

# SEWARD PARK (BASIN 44) CSO REDUCTION PROJECT

## SEPA SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT



### INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), Seattle Public Utilities conducted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping process for the Seward Park (Basin 44) Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Reduction Project. Per the City of Seattle’s SEPA Policy and Procedures (SMC 25.05), Seattle Public Utilities issued a Determination of Significance (DS) and scoping notice and hosted a public scoping meeting:

Tuesday, June 7, 2011  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
Seward Park Audubon Center  
5902 Lake Washington Boulevard S, Seattle

This report provides a summary of the scoping meeting and comments received during the scoping process.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Seward Park (Basin 44) Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Reduction Project will reduce the amount of untreated sewage and stormwater runoff that overflows into Lake Washington at the combined sewer overflow outfall in Seward Park.

CSOs happen when pipes that carry both sewage and stormwater overflow into our waterways during heavy rain. Even though overflows do not affect our drinking water, they are a public health concern because they carry pollutants from untreated sewage and stormwater into our lakes, streams and Puget Sound. Seattle Public Utilities is working to control CSOs throughout Seattle to protect public health, improve the quality of our lakes, rivers and Puget Sound, and comply with the Clean Water Act and State regulations.

Overflows occur at the Seward Park outfall about 12-16 times per year. Sixteen overflows occurred in 2010, pouring 9.9 million gallons of combined sewage and stormwater into Lake Washington just south of Seward Park. Seattle Public Utilities is required by State and Federal regulations to reduce overflows to no more than one per year per outfall.

## Project Alternatives

Seattle Public Utilities proposes to construct an underground storage facility in Seward Park to temporarily hold combined sewage and stormwater runoff. When there is capacity available, the facility would gradually send flows to the downstream sewer system for treatment and discharge.

Seattle Public Utilities is currently studying two “action alternatives” (alternatives that would require construction) as well as a “no action alternative” in the Environmental Impact Statement.

The no action alternative is being evaluated as the basis for comparing the effects associated with the two action alternatives. If Seattle Public Utilities does not take action in Basin 44, overflows will continue to occur at the outfall in Seward Park above the regulatory maximum of one overflow per year, in violation of the Clean Water Act and State regulations.

### *Alternative 1*



*Alternative 1 is a 2.4 million gallon storage tank and facilities vault built underneath the parking lot on the south side of Seward Park, adjacent to the Lake Washington shoreline. The tank and facilities vault would be approximately 410 feet long by 50 feet wide and 30 feet deep.*

### *Alternative 2*



*Alternative 2 is a 2.4 million gallon storage tank and facilities vault underneath the existing tennis courts and an adjacent parking lot on the south side of Seward Park, adjacent to the Lake Washington shoreline. The tank and facilities vault would be approximately 410 feet long by 50 feet wide and 30 feet deep.*

## **EVENT OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this public scoping meeting was to identify the range, or “scope” of issues to be studied in the project’s Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A total of 14 people signed in at the meeting.

The meeting also provided participants with the opportunity to:

- Learn about the environmental review and decision-making process;
- Review visualizations of the two “build” alternatives;
- Offer official comments on the alternatives; and,
- Take a tour of the proposed tank sites in Seward Park.

The scoping meeting was held in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). It is the latest in a series of public meetings Seattle Public Utilities hosted in 2010 and early 2011 to work with the community to identify community preferences and gather input to help Seattle Public Utilities identify a short list of alternatives to advance for further evaluation.

## **Public Notification**

Seattle Public Utilities advertised the workshop through a variety of methods including:

- Determination of Significance (DS) and SEPA Scoping Notice published in the *Daily Journal of Commerce* on May 26;

- DS and SEPA Scoping Notice sent to the Washington Department of Ecology SEPA Public Information Center on May 26 and entered in the SEPA Register;
- Included in the Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Land Use Information Bulletin;
- Published in the South Seattle Beacon printed edition on June 1 and included in the public notices section of the on-line publication;
- Notice on the North Henderson project website;
- Postcard announcement mailed to approximately 1,700 households in the North Henderson basins and to about 100 people representing organizations that have reserved facilities in Seward Park over the last three years;
- Posting on the City’s online public outreach and engagement calendar;
- Messages to the North Henderson listserv;
- Display advertisement in the *Medium* newspaper;
- Earned media providing advanced meeting notice in the *Rainier Valley Post*;
- Meeting flyers delivered to community centers, libraries, Synagogues and post offices; and,
- Meeting notice on the project sign in Seward Park.

## Meeting Format

Participants signed in as they arrived and Seattle Public Utilities staff informed them of the format. Each participant received a [Community Guide to the Project Alternatives](#) and a [comment form](#).

The meeting was conducted as an open house where participants could review displays with project details, view visualizations of the two project alternatives and discuss the material with project team members. Participants also had the option to go on a site tour with project staff to the location of each alternative.

[Display boards](#) contained information describing what a combined sewer overflow is, how Seattle Public Utilities is addressing CSOs throughout Seattle, a map of the North Henderson basins, information about project alternatives, and a project timeline defining the decision process and upcoming public involvement opportunities.



*Attendees were given a Community Guide to the Project when they arrived at the open house and were encouraged to review display boards and talk to project staff.*



*Attendees were also invited to provide written comments on comment forms and on an aerial photo of the project area.*

## COMMENT SUMMARY

Seattle Public Utilities provided an official scoping comment period from May 26 – June 16. This section contains a summary of comments received during the comment period.

### Comment Forms

Seven participants returned completed comment forms. Seattle Public Utilities also received two comment letters.

What environmental issues are most important to you about this project? Check all that apply:

Environmental Element	Number of Responses
<b>Recreation</b>	3
• Park Use and access	3
• Parking	1
• Special Events	--
• Safety	2
<b>Transportation</b>	1
• Construction traffic	2
• Emergency services	1
• Community cohesion/disruption	2
<b>Earth</b>	2
<b>Air</b>	3
<b>Water</b>	1
<b>Plants and Animals (including endangered species)</b>	2
<b>Environmental health</b>	1
<b>Land and shoreline use</b>	3
<b>Cultural resources</b>	1
<b>Other public services and utilities</b>	--

**Please give additional information on the above or share if there are other environmental, community or neighborhood issues we should consider.**

#### Recreation – Park Use and Access

- *“I am also concerned about how the tennis courts are rebuilt and rumors that I heard about turning the flat area south of the courts into a swimming beach. I do not want additional people swimming in Seward Park... Seward Park already has a swimming beach and should the tennis court plan get approved should restore the area to native plants/habitat – as it is designated by the City of Seattle.”*

Seattle Parks and Recreation submitted a comment letter outlining specific concerns relating to park use and access, which is provided in Appendix A. Comments included:

- *“Placement of the CSO facility within Park’s property forever constrains the use of this area of Seward Park, regardless of whether it is under a parking area or under the tennis courts. Parks will be forever precluded from changing the use of the site to provide a different park amenity and/or recreational opportunity due to the underlying utility facility.”*
- *During construction, impacts to park users could be significant, particularly if large area(s) of the park will not be accessible for the duration of the project...All of these construction related impacts must be addressed*

*in the EIS and the goal should be to provide these off site and not in the park.”*

- *“Operation necessities adversely affect the character of the park and change it from one of open space and recreation to a utility facility cover with hardscape.”*

#### Recreation – Parking:

- *“Parking is always an issue when Seward Park holds its increasing number of major events. With a parking lot gone because of construction, there will be even more pressure on the neighborhood for parking for the park.”*
- *“Do not want parking on Lake Shore Drive.”*

#### Recreation – Safety

- *“Increased crime.”*
- *“Safety of the homes on the ridge adjacent to the park (west) lower “use” volume has kept crime at a minimum to the homes on the ridge.”*
- *“I have kids and pets that play outside. I am concerned about the safety of the site for children. Soccer balls, tennis balls and games happen right above the site and I hate to have a child injured while trying to retrieve a ball or explore the area.”*
- *“We also sit on a fault – in case of an earthquake is there probably health risk from the tanks to neighbors sitting just a few feet away?”*

#### Transportation – Community Cohesions

- *“The local Jewish community has designated boundaries that should be identified.”*

#### Transportation – Emergency Services

- *“Many summer weekends access is impossible for emergency services to my home because cars are parked (some illegally) on both sides of Lake Shore Drive S and makes the street very narrow. There will definitely need to be some increased parking restrictions on the neighborhood streets.”*

#### Earth

- *“My short-term construction related concerns begin with the noise, vibrations from blasting, digging and major construction, damage to the slope between our home and the project (designated as and Environmentally Critical Area/Steep Slope Erosion area) and the damage to my home from the blasting.”*

#### Air

- *“I have breathing issues and am concerned about how much dust will be in the air during construction.”*
- *“My long-term concerns are exactly how much risk there is for smell and noise. The Community Guide to the Project is vague.”*
- *“Sewer gases coming from the tank.”*
- *“Dust short-term.”*

#### Water

- *“Now the Lake Washington has been saved from the problems of the 1910s-1950s, let’s preserve the rest.”*

#### Plants and Animals

- *“Trees, specifically the white poplars along the south shoreline of the Alt 1 parking lot. And to a lesser level of importance, the lombardy poplars at Alternative #2.”*
- *“The white poplars that march along the south shoreline are iconic; they are a signature feature of Seward Park, just as the old gate keeper lodge/Audubon environmental center is another Seward Park identifier feature.”*

#### Environmental Health

- *“I work from home ... I worry that work will be impossible with the sounds from this project.”*
- *“Smell long-term”*

#### Cultural Resources

- *“Archeologic buffer.”*

### **Do you have a preference for any of the project alternatives?**

Of the seven participants who returned comment forms, four indicated a preference for Alternative 1 – Parking Lot Tank and three indicated a preference for Alternative 2 – Tennis Court Tank.

### **Why do you prefer this alternative?**

Support for Alternative 1 – Parking Lot Tank was based on the opinion that it would have less impact on nearby homes:

- *“Less disruptive to neighbors...the tennis court tank requires a major negative impact (both financial and well-being) to a handful of neighbors but the project is servicing a giant “basin” of people. Putting the tank in the parking lot has less of a negative impact on families.”*
- *“It doesn’t impact the neighbors to the west of Alternative 2.”*
- *“I am opposed to Alternative #2 because of the impact to the neighbors abutting the construction zone.”*
- *“Less impact to the closest homes.”*
- *“Concern about proximity of drilling into bedrock and the impact of nearby homes.”*

One participant comment in favor of Alternative 1 because of it would not impact the tennis courts:

- *“Tennis courts would remain open during construction.”*

Those in favor of Alternative 2 offered the following comments:

- *“Hate tennis, but agree with Talbot re: access to underutilized back area.”*
- *“Lesser evil.”*

### **What do you like about each of the project alternatives? Or, are there any changes to the alternatives you would like the project team to consider?**

Alternative 1 – Parking Lot Tank:

- *“Far enough away from homes.”*
- *“It doesn’t impact the residents on the west side of Alternative 2 tennis courts.”*
- *“Pro: More in need of shoreline restoration. Con: block easy kayak put in.”*

Alternative 2 – Tennis Court Tank:

- *“Less direct impact.”*
- *“Access to back area, less disruption to main park area.”*
- *“The only thing I like about the plan is that the poplar trees will come down.” (note, this commenter preferred Alternative 1.)*

The following comment was offered in response to both alternatives:

- *“Make the engineers justify why they would take out historic trees to build their tank. Why can’t protect the root spread distance and still excavate the tank footprint? Or, why can’t they move the tank further from the lake edge even at the lesser negative of removing some of the standard type deciduous canopy trees?”*

### Other Comments

A large aerial of the project area in Seward Park was provided at the meeting. Participants were invited to write their comments and questions about the project alternatives directly on the aerial. The following comments are a transcription of comments provided. The numbers correspond to the image to the left.

1. It would be a bigger shame to lose the poplars along the lake edge in Alternative #1 than Alternative #2. They make a more prominent, familiar statement along the south shoreline than the eastern shoreline. They are like an indentifying landmark. They are beautiful because they evoke those wonderful rows of similar trees along rivers and waterways in France, Belgium and Holland)

2. If you have to destroy the poplars, why wouldn’t you replace them with the same or similar habit of tree, instead of the standard spreading crown deciduous tree show in the illustration?
3. If you have to sacrifice trees to fit the tank in, then sacrifice them on the north side and adjust the tank footprint northward. These are generic leaf canopy trees. EIS Question: Why is the present bulkhead in any way a fatal flaw for the habitat restoration program?
4. All Park property (referring to area of trees next to proposed tank. Why push the tank so close to the lake? Move tank west and save the Lombardy Poplars. Why can’t you do this?

