

I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt Operational Plan

August 12, 2016

Section I: Operational Plan purpose

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to detail the operational plan for initial infrastructure and brush removal work in the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt. This document outlines the scope of work to be conducted by State, City, and non-profit agencies to support a long-term transition for the area that will ensure safety for encampment residents and the broader public who utilize and work on our road and park systems. The efforts articulated in this document and proposed by the Mayor will not be implemented until the Seattle City Council has approved the process outlined within.

This plan is specific to the outreach and maintenance activities needed under the freeway structure and within the greenbelt itself. While focused on these activities, the Washington State Department of Transportation also has an immediate need to make repairs and inspect the expansion joints on the freeway structure itself. To begin this work, the area under the freeway must be clear to safely allow crews and equipment access to the site.

Focus area

The work included in this plan will take place in the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt, including the areas immediately under and adjacent to the freeway between I-90 and Spokane Street. The Washington State Department of Transportation is the largest property owner along the corridor. The City of Seattle, through the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, owns approximately ten acres of primarily wooded land to the east of the freeway. See the attached map.

Outreach scope and scale

This operations plan builds on the outreach work conducted by the Union Gospel Mission, which is further detailed in the “East Duwamish Greenbelt Encampment Outreach Assessment.” Per that assessment, encampment residents have been actively engaged for a minimum of five weeks, and have been offered a variety of service options in anticipation of the debris removal and infrastructure work outlined here. The Union Gospel mission estimates that they have made contact with all of the residents living in the area. Each resident has been offered assistance a minimum of five to ten times.

Temporary encampment site

Many individuals who were previously living in the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt have relocated to a one-acre Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) property at the intersection of Airport Way South and Royal Brougham. This site currently holds approximately 75 tents. The City has formed an agreement with WSDOT to take emergency harm reduction measures to manage health and safety issues at this site through the end of the year. These harm reduction measures include portable toilets, dumpsters, assistance with bulk debris removal, and regular outreach. The Union Gospel Mission

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(UGM) has an ongoing outreach relationship with many of those camped on this site and has agreed to continue to provide outreach services there. UGM will be on site multiple times per week to continue to outreach to this population in an attempt to get them into more stable shelter and services. UGM has also agreed to assist the encampment with self-management by providing garbage bags, tents, water, emergency meals, and other supplies.

Infrastructure operations scope

Following the outreach detailed in the “East Duwamish Greenbelt Encampment Outreach Assessment,” the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (SPR) will begin work on the infrastructure and safety improvements planned for the area. These efforts will include:

- Brush removal and native plant restoration
- Trash and debris removal
- Collection and storage of personal belongings
- Restoration of a gravel access road
- Repair of freeway and storm water infrastructure
- Ongoing maintenance and operations
- Continued outreach to encampment residents

While WSDOT and SPR will be the lead agencies on site, the work will be supported by several others including UGM, Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), and Seattle Police Department (SPD).

A separate document, prepared by the consultant firm MIG/SvR, will include conceptual design recommendations for the access points on the west side of the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt and for the area under the freeway structure itself.

Operations protocols

Prior to beginning work, the agencies above will meet at least twice onsite to coordinate activities and finalize site management and operations plans. These pre-construction meetings will focus on developing a common understanding of outreach and service availability, access protocols, safety plans, and equipment requirements. When operations begin, the onsite crew will set up a central operations point and will meet at least once daily to coordinate among agencies. WSDOT is able to provide a construction trailer for meetings, if needed.

Each agency will designate a single onsite point of communication and contact information for these individuals will be shared during the daily coordination meetings. WSDOT and SPR will be jointly responsible for developing a report of onsite activities and will provide that information to State and City Executive and Legislative staff weekly.

All members of the work crews at both the State and City level will have been trained on the safe removal of hazardous materials and will follow existing protocols for handling personal belongings, drug

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paraphernalia including sharps, gas canisters, and human waste. The protocols cover security, biohazards, wearing protective clothing, and protection from blood-borne pathogens.

Section II: Site work

Phase I: Final notification and outreach to remaining encampment residents

Days: 1-10

Lead: WSDOT, SPR

Support: SPD, UGM

UGM estimates that approximately 100 people remain in the Greenbelt. Most of these individuals have indicated that they are prepared to leave but are waiting for a fixed deadline. The joint State and City team will provide specific notice with a specific deadline at least 10 days prior to a final order to move from the Greenbelt. The notice will be attached to all remaining tents in the area and clearly posted at all major entry points in multiple languages. Where outreach workers are aware that someone speaks a primary language other than English, every attempt will be made to provide the notice in that person's native language. Outreach workers will then again make contact with all remaining residents and attempt to assist them with relocation. For those who are unwilling or unable to go to available shelter, UGM will provide assistance in moving the individual with their belongings to the transitional encampment location at Airport Way South. The City will be providing bags and storage bins to assist in this relocation.

On the day of the deadline, police and outreach workers will contact any individuals that remain encamped in the Greenbelt. Those individuals will be given an order to depart the area in advance of the arrival of construction equipment and cleaning crews. It is the experience of the City and State teams that encampment residents comply with direct orders to vacate an area (in the past two years, there has not been a single arrest for someone refusing to vacate an unauthorized encampment after notice and outreach). Every effort will be made to achieve voluntary compliance with these police orders and every individual circumstance will be evaluated based on the input and experience of outreach workers.

Prior to beginning construction and maintenance activities, crews composed of outreach workers, police, WSDOT, and SPS will examine the entire area and confirm that there are no remaining encampments in the area where work will be conducted. This is to ensure that people living in encampments are not hurt by the heavy equipment and that operations can proceed safely.

Phase II: Preliminary clean up and large debris removal

Days: 10-20

Lead: WSDOT, SPR

Support: SPD, UGM, SDOT, FAS, DOC

Following verification that all encampment residents have departed from the Greenbelt, crews will begin to sort through and store personal belongings from encampment sites, and to remove large debris. SDOT and FAS will be responsible for sorting and storing personal items that are usable/valuable

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and not contaminated. The City will collect, label, and store for 60 days certain personal items found during cleanup. These things include any item that is reasonably recognizable as a personal item that is not hazardous or contaminated material. Items that are visibly contaminated will be disposed of by the associated cleanup crew members. The items that are kept will be placed and sealed (i.e. duct tape, zip tie) in a clear heavy-duty plastic bag. The bag will be placed into a rigid plastic container, not to exceed 50 pounds or the weight restrictions per the manufacturer of the plastic container.

Because of the large area associated with the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt Encampment, additional SDOT, FAS, and SPR operations staff will be needed to transport the packed bins from the encampment site to a City vehicle for delivery to the storage location. Information on how to retrieve personal items stored during this process will be posted at multiple entry-points to the Greenbelt and at the alternate encampment location on Airport Way South. In addition, outreach workers will attempt to personally notify any person who returns to the area how they can recover personal belongings.

All items are to be documented on an inventory sheet and taken to the storage trailer at the SDOT Sunny Jim Traffic Shop. If items are large, such as a suitcase, and if applicable, will be placed in a clear heavy-duty plastic bag, sealed, and stored in a designated area within the storage trailer. The plastic containers, placed in the storage trailer. Larger items, if applicable, are sealed in a clear heavy-duty plastic bag prior to arriving at the storage trailer and are stored in a designated area within the trailer.

The removal and storage process will take two to three days to complete. Personal belongings will be available for pick up for 60 days, and following that they are disposed of by City crews. Photos are taken of items kept and those thrown away.

After personal items have been collected and stored or in areas where there are no personal items cleanup crews will remove the remaining garbage, debris and other material. Depending on the quantity, garbage, sharps, and flammable materials will be taken to the South Transfer Station at least daily. Each cleanup crew will be supported by SPD for safety purposes.

Later in the week WSDOT will begin to stockpile gravel near Bayview Street for improvements to the access roads. Removal of the larger garbage piles adjacent to the access roads will take two to three weeks and will be completed concurrently with road construction.

Phase III: Road construction and brush removal

Weeks: 4-13

Lead: WSDOT, SPR

Support: SPD, UGM

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Once personal belongings have been secured and initial debris removal has begun, WSDOT and SPR will begin work on repairing the access road and removing brush. Throughout this time staff from both agencies will continue to remove trash and debris. SPD and UGM will remain onsite to assist with any additional outreach to people who may return to the area. Initially SPD will have two officers with each team. SPD will assess ongoing needs as the work continues.

WSDOT property

There are three access roads constructed of native materials and gravel that follow the I-5 alignment. They are rutted and currently do not provide good access for emergency responders as detailed in the [I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt Conditions Assessment](#). To facilitate better access, WSDOT will regrade the western-most road between I-90 and Spokane Street. This road has the most continuous access and highest clearance for emergency and maintenance vehicles. Work will be conducted by WSDOT crews and is expected to last for up to six weeks.

Depending on the onsite conditions, and possibly partially concurrent with the roadwork, WSDOT crews will remove unnecessary brush and tree limbs to improve sight lines. Crews will also work to clear areas for repairs to the existing fence lines. During this work, weed eaters, sidearm mowers and other mowing equipment will be used. WSDOT, or a WSDOT contractor if necessary, will make repairs as required if there is significant damage found during cleanup. The exact scope and tools necessary will vary depending on the type of damage, which may include fence, electrical and drainage repair.

WSDOT crews will also begin removing the larger garbage piles adjacent to the access roads. These piles will require heavy equipment to gather, load, and truck from the site.

Following the completion of all the work, roads within WSDOT, SDOT, and/or SPR properties will have to be repaired, graded, and gravel added for on-going access to allow for routine maintenance.

This work will take up to four weeks to complete.

SPR property

SPR staff will work to clear excess brush; invasive plants; weeds; invasive wooded plants; and will trim the tree canopy. SPR will conduct targeted limbing to improve sight lines, creating visual permeability and facilitating more active use of the space. The team will continue to work daily collecting garbage and litter throughout the area. The work will require truck support for hauling brush and invasive materials away. SPR will also conduct some restoration of existing trails in the area.

Following the plant and brush removal, SPR Natural Area Crews will conduct Urban Forest Restoration within Park's property. The work will include revegetation by planting native plants and installing erosion and sediment controls on the hillsides.

Work as outlined includes:

- Targeted weed removal: Manual and chemical of non-native invasive species, storm water and erosion controls (Certified Erosion and Sediment Control, CESCL), and debris removal
- Planting native trees and shrubs, mulching, and watering

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- Continual targeted weed removal: Manual and chemical of non-native invasive species, mulching
- Plant establishment: Includes summer watering and follow up weed maintenance
- Installation of cisterns for watering new plants

Two crews composed of a total of eight maintenance laborers and two leads will be doing the hands on restoration work. The work will be planned and monitored by a Plant Ecologist. The crew will work from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm daily, up to three days per week for ten weeks.

Phase IV: Ongoing maintenance and activation

Weeks: 14-52

Lead: WSDOT, SPR

Support: SPD, UGM

The City has hired a design consultant to develop conceptual designs for the western access points of the I-5 East Duwamish Greenbelt. Those conceptual designs will be complete at the end of the summer and will include short and longer-term recommendations for implementation. The intent of the design effort is to further public safety through better visibility and activation, and limit access for criminal purposes. No design solution will completely prohibit future encampments; rather, the intent is to make the area safer and more secure for everyone. Beyond design, the ways in which the space is utilized on an ongoing basis will inhibit the extent to which the area sees continued public safety challenges.

To that end, WSDOT will continue garbage removal and vegetation management, as needed. This work is funded through the one-time \$1 million allocation authorized by the 2016 legislature. The scale and scope of this work will be determined based on ongoing needs within the area and the degree to which debris accumulates. WSDOT maintenance crews will continue to inspect the freeway structure at least monthly. The continued presence of staff will deter some illegal activities.

SPR will continue to have maintenance crews on site at Dr. Jose Rizal Park and on the bike trail at least twice weekly and crews will continue to provide services to the wooded areas approximately monthly. SPD will also conduct walkthroughs during the next year. The access road and brush removal will make patrol easier and deter the reestablishment of many of the encampments.

City and State partners will continue to work to identify potential implementation strategies for the recommendations developed by the design consultant. During the ongoing maintenance and activation phase, agencies will meet monthly and will jointly report on activities within the area to State and City Executive and Legislative staff.

