



Community Sounding Board Meeting Summary

Date: August 21, 2024

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 PM

Location: Zoom

Topic: 5th Avenue Bridge & Heritage Park Experience

Meeting Summary

Welcome & Introductions

Ann Larson, Project Director with the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES), welcomed Community Sounding Board (CSB) members and other participants and observers to the meeting. Susan Hayman, Facilitator, described the meeting objectives and led introductions. She also welcomed public observers, and reminded them a public comment opportunity would be provided toward the end of the meeting. She thanked the public for conducting themselves as silent observers with webcams off for this and any CSB meeting.

Susan led a poll to learn from attendees “What about this project inspires you?”

History and Conceptual Design Overview

Ann and Tessa Gardner-Brown, project manager for the consultant team under DES (Floyd|Snider), provided a brief review of the project history including natural history of the Deschutes Estuary and stewardship of the area by the Squaxin Island Tribe to the modern development of Olympia and the Capitol and the current efforts to restore the estuary. She pointed out that the commonality throughout this rich history is how people are all unified through water. Tessa then presented a conceptual overview of the estuary restoration project, which can be found on the project website, linked [here](#). She also provided an update on the project timeline.

Susan then invited questions and comments about the project overview from members of the CSB:

- **Cordilleran icesheet:** A CSB member noted that the terminus of the South Sound area was carved out by a single icesheet. There is the opportunity to tell a large geological story.
- **How to Submit Comments:** To provide input on topics not covered in the CSB meetings, the project team reminded members that comments can be sent to the project email (info@DeschutesEstuaryProject.org). Tessa and Ann reminded CSB members that some components of the design need to be coordinated with specific project partners (e.g., roadway design and code). DES will consider how the public can be involved in providing input on some of the more technical design elements.

Lindsey Sheehan (Environmental Science Associates) and John Williamson (LMN Architects) provided an overview of the conceptual (15%) design. This included visual simulations of the 15% design of the estuary restoration and 5th Avenue Bridge. They overviewed the project goal of

creating a continuous and seamless connection between the park spaces, trails, and bridge experiences.

Susan invited questions and comments from the CSB about the general conceptual design overview.

- **Bridge:** Is it correct that the elevation of the bridge is going to be higher than the current elevation?
 - Scott Stainer (KPF) responded that the height will increase, as the project team needs to consider flood elevation and sea level rise, as well as state code. The current design has a minimum elevation of 21 feet and crowns in the middle. That's about 5 feet higher than the current standard grade at the bridge. The CSB member noted that it would be great to be as close to the water as possible to view salmon.
- **Channelization:** Is the side channel that goes to the east in the historic images going to exist? If so, will that be a problem since the opening near 4th will be narrower than it was historically.
 - Lindsey said the channel proposed in the new design is shifted a bit south. The project team plans to create side channels that reflect historical channels, but those might fill in over time, and that would be okay, as it's part of the natural system.
- **Interpretive Park:** A CSB member noted that the area within Interpretive Park is freshwater and that once you remove the dam, it will be open to marine waters. They suggested the project team consider this area in that design, as all the current vegetation will be impacted.
 - Lindsey clarified that the Interpretive Park area was not included in 15% design, but will be part of 30% design.
- **Bridge:** A CSB member noted that the materials in the visual simulations look to be mostly concrete with wood. Is there a possibility of having more wood within the pedestrian portions and having vehicle areas concrete to match with the boardwalks, understanding that cost might be part of this decisions?
 - John replied that materials are not fully decided yet, but cost and maintenance go into the decision. The design team will focus on creating something cohesive and as natural as possible.
- **Oculus:** A CSB member noted that as a nod to the Coast Salish, it might be nice if the shape of the oculus derived inspiration from salmon by incorporating a similar curvature.
- **Views:** A CSB member asked for confirmation that the project team looked at many aerials over time, not just the one historical image. They also suggested that the project team consider updating project images (such as the 15% Design restoration) to better show important Capitol elements to highlight the sightlines to and from the Capitol better.
 - Lindsey mentioned that the east side of the North Basin will not have trees, so as to provide views to the Capitol. The team will double check that trees in the Middle Basin do not block any Capitol building views, but believe that is not an issue. The CSB member responded that it would be helpful to share any analysis used in making decisions about these elements. Lindsey also mentioned that the team

plans to do more graphic renderings in the future, and that she sees value in including a viewport from Heritage Park looking up to the Capitol.

- **Trees:** There are established Chestnut trees in the project area. Can they be incorporated into this habitat?
 - Lindsey responded that it's something the team can look into.
- **Design:** A CSB member asked about the grey lines on the 15% design image. Tessa responded that the grey lines are gravel berms that will allow the design team to reach higher elevations more quickly for different habitat types (like riparian habitat) in certain areas.

After a ten-minute break, the CSB discussion resumed.

Conceptual Design: Deep Dive (5th Avenue Bridge)

John provided a deeper overview of how the 5th Avenue Bridge can play off of the civic architecture of Olympia. The 15% design of the 5th Avenue Bridge features a softer, curved shape to echo the 4th Avenue Bridge and uses natural shapes to reflect the estuary. John also mentioned that this is an accessible path that all members of the community can use as a destination location. Seat steps at the oculus would allow for longer pause and opportunity for educational programming.

John shared images of local architecture, art, and places of gathering to inspire the CSB to consider what is valuable within the community. The project team intends for the bridge design to reflect the history of Olympia, while also being something new to add to the history of Olympia.

Using polling software, Susan began presenting questions to CSB members and inviting responses regarding design elements of the Bridge. Summarized results are below. [Appendix 2](#) contains the complete poll report.

- What specific activities should we design the 5th Avenue Bridge to accommodate?
 - **Responses included:** This should be a restful place, shaded with trees, with a focus on viewing the Capitol, nature, salmon, and public art. Also, a place for community education (salmon, etc.).
- Are there aspects or places in and around the Deschutes Estuary, Capitol Campus, or downtown Olympia you feel could influence the design of the 5th Avenue Bridge and Heritage Park?
 - **Responses included:** Olympia's music, Squaxin Island Tribe Pole and other cultural art, tile mosaic, salmon and native peoples' history.
- When we think about history and culture, are there specific stories we should consider for integration into the 5th Avenue Bridge design?
 - **Responses included:** Geologic stories, Boldt decision, salmon lifecycle, water quality, little Hollywood, story of the estuary, Capitol siting.

Susan then invited conversation about the responses, and reflections on the responses from other CSB members.

- **Traffic and Noise:** A CSB member noted that the City of Olympia did a street study and saw that, almost everywhere in Olympia, people drive 5-10 miles over the speed limit. If it's designed for 25 MPH and people are driving 30 to 35, the noise from the tires might exceed the noise of the engine. They wondered about traffic calming measures to reduce speed of the cars as well as to provide shielding. John responded that the team is continuing to consider traffic calming, as well as the traffic barrier. This is still in coordination with the City of Olympia and could be a wall or landscaping to create a buffer for safety and sign.
- **Traffic and Safety:** A CSB member stated that having a calming and peaceful spot will be difficult, but the design seems like it will be an amazing location to pause. They asked if there could be a location 100 yards away from the bridge on the west side of the bridge, which would be quieter and more pleasant for gathering and art. They also noted that having kids on the bridge, especially for educational programming, is not safe. Perhaps kids could see the salmon and play at a park on the west of the bridge.
- **Design:** There was appreciation expressed for the bridge design. It fits not only the other bridge, but also into the landscape. A CSB member suggested that different types of tilework could be used to tell stories and create an interactive and interesting landscape that the community can interact with.
- **Usage:** A CSB member requested that the team consider who is allowed on what parts of the bridge. They suggested signage or a barrier to keep the walkway for pedestrians only. Scott mentioned that our current plan is to promote biking in the bike lane.
- **Armoring:** A CSB member suggested that future drawings show the armoring that will be used along the shoreline between the two bridges, as right now it appears to be grassy. Scott mentioned that the armoring might be covered with some habitat, but that is currently undecided.
- **Bridge:** A CSB member asked if the team considered curving the bridge so it's not such a straight edge, as that might help with traffic calming and also the view. They mentioned that the protrusion of the bridge is dominating the edge. If shortening the bridge is not possible, perhaps there could be some shadowing like the 4th Avenue Bridge has, so the edge of the bridge slopes backward to narrow and dissolve the bridge into the landscape.
- **Trees:** A CSB member suggested incorporating trees into that landscape.
- **Salmon Viewing:** A CSB member asked what the current experience on the bridge is for salmon viewing in terms of how long people stay to view. Susan McCleary, from Stream Team, responded that people often stay and talk for up to 20 minutes with salmon stewards. She also mentioned that Stream Team currently places signs on the bridge that advertise when the salmon are there. She asked that the team not underestimate how important salmon viewing is for the community.

Conceptual Design: Deep Dive (Heritage Park)

Lindsey provided an overview of some of the major design components currently in Heritage Park. She first gave an update on the 15% design for the water access point planned in Marathon Park that will include a sloped gravel surface, noting that sediment will likely fill in the gravel over time. She provided information about an additional potential water access points within Heritage Park. This could include stairs that tie into the bridge design and past Heritage Park water access or could have a more natural feel by use of boardwalks or platforms.

She then reviewed the potential sea level rise issues in Heritage Park, as describe in the [Olympia Sea level Rise Response Plan](#), and how the park shoreline could be designed to better address projected sea level rise. She provided an overview of a horizontal levee concept the project team is currently considering. She explained that DES believes a horizontal levee will not only support sea level rise mitigation efforts, but will allow for better views of the Capitol, as the land would be slightly elevated above the habitat.

Using polling software again, Susan began presenting questions to CSB members and inviting responses regarding design elements of Heritage Park. Summarized results are below. [Attachment 2](#) contains the complete poll report.

- We have an opportunity for an additional water access point in Heritage Park. If we add one, how would you use it?
 - **Responses included:** To interact with the water (skipping stones, getting feet wet), taking kids to see the estuary close up, fishing. There were mixed responses regarding the desirability of accommodating boats at all in Heritage Park.
- What are existing design features that should be preserved or honored in a new way?
 - **Responses included:** Honoring flora and fauna, natural landscaping, Heritage Park fountain with reflecting surface for the Capitol, and suggestions that the arc of statehood should be maintained
- What are the specific viewpoints that should be maintained as we develop the shoreline?
 - **Responses included:** Focusing on fewer but more impactful view points of the Capitol and salmon viewing, and the Capitol from the Heritage Park fountain.

Susan then invited conversation about any remaining questions, and/or reflections on the responses from other CSB members.

- **Flood Control:** A CSB member asked for clarification on how a berm in Heritage Park would help prevent the flooding from West Bay via the Olympia Yacht Club property.
 - Lindsey explained that this project will not solve flooding due to sea level rise for the city, but that DES is in coordination with the City about the Percival Landing work.
- **Berm Placement:** A CSB member asked if it would be better to move the berm back father rather than raise it up to help take some of that flooding.
 - Lindsey responded that this is something the project team is discussing, but that one of the downsides to moving the berm back is that you are allowing saltwater farther into the park. Another member suggested that raising 5th Avenue near Water Street might solve the flooding issues.
- **Restoration Design:** It was noted that this is an opportunity to integrate some of these historical pieces and landscape design, but also an opportunity to look forward to what a more holistic design might look like. The CSB member suggested that DES should consider as much native foliage as possible in these areas where there are currently lawns. They invite change into that space, especially if it can still honor Olympia’s history and protect downtown.
- **Sea Level Rise:** A CSB member noted that it is great the team is taking on sea level rise to support the historic downtown district.

- **Facilities:** There was a suggestion for 21st Century bathrooms.
- **Wading:** A CSB member mentioned that wading may be limited somewhat by water quality, as it is precluded in some areas of West Bay.
- **Views:** A CSB member said they would prefer to not have trees along the walkway between the walkway and the water, especially along the southeast part of the basin.
- **Railroad Bridge:** A CSB member asked about boating in the Middle Basin due to the height of the railroad bridge. If not, maybe there does not need to be a boat launch in Tumwater Historic Park. [**Note: this is no longer part of the design and outside the scope**]
- **Arc of Statehood:** A CSB member asked how often would the tide be out so you would see the foundation of the Arc of Statehood?
 - The team responded that if DES determine to move forward with the updated Arc of Statehood, the area would need to be rebuilt, but DES will find ways to preserve the plaques.
- **Planting:** A CSB member noted that the plants that are considered native right now, might not always be the best ones to incorporate as the local climate changes over time.
- **Water Access:** A CSB member noted that there is no water access on Percival Landing or at Port Plaza, but folks still want to touch it anyway.

Public Comment

No public comments were provided. The public is encouraged to sign up for the project newsletter on the project [website](#) to learn about upcoming opportunities to provide input on the estuary restoration design.

Reflections

Tessa provided a brief summary of her key takeaways:

- **Bridge Programming:** There is a desire for opportunities to pause and view back to the Capitol. Incorporate trees, shade, and traffic calming to help support that goal. There is also interest in community education.
- **Design Influences:** There were clear themes around cultural art, connection to salmon, and the music and unique culture of Olympia. Leave space in design for the story of past and moving into the future and show the evolution of the space in some sort of timescape.
- **Stories:** There is great importance in the Capitol siting and the story of Olympia, including Little Hollywood. It is also important to reflect the history of the estuary and the Boldt decision, and to honor the natural environment and its context within the urban space.
- **Heritage Park:** There is interest in boating and passive usage of the space, such as skipping rocks, wading, and allowing youth to experience the estuary.
- **Design Features:** Views to and from the fountain and other built spaces are important, while integrating new flora and fauna.

Upcoming Meeting

The team will be working from now through the end of the year to complete 30% and will review stakeholder input, including that gathered in this meeting, as design develops. The project has

budget requests into the Legislature which will move the project into construction. DES will continue to engage the public throughout the design.

Ann closed by thanking the CSB members for their time and focus on this important work. She reminded CSB members to provide additional comments via the project email address: info@DeschutesEstuaryProject.org or to reach out to her or Susan directly. It is expected the project team will meet with the CSB again in early 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Meeting Participants

CSB Members in Attendance:

- Anne Knight, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
- Bill Robinson, N Capitol Campus Heritage Park Development Association
- Bob Holman, Capitol Lake Improvement and Protection Association
- Bruce York, South Sound Group of Sierra Club
- Casey Allen, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
- Jamie Gerken, City of Olympia Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- John Dunlap, Mountaineers Olympia Sea Kayaking Committee
- Tom Dillon, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Stephanie Johnson, Gateways Public Art
- Susan McCleary, Stream Team
- Wade Stine, Olympia Downtown Alliance

Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project Team in attendance:

- Ann Larson, DES
- Brian Combs, DES
- Shaina Thompson, DES
- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Kate Snider, Floyd|Snider
- Kristen Legg, Floyd|Snider
- Scott Stainer, KPFF
- Mark Steepy, KPFF
- Lindsey Sheehan, ESA
- John Williamson, LMN Architects
- Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic
- Mariana Ramirez, Ross Strategic

Attachment 2: Materials Generated during Meeting

5th Avenue Bridge: Polling Questions and Results

1. What specific activities should we design the 5th Avenue Bridge to accommodate?

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Downvotes	Trending Score
Thinking about oculus think about temporary art	0	0	0	0
Trees on bridge - not just at the entrance	1	1	0	1
Alternate (safer) bike route to 4th Ave bridge	1	1	0	1
Looks like all modes of transportation have been taken into consideration, and this looks very walkable! The 4th Ave bridge can be very windy and exposed. This seems softer.	0	0	0	0
A great viewing platform for observing nature being brought back into our built environment.	0	0	0	0
Art and history info boards	2	2	0	2
Design looks like a great rest stop for the majority of people who walk the loop.	1	1	0	1
Places to rest in addition to the steps near the oculus for folks with limited mobility	2	2	0	2
Salmon Stewards community education	2	2	0	2
I like the step seating for classes on salmon migration and enjoying the view!	1	1	0	1
If used for anything but commuting, how has sound been brought into the design. Could there be trees or other foliage between the cars and the pedestrians? Shouldn't we focus on the pedestrian experience, shouldn't the drivers have their eyes on the road? :)	2	2	0	2
Sitting relaxing watching the estuary and people	0	0	0	0
Water fountain and seating to pause on the usually long walks associated with crossing the bridge.	0	0	0	0
Walking around the lake, salmon viewing, gathering for nature	0	0	0	0
Provide Trees for shade in the landscape areas on the bridge for the pedestrians - It is a long way to walk without shade.	3	3	0	3

2. Are there aspects or places in and around the Deschutes Estuary, Capitol Campus, or downtown Olympia you feel could influence the design of the 5th Avenue Bridge and Heritage Park?

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Downvotes	Trending Score
Could be a great place for buskers to bring music to the space	1	1	0	1
Something that can keep up with changes over time, as in the Raffa solidarity mural	0	0	0	0
We have a vertical pole planned just north of your site. Certainly a second is possible, but there is a lot of opportunity for art in the infrastructure.	0	0	0	0
Salmon and native people history. From Cap Vancouver, fishing, timber, beer, water quality	2	2	0	2
Board walk - thinner edge along basin edge - allow concrete structure to disappear into the shadow - less exposed flat surface - subject to graffiti	1	1	0	1
Tile mosaic reflecting nature	2	2	0	2
A place to show cultural art.	2	2	0	2
Olympia's music heritage	0	0	0	0
Artwork on 4th Ave bridge and roundabouts is called "From the Laws of Man to the Laws of Nature." This resonates with that concept!	0	0	0	0

3. When we think about history and culture, are there specific stories we should consider for integration into the 5th Avenue Bridge design?

Heritage Park: Polling Questions and Results

1. We have an opportunity for an additional water access point in Heritage Park. If we add one, how would you use it?

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Downvotes	Trending Score
No boat launch at heritage park	0	0	0	0
Sitbon stairs to look at estuary w lunch	0	0	0	0
where would be the parking for unloading kayaks? so does it make sense for boats. But it could be just to get closer to the water	2	2	0	2
The boat access at marathon park is best not in the middle of park	0	0	0	0
Take kids down to see estuary closer up	5	5	0	5
Tumwater boat launch would of course be for hand carried boats only	1	1	0	1
I would not use it prefer to keep the habitat protected	2	2	0	2
I would not put an "expert level launch" at the most casual use part the park. Many conflicts.	1	1	0	1
Skipping stones	3	3	0	3
To touch the water. Get my feet wet.	4	4	0	4
Fishing.	1	1	0	1
Put in for kayaks	1	2	1	1
Coordinating with the City of Tumwater to get a boat launch in Tumwater Historical Park.	-1	0	1	-1

2. What are existing design features that should be preserved or honored in a new way?

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Downvotes	Trending Score
Keep arc of statehood and county markers. And passive nature of heritage park	1	2	1	1
Heritage park fountain with reflecting surface for capitol	1	1	0	1
Flow of water	0	0	0	0
I would like to honor the natural flora and fauna and reduce the grass in any place that is not a specific gathering place (e.g. main lawns of Heritage park). I would like to see more native landscaping, I also believe this will provide a more interesting and interactive space.	4	4	0	4

3. What are the specific viewpoints that should be maintained as we develop the shoreline?

Response	Net Votes	Upvotes	Downvotes	Trending Score
I think that certain view points that are important from a landscape architectural perspective but view points are more stunning when they are less frequent. More. Trees.	4	4	0	4
Capitol building, salmon viewing	0	0	0	0
View of capital from puget sound	0	0	0	0
Capitol from Heritage Park Fountain.	2	2	0	2