



CAPITOL LAKE — DESCHUTES ESTUARY

Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom

Topic: Executive Work Group

Meeting Participants

Executive Work Group Members

- Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe
- E. J. Zita, Port of Olympia
- Tye Menser, Thurston County
- Pete Kmet, City of Tumwater
- Chris Liu, Enterprise Services
- Lisa Parshley, LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Cheryl Selby, City of Olympia

Department of Enterprise Services

- Bill Frare
- Annette Meyer
- Carrie Martin
- Ann Larson
- Linda Kent
- Sarah Dettmer

EIS Consultants/Facilitators

- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Ray Outlaw, Floyd|Snider
- Karmen Martin, ESA
- Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic
- Tori Bahe, Ross Strategic

Observers

- Michael Althausen
- Jack DeMeyer
- Joe Downing
- Daniel Einstein
- Sue Patnude
- Steve Shanewise

Meeting Notes Summary

Welcome and Introductions

Tessa Gardner-Brown welcomed the work group and noted the meeting was being recorded and will be posted to the project website. Tessa noted the large group of meeting observers in the meeting and reminded all participants of the meeting process.

Tessa briefly reviewed the meeting agenda and expressed excitement to be delivering the Draft EIS on June 30, consistent with the deadline prescribed by the Legislature.

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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Ann Larson welcomed participants and thanked everyone for attending. Chris Liu echoed the gratitude, noting this has been a long process that is nearing a very significant milestone.

Next Steps for EIS Process

Tessa provided a brief update on the Draft EIS, again noting the release date of June 30, 2021.

Tessa described the contents of the Draft EIS (see slide 3 of meeting presentation) and noted that it is not common to see benefits discussed in an EIS, but this EIS is unique, and benefits will be included.

Tessa also reviewed the list of technical disciplines that were analyzed for the Draft EIS and noted that full technical analyses would be included in discipline reports attached to the Draft EIS. The list of disciplines includes:

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

She explained that the Draft EIS is a summary of those technical analyses. The document will also include cumulative effects and construction and long-term management planning-level costs. There is a chapter discussing engagement with work groups and the Community Sounding Board. There is also a section describing permits and approvals that would be needed to construct each alternative.

Tessa explained that between late May and October 2021, the EIS project team will collect additional water quality samples. This is consistent with the water quality monitoring conducted in 2019 in support of the Draft EIS water quality analysis; and is consistent with sampling performed by Thurston County between 2004 and 2014. These additional data will be evaluated by the EIS Project Team after the sampling is completed, between the Draft EIS and Final EIS, and included in the Final EIS.

Question: Does the hybrid alternative consider both a fresh and salt water reflecting pool?

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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Response: We evaluated both in the EIS, though the analysis of a freshwater reflecting pool is at a programmatic level. The recommendation remains that the hybrid alternative includes a saltwater reflecting pool. But the freshwater analysis is included.

Carrie Martin explained the Draft EIS will be available online to print in full or by chapter, including the discipline reports. Because of the length of the document and cost to print, there will be print copies available at libraries and the Enterprise Services office. We are also offering one hardcopy to each work group entity. Carrie asked EWG members to contact her directly to request print copies (this request was also extended to the TWG).

EIS Outreach

Ray Outlaw described the outreach activities planned during the Draft EIS comment period (June 30 – August 13, 2021). He explained that due to COVID-19 most activities will occur online. The activities include (see slide 4 of meeting presentation):

- Public comment period (extended from 30 to 45 days)
- Work Group meetings
 - Describe key findings and answer clarifying questions (early July)
 - Revisit Preferred Alternative selection criteria and preview steps between Draft and Final EIS (fall 2021)
- E-newsletters and other notices
- Online open house (available throughout comment period)
- Interest group and jurisdictional briefings (as requested, in July)
- Online public hearing (July)
- Parkway and Heritage Park Trail Loop Self-Guided Open House
- Online office hours

Carrie also described that the EIS Project Team could brief councils and commissions during the Draft EIS comment period and asked EWG members for help in scheduling briefings.

Question: Are you going to contact us directly?

Response: If you know a date and time you can let us know, but we will reach out. Please let us know as soon as possible if you have a specific date and/or time and we will get your briefing scheduled.

Question: How long of a timeslot will you need?

Response: An hour would be great.

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom

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Question: Is 45 days shorter than the previous comment period. Colleges were able to participate during scoping because school was in session. This will be when students are out of school.

Response: The comment period during scoping was the same length that we have for the Draft EIS comment period. We also looked at other EIS documents of similar complexity and a 45-day comment period was typical. This would be much longer than what was offered during Phase 1, which may be what you are referring to as the “previous comment period”. The summer issuance had to account for meeting the legislative directive for issuing the Draft EIS on June 30, 2021, and the comment period duration had to account for the target Final EIS deadline of mid-2022.

Preferred Alternative Selection Process – Criteria Definitions

Tessa described the draft process for making an informed decision about the preferred alternative. She noted including this process in the Draft EIS will allow stakeholders to review the Draft EIS before providing input into the selection process. The decision-making process includes other important decision-making factors like costs and stakeholder perspectives. There are several opportunities to integrate stakeholder input.

During this meeting, the focus is to solicit group input on the preferred alternative selection criteria. Enterprise Services is interested in whether the criteria are comprehensive, and if any key considerations are missing. We will facilitate an exercise to understand which of the criteria are most important or should be most influential in decision making, from the perspective of the Executive Work Group. A similar exercise was completed with the TWG on Friday, May 14, 2021.

Question: *How will the State Capitol Committee (SCC) be involved in the process?*

Response: *They will provide input along with the EWG and CSB in late 2021 or early 2022. The Legislature will continue to be briefed along the way. We are scheduling meetings with the 22nd delegation and budget writers in June 2021. This also includes CCDAC, the advisory arm of SCC. There is a joint meeting with SCC and CCDAC already scheduled for July 13, 2021.*

Question: *Who will be the key decision-makers for the preferred alternative; we must engage the east side of the state also?*

Response: *There are numerous meetings scheduled or being scheduled so we can continue to inform the Legislature and involve them in the process.*

Tessa explained the decision-making process that Enterprise Services has developed is a fundamental shift in how a preferred alternative is selected relative to past processes. It encourages input as a decision is being made and transparently describes decision criteria, allowing the project team to collect input in real time to support the process.

Tessa introduced Susan who has joined the meeting to facilitate an exercise with the Executive Work Group on relative importance of the preferred alternative selection criteria. Susan Hayman, who joined to support this exercise and provide consistency across similar meetings, asked the

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom

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group to think about the key issues they really want to be sure are considered in decision-making and to drop their top issues in the meeting chat. She acknowledged that people likely have more than one top priority.

Responses included:

- Sea level rise
- Ecological function
- Water quality
- Environmental health of South Sound
- Potential for ecosystem restoration in south Puget Sound
- Fish
- Sediment management

Tessa then reviewed the proposed selection criteria by describing the macro or broad criteria (A-F) and the sub-criteria (bullets) as follows.

- A. Performance Against Project Goals
- B. Other Environmental Disciplines with Significant Findings
 - Impacts and/or benefits
- C. Environmental Sustainability
 - The ability to provide net environmental benefits over a 30-year time horizon; and the level of active management required to achieve project goals
- D. Economic Sustainability
 - The relative cost-effectiveness to construct and operate the alternative in a way that would meet project goals; and the potential impacts if there is a lapse in long-term funding
- E. Construction
 - Duration/magnitude of impacts
- F. Regional Sustainability
 - Based on findings in the Draft EIS, which alternative(s) are most likely to achieve long-term support by local tribes, stakeholders, and communities?

Tessa explained that to make the most informed selection, a decision should not be made only around the ability of an alternative to meet project goals; it should consider the range of important decision-making factors, which is why there are six broad criteria.

Question: C is a little difficult for me. Net environmental benefit seems to cross over and overlap with earlier categories?

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom

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Response: There is overlap in the definition across categories. And the way the project would be implemented, benefits in one area ripple to and provide benefits in others. This process will help us understand which alternative provides the greater environmental benefit.

Question: Having just gone through the Thurston County Climate Mitigation Plan we had to narrow down top options and give priorities to our priorities. How do you pick a criterion when they all have equal weighting?

Response: The exercise today will help us understand how you might weight these criteria. Our goal through the TWG, EWG, and CSB is to understand from stakeholders how these could be weighted.

Question: It sounds like you don't yet have a characterization of how these would be weighted? Would you treat them sequentially, A>B, A>C? What happens if an alternative fails a particular criterion?

Response: The exercise today will help us understand how this group might weight the criteria. Relative to a potential failure of an alternative – it does not mean an alternative would be removed from further review because each alternative would be scored separately against each criterion – and a failure would impact the alternative scoring.

Comment: I would say to the committee that I'm not sure it does make sense. Some of these criteria are a function of compliance with the law. Let's say, for example, an alternative fails to meet water quality standards it would seem to me that any other analysis is irrelevant.

Response: We hear and note that feedback and will consider this going forward.

Comment: For some criteria scoring may be clear, for example if you do or do not meet water quality standards. But others may be less clear.

Question: Sediment management will impact the Port as well as private marinas. Does the alternatives discussion include ways that this will be addressed?

Response: The analysis considers those topics, including a dredging program to avoid or minimize impacts, and potential impacts to private marinas and the Port.

Preferred Alternative Selection Process – Criteria Prioritization

Susan explained a small-group exercise to solicit feedback on criteria priorities. Observers were welcome to view the exercise, but feedback was only completed by work group members. Feedback was not attributed to specific individuals or organizations.

Susan explained the exercise, called pairwise, which evaluates each criterion in pairs then asks the question which one (of two) would be most important to you if you were making the preferred alternative decision. This exercise was intended to evaluate relative importance, not to eliminate any of the criteria from consideration.

Meeting Notes Summary

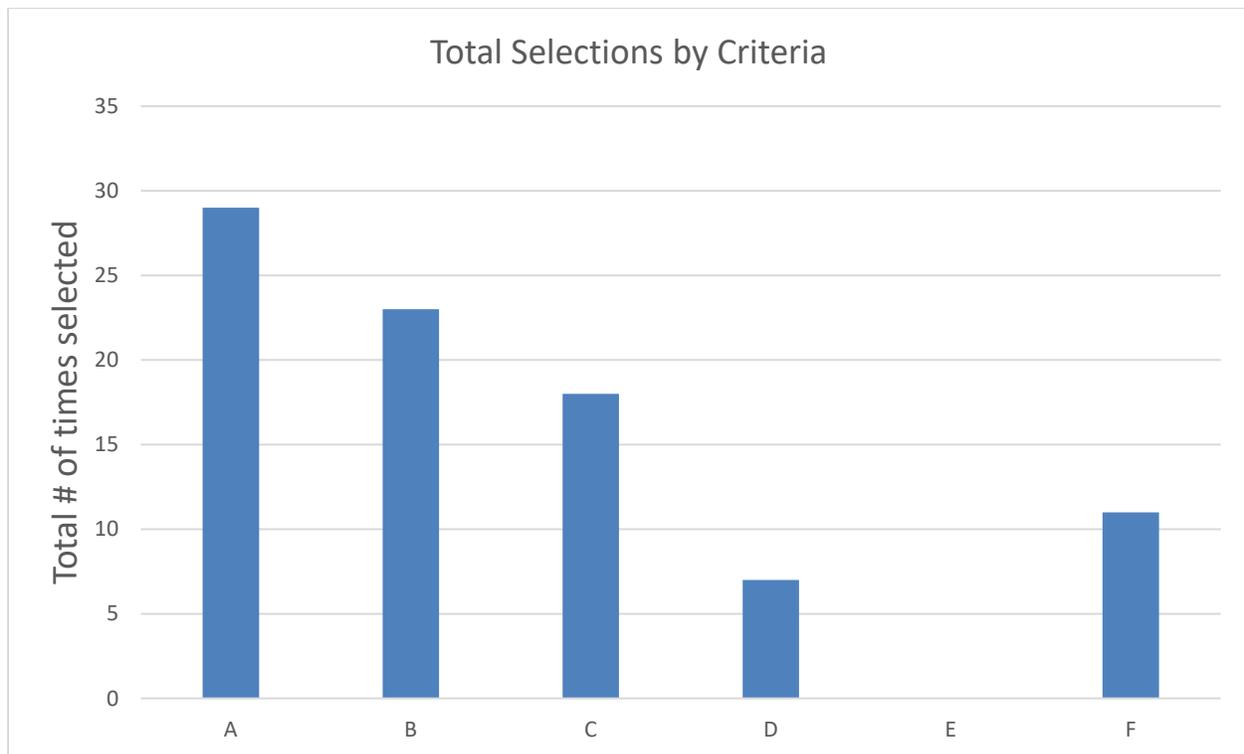
Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zoom

Topic: Executive Work Group

The group completed the exercise, and shared comments as a group.



Comment: Criteria A is overarching and more comprehensive than Criteria B.

Comment: I have a concern that, in reference to the last statement, I think it's important that we continue to follow the project goals we have established. However, the tribe would point out that fish and wildlife, specifically fish, that are included in Criteria B with some things that are relatively "mushy", that fish are not mushy. As a treaty right they are the supreme law of the land. They supersede anything else in these categories. While I argue that we should stick to our project goals the tribe's belief is that fish themselves are superseding every other criterion.

Response: Ecological functions would consider wetlands and habitat presence and quality for fish and wildlife. They are individually looked at in Criteria B as well as Criteria C.

Question: Are the alternatives evaluated for fish to include fish passage and survivability?

Response: Yes.

Comment: Water quality and ecological function are thresholds. Those have to be near the top and then we can proceed to the others. There has to be a prerequisite before moving forward.

Comment: Transportation is a big consideration.

Comment: All subcategories are important; Criteria A is overarching.

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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Comment: It is difficult to account for this without a magnitude of difference.

Question: Are costs here solely the cost of the alternatives or the long-term impacts as well?

Response: Construction and long-term maintenance costs are both estimated and would be considered in Criteria D. Criteria D is really about costs and economic impacts if there is a funding lapse. The impacts to LOTT, which can also be considered an economic impact, will be captured in Criteria B relative to ecosystem services.

Question: Would the potential for grant funding be considered?

Response: Yes, in Criteria D. An alternative might be more economically feasible if it were eligible for grant or other federal funding.

Question: This exercise is difficult with so many unknowns. Why aren't we doing this after the Draft EIS? Is this something that you will be rolling into the Draft EIS?

Response: Yes, the work on criteria should be done before the Draft EIS so that we can all look at these criteria objectively and not allow the results of the Draft EIS to influence the relative importance of the criteria. We will revisit these after the Draft EIS if needed. Today we are asking, does this make sense based on what we know?

Comment: I found it useful and a high integrity process for Enterprise Services to articulate the goals beforehand. It's worth noting that if an alternative costs more it may drive more employment and create more jobs.

Comment: To not mention the impact to LOTT would be a disservice to the community. The impact to the community financially could be a significant factor in economic sustainability.

Comment: There is a close connection between economic sustainability and water quality. If we do not meet goals for water quality standards, it hurts in every way and if we can it helps with everything.

Comment: Change is difficult to anticipate. It is hard to know what people will support over the long-term. What we hear today is not necessarily what we will hear years from now.

Comment: If the community agrees something is worth paying more that shows it has value. Criteria F over Criteria D may indicate community support to pay more.

Comment: If the community is supportive, it may be reflected as economically sustainable.

Comment: Most of the considerations B-F are in Criteria A.

Comment: There are various ways the project might be funded. Not knowing what flows into the local government plays into how I looked at Criteria D. Regional Sustainability is a difficult title – 'long-term community support' would make more sense.

Comment: I would like to reiterate support for revisiting this discussion after we see the Draft EIS.

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: May 17, 2021

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Comment: Has there been communication between the state family of various agencies that have authority on Capitol Lake. How will the communications between the agencies be incorporated into the EIS? For example, if Enterprise Services had specific conversations with Ecology about water quality standards, how will that be incorporated into the EIS?

Response: Input from governmental and resource agencies was sought through the facilitated work group meetings; no entity has received preferential coordination. In order to maintain an objective analysis, Enterprise Services has not provided draft technical work to the stakeholder groups either. However, as needed, we have followed up with resource agencies to understand and document various technical and regulatory requirements.

After the meeting, Enterprise Services spoke with Jeff Dickison to confirm his question. Jeff asked whether the analysis considers the change in water quality standards. Enterprise Services confirmed that the water quality analysis did look at retention time in Capitol Lake, which influences whether lake or riverine water quality standards apply. Enterprise Services also confirmed that the analysis would consider whether an alternative supported water quality standards or if water quality violations would continue.

Public Comment

There was insufficient time for verbal comments. Tessa encouraged observers to submit comments via email to be shared with the work group.

Adjourn

Tessa thanked the group for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Appendix

Pairwise Exercise

Criteria	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.
A. Performance Against Project Goals		★ A or B ✓	★ A or C ✓	★ A or D ✓	★ A or E ✓	★ A or F ✓
B. Other Environmental Disciplines with Significant Findings			★ B or C ✓	★ B or D ✓	★ B or E ✓	★ B or F ✓
C. Environmental Sustainability				★ C or D ✓	★ C or E ✓	★ C or F ✓
D. Economic Sustainability					★ D or E ✓	★ D or F ✓
E. Construction						★ E or F ✓
F. Regional Sustainability						