

# Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project

## Frequently Asked Questions

### I. Project Overview and Background

#### **Where is the Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project Area?**

Taylor Creek is located near the south end of Lake Washington in southeast Seattle. The creek originates in unincorporated King County and passes through a natural area known as Deadhorse Canyon within the City's Lakeridge Park. It then passes through residential yards and a culvert under Rainier Avenue South before discharging into Lake Washington. That culvert and other barriers in the creek prevent fish from passing from the Lake to quality habitat within Deadhorse Canyon.

In 2010 and 2011, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) purchased property along the lower reaches of Taylor Creek as part of an eventual effort to restore habitat and reduce storm-related flooding. SPU purchased an additional property on Rainier Avenue South in 2015—located above an existing culvert—and is looking at the need for easements to accommodate the creek alignment on the north side of Rainier Avenue South. These acquisitions provide flexibility for the design process, enable optimal creek restoration, and support development of a final design that minimizes impact on neighbors.

#### **Why is Seattle Public Utilities restoring Lower Taylor Creek?**

This project will address storm-related localized flooding and sediment deposition within the project limits. The project will also improve stream channel habitat and fish passage between Lake Washington and Deadhorse Canyon.

Lower Taylor Creek offers good habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon, a species listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Currently, fish passage barriers and sediment loads diminish habitat quality at the mouth of Taylor Creek. The channelized creek floods during heavy rains. Also, the existing culvert under Rainier Avenue South is in need of replacement.

#### **What is the projected timeline for the project?**

In fall 2015, the SPU project team completed an analysis that considered the social, financial, and general environmental impacts and benefits of three planning concepts. The project team will soon recommend to SPU managers that one of those configurations be moved into the design phase. The design phase is dependent upon available funding but is anticipated to begin in spring 2016.

### **What are the next steps?**

SPU is currently in the planning phase of the project. During this phase, SPU has been evaluating three different conceptual configurations that meet project goals. One of these configurations has been identified as the best concept and will be used to move the project into the next phase—design.

### **Will I have an opportunity to discuss this project with City of Seattle representatives?**

Yes. SPU will continue to gather input during the design phase of the project beginning in 2016. Please check the project website for updates: [www.seattle.gov/util/TaylorCreek](http://www.seattle.gov/util/TaylorCreek).

## **II. Public Access Option**

### **What was SPU's decision-making process to recommend the public access option?**

Since 2013, SPU has been working with Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), the community, and other City Departments to evaluate possible public access opportunities for the Lower Taylor Creek Restoration Project site. SPU considered five public access options, including No Access, Viewpoint, Scheduled Access, Limited Access, and Open Access. These options were evaluated based on the following six criteria (in no particular order):

- Habitat improvements
- City cost, operations, and maintenance
- City safety and liability
- Community and neighborhood amenities
- Potential neighborhood impacts
- Traffic safety and mobility

Lower Taylor Creek residents and stakeholders had opportunities to share their thoughts on the public access options and contributed to an SPU decision to allow public access. The community was asked to provide feedback on the decision and share any final thoughts related to public access at the site; the survey results are available [here](#) (pdf). In January 2015, SPU and SPR approved public access to the Lower Taylor Creek site. Learn more about the [public access options analysis](#) (pdf).

### **What is SPU's process for selecting a proposed concept?**

SPU hosted two community events in spring 2015. In April, SPU met with owners of properties adjacent to the proposed project area, and in May SPU hosted an open house. Adjacent property owners brought up some concerns about the project. You can see SPU's responses to those concerns in a matrix that was sent to project neighbors in summer 2015; the matrix is on the project website: [www.seattle.gov/util/taylorcreek](http://www.seattle.gov/util/taylorcreek). The open house provided an opportunity for community members and the public to learn about the project's purpose and what has been done so far. Three planning concepts were presented, each with a different creek alignment, and community members were asked to provide input on the concepts. The majority of the community preferred the proposed concept ([shown here as Option 2](#)), which minimizes work in Lakeridge Park and keeps most of the creek within public right-of-way.

SPU used community input in its analysis of the concepts. SPU considered the social, financial, and environmental impacts of each option, including such elements as transportation (particularly construction-related traffic impacts), parking, pedestrian and bicycle impacts, long-term environmental impacts, community preferences, and impacts to ratepayers. SPU completed this analysis in fall 2015 and will recommend the proposed concept found on the project website.

### **Is SPU acquiring additional property?**

SPU negotiated the purchase of one additional property on the south side of Rainier Avenue South. The purchase of this property provides flexibility for the design process, enables optimal creek restoration, and supports a final design that minimizes impact on neighbors. This additional property will also allow more space for sediment management than previously proposed creek alignment concepts.

## **III. Impacts to Residents**

### **What can I expect with public access?**

Specific details related to public access will be developed during the project's design phase. The design will be consistent with natural areas around the City.

### **How will construction affect me?**

SPU is currently in the planning phase of the project. Construction-related impacts will be determined and addressed during the project's design phase. SPU is committed to working with community members to address impacts during construction.

## **IV. Environmental, Health, and Safety Impacts**

### **I am worried about the environmental impacts of the public access option. Will Seattle Public Utilities undergo a formal environmental review process?**

Yes. In compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (Chapter 43.21C RCW) and Seattle Municipal Code (Chapter 25.05), SPU will identify, review, and disclose the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and determine whether or not those impacts would be significant. This review will be conducted at that earliest possible point in the planning, design, and decision-making process when the principal features of the proposal and its environmental impacts can be reasonably identified. The public will have an opportunity to comment on this proposal, as well as appeal SPU's determination of significance.

### **Does public access conflict with salmon restoration efforts?**

SPU is aware of the potential impacts of public access on salmon restoration efforts. SPU will work with regulatory agencies to ensure that salmon restoration goals are met during the project's design phase, and will balance this with the opportunity for educating the public on salmon (as has been achieved at Carkeek Park).

### **What about pedestrian safety?**

SPU is aware of pedestrian safety concerns and is working with SDOT to address the need for potential improvements.

### **How will people access the park?**

Normal park operations are being considered, with Dusk to Dawn closures. Additional details will be addressed during the design phase in accordance with existing Parks protocols.

### **Stay in touch**

SPU is available to answer questions and provide any information you need to be informed about this project and its impacts to you and your neighborhood.

For questions or comments on this project, contact:

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Sign up for the Taylor Creek Restoration Mailing List at: [www.seattle.gov/lists/taylor\\_creek\\_restoration.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/lists/taylor_creek_restoration.htm)

### **Need your information in another language?**

For interpretation services, please call (206) 233-7861.

如需要口譯服務，請撥電話號碼 (206) 233-7861.

통역 서비스를 원하시면 (206) 233-1086으로 전화하세요.

Para servicios de interpretación por favor llame al (206) 233-7861.

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