

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### **Purpose of LS DSEIS**

On January 27, 2020, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to advise the public that a Limited Scope Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (LS DSEIS) will be prepared for the proposed Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway (Project) in the City of Burlington (City), Chittenden County, Vermont.

The FHWA, in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the City, has prepared this LS DSEIS for the Project between Interstate 189 and Main Street in Burlington, Vermont. The project's Record of Decision (ROD) was rescinded on October 11, 2019 to "perform targeted outreach to any minority and low-income populations in the project study area in order to determine whether the conclusions reached in the 2009 Final SEIS and 2010 ROD remain valid."

This LS DSEIS is limited in the scope of issues, and only assesses impacts to low-income and minority populations. Based on the Executive Order (EO) 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, and FHWA's *Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA*, it is FHWA's policy to identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse effects of FHWA actions on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. This LS DSEIS addresses a limited portion of the project along the Pine Street section of the Selected Alternative, between Maple Street and Main Street, which received targeted outreach to the minority populations. During the LS DSEIS review of the Selected Alternative, minority populations were also identified adjacent to Pine Street between Kilburn Street and Flynn Avenue. It has been determined the project will have minimal effects to this community. There will be additional outreach to this community once the LS DSEIS is released.

### **Project Description**

The Project remains divided into three construction contracts referred to as the C-1 Section, the C-2 Section, and the C-6 Section. The description and limits for the C-1 Section and C-2 Section are unchanged from the 2009 FSEIS and Selected Alternative in the 2010 Record of Decision (ROD). The C-6 Section is also unchanged from the description provided in the 2009 FSEIS. As described in the 2009 FSEIS, C-6 Section will utilize Lakeside Avenue and Pine Street to connect C-2 Section of the Project to the Burlington CCD at the intersection of Pine Street and Main Street. The Maple and King Street Neighborhood is at the northern end of the project on Pine Street extending from Maple Street to Main Street (approximately 800 feet). An overview of the Project corridor is shown in Figure ES-1.



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**LEGEND**

- SIDEWALK
- SHARED USE PATH
- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- MAPLE AND KING STREET NEIGHBORHOOD



**Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway MEGC-M5000(1)**



**FIGURE ES-1**  
**PROJECT CORRIDOR**  
 Page ii

The proposed improvements to Pine Street within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood consist of cold planing and resurfacing the existing pavement; the installation of traffic signals at the Maple and King Street intersections with Pine Street; providing drainage improvements, installing new curbing, curb extensions; new concrete sidewalks with new ADA-complaint sidewalk access ramps and detectable warning surfaces at the crosswalk locations.

### **Project Need**

The existing problems and deficiencies that were identified in the 2009 FSEIS have not changed and are still considered valid. In summary, the Project needs defined in the 2009 FSEIS are:

1. Congestion (including insufficient capacity to appropriately service traffic volumes and provide appropriate access);
2. Safety concerns created by vehicles utilizing roadways that functionally operate at a higher classification than intended, both along the minor arterials and in neighborhood areas which are acting as short-cuts; and
3. Mix of local and through-traffic in neighborhood areas (including truck traffic) created by a lack of a north/south arterial to access the CCD.

### **Project Purpose**

The purpose of the Project is unchanged from the Project purpose stated in the 2009 FSEIS:

The purpose of the Project is to improve access from the vicinity of the interchange of I-189 and U.S. Route 7 to the Burlington CCD and the downtown waterfront area and to improve circulation, alleviate capacity overburdens, improve safety on local streets in the project study area and provide traffic relief in the southwestern quadrant of the City of Burlington. The purpose of the project is also to eliminate the disruption to local neighborhoods and separate local and through-traffic. Truck traffic that is destined for the CCD or the industrial areas accessed from Home Avenue and Flynn Avenue would be directed onto the Champlain Parkway and removed from the local street network. The proposed transportation corridor is expected to become the major routing for north-south through-traffic in the area. The reassignment of the majority of through-traffic to this route would reduce traffic volume levels along neighborhood streets and improve accessibility to adjacent neighborhood areas.

## **Project History**

The Project has a long history with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews dating back to the 1970s. The most recent NEPA document for the project was a Final Supplemental EIS approved by FHWA on September 22, 2009 and a Record of Decision (ROD) issued on January 13, 2010 identifying the Selected Alternative and the reasons for its selection.

On October 11, 2019, FHWA published a notice to rescind the 2010 ROD in order to re-evaluate the project's impacts to minority and low-income populations in accordance with 23 CFR 771.129. This decision reads, in part, "The FHWA, in conjunction with VTrans, has determined that the ROD shall be rescinded for the following reason: Although the 2005 Draft SEIS and the 2009 Final SEIS each considered disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations in accordance with Executive Order 12898, public outreach for that analysis was limited to the general public involvement associated with the NEPA process. FHWA and VTrans have decided to perform targeted public outreach to any minority and low-income populations in the project study area in order to determine whether the conclusions reached in the 2009 FSEIS and 2010 ROD remain valid. FHWA and VTrans have also determined that the environmental justice analysis and conclusions in the NEPA review should be reassessed using the latest (2014-2018 5-year estimates) American Community Survey data and based on FHWA's December 16, 2011 Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA." Based on the environmental reevaluation, FHWA determined that a LS DSEIS should be prepared for the project to address the FHWA guidance and methodology for performing Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis subsequent to the 2009 FSEIS, incorporate updated demographic information contained in the latest available census data, and to provide additional opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

## **Regulatory Background**

FHWA has required preparation of this LS DSEIS under NEPA implementation regulations in accordance with 23 CFR §771.130(e) that state "In some cases, an Environmental Assessment (EA) or supplemental EIS may be required to address issues of limited scope, such as the extent of proposed mitigation or the evaluation of location or design variations for a limited portion of the overall project."

## **Environmental Justice**

The EJ Analysis included in this document follows the procedures recommended in the FHWA Guidance memorandum as listed below and summarized in Chapter 4.

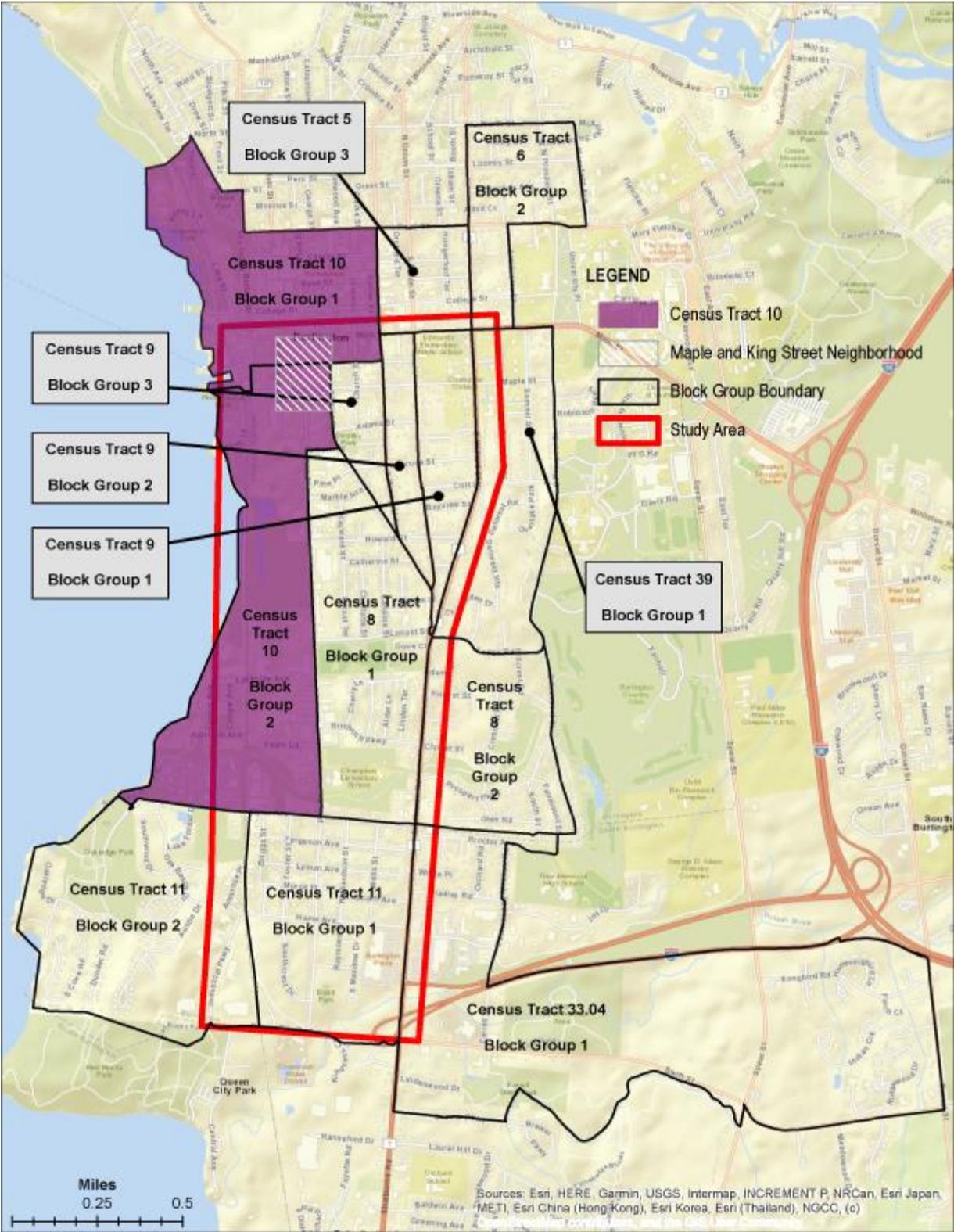
- EO 12898 – *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations*
- FHWA Order 6640.23A – FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations dated June 14, 2012
- FHWA Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA dated December 16, 2011

As described in Chapter 4, an EJ screening was completed within the Project study area. Although it was determined that none of the study area census tracts meet the criteria for low-income populations, Census Tract 10 was identified as a minority population given the higher percentage of minority residents than the City or county. The residential portion of this census tract that is within the Project study area comprises much of the Maple and King Street Neighborhood.

The percentage of minority residents in Census Tract 10 was originally identified in the 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey estimates. These estimates provided Census Tract level data only. Based on this information, coupled with intimate knowledge of the city demographics, the Maple and King Street neighborhood was identified as a community higher in minority composition over any another area within the project area. This community possessed 21% minority totals compared to that of the city average of 17%. While completing the project analysis, new 2018 American Community Survey data was released which added new granularity and Block Group detail data. This new data cut the Maple and King community in half by showing the King Street demographics in Census Tract 10 Block Group 1 and Maple Street demographics in Census Tract 10 Block Group 2. Considering the combination of recent census data, local knowledge, and the results of the outreach and engagement effort, it has been determined that the Maple and King Street Neighborhood consists of a minority population that will require an EJ analysis for this project.

The Maple and King Street Neighborhood is highlighted in a hatched box within Census Tract 10 in Figure ES-2.

Figure ES-2:



## **Project Impact**

The Selected Alternative will be located within the current Pine Street right-of-way in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood, although temporary right-of-way access will be necessary to complete construction of sidewalks and other project amenities.

While the Project is expected to have limited footprint and construction impacts in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood, the Project will increase traffic volumes by approximately 1,400 vehicles per day (vpd) (approximately 9%) on Pine Street north of Lakeside Avenue, including in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood, when compared with the No-Build condition. The increased traffic within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood was evaluated for adverse effects through an environmental justice analysis. It was determined, through this analysis, that the installed coordinated traffic signals will improve traffic operations and decrease congestion on Pine Street in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood. It was further determined that these upgrades will lead to smoother traffic flow, improved intersection operation, and decreased delay. They are expected to address any adverse effects resulting from the increase in traffic volumes.

Overall effects to the transportation system, including a discussion of traffic volumes, operations, and safety are discussed and fully described in Chapter 7 and in Appendix 2 of this document.

To minimize project impacts within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood, Pine Street will not be widened. Instead, all improvements will occur within the existing right-of-way, except temporary easements necessary to complete the work. The Project will improve traffic operations compared to the No-Build condition and will address increased traffic flow and overall intersection operations. The installation of traffic signals at the Maple and King Street intersections with Pine Street will be coordinated with an upgraded signal at Main Street and Pine Street, resulting in smoother traffic flow, improved intersection operations, and decreased delay.

The new and upgraded signals will include pedestrian phases with countdown timers to provide safer crossing opportunities for pedestrians, which include WALK signals in an exclusive phase where all vehicles are stopped. This operational improvement will improve intersection safety for pedestrians utilizing these intersections and overall traffic flow for motorists. Curb extensions and crosswalks will be constructed at these three intersections as part of the Project and will further improve pedestrian safety by increasing visibility and reducing the crossing distance. These Project improvements will be particularly beneficial to pedestrians traveling in groups with children, the elderly, and the disabled. Mobility and access for pedestrians and bicyclists will be improved by providing new continuous ADA-compliant sidewalk along the eastern side of Pine Street, and a reconstructed ADA compliant sidewalk along the western side of Pine Street. These new accommodations will improve pedestrian accessibility and safety compared to the No-Build condition and will mitigate the negative effect of the Project's traffic increases.

These new and reconstructed sidewalks, combined with a new shared-use path to the south and enhanced on-road bicycle treatments, will expand the network and quality of facilities available to pedestrians and bicyclists having origins/destinations within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood and the City at large. These new facilities will better accommodate pedestrian and bicyclist safety and movement, ADA compliance/accessibility and on-street parking in and around the community.

Construction of the Project in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood will involve temporary impacts to normal traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle patterns due to paving and temporary sidewalk closures with detours to construct the new curbing, sidewalk, and traffic signal equipment. Concerns and comments regarding construction and work zone impacts were raised from members of the Maple and King Street Neighborhood during the public outreach events. These concerns were noted and will be mitigated to the greatest extent possible during the construction phase for the project.

As illustrated in Table ES-1 and in the body of the LS DEIS, identified neighborhoods within the Study Area will share both the project's improvements and some adverse impacts. After additional review of the proposed improvements and public involvement engagement, the Project will not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority populations in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood in accordance with the provisions of EO 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23A.

## **Project Mitigation**

To mitigate the negative effects of the project, a number of mitigation measures are proposed:

### *Construction Impacts*

To the extent feasible, appropriate measures have been incorporated into the Project's construction and planning documents to address construction impact concerns.

### *Work Zone Safety and Mobility*

The Project will include provisions that provide safe passage for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorized vehicles during and after construction work hours while minimizing impact in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood during construction work hours. Construction phasing and scheduling will ensure safe pedestrian access through the construction area and to adjacent properties, buildings, residences, commercial properties and transit stops.

Regular and timely coordination between the contractor, emergency response personnel, Green Mountain Transit, and school bus route operators shall ensure the continuity of these vital services.

Pedestrians may be directed around isolated work areas. The contractor is required to prepare a temporary pedestrian and bicyclist traffic control plan in advance of the plan

being implemented to detail construction phasing and schedule as well as the specific methods of maintaining safe pedestrian and bicyclist access throughout the work zone.

Other efforts that will mitigate temporary neighborhood impacts include the following:

- Time-of-day restrictions on the contractor's activities,
- Changeable message boards with timely and meaningful messages consistent with the current construction activities,
- Maintaining bicycle travel paths to be free of ruts, sand, mud and other debris.
- Providing pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic detours as necessary and ensuring that the site is not left inaccessible at night.
- Installing temporary pedestrian ramps as necessary.
- The Project will also be constructed in accordance with the City's noise ordinances which will place limitations on contractor's disruptive construction operations. Fugitive dust will be minimized by imposing requirements such as pick-up broom sweepers and watering down dust piles and/or tarping piles at night as well as other dust control measures.

#### *Public Involvement Plan*

In addition to work zone safety and mobility provisions, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has been developed by the City, the Champlain Parkway Municipal Project Manager (MPM), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and a dedicated Project Information Manager (PIM). This PIP will utilize communication strategies that seek to inform the general public and the EJ community of work zone impacts and the Project's changing conditions. The public information team will also conduct outreach to residents and businesses adjacent to construction activities. This outreach will include door-to-door outreach, posting informational flyers in local businesses, organizations, and other public places, stakeholder interviews, calls, and visits. A database of key constituents and stakeholders will be developed to share project information and updates throughout the construction of the Project. This list will include businesses and residents in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood. Informational outreach will include updates to provide advance warning of construction impacts such as traffic pattern changes or other disruptive activities and to identify community specific-issues or concerns before construction activities begin.

Print materials for education and outreach, such as project factsheets, door hangers, brochures, and flyers, will be produced as part of the PIP. These materials will be available in multiple languages. The target languages have been verified with city personnel as part of the ongoing EJ community public involvement effort. These materials will be posted in community locations, including in public buildings and businesses, throughout the Project Area and will be distributed to each residence. In addition to project-specific materials and meetings, press releases, other media alerts, and the City's social media platforms are anticipated to be used to inform the community about construction activities.

A project hotline and email address for the public to submit questions and comments will be established and weekly project email updates will be sent to the stakeholder distribution list.

The Parkway's website ([www.champlainparkway.com](http://www.champlainparkway.com)) will be used to provide information about construction progress and upcoming construction activities, including the overall construction schedule and the anticipated schedule of key construction activities. The website will be redesigned to be updated daily and will include an interactive project map to provide a closer look at the phased construction work and ongoing progress. The City's municipal website will include links to the Parkway's website ([www.champlainparkway.com](http://www.champlainparkway.com)) to facilitate access to project updates.

**Table ES-1: Summary of Project Impacts by Neighborhood**

Affected Environment*	Neighborhoods							
	Maple and King Street	Calahan (South) Park	Birchcliff Parkway	Lakeside	Flynn Avenue/ Home Avenue	South Meadows	Oakledge	Austin Drive
<b>Land Use and Socioeconomics</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Traffic Volumes</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	Positive	<b>Negative</b>	Positive	Positive	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Mobility</b> <i>(Traffic Operations and Bicycle and Pedestrian Access)</i>	Positive	Neutral / None	Positive	Neutral / None	Positive	<b>Negative</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Traffic Safety</b>	Positive	Positive	Positive	Neutral / None	Positive	Positive	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Air Quality</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Noise Environment</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Historic and Archaeological Resources</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None	Neutral / None
<b>Construction Impacts</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	Neutral / None	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	Neutral / None	Neutral / None

\* Mitigation Measures have been incorporated into this matrix.

## **Design Treatments**

For the Selected Alternative, design treatments have been incorporated to mitigate the adverse effects of the changes in traffic volumes and patterns, which include traffic calming features, improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and streetscape features. Consistent ADA-compliant sidewalks will be used to replace current sidewalks on Pine Street, within the study area, that are inconsistent, narrow, and in bad repair. Traffic calming measures will be included to alert drivers to pedestrians along Pine Street, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the project, including the Maple and King Street Neighborhood.

The design for Pine Street, within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood, will not require widening. Traffic volumes on Pine Street in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood will increase, when compared with the No-Build alternative. However, the installation of traffic signals at the Maple and King Street intersections with Pine Street will be coordinated with the existing signals at Main Street and Pine Street, resulting in smoother traffic flow, improved intersection operation, and decreased delay. Additionally, the proposed design for Pine Street within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood includes cold planing and resurfacing the existing roadway, drainage improvements, consistent ADA-compliant sidewalks, and new curbing. The roadway layout will feature a two-foot shoulder and 11-foot shared lane in the southbound direction. The northbound direction will consist of an 11-foot shared lane, a four-foot painted parking lane buffer, and a seven-foot parking lane. These improvements will mitigate the increased traffic volume on Pine Street in the Maple and King Street Neighborhood.

The new traffic and pedestrian signals will provide safer crossing for pedestrians using walk signals in an exclusive phase where all vehicles are stopped. Providing an exclusive pedestrian phase improves vehicular traffic flow because pedestrians know to wait for a cross signal instead of causing traffic to stop each time a pedestrian arrives at the crosswalk. Curb extensions and high-visibility crosswalks will also improve pedestrian safety.

The project will also improve mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists by providing a new, continuous ADA-compliant sidewalk and ramps along both sides of Pine Street. This new and reconstructed sidewalk, combined with a new shared-use path to the south and enhanced on-road bicycle treatments, will expand the network and quality of facilities available to pedestrians and bicyclists having origins/destinations within the Maple and King Street Neighborhood and the City at large.

## **Determination of Disproportionately High and Adverse Effect**

Based on this review, it has been determined that once project upgrades have been implemented and potential adverse impacts are mitigated, there will be no disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority and/or low-income populations in accordance with the provisions of EO 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23A.