

Crews to survey seawall project area in May, June

Crews working for the City of Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will be out along the waterfront this month and into June surveying the area for the Elliott Bay Seawall Project. The survey work is important to create a precise base map for the project as the design team works toward refined designs this fall. This is a busy time for the waterfront, and SDOT will minimize disruptive activities as much as possible. We anticipate few impacts to parking or vehicle traffic along the waterfront during survey work.

Crews are using three different methods to ensure an accurate representation of the seawall project area today, including utilities, bathymetry (underwater mapping), and topography (above ground mapping).

Aerial mapping

Crews will use a helicopter to generate High Accuracy Mapping of the project corridor. A helicopter will fly as low as 500 feet above the waterfront during this activity. Flyovers must occur on clear weather days, at times when there are few cars travelling on Alaskan Way. Crews plan to complete two flyovers in early May. Each flyover will last less than one minute. The general area of the flyovers will be along the waterfront from Pioneer Square to Pier 62/63. There may be brief occurrences of increased noise during this activity.

Ground surveys – general and underground

On the ground, crews will use two techniques to capture information about topography and locations of underground utilities in the project area: 1) a general sightline survey, and 2) a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) between South Main Street and Lenora Street.

A GPR allows crews to gather valuable information without breaking pavement. The GPR resembles a lawnmower and requires someone to pull it over pavement and through the area. Because the seawall extends up to 60 feet east from its face into the travel lanes of Alaskan Way, crews plan to complete the GPR work at night. Completing the work at night will have the least amount of impact to waterfront businesses.

In addition to the GPR work, crews will be walking along the west side of Alaskan Way and under the viaduct to take photos and identify existing utilities. Crews will use existing plans and maps to gather new information or update old information as a supplement to the GPR and aerial mapping activities.

Example Ground Penetrating Radar photo



Details of ground survey work

- General survey work will take place during the day, and you may notice crews in hard hats and vests taking photos and notes and inspecting manholes. This work will not impact traffic.
- GPR work will impact a lane on Alaskan Way overnight, when it will have the least impact to drivers.
- Specific dates and working hours of the overnight GPR work are being coordinated with other waterfront projects. During overnight GPR work, crews will be off the street and traffic will be restored by 6 a.m.

Bathymetric surveys

Crews will also be in the water on small boats gathering information about underwater elevations along the seawall and also specifying the location of existing utilities that are attached to or protruding from the face of the seawall. This will require travelling beneath and around pier structures. There should be no impact to existing water-borne transportation corridors for Argosy Cruises, Washington State Ferries, and others.

Schedule

Crews plan to begin the week of May 7. Aerial mapping is weather dependent, but likely will occur one day between May 6 and May 13. All work is planned for completion by the end of June 2012.

Example bathymetric survey photo



What is the Elliott Bay Seawall Project?

The Elliott Bay Seawall Project will replace the existing seawall – from South Washington Street to Broad Street – with a structure that meets current safety and design standards. The City plans to replace the most deteriorated sections of the central seawall beginning in late 2013, with a second phase of work for the northern seawall following as funding is available. This project is a priority because:

- The Elliott Bay seawall was built between 1916 and 1934 and has deteriorated significantly since it was constructed.
- The seawall was not designed for earthquakes and could fail in a moderate to large earthquake.
- Failure of the seawall could also be caused by wind driven storm waves or the erosive tidal forces of Elliott Bay.
- The seawall support major utilities, Alaskan Way and SR 99, the ferry terminal, and rail lines.

Thank you

Thank you for your patience as crews complete this important work. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause.

If you have any questions about this work or the Elliott Bay Seawall Project, you can get information in the following ways:

Web: www.seattle.gov/transportation/seawall.htm

Email: seawall@seattle.gov

Project Hotline: 206-618-8584

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