



NORTH MERCER ISLAND/ENATAI Sewer Upgrade Project

Mercer Island Community Meeting *Meeting Summary March 2016*

Date/Time/Location

Mercer Island Community Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2016

6-8 p.m.

Mercer Island Community & Event Center

Advance Notification

King County understands the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy for community meeting outreach and notifications. Using a variety of tools, the County's project team provided meeting information and notifications to residents and stakeholders in and around the project area.

Postcards

Postcard mailed to 8,000 residents in the North Mercer Island and Enatai communities.

Mailing List Email

An invitation and notification email was sent to the project mailing list for the Mercer Island community meeting. This list included researched stakeholders and individuals who signed up for notifications via the website or during an outreach event or project briefing.

Personal Letters

Personal letters were sent via mail on and hand-delivered to potentially affected property owners. The letters explained the project's need and purpose, invited the property owners to attend the March 10 meeting, and included a full-page image of the recommended alignment.

Alternative Formats Available
206-477-5371 or 711 TTY Relay



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Meeting Overview and Purpose

King County’s sewer pipe that carries wastewater from North Mercer Island and the southwest portion of Bellevue is ageing and reaching capacity. To limit potential for sewer overflows and keep sewer service in these areas running smoothly, King County will replace the pipe that carries wastewater from the North Mercer Island Pump Station to the Sweyolocken Pump Station in Bellevue. At this time, the project is in early planning stages and the team has identified a recommended alignment.



King County project team members discuss the recommended alignment with Mercer island community meeting participants.

The North Mercer Island/Enatai Sewer Upgrade Project team held the meeting on Mercer Island to present the recommended alignment.

The community meetings provided an opportunity for participants to:

- Learn about the project need and wastewater service in the project area.
- Understand the recommended alternative.
- Ask questions about the project.
- Provide feedback on the recommended alternative.
- Hear how King County Wastewater Treatment Division will work with neighbors throughout the project.

Approximately 15 people attended the meeting. This report provides a summary of what the project team presented to the community, frequently asked community questions, and feedback received from participants.



Community Relations Planner Monica Van der Vieren discusses the recommended alignment with Mercer Island community meeting participants.

Meeting Format

From 6 to 6:30 p.m., participants viewed four display boards explaining how Wastewater Treatment Division works and had the opportunity to talk directly with project staff. The team gave a presentation from 6:30 to 7:30, followed by a facilitated question-and-answer session from 7:30 to 8 p.m.

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Presentation

The presentation covered a project overview, current status and the recommended alternative, design and construction, community input and next steps, followed by a question and discussion session. Facilitator Jamie Strausz-Clark introduced the presenters and explained the format of the presentation, noting that participants should ask clarifying questions at any time and that further questions should be held for the discussion at the end of the presentation.

Project overview

In the 1950s, Lake Washington was so polluted, the voters created a regional wastewater system, now known as King County Wastewater Treatment Division. Today, Lake Washington is one of the cleanest urban lakes in the world and King County WTD serves 1.5 million people. WTD's mission is to provide safe and reliable sewer service. To fulfil that mission, WTD regularly evaluates the system and plans upgrades as needed.

The current system serving north Mercer Island and the southwest portion of Bellevue was installed in the 1970s and is nearing the end of its lifespan. This project will upgrade the system to serve through 2060 or beyond.

Alternative selection

King County's project team includes experts in engineering, construction, community relations, permitting, environmental, and operations and maintenance. At the beginning of the project, that team developed selection criteria to help select a recommended alternative.

The design team spent the last 18 months analyzing alternatives for how well they fit the design criteria. The team held open houses in September 2015 where we presented several options on Mercer Island that included in-water and upland alternatives. Ultimately, the team recommended an upland, rather than in-water, corridor. It would be very challenging to permit a line in the water if we had a practical, feasible option out of the water.

The upland corridor means we need more power at the pump station, so we are going to upgrade the North Mercer Pump Station as part of this project. It was originally planned for upgrades in 2029. We will also look at upgrading a city-owned lift station.

Community input

Since our first open houses in September 2015, we have been working closely with the community and have heard concerns about coordination with Sound Transit and the impact of multiple construction projects on the community. We are committed to working closely with Sound Transit to reduce impacts wherever possible. We also know that construction projects

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are impactful; we are working during the design phase to find solutions for community concerns during construction. As our plans progress, we will inform the community about how permitting conditions and Best Management Practices will address the concerns identified by the community.

At the September open house, you told us you were concerned about traffic impacts to North Mercer Way, so we are evaluating construction along the I-90 trail instead. Some of the other priorities we heard in September included minimizing impacts to Luther Burbank Park, moving the pipeline from between homes, and reducing traffic impacts.

Schedule

During this early design phase, much of our work will focus on field investigations to inform the final alignment. While we have a recommended alignment (upland), we still need to make refinements and narrow down exactly where the alignment will be. During final design, we will focus on how to build the system, obtain permits, and develop the construction contract. Our schedule allows about a year for early design, two years for final design, and three years for construction. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019.

Current status and recommended alternative

Current status

In the current system, Mercer Island has several pump stations and sewers that feed into King County's North Mercer Pump Station. The North Mercer Pump Station pumps flows uphill to about the Mercer Island Community Center and then relies on gravity to carry flows to the Sweyolocken Pump Station in Bellevue. The existing pipe lays along the bottom of Lake Washington near the I-90 bridge then passes near some private docks where there are direct connections to the system. From Sweyolocken, flows are pumped to the Eastside Interceptor and then on to King County's South Treatment Plant in Renton. With the upgrade, we need to maintain all of these functions and create a more reliable system.

Recommended alternative

The upland corridor that the team has recommended means we'll need to make upgrades to the North Mercer Pump Station. The pump station was built in the 1960. It pumps flows to the Mercer Island Community & Events Center today; in the recommended alternative, it has to pump farther, so we need to increase the size of the pumps and add a pump. We will look at what can fit into the existing facility and make some other improvements like upgrading the emergency generator and odor control. We'll likely add one or a few additional buildings on the site. We'll work with the city and permitting agencies to identify the best way to do that while

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accomplishing our goals and being mindful of architectural considerations and the character of the neighborhood in our design.

Today, a lake line runs almost all the way around Mercer Island. Flows are pumped from one station to the next. At Lift Station 11 at 97th Avenue SE at Fruitland Landing, the lake line is pumped up the hill into the county's pipe. Our design will move that pipeline connection further up the hill and feed additional flows into the main interceptor so that we don't need to do any upgrades on the pipe in the lake. We need to increase the power at Lift Station 11, so we'll work with the city to provide a facility that meets their standards and is serviceable, safe and reliable.

Design and construction

Design

We have a number of design considerations that have been a priority on this project: hydraulics, or keeping flows moving, pinch points with limited work area, existing utilities and traffic impacts.

The team identified a winding alignment for the pipe because that will keep much of the work in the public right of way. We are investigating one alternative that would be a more direct alignment but would require private easements. We do want to avoid work under private property, but if the benefits are great enough – for example, in this case building under private property would shorten the alignment and get us to the bike path quicker – we will consider it. This alignment was suggested by community members at the September open house.

Construction

- On Mercer Island, we will install the pipe by excavating from the surface, installing the pipe, backfilling, and restoring the surface. We are being mindful of existing utilities, traffic impacts, proximity to retaining walls and proximity to homes as we investigate the final alignment.
- East Channel: To construct the in-water crossing through the East Channel, crews will enter the water at the Mercer Island Boat Launch and install the pipe on the north side of the I-90 bridge primarily using barges in Lake Washington. Most of this work will have to happen during the summer to avoid impacts to fish in the lake. The main steps are to excavate, or dredge, the bottom of the lake; dispose of excavated material at an approved facility; install the pipe; and backfill first with material that will protect the pipe, and top that with fish-friendly material.



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- Southwest Bellevue: The underground pipe from Enatai Beach Park to Sweyolocken Pump Station will be constructed using a trenchless, or below ground, technology. One method we are strongly considering is called Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). King County has experience with HDD. The county's subcontractor just completed an HDD project for the Bellevue Force Main Project, and the county recently used HDD on the Magnolia CSO Control Project. To install the new 30-inch pipe, crews will first drill a pilot hole, then enlarge the hole using a reaming pass, and then pull the pipe through the hole. During pipe pullback the pipe will be fused together and floated in Lake Washington to avoid surface impacts. There will be temporary impacts to docks in the East Channel during this time, although boat access will be maintained. Pipe pullback lasts about two-to-three days.
- Enatai Interceptor: We will re-line the existing pipe along the shoreline of Enatai so that it stays in service for the Bellevue Lake Line and private home connections.

King County takes environmental protection and restoration very seriously. Because sewer pipes often use gravity to convey flows, they are generally located in low-lying areas, which tend to be near water bodies. This means King County has a lot of experience working near sensitive shoreline areas. We have been and will continue working with permitting agencies and tribes to protect shoreline areas and plan for appropriate restoration once the project is completed.

We're working to gather information to determine the final pipe alignment. You will see surveying on public streets and in parks, and some homeowners may be asked for permission to conduct surveys on private property. We will also conduct geotechnical borings and pile support evaluations along Mercer Slough. We'll have more detail to share as we progress design related to odor control at Enatai Beach Park, access to Enatai Beach Park and boat launches, noise, and working in sensitive shoreline areas.

Community input

King County understands working near homes and recreation centers is impactful, and we will work with you throughout the life of the project.

As we've mentioned, in September a resident suggested a more direct alignment coming out of the Mercer Island Pump Station and we're now evaluating it. This is a great example of why it's so important for you to talk to us. You know your community best, and we want to learn from you.

A couple things we've heard from you include:

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- Using the bike path. We received a lot of input to work on the bike path and avoid or reduce impacts to North Mercer Way, and make improvements to the bike path during restoration.
- We know you are very concerned about Sound Transit's East Link project. We'll keep you informed about how we are working with them.

King County holds community meetings like this at milestones, but we don't rely on them as our only tool. During early design, the community relations team wants to learn how best to work with you. We often do door hangers, but we're happy to find different methods of sharing information, depending on what you prefer. We'll hold neighborhood meetings in the street, plan one-on-one or small-group meetings, or find other ways to come to you.

We also look for opportunities to do creative things with the community. If you're interested in construction, we can find ways to bring the community in during construction. We will work with the community on items such as landscaping and architectural 'look and feel' for above-ground structures.

During construction, we will have a 24/7 hotline.

Monica Vander Vieren will be your main point of contact. She can be reached at 206-477-5502 or monica.vandervieren@kingcounty.gov.

Summary of Questions

The following section summarizes general questions, comments and discussion from the public meeting. This summary does not document site-specific issues, which King County will address with individual homeowners in one-on-one and small group meetings.

Questions and comments focused on the following topics:

Design details

Funding

Construction, including specifics related to:

- Work on the bike path
- Construction duration

Design details

Will you be exercising sewer easements on private property?



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Most work on Mercer Island will be in the public right of way. Once we complete early design and start final design we'll know for sure if there will be any work on private property. We will reach out to any directly impacted homeowners at that time.

Why do you show two pipes in the East Crossing but only one in Bellevue?

On Mercer Island and across the East Crossing we'll have two pipes. We only show one in Bellevue because the Enatai Interceptor is going to stay in use, so after the East Crossing the alignment splits with a new line running upland to the Sweyolocken Pump Station and the Enatai Interceptor staying in place along the shoreline. We'll use the Enatai Interceptor for low flows, and high flows will go to the new pipe.

Tell me more about odor control.

Primary odor control will be at Enatai Beach Park. If you look at a cross section of the alignment, you'd see that it goes up and down. At high points in the alignment, air can collect. You need to release the air or your pipe loses capacity. We release air at high points, and at those locations we treat the air so there's no odor. There may be other points along the alignment where we will have odor control, but likely not as big as at Enatai Beach Park.

We'll also update the odor control system at the Mercer Island Pump Station.

Funding

Who is funding the project and how will the cost be borne?

Regional ratepayers pay for these projects. Rates across the region include money for upgrade projects, so you will not see a Mercer Island-specific rate increase for this project. King County has very good bond funding and we'll also apply for state revolving funds and low-interest loans.

Construction

You mentioned the 24/7 construction hotline. What would be happening at 3 a.m. that we'd need to call about?

Anything can and has happened. We've gotten calls about traffic accidents, vandalism, or problems with our pipes or construction materials. The 24-hour hotline is intended to provide quick response to unexpected occurrences.

What will construction look like on the I-90 trail and will it be useable during the project?



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We have not yet determined a final alignment, so we don't know at this time if work will be on the trail.

For any work on the trail, it's likely that a segment of the path would be closed. If we're in North Mercer Way it would be similar. There would be flaggers and we'd likely close one lane during the day and reopen the road at night. In both cases, the trail or road would be open except for the relatively short segment where crews are working.

I know you've mentioned traffic considerations on North Mercer Way, but there are also people who use the I-90 trail for their primary form of travel and three years is a long time.

Three years is the overall length of construction for the project, but we don't expect to be in any one area for three years.

We've heard from the bike community that the opportunity to upgrade the path is appealing, and work on North Mercer Way would impact bikers because that's how many people access the trail. This is a planned project so we have a lot of opportunity to plan detours and alternate routes. During design, we want to work with trail users to understand how and when people use the trail. Then we can start planning those detours and alternate routes.

We don't have a detailed construction schedule yet. The Mercer Island portion of the pipe is a little over two miles. Construction details will depend a lot on contractor means and methods, final design and permit conditions. We will share that information once we have it.

What can we expect for construction on 78th Avenue?

A final alignment has not yet been determined. Once it has been determined, later in the fall, King County will reach out to impacted homeowners and begin discussions around construction impacts.