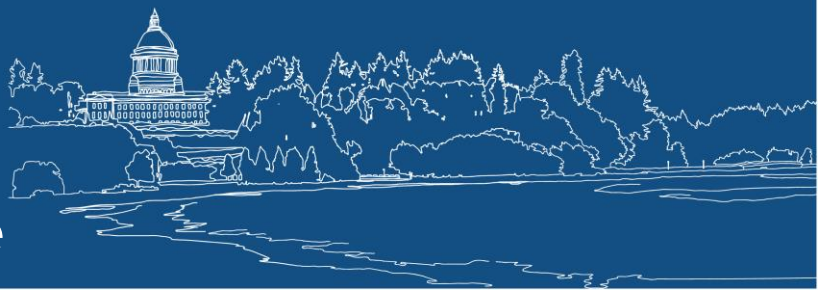
Fact Sheet

CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY
Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

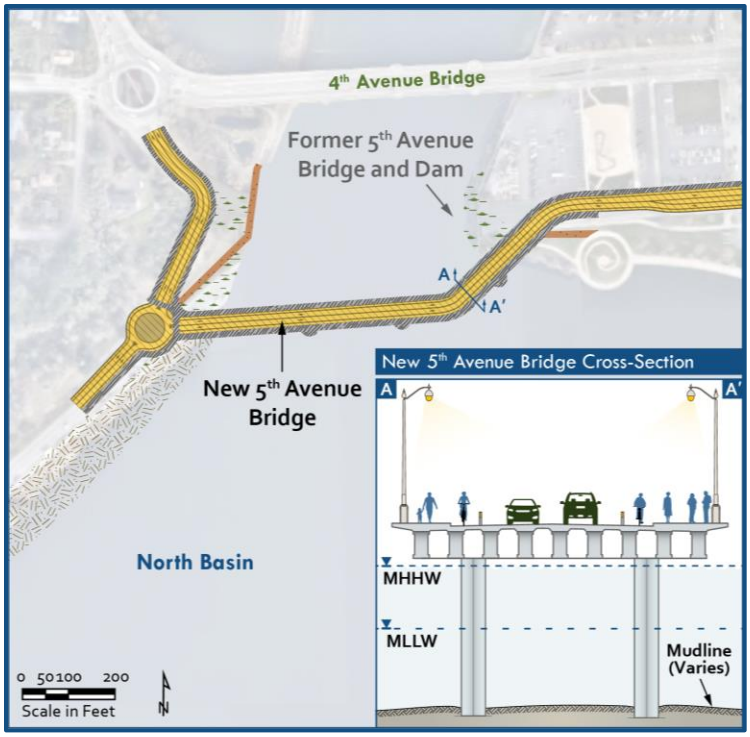
Final EIS & Preferred Alternative



In October 2022, the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project. The Final EIS identifies the Estuary Alternative as the Preferred Alternative. As documented in the Final EIS, estuary restoration best achieves project goals compared to the other alternatives considered, has the broadest stakeholder support, and provides other benefits to the natural and built environment.

Overview of the Preferred Alternative: Estuary Restoration

Under the Estuary Alternative, the 5th Avenue Dam would be removed, and an approximately 500-foot-wide opening would be established in its place. This would reintroduce tidal flow to the Capitol Lake Basin, returning the area to estuarine conditions where saltwater from Budd Inlet would mix with freshwater from the Deschutes River.



A new 5th Avenue Bridge would be constructed and would include a vehicle lane, bike lane, and sidewalk in each direction, with the sidewalk on the south side providing a dedicated recreational trail connection. The Estuary Alternative was modified in the Final EIS to construct the new 5th Avenue Bridge south of the existing 5th Avenue Dam and Bridge rather than to replace the bridge in its existing footprint. The new 5th Avenue Bridge would be constructed and connected to the transportation system before the existing 5th Avenue Dam and Bridge are removed.

The approach to sediment management includes initial dredging in the Capitol Lake Basin during construction and maintenance dredging within West Bay into the future. Habitat areas would be constructed to promote ecological diversity, although tideflats would be the predominant habitat type. Boardwalks, a dock, and a boat launch would be constructed for community use.

Shared funding for increased sediment management in West Bay is expected to be provided by members of the Funding and Governance Work Group through 2050 (as outlined in a recent Memorandum of Understanding; Attachment 23).

Learn More
https://CapitolLakeDeschutesEstuaryEIS.org

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What will water levels look like under the Estuary Alternative?

Tidal conditions in the Capitol Lake Basin under the Estuary Alternative will be similar to West Bay. The North Basin would have water in it (at varying depths) approximately 80% of the time.

Under the Estuary Alternative, the predominant habitat would be tideflats, with additional constructed habitat areas along the shorelines to promote ecological diversity.

Visual Simulation of Estuary Alternative from North Overlook—High and Low Tide

Visual Simulation of Estuary Alternative from the Interpretive Center—High and Low Tide

Project Background

The purpose of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project is to identify and implement an environmentally and economically sustainable management alternative that would improve environmental conditions and enhance community use of the resource.

The EIS provides an objective summary of long-term management alternatives, the impacts and benefits of the alternatives over a 30-year time horizon, impacts during construction, potential mitigation measures, and additional information to support the decision-making process, like planning-level costs.

The Estuary Alternative was identified by Enterprise Services as the management alternative that would best address the existing environmental impairments, including accumulating sediment, violations of water quality standards in the project area, a dense community of aquatic plants, and invasive plant and animal species that have closed the waterbody to active recreation.

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY
Natural estuary conditions will be restored with water quality typical of South Puget Sound inlets.

IMPROVE ECOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS
Tideflats will be the predominant habitat type, and approximately 85 acres of shoreline marsh habitat will be established in the Middle and North Basins.

MANAGE SEDIMENT
Accumulated sediment will be dredged in the Middle and North Basins during construction, and periodically in West Bay to maintain a working waterfront and recreational boating.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY USE
Fishing, hand-carried boating, and new boardwalks will increase recreation opportunities and community use of the waterbody.

Key Design Elements of the Estuary Alternative

Removal of the 5th Avenue Dam to Improve Water Quality

The 5th Avenue Dam would be removed, and an approximately 500-foot opening would be established. This would enhance tidal flow to the basin, which may improve water quality relative to marine water quality standards. This configuration would constitute natural estuary conditions and would be in compliance with state water quality standards.

New Pedestrian & Bike Facilities

A new 5th Avenue Bridge would be constructed with dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks in each direction. This enhances recreational use and connectivity within the project area.

Restoration of Boating & Fishing

Project actions to improve water quality and ecological functions, and to manage sediment, would restore fishing and some boating opportunities throughout the system. Restoring the opportunities for water-based activities enhances community use of the resource beyond the range of existing recreational opportunities in the project area.

Boardwalks Adjacent to Ecological Improvements in the South & Middle Basins

Establishing a boardwalk in the South and Middle Basins increases opportunities for recreational use within the project area.

Maintenance Dredging to Remove Accumulated Sediment

Maintenance dredging would occur in impacted areas of West Bay to minimize effects of sediment accumulation on the marinas, Port of Olympia, and navigation. Maintenance dredging is assumed at a 6-year frequency.

New 5th Avenue Bridge constructed then 5th Avenue Dam removed

Initial Dredging in the Middle & North Basin Channels

Initial dredging would remove sediment that has accumulated within the Middle and North Basin main channel and secondary channels to reduce the amount of sediment that may be transported once the Fifth Avenue Dam is removed. The dredging plan would establish a main channel that would remain submerged under most tidal elevations.

Establish Habitat Areas within the Middle & North Basins

Establishing habitat areas along the shorelines of the Middle and North Basins would promote ecological diversity with low marsh, high marsh, transitional, and upland habitat zones. Removing the dam would restore tideflats throughout the basin; tideflats would be the predominant habitat type.

Habitat Enhancement Plan to Maintain Ecological Functions

A Habitat Enhancement Plan would be implemented to manage invasive and nuisance species and to ensure that the habitat areas ecological improvements in the North and Middle Basins meet performance goals defined through the permitting process.

Proposed Habitats & Elevations (ft NAVD 88)

upland		> 14
transitional		11.5 - 14
high marsh		8.9 - 11.5
low marsh		6.6 - 8.9
tideflat		4 - 6.6
		2 - 4
		0 - 2
		-2 - 0
		-4.03 - -2
subtidal		-6 - -4.03
		-8 - -6
		< -8

Proposed and Improved Pathways

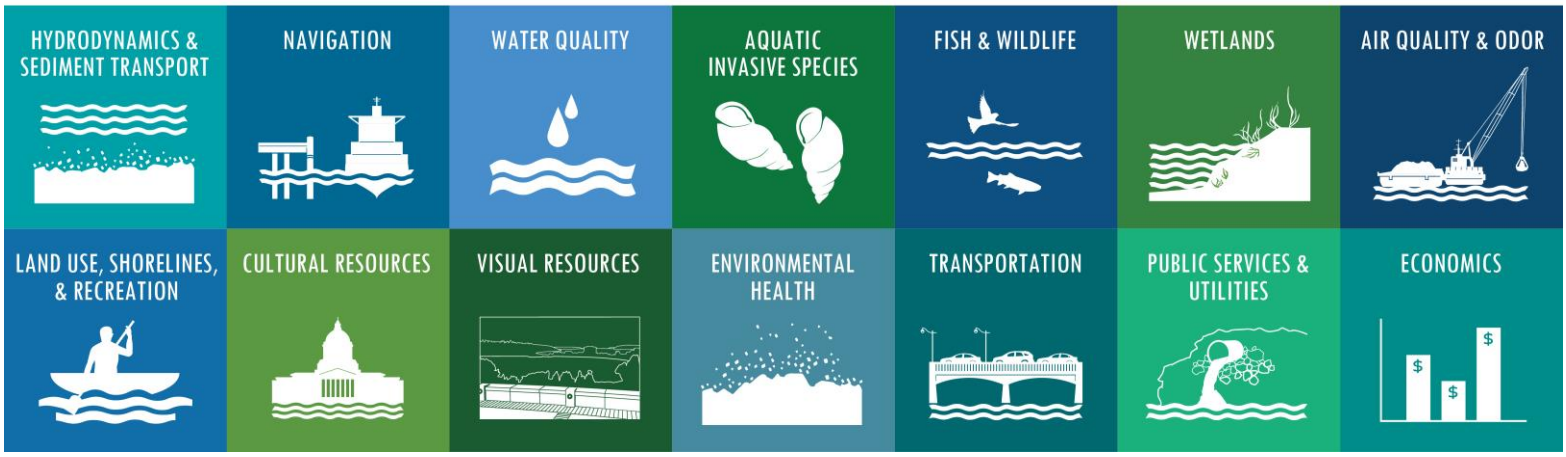
Estuary Alternative at Low Water

0 500 1,000 2,000
Scale in Feet
N

Assessing Environmental Impacts and Benefits

A range of environmental disciplines were evaluated to identify potential impacts and benefits to the natural and built environment as a result of project construction and long-term management. The Draft and Final EIS include a summary of the interdisciplinary analyses, and detailed discipline reports are provided as attachments to the EIS.

TECHNICAL EVALUATIONS



Stakeholder Engagement

The Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary is a shared resource. Enterprise Services conducted long-term management planning as a collaborative process with potential beneficiaries and key stakeholders, including the community. Enterprise Services convened representatives from the Squaxin Island Tribe, governmental and agency partners, and the community to evaluate alternatives for long-term management of the waterbody.

- **Executive Work Group:** Members shared policy-level feedback and ensured that the interests of their constituents were considered. They were tasked with comprehensive review of project issues, to consider policy, community, and technical aspects.
- **Technical Work Group:** Included entities that have regulatory authority during design and permitting, or would require close coordination regarding potential significant impacts and mitigation measures. Members provided natural resources expertise and technical review of project topics related to long-term management.
- **Funding and Governance Work Group:** Focused on developing a plan for shared funding and governance for long-term management of the Estuary Alternative.
- **Community Sounding Board:** Composed of 25 individuals selected through an application process, these members represented a wide range of community interests and provided feedback to Enterprise Services on a variety of topics that were important to the decision-making process.

STAKEHOLDERS AND TRIBAL PARTICIPATION IN LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLANNING

- Squaxin Island Tribe (●◆■)
- City of Olympia (●◆■)
- City of Tumwater (●◆■)
- Enterprise Services (●◆■▲)
- LOTT Clean Water Alliance (●◆■)
- Port of Olympia (●◆■)
- Thurston County (●◆■)
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (◆)
- Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (◆)
- Washington State Department of Ecology (◆)
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources (◆■)
- Community (▲)

Decision-Making Process

Enterprise Services developed a decision-making process for the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary Long-Term Management Project that considered a range of important information and incorporated tribal and stakeholder input into the process.

In the EIS process, the Managed Lake, Estuary, Hybrid, and No Action Alternatives were evaluated against six selection criteria:

- **Performance Against Project Goals.** Degree to which the long-term management alternatives would meet project goals.
- **Other Environmental Disciplines.** Potential significant impacts and benefits across the environmental disciplines analyzed in the EIS but not directly associated with the project goals.
- **Environmental Sustainability.** Ability to provide net environmental benefits over a 30-year horizon. Considers relative contribution to project goals, resiliency to climate change (including sea level rise), and level of active management required to achieve project goals.
- **Economic Sustainability.** Relative cost-effectiveness in constructing and operating the alternative; and the severity of economic impacts if there is a lapse in long-term funding.
- **Construction Impacts.** The duration and magnitude of construction impacts.
- **Decision Durability.** The ability of an alternative to achieve long-term support from local tribes, stakeholders, and communities. Enterprise Services sought input on the relative ability of the alternatives to achieve long-term support from the Squaxin Island Tribe, governmental and agency partners, and the Community Sounding Board. These groups collectively represent the communities most likely to be affected by this decision.

Enterprise Services identified the Estuary Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for long-term management of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary in the 2022 Final EIS.

Next Steps