

DRAFT Tribal Work Plan

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is evaluating options for replacing the westbound US 2 trestle and making east side interchange improvements. Current efforts include examining and recommending financing and planning options to the legislature. The legislative direction for this study also included requirements to work in close collaboration with local project proponents and stakeholders. To meet this requirement WSDOT formed three groups: an Executive Advisory Group (EAG), a Technical Working Group (TWG), and a Resource Agency Committee (RAC). The EAG includes senior staff and elected or appointed officials. The TWG is comprised of technical experts focused on transportation planning. The RAC includes agencies and tribes with environmental interests and jurisdiction in the area.

There are five identified tribes with an interest in the Project: the Tulalip Tribes (Tulalip), Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama), Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians (Stillaguamish), Snoqualmie Tribe (Snoqualmie), and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe (Sauk-Suiattle). These tribes have varying interests in the project. For example, the project lies immediately south of the Tulalip reservation and the Tulalip has treaty fishing rights in this area. Other tribes may have an interest in cultural or natural resource impacts from the project.

This work plan outlines an approach for WSDOT to help identify key tribal issues as it prepares cost and feasibility studies for the project. The approach is designed to ensure that interested tribes have the opportunity to provide input throughout the process, while acknowledging the Tulalip's reservation and treaty rights in the area.

Planning Study Objectives

At this stage in development, the key objective is to gather information and create trust and transparency with interested tribes as WSDOT develops planning-level options that if funded will eventually be carried a full environmental review.

Approach

Key tribal issues will likely be economic, transportation, and treaty fishing topics expressed by the Tulalip, and any significant cultural or natural resource concerns raised by all interested tribes. At this stage in project development, WSDOT should factor these issues and considerations into cost, feasibility, and schedule plans.

Due to the Tulalip Tribes' interests in transportation to the reservation and treaty fishing rights in the area, WSDOT formally invited the tribe to participate in the EAG, TWG and RAC and has been making efforts to meet with the tribe.

WSDOT sent letters and followed up individually to the Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie, Yakama, and Sauk Suiattle inviting them to participate in the RAC and TWG work groups. The WSDOT project team has been also working to meet individually on cultural resources and other issues.

These meetings focus on presenting project briefings to the tribes, soliciting their feedback, and identifying any significant issues that would affect project development. For example, if a tribe identifies that there are significant cultural resources affected by an alternative, it could influence the alternatives under development.

Project Documentation

As part of this early planning effort, documentation of all tribal outreach is maintained in Tribal Log. This will ensure that as the project moves from planning into environmental review, early efforts and feedback is carried forward without duplicative effort, and will help build trust with the tribes that their early efforts are being considered.