

### Potential Alternative or Additional Organization Structures for AHSS

This table outlines preliminary research and options for organizing structures that might serve as an alternative, or complement, to the LIO structure and provide AHSS with the potential for more independence from the Puget Sound Partnership and increased ability to raise money and fund priority projects. The following options are included: 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), Council of Governments, Regional Planning Commission, and Lead Entity. The table below describes each option briefly and provides some examples. Feedback from the AHSS Council on these options is provided on page 3.

|  | Description   | Example   | Notes  |
|--|---|---|--|
| 501(c)(3)  | Nonprofit organization that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service to be tax-exempt under the terms of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Lobbying activities must be less than 20% of budget.  | <a href="#">HCCC</a>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May apply for private and public grants</li> <li>• Creating a nonprofit organization takes time, effort, and money. Because a nonprofit organization is a legal entity under federal, state, and local laws, it may be necessary to consult an attorney, accountant, or other professional.</li> <li>• Would need to establish governance and decision making structure (e.g. Board, Director, other?) and participation structure for government.</li> </ul> |
| 501(c)(4)  | A social welfare organization, such as a civic organization or a neighborhood association. An organization is considered by the IRS to be operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare if it is primarily engaged in promoting the common good and general welfare of the people of the community.  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted to engage in lobbying to achieve its social welfare purpose</li> <li>• May apply for private and public grants</li> <li>• Would need to establish governance and decision making structure (e.g. Board, Director, other?) and participation structure for government.</li> </ul>  |
| Regional Conference (also referred to as a Council of Governments) | A multi-purpose association of governments that delivers federal, state and local programs while fulfilling its primary function as a regional planning organization. COGs are accountable to their membership - the local units of government within that region. Conceived in the 1960s, COGs were established under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) chapter 36.64.080 for the “purpose of studying regional and governmental problems of mutual interest and concern.” The role of COGs has evolved with changing dynamics within federal, state and local government, as well as the growing awareness | <a href="#">HCCC</a><br><br><a href="#">Cowlitz-Wahkiakum</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires legislative endorsement/designation</li> <li>• May apply for private and public grants</li> </ul>  |

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|                              | that within a region, entities must work together to resolve economic, infrastructure, social and environmental issues.  |  |  |
| Regional Planning Commission | <b>RCW 36.70.060</b> – A county or a city may join with one or more other counties, cities and towns, and/or with one or more school districts, public utility districts, private utilities, housing authorities, port districts, or any other private or public organizations interested in regional planning to form and organize a regional planning commission and provide for the administration of its affairs. Such regional planning commission may carry on a planning program involving the same subjects and procedures provided by this chapter for planning by counties, provided this authority shall not include enacting official controls other than by the individual participating municipal corporations. The authority to initiate a regional planning program, define the boundaries of the regional planning district, specify the number, method of appointment and terms of office of members of the regional planning commission and provide for allocating the cost of financing the work shall be vested individually in the governing bodies of the participating municipal corporations. | <a href="#">TRPC</a>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any regional planning commission or municipal corporation participating in any regional planning district is authorized to receive grants-in-aid from, or enter into reasonable agreement with any department or agency of the government of the United States or of the state of Washington to arrange for the receipt of federal funds and state funds for planning in the interests of furthering the planning program.</li> </ul> |
| Lead Entity                  | <p>Lead entities are local, watershed-based organizations that develop local salmon habitat recovery strategies and then recruit organizations to do habitat protection and restoration projects that will implement the strategies. Lead entities perform an essential role in salmon recovery in Washington State. Established in law (Revised Code of Washington 77.85), lead entities consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A lead entity coordinator (usually a county, conservation district, or tribe)</li> <li>A committee of local, technical experts</li> <li>A committee of local citizens</li> <li>A lead entity grant administrator (usually county, conservation district, tribe, or regional organization).</li> </ul>   | <a href="#">HCCC</a> (see <a href="#">RCW</a> )<br><br><a href="#">West Sound Watersheds Council</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convening governments can designate the lead entity as well as the geographic boundaries</li> <li>May apply for private and public grants</li> </ul>  |

Feedback from AHSS Council on Organizational Structure Options:

- There was not clear agreement on a particular structure to gravitate towards.
- Council members who offered comments were generally supportive of (1) AHSS leaning into the parts of its mission focused on economic development and human well-being; and (2) of AHSS diversifying funding and setting more of its own agenda. To the extent that an additional organizational structure would be needed to support these two directions, Council members who spoke were generally supportive of the idea.
- Council members observed that any new organizational structure would take time both to set up and to administer; this level of effort should be considered as structures are considered.
- Council members were mixed on the 501(C)(3) or 501(C)(4) structures. Some Council members thought these were appropriate only for charitable organizations and did not see them as appropriate for AHSS, these Council members tended to favor the Council of Governments structure, or similar. Other Council members were more comfortable with the (C)(3) and (C)(4) organizations. A Council member observed that if lobbying were to be part of AHSS' work program a (C)6 also should be considered.
- Council members pointed out that Lead Entities, like LIOs, facilitate a process but do not directly administer grants or other funds beyond capacity.
- Council members discussed whether AHSS jurisdictions could consider allocating an annual dollar amount to hire an AHSS administrator, and there was some support for this idea.
- While they were supportive of AHSS doing more to set its own agenda, Council members were not supportive of AHSS ceasing to become an LIO but instead generally saw an additional organizational structure as a complement rather than a replacement to the LIO designation.