

We have put together this list to answer general questions about this capital improvement program. For information on specific projects, you can read more about each project by first clicking on [Locate a Fire Facility](#) or on one of the links below.

1. What will this capital program do and how much will it cost?

The levy will generate \$167.2 million over nine years to improve and upgrade the entire fire and emergency response system in Seattle. There are four categories of improvements in the plan: neighborhood stations; support facilities; emergency preparedness; and marine fire response. It will cost the owner of a median-valued Seattle home an average of approximately \$73 a year for nine years.

Neighborhood Stations

All but one of Seattle's neighborhood fire stations will be brought up to current seismic standards; they will also be outfitted with systems to decontaminate firefighters and equipment from chemical, biological or other hazardous agents. (Station 5, located on the downtown waterfront is not included, because of the uncertainty about long-range plans for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and seawall.) Twelve new fire stations will be built to replace aging stations in [West Seattle/Highpoint](#), [West Seattle Junction](#), [Fremont](#), [West Queen Anne/Interbay](#), [Greenwood](#), [Roanoke](#), the [Central District](#), [Mt. Baker](#), [Crown Hill](#), [Ravenna/Bryant](#), [Lake City](#), and [Pioneer Square](#).

Support Facilities

A new [fire alarm center](#) will be built to improve the department's coordination and response to fires and emergencies throughout the city. The new facility will be located in a seismically safe area and housed with Fire Station 10 and a new Emergency Operations Center (see below). The co-location of these facilities is designed to enable fire and medical response to continue during earthquakes or other disasters.

A new fire training center will be constructed to replace an existing fire station parking lot that serves as the training facility for the whole department. The new center will provide fire, emergency, and disaster response training for firefighters and recruits. The new facility will enable the department to consolidate all of its major training programs at one location in Seattle, saving time and resources now spent on traveling to training facilities outside of the city.

Emergency Preparedness

A new [Emergency Operations Center \(EOC\)](#) will be located on the same site as the new fire alarm center and [Fire Station 10](#). The EOC will be able to withstand severe earthquakes and other disasters so that the fire department and emergency services can continue operating and protecting citizens during major crises.

Special hydrants will be placed at reservoirs, lakes, and on Puget Sound to provide water for firefighting in the event the city's water system is damaged during an earthquake. Caches of emergency medical and shelter supplies will be placed in strategic locations throughout the city. The caches will ensure that areas of the city will have supplies if they are isolated during an earthquake or disaster. Portable generators will also be distributed to shelters to provide emergency power.

Marine Fire Response

A new [large fire boat](#) will be purchased to protect Elliott Bay, the central waterfront, boats, and marinas on the saltwater side of the Ballard locks. The existing fireboat, Chief Seattle, will be upgraded and moved to a freshwater location to protect businesses, homes, boats, and marinas on the freshwater side of the locks. The City will also build a [small fireboat](#) that can respond to fires and emergencies in either freshwater or saltwater.

2. Why is so much being undertaken at one time?

The Seattle Fire Department has faced a number of challenges over the past few years – such as the Nisqually Earthquake, hazardous material spills, marina fires, and the threat of terrorist attacks. Although the department has performed its duties exceptionally well, it operates from facilities that are 28 to 85 years old. This investment in our fire, emergency, and disaster response systems and facilities will prepare our city for future emergencies and disasters.

This program will make fire stations seismically sound, improve coordination and communications on a daily basis and during disasters, enhance firefighter training programs, and provide adequate water-based fire and emergency response on both sides of the Ballard locks.

The federal government has also mandated certain changes and upgrades for fire stations in response to potential terrorist acts. This program will enable the City to meet the new federal guidelines for homeland security.

3. Have the fire stations been properly maintained over the years?

Seattle's fire stations were constructed between 1918 and 1974, with most built before the Korean War. The City has provided routine maintenance on stations over the years, but like all buildings, they eventually need to be repaired and renovated if they are to keep pace with new demands and modern equipment. For example, many fire stations are outfitted with doors that are too narrow for modern fire engines and ladder trucks.

All of Seattle's fire stations are seismically vulnerable, and no amount of basic maintenance can change that. We need to retrofit all of our fire stations if we want to keep them standing and operational in the event of another major earthquake.

4. What will happen to the historic stations once they aren't in use?

The City is proud that many of its fire stations are historic structures that add to the character of neighborhoods throughout the city. Due to limited area for expansion and other construction challenges, this program will close four historic fire stations and replace them with brand new stations nearby. The department is working with the City Council and historic preservation office so that these historic stations will be appropriately preserved and maintained by future owners. Once the new stations are built, these historic stations will be sold and the proceeds returned to this capital program.

5. Where will the new facilities be located?

The city is building 12 new fire stations. Eight will be built at existing locations, and four will be built at new locations. The city is still evaluating locations for the four new stations, but the goal is to locate these stations in [Ravenna/Bryant](#), [West Queen Anne/Interbay](#), [West Seattle](#), and the [Central District](#) close to the existing stations so that Fire Department's response time is preserved.

6. Where will firefighters go while the stations are being rebuilt?

The fire department is committed to providing the same level of service to all neighborhoods during construction and renovation of the fire stations. In some cases, firefighters will remain in their stations during construction work, while others will be relocated to temporary facilities near their existing stations. The department will notify neighborhoods if their station will be temporarily relocated.

7. Why is a new [training center](#) needed?

Seattle is the only major city in the region without a modern fire training facility. The city's existing fire training facility was built in 1922, and it is nearing the end of its useful life. Today's firefighters face new challenges ranging from hazardous material spills to terrorist attacks, and it is important that they have a proper training facility in which to learn how to best protect citizens.

8. What will happen to the fireboat Alki?

The 76 year-old Alki will remain in service until a new fireboat for Elliott Bay is built and the fireboat Chief Seattle is refurbished to take the Alki's place at Fisherman's Terminal. Once that happens, the Alki will be retired.