



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON

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Frequently Asked Questions About the First Hill Water System Improvements Project

What is the First Hill Water System Improvements Project?

- The First Hill Water System Improvements Project is a three-phase, extensive water infrastructure improvement effort for the neighborhood. In 2009, the City replaced the water main and system components on 72nd Avenue SE as part of the first phase. Then in 2011, we made improvements to the First Hill Booster Pump Station, located at 74th Avenue SE and SE 32nd Street.

Construction of the third and final phase will begin in mid- to late March, 2012. The contractor for this final phase of work will:

- Replace and upsize approximately 3,500 lineal feet of water main
- Replace approximately 140 water services and seven fire hydrants
- Construct 13 water main connections
- Make property and pavement restoration and other related improvements

Why does this work need to be done?

- The City of Mercer Island's water system is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure the infrastructure remains in good condition and has adequate capacity to provide water to customers. The water mains in the First Hill neighborhood are undersized and aging rapidly. In several areas, the fire flow capacity was below the minimum standard of 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm), as defined by the City's Water System Plan, adopted by the Department of Health in 2008. This current work will improve water supply and fire flow to houses in the area.

How much will this project cost?

- By the time all three phases of construction are completed, the total project will cost approximately \$2.5 million. This final phase is estimated to cost \$1.2 million.

How is this project being funded?

- This project is significant in terms of its large size, benefit to rate payers (projected savings on long-term maintenance costs and improved fire flows) and innovative design to upsize the main. Because of the high priority given this project, the City needed debt financing to maintain the planned timing for the work. The City funded the project with savings from construction of the Sewer Lake Line project, from bonds and from money collected through water rates.

Where will construction take place?

- The boundaries for this project lie between SE 29th Street and SE 36th Street, and between 71st Avenue SE and 74th Place SE.

When will construction begin? When will it end?

- Construction will begin in mid- to late March. Crews will work about 30 weeks, so the project will extend through the summer. If all goes as planned, we expect to be done by early October.

Who will be doing this work?

- On February 21, 2012, the Mercer Island City Council awarded the construction contract to R.L. Alia Company, a general contractor that undertakes large-scale public works projects like water main replacements. Based in Renton, R.L. Alia is a licensed and bonded contractor that has been in business since 1974. They were the contractor for the First Hill Booster Pump Station Improvements project, which was phase two of this three-phase project. This phase of the project has been designed by The Blueline Group, LLC of Kirkland.

How will I be affected by this project?

- Area residents will be impacted by disruptions to your water supply and traffic delays. We will have a number of water main shutdowns; these will occur between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. You could also experience intermittent shutdowns for replacement of your individual water service; these may have a shorter duration. You will experience traffic delays. We may have occasional road closures that require us to reroute traffic, but our contractor will try to keep at least one lane open on each road. Your landscaping may also be impacted when the contractor digs trenches to install a new service line, reconnect your new service, or relocate a meter.

How will I be notified of water shutoffs or street closures?

- The City of Mercer Island will send you a notification postcard regarding water main shutdowns the week prior to shutoff. We will hang a reminder notice on your front door the day before water shutdowns and street closures.

Will you be replacing my water meter?

- No, none of the water meters will be replaced for this project, although some meter boxes will be replaced. We will replace the service line that runs from the water main to your meter location.

During what hours will crews work? Will they work weekends?

- Crews will work between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm. We do not anticipate that they will need to work weekends.

Will construction crews work during SeaFair? During Summer Celebration?

- Yes, however the contractor will adjust their construction activities accordingly to minimize the interference with SeaFair and Summer Celebration events.

How will my mail be delivered? Garbage picked up? Will this project change our school bus pickup?

- Your mail delivery and garbage pickup should not be impacted. If a full street closure is required, we will work around garbage pickup days to avoid interference. We will also coordinate directly with Mercer Island Public Schools officials to make sure there is no disruption to school bus pickups.

I'm planning to have construction done at my home. What do I need to do to coordinate schedules?

- Let us know about your plans *now* and we'll do our best to work around the construction at your house. It's especially important to let us know if you have large building materials deliveries or need access for concrete trucks at your home at any time during this period.

I'm having a large event at my house during the construction period. How can I eliminate conflicts?

- Communication is very important; let us know *now* if you have plans and we'll do our best to work around your special event.

If water is shut off, how long will my home be without water?

- On the days that water is shut off at the main, your service could be off from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Do I need to do anything special to my irrigation system / pool / hot tub / etc. during this period?

- No, nothing special is needed; although we want to remind you not to run hot water out your faucet during water main shutdown. This would drain your hot water tank which could cause damage.

Will this work disrupt my landscape?

- Yes, it could. While we will do everything we can to minimize disturbance to your property and landscaping, the contractor may need to dig a small trench through your yard, roughly 18 inches wide and two or three feet deep. Lawn will be replaced with the original turf or reseeded if needed. If you have any concerns about special plants or landscaping that might be impacted, particularly plants near the meter box, let us know.

What are my responsibilities?

- Let us know *now* if you have special landscape plants, irrigation lines or invisible fencing, particularly if they are located near the meter box. Also, keep everyone safe by keeping kids and pets away from the construction zones.

Who can I contact about this project?

- At any point during the duration of the project, you may contact Rona Lin, P.E., City of Mercer Island Utilities Engineer, at (206) 275-7806 or via email at rona.lin@mercergov.org.

Where can I learn more about the project and the contractor's progress?

- You can learn more about this project and get updates on our progress at the City of Mercer Island's website, www.mercergov.org. Find the information under Departments > City and Regional Projects > Capital Improvement Program > First Hill Water System Improvements Project. Or, you can directly link to www.mercergov.org/FirstHillWater. We will post new information as it becomes available, so check back throughout the construction period.