



## Meeting Summary

Date: November 17, 2021

Time: 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Topic: Community Sounding Board Meeting

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### Meeting Participants

#### *Community Sounding Board Members in Attendance*

- Joel Hansen
- Alanna Matteson
- Chris McCabe
- Allen Miller
- Jack Mongin
- David Nicandri
- Gretchen Nicholas
- Sue Patnude
- Drew Phillips
- Kathi Rafferty
- Alicia Rose
- Steve Shanewise
- Nancy Stevenson
- Robert Wubbena
- Bruce York
- Nancy Zabel

#### *Community Sounding Board Members not in Attendance*

- Sandy Cashman
- Clara Hard
- Jeanette Laffoon
- Doug Mah
- Cory Miller
- Stuart Reed
- Robyn Wagoner
- Jenny Wilson

#### *Department of Enterprise Services*

- Bill Frare
- Carrie Martin
- Tara Smith

#### *EIS Project Team*

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

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### Welcome and Introductions

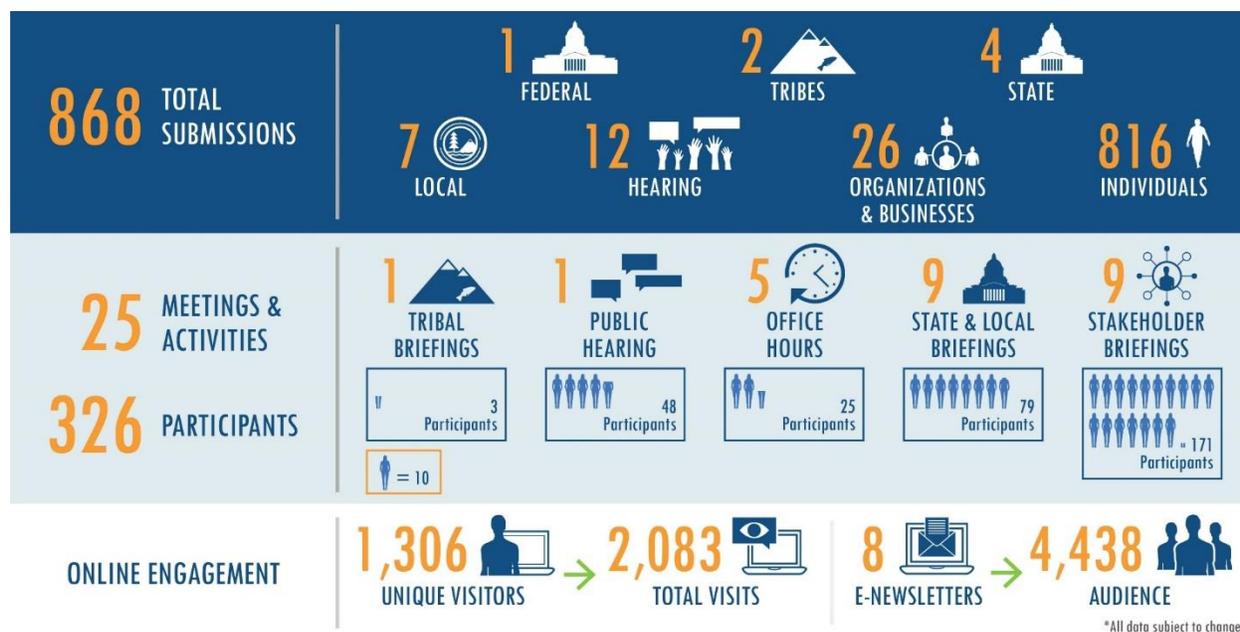
Carrie Martin, Washington Department of Enterprise Services (Enterprise Services) welcomed and thanked the Community Sounding Board (CSB) members for their attendance. She then introduced Bill Frare and Tara Smith. Tara joined Enterprise Services in September as the new agency director. Tara joined as an observer to learn more about the project and the work of the CSB.

Susan Hayman, facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda which included a recap of Draft EIS engagement, a summary of comment themes and preliminary Final EIS focus areas, review of the preferred alternative identification process including criteria weighting and stakeholder input, a schedule update, and an opportunity for public comment. Susan also provided reminders on virtual meeting conduct.

The presentation, with slide numbers referenced throughout this summary, is [available on the project website](#).

### Draft EIS Engagement Outcomes

Ray Outlaw provided a brief summary of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) comments received, meetings and participants, and online engagement totals as illustrated below. Comment totals more than doubled the number of scoping comments and these efforts resulted in content rich comments that will help inform the Final EIS.



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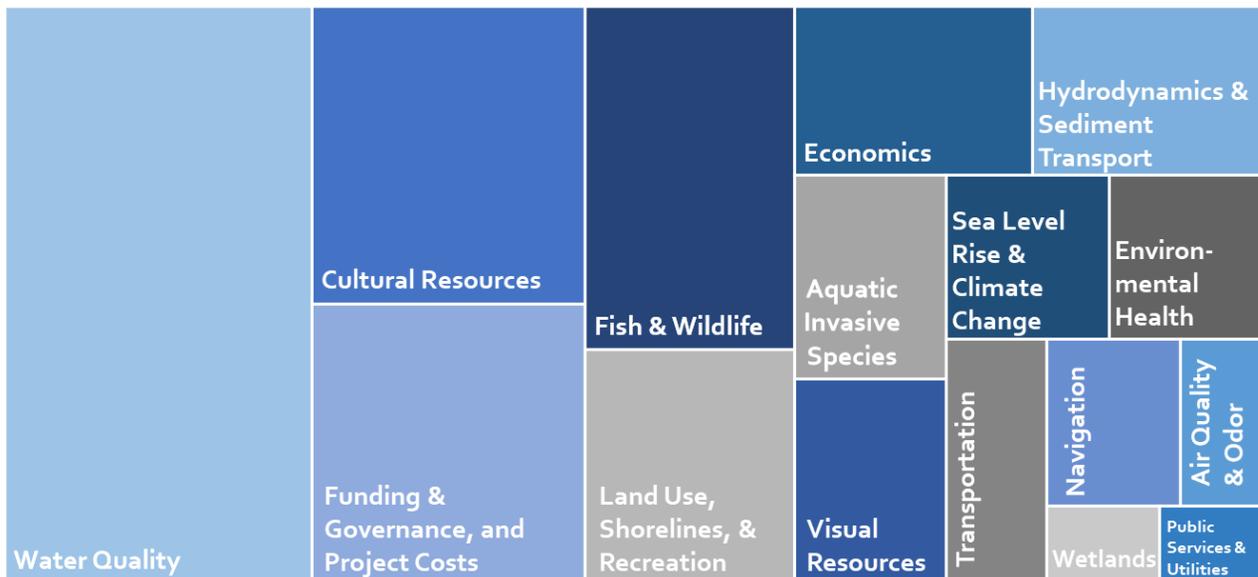
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## *Comment Themes by Discipline/Topic*

Karmen Martin reviewed the distribution of themes that are emerging from comment analysis. Water Quality received the largest number of comments followed by Funding & Governance and Project Costs, Cultural Resources, and Fish & Wildlife. The overall distribution is represented in the graphic below.

Many comments stated an alternative preference. While all comments will be considered, alternative preferences will not be tallied because voting is not part of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process. The purpose of the SEPA comment process is to comment on the adequacy and completeness of the analysis so it can be improved in the Final EIS.



## *Preliminary Final EIS Focus Areas*

Karmen noted the EIS Project Team is still in the process of reviewing comments, so the list of Final EIS focus areas is preliminary. This list is subject to change as comments are further reviewed.

### **Water Quality**

- Evaluate potential compliance with state water quality standards and anticipated total maximum daily load (TMDL) allocations.
  - Karmen noted that Ecology has weighed in on the ability of the alternatives to meet water quality standards. New information related to TMDL allocations that was not available prior to the Draft EIS release is expected soon.

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## Funding and Governance

- Reconvene Funding and Governance Work Group to confirm long-term funding and governance approach.

## Transportation

- Consider opportunities to avoid long-term closure of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge during construction of an Estuary or Hybrid alternative.
  - Karmen explained that the City of Olympia and other commenters stated it is important to avoid traffic congestion and associated safety and economic impacts from an extended 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge closure during construction.

## Cultural Resources

- Coordinate with Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) regarding historic eligibility of resources in the project area.
- Note: The EIS Project Team has requested formal eligibility determinations from DAHP and those determinations will be reflected in updates to the Final EIS.
- Better describe significance of project area to Tribes.

## Navigation

- Discuss potential impacts to navigation if funding is not available for long-term maintenance dredging.

## Public Services and Utilities

- Consider potential regulatory and financial impacts to LOTT and ratepayers given additional information provided by LOTT, under future discharge allocations related to Ecology's TMDL.
- There were also comments related to costs and economics that are anticipated to result in revisions and/or supplementary information in the Final EIS.

## Inter-Agency Coordination

- Coordinate with regulatory agencies as needed to confirm assumptions (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources)
- NOTE: Formal engagement with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will occur when a permit application is submitted following the Final EIS and identification of a preferred alternative

## Alternative Design

- Hybrid Alternative is now likely to include a freshwater reflecting pool.

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*Question: In the presentation, it was mentioned that the Hybrid Alternative would likely have a freshwater pool. Is this decision finalized or has the decision not been made yet? Follow up, were the comments that Department of Ecology provided based on the saltwater or freshwater pool? Will they be able to submit new comments based on the freshwater pool option?*

*Response: Based on comments received, the assumption is that the Hybrid Alternative will include a freshwater pool. The Department of Ecology provided comments primarily focused on the Estuary Alternative and not specific to the reflecting pool configuration of the Hybrid Alternative. There is not another opportunity for public comments, but the EIS Project Team will continue to coordinate with Ecology moving forward in the process.*

*Question: It was noted that there were 868 comments received--are those unique comments or total comments? I suspect that one individual may have provided multiple comments.*

*Response: The 868 number represents unique submissions (e.g., letters, online comments, etc.) not unique commenters. We tried our best to count exact duplicates as one submission.*

*Question: Given the length of the Draft EIS and the number of comments received, how is the new information going to be highlighted in the Final EIS for ease of seeing the changes?*

*Response: The EIS Project Team is actively working on those details right now. We have brainstormed some ideas such as a summary or tracked changes, but those details are still to be determined.*

*Question: Will you engage with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) after the EIS process is done? Or will you engage with them before the end of the EIS to discuss topics such as dredging. It is important to coordinate with the federal agencies prior to a decision and for their input to be well documented for people to see.*

*Response: The EIS Project Team is working to coordinate with the agencies mentioned (e.g., USACE, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources). We anticipate having these coordination conversations before the end of the year and are actively trying to schedule those meetings. The formal engagements with the USACE would occur after the EIS process during the design and planning phase. In addition, the USACE is an ad-hoc participant in the Technical Work Group (TWG) and has been involved in the process since 2019.*

*Question: If a group submitted a multi-page comment, is that considered one comment? What if it addresses multiple aspects of the Draft EIS?*

*Response: A multi-page comment would be considered one submission with multiple comments. During our review, we separated those types of comments into the appropriate sections of the*

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*Draft EIS. Our team has reviewed many of the comments multiple times. We review the comments because it informs our team how to work through the Final EIS and highlights the areas that we need to revisit in the Final EIS.*

*Comment: What is the timing to see the comment responses?*

*Response: As part of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, we will include comment responses as part of the Final EIS. We anticipate the Final EIS will be released in mid-2022.*

## ***What to Expect From the Final EIS***

Karmen explained that work on the Final EIS includes considering all comments received on the Draft EIS. The Final EIS will provide responses to substantive comments from the public, Tribes, agencies, and organizations, and include revisions based on public comments and new information. The Final EIS will identify any additional mitigation plans and measures that would be needed to avoid, minimize, or compensate for significant impacts at a high level, recognizing that detailed design and mitigation measures will be developed during the design and permitting process. The Final EIS will also identify a preferred alternative and proposed funding and governance approach.

## ***Preferred Alternative Identification Process***

Tessa presented a graphic describing the process Enterprise Services will use to identify a preferred alternative (see [presentation slide 11](#)). This graphic was first presented to the CSB during the May 2021 meeting, and it was included in the Draft EIS for public comment. There were not many comments received on the process during the Draft EIS comment period. As a result, Enterprise Services will continue to follow this approach for identifying the preferred alternative as previously described.

The concept behind this approach is to ensure that the preferred alternative is identified based on the technical analysis in the Draft EIS, Tribes and stakeholder input, and other important factors (e.g., cost). The selection criteria help to ensure these elements are considered as the alternatives are evaluated. Each alternative will be scored numerically as to their performance against these criteria.

The preferred alternative selection criteria are as follows:

- Performance Against Project Goals
- Other Environmental Disciplines
- Environmental Sustainability
- Economic Sustainability
- Construction Impacts

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- Decision Durability

Tessa reviewed the steps to be completed as Enterprise Services evaluates the alternatives.

1. Share Draft EIS comment themes and Final EIS focus areas with Work Groups and Community Sounding Board so that stakeholders understand what may have changed since the Draft EIS was issued. A good example of this is that the Hybrid Alternative may now include a freshwater rather than saltwater reflecting pool.
2. Confirm preferred alternative selection criteria. The EIS Project Team has confirmed the criteria have not substantively changed from the Draft EIS. Tribal treaty rights have been added as an element to be considered specifically and uniquely under Other Environmental Disciplines as a result of Draft EIS public comments. The CSB members will have a final opportunity to provide feedback on the criteria at tonight's meeting(see below).
3. Ask the EWG and CSB to provide input on the Decision Durability selection criteria. Tessa restated that Decision Durability refers to the ability of each alternative to achieve long-term support from local Tribes, stakeholders, and the community. The process to solicit input from the CSB is described below.
4. Enterprise Services will continue the process to identify a preferred alternative using the Decision Durability feedback provided by the EWG and CSB.
5. Enterprise Services will reconvene the Funding & Governance Work Group to confirm the approach for long-term funding and governance. We know from Draft EIS comments that this is a critical piece of information that still needs to be developed.

*Question: When you talk about identifying community support, it sounds like it is a system of voting. Is that correct? If so, I would prefer it not be a voting system.*

*Response: The EIS Project Team has developed a process that is not a voting process. This process to gather feedback on Decision Durability will be discussed later in the presentation.*

*Question: In what way are you acknowledging that Tribal treaty rights take precedent? Also, when we talk about Decision Durability we talk about the stakeholders, which should also include mother nature as a stakeholder.*

*Response: First, we consider Tribal treaty rights in Decision Durability. In this criterion, we are considering Tribes and stakeholder response to the alternative and asking what Tribes and stakeholders deem important. This is important input for our team. Second, we have included Tribal treaty rights in a new criterion within the Other Environmental Disciplines and it is also accounted for in Ecosystem Services.*

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*Question: When you mention input from stakeholders, are we the only group that you are gathering input from?*

*Response: The EIS Project Team is gathering input from the Executive Work Group (EWG) and the CSB. This does not include the TWG directly; however, some members of the TWG are part of the entities within the EWG.*

*Question: Many of us have provided written comments on the Draft EIS. How do we ensure there is dialogue between those who have provided comments on the technical aspects of the analysis and the technical staff involved in the EIS process?*

*Response: The EIS Project Team has maintained a commitment to review and provide attention to all comments submitted, in a way that is consistent with the SEPA process. As described previously, the Final EIS will include a response to public comments.*

## ***When Can a Preferred Alternative Be Identified?***

Tessa explained that a key step in the EIS process is identification of a preferred alternative. She described the components Enterprise Services feels are needed to make a durable decision as follows.

1. The Draft EIS as the body of technical work that adequately discloses impacts and benefits.
2. Comments on the Draft EIS that inform whether additional technical work is needed, and an understanding of whether additional technical work may substantively change findings in the EIS.
3. Input from engaged Tribes and stakeholders on which alternative could be supported as the preferred.

Tessa noted that Enterprise Services has completed the first step and is continuing to work through the second and third. She then described SEPA gives the lead agency wide discretion with regard to when and how to identify the preferred alternative.

## ***Criteria Weighting Results from May 2021***

Ray revisited the process completed in May with the EWG, TWG, and CSB where members compared selection criteria individually using a pairwise process. He shared the collective results of the exercise as illustrated in the table below (see [presentation slides 14-15](#)). Ray noted the ranked order on average (Average Ranking in the table below) was identical to the EWG ranked order. He then reviewed the percentages, noting that while the ranked order varied among groups, the difference in percentage scores were often very small. Ray noted strong consensus at the top and bottom ends of the rankings, Performance Against Project Goals ranked highest and Construction ranked lowest, while the other four criteria were more similarly valued.

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Criteria	EWG (%)	TWG (%)	CSB (%)	Average Rank (%)
Performance Against Project Goals	1 (33%)	2 (23%)	1 (27%)	1 (28%)
Other Environmental Disciplines	2 (26%)	1 (24%)	6 (10%)	2 (20%)
Environmental Sustainability	3 (20%)	4 (20%)	3 (18%)	3 (19%)
Decision Durability	4 (13%)	3 (21%)	4 (16%)	4 (16%)
Economic Sustainability	5 (8%)	5 (12%)	2 (19%)	5 (13%)
Construction	6 (0%)	6 (0%)	5 (11%)	6 (4%)

*Comment: Where are Tribal resources located in the criteria?*

*Response: Tribal resources are in the Other Environmental Disciplines criteria. This is a great example of how the sub-criteria have changed since the May meeting.*

*Comment: How do life cycle costs fit into the criteria?*

*Response: Life cycle cost considerations are included in the Economic Sustainability criterion. It is intended to look at both the upfront cost, annual operations and maintenance costs, and the potential economic impacts if there is a lapse in funding.*

*Comment: Which criterion includes permitability?*

*EIS Team Response: Permitability is addressed in water quality, under Performance Against Project Goals. It is also addressed in sediment management and in Tribal resources since tribal concurrence is an element of federal permitting.*

## **Discussion: Criteria Weighting Feedback**

Tessa explained the final criteria weighting for the process to identify a preferred alternative should reflect the outcomes of the exercise but not be a direct output of the numbers when a single percentage point can result in a change in the ranking. It is also important to have a dialogue with each of the groups who participated.

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Susan asked the CSB members to consider these results and any compelling reasons to change the order of prioritization or adjust the weighting. Each member was given an opportunity to provide their feedback on the results through a facilitated round-robin process.

*Comment: I agree with the order of the criteria and would not change the order.*

*Comment: I think Decision Durability should be last on the list. From my understanding, Decision Durability is based on long term acceptance, and this will depend on the success of implementation. With appropriate mitigation, the process should bring out the best chance of long-term success and that will lead to decision durability.*

*Comment: I think all of those criteria are important. However, after reviewing the Draft EIS and my organization's comments, I believe that Economic Sustainability should be higher and move to the second criteria. I think it's more important than we initially thought, especially if there is inadequate funding.*

*Comment: I think that Performance Against Project Goals should be first, Environmental Sustainability should be second, and Economic Sustainability should be third.<sup>1</sup>*

*Two Commenters Noted: I agree with the order of the criteria and would not change the order.*

*Comment: I would change to the CSB ranking and have economic sustainability at a higher percentage. The CSB ranking considered life cycle cost and the community dynamics.*

*Three Commenters Noted: I think that Performance Against Project Goals should be first, Environmental Sustainability should be second, and Economic Sustainability should be third.*

*Comment: I agree with the order of the criteria and would not change the order. However, I am unsure why we need to rank the criteria.*

*Comment: I agree with the averages of the three groups and think it's best to average the three stakeholder groups.*

*Three Commenters Noted: I support the averages as is.*

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<sup>1</sup> Note that this CSB member subsequently emailed the CSB Facilitator and provided additional perspective on the ordering of the remaining three criteria.

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*Comment: I think that Decision Durability should be first. This project is expensive and if you do not have the money, you'll need community support to raise the funds. The community has to come together as one.*

*Comment: I agree with the current order of the criteria but note that Other Environmental Disciplines is a large criterion category with many sub-criteria associated with it.*

Tessa noted that CSB members could consider this further and provide feedback in writing to Susan Hayman ([shayman@rossstrategic.com](mailto:shayman@rossstrategic.com)) on or before Nov. 19. She explained that the City of Olympia and other stakeholders requested a last opportunity to provide feedback on the criteria weighting in their Draft EIS comments.

## ***Decision Durability Preview***

Enterprise Services is formally asking each of the CSB members to provide input on the Decision Durability criterion by December 8, 2021. Each CSB member will receive a link for the online questionnaire that will help CSB members provide input that plugs directly into the preferred alternative identification process.

There are two key components to that input.

1. Numerical scores of each of the alternatives on a scale of 1-10. Numerical scores are direct inputs into the preferred alternative identification process. This scoring reflects a nuanced sensing of the degree of support, rather than a simple yes or no vote.
2. Narrative responses about what increases and decreases support for each alternative. Narrative responses provide the rationale for the scoring and become a key part of the documentation

It is critical that each member submits numerical scores and narrative responses for each alternative so that Enterprise Services has scoring for each. The narrative will become a component of the documentation that goes into the Final EIS. Some entities will be able to draw from their Draft EIS comments, but we are asking for narrative responses for each.

Tessa noted the reasoning and rationale for why something is NOT supported is just as important as why it IS supported.

*Comment: I believe that there are technical inaccuracies in the Draft EIS and I am concerned that this online questionnaire will lead the group to incorrect findings if they rely solely on that information.*

*Response: In this online questionnaire, we are asking the group to think specifically about Decision Durability and to provide your assumptions and/or uncertainties. Also, we have worked to*

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*maintain transparency throughout this process. All Draft EIS comments we received are posted on the website for transparency to all stakeholders in this process.*

*Comment: This group represents various perspectives with strong opinions. I think it's time for us to move forward in the process as much as possible.*

*Question: Is there an opportunity to change the scale of the ranking from 1-10 to 1-9 in order to create equal intervals for each support level?*

*Response: Thank you for your suggestion--we will look into it.*

## ***Decision Durability Timeline***

Tessa reviewed the Decision Durability timeline, with feedback due from each CSB member on or before Dec. 8, 2021. She explained that Enterprise Services and the EIS Project Team are available for clarifying questions and support. Susan said she will follow up by phone with any member who has not yet submitted a response by December 6. Susan noted that while the online questionnaire asks for members' names, this is just to track who has submitted a response. Comments will not be attributed to specific members in the synthesis of the responses, nor in the Final EIS.

## ***Approach to Complete Final EIS***

Tessa reviewed the timeline for completing the Final EIS (see [presentation slide 21](#)) as described below.

### **October 2021**

- Analyze comments on Draft EIS
- Develop scope and focus areas for Final EIS

### **November 2021**

- Work Group meetings to review comment themes and Final EIS focus areas
- Begin ongoing agency-specific coordination to support Final EIS
- Begin soliciting input from the CSB on decision durability

### **December 2021**

- Continue steps in preferred alternative identification process
- Solicit input from EWG on decision durability
- Continue to solicit input from CSB on decision durability. The CSB will meet mid-December to review the synthesized, individual responses as a group.

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## Early to mid-2022

- Reconvene FGWG to identify long-term funding and governance
- Prepare Final EIS, including findings from FGWG

## Mid-2022

- Issue Final EIS with preferred alternative and approach to funding and governance

## *Public Comment*

Susan provided an opportunity for public comment. There were no public comments offered.

## *Adjourn*

Bill thanked the CSB for their sustained and ongoing commitment. He reviewed the work undertaken thus far and the importance of delivering a Final EIS with a preferred alternative and funding approach. He reiterated his and the agency's gratitude for the CSB contributions and encouraged each member to remain committed through the remaining steps of the process.

Carrie thanked the members for participating and for their commitment to the EIS process and adjourned the meeting.