

McGraw St Bridge Seismic Improvements

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

September 2022

Why was the McGraw St Bridge chosen for seismic improvements and why are the improvements needed?

The City of Seattle established a bridge seismic retrofit program to assess the seismic vulnerability of the City's bridges and to prioritize limited funding to strengthen bridges so they can better withstand the potential impacts of an earthquake. As part of the Levy to Move Seattle, 16 bridges were selected for seismic retrofits, including the McGraw St Bridge. The McGraw St Bridge, constructed in 1936, spans the Wolf Creek Ravine Natural Area in the Queen Anne neighborhood and doesn't meet current seismic design standards for bridges. The bridge is within the Queen Anne Boulevard historic area and is frequently used by people driving, biking, walking, and rolling.

What seismic improvements are being made to the McGraw St Bridge?

The McGraw St Bridge project includes several modifications to seismically strengthen the existing bridge components and make the bridge less vulnerable in the event of an earthquake. The project includes:

- Installing carbon fiber wrapping to strengthen the bridge's crossbeams, columns, and arches
- Strengthening the existing arch with a concrete infill wall
- Installing concrete block restrainers for the bridge's columns and crossbeams
- Repairing cracks and damaged concrete
- Replacing the expansion joints at both ends of the bridge

Will the seismic improvements change the design of the bridge or its architectural features?

We are not making changes to the current design, use, or operation of the bridge or the architectural features such as light fixtures. The seismic retrofits will strengthen the existing bridge components and make the bridge more resilient and seismically sound in the event of an earthquake. To ensure the historic elements of the McGraw St Bridge are properly addressed by the project, we're submitting our design plans to the Landmark Preservation Board for review.

Was an environmental impact study done for the project?

This project meets State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) exemption criteria as defined in the Seattle Municipal Code Section 25.05.800(C), which states "The following activities shall be categorically exempt: the repair, remodeling, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing private or public structures, facilities, or equipment, including utilities, recreation, and transportation facilities involving no material expansions or changes in use beyond that previously existing...". When a project meets exemption criteria this means that the Project, by its nature, will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

Projects that meet SEPA exemption criteria do not require a threshold determination or any additional environmental analysis. We understand that we'll be working in a natural area and are taking necessary precautions to ensure environmental stewardship.

PROJECT INFORMATION & CONTACT

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How will the construction impact my travel along McGraw St?

To complete the work as safely and efficiently as possible, the bridge will be closed for the duration of construction. The closure will allow us to stage equipment and materials on the bridge and complete the work as quickly as possible. We acknowledge that this closure will be impactful to the neighborhood. Once we have a contractor on board, we will share more information about timing of the closure and [detour routes](#).

Access to residences will be maintained at all times. We may need to temporarily restrict driveway access for homes adjacent to the bridge and will communicate directly with affected residents prior to any restrictions.

What should I expect during construction?

We anticipate that construction will begin in late fall 2022 and last approximately 7-8 months. You can expect noise, dust, and vibrations during active construction. Like all construction projects, impacts will vary by day and by the type of work being performed. Typical construction hours are weekdays from 7 AM - 5 PM. We understand how disruptive construction can be to the community and appreciate everyone's patience as we complete these important safety and seismic upgrades. Construction schedules and activities are always subject to change, and dependent on factors such as weather and crew and material availability. Once project construction begins, we will send out regular email updates to keep people informed on what they can expect. You can sign up for email updates on our [webpage](#).

How will construction impact street parking around the bridge?

Construction activities will require restricting parking in some locations throughout the project to stage equipment, materials, and perform construction activities. When possible, we'll reopen parking spaces to the public at the end of the day. Parking restrictions will not be placed to reserve crew parking. Crews may park in any publicly available street space in accordance with posted time limits and parking fees. We encourage our crewmembers to travel to the construction site together and to use alternative transportation, when possible, but understand that the nature and location of work can limit commute options.

Will the project construct any concrete staircases into Wolf Creek Ravine?

No, we are not constructing a staircase as part of the project. If a staircase is needed to support construction, it would be removed at the end of the project.

Will this project remove any trees from the Wolf Creek Ravine or surrounding neighborhood?

Approximately 6 trees beneath and adjacent to the bridge are proposed to be removed as part of the work. The trees were selected based on construction needs with guidance from SDOT's Urban Forestry arborists. We will follow all applicable City regulations for [tree and vegetation management in environmentally critical areas](#) and post notifications of removal in advance.

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Will the project impact slope stability or wildlife habitat of the Wolf Creek Ravine?

We reviewed these seismic improvements for impacts to slope stability and determined that there is no ground disturbing work that would affect its current state. Maintaining healthy, thriving wildlife habitats is a priority and we are following all regulations for working in environmentally critical areas. As a retrofit project, work will primarily occur on the bridge itself, which will minimize disturbance to the ravine. We're also closing the bridge during construction in part so that we can stage materials and equipment on the deck and minimize our footprint within the ravine. This project will not have any permanent impacts to wildlife habitat and any areas disturbed during construction will be restored.

Will the project impact the wooden fences at the ends of the bridge?

We will replace the wooden fences at each end of the McGraw St Bridge with chain link fences. This is consistent with the type of fencing used in other locations owned and managed by SDOT.

How will you address those living unhoused in the project area?

We understand the urgency to provide additional shelter spaces for those living unhoused. As we prepare for construction, we'll coordinate closely with City and regional partners to engage those living unhoused in the area and connect them with services. If there are people currently in need of supportive services, you can notify the City using the [Find It Fix It app](#), calling the Customer Service Bureau (CSB) at 206-684-2489 or visiting the CSB website at www.seattle.gov/customer-service-bureau.

How are you communicating with residents, and how can the community be involved with the project?

As a seismic improvement and maintenance project, we did not solicit design feedback from the community as we would with other types of projects because the overall design and look of the bridge is not affected. As we move into construction, we will reach out to residents with information about the expected construction schedule, anticipated impacts, and to hear community needs during construction. We encourage you to sign up for email updates on our website (seattle.gov/transportation/mcgraw-bridge) to receive regular project updates. You can reach out to the project team via email at McGrawStBridge@seattle.gov, or by leaving a voicemail at [\(206\) 775-8734](tel:2067758734) and a project representative will return your call.

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