

Alki Pump Station 38 Improvement Project

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is a pump station and how do they help keep our neighborhoods and environment healthy?

Pump stations are an important part of the sewer system. They help protect public health and the environment by pumping sewage and wastewater away from homes, businesses, and other buildings to a regional wastewater treatment plant.

In areas with combined sewer systems, pump stations also help the environment by pumping untreated stormwater runoff, which carries polluted water runoff from streets, parking lots, roofs, and other surfaces, to be treated. This helps protect our waterways and preserve healthy habitat for fish and other animals.

Q: Why is Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) doing this work?

SPU is responsible for maintaining the City's wastewater system assets, including pump stations, and SPU works to ensure the City's assets are in good working order and in compliance with electrical, mechanical, and safety codes.

SPU proactively assesses the conditions of pump stations to identify if they are performing efficiently, requiring higher levels of maintenance, and/or are otherwise showing signs of deterioration. When a pump station warrants modernization, SPU proactively initiates a project to update and modernize the pump station rather than waiting for the station to fail, which would result in much higher repair costs and pose significant risks for public health and the environment.

Q: What is the Alki Pump Station 38 Improvement Project?

SPU is working on a capital improvement project at Pump Station 38, which is in Alki Beach Park near 1411 Alki Ave SW.

SPU is performing this work to upgrade the existing pump station from an airlift-type station to a standard pump station. This conversion will improve service reliability, improve system performance, and reduce maintenance costs. It's essential that we conduct proactive upgrades to our sewer system to ensure SPU can provide continued, reliable sewer service to your community.

Q: Is this work related to the pump station near 53rd Ave SW?

The pump station located near 53rd Ave SW and Alki Ave SW is owned and operated by King County Wastewater Treatment Division. That pump station, which is significantly bigger than Pump Station 38, is not related to the infrastructure improvement work that SPU is performing at Pump Station 38.

Q: How are these pump station improvements being funded?

Pump station maintenance projects such as these are funded directly by SPU ratepayers, rather than general city tax-dollars.

Q: What are the benefits of this project?

SPU is performing pump station improvement project to:

- Increase flow capacity of Pump Station 38
- Reduce the risk of station failure
- Ensure the pump station is compliant with existing codes
- Make the station safer for maintenance crews
- Install a new public art piece

CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Q: What can I expect when this project is in construction?

Construction began in July 2022 and is anticipated to be completed by September 2023.

Much of the work will occur in the belowground pump station with some aboveground impacts while crews upgrade the sewer pipe connection to the pump station as well as during installation of the art and landscaping features. During construction, residents in the area can expect:

- Construction noise, dirt, dust, and vibration
- Slowed vehicle traffic
- Equipment, signage, and materials will be staged in or near the work area
- Partial road closure and parking restrictions near the work area
- Restricted access to the walking and biking path through the work area

We will continue to provide updates about schedule and anticipated impacts throughout construction.

Q: What safety measures will be in place for residents during construction?

We will ensure there is signage to clearly distinguish the construction area and allow pedestrians and vehicles to move safely around the work zone and to continue enjoy Alki Beach Park.

Q: How can I stay notified about this project?

The project email listserv is the best way to stay up to date prior to and during construction. Visit the project website for more information and to sign-up for the email listserv: www.seattle.gov/utilities/PS38.

ART INSTALLATION

Visit the project website at www.seattle.gov/utilities/PS38 to learn about the art installation and to watch a video from the artist about the proposed artwork.

Q: What is the inspiration behind the art installation?

The artist, Sarah Thompson Moore, was inspired by a topographical map of Seattle printed in 1894. The proposed design calls to mind patterns in nature such as the rippling of water, growth rings in a tree, shellfish, and even fingerprints. The artwork is intended to become an inviting destination for trail-goers to explore themes of connection to place, history, nature, and human influence specific to Alki Beach.

Q: How did the artist coordinate with the local tribes and communities around Seattle to develop this design?

Our goal has always been to design an art installation that highlights the relationship and history of Indigenous communities and the land and waterways surrounding West Seattle. In alignment with the project goals and feedback from community, the project artist, Sarah Thompson Moore, has worked in coordination with the Muckleshoot and Suquamish Tribes to provide feedback and review on the design, and to identify important cultural sites to be highlighted on the map design.

Q: Where does the funding for the art installation come from?

The art installation is funded through the public art program, which directs funds for enhancing capital improvement projects through art.

Visit Seattle’s public art website at www.seattle.gov/arts/programs/public-art to learn more about this 45+ year old program’s work to enhance our community by integrating art into a variety of public settings throughout Seattle.

LANDSCAPING DESIGN

Q: What is the proposed landscaping for this project?

The landscaping design is intended to integrate into the existing landscape, which is situated between a shoreline, a seawall, and developed right-of-way, while adhering to the City's design standards and environmental permitting requirements as well as coordinating with the art installation.

The plan is to include low, evergreen native shrubs and ground covers interspersed with stone to evoke the historic shoreline while offering drought tolerance and the ability to withstand heavy public and utility uses.

Q: Why was a safety guardrail added to the design?

This safety guardrail is required for the site to be compliant with local safety codes and will ensure a safe environment both for the community to enjoy the art installation and for SPU maintenance crews to work on the pump station as needed.

Our team is also excited for the opportunity to integrate this required safety feature through landscaping and art. The required safety guardrail will include stainless steel mesh panels designed to be see-through while also providing a continuation of the artwork.