

PRESS RELEASE FROM CITY OF SEATTLE

Contact: Iris Picat, (505) 600-1227, info@waterfrontseattle.org

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Waterfront Construction Progress - Opening a new multimodal street connection between the waterfront and Belltown

SEATTLE (April 24, 2023) – As construction of the City’s Waterfront Park continues, a new elevated connection between the waterfront and Belltown will open soon, a milestone years in the making. The City’s Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects has been busy building this connection over the railroad tracks, and nestled into the hillside below Pike Place Market, ever since the Washington State Department of Transportation’s 2019 completion of the SR-99 Tunnel and the demolition of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The Waterfront Seattle Program is now ready to open the new street, named Elliott Way, ahead of the summer crowds. The opening of Elliott Way means that Alaskan Way and Elliott Way will be open to traffic from the stadium district at S King St at the south end all the way up to Bell St at the north end.

“Opening Elliott Way is a special milestone for downtown revitalization, part of the backbone of our transformed waterfront,” said Mayor Bruce Harrell. “This accessible new corridor will strengthen connections to our downtown neighborhoods and bring people together across our city through new opportunities for activities and experiences. We are proud to give this new street the honorary name Dzidzilich, preserving the rich history of our waterfront to the Coast Salish people and memorializing it for generations to come.”

Construction on Elliott Way began in late 2019 and included setting 18 concrete girders, each weighing up to 75 tons, over the railroad tracks and building roughly 900 feet of retaining wall with 77 soldier piles and 142 anchors to support the street. Work also included connecting the new street into existing streets on both ends, while keeping people moving.

"The new Elliott Way is an exciting milestone in the transformation of Seattle's central waterfront. Building the SR 99 tunnel and removing the Alaskan Way Viaduct was a tremendous act of partnership and vision between WSDOT, the City of Seattle, King County and the Port of Seattle, resulting in a more resilient and multimodal transportation system. We are excited to see the dividends of that work continue to be realized," said Washington Secretary of Transportation Roger Millar.

Elliott Way will feature a multimodal path, providing key connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. There will be vehicle lanes in each direction to support freight movements, who will be able to traverse between industrial areas south and north of downtown without getting interrupted by train crossings at Broad St. Elliott Way will also feature new sidewalks and

protected bike lanes. This new street will become a vital and direct connection between the waterfront and Belltown.

This opening will mark the final alignment of Alaskan Way between S King and Pine streets, which has been shifted back and forth from east to west during various phases of construction. The area west of the new street will become public park space. Opening Elliott Way is also the first step in creating the park area between Pier 62, the Aquarium and Pike Place Market. [Overlook Walk](#), an elevated public park, will provide a direct pedestrian connection between the waterfront and Pike Place Market. Work is now primarily focused on the park promenade, east-west connections projects, and protected bike lanes also included in the [City's Waterfront Seattle Program](#).

“The vehicle-centric Alaskan Way Viaduct has long separated the waterfront from the Belltown neighborhood and we are excited to be opening a new and vital throughfare providing a multimodal connection that has not existed until now,” said Angela Brady, Acting Director of the Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects. “Looking down at the waterfront from Pike Place Market today, the change that has taken place since the viaduct was removed is clearly visible and there is so much more to come with the new park Promenade, Overlook Walk, and Pier 58 projects slated to be done in 2025. This area is being transformed and becoming a more accessible, enjoyable, and safe place for all.”

At the south end, Elliott Way will transition into Alaskan Way north of Pike Street. At the north end, Elliott Way will connect to Elliott and Western avenues between Blanchard and Bell streets. New sidewalks and protected bike facilities, including the southbound bike lane between Bell and Pine streets and northbound bike lane between Lenora and Bell streets, will open at the time of the street opening. Over 40 varieties of plants, over 165 trees and more than 46,000 individual plantings, were added along the sidewalk supporting the city and community's desire to see more greenery in this area.

Construction will continue to be very visible between Pike and Pine streets where the [Overlook Walk](#) temporary bridge support towers span over the new street, and the sidewalk and bike lane on the east side will remain closed south of Lenora St. With the opening of Elliott Way, the [Seattle Aquarium Ocean Pavilion](#) will begin a new phase of work that will close Alaskan Way daily, on the west side of their construction zone between Pike and Pine streets, requiring access to approach from the north.

“It's great to see the realization of a better and more beautiful waterfront. Removing the old viaduct restored the views of Elliott Bay from Belltown and the new Elliott Way will help reconnect Belltown to its waterfront,” said Zander Batchelder, Belltown Community Council President. “Moreover, walkability is very important to Belltowners and these new paths will provide Seattleites and tourists alike new ways to explore our growing and vibrant cityscape and rediscover what makes Seattle such a great place.”

Earlier this year, the City was pleased to announce an honorary street naming of Alaskan Way and Elliott Way of Dzidzilalich, a Lushootseed name - one of the languages of the Coast Salish people - which roughly translates to "little crossing over place." The name was chosen in coordination with representatives from the Muckleshoot and the Suquamish Tribal Councils in honor of the long tribal history of Seattle's waterfront, with the proposal approved unanimously by the Seattle City Council in February 2023. The brown honorary signs will be unveiled as part of the street opening and will be in place along Elliott Way and Alaskan Way, between S Dearborn and Bell streets. For more information about the honorary street name, including an audio snippet courtesy of the Muckleshoot Tribe, please [visit our website](#).

"The Seattle waterfront shoreline hosted a string of villages ancestral to the Muckleshoot people prior to the treaties of Medicine Creek and Point Elliott," said Muckleshoot Tribal Council Vice Chair Donny Stevenson. "This honorary name change recognizes the Muckleshoot Tribe's long history and deep connections to the land that is now Seattle."

"The name d'íid'əlalič is a powerful reminder of the names that the Coast Salish people applied to our villages, harvest areas and landmarks within Seattle's ancestral landscape," said Suquamish Chairman Leonard Forsman. "We occupied these areas, including Chief Seattle's winter home in Pioneer Square and our ancestral fishing grounds in Elliott Bay, until being moved to reservations and later excluded from Seattle by law in 1865. We have since returned to our fishing grounds since the 1974 Boldt Decision recognized our fishing rights. We appreciate the city's acknowledgement of this history."

The improved Lenora Street Pedestrian Bridge that connects Belltown to Alaskan Way will open at the same time as the new street and features new railing, landscaping, and a signalized intersection at Elliott Way. The Port of Seattle is upgrading the elevator which supports accessible connections at the north end of the waterfront.

"This newly created route marks the beginning of something far greater—an integrated park space connecting our downtown with its waterfront, right over a mainline railroad that carries goods across the world both in and out of this gateway," said Port of Seattle Commissioner Sam Cho. "Dzidzilalich may not be familiar with many right now, but this Lushootseed name, like so many of our parks along the Duwamish River, best reflects what this area actually is, which is the 'little crossing-over place'."

This project is a part of the new world class Waterfront Park that will be opening in phases between now and 2025. It is a 20-acre linear park along the waterfront that extends from S King St in Pioneer Square to Belltown and extends to the east connecting the waterfront into rich cultural downtown neighborhoods and the downtown core. The Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects leads the large collaborative public/non-profit effort of the new Waterfront Park. Our partners have been imperative to its success.

Friends of Waterfront Seattle is the non-profit public/private partner to the City of Seattle responsible for funding, stewarding, and activating the park now and in perpetuity. Since

opening Pier 62 in fall 2000, Friends has been activating this space with community partners and has hosted 125,000 people for programs and over 700,000 visitors ever since.