

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

June 2021



CAPITOL LAKE — DESCHUTES ESTUARY

Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES

1500 Jefferson St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501
PO Box 41476, Olympia, WA 98504-1476

June 30, 2021

To Affected Tribes, Interested Agencies, Organizations, and Members of the Public:

The Department of Enterprise Services (Enterprise Services) is pleased to issue the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project.

Enterprise Services is seeking comments on the Draft EIS. Instructions for submitting comments are outlined in the Draft EIS Fact Sheet that follows, which also includes details of the public hearing scheduled for July 27, 2021. All comments are due by August 13, 2021.

Background

Enterprise Services is evaluating options for long-term management of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary. The purpose is to identify and implement an environmentally and economically sustainable long-term management approach that meets project goals to improve water quality, manage existing sediment accumulation and future deposition, improve ecological functions, and enhance community use of the resource. **Neither short-term actions nor a long-term management alternative can be implemented until an EIS is completed and a Preferred Alternative is selected.**

About the Draft EIS

As Lead Agency under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act, Enterprise Services has prepared this Draft EIS to evaluate a range of long-term management alternatives for their ability to meet project goals. The Draft EIS evaluates a “No Action” and three action alternatives – an Estuary, a Hybrid, and a Managed Lake Alternative. The Draft EIS does not identify a Preferred Alternative.

This Draft EIS describes the impacts and benefits of the alternatives over a 30-year time horizon, temporary impacts during construction, and potential mitigation measures.

The following elements of the environment were evaluated.

- Hydrodynamics & Sediment Transport
- Navigation
- Water Quality
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Fish & Wildlife
- Wetlands
- Air Quality & Odor
- Land Use, Shorelines, & Recreation
- Cultural Resources
- Visual Resources
- Environmental Health
- Transportation
- Public Services & Utilities
- Economics

Next Steps

Comments received on the Draft EIS during the comment period will be compiled and reviewed. Substantive comments will be considered by Enterprise Services in the preparation of the Final EIS. A preferred alternative will also be identified in the Final EIS.

Thank you for your interest in the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project.

Sincerely,

William Frare

William J. Frare, P.E.

Assistant Director, Facility Professional Services (and SEPA Responsible Official)

Signed by Janet Jansen for William Frare 6/22/2021



SEPA EIS Fact Sheet

Project Title: Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project

Project Description:

The Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary includes the 260-acre waterbody, known as Capitol Lake, located on the Washington State Capitol Campus, adjacent to downtown Olympia, at the base of Puget Sound. Historically, freshwater from the Deschutes River would mix with saltwater from Budd Inlet over expansive tidal flats. Between 1949 and 1951, a dam was constructed at 5th Avenue and, without the tidal exchange, the area was transformed into a freshwater lake, fed primarily by the Deschutes River. The newly formed Capitol Lake began to experience a range of environmental impairments after construction of the 5th Avenue Dam, eventually leading to community-use restrictions that persist today. Neither short-term actions (e.g., dredging to remove accumulated sediment) nor construction of a long-term management alternative (Estuary, Hybrid, or Managed Lake) can be implemented until an Environmental Impact Statement (or EIS) is complete and a Preferred Alternative is selected. The Department of Enterprise Services, at the direction of the state Legislature, developed this Draft EIS. Enterprise Services is seeking public comment on the Draft EIS, which describes the project goals, long-term management alternatives, potential significant impacts and benefits, and ways to avoid or minimize impacts.

Summary of Alternatives:

No Action: A No Action Alternative is a required element in an EIS. It provides a baseline against which the impacts of the action alternatives (Managed Lake, Estuary, Hybrid) can be evaluated and compared. The No Action Alternative represents the most likely future in the absence of implementing a long-term management project. The No Action Alternative would retain the 5th Avenue Dam in its current configuration, with limited repair and maintenance activities, consistent with the scope and scale of those that have received funding and environmental approvals over the past 30 years.

Managed Lake: The Managed Lake Alternative would retain the 5th Avenue Dam in its existing configuration. Extensive repair and maintenance would be completed on the 5th Avenue Dam to significantly extend the serviceable life of the structure. The reflecting pool within the North Basin would be maintained, and active recreational use would be restored in this area. Sediment would be managed through initial construction dredging and recurring maintenance dredging in the North Basin only. Sediment from construction dredging would be used to create habitat areas in the Middle Basin to support improved ecological function, habitat complexity, and diversity.

Estuary: Under the Estuary Alternative, the 5th Avenue Dam would be removed, and an approximately 500-foot-wide (150-meter-wide) opening would be established in its place. This would reintroduce tidal flows to the Capitol Lake Basin, returning the area to estuarine conditions where saltwater from Budd Inlet would mix with freshwater from the Deschutes River. Sediment would be managed through initial construction dredging in the Capitol Lake Basin and recurring maintenance dredging within West Bay. Dredged materials from construction dredging would be used to create habitat areas in the Middle and North Basins to promote ecological diversity, though tide flats would be the predominant habitat type.

Hybrid: Under the Hybrid Alternative, the 5th Avenue Dam would be removed, and an approximately 500-foot-wide (150-meter-wide) opening would be established in its place. Tidal hydrology would be reintroduced to the western portion of the North Basin and to the Middle and South Basins. Within the North Basin, a curved and approximately 2,600-foot-long (790-meter-long) barrier wall with a walkway would be constructed to create an approximately 45-acre saltwater reflecting pool adjacent to Heritage Park. A freshwater (groundwater-fed) reflecting pool was also evaluated for this EIS. Construction and maintenance of this smaller reflecting pool, in addition to restored estuarine conditions in part of the Capitol Lake Basin, gives this alternative its classification as a hybrid.

All action alternatives include construction of boardwalks, a 5th Avenue Pedestrian Bridge, a dock, and a boat launch for community use.

Date of Issue of the Draft EIS:

June 30, 2021

Date Draft EIS Comments are Due:

August 13, 2021

Document Availability:

The Draft EIS is available online at: <https://CapitolLakeDeschutesEstuaryEIS.org>.

Printed copies of the Draft EIS and technical appendices are available for review for no cost at the following locations. Please call in advance due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Department of Enterprise Services, Visitor
Services
Legislative Building, 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW,
Olympia, WA 98501
360-902-8880

Washington State Library
6880 Capitol Blvd SE, Tumwater, WA 98501
360-704-5200

Lacey Timberland Library
500 College St SE, Lacey, WA 98503
360-491-3860

Olympia Timberland Library
313 8th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA, 98501-1307
360-352-0595

Tumwater Timberland Library
7023 New Market Street, Tumwater, WA, 98501-
6563
360-943-7790

How to Submit Comments:

Via the project website: <https://CapitolLakeDeschutesEstuaryEIS.org>

Via email: comment@CapitolLakeDeschutesEstuaryEIS.org

In writing:

Department of Enterprise Services
Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary EIS
PO Box 41476
Olympia, WA 98504-1476

Public Hearing:

An online public hearing will be held July 27, 2021, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Enterprise Services staff and members of the EIS Project Team will attend to hear feedback and comments on the Draft EIS. Anyone interested in providing testimony that will be submitted as public comments will be asked to pre-register to ensure accommodations for all those who wish to speak. Those who wish to observe the hearing, do not need to register. Attendance is not required in order to provide comment. The hearing will be broadcast live via TVW.

Register at: <https://clde.participate.online>

Proponent:

Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
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Lead Agency and Responsible Official:

Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
William J. Frare, P.E.
Assistant Director, Facility Professional Services

Contact Person for Lead Agency:

Carrie Martin, Project Manager
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List of Permits and Approvals:

The List of Permits and Approvals that may be required for the project can be found in Chapter 9.0, Permits & Approvals.

Authors and Principal Contributors:

The List of Preparers can be found in Attachment 2 of this Draft EIS.

Anticipated Date of Final EIS:

Comments received on the Draft EIS during the comment period will be compiled and reviewed. Substantive comments will be considered by Enterprise Services in the preparation of the Final EIS. A Final EIS that includes updates to the environmental review and responses to comments received on this Draft EIS, is expected to be published by June 30, 2022, with a Preferred Alternative identified for long-term management.