

Duwamish Valley Resilience District

Join us as part of a cross-sector partnership for Duwamish Valley residents and businesses to thrive.

What is a Resilience District?

A Resilience District is an innovative proposal to prepare for, withstand, adapt to, and recover from challenges that come from:

- **environmental issues**
- **climate change**
- **economic displacement pressure**

Community resilience is the ability to address these impacts and to maximize the benefits of ongoing and future investments in the Duwamish Valley.

The City is planning for sea level rise. We will strive to ensure adaptation to sea level rise in the Duwamish Valley is rooted in community resilience: community power and wealth building today are as critical as engineered infrastructure to respond to climate change impacts tomorrow.

Over the next few years, the City will be working with residents and businesses to develop the community organizational structures, funding mechanisms, and infrastructure investments to make sure that families and businesses can thrive in place.

Community-Driven Decision-Making

You can help make decisions about creating a Resilience District. The City will engage South Park and Georgetown partners to develop a shared vision for a Resilience District by exploring strategies for community decision making and organizing, sea level rise adaptation, and financing. This work will elevate the voices of those most impacted by inequities to ensure that decisions benefit all.



Clockwise: 1) Volunteers planting trees along the Duwamish River. Photo courtesy of Paul J. Brown; 2) Flooding in the industrial area of South Park. Photo courtesy of Seattle Public Utilities; 3) Volunteers cleaning up the Duwamish River. Photo courtesy of Tom Reese.



Why should everyone care?

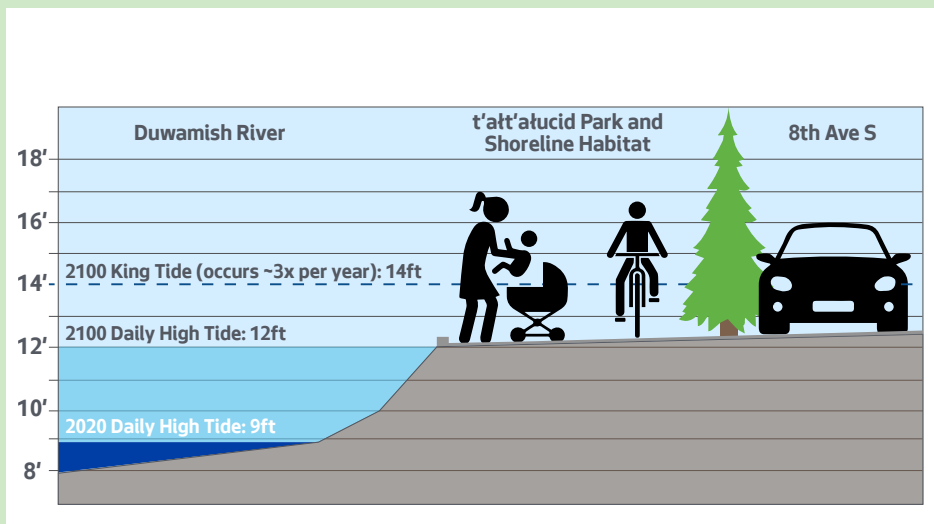
Resilient communities have called the Duwamish Valley home since time immemorial—from the fishing and winter campgrounds of the Duwamish Tribe to the first European settlers, and up through the people living in it today.

But environmental contamination, increasing housing costs, and the impacts of climate change pose threats to the Valley residents and businesses.

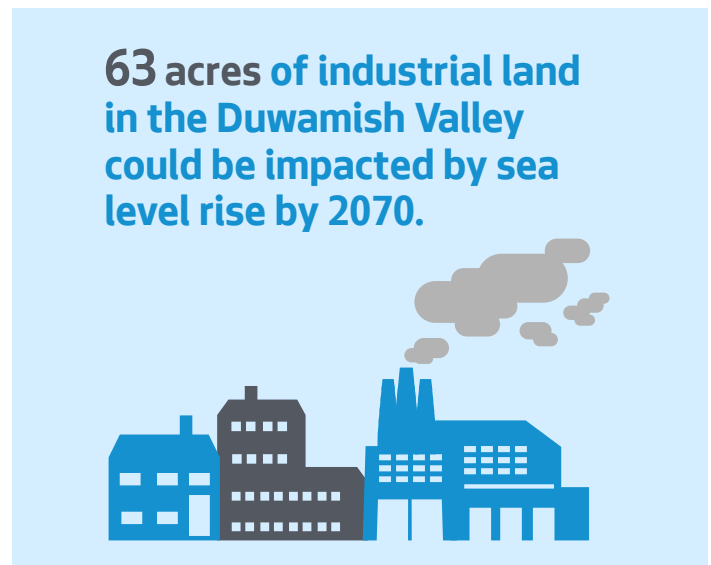
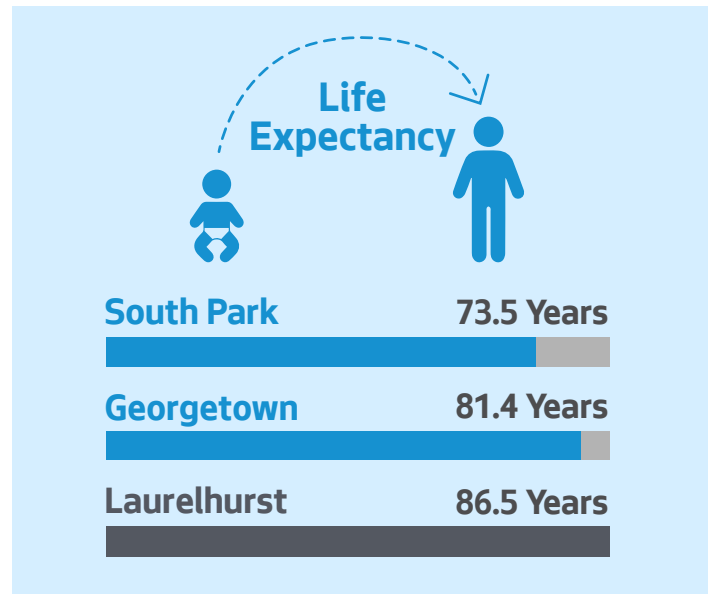
The Environmental Protection Agency declared the Duwamish River a Superfund site in 2001. Valley residents, workers, and businesses face environmental hazards including industrial pollution in the Duwamish River; air pollution from highways; a lack of green space; and other challenges. These factors result in an average life expectancy eight years shorter in this zip code than in Seattle and King County as a whole, and 13 years shorter than in Seattle's more affluent, less diverse neighborhoods.

Flooding places additional health and financial burdens on businesses and families. Some low-lying areas in South Park and Georgetown already experience flooding related to extreme high tides and rainstorms. **Flooding will become more severe and more frequent as we experience wetter winters and higher sea level due to climate change.** This will have severe economic impacts. The manufacturing and industrial uses within the area affected by future sea level rise generate approximately \$300 million each year and support thousands of jobs.

Work has begun to build affordable housing, improve mobility, and develop open spaces. **A Resilience District could increase the ability to develop holistic solutions to address these challenges.**



Climate scientists anticipate that sea level will rise by 1 foot by 2050, and 2 to 5 feet by 2100. Seattle experiences winter storms whose winds can push water levels up by a foot above normal levels. Storms are most problematic when they coincide with King Tides, which occur three or four times a year and can add an additional 1.5 feet of rise. The combination of these forces and sea level rise are a major threat to the health, safety, and will threaten an estimated 63 acres of industrial property in South Park with annual flooding by 2070, according to a [2017 study by the US Army Corps of Engineers](#).



How is this effort different?

The City has grant funding to help the community lead decision-making about the development of the Duwamish Valley Resilience District. The grant provides community with consultant expertise and other support to shape an integrated vision addressing:



People

Establish a framework for community decision-making that brings together residents and businesses, fosters collaboration with public agencies, and centers environmental justice and racial equity.



Policy & financing

Guide the development and funding the sea level rise protection infrastructure and investments that improve health and equity.



Places & projects

Develop a holistic sea level rise adaptation strategy and support community-prioritized projects that are opportunities for shared decision-making, partnership development, and to meet multiple community needs.

Timeline

2024

Exploration

Duwamish Valley residents and businesses organize, plan for, create, and control a vibrant, diverse, and high-quality neighborhood with key partners.

- Plan for Sea Level Rise Adaptation
- Explore Organizational Structure
- Develop Financing Models

Key Partners:

- City & Agencies
- Philanthropy

2022

Logistics & Engagement

Community Organizing & Engagement

COVID Delay

- Assemble Project Teams
- Engage Communities

2020

Project Begins

Community & City Conversations

- City Secures Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Funding
- Scope Work
- Begin Early Projects

Two collaborations will advance projects that are models for community decision-making, partnerships, and funding.



South Park - Complete a site planning process that identifies community priorities for the Unity Electric site.



Georgetown - Improve access on 8th Ave. S and Gateway Park North to link residents to the Duwamish River.

Adapting to sea level rise in Seattle is imperative and, given the low elevation and flat topography of the Duwamish Valley, we must start in **South Park** and **Georgetown**. Residents and industries share the Duwamish Valley, and a resilient future for both requires strong collaboration and partnerships.

A Resilience District can help mobilize everyone in the Duwamish Valley to steward these lands so that existing and future generations can live and thrive in place.

Partnerships

A web of partnerships among the City of Seattle, community organizations, community leaders, industrial and maritime businesses, and philanthropies is critical to resilience. Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment and the Office of Planning & Community Development lead the Duwamish Valley Program. Since 2016, City departments (including Seattle Public Utilities), community organizations, residents and agencies, have worked to advance environmental justice and equitable development and create positive change in the Duwamish Valley – delivering many programs and projects in ways that advance racial equity outcomes, as detailed in the **Duwamish Valley Action Plan**.

The Duwamish River Community Coalition is a key partner. It is a coalition of organizations representing communities affected by the Duwamish River Superfund site. It brings its experience with community-based participatory research and action, and its deeply rooted relationships in the community. The City will support the growth of partnerships with Duwamish Valley Organizations and agencies as it continues supporting the Duwamish Valley.

Join us!

We need you! Join your neighbors and help figure out how to help Duwamish Valley residents and businesses thrive.

To learn more visit www.seattle.gov/dvp or scan the QR code with your camera.



Photo credits: Clockwise: 1) David W. Goldberg. 2) Paul J. Brown. 3) Curtis Allan. 4) Machinist Inc.

For millennia, the Duwamish River took a meandering path as it flowed into Elliott Bay and sustained a diverse ecosystem. In the early 1900s, dredging and filling created navigable waterway and supported the development of industry along its banks.

Support for this project was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as part of the Cities Taking Action to Address Health, Equity and Climate Change Initiative. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.