WASHINGTON STATE Recreation and Conservation Office

Project Review Comments

PROJECT: 21-1108 P, Cispus Floodplain Reconnection Project

Sponsor: Cowlitz Indian Tribe Program: SALMON ST PROJ Status: Application Resubmitted

MEETING: Initial Review

Shared: 4/2/2021

Review Status: Needs more information

Considerations: Scope concern

Topics	Comments
Review Panel Comments - Initial	
Questions (response required)	
	Can you clarify the extent to which the left bank bridge (Tom Music) abutment will be considered in the analysis? The thought is not that a preliminary design should be developed for a new bridge, but that the alternatives analysis will include options for this. Relocating the 2801 road to reconnect the floodplain seems like a good option to move forward to preliminary design, but the infrastructure work associated with bridge or culverts through the 28 road and the impact of the Tom Music left bank abutment create concern's about the ability to move forward to preliminary design.
	Reply: We do not anticipate replacing or retrofitting the left bank bridge abutment as part of the restoration project, but a floodplain swale and small overflow culvert currently carries flow during high water events just south of the abutment, so that location would be a natural candidate for an enlarged, aquatic-organism-passable structure to convey more flow and provide habitat benefits above and below FR 28. Impacts to or improvements of the abutment would need to be addressed through the preliminary and final design processes in coordination with Forest Service road engineers. While relocating FR 2801 to the base of the valley wall would alleviate erosion concerns for road use, it would do a poor job of reconnecting the floodplain overall because perched overflow culverts installed in FR28 would create a bathtub effect, rather than a functional floodplain. A feasibility-level project is possible, but we would much rather proceed to a preliminary/permit-level design, even if the resulting plans would require substantial additional engineering work to proceed to final design. For example, the preliminary design deliverable for this project could include typical design drawings for each crossing through FR28, while the [future] final design deliverable would have additional detail based on site/structure-specific constraints. This would fulfill the requirements of Manual 18, Appendix D-2, and would keep the project moving forward.
General Comments (response not required)	
	Excellent relative elevation maps of the Cispus River.
	It's good to finally see some action on the road impingement issues in this area of the Cispus as challenging as it may be to get to a final design that works on a long term basis.

PROJECT: 21-1108 P, Cispus Floodplain Reconnection Project

Sponsor: Cowlitz Indian Tribe Program: SALMON ST PROJ Status: Application Resubmitted

MEETING: LE Review

Shared: 4/16/2021

Topics	Comments
Lead Entity Comments	
Questions For Applicant	
	Given the existing bridge is such as constriction point for the river, what is the ideal bridge size to both access and river needs? Will you consider replacing or widening the Tom Music bridge during the design process? Consider the outcomes of changing the size of the existing bridge during the alternatives review process. Modeling possible outcomes could be helpful even if costs are restrictive for certain alternatives.
	Reply: Evaluating a wider bridge can be one of the alternatives evaluated, but the landowner has expressed no interest in replacing the bridge since it is less than 25 years old and is currently functional as transportation infrastructure.
	How will you balance a high cost construction project with the habitat gains from the restoration work during the design process?
	Reply: We anticipate leveraging funding from diverse sources for the implementation phase of this project. We share the Panel's expectation that construction costs will be high for the anticipated habitat gain, so funding sources that prioritize water quality, transportation infrastructure, and local community resiliency will be in our sights when we begin soliciting implementation funding. During the design process, we will consider available and prospective grant sources and their likelihood of contribution when selecting a preferred alternative. For example, when evaluating a bridge replacement alternative, we will consider the likelihood of securing adequate funds for that endeavor.
	Will potential impacts of downstream phase 1 – 3 restoration work in the Cispus River and Yellowjacket Creek be considered during this design project?
	Reply: Yes, the Cispus-Yellowjacket Phases 1, 2, and 3 projects will be completed or in construction and will be considered existing conditions for the purposes of modeling.
	Is there potential for USFS engineers to support design development for this project? Make sure they are at least reviewing materials if not leading design development.
	Reply: Engineering staff at USFS are exceptionally under-resourced and do not have the capacity at the District level to undertake design development. They will, however, be a key stakeholder in evaluating the transportation aspects of the design work.
	Are there opportunities to relocate the bridge to an area where the floodplain is naturally more constricted? The presence of a large, alluvial floodplain at the current bridge crossing may make it difficult to support bridge and river process needs.

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	Reply: The bridge is a concrete 168-foot clear span deck with integrated girders. The previous bridge was irreparably damaged presumably because a log jam formed on a central pier during the flood of record in 1996. The nearest floodplain constriction is approximately 500 feet wide, so relocating the current bridge does not seem to be a helpful improvement to transportation resiliency, since it would not be able to span that constriction without additional piers.