



Cowlitz Indian Tribe

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Cowlitz Tribe to prepare Environmental Impact Statement for LaCenter junction project site

LaCenter, WA – The Cowlitz Tribe has voluntarily agreed to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed development on their 152-acre property at the LaCenter Junction with I-5 at NW 319th Street.

The Cowlitz Tribe's decision to undertake the EIS, although none is required by law, was made after careful review and consideration of the community and the Board of County Commissioner's comments on the Environmental Assessment (EA). The EIS process is much more detailed than the Environmental Assessment and will fully explore issues of concern to the community.

"We realized after reviewing the public's comments on the EA that there is a lot of confusion and misinformation. We believe a more in-depth analysis will clear-up a lot of this uncertainty," said Nancy Osborne, Cowlitz Indian Tribe spokesperson. The EIS process, which could take up to one year to complete, will provide new opportunities for community dialogue and involvement.

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe's decision to complete an EIS was made following the announcement that Mohegan Tribal Gaming of Connecticut had entered into a partnership with Washington-state based Salishan, LLC to develop a casino proposal for the Cowlitz Tribe. The Mohegans currently operate a successful casino in Uncasville, Conn. The Mohegan's participation will provide the tribe with the resources necessary to develop the detailed plan needed for EIS analysis, Osborne said.

David Barnett, President of Salishan and partner in the newly formed Salishan-Mohegan, LLC., said the Mohegans' participation is welcome because of their mission to share the knowledge they have gained in their successful business ventures with other tribes.

"We selected the Mohegans because it was a natural fit," said Barnett., "the Mohegan Tribe has an excellent track record of being good neighbors and supporting their community. The additional resources they bring to the table now enable us to spend more time and resources on working with the community."

“We are excited at the prospect of investing with the Cowlitz,” said Mohegan Tribal Chairman Mark Brown. “As a tribe that has overcome a lot of obstacles, we know what the Cowlitz have gone through, and we know that they will be able to be better able to articulate a vision for the trust land once they have adequate resources.”

The development of site plans will continue to be refined taking into consideration that there is a cap under the compacts that Washington State negotiates with tribes. This cap limits new tribal casinos to 425-675 electronic games during the first year of operation. Under certain circumstances tribes can acquire the rights to up to a maximum of 2,000 electronic games, which would be the upper limit for the proposed casino analyzed under the EIS. Osborne noted that a casino of this size would be significantly smaller than the Mohegan’s existing casino in Connecticut.

For additional information on the Cowlitz Tribe, contact Nancy Osborne, tribal spokesperson at (360) 577-8140. For information on the Salishan-Mohegan partnership or proposed project in LaCenter, contact David Barnett, President, Salishan, LLC at (206) 276-4755 or Mark Brown, Chairman, Mohegan Tribe at (860) 862-6100.

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