

Chapter 1. Overview

Spokane County is proposing to modify parts of Bigelow Gulch and Forker roads to improve safety, accommodate more traffic, and allow freight to move through the area more easily. The proposed action, also referred to as the project, is the Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road Urban Connector—Havana Street to Sullivan Road (Urban Connector Alignment). The Urban Connector Alignment is evaluated herein alongside the no action alternative.

The Urban Connector Alignment evaluated in this National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) and Section 4(f) Evaluation, referred to herein as the Revised EA, differs slightly from the Urban Connector Alignment evaluated in the previous EA for the project (January 2006 EA). These modifications are described in Section 2.3.3. This chapter describes the proposed action, explains the purpose of the Revised EA, and provides background on the January 2006 EA.

Chapter 2 presents the project purpose and need and provides a more detailed description of the proposed action.

Chapter 3 describes how the County identified and evaluated the project alternatives and ultimately selected the Urban Connector Alignment as its preferred alternative.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the technical analyses regarding how the proposed action will affect the natural and built environment. This chapter also identifies mitigation measures recommended or required to reduce the impacts of the proposed action on each element of the environment.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the Section 4(f) Evaluation, which looks at the proposed action's potential use of recreational resources. It is revised from the January 2006 EA to clarify the steps taken to analyze the avoidance alternatives and the use and minimization alternatives.

1.1. What is the Urban Connector Alignment?

The Urban Connector Alignment, the action proposed by Spokane County, would involve the modification of an 8.26-mile section of Bigelow Gulch Road and Forker Road in Spokane County, Washington. The project area includes the specific path that the proposed roadway would follow (the proposed alignment) and the surrounding area. The proposed alignment would begin on Bigelow Gulch Road at its intersection with Havana Road, merge with Forker Road, continue on Sullivan Road, and conclude at its intersection with Wellesley Avenue (Figure 1-1).

The Urban Connector Alignment would widen approximately 5.80 miles of the existing Bigelow Gulch and Forker roadways, and construct 2.47 miles of new roadway at the west and east ends of the project area. The project would include four segments, installed in six construction phases. Chapter 2, *Project Description*, provides a detailed description of the Urban Connector Alignment project segments and construction phases.

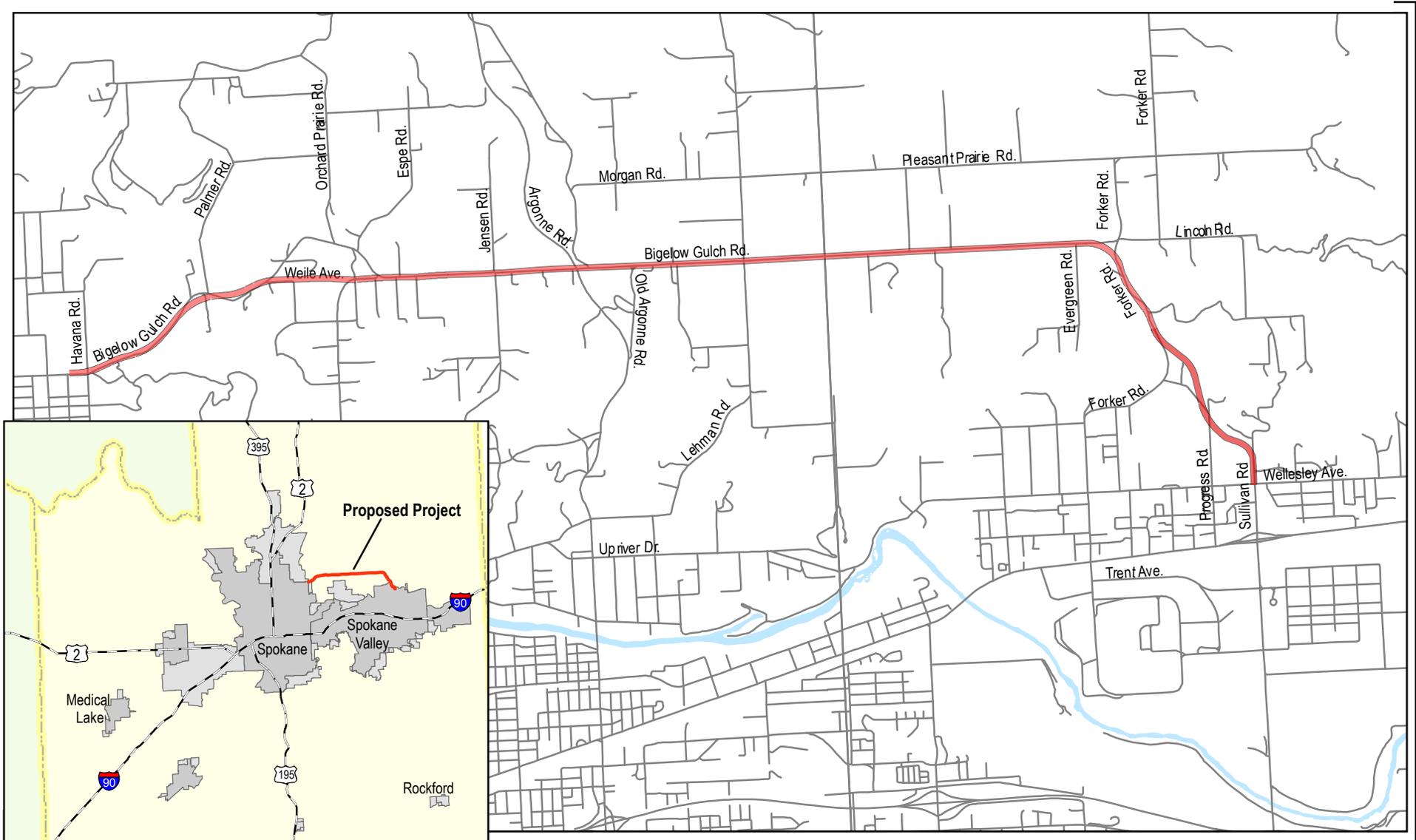
1.1.1. Project Area and Proposed Alignment

The project area includes the specific route that the proposed roadway would follow (the proposed alignment) and approximately one-half mile on each side of the proposed alignment. The proposed alignment would:

- begin on Bigelow Gulch Road at its intersection with Havana Street;
- continue east on along Bigelow Gulch Road for approximately 7.2 miles to Forker Road;
- turn southeast along Forker Road;
- depart southeast from Forker Road, cross Progress Road and a portion of the East Valley School District property joining Sullivan Road between East Valley middle and high schools; and
- continue on Sullivan Road south to its intersection with Wellesley Avenue (Figure 1-1).

1.1.2. Project Description

The Urban Connector Alignment would widen approximately 5.80 miles of the existing Bigelow Gulch and Forker roadways, and construct 2.46 miles of new roadway at the west and east ends of the project area.



-  Urban Connector Alignment
-  Roads



Figure 1-1
Project Vicinity Map

The following bullets summarize the key project components.

- The 7.51-mile section of roadway from the Bigelow Gulch Road/Havana Street intersection to the Forker/Progress roads intersection would be designed as a rural roadway: four lanes, alternating gravel medians and two-way left-turn pockets, and paved shoulders.
- The 0.75-mile section of roadway from the Forker/Progress Roads intersection to the Sullivan Road/Wellesley Avenue intersection would be designed as an urban roadway: four lanes with two-way left-turn pockets, bike lanes, sidewalks, and landscaping.
- A Forker Road underpass would be designed to merge with Bigelow Gulch Road eastbound traffic about 500 feet east of the proposed intersection of Bigelow Gulch Road and Forker Road.
- A 0.14-mile section of the right-of-way from west of Jensen Road to just east of Argonne Road would be reduced in width from 120 to 80 feet and shifted slightly south to avoid the historic Karl Paulson Farmstead on Bigelow Gulch Road. The width reduction would be accompanied by a speed limit reduction (from 45 to 35 miles per hour).

Table 1-1 presents a summary of impacts and mitigation measures for the Urban Connector Alignment. Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the Urban Connector Alignment.

1.2. What is the purpose and content of the Revised Environmental Assessment?

This Revised EA was developed, to respond to public comments and issues and to clarify the impacts and mitigation measures identified in the January 2006 EA.

This Revised EA includes summary information from the January 2006 EA, additional information regarding the proposed action and development of the alternatives, and additional analysis of impacts and mitigation measures for the elements of the environment. Socioeconomics, a new section, has been added to the analysis.

The January 2006 EA document, *Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation, Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road Urban Connector, Havana Street to Sullivan Road*, is incorporated by reference to this document, *Revised Bigelow Gulch EA*. This document is incorporated by reference (40 CFR 1502.21).

Table 1-1. Summary of Impacts, Regulations, and Mitigation Measures for the Urban Connector Alignment

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
Geology and Soils		
Potential erosion hazard may be associated with construction activities.	<p>Spokane County Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Section 11.20.070D(1)—Geologically Hazardous Areas</p> <p>Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005)</p> <p><i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington</i> (Ecology 2004)</p> <p>National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater Permit</p>	<p>Conduct detailed geotechnical investigation and prepare geohazard plan. Adjust roadway alignment, slope length, and steepness, and minimize construction in areas of erodible soils.</p> <p>Prepare and implement a temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) plan per Section 4.5.400 of stormwater management guidelines.</p> <p>Prepare and implement a geohazard mitigation plan to address geohazard conditions.</p> <p>Prepare and implement a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) as required for NPDES construction stormwater permit.</p>
<p>Grading, filling, and other construction-related activities would modify the topography and soil profile of the area. Estimated earthwork:</p> <p>Cut: 1,225,740 cubic yards</p> <p>Fill: 787,000 cubic yards</p>	<p>Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.070D(1)—Geologically Hazardous Areas</p> <p>Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005)</p>	<p>Same as above.</p> <p>Stabilize large areas of fill by placing the fill in lifts and compacting per the requirements of the <i>Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction</i> (WSDOT 2006c).</p> <p>Implement slope stabilization/hillside reinforcement measures to prevent movement or erosion of cut-slopes, including hillside cuts, particularly through the Forker Road and Progress Road area.</p>
Further stabilization of some cut slopes may be necessary after construction.	Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.070—Geologically Hazardous Areas	Implement additional best management practices (BMPs) to minimize erosion, maintain water quality, and achieve the intended environmental performance.
Groundwater		
Fuels, oils, and other materials may spill during construction.	<p>Spokane County Code</p> <p>NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit</p> <p>Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) specification 1-07.15(1) for road, bridge, and municipal construction</p> <p>CARA regulations (Section 11.20.075) of the Spokane County Ordinance related to Critical Materials Use Activities</p>	<p>Enforce the CARA regulations (Section 11.20.075) of the Spokane County Ordinance to prevent fuels, oils, solvents, and other potentially hazardous materials from entering groundwater.</p> <p>Prepare and implement a spill prevention, control and countermeasures (SPCC) plan following WSDOT specification 1-07.15(1).</p>

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
Potential erosion and sedimentation may result from grading and construction activities.	Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.070 – Geologically Hazardous Areas Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005)	Prepare and implement a TESC plan per stormwater management guidelines. Prepare and implement a SWPPP.
Increased stormwater runoff from 90.7 acres of impermeable surface may result in greater concentrations of pollutants reaching local surface and groundwater.	Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005) <i>WSDOT Highway Runoff Manual</i> (WSDOT 2006b) <i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington</i> (Ecology 2004)	Prepare a drainage report, a geotechnical site characterization report, and a downstream/down-gradient analysis to complete the final stormwater design. Complete soil cation exchange capacity (CEC) testing to substantiate the treatment soil composition.
Potential dewatering and discharge may occur during construction.	Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-200 Water Quality Standards for Groundwater	Conduct pump tests prior to construction to estimate the influence area from dewatering, where recommended by the geotechnical engineer for the project. Develop a dewatering plan to monitor groundwater withdrawal, avoid groundwater contamination, and collect and treat groundwater prior to discharge.
Potential impact to water quality and quantity of groundwater wells may occur in the vicinity of the roadway.	WAC 173-200 Water Quality Standards for Groundwater	Identify and locate in the field any well and/or spring located within 1,000 feet of the roadway alignment. Evaluate the water supply source hydrogeology to estimate source vulnerability where recommended by the geotechnical engineer for the project or as requested by applicable property owners. Establish pre-construction baseline groundwater quality and quantity at the subject water wells, including capacity testing and flow measurements of spring sources provided that owner consent can be obtained. Measure the groundwater quality and quantity of the wells and springs post-construction, and compare with baseline testing results. Provide an alternate source of water (e.g., new well or extension of water supply from nearest irrigation district) for wells impacted by the Urban Connector Alignment.

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
Floodplains		
<p>Placement of approximately 3 acres of fill would occur in a Zone B 500-year floodplain at west end of project, and 5 acres of fill would occur in Zone A and B floodplains at the east end of the project.</p>	<p>Chapter 3.20 of the Spokane County Code, Floodplain Development Permit</p>	<p>Conduct a hydrologic study to detail floodplain functions, including base flood elevation, water storage and quality, and infiltration as part of the project design and permitting process.</p> <p>The proposed alignment will be designed so that the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Base flood elevations (i.e., the water surface elevation during a 100 year flood event) will not increase at any point by more than 1 foot within the unnumbered "A Zone" areas. The requirement of no increase in base flood elevation greater than 1 foot will be demonstrated through hydraulic modeling and calculations of flood elevations. Modifications to design would be used as necessary to meet the requirements. ▪ Floodwaters will enter and exit in the same manner as under pre-project conditions. The proposed alignment will not alter the flow of floodwaters into or out of the area, because the roadway will not alter flood flow conveyance and will maintain or increase the capacity of culverts along the proposed alignment. ▪ Floodplain functions (e.g., water storage, infiltration, water quality, wetland functions) will be preserved or restored to the highest degree possible where the project encroaches into floodplains.
Wetlands		
<p>Of the 16 wetlands (Types 2 and 3) in the project area, approximately 0.71 acre of wetland in six wetlands would be partially or completely filled.</p> <p>Buffers of 11 wetlands would be impacted.</p>	<p>Clean Water Act (CWA), Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 77.55</p> <p>Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.050 – Wetlands</p>	<p>Provide approximately 2.01 acres of mitigation near Bigelow Gulch Road and Palmer Road per Spokane County Code 11.20.050.</p> <p>Prepare a wetland mitigation plan and buffer averaging plan per Spokane County Code requirements.</p>
<p>Water quality and other wetland functions may degrade from increased runoff and pollutants from the roadway.</p>	<p><i>WSDOT Highway Runoff Manual (2006b)</i></p> <p><i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington (Ecology 2004)</i></p>	<p>Control discharge of stormwater runoff from construction sites to wetlands per the TESC plan. (See Soils and Geology.)</p> <p>Reduce the potential for chemical contamination of wetlands from mechanized equipment through implementation of the SPCC Plan. (See Groundwater.)</p>

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
Streams		
<p>Realignment of streams or replacement/extension of culverts would occur on two perennial and seven intermittent streams. Stream buffers would be impacted.</p>	<p>RCW 77.55, Spokane CAO Section 11.20.060 – Fish, Wildlife, Habitat, and Species Conservation Areas</p>	<p>Reconstruct stream channels following <i>Aquatic Habitat Guidelines: An Integrated Approach to Marine, Freshwater, and Riparian Habitat Protection and Restoration</i> (WDFW 2004) and <i>Fish Passage Design at Road Culverts Guidelines</i> (WDFW 2003) if fish are found in portions of the creeks impacted by the proposed action.</p> <p>Prepare a management plan in consultation with the Spokane County Soil Conservation District and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to address mitigation for impacts on stream buffers, as required by Spokane County Code Section 11.020.060.</p>
<p>Short-term increase in stream turbidity would occur during construction.</p> <p>Hazardous materials spillage may occur during construction.</p>	<p>Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005)</p> <p><i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington</i> (Ecology 2004)</p> <p>NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit</p>	<p>Implement a TESC plan to minimize construction impacts on stream water quality.</p> <p>Prepare and implement an SPCC per WSDOT specification 1-07.15(1).</p>
<p>Additional runoff from impervious surface may impact water quality.</p>	<p>Draft Spokane Regional Guidelines for Stormwater Management (Spokane County et al. 2005)</p> <p><i>WSDOT Highway Runoff Manual</i> (WSDOT 2006b)</p> <p><i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington</i> (Ecology 2004)</p>	<p>Install stormwater treatment systems that meet the requirements of <i>Spokane County Guidelines for Stormwater Management</i> (Spokane County et al. 2005 draft or Spokane County 1998b, as amended) and <i>Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington</i> (Ecology 2004).</p>
Vegetation and Wildlife		
<p>Filling or partially filling wetlands may impact water howellia (if present).</p>	<p>Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.060 – Fish, Wildlife Habitat, and Species Conservation Areas</p>	<p>Conduct pre-construction surveys of wetlands to determine presence of water howellia.</p> <p>If water howellia was documented within any wetlands within the project area, Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation would be reopened with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).</p>

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
<p>37.8 acres of grass/forest wildlife habitat and white-tailed deer winter range and 71.6 acres of non-forested agricultural fields, recreation fields and areas modified by development (e.g., yards, driveways) would be converted to impervious surface or seeded and/or planted with shrubs (53.5 acres).</p>	<p>Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.060 - Fish, Wildlife Habitat, and Species Conservation Areas</p>	<p>Approximately 7.8 acres of old roadway would be decommissioned, and impervious surface and unsuitable subgrade material removed. These restored areas will provide an incremental benefit as additional wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Spokane County will designate approximately 6.6 acres of Ponderosa pine/ Douglas-fir forest east and north of Palmer Road as open space and wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Plant native, drought-tolerant grasses in disturbed areas and road shoulders to provide habitat.</p>
<p>Potential vehicular collisions with white-tailed deer and other animals would decrease initially, and possibly increase with the increase in vehicular traffic.</p>	<p>Spokane County CAO Section 11.20.060 – Fish, Wildlife Habitat, and Species Conservation Areas</p>	<p>Evaluate the feasibility and benefits of installing a wildlife underpass associated with the Bigelow Gulch Creek culvert crossing at Palmer Road.</p> <p>Install signs warning motorists of the presence of deer and elk along the alignment, the most common approach to addressing deer-vehicle collisions.</p> <p>Implement line-of-sight improvements with shallow-sloped road shoulders and limited vegetation to improve drivers' ability to see wildlife and avoid collisions.</p>

Land Use and Displacement

<p>Nine houses and five outbuildings would be displaced (either currently purchased or to be purchased by Spokane County). Residential, agricultural, and undeveloped land would be converted to a public roadway.</p>	<p>Executive Order 12630 – Governmental Actions and Interference with Constitutionally Protected Property Rights Washington State Constitution Article 1, Section 16 – Eminent Domain</p>	<p>Spokane County will plan for and acquire property in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.</p> <p>Enter into agreements with landowners for temporary construction easements.</p>
<p>Approximately 65 acres of temporary easements would be required during construction.</p>	<p>Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970, 49 CFR Part 24</p>	<p>No need for protection of farmland conversion per Farmlands Protection Policy Act (7 CFR 658.4).</p> <p>Some farmland within the right-of-way would be available for continued farming on a lease basis so long as the crops and farming activities were compatible with the clear zone requirements of the project.</p> <p>Topsoil removed from prime farmland will be used for erosion control and areas of planting.</p>
<p>Fifty acres of farmland with a farmland conversion impact rating below threshold score of 160 would be converted.</p>	<p>Farmlands Protection Policy Act (7 CFR 658.4)</p>	

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
Change in access to and from Bigelow Gulch and Forker Roads would occur.	None	Consult and coordinate with affected farmers to ensure that disruptions to farming are minimized and adequate advanced notice of potential disruptions is given.
No change in the underlying comprehensive plan land use designation or zoning would occur along the alignment.	Growth Management Act, Spokane County Comprehensive Plan	None required; Spokane County zoning, not the proposed action, will dictate growth in the area.
Environmental Justice		
No disproportionate significant adverse impacts on minority or low-income persons would occur.	Executive Order 12898 and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order 6640.23	No activities to avoid or minimize adverse effects related to Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, will be necessary.
Transportation		
Traffic congestion and detours would temporarily increase during roadway construction.	None	Prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan that will include traffic control signing consistent with the <i>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices</i> (USDOT 2000) and state standards for road construction. Inform the public, school districts, emergency service providers, and transit agencies of changes in traffic flow or lane closures ahead of time through a public information process. A wide spectrum of techniques and media should be used to convey planned construction activities, such as a website with the planned construction schedule regularly updated.
Level of Service (LOS) E projected at intersection of Sullivan and Euclid for 2025 with the proposed project in place, which would exceed the adopted County standard of LOS D.	Adopted policies to Spokane County Comprehensive Plan	Cooperate with the City of Spokane Valley for an intersection improvement project consisting of an additional westbound lane with a dedicated left-turn lane, a left-through lane, and a dedicated right-turn lane to mitigate conditions to LOS C.
Improved traffic flow and decreased congestion would occur (project benefit).	None	None needed.
Improved traffic safety would occur (project benefit).	None	None needed.
Air Quality		
Short-term increase in particulate matter and exhaust emissions and construction-related odors would occur during construction.	US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) enforced by Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority Control of Emissions of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobile	Project conforms to NAAQS standards and will not cause air quality impacts during operation. Require construction contractor to implement BMPs as required under Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
	Sources (66 FR 17235)	regulations for fugitive dust. Require construction contactor to specify BMPs (for County review and approval) to minimize Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) impacts during construction.
Improved traffic flow would result in decreased carbon monoxide (CO) emissions. (Project benefit.)	Same as above	No mitigation measures will be necessary since CO concentrations with the project would remain well below the NAAQS limits. EPA's MSAT regulations and nationwide programs for emission reductions will prevent future air toxics impacts.
Noise		
Construction equipment would cause a localized temporary increase in sound levels.	WAC Chapter 173-60; Spokane County Noise Ordinance Traffic Noise Analysis & Abatement Policy & Procedures (WSDOT)	Ensure that all equipment is fitted with mufflers, engine air intake silencers, and engine enclosures at least as effective as the original factory-installed devices. Park inactive mobile equipment away from homes while the engines are running. Operate loud stationary equipment as far away as practical from the nearest homes. Portable noise barriers will be placed around loud stationary equipment that must be operated near homes. Train workers to avoid, to the extent practical, unnecessarily loud activity near homes (e.g., dropping large loads of rebar onto pavement, or dragging steel plates across pavement).
Twenty homes will be affected under the proposed action in 2025.	WAC Chapter 173-60 Spokane County Noise Ordinance Traffic Noise Analysis & Abatement Policy & Procedures (WSDOT)	Noise abatement along the proposed alignment would not be eligible for WSDOT funding; however, during the design phase Spokane County will work with homeowners located close to the road to provide visual screening.
Visual Resources		
Visual change as a result of construction activities and removal of vegetation.	None	Hydroseed exposed soils and slopes immediately following construction.
Localized changes in light and glare from lighting.	None	Install lights at lowest allowable height and lowest allowable wattage.
Removal of vegetation would expose more hardscape features and structures along the alignment.	None	Spokane County will work with residents to determine feasibility and function of berms and landscape planting.

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
		<p>Approximately 53 acres of the right-of-way would be reseeded or replanted to reduce visual impact.</p> <p>Spokane County will replace fencing and landscaping removed from residential properties during construction.</p>
Parks and Recreation		
<p>Temporary impact on middle school recreation fields and parking for recreational activities would occur. The eastern end of Urban Connector Alignment would require use of a portion of the public school sports field.</p>	<p>Section 4(f) (23 CFR 771.135)</p> <p>Federal Regulations – Section 4(f) – Definitions, Regulations and Policies</p>	<p>See 4(f) Evaluation for mitigation.</p>
Cultural and Historic Resources		
<p>Construction activity may uncover previously unrecorded archaeological and historic resources.</p> <p>There are five structures eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for which the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and WSDOT have determined No Adverse Effect of the proposed would occur.</p>	<p>Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, Antiquities Act of 1906; the Historic Sites Act of 1935; the Archaeological Data Preservation Act of 1974; and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979</p> <p>Washington State law (RCW 27.53) (RCW 27.34)</p> <p>Consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Affected Native American Tribes</p>	<p>If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be stopped until the Highways & Local Programs archaeologist can assess the context and integrity of the find and determine the best course of action.</p> <p>If significant cultural resources are discovered (e.g., human skeletal remains), Spokane County, and if necessary, any affected Native American Tribe and the DAHP will be immediately contacted. All Native American graves on private or public lands are protected under Washington State law (RCW 27.44).</p>
Hazardous Materials		
<p>None of the inventoried hazardous materials sites are within the proposed urban connector right-of-way.</p>	<p>Section 447 of <i>Environmental Procedures Manual</i> (WSDOT 2006a); Model Toxic Control Act Cleanup Regulation, WAC 173-340</p>	<p>Prepare and implement an SPCC (see Groundwater).</p> <p>Survey structures for asbestos, lead-based paint, and heating oil tanks prior to demolition.</p> <p>Require construction contractor to implement worker awareness training and hazardous materials contingency plan as per WSDOT and state requirements.</p>
Social and Economic Elements		
<p>Impact on community cohesion would vary with location along the proposed alignment.</p>	<p>FHWA implementation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [23 U.S. Code 109(h)]</p>	<p>Work with individual property owners during final engineering design phase to address site-specific aspects of the proposed alignment, such as access points, retention or installation of landscaping, etc.</p> <p>Work with East Valley School District regarding recreation and</p>

Summary of Impacts	Mitigating Regulations/Guidelines	Mitigation Measures
		<p>access mitigation (see 4(f) Evaluation).</p> <p>Maintain access to businesses and homes during construction.</p> <p>Provide a contact person whom the public may contact to submit complaints, problems, and suggestions during construction.</p> <p>See construction notification measures for Transportation.</p>
Section 4(f)		
<p>The Urban Connector Alignment would impact 3.42 acres of recreation property (sports fields) and open space at the East Valley Middle school.</p>	<p>23 CFR 771.135 Section 4(f)</p>	<p>Measures to Minimize Harm</p> <p>Hire a recreational architect to assist the school district with remodeling the sports fields. Measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add an exit-only at the high school to Wellesley Ave. to improve bus movement. ▪ Relocate the northeastern ball field and unmarked practice football field at the middle school. ▪ Plan with the school district regarding a pedestrian tunnel or bridge between the middle school and high school. ▪ Conduct necessary geotechnical studies to address soils and groundwater conditions. ▪ Provide 1.4 acres of additional land for relocated field. ▪ Ensure that alternative parking is an element of planning, design, and construction, if so desired by the school district.

1.3. January 2006 Environmental Assessment

On January 27, 2006, the Spokane County Public Works Department, FHWA, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) issued the January 2006 EA. The January 2006 EA was made available to the public in paper copy, compact disk, and online at the Spokane County Web site. (See Appendix 1 for a distribution list.)

1.3.1. How did the public participate?

Public involvement began in 2000 with a public open house to discuss the project purpose and need and to receive comments from the public.

Following publication of the January 2006 EA, Spokane County held open houses, conducted meetings, and, upon public request, held a public hearing on March 22, 2006.

Scoping

Spokane County hosted an open house at the Central Grange on Bigelow Gulch Road on February 2, 2000, to provide citizens the opportunity to obtain information and to discuss the project with government officials and consultants. Meeting attendees were also asked to complete and submit comment sheets to inform Spokane County about their specific concerns and questions. More than 50 citizens submitted scoping comments to Spokane County relating to traffic conditions, land use, safety, and natural resources.

Public Outreach

Since 2000, Spokane County has provided project information at community and interstate fair booths, through the annual Spokane County Road Construction Program publication, at civic group meetings, and in newspaper articles.

Public Review

The January 2006 EA was published and made available to the public on January 27, 2006, at the following locations:

- Spokane County Public Works office,
- Spokane County Public Works Web site at www.spokanecounty.org/engineer,
- Argonne Public Library, and
- Spokane Public Library.

The normal 45-day review period was extended to 90 days, upon public request.

The Notice of Availability and EA were provided directly to elected officials, tribes, and city administrators for jurisdictions within the project area; and regulatory agencies, cooperating agencies, and all other agencies that had expressed interest in the project.

Open House Meetings

Open house meetings were held at Central Grange Hall on (February 15, 2006) and East Valley Middle School (February 16, 2006). Approximately 330 people attended. The Notice of Availability of the EA and Notice of Open Houses were advertised:

- on the Spokane County Public Works Web site on January 27, 2006,
- in the *Spokesman-Review* on January 25 and 26, 2006 (Affidavit of Publication),
- in the *Spokesman-Review* on February 9, 12, and 14, 2006 (Paid Advertisement), and
- on 4-by-8-foot signs located along Bigelow Gulch and Forker roads.

Open Town Hall Meeting

Approximately 50 residents attended a 2-hour open town hall meeting, held on the evening of February 27, 2006, at the Orchard Prairie School. Attendees presented questions on the January 2006 EA to Ross Kelley of Spokane County and Keith Martin and Steve Yach of WSDOT. Commissioner Todd Mielke was also present and discussed project concerns.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held March 22, 2006, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., at East Valley Middle School. The notice of the public hearing was advertised:

- on the Spokane County Public Works Web site on March 7, 2006,
- in the *Spokesman-Review* on March 7 and 14, 2006, and
- on seven 4-by-8-foot signs along Bigelow Gulch and Forker roads.

The public hearing included the opportunity to provide verbal comments documented by a court reporter, to fill out the comment forms, or to provide written comments to Spokane County (postmarked by April 28, 2006—the end of the public comment period). The public hearing was attended by 148 people; 33 people offered verbal testimony. A paper copy of the public hearing transcript is available for public review at the Spokane County Public Works' office, and is available in PDF format on the Spokane County website at <<http://www.spokanecounty.org/engineer/>>.

The number and format of comments on the January 2006 EA that were submitted during the comment period (January 27–April 28, 2006) include the following:

- 51 comment letters were submitted directly to Spokane County,
- 93 comments forms were submitted at the open house meetings,
- one state agency and several Spokane County departments provided written comments, and
- 33 individuals provided verbal testimony at the public hearing, which was recorded in the hearing transcript.

A total of 557 comments were received via letter, form, and public testimony. These comments covered a variety of issues including project alternatives, public involvement, NEPA process, groundwater resources and quality, land use, vegetation and wildlife, and noise. The majority of comments received were from local citizens in and around the Urban Connector Alignment project area.

1.3.2. Agency Consultation

During the conceptual planning and preliminary design phase, Spokane County and WSDOT met and coordinated with a variety of agencies and other organizations including the Spokane Regional Transportation Council, East Valley School District No. 361, Orchard Prairie Association, cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Nez Perce Tribe, Kalispel Tribe, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Washington Historic Preservation Office.

Agency coordination activities occurred in conjunction with scoping, definition of issues or approaches to analysis of issues, requests for information, and efforts relating to mitigation.

1.4. How will the Urban Connector Alignment meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements?

As a federally funded roadway project, the Urban Connector Alignment constitutes a federal action under NEPA, and must comply with NEPA requirements. FHWA is the lead agency responsible for the project's compliance with NEPA.

Part 771.115 of Title 23 – Highways, of the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) (CFR Chapter 1, 2003), defines three classes of action which prescribe the level of documentation required under NEPA.

(a) Class I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Actions that significantly affect the environment require an EIS (40 CFR 1508.27). The following are examples of actions that normally require an EIS:

- A new controlled access freeway.
- A highway project of four or more lanes in a new location.
- New construction or extension of fixed rail transit facilities.
- New construction or extension of a separate roadway for buses or high occupancy vehicles not located within an existing highway facility.

(b) Class II (Categorical Exclusion). Actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant environmental effect are excluded from the requirement to prepare an EA or EIS.

(c) Class III (EA). Actions in which the significance of the environmental impact is not clearly established require the preparation of an EA. All actions that are not Class I or Class II are Class III. All actions in this class require the preparation of an EA to determine the appropriate environmental document required.

The FHWA determined that because the Urban Connector Alignment would follow an existing roadway for much of its length (71%), it did not represent a Class I action, “a highway project on four or more lanes on a new location,” but rather a Class III action, which requires development of an EA.

This Revised EA has been prepared to assist FHWA to determine if further environmental review is required. If FHWA determines that project impacts are significant, it will proceed with the development of an EIS. If FHWA determines that project impacts are not significant, it will proceed with development and issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The impacts, regulations, and mitigation measures examined in detail in Chapter 4, *Elements of the Environment*, are summarized in Table 1-1.

1.5. What is the current status of the Urban Connector Alignment?

The Urban Connector Alignment is in the development stage; the design information for the level of right-of-way requirements is not finalized. The Urban Connector Alignment is included in the Spokane County 2007–2012 Transportation Improvement Program and is also included in the Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Transportation Improvement Program, and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Spokane County is the proponent of the Urban Connector Alignment, with cooperation and contributions from:

- WSDOT,
- Washington State Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board,
- Washington State Transportation Improvement Board,
- County Road Administration Board, and
- Federal Surface Transportation Act, Surface Transportation Program.

Final design will begin upon issuance of the FONSI.

The County Road Project (CRP) numbers assigned to the Revised EA are as follows:

1. CRP 2784 for the urban portion, and
2. CRP 2789 for the rural portion of the road.

A summary of the required federal, state, and local permits and approvals for the Urban Connector Alignment is shown in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2. Federal and State Permits and Approvals

Agency	Law	Documentation	Permit/Approval
FHWA	NEPA	Environmental Assessment (EA)	Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
WSDOT	State Environmental Policy Act; adoption of NEPA EA per WAC 197-11-630	EA	Determination of Non-Significance, Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance, or Determination of Significance
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Endangered Species Act (ESA)	Biological Assessment (BA)	Letters of Concurrence (Concurrence letter received 9/03; see Appendix F of January 2006 EA)
Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)	CWA and Washington State Water Pollution Control Act	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, Temporary Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan, Spill Prevention and Emergency Cleanup Plan	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general permit to discharge stormwater associated with construction activity
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Native American Tribal Authorities (Tribes), and local governments	Construction projects in state waters, Chapter 77.55 of the RCW Water Resource Act of 1971 (90.54 RCW)	Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA)	As appropriate, the JARPA consolidates the following permit applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CWA Section 404 permit ▪ Rivers and Harbors Act Sections 9 and 10 Permits ▪ Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) ▪ Water Quality Certification ▪ Aquatic Use Authorization ▪ Shoreline Management Permit ▪ Floodplain Development Permit ▪ ESA Consultation (see above)
SHPO and Affected Tribes	Section 106 of NHPA	Determination of Eligibility Form, Archaeological Survey Report, Site Protection Plan (if necessary)	Letters of concurrence with Area of Potential Effect; see Appendix D of January 2006 EA and in Appendix 5 of this revised EA
Washington State Department of Natural Resources	Aquatic Use Authorization Washington Forest Practices Act, Chapter 76.09 RCW	Aquatic Use/Easement Permits Forest Practices application/ notification	Aquatic Use Authorization Forest Practices Permit
FHWA and U.S. Department of Interior	Section 4(f) (23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.135)	Draft and final Section 4(f) evaluation	FHWA Section 4(f) Determination and concurrence from U.S. Department of Interior