

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish (WRIA 8) Watershed 201 S. Jackson Street, Suite 600 Seattle, WA 98104-3855

December 2, 2015

Jerry Shuster City of Edmonds 121 5th Avenue N. Edmonds, WA 98020

RE: Willow Creek Daylighting Final Feasibility Study - WRIA 8 Review Comments

Dear Mr. Shuster:

Per your request, the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Technical Committee was provided the Draft Willow Creek Daylighting Final Feasibility Study for review and comment. Both the Technical Committee and WRIA 8 staff appreciate the opportunity to provide input prior to the draft report being finalized, and we appreciate the City's interest in maximizing the restoration opportunity for the benefit of salmonids. The purpose of this letter is to transmit to you the Technical Committee's comments, which are summarized below.

Overall, the draft final feasibility report appears comprehensive and contains a number of important and useful recommendations. Based on the analysis presented, it appears that the preferred alternative will offer channel characteristics and flow velocities allowing juvenile salmon to access the channel and the marsh to the maximum extent possible given site constraints. Specific recommendations and considerations are as follows:

- 1) Section 2.6.4 highlights the limited quantitative water and sediment quality data on stormwater runoff entering Edmonds Marsh and Willow Creek. The study recommends that a stormwater and sediment sampling and analysis plan be developed to evaluate the potential effects of stormwater and chemical contaminants on fish. In addition, Section 10 highlights important issues related to potential site contamination that require additional sampling and analysis (for example, groundwater modeling to evaluate the effects of installing an HDPE protective liner beneath a section of daylighted creek). Given the high estimated costs and uncertainties related to the liner, potential soil contamination, the issues of site contamination and existing pollution loadings, and their potential effects on fish and other organisms, these issues should continue to be investigated. In order to anticipate likely comments during future Salmon Recovery Funding Board reviews, we suggest that these topics are clearly articulated and addressed, and that feasible mitigation steps are identified, in advance of seeking additional salmon recovery funding for design.
- Section 2.6.1 references warm water in the currently confined open Willow Creek channel, and high water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen in the marsh are noted in Section 2.6.2. Further explanation of the water temperature expectations in a new daylighted channel would be helpful to ensure conditions are conducive to juvenile Chinook salmon use. Moving forward

into the design process, the City should attempt to maximize a dense buffer of riparian vegetation along the daylighted channel, complemented by instream habitat structure.

- 3) We appreciate the extensive coordination being initiated by the City of Edmonds with relevant stakeholders and adjacent landowners. The report states that the preferred alignment does not conflict with the future Edmonds Crossing ferry terminal preferred alternative, and we encourage continued coordination with WSDOT Ferries to ensure that conflicts do not emerge as the two projects advance. To echo a comment of WSDOT Ferries noted in Section 11.2, it would be helpful for the Edmonds Crossing preferred alternative to be illustrated on the Willow Creek Daylighting conceptual drawings. Furthermore, it would be helpful to better understand whether the anticipated new ferry terminal at the proposed location could compromise a daylighted Willow Creek channel or result in undesirable impacts to the channel from a habitat restoration perspective. If the ferry terminal and parking will be on the Unocal site, the City should seek ways to maintain an intact stream buffer along the daylighted stream channel and, preferably, preserve space for channel sinuosity along Admiral Way.
- 4) The design plan shows the existing Willow Creek outfall will be abandoned. The pipe should be removed if possible; at a minimum, the pipe should be capped or screened in a manner that ensures fish or other aquatic species don't travel up it once it is decommissioned.
- 5) The description of Alternative 1 mentions dog park exclusion fencing, and Section 15 states dog access to the channel should be restricted. We concur with this recommendation. The dog park location, south of the new daylighted channel alignment, seems problematic. With the level of investment required to implement the project and the goal of providing functional nearshore habitat, it is preferable that the dog park not present conflicts with the restored channel. If relocating the dog park to another area is not feasible, we would like to see the next phase of design determine ways to maximize the stream buffer and eliminate the potential for undesirable user conflicts.
- 6) The City should consider limiting the number of pedestrian crossings over the new channel in Marina Beach Park to one—or eliminating crossings altogether if practical—to allow for dynamic channel processes. If a crossing is necessary, it should be designed in a way that does not limit natural channel movement. In particular, the downstream pedestrian crossing as illustrated in Figure 8 seems to be located in an area that would limit or restrict natural channel processes, which should be avoided to the extent possible.
- 7) Section 4.4 references herbicide applications as a possibility for reducing cattails. We prefer the City use methods other than herbicides to remove cattails in the marsh.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on this report. If you have any questions, please contact me at 206-477-4786 or <u>jason.wilkinson@kingcounty.gov</u>.

Sincerely,

Jason Wilkinson Actions and Funding Coordinator, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)