



Community Notification for City Construction Projects A Guide for Seattle's Elected Officials

The Neighborhood Planning Policy Docket includes PD27:

Community Notification

How can the City reconcile its public notification processes about capital projects into a simple process common among departments?

This guide is an explanation of how the city informs and involves our citizens in construction projects. It is a summary of the information mechanisms in place at:

- ✓ Seattle Public Utilities
- ✓ Seattle Transportation
- ✓ Seattle City Light
- ✓ Department of Parks and Recreation

The City's guiding policy for public involvement and information is:

- To keep the public informed about work being done by the four departments and to encourage public involvement in planning and making decisions about the work as much as possible.
- To invite and encourage public involvement in the review of funded capital projects and/or any proposal that would substantially modify the property's or public facility's use, appearance, or access.
- To provide early and thorough notification of proposals and projects through a variety of means to users, user groups, neighborhood groups and other interested people.
- To listen and respond to businesses and residents affected by construction projects, providing support when possible to reduce the impacts that are detrimental to the quality of life in the neighborhood.
- To complete the process by notifying involved and interested people and groups of final decisions and the reasons for them, and to join with the community in celebrating the accomplishments of the departments.

All of the departments have a comprehensive mechanism in place to enact this policy. Although a summary of those mechanisms is presented here, the following documents provide extensive detail:

- **Draft Project Management Guide Communication for Construction Projects** — Seattle Public Utilities
- **Guidelines: Public Information and Involvement for Transportation Projects** — Seattle Transportation
- **Draft Department Guidelines for Community Involvement and Notification of Utility Projects** — Seattle City Light
- **Public Involvement Policy for Proposals to Acquire Property, Initiate Funded Capital Projects, or Make Changes to a Park or Facility** — Department of Parks and Recreation

Common Attributes of the Departments’ Programs

Department	Step One Conduct an Evaluation	Step Two Create a Plan	Step Three Implement the Plan	Step Four Assessment & Celebration
Seattle Public Utilities	Before a public information program is initiated, departments conduct an evaluation of the construction project. By assessing the type of construction, the length of time it will be underway, and the kinds of impacts it is likely to cause, the project manager is better able to determine the most effective public involvement strategies to use. During this evaluation, project managers are careful to determine whether or not their project is one that could be a helpful contribution to the implementation of a neighborhood plan. If so, this is noted and highlighted as part of the overall effort.	Once the evaluation has been conducted, project managers work with a member of the department’s community relations staff to craft a public information program for the project.	Once the plan has been created, the department implements it. Typical tools for notification and outreach include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News releases • Letters and notices • Signs • Community meetings • Website posting • Open Houses • Graphic displays • One-on-one conversations 	A groundbreaking and completion ceremony is held if appropriate. An assessment of the overall effectiveness of the public information program is conducted.
Seattle Transportation		The community relations staff member offers tools, strategies, roles and responsibilities for carrying out the public information program.		
Seattle City Light		In larger projects, two public information programs will be created - one for the design phase and another for the construction phase. On some projects, the scoping phase will require a separate program.		
Parks & Recreation		All effort is made to anticipate and coordinate with other construction projects in the area.		

All departments use a common set of public information and involvement tools. These increase in complexity as the projects increase in duration and level of impacts.

Type One Projects

Strategies used:

- News release(s)
- Fact sheets and informational mailers
- Letter, notice, or flyer delivered by mail or in person three weeks prior to construction
- Public meetings
- Signs/traffic barricades containing specific information including name and phone of contact person
- Distribution of general department or program information
- Discussions with individual property and business owners and community representatives
- Personal visit to affected residents or businesses
- Posting on City and department website
- Signs containing specific information including proposal description, background information, name and phone of contact person, invitation to comment
- Petition for projects requiring a vote of support
- Notification of elected officials

Type Two Projects

Everything used for Type One Projects, with the addition of:

- Media information beyond a news release
- Speciality signs, newspaper ads or other actions tailored for specific businesses or neighborhoods
- Ongoing discussions with individual property and business owners and community representatives
- Internet posting on City and SPU website
- Open House community meetings with resident engineer, contractor, and communications specialist
- Displays with project information located in an area frequented by the public affected by the project
- Notification sent to Department of Neighborhoods, Sector Managers, and Neighborhood Service Centers
- TV and radio PSA's
- Paid advertising in newspaper/radio

Type Three Projects

Everything used for Types One and Two Projects, with the addition of:

- Extensive media relations including tour
- Letter, notice, or flyer delivered three weeks prior to construction and 48 hours prior to changes in construction schedule
- Three or more community meetings/workshops with written agenda, fact sheet, and project staff
- Advertising in local media about benefits and impacts
- Impact mitigation efforts
- Establish and advertise hot lines
- Brief and solicit feedback from SPU's Citizen Advisory Council
- Outreach to city employees

Seattle Transportation

Seattle Public Utilities

Seattle City Light

Department of Parks and Recreation

Types of Projects

Strategy Options for Notification and Outreach

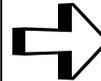
Type One Projects

Spot Improvements and Routine Maintenance

Examples:

SPU

Spot sewer program
Emergency water main repair
Infrastructure construction
51st Avenue Seawall
Genessee Dam Spillway



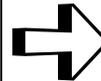
SEATRAN

Changes in lane configuration
Sign installation
Traffic signal change
Cleaning Battery Street Tunnel
Minor paving project
Traffic circle installation



City Light

Short Duration/Minimum Impact
(Under two weeks duration/located on one block in an alley)
Scheduled rebuild of underground electrical vault roofs
Most new services connections



Parks & Recreation

Capital Funding Projects
(after funding has been approved)



All departments use the following strategies:

- News release(s)
- Fact sheets and informational mailers
- Letter, notice, or flyer delivered by mail or in person three weeks prior to construction
- Public meetings
- Signs/traffic barricades containing specific information including name and phone of contact person
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Seattle Transportation

Seattle Public Utilities

Seattle City Light

Department of Parks and Recreation

Types of Projects

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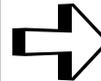
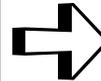
**Type Two Projects
Neighborhood and Community Improvements
Examples:**

SPU Water main construction (residential /light commercial areas)
Creek restoration projects
Spot drainage projects
Queen Anne water tank

SEATRAN Neighborhood traffic plan
New residential parking zone
Bridge painting
Traffic signal redesign
Major paving project

City Light Long Duration/High Impact
(Over two weeks duration/covering more than one block on an arterial)
CIP Projects in the network area
Major rebuild of an underground area

Parks & Recreation Capital Funding Projects
(after funding has been approved)



In addition to all the strategies outlined for Type One Projects, departments may use:

- Media information beyond a news release
- Speciality signs, newspaper ads or other actions tailored for specific businesses or neighborhoods
- Ongoing discussions with individual property and business owners and community representatives
- Internet posting on City and SPU website
- Open House community meetings with resident engineer, contractor, and communications specialist
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Department of Parks and Recreation

Types of Projects

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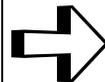
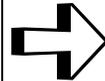
**Type Three Projects
Major/Regional Improvements
Examples:**

SPU West Lake Union Pathway
Water main replacement (industrial/heavy commercial areas)

SEATLAN West Seattle Freeway Bridge
King Street Intermodal Terminal
Street Tree Master Plan
Parking meter policy

City Light Neighborhood Plan Implementation/ High Visibility
Street and pedestrian lights
Tree trimming

Parks & Recreation Capital Funding Projects
(after funding has been approved)



In addition to all the strategies outlined for Type One and Type Two Projects, departments may use:

- Extensive media relations including tour
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- Three or more community meetings/workshops with written agenda, fact sheet, and project staff
- Advertising in local media about benefits and impacts
- Impact mitigation efforts
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- Brief and solicit feedback from SPU's Citizen Advisory Council
- Outreach to city employees

How does Coordination Happen?

Although all four city departments have their own notification procedures, there are a number of ways in which the departments also work directly with each other:

- The C3 Action Team has been working on various improvements to citywide notification efforts.
- The Utility Cuts Coordinating Committee works together to minimize street disruptions due to utility improvements.
- The new sector manager positions within the city are proving to be a valuable resource to more effectively share information on various construction projects that are either scheduled or are underway. Likewise, each of the departments coordinates with the Department of Neighborhoods to ensure that information is being shared.
- Every two months program directors from Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Transportation meet to discuss ongoing and upcoming projects.
- When joining on a combined project such as the West Lake Union Pathway, the involved departments meet during the design phase and the scoping phase. During construction, coordination and discussion occurs on a weekly, if not daily, basis.

For More Information

What phone number should city residents call if they have a question about a construction project?

- A telephone number is usually posted right at the construction site. This is most often a direct line to the construction project manager.
- Seattle Transportation's 684-ROAD number is a one-stop source of information for Seattle Transportation projects.
- Seattle Public Utilities' project managers register their projects with SPU's phone staff, so if residents call 684-3000, they can get information about all SPU projects.