



## DRAFT EIS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

#### Has a Preferred Alternative already been identified?

A Preferred Alternative has not been identified. The Draft EIS includes an impartial analysis of the three long-term management alternatives (Managed Lake, Estuary, and Hybrid). The process for selecting a Preferred Alternative is summarized in the next FAQ and described in more detail in [Section 1.12 of the Draft EIS](#). The public is encouraged to provide comments on this and all aspects of the Draft EIS during the public comment period.

#### How will a Preferred Alternative be identified?

Enterprise Services will identify the Preferred Alternative in the Final EIS based on how each long-term management alternative performs against six selection criteria. The criteria as described in the Draft EIS include the following:

- Performance against project goals
- Other environmental disciplines with significant findings (impacts or benefits)
- Environmental sustainability
- Economic sustainability
- Construction impacts
- Decision durability

The Draft EIS provides the information needed to complete the evaluation against the selection criteria for five of the six criteria. For Decision Durability, Enterprise Services will also solicit input from the engaged tribes, governmental and agency partners, the Community Sounding Board, and the State Capitol Committee on which alternatives are likely to achieve long-term support as the Preferred Alternative. [See Section 1.12 and Figure 1.8.1 of the Draft EIS for more details.](#)

#### When will a Preferred Alternative be identified?

Enterprise Services will begin the process to identify a Preferred Alternative following the Draft EIS public comment period (June 30 – August 29, 2021). The Preferred Alternative will be identified in the Final EIS, expected to be issued in June 2022 (pending the volume and content of comments received on the Draft EIS).

## DESIGN

### How wide would the opening be at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue for the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives?

Under the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives, the opening at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be approximately 500 feet wide. This would be achieved by removing the approximately 80-foot-wide tide gate and up to a 450-foot-wide earthen dam to the west of the tide gate – both of which were constructed to create the current Capitol Lake.

[See Chapter 2 for additional information.](#)

### How often would there be water in the North Basin under the Estuary or Hybrid Alternatives?

The Draft EIS estimates that the North Basin would have water in it approximately 80% of the time under the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives, and shallow draft boating, such as kayaking, would be supported. During most of the tidal cycle, boats with shallow draft would be able to move between West Bay and the North Basin. [See Section 2.2.2 for more details.](#)

### Would the Hybrid Alternative include a saltwater or freshwater reflecting pool?

No decisions have been made at this time; however, the Draft EIS analysis recommended a saltwater reflecting pool. As described in [Attachment 19: Measurable Evaluation Process – Summary of Concept Screening](#), the saltwater reflecting pool concept demonstrates higher technical and regulatory feasibility and is more environmentally and economically sustainable than the freshwater reflecting pool concepts that were evaluated. Additional details on the freshwater (groundwater-fed) reflecting pool analysis can be found in [Attachment E of Attachment 7: Water Quality Discipline Report](#).

### What would happen to the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge and trail/sidewalk?

Under the Managed Lake Alternative, the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge would remain similar to today. For the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives, the bridge, tide gate, and earthen dam would be removed, creating an approximately 500-foot-wide opening, and a new vehicular bridge would be constructed in its place.

For all action alternatives, an approximately 14-foot-wide (4.3-meter-wide) elevated bridge would be constructed south of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor. This would provide a connection between the existing pathways at Heritage Park to existing pathways along Deschutes Parkway for bikes and pedestrians. It would support the frequently used walking path and would improve circulation for bicycles through the Project Area.

[See Chapter 2 for additional details.](#)

## SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT AND DREDGING

### **Did you consider potential measures to minimize the amount of sediment that deposits along the eastern shore of West Bay instead of or in concert with dredging?**

Yes. [Attachment 5: Hydrodynamics and Sediment Transport Discipline Report](#) includes details on several potential mitigation measures that were modeled, including variations to the initial dredging approach, constructing a sediment control structure (such as a vertical wall adjacent to Olympia Yacht Club), and a sediment trap. The analysis concluded that long-term sediment monitoring and maintenance dredging is the most effective approach to managing sediment, combined with an annual sediment monitoring program that would ensure that dredging is responsive to actual environmental conditions.

### **How would contaminated sediment in West Bay affect future dredging?**

Maintenance dredging in West Bay would be required for the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives. The earliest that maintenance dredging resulting from this project could occur is approximately 2040. As a result and based on coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Port of Olympia, the Draft EIS assumes that contaminated sediment that currently exists in West Bay will have been dredged before the first maintenance dredging event. Dredging is needed in West Bay now because of the presence of contamination and because of shallow conditions in the federal navigation channel and in vessel berths.

The Draft EIS describes that, following removal of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Dam, new sediment deposition in West Bay would come from the Deschutes River. Based on the known chemical quality of that sediment, it is expected to be suitable for in-water disposal. Sediment sampling for chemical quality would be conducted prior to future maintenance dredging. [See Section 4.2 for additional details.](#)

### **How does sediment management affect the ongoing (long-term) maintenance costs of the project?**

Across all action alternatives, sediment management is the project component with the greatest influence on the ongoing (long-term) maintenance costs.

For all alternatives, sediment dredged during construction would be beneficially reused in the basin to create habitat – a significant cost savings compared to offsite disposal.

For maintenance dredging, the approach varies by alternative. The planning-level cost estimates and assumptions for maintenance dredging summarized below are [described in more detail in Section 7.1.3 and Table 7.1.1.](#)

## Why does sediment disposal cost more for the Managed Lake Alternative than the Hybrid or Estuary Alternatives?

**For the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives** it is assumed that sediment dredged from West Bay could be disposed at an allowable in-water location for two primary reasons: the sediment is expected to be chemically suitable for in-water disposal and aquatic invasive species are not anticipated in the dredge areas.

- Sediment in Capitol Lake (which is representative of the material that would deposit in West Bay under the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives) was sampled for this Draft EIS and found to be of good chemical quality.
- Sediment dredged in West Bay would be the recently deposited sediment from the Deschutes River and would be dredged from deeper water. New Zealand mudsnail prefer shallow, freshwater environments, and the other aquatic invasive species currently found in Capitol Lake would not persist in the saltwater environment.

Sediment sampling for chemical quality and invasive species presence would be conducted prior to dredging, and contingent cost estimates are described in [Table 7.1.1](#) in the event that in-water disposal is not authorized.

**For the Managed Lake Alternative** upland disposal is the only known feasible disposal option for dredged material because aquatic invasive species, including the New Zealand mudsnail, would persist in the freshwater environment, at high densities similar to existing conditions.

- The assumption of upland disposal (rather than in-water) is based on policies of the [Dredged Material Management Office](#) and other agencies participating in the EIS process.
- The planning-level cost estimates associated with upland disposal assume transport to the upland site by truck.
- Rail transport would likely reduce costs and should be explored in the future if the Managed Lake Alternative is selected as the Preferred Alternative. But the feasibility of rail transport from maintenance dredging would depend on several factors, including availability of equipment and land for staging, and whether or not the upland disposal location is adequately served by rail.

## INVASIVE SPECIES (E.G., NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAIL)

### How would invasive species be addressed? Will you be able to eradicate the New Zealand mudsnail? If not, how do you keep it from spreading?

Under all action alternatives, Capitol Lake would be treated before construction to significantly reduce aquatic invasive species populations within the waterbody. However, the New Zealand mudsnail would not be eradicated under any alternative.

Decontamination stations would be installed to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by requiring recreationalists to decontaminate footwear, fishing gear, and nonmotorized vessels. Additionally, educational signs would be posted warning recreationalists of the presence of New Zealand mudsnails and other high-priority aquatic invasive species, and their potential to spread. Effective use of education and decontamination stations is considered necessary and has proven effective.

[See Attachment 8: Aquatic Invasive Species Discipline Report for additional information.](#)

## RECREATION

### What kind of recreation could be allowed in the Project Area after construction?

All action alternatives (Managed Lake, Estuary, and Hybrid), as described in the Draft EIS, would restore fishing and non-motorized boating. The project would also construct features to enhance recreation including:

- A new 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike and pedestrian bridge (separate from the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue vehicular bridge)
- Elevated boardwalks adjacent to enhanced shoreline habitat areas in the Middle and South Basins
- A boat launch for hand-carried watercraft near Marathon Park
- A rebuilt fishing dock at the Interpretive Center in the South Basin

[See Section 2.3 for additional details.](#)

### Would a swimming beach be constructed?

No, but the project does not preclude or prohibit swimming. The swimming beach that existed in the North Basin of Capitol Lake from 1964 to 1985 was operated by the City of Olympia, not by the State of Washington. A governmental or agency partner could negotiate a lease to operate formal swimming facilities. Operating formal swimming facilities is not in alignment with the mission of Enterprise Services.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Is Capitol Lake considered a historic resource and how does this reconcile with the Deschutes Estuary that has been used historically by Indigenous people and is part of the tribal usual and accustomed fishing areas?

The Draft EIS recognizes the importance of the Deschutes Estuary and the surrounding area to local area tribes and the Chinese-American community, and that the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives would return the area to tidelands and estuary functions associated with these historic use patterns. However,

this area is not, by definition, a built environment resource that can be reviewed against eligibility criteria to make a historic resource determination.

Regarding Capitol Lake as a historic resource, historic resources (also termed historic property) are defined in the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. § 300308) as any “prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion on, the National Register of Historic Places. To be eligible for inclusion structures must be at least 50 years old, be historically significant, and have a high degree of integrity.”

Based on standard eligibility criteria, the area that includes Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary itself, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Dam, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge, and Olympic Street W Bridge, appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

It is important to note that eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places does not preclude the removal of a historic resource. The historic resources within and historic nature of the Project Area will be considered carefully when identifying a Preferred Alternative.

[See Attachment 13: Cultural Resources Discipline Report for additional information.](#)

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

### Does the analysis account for sea level rise?

Yes. Long-term hydrodynamic conditions were assessed using a 3D numerical model. Two hydrodynamic conditions were simulated for each project alternative to represent the extreme conditions: a +100-year river flood event and a 100-year tidal flood event. Both events were modeled with and without 2 feet (0.61 meters) of relative sea level rise. Details on maximum water levels under these flood conditions are [described in Section 4.1](#) and further detailed in [Attachment 5: Hydrodynamics and Sediment Transport Discipline Report](#). The EIS incorporates climate change projections related to sea level rise and extreme river flows as part of the future conditions for all alternatives and affected resource areas and qualitative consideration of other climate change trends (e.g., temperature) where appropriate. Climate change discussions are included in sections of the Draft EIS on Water Quality; Air Quality & Odor; Land Use, Shorelines, & Recreation; and Visual Resources, as well as in their corresponding discipline reports.

## PLANNING-LEVEL COST ESTIMATES

### Can you provide more detail on how the cost estimates in Chapter 7 were calculated?

Planning-level cost estimates were developed for design, permitting, and construction of the long-term management alternatives, and separately, for sediment management over 30 years after construction.

The construction estimates were developed based on conceptual design of the primary elements of each alternative, such as dredging, habitat area construction, work at the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Dam (as needed

for each alternative), installation of the boardwalks, the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike and pedestrian bridge, etc. Costs for 30 years after construction focus only on sediment management and were developed based on the assumed approach to dredging and disposal of dredged sediment.

Specific project elements that are included in the planning-level cost estimates and associated unit costs are now [available in the project library](#), in response to stakeholder requests.

### **Who will pay for long-term management of the selected alternative? How will you ensure long-term funding, so we don't end up at the same place sometime in the future?**

A Funding and Governance Work Group was convened with participation by local governments, the State of Washington, the Squaxin Island Tribe, the Port of Olympia, and LOTT Clean Water Alliance, to evaluate opportunities for shared funding and governance because identifying viable shared funding opportunities would provide the clearest path for project implementation. It would also ensure that, after the investment of construction funds, a governing body has oversight capabilities and long-term funding sufficient to manage the resource.

Achieving these goals (construction funding and long-term management) would avoid a scenario where: (1) the No Action Alternative persists and environmental conditions continue to worsen; and (2) the Preferred Alternative is constructed but long-term funding is not guaranteed, and environmental conditions deteriorate over time or downstream resources are significantly impacted.

In the Draft EIS, the Funding and Governance Work Group provided initial recommendations for long-term management of the action alternatives, to include the following:

- Long-term management of the Managed Lake Alternative would remain the primary responsibility of the State of Washington, because it would be very similar to status quo.
- Long-term management of the Estuary and Hybrid Alternatives could be shared across members of the Funding and Governance Work Group, through an Interlocal Agreement that would stipulate shared funding responsibilities as well.

The Funding and Governance Work Group will reconvene as the Final EIS is prepared to finalize recommendations on shared funding and governance.

[See Section 7.2 of the Draft EIS for additional information.](#)