



CAPITOL LAKE — DESCHUTES ESTUARY

Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: November 17, 2021

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: Zoom

Topic: Technical Work Group

Meeting Participants

Technical Work Group Members

- Abby Barnes, Department of Natural Resources
- Eric Christensen, City of Olympia
- Lisa Dennis-Perez, LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Stephanie Jolivette, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Gwendolen Lentes, Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Brad Murphy, Thurston County
- Lisa Parks, Port of Olympia
- Allen Pleus, Department of Fish & Wildlife
- Dan Smith, City of Tumwater
- Wendy Steffensen, LOTT Clean Water Alliance
- Lawrence Sullivan, Department of Ecology
- Kristin Swenddal, Department of Natural Resources
- Ben Watson, Department of Ecology

Department of Enterprise Services

- Ann Larson
- Kevin Dragon
- Carrie Martin
- Sarah Detmer
- Linda Kent

EIS Consultants/Facilitators

- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Karmen Martin, ESA
- Ray Outlaw, Floyd|Snider

Observers

- Wayne Olsen
- Steve Shanewise
- Anne Van Sweringen

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Welcome and Introductions

Carrie Martin, Enterprise Services project manager, welcomed the Technical Work Group (TWG) members. She thanked everyone for their attendance and for their time and efforts in submitting Draft EIS comments.

She introduced two new TWG members, Ben Watson with the Department of Ecology, and Lisa Parks with the Port of Olympia.

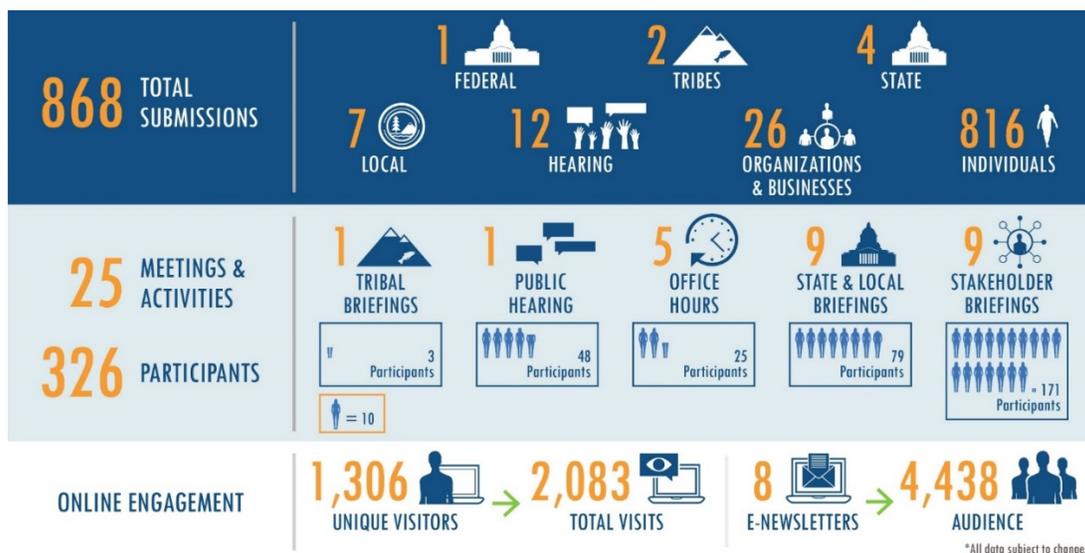
Ben and Lisa provided brief introductions.

Tessa Gardner-Brown reiterated gratitude for the detailed and thorough review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and resulting comments by TWG members. She reviewed the meeting agenda which included a recap of Draft EIS engagement, a high-level overview 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.

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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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 (which includes cultural, historic, and archaeological resources), and Fish & Wildlife. The overall distribution is represented in the graphic below.



Karmen explained that 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. She explained the following topics are those that received the most substantive comments but are by no means the only topics that will be addressed in the Final EIS. 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 and there is expected to be new information related to TMDL allocations that was not available prior to the Draft EIS release.

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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 5th Avenue Bridge during construction of an Estuary or Hybrid alternative.
- Karmen explained that the City of Olympia and other comments stated it is important to avoid traffic congestion and associated safety and economic impacts during construction from an extended 5th Avenue Bridge closure.

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 will be able to describe those determinations in 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 likely to include a freshwater reflecting pool.

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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 8](#)). This graphic was first presented to the TWG during the May 2021 meeting, and it was included in the Draft EIS for public comment. Ultimately there were not many comments 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 described previously.

The concept behind this approach is to ensure that the preferred alternative is identified based on the technical analysis in the Draft EIS, 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 and via narrative 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
- 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 (groundwater fed) rather than saltwater reflecting pool.

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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 EWG members were offered a final opportunity to provide feedback on the criteria (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 EWG 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.

When Can a Preferred Alternative Be Identified?

Tessa explained that one of the key goals of this process has always been to identify a preferred alternative. She described the components Enterprise Services feels are needed to make a durable decision as follows.

- The Draft EIS as the body of technical work that adequately discloses impacts and benefits.
- 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.
- Input from engaged stakeholders on which alternative could be supported as the preferred.

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

Question: Are there any additional technical analyses that are going to occur and if so, what are they?

Response: Yes, we expect there to be some additional work which includes the topics discussed earlier in the [presentation on slides 5 and 6](#).

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 10-11](#)). Ray then reviewed

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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.

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%)

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. Tessa also noted that EWG members requested another opportunity to discuss and consider the criteria prioritization.

Tessa asked the EWG members to consider these results and any compelling reasons to change the order of prioritization or adjust the weighting.

Comment: The City of Olympia will provide a response to Carrie by the end of the week regarding criteria prioritization. It felt like the process was a little rushed back in May.

Response: That is helpful feedback. We recognize you may want to take more time with this, and we welcome written feedback through Nov. 19, 2021.

Comment: LOTT may also submit written comments. There is a quite a bit of overlap among some of the criteria.

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Response: We have heard that feedback, considered it carefully when defining these criteria, and took care to avoid overlap in the criteria definitions.

Themes from Executive Work Group Comments

Tessa reviewed excerpted quotes from Draft EIS comments submitted by the EWG entities. She explained that four of the six entities expressed a preference for the Estuary Alternative while two did not indicate a preference (see [presentation slide 13](#)). The purpose of this slide is to acknowledge this feedback which will prove helpful for the Decision Durability exercise.

Decision Durability Preview

Enterprise Services is formally asking each of the EWG member entities to provide input on the Decision Durability criterion by December 17, 2021. Each EWG member has received a one-page questionnaire that will help entities to 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.
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 entity 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.

The request is for each entity to provide a single response representing your internal coordination and your constituents. Enterprise Services has also scheduled meetings with each entity in December to answer clarifying questions and support you through this process.

Tessa explained that TWG member support in developing responses would be very valuable. These questions have been provided to the EWG members and there are touch points with each EWG member in December. The formal responses are due on or before Dec. 17, 2021.

Question: Are you looking for one score sheet from each entity?

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Response: That is the goal, but we have heard that may not be possible for each entity. If a single response is not possible, we are asking that entity to reach out to Carrie directly.

Question: Can you share the score sheets with the TWG members?

Response: Yes, Carrie will send the document via email.

Tessa noted the questions being asked of the EWG are identical to the questions for the CSB.

Decision Durability Timeline

Tessa reviewed the Decision Durability timeline, with feedback due from each EWG entity, with support from TWG members, on or before Dec. 17, 2021. She explained that Enterprise Services and the EIS Project Team are available for clarifying questions and support.

Approach to Complete Final EIS

Tessa reviewed the timeline for completing the Final EIS (see [presentation slide 16](#)) 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

December 2021

- Continue steps in preferred alternative identification process
- Solicit input from EWG on decision durability

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

Question: When do you anticipate any additional EIS analysis to occur?

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Response: We are developing our plan for that; work will start as soon as January 2022.

Question: The process indicates there will be input from the Work Groups. Where on that schedule will that happen?

Response: Enterprise Services is asking the EWG (with support from the TWG) and CSB to provide their feedback on Decision Durability in December 2021. It will be the responsibility of the EIS Project Team and Enterprise Services to score the technical disciplines, based on the EIS analysis.

Public Comment

Comment: I believe Decision Durability is the most important thing to focus on now. If the preferred alternative is not supported by the vast majority of stakeholders and community, I don't think it will ever be funded. We are asking for something like a half billion dollars and I don't think we can get the money if it is not supported.

Comment: In the plan, what is the timeframe that any of the alternatives will last, in terms of perpetuity. There was a new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment issued on Aug. 9 in which scientists are certain that sea level rise will continue long into the future. Olympia will likely experience debilitating tides into the future. Is it worth spending considering what scientists say will be inevitable? For the first time that document describes sea level rise beyond 2100.

Response: We understand this context and we incorporated sea-level rise, with the EIS analysis over a 30-year time horizon. Those findings are documented in the Draft EIS. The project time horizon is 30 years though the intent is for the preferred alternative to be a permanent implementation. We did see this theme relative to the updated IPCC assessment in the Draft EIS comments, and we will consider it along with all Draft EIS comments.

Adjourn

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