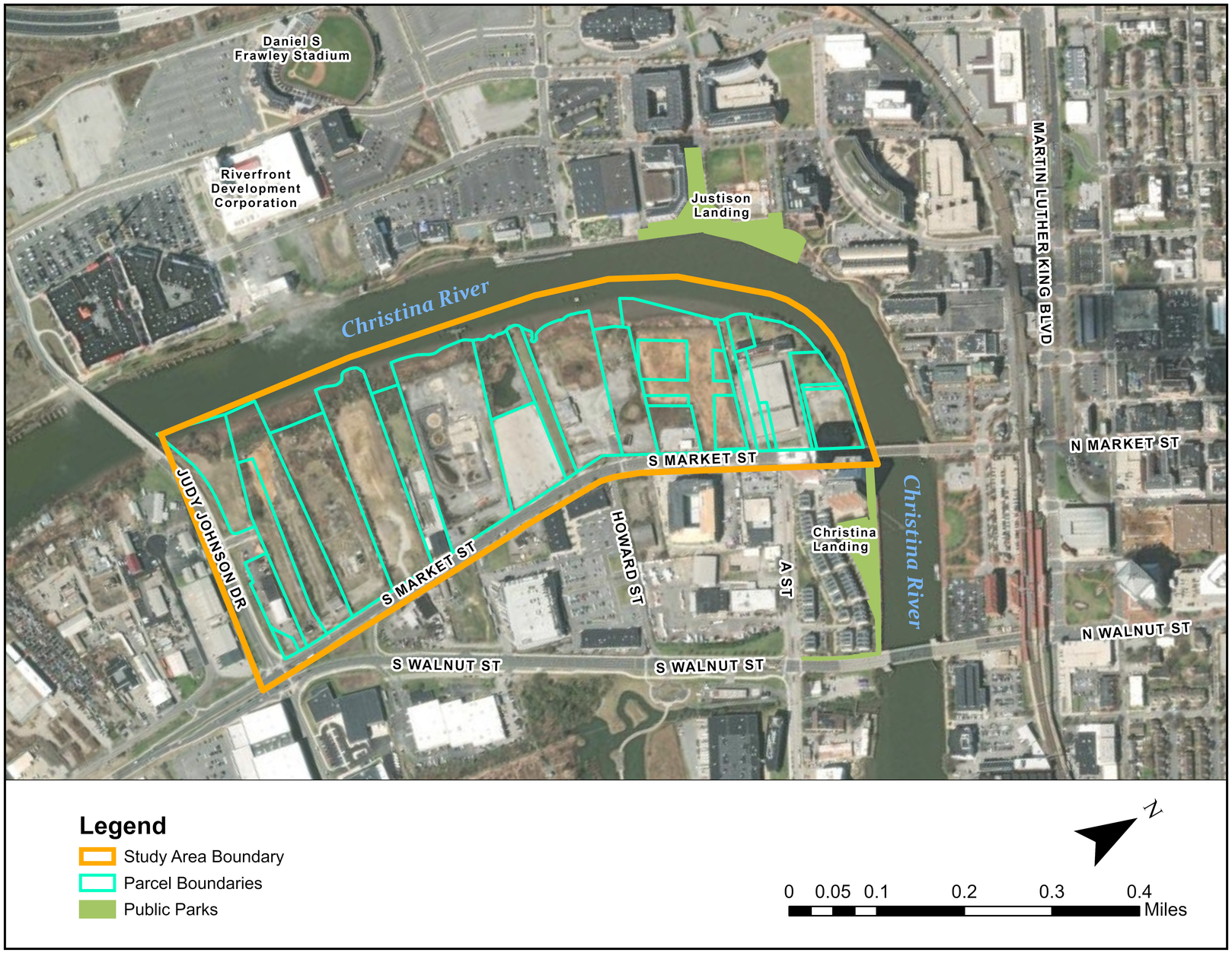
What is the Purpose of the Public Hearing?

Learn about the findings of the draft Environmental Assessment

Provide comments and Testimony

What is the Project Study Area?



EA Reference: Chapter I, page 1

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

What is the Project's Purpose & Need?

The purpose of the Project is to provide transportation infrastructure to further the connectivity of the riverfront area and provide multi-modal resources.

Project Needs:

Expand Roads

New Pedestrian/Bike Options

Manage Stormwater

EA Reference: Chapter II, pages 3-4

What are the Alternatives Considered?

No Build

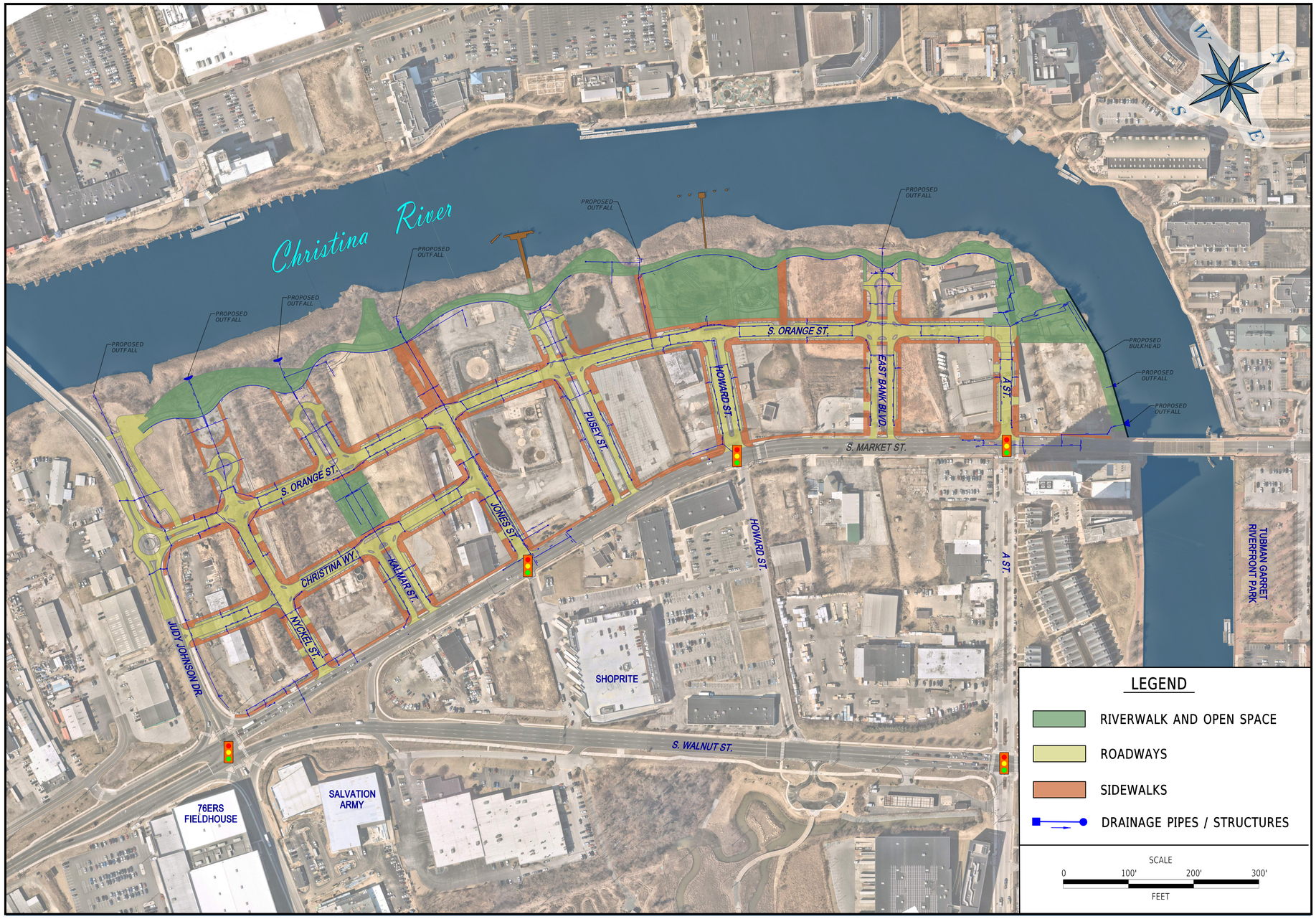
- Does not meet Purpose and Need
- No work or improvements will occur
- Existing transportation deficiencies will continue

Build

- Meets Purpose and Need
- Build Alternative includes:
  - Replication of the Wilmington street grid
  - A Riverwalk
  - New pedestrian and cyclist accommodations that connect to the existing network pathways
  - Repair of the existing bulkhead and construction of a new bulkhead
  - Additional drainage outfalls and tide control valves
  - Two feet of clean fill beneath the proposed transportation improvements

EA Reference: Chapter III, pages 5-8

What Does the Proposed Build Alternative Look Like?



EA Reference: Chapter III, pages 5-8

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Wilmington Riverfront Transportation Infrastructure Project

What Environmental Resources Were Analyzed?

- Air Quality
- Business, Economy, and Employment
- Demographics
- Environmental Justice
- Neighborhoods and Community Facilities
- Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change
- Groundwater and Hydrology
- Hazardous Materials
- Indirect and Cumulative Effects
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Noise
- Land Use and Zoning
- Floodplains
- Historic Architecture and Archaeological Resources
- Watersheds and Surface Waters
- Wetlands and Waters

EA Reference: Chapter V, pages 10-80

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What are the Differences Between the No Build and Build Alternative Direct Effects?

Comparison Factor	No Build	Build Alternative
Land Use and Zoning	No change	13.6 acres converted to infrastructure and open space; 42 acres converted to mixed use
Businesses, Economy, and Employment	No change	1 business displacement; approximately 200 construction-related jobs
Neighborhoods and Community Facilities	No effect	Improved community benefits and mobility
Demographics	No effect	There are currently no residential uses and limited employment opportunities within the Project study area. The infrastructure improvements proposed with the Build Alternative are anticipated to have direct effects on demographic characteristics.
Environmental Justice	No effect	No disproportionately high and adverse effect to the environmental justice population
Hazardous Materials	No effect	3 low-risk sites; 17 moderate risk sites; 4 high-risk sites
Noise	No effect	24 residential noise-sensitive land uses would be impacted by traffic-generated noise
Air Quality	No effect	Project meets all applicable air quality requirements
Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change	No effect	Increase in GHG emissions from construction, operational, and maintenance activities
Historical Structures	No effect	No adverse effect
Archaeology	No effect	Potential adverse effect
Wetlands and Waters	No effect	Impacts to Federal- and state-regulated features
Watersheds and Surface Water	No effect	Impacts a drainage area of 0.03 square mile and increases the amount of impervious surface area within the watershed
Groundwater and Hydrology	No effect	Project could add additional sources of groundwater contamination from roadway runoff
Floodplains	No effect	Encroachment because the Project is contained entirely within the 100-year floodplain
Vegetation, Terrestrial Habitat, and Terrestrial Wildlife	No effect	Impacts to edge species; no substantial impacts to wildlife habitat
Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) Species	No effect	No adverse effect on the ESA-listed species
Aquatic Biota	No effect	Impacts to aquatic biota and natural habitat
Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Properties	Not applicable	Creation of a Riverwalk and multiple public green spaces and parks

EA Reference: Executive Summary, pages ix-x & Chapter V, pages 10-80; Appendices B-J

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental Justice (EJ) is evaluated to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of an action on minority and low-income populations.

An **EJ population** is any readily identifiable group of minority race and ethnicity populations and low-income populations who live in geographic proximity to the Project study area.

11 Census block groups were identified as the Socioeconomic Study Area for analysis.

EA Reference: Chapter V, Section E, pages 21-28; Appendix B

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

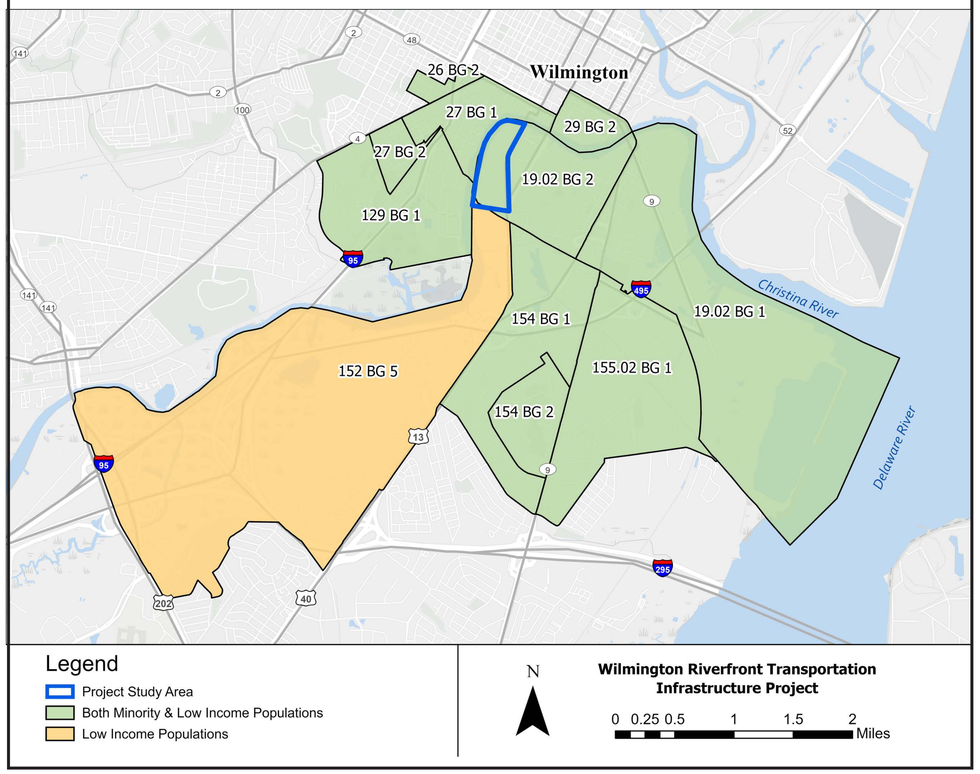
WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

What are the Effects to EJ Populations?

EJ populations are anticipated to **experience benefits** from the Build Alternative in:

- Community cohesion
- Economy and employment
- Traffic
- Air quality
- Access and mobility
- Natural resources
- Hazardous materials
- Visual and aesthetic resources
- Construction

Minority and Low Income Populations in the Socioeconomic Study Area



The Build Alternative is **not expected** to result in a disproportionately high and adverse effect on EJ populations.

The only **potential adverse effect** of the Build Alternative would be the displacement of **one business** in the Project study area, a gas station located on South Market Street.

EA Reference: Chapter V, Section E, pages 21-28; Appendices B and J

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What is the Section 106 Process?

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of the Project on historic properties (including archaeology and historic architecture), and those that are listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.


Davo Shipyard Crane 1

An architectural survey was conducted to identify all above-ground cultural resources that are 40 years or older in the area. No adverse effect is anticipated to historic structures.


South Market Street Bridge

The area has the potential to contain intact archaeological resources; however, effects to archaeological resources have not been identified. Archaeological work will continue following the completion of the NEPA process though the use of a Project Programmatic Agreement.

EA Reference: Chapter V, Section J, pages 46-51; Appendices F and H

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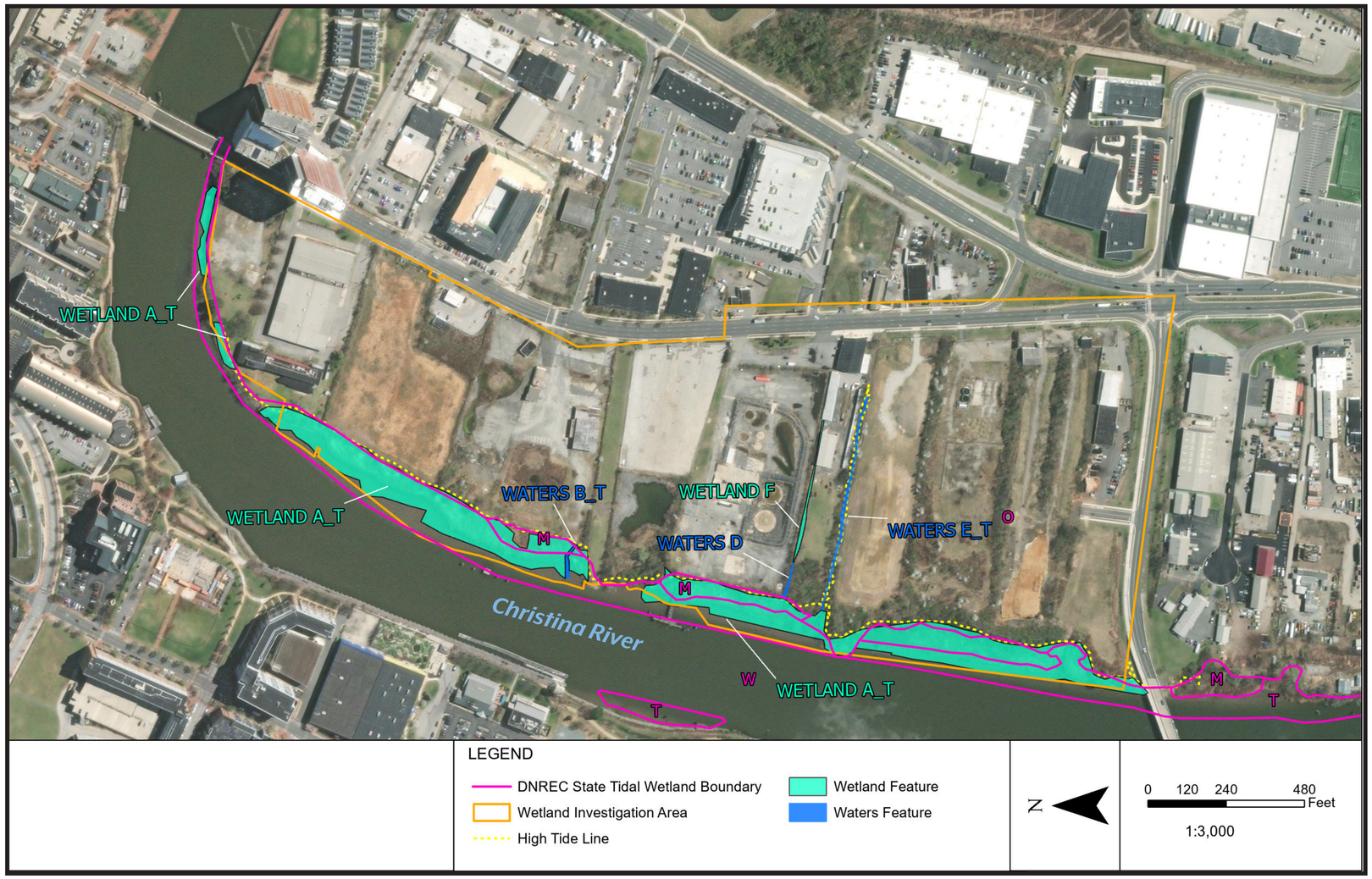
What are the Impacts to Wetlands, Waterways, and Floodplains?

The entire Project study area is **within the 100-year floodplain** caused by coastal storm surges from the Delaware Bay.

The Project includes fill to **raise the transportation infrastructure 18 inches or more above the 100-year floodplain**.



Impacts to wetlands and waters associated with construction of the Build Alternative **may lead to a decrease** in available wetland and waters habitat within the Project study area and ultimately a decrease in plant and animal species inhabiting these areas.

EA Reference: Chapter K-N, pages 51-65; Appendices I and J

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WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

What are the Effects to Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change?

Currently, the area's infrastructure and transportation systems contribute to **a small level of emissions** from moderate vehicular traffic and limited availability of public transit options.

Potential Effects from the Build Alternative on GHG emissions

- Reducing congestion
- Improving vehicle efficiency

Potential Emissions Decrease

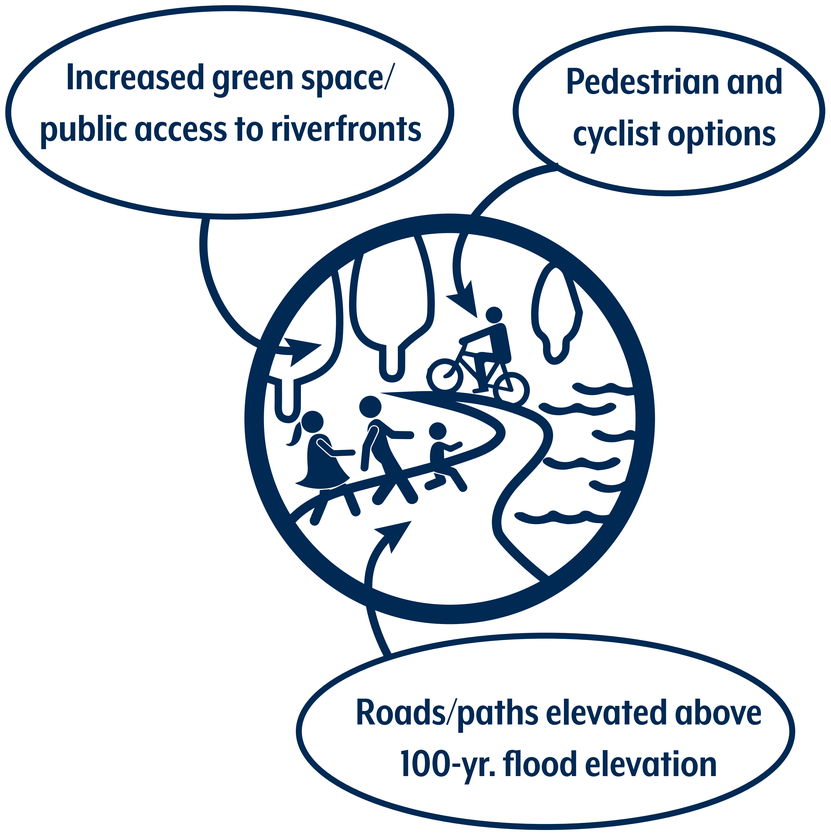
- Construction activities/ equipment/vehicles
- Additional traffic on new alignment roadway built under Project

Potential Emissions Increase

Minimization strategies to address GHG emissions

- ✓ The implementation of construction best practices to reduce emissions
- ✓ The integration of sustainable transportation options to lower future emissions
- ✓ The use of green infrastructure to enhance carbon sequestration

Strategies to mitigate effects of climate change



Chapter V, Sections H and I, pages 38-46; Appendix E

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WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

What are the Minimization, Mitigation, and Commitments of the Build Alternative?

Environmental Resource	Minimization, Mitigation, and Commitments
Land Use and Zoning	**No mitigation is needed.**
Businesses, Economy, and Employment	**No mitigation is needed.** **Commitment:** Approximately 200 construction-related jobs.
Neighborhoods and Community Facilities	**No mitigation is needed.** **Commitment:** Early construction of Orange Street to serve as a haul road to minimize project-related construction traffic traveling through adjacent residential communities.
Demographics	**No mitigation is needed.**
Environmental Justice	**No mitigation is needed.** **Commitment:** The City of Wilmington's Office of Economic Development will work with the University of Delaware's Local Government Grant Assistance Program and the Southbridge Civic Association in identifying and applying for grant funding in support of the improvements identified in the Southbridge Transportation Action Plan. The City of Wilmington and the Riverfront Development Corporation will continue to investigate funding to plan, design, and construct a pedestrian connection from the Southbridge Community to the Wetland Park between C Street and South Church Street.
Hazardous Materials	In locations where the infrastructure improvements would occur, avoidance, mitigation, and minimization efforts include the completion of hazardous materials surveys, sampling, and investigations; completion of Brownfield Investigation Reports; development of Final Plans of Remedial Action and implementation of remediation as needed; completion of waste characterizations; completion of Contaminated Materials Management Plans and Health and Safety Plans; abandonment of all monitoring wells after remediation; proper onsite exposure precautions; proper treatment and disposal of identified hazardous materials. The City and the RDC will continue public notification throughout the construction process.
Noise	**Minimization:** Minimizing temporary construction noise may include limiting noise from equipment where possible, following equipment noise standards of the EPA, temporary acoustic barriers, locating stationary equipment away from noise-sensitive properties, and strategic scheduling of loud construction operations. All construction operations would comply with the City's Code of Ordinances on noise control and abatement.
Air Quality	**Minimization:** All construction activities would follow the *DelDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* to minimize and mitigate emissions during construction.
Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change	**Minimization:** Strategies include the implementation of construction best practices to reduce emissions, the integration of sustainable transportation options to lower future emissions, and the use of green infrastructure to enhance carbon sequestration.

What are the Minimization, Mitigation and Commitments of the Build Alternative?

Environmental Resource	Minimization, Mitigation, and Commitments
Historical Structures & Archaeology	**No mitigation necessary for historic structures.** **Commitment:** A Project Programmatic Agreement (PPA) stipulates the completion of a phased identification of archaeological historic properties, should they be present.
Wetlands and Waters	**Mitigation:** Proposed approach would be to enhance phragmites dominated tidal wetlands, on-site, along the Project shoreline. Compensatory mitigation plans developed, as required by Federal and state regulations, would comply with the requirements included in the 2008 mitigation rule, including provision for long-term management, adaptive management, and site protection.
Watersheds and Surface Water	**Minimization:** Actions will be in accordance with the Delaware 5101 Sediment and Stormwater Regulations. **Mitigation:** The quality and quantity requirement are met through brownfield remediation and conveyance structure use BMPs.
Groundwater and Hydrology	**Minimization:** Groundwater impacts would be minimized by the remedial actions in the transportation infrastructure improvement area and by the development of a non-erosive stormwater conveyance system.
Floodplains	**Mitigation:** Elevating Project study area 18 inches or more above the 100-year floodplain.
Vegetation, Terrestrial Habitat, and Terrestrial Wildlife	**Minimization:** The abatement of hazardous materials should improve habitat for wildlife where it can recolonize. **Mitigation:** Project proposes inclusion tree plantings and additional green space. **Commitments:** The use of erosion and sediment control best management practices would minimize pollutant runoff into surrounding wildlife habitat.
Rare, Threatened, and Endangered (RTE) Species	**Minimization/Commitments:** DNREC time-of-year restrictions for in-water work would not take place from March 1 to June 30. Project design criterion would be used to minimize potential negative effective to RTE species. These include tactics that aim to control underwater noise, impingement/entrainment and entanglement, water quality/turbidity, habitat alteration, and vessel traffic.
Aquatic Biota	**Minimization:** Through strict adherence to Delaware mandated erosion and sediment controls. **Commitment:** Adherence to DNREC time-of-year restrictions, reducing underwater noise by using a soft start pile driving system, minimizing water quality impacts through use of erosion and sediment control BMPs, limiting construction debris, and minimizing habitat impacts by reducing the channel size to the minimum size that still allows non-erosive conveyance.
Section 4(f) and Section 6(f)	**No mitigation necessary** **Commitment:** PPA will address phased identification of archaeological historic properties, should they be present.

What are the Next Steps for the Project?

- Public comments on the Draft EA will be collected between April 1 - May 1, 2024
- FHWA and the City of Wilmington will review public comments and address them in a Final EA
- If FHWA determines that there are no significant impacts, a Finding of No Significant Impact would be published
- Construction would begin after completion of the NEPA process

How Can I Provide Comments at the Public Hearings?

Verbal testimony to panelists at the in-person or virtual hearing

Private verbal testimony to court reporter at in-person hearing

Written comments in comment box at in-person hearing

Comment by Wednesday, May 1, 2024

What are the Other Ways to Comment?

Comment by Wednesday, May 1, 2024

riverfronteastconnect.com/EAcommentform

contact@riverfronteastconnect.com

Voicemail via 302-250-4379

Visit riverfronteastconnect.com

- View Draft EA
- Sign up for Project emails
- Participate in future public involvement opportunities
- See project updates
- Review Public Hearing materials