



# Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities



## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a CSO?

Most of King County has a network of pipes that sends wastewater to treatment plants to clean the water. However, in older parts of the system, including areas in Seattle, rainwater flows into the same pipes as wastewater. This is called a combined sewer system, and it was an engineering best practice at the time these pipes were built. When heavy rainstorms fill the pipes, combined sewer overflow (CSO) outfalls release stormwater and sewage into local water bodies and act as relief points to prevent sewer backups in homes, businesses, and streets.

### What is the problem with the current CSOs?

While CSOs can prevent sewer backups into streets and homes, they carry harmful chemicals and bacteria into local water bodies, such as the Duwamish Waterway, posing a risk to public health and the environment. The water released through a CSO outfall typically contains about 90% stormwater and 10% sewage. King County is planning Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities to control five combined sewer overflow outfalls in the area of the mouth of the Duwamish Waterway.

### What is King County doing to solve the problem?

Today, when King County builds new portions of the system, those sections include separate pipes for stormwater and wastewater. However, in older parts of the system where building new pipes is not feasible, we seek other solutions to limit CSOs. The goal of Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities is to reduce the frequency of uncontrolled CSOs near the mouth of Duwamish Waterway to no more than one untreated release per year over a 20-year average. This meets regulations set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

### What is the timeline for this project?

During the planning phase, we will narrow our options and select the best solution to reduce CSOs at Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities outfalls. We will move into design, and then construction, as soon as we select the best solution.

### How does the project fit with other King County water quality efforts?

Other King County water quality efforts, like the Lower Duwamish Waterway and East Waterway Superfund cleanups, and the Washington State Department of Ecology's Source Control Strategy, are already underway. Together, these projects will clean up existing contaminated river sediments, reduce the amount of new pollutants entering the river, and improve water quality in Seattle's only river.

## What kinds of CSO control methods is King County looking at for this project?

The methods that we are considering include a combination of storage, treatment, and new pipelines. These options could include new above-ground or below-ground facilities, a new outfall structure for treated water, and pipelines that connect flows along the way.

## Where will King County build Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities?

We are currently in the planning phase for this effort. During the planning phase, we are studying options that include new facilities, a new outfall structure for treated water, and pipelines that connect flows along the way. For any option, we will need to purchase property for facilities in SODO and West Seattle (Industrial District West). This could range from approximately four to eight acres, depending on the option. We may also need to acquire property rights such as easements in West Seattle (Industrial District West) for pipelines, outfalls, and other system needs.

## Is this project related to local flooding in South Park?

While this project does not address flooding in South Park, King County and Seattle Public Utilities are advancing short-term and long-term solutions to reduce the risk of wastewater backups and flooding through other efforts. More information is available on the [South Park Flooding](#) and the [South Park wastewater backup protection websites](#).

## Does this project have anything to do with road closures on East Marginal Way South?

No, these closures are related to the Seattle Department of Transportation East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project. You can find more information on the [East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project website](#).

## Why doesn't King County just build a new pipe system instead of working with the existing one?

King County conducts Long-Term Control plans to examine the feasibility of different CSO control options, including building new pipes to separate stormwater from sewage. These plans concluded that building new pipes would take much longer and be much more intrusive and costly, as it would require the replacement of all pipes leading to the Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities outfalls. King County believes the proposed solutions we are considering will be much more effective and will help to solve the problem more quickly.

## How will this work compare to the Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station?

King County estimates that the Mouth of Duwamish Wet Weather Facilities need approximately three times the treatment capacity of the Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station. You can read more about the Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station on the [project website](#).

## How can I stay informed?

Visit [kingcounty.gov/MDWetWeatherFacilities](http://kingcounty.gov/MDWetWeatherFacilities) to learn the latest updates about the project, access all project materials, and join our mailing list.

Contact Bibiana Ocheke-Ameh at [Bibiana.Ocheke-Ameh@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Bibiana.Ocheke-Ameh@kingcounty.gov) or (206) 477-5604 with questions or to request a conversation by phone, video chat, email, or in person.