

Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Cleanup Roundtable: Frequently Asked Questions

On April 18, 2018, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hosted two webinars to provide information about the Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) Roundtable that will convene in fall 2018. Below are the questions and answers from these webinar sessions.

ROUNDTABLE OPERATING PROCEDURES QUESTIONS

Will the Roundtable make recommendations using consensus?

The Roundtable may reach consensus on recommendations, and such recommendations will have added weight. However, Roundtable members can provide recommendations to EPA if consensus is not reached. All members of the Roundtable will be involved with making recommendations to EPA. Recommendations are meant to provide input and feedback to the EPA on issues related to the LDW Superfund cleanup. The idea is that each caucus or individual seat will develop its own recommendations regarding the design issue under consideration, and those recommendations would be discussed at the Roundtable meetings. By vetting and refining recommendations at the Roundtable, recommendations that are widely supported are likely to emerge.

How many Roundtable meetings will there be in a year?

EPA anticipates that the Roundtable would initially meet three times a year. The frequency of meetings will be decided by the Roundtable when it convenes and finalizes the operating procedures. When and how often the Roundtable meets can be adjusted depending on project activities and the phase of the cleanup. For example, when active cleanup is underway, the Roundtable might choose to meet more often to give feedback.

How long will the Roundtable charter exist, and how can it be modified or terminated if goals are not being met?

This is an item that has yet to be determined. This and similar aspects of the Roundtable should be discussed by the Roundtable members and resolved in the final operating procedures.

What is the time commitment to participate in the Roundtable?

It is anticipated that a caucus leader would need to commit to about 64 hours a year for the Roundtable. This is assuming about three hours a month to review documents related to designing the cleanup, three Roundtable Meetings, and three Caucus Meetings. Roundtable members who are not caucus leaders can expect to spend about 16 hours a year at Roundtable meetings plus 4-10 hours at caucus meetings to give updates and gather feedback.

Can community members and community-based organizations be compensated for their time?

The question of compensation is something that often comes up when the public is asked to spend considerable time providing input. We recognize the value of everyone's time in this process, especially that of the community members impacted by the cleanup. However, EPA is prohibited from using federal funds to compensate community members for participating in the public process. Community groups may wish to pursue other avenues for funding.

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS

Can anyone participate in the Roundtable? Does EPA expect a certain type of expertise (e.g. technical experts, public involvement experts, department heads, staff, etc.)?

There is no requirement for a particular type or level of expertise, as the Roundtable discussions will not focus only on technical details. The purpose of the May 30, 2018 training is to ensure we have a common understanding of Superfund and the LDW. Beyond that, having a variety of expertise at the table will, we hope, help bring together scientists and engineers, people with direct knowledge of neighborhoods and communities

in the Duwamish Valley, business people, tribal representatives, and people familiar with local government activities and processes. EPA would expect the project manager, community involvement coordinator, or both to attend Roundtable meetings and to bring technical experts to meetings as needed. We do not expect that agency management or political leaders would typically participate in the Roundtable.

What if I'm not sure what caucus I belong in?

It is up to the individual Roundtable member to consider which caucus best reflects the member's role, values and interests. Caucuses have overlapping interests. As caucuses take form and select leaders, it may be appropriate to adjust membership based on what works for the caucus as a whole. The Roundtable Training on May 30, 2018 will be an opportunity for prospective Roundtable members to connect with other potential members of their caucus. There is also an ad-hoc seat for those who feel that they do not fit into a particular caucus.

Please define the "Ad-Hoc" seat(s).

An Ad-Hoc seat has been proposed so that all interested parties could potentially participate in the Roundtable, even if they don't fit into an existing caucus or are not part of a defined seat. Ad-Hoc members could include an interested member of the public or other non-governmental interest groups as appropriate.

Please explain "resource members".

Resource Members were described in the [Draft Operating Procedures](#) as entities who provide information to the Roundtable but do not participate in the development of recommendations. Examples might include the Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Health and others who may have relevant knowledge. Resource members could also include experts from academia or the private sector. Resource members do not need to be fixed members but attend meetings as needed. The definition of Resource Members can be refined by the Roundtable when it convenes in October.

Which caucus or seat would best represent the interests of recreational users of the waterway?

It will be up to the recreational users to determine which caucus most represents their interests. A likely caucus group would be the non-Community Advisory Group (CAG) Community caucus.

Will fishers have a place in this meeting? Where are the fishing groups on the Roundtable diagram?

We have heard from government agencies and nonprofits about the importance of having a Roundtable caucus for the fishing community. Access for people who fish in the Duwamish could be affected during active cleanup, and this community will continue to be the focus of institutional controls related to the health advisory. The role of fishers in the Roundtable will be discussed when the Roundtable convenes in October.

Could a Roundtable member have a conflict of interest in participating in the Roundtable?

A question that has come up is how membership should be limited in the case of a potential conflict of interest. Provided it is demonstrated that the person or entity represents the interest of the larger group or caucus, and not their individual interests, their participation in the Roundtable should be acceptable. What constitutes an adequate demonstration has not been determined, but at a minimum, we would seek a written statement documenting the individual's capacity as a representative of the group.

Is there a list of members for each Caucus?

Not yet. People should be finding or forming their caucuses in the summer of 2018. Caucus membership should be established at the first Roundtable meeting in October 2018.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONS

Will community members be able to ask questions or make recommendations at Roundtable meetings?

General members of the public who attend the Roundtable meetings as audience members will have defined opportunities to ask questions or make comments to the Roundtable. In addition, they can direct ideas or topics to the leader or a member of the caucus that may best reflect their interests. It is the Roundtable members who will make recommendations to EPA regarding the design and implementation of the cleanup.

Will Caucus meetings be open to the public and to non-caucus interests?

The Roundtable meetings will be open to the public. Interested parties can sign up to receive email updates related to the Roundtable (agendas, meeting summaries, etc.).

Is there a limit to how many community members can attend, or will it be open anyone in the community?

Roundtable meetings will be open for observation and at defined points, for questions and comments. How many community members can attend will only be limited by room size. The number of Roundtable members at the table will be determined by the Roundtable when it finalizes its draft operating procedures.

Will Community Health Advocates (CHAs) have their own place or will they be considered community members?

CHAs are community members who are working with Public Health Seattle/King County (PHSKC) and EPA to develop and implement institutional controls related to consumption of seafood from the Duwamish. We want fishing communities to be represented on the Roundtable for their perspectives regarding how to mitigate impacts on fishing during active cleanup, such as short-term loss of access to fishing sites in and along the river. Fishing communities may also want to join discussions about water monitoring, phasing of cleanup, and other topics. Should they choose to participate in the Roundtable, the CHAs would participate in their capacity as a member of a fishing community, though not in their capacity as a CHA. Members of a possible Fishers Caucus do not also have to be CHAs.

ROUNDTABLE MEETING CONTENT QUESTIONS

Will Roundtable meetings also speak about health risks in the LDW, i.e. PCBs?

Very little. The cleanup is intended to reduce health risks from seafood consumption. During the design phase, the primary purpose of sampling is to determine what cleanup action is required in what area. We don't expect to change the human health risk assessment that EPA used in developing the cleanup plan.

The Roundtable may discuss how to prevent physical safety hazards during cleanup action, including fishers. Communicating with fishing communities about Duwamish seafood is the IC work that the CHAs are doing. At the Roundtable meetings, EPA may present new seafood data that would be of interest to the CHAs, and PHSKC may update Roundtable members on the work the CHAs are doing. This information sharing may also take place in meetings focused only the CHA work.

How will Duwamish Valley-related topics that fall outside the scope of the Superfund cleanup be addressed at Roundtable meetings?

The Roundtable will address topics within the scope of the Superfund cleanup of the LDW, as EPA designs and implements the cleanup plan finalized in 2014. The facilitator will redirect the Roundtable if topics outside the scope of the Superfund cleanup arise. The Roundtable protocols may include a process for addressing such topics after the primary meeting time of the Roundtable, if the membership consents. EPA hopes that the Roundtable will foster good working relationships between the different caucuses and Roundtable members,

making it easier for the members to work on issues and projects unrelated to the Superfund cleanup but nonetheless important to the communities in and around the Duwamish Valley.