

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

Appendix A defines technical terms used in the EA.

Acquisition – The purchase of property necessary to construct a project. If a property is only partially acquired, the project requires only a portion of the property, leaving portions still available for the former use.

Adverse effect – Any undesirable or harmful effect to a person or to any natural or man-made resource.

Arterial street – A major street that primarily serves traffic traveling through a municipality, but also provides access to adjacent properties.

At-grade roadway – A section of roadway at ground level.

At-grade crossing – Any intersection of two or more flows of traffic at the same elevation (possibly involving more than one mode of transportation, such as a roadway/railroad crossing).

A-weighted decibel (dBA) – Sound levels are expressed on a logarithmic scale in units called decibels (dB). However, the human ear is more sensitive to some frequencies than others. A-weighted decibels (dBA) are measured using a filter to more accurately represent sound at levels that people can hear.

Bent – A structural support consisting of two columns with an interconnecting beam.

Best Management Practice (BMP) – A practice that has proven to be an effective means of avoiding or reducing environmental effects. For example, water quality BMPs are designed to prevent or reduce the amount of pollution from nonpoint sources (diffuse sources over a relatively large area) or other adverse water quality effects while meeting other goals and objectives.

Carbon monoxide (CO) – A colorless, odorless, poisonous gas that forms when the carbon in fuels does not burn completely, primarily in motor vehicle engines.

Combined sewer – A sewer system carrying both stormwater and untreated household and industrial wastewater.

Combined sewer overflow – When heavy rainfall enters a combined sewer system, the volume of rainwater and sewage that exceeds the system’s capacity is forced to overflow into area streams and rivers through combined sewer outfalls.

Cumulative effects – The effects on the environment resulting from the addition of the incremental effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions occurring over time.

Dewatering – Pumping groundwater to lower the water table in an area, usually in preparation for excavation or construction.

Easement – A right to use or control property belonging to another party for a designated purpose, such as maintaining public utilities.

Emission standards – A limitation on the release of an air contaminant into the ambient air; for example, the federal government limits carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxide emissions per mile of travel in new automobiles.

Ferry holding – The area where vehicles wait to enter a ferry terminal when the dock is full.

Fill – Soil or other material placed in an area to increase the surface elevation.

Footprint – The surface area covered by a project or structure.

Grade-separated – A physical arrangement of two transportation routes that cross each other at different elevations without any physical interference. For example, a highway that crosses over or under a railroad is said to be grade-separated.

Greenhouse gas – A gas that absorbs and traps heat in the Earth’s atmosphere.

Groundwater – Water that flows below the ground surface.

High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) – A vehicle with a defined minimum number of occupants (greater than one); HOVs often include buses, vanpools, and carpools of two or more people (though sometimes three people are required).

Historic era – The time after approximately AD 1850, when Euroamericans settled the Puget Sound region.

Impervious surface – Any surface, such as a road, rooftop, or parking lot, that does not allow water to soak into the ground.

Indirect effects – An indirect effect is a reasonably foreseeable effect that may be caused by a project but would occur in the future or outside of the project area. Indirect effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Intelligent transportation system (ITS) – The application of advanced electronics and computer technology to automate highway and vehicle systems to enable more efficient and safer use of existing highways.

Interchange – A system of interconnecting ramps between two or more intersecting roadways that are grade-separated.

Lateral spreading – Ground movement on gentle slopes.

Liquefaction – Liquefaction is what can happen to loose soils when shaking motion from an earthquake causes the soils to turn into a quicksand-like material. This can cause foundations to fail.

Low-income household – A household with a median household income at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, as derived from 2000 U.S. Census data.

Mainline – The primary through roadway of a freeway, as distinct from ramps and auxiliary roadways.

Maintenance area – An area that previously violated the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for a criteria pollutant but is currently in attainment and is being managed according to an approved Clean Air Act Section 175A maintenance plan.

Minority residents – Those persons who, in responding to the 2000 U.S. Census, indicated their race to be something other than “White” or reported entries that the Bureau of the Census categorized as something other than “White,” or those who indicated that they were Hispanic or Latino.

Mitigation – Measures designed to counteract or reduce environmental effects. These measures may include avoiding an

effect by not taking a certain action or part of an action; minimizing an effect by limiting the degree or magnitude of an action and its implementation; rectifying the effect by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; reducing or eliminating the effect over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; or compensating for the effect by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Multimodal – Accommodating a variety of transportation options, including cars, public transit (buses, monorail, commuter rail, light rail), pedestrians, and bicycles.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) – Federal limits on levels of atmospheric contamination necessary to protect the public from adverse effects on health (primary standards) and welfare (secondary standards).

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) – A comprehensive federal law (42 USC §§ 4321-4327) establishing national policy that environmental effects will be evaluated as an integral part of any major federal actions.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – The act that established the National Register of Historic Places and State Historic Preservation program and set forth guidelines and regulations for environmental review of projects involving federal funding.

National Register of Historic Places – The official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture and determined to be worthy of preservation.

Particulate matter (PM) – Small particles of dust, soot, and organic matter suspended in the air.

Pre-contact – Of or relating to the time before Euroamericans made contact with Native American Tribes.

Pollutant loading – The total quantity of a pollutant in stormwater runoff.

Queue – A line of vehicles waiting to move.

Queue bypass lane – A dedicated lane for transit or other high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs) allowing these vehicles to “jump ahead” of other traffic on the roadway.

Retained cut – A trench or excavated area that is supported (or “retained”) with a reinforced or stabilized wall.

Retained fill – Fill dirt supported by a retaining wall, often used to support elevated structures.

Retrofit – To modify an existing structure (for example, to make it safer or add new features).

Right-of-way – Land purchased by a public agency for a transportation way or utility, including easements for construction and maintenance.

Scoping – Identifying the range of proposed actions, alternatives, environmental elements, issues, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in an environmental document.

Section 106 – Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 establishes a procedure to review the potential effects on cultural resources by projects receiving federal funds.

Section 4(f) – Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 restricts the use of U.S. DOT funds for projects affecting the following properties: publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any land from a significant historic site.

Section 6(f) – Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 established restrictions on, and replacement requirements for, the use of land acquired with funds authorized under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

Seismic – Pertaining to or caused by an earthquake or vibration of the earth.

Sensitive receptor – A local area or site that supports activities easily disrupted by audio or visual intrusions or distractions, such as a park, school, historic landmark, or residential neighborhood.

Slurry – A sealing mixture made up of bentonite and water that is used to support an excavated trench. Bentonite is a type of clay that expands to help seal off groundwater flow.

Spoils – Soil, rock, and other materials that come to the surface when soil is mixed with cement grout.

Staging area – A site temporarily used for storage of materials or equipment, assembly, or other temporary, construction-related activities.

Tail track – A track used to sort railroad cars and assemble trains.

Total suspended solids (TSS) – Soil and other particles carried in water.

Undercrossing – A road that crosses under a freeway.

Work zone – An area where construction is occurring.