



Seattle
Office of the Waterfront
and Civic Projects

PRESS RELEASE FROM CITY OF SEATTLE

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City of Seattle to enhance pedestrian connections between Pioneer Square and Waterfront Park

In support of Mayor Harrell's Downtown Activation Plan, new construction will improve downtown neighborhood and access to new Waterfront Park

Seattle (December 14, 2023) – The City of Seattle's Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects will start construction on [the Pioneer Square East-West Pedestrian Improvements project](#) in early January 2024. As part of the City's Waterfront Seattle Program, the project will make pedestrian improvements in the heart of the Pioneer Square neighborhood for easier and more accessible travel between downtown Seattle and the new Waterfront Park.

"The projects and improvements made today create the downtown of the future – a Seattle that makes residents proud and attracts visitors around the world. As Seattle continues to grow, projects like the Pioneer Square East-West Pedestrian improvements will fuel our vision of seamless connections between our waterfront and downtown," said Mayor Bruce Harrell. "These investments in pedestrian pathways and open green spaces will center vibrancy and accessibility where generations of neighbors, workers, families, and visitors can navigate and enjoy a seamlessly connected Seattle."

"We are excited to start construction on yet another project to improve east-west connections between downtown Seattle and our new Waterfront Park, this time within the historic Pioneer Square neighborhood," said Angela Brady, Director of the Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects. "We were able to reach this milestone due to the hard work of the City's dedicated Waterfront Seattle team, using invaluable design feedback we received from community members during early planning efforts. Our team will continue to work with our partners at the Alliance for Pioneer Square in reaching out to neighbors to ensure they know what to expect as we begin to build these improvements."

Improvements to calm vehicle traffic and increase pedestrian travel by walking or rolling will be made to S King, S Main and S Washington streets, and Yesler Way. Current one-way configurations between Alaskan Way S and 1st Ave S, on S Main and S Washington streets, will be extended to 2nd Ave S and each street will also become curbside. Additionally, the project will widen and upgrade sidewalks, move vehicles away from

vulnerable underground areaways, and add greenery with native plants. Loading zones for neighborhood businesses will be maintained.

This project is a part of the new world class Waterfront Park that will be opening in its entirety in 2025. It is a 20-acre linear park along the waterfront that extends from SODO to Belltown and extends to the east connecting the waterfront into rich cultural downtown neighborhoods and the downtown core.

Once completed, the pedestrian improvements will include storytelling elements that reflect and honor Indigenous histories in and near Pioneer Square based on collaboration and feedback from members of local tribes. There will be illustrated interpretive panels featuring Indigenous practices and ground-level etchings depicting native plants and their usage. In addition, pavement markings will show the original shoreline of the area, prior to settlement.

The project will be constructed in phases to help minimize impacts to the neighborhood. Construction is planned to be completed in late 2024 and will be carried out by Gary Merlino Construction, who was awarded a \$12.6M contract to complete this work.

“The East-West Pedestrian Improvements project is an exciting investment in Pioneer Square,” said Lisa Dixon Howard, Executive Director for the Alliance for Pioneer Square. “For the first time in over 50 years, the neighborhood is reestablishing its connection to the water and these additional improvements will increase safety and accessibility for all those wanting to visit Pioneer Square.”

The City will continue to partner with the [Alliance for Pioneer Square](#), which has deep ties with the community, to provide proactive and timely updates and share construction impacts in advance of changes.

Friends of Waterfront Seattle is the non-profit organization leading the management of park operations, fundraising, programming, and stewardship of Waterfront Park, now and for generations to come. They are leading a \$170 million comprehensive campaign to contribute to the City’s construction, activation alongside community partners, and long-term care of the park. Friends welcomes the community to become park champions of this world class public space.

“Pioneer Square is an incredible neighborhood rich with history and stories. This connection to Waterfront Park is so vital, as is honoring Indigenous history, culture, and stories represented in the physical space through these improvements,” said Joy Shigaki, President & CEO of Friends of Waterfront Seattle. “It’s wonderful that pedestrians will have improved accessibility and safe passage, creating a dynamic visitor experience at the waterfront.”

Pier 62 was the first part of Waterfront Park to open in Fall 2020. Friends has been activating this space with vibrant programming alongside community partners with 180,000 attendees at events since opening. Over 1 million visitors have come to enjoy the beauty and joy of Pier 62 at Waterfront Park.