selected alternative because it best addresses the Purpose and Need of the Project.