WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
with the Department of Enterprise Services
DESCHUTES ESTUARY
Restoration Project

Meeting Notes Summary

Date: July 7, 2026 **Time:** 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Location: Zoom **Topic:** 90% Design CSB Meeting

Meeting Participants

CSB Members in Attendance:

- Anne Knight, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
- Bob Holman, Capitol Lake Improvement and Protection Association
- Bill Robinson, N Capitol Campus Heritage Park Development Association
- Eric Seder, South Capitol Neighborhood Association (SCNA)
- Hap Clemons, Puget Sound Estuarium
- Jackie Velasco, Thurston County Regional Housing Council
- Laurie Gneiding, South Sound Bird Alliance
- Pheobe Cross, Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team
- Stephanie Johnson, Gateways Public Art
- Ted Trepanier, Olympia Yacht Club
- Todd Cutts, Olympia Tumwater Foundation
- Tom Dillon, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project Team in Attendance:

- Lynn Turner, Ecology
- Ciara Sheets, Ecology
- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Madeline Remmen, Floyd|Snider
- Scott Stainer, KPFF
- Nathan Anderson, KPFF
- Mark Steepy, KPFF

Meeting Notes Summary

Welcome & Introductions

Lynn Turner, with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), is the Southwest Region Planner and serves as the Project Manager. She welcomed the Community Sounding Board (CSB) members to the meeting. Lynn described the meeting objectives and led introductions.

Project Overview and Design Schedule

Lynn and Tessa Gardner-Brown, the consultant team Project Manager (Floyd|Snider), provided a brief overview of the project and the overall design schedule. The project team is currently working toward 90% design, which is expected to be complete in fall 2026, and will finalize design and permitting in mid-to-late 2027.

- A CSB member asked why 60% design happened without CSB participation.
    - In 2025, the legislature switched lead agencies from the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services to Ecology. During this transition, external engagement was paused except for continued coordination with formal design partners including the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Squaxin Island Tribe, City of Olympia, and City of Tumwater. Now that the state agency transition is complete, external outreach has resumed.
    - Beginning in early 2026, Ecology held a virtual public meeting, hosted two open house events at the site, and published blog and video materials.

Tessa went over a summary of the CSB's input into design.

Conceptual Rendering of New 5th Avenue Bridge & Key Refinements

Tessa introduced a conceptual rendering of the 5th Avenue Bridge and described the design refinements since the conceptual and 30% design phases to adjust for input from the Governor's Office and Legislature, focusing on cost reductions. This resulted in the following key changes to bridge design:

- Reduced bridge width and length, changed structure type, removed arched facia
- Refined channel/estuary viewing opportunity and removed oculus

Refinements also occurred based on feedback from the City of Olympia. These refinements addressed comments related to maintenance and safety, with the following key changes:

- Reducing the number of railing and vertical elements
- Raising the pedestrian space to increase sightlines

Nathan Anderson, project engineer at KPFF and project team civil design lead, then went over the latest version of the bridge design, which includes bike lanes in each direction, a sidewalk on the north side, and a shared use path on the south side with expanded areas for seating and viewing.

CSB discussion on the bridge design included the following key points:

- Discussion around circulation in the shared use areas with both pedestrian and cyclist use. There were questions and discussion around whether signage, striping, or requirements for bicycle dismount are needed to help navigate the shared use path, or what other design elements would promote safe circulation.
- Question about who is the owner of the bridge and who is responsible for bridge maintenance.
- Discussion around the aesthetic preferences toward horizontal tensioned cabling as opposed to a pedestrian guardrail.

- Encouragement for the design team to think about disposal receptacles (such as sharps containers) on the bridge and suggested reaching out to the environmental health team at Thurston County (County) for additional detail.
- Discussion around potential for solid, taller barriers between bike lanes and vehicle lanes for increased cyclist safety, rather than the proposed buffer.
- Question around whether the mid-span access points to the shared use path would encourage people to cross the street, outside of a designated crossing.
- Interest in bridge landscaping that encourages pollinators and discussion around the bridge not being an appropriate location for bird/bat boxes.

Heritage Park Design Updates

Tessa overviewed the habitat berm proposed in Heritage Park to increase climate resiliency. She described that a new trail would be constructed on top of the berm.

- A CSB member asked whether the sediment that is proposed for beneficial reuse is contaminated.
    - Tessa described that sediment sampling occurred in the EIS and shows that sediment in Capitol Lake is below cleanup levels. A link to the Sediment Quality Discipline Report was provided.
- Question concerning state policy on consistent interpretive signage on campus.
- A CSB member asked if reflected views of the Capitol building on the waterbody or on the Heritage Park Fountain would be impacted by the berm.
    - Project team confirmed that views from the Heritage Park Fountain would not be impacted by the berm given the elevated location of the building on the hillside.

Mark Steepy, Principal at KPFF and project team park design lead, went over key design components of the habitat berm, trail, and new water access point at Heritage Park. Then Tessa described how the County plaques are salvageable and will need moderate to heavy restoration. Questions and comments from the CSB on Heritage Park included the following:

- Discussion around inundation of the water access location.
    - Based on the design elevation, inundation would not occur frequently but would occur during King Tides, which are approximately annual.
- Suggestion for wildlife-friendly lighting via downlights and long-wavelength lights if the lighting will be replaced.
- Question around whether the shoreline requires armoring.
    - Scott Stainer, Principal at KPFF and project team design lead, described that Heritage Park is fairly sheltered from wave energy given the narrow opening between 4th and 5th Avenues. Additionally, he described that the slope of the habitat berm will be soft and vegetated, so wave energy will be buffered.
- A member pointed out that the renderings do not quite match the plan view of Heritage Park.

- The project team noted that the renderings will be updated.

Other Comments/Questions

After the presentation, additional discussion included the following:

- Lynn described that the boardwalks have not been eliminated from the project but that design and construction of these elements is paused until funding is identified.
- Question about whether spaces for birds will be limited.
  - Tessa discussed that WDFW and the Squaxin Island Tribe wanted to focus on boardwalk length being shorter and discussion with CSB may occur later, with funding resolution.
- Views from the new roadway reconfiguration were discussed. The project team noted that this will be a new roadway spur with a different orientation than the existing Olympic Street, but that views toward the Capitol building would be similar to existing conditions.
- Question and discussion about art programming and whether the 0.5% for the state would be triggered.
- There was a suggestion to coordinate with the environmental health team at the County a few months before construction regarding coordination with unsheltered people residing within the project area.

Upcoming Meetings

Lynn noted that there may be another opportunity for a meeting with the CSB before final design, or as the project transitions into construction, but that a specific meeting date and topic have not yet been identified.