



City of Seattle
Seattle Public Utilities

Thornton Creek Confluence
SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)

Description of Proposal

The 11.6 square mile Thornton Creek watershed is located in highly urbanized areas in the cities of Seattle and Shoreline. As a result, many areas along Thornton Creek experience flooding, contain limited floodplain for flood storage, and provide poor instream and riparian habitat. The area at the confluence of the North and South Branches of Thornton Creek has several challenges:

- The existing culvert under 35th Avenue Northeast that conveys South Branch Thornton Creek is under-sized for current flow conditions and has been damaged by repeated flood flows and debris blockages.
- Flooding routinely occurs during 10-year storm events (i.e., not meeting SPU's 25-year storm desired level of service).
- Although Thornton Creek is the location for more than 90% of all Chinook spawning in the City of Seattle, the creek is confined to rip-rapped, concrete-lined, and straightened constructed channels that are subject to high-flow scour during almost every storm event and that provide negligible floodplain storage and poor in-stream and riparian habitat.

To address these challenges, SPU is proposing a floodplain reconnection project to reconstruct stream channels of the North and South Branches of Thornton Creek, portions of the former floodplain, and associated wetland, riparian, and upland forest habitats. The project's main objectives are to meet flood management service levels for 35th Ave Northeast and reduce flooding of private property. Additional goals are to create floodplain storage; improve mixing of surface water and groundwater (hyporheic functioning); reduce stream velocities and increase areas of slow water; and improve instream and riparian habitat quality and functioning. The project is expected to provide temporary flood storage on the created floodplain, delay timing of flood, slow instream peak flows in the project area (to reduce streambed scour and channel erosion), and improve water quality within the project reach. The project includes the following elements:

35th Avenue Northeast

- Remove and replace the existing 6.5 foot arch culvert with a new pre-cast 32 foot wide, 3-sided concrete box culvert (bridge) with stem-wall footing. Disconnect and re-connect/relocate impacted utilities, as required.
- Install grade controls in new culvert to allow dispersed stream flow in low-flow conditions.
- Reconstruct the road base, travel surfaces, sidewalks, pedestrian barriers, railings, and signage on 35th Avenue Northeast above and adjacent to the new culvert.
- Reconfigure roadway travel lanes over the bridge/culvert and provide wider sidewalks in accordance with SDOT's plans and direction (via SIPs).
- SDOT would assume ownership of constructed transportation assets within the right-of-way (including the bridge) after construction is complete.

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West of 35th Avenue Northeast on Seattle Public Schools Property

- Realign stream channel of South Branch to connect to the new 35th Avenue Northeast box culvert, create pools, and add woody material for habitat.
- Create flood storage and functional riparian habitat by re-grading and planting native shrubs, trees (primarily conifers), and ground cover on approximately 2.5 acres.
- Remove abandoned pedestrian bridge and Lombardy poplars and MacKenzie willows as required by the re-grading.
- Remove the existing arch culvert from the Seattle Public Schools property and from under 35th Avenue Northeast.

Parcels east of 35th Avenue Northeast and Portion of Right-of-way of 36th Avenue Northeast

- Reconstruct existing armored and straightened stream channels into meandering channels with significant floodplain. Realign the channels of both North and South Branches of Thornton Creek to facilitate more desirable hydraulics at the confluence.
- Create a hyporheic zone. [In a stream or river system, the hyporheic zone is that region beneath and alongside stream channels where shallow groundwater mixes with surface water.]
- Install woody material and create pools in the stream channels to enhance fish spawning and rearing habitat.
- Construct a service road to provide maintenance vehicle access and pedestrian access to the adjacent Meadowbrook Pond Stormwater Detention Facility.
- Construction of a formal cul-de-sac and associated sidewalks in the 36th Avenue Northeast street end.
- Install a visible public work of art using SPU's 1 Percent for the Arts Program funding.

In addition, the project would install structures used to monitor the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of the completed project.

Proponent

Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle Municipal Tower Suite 4900
P.O. Box 34018
Seattle, WA 98124-4018

Location of Proposal

The project would occur on the following seven tax parcels:

Address	King County Tax Parcel	Owner
3600 Northeast 105th Street	2726049129	SPU
10703 36th Avenue Northeast	2726049185	SPU
10709 36th Avenue Northeast	2726049186	SPU
10723 36th Avenue Northeast	2726049140	SPU
10718 35th Avenue Northeast	2726049064	SPU
10750 30th Avenue Northeast	2826049152	Seattle Public Schools
10727 36th Avenue Northeast	2726049095	Chase

The SPU owned parcels are immediately upstream, to the north, of Meadowbrook Pond.

Portions of the project would also be located in the right-of-way for 35th Avenue Northeast and in the street right-of-way for 36th Avenue Northeast Street south of Northeast 110th Street. The project is located in the densely developed, residential Meadowbrook neighborhood of northeast Seattle, in the southwest quarter of Section 27, Township 26 North, Range 4 East and within the Lake Washington Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA 8).

Lead Agency

Seattle Public Utilities, the lead agency for this proposal, has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This Determination of Non-significance (DNS) is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for fourteen (14) days from the date below.

A copy of the environmental checklist is available at:

- Seattle Public Utilities, Director's Office Main Reception Area, Seattle Municipal Tower, Suite 4900, 700 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, Washington
- Seattle Central Library, Public Review Documents, Level 5 Reference
- www.seattle.gov/util/meadowbrook

Public and Agency Comments

Comments must be submitted by October 10, 2013 and must be sent to:

Betty Meyer, SEPA Responsible Official
Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle Municipal Tower, Suite 4900
P.O. Box 34018
Seattle, WA 98124-4018
betty.meyer@seattle.gov

Signature:


Betty Meyer

Issue Date: September 26, 2013

Appeals

Appeals of this DNS must be accompanied by a \$85.00 filing fee and must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on October 17, 2013.

- Written appeals must be sent to:
City of Seattle Hearing Examiner
700 5th Avenue Suite 4000
P.O. Box 94729
Seattle, WA 98124-4729
- Appeals can be filed electronically. Details on electronic filing procedures are available under "e-File" at the Office of the Hearing Examiner's web site:
<http://www.seattle.gov/examiner/>
- Filing fees must be paid by the appeal deadline and can be paid *via* check (made payable to the City of Seattle) or credit/debit card (Visa and MasterCard only). Credit/debit card payments can be made in-person or over-the-phone.

You should be prepared to make specific factual objections. Please refer to the Hearing Examiner Rules of Practice and Procedure for rules that govern appeals. These rules are available on the Hearing Examiner's website at www.seattle.gov/examiner/rules-toc.htm or by calling 206-684-0521.