

## **PRESS RELEASE FROM CITY OF SEATTLE**

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Images and materials are available [using this link](#).

### **The Pioneer Square Habitat Beach, a key component to Seattle’s nearshore marine habitat at Waterfront Park, opening for the summer on July 1**

**Seattle** (June 29, 2023) – The City’s Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects will be opening the Pioneer Square Habitat Beach, located just south of Colman Dock and in easy walking distance from Pioneer Square and the stadiums, to the public on July 1. Pioneer Square Habitat Beach was primarily developed to support marine habitat along the waterfront and also provides passersby with a perfect place to sit and watch the ferries and other boat traffic go by.

“We know people have been watching how the habitat beach vegetation has grown and established itself over time and have been wondering when they would be able to explore this new community amenity. We are excited to invite people down to enjoy the new beach,” said Angela Brady, Acting Director of the Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects. “With an influx of people coming down to the waterfront this summer, we are certain the Pioneer Square Habitat Beach will become a popular destination for residents and tourists alike.”

Pioneer Square Habitat Beach was completed in 2020 and remained closed to the public to give the new plants time to get established. Coastal plantings are a key component of the nearshore ecosystem, mimicking natural shorelines in the area and providing benefits to marine life. Now that the plants, including evergreen trees and saltwater-tolerant shrubs, are thriving, the City can open it up to the public. The beach is a part of the new 20-acre Waterfront Park that will be opening in phases between now and 2025. Once completed, Waterfront Park will extend along the waterfront from the stadiums and Pioneer Square up to Belltown and includes extensions to the east connecting the waterfront into rich cultural downtown neighborhoods and the downtown core.

The beach will be open every day from 7AM to 10 PM. Because the beach is a key component to Seattle’s nearshore marine habitat, some rules to keep in mind before heading down include no swimming or entering and exiting the water by personal watercraft, and packing out what you pack in. Additional rules and regulations will be posted on-site.

“The Alliance is excited for the opening of the Pioneer Square Habitat Beach along Waterfront Park. The public space is a welcomed addition to Pioneer Square’s urban shoreline that will be enjoyed by all,” said Lisa Howard, Executive Director of the Alliance for Pioneer Square.

Concurrent with the opening of the beach on July 1, Seattle Center will begin its new role as the City’s lead department for operations of Waterfront Park, with a dedicated groundskeeping and security team that will be on site and on hand to help maintain Waterfront Park spaces and to help keep them safe. This is a partnership with Friends of Waterfront Seattle, the non-profit organization responsible for fundraising, activating, and stewarding the park.

The Pioneer Square Habitat Beach is part of a suite of marine habitat improvements implemented in conjunction with the first phase of the Elliott Bay Seawall Replacement Project and was designed with a special focus on encouraging juvenile salmon migration. When the existing waterfront was first developed, many of the native intertidal elements were lost including sloping beaches, crevices and vegetated hiding places for fish. Restoring the function of a natural shoreline and improving ecosystem productivity is an important goal of the Waterfront Seattle program and the new Waterfront Park.

Over 45,000 tons of material, including sand, gravel, soil, shells and rocks of varying sizes make up this man-made intertidal shoreline. The shells were kindly donated by the Suquamish tribe. The beach also includes over 1,400 native plants, including shore pines, oregon grapes, nootka roses, douglas asters, entire-leaved gumweeds, american dunegrasses, and sea plantains.

These marine improvements were created on state-owned property thanks to an agreement between the Washington State Ferries and the City of Seattle. Of note, the Pioneer Square Habitat Beach will need to be temporarily closed this fall to accommodate installation of indigenous artwork as part of honoring nearby [Ballast Island](#). The artwork and historical information will be installed by the Washington State Department of Transportation as part of their coordination with local tribes.

Meanwhile, the historic Washington Street Boat Landing, located beside Pioneer Square Habitat Beach, includes a beautifully restored space for an exciting future tenant. Friends of Waterfront Seattle will be working with the concessionaire improvements through the fall and both the boat landing and the beach will be open and active before next spring.

Friends of Waterfront Seattle is the non-profit organization responsible for fundraising, programming, stewarding and activating Waterfront Park now and into the future. They are leading a \$200 million comprehensive campaign to contribute to the build and long-term care of the park. They welcome the community's generosity to be champions of this world class public space.

"We are thrilled that Pioneer Square Habitat Beach will be opening this summer for visitors and residents to connect to the wonders of the Salish Sea and experience Waterfront Park in the making," stated Joy Shigaki, President and CEO of Friends of Waterfront Seattle. "We welcome the public to join Friends to support the build and care of this new 20-acre park opening in 2025, which will be the heart of downtown and our city."