

Working Group Charter

Port of Seattle AdaptSea Waterfront Resilience Partnership, 2024

1. Purpose:

Seattle's waterfront is the backbone of the region's economy; its long-term integrity amid rising sea levels and intensification of seasonal storms is essential to preserving uninterrupted flow of people, goods, and services. As public waterfront asset owners, operators, and regulators we must prioritize investments in waterfront infrastructure resilience to improve our ability to withstand, pivot, and recover in the face of large-scale stressors, acute shocks, and transformative disruptions, including the effects of climate change.

The AdaptSea Waterfront Resilience Partnership serves as a collaborative forum of Seattle waterfront stakeholders to develop a shared strategy for synchronizing investments and local regulatory approaches to improving the resilience of Seattle waterfront infrastructure and transportation/freight corridors. The Partners have a vested interest in the long-term resilience of the Seattle waterfront and transportation/freight corridors, as they prepare for climate change and sea level rise, as well as seismic hazards, tsunamis or seiches, intensified storms, and other environmental hazards. We agree that the costs and effects of sea level rise and climate-related hazards are better managed through coordinated planning and capital investment toward a shared vision rather than through independent, siloed planning.

The geographic area concerning the AdaptSea Partnership is the Seattle marine and estuarine waterfront including Elliott Bay from Golden Gardens in the north, to Duwamish River Mile 4.5 and around West Seattle to Brace Point.

This Partnership is not a decisional body. Any specific projects defined or prioritized by this Partnership will still require separate authorization and public involvement processes per local, state, and federal regulations and separate entity policies.

2. Outcomes:

The Partnership will be focused on knowledge sharing and collaboration, with the following goals:

- Compiling and sharing ongoing, planned, and potential strategies and tools (including new policies and regulations associated with required comprehensive plan updates) to address sea level rise and waterfront resilience
- Coordinating, prioritizing, and phasing relevant projects along the waterfront, with a focus on action and implementation
- Engagement between the Partners on capital planning processes
- Positioning the Partners to collaborate and successfully compete for grants to fund projects of mutual interest that support waterfront resilience goals

As part of this work, the Port of Seattle has also committed funds to a literature review of best available science and regulatory frameworks, which will result in a repository of existing data and maps of hazard zones and waterfront assets. Mapped waterfront assets will include, at a minimum, Port of Seattle-owned assets and may include other significant and/or public assets.

Strategies and recommendations developed through Partnership meetings will be compiled by the Port of Seattle and presented as a report. This report will provide recommendations for future coordinated efforts on research, data collection, and technical studies. The report will also include an implementation plan with prioritization and phasing of strategies and recommendations for Port of Seattle project development.

3. Membership and Roles:

The AdaptSea Waterfront Resilience Partnership is a voluntary and collaborative group, focused on strategic planning and information sharing.

Partnership Members

Partnership members (hereafter referred to as Partners) represent key public agencies that own, regulate, or manage waterfront infrastructure and have a stake in resilience along Seattle's waterfront. These entities include:

- Port of Seattle
- City of Seattle (Seattle Public Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Seattle City Light, Office of Sustainability and Environment, Office of Planning and Community Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Construction and Inspections, Office of the Waterfront)
- King County Wastewater Treatment Division
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- The Northwest Seaport Alliance

Additional Partners may be added by invitation by the Port of Seattle.

As the convening entity, the Port of Seattle will plan and facilitate meetings and will lead development and finalization of deliverables. The Port of Seattle will also provide quarterly updates to Partners and Advisors. Partners may share knowledge and data or present on specific topics as desired.

Advisors

Additional entities and individuals will be invited to participate in an advisory capacity, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Duwamish River Community Coalition
- Sound Transit
- Suquamish Indian Tribe
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Port of Olympia
- Port of Bellingham
- Port of Everett
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Commerce

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Washington Public Ports Association
- King County Flood Control District
- South of Downtown (SODO) Business Improvement Area
- City of Seattle Office of Economic Development
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Advisors may also include additional staff members from Partner organizations. Advisors will present or provide feedback on specific topics as needed. The Port of Seattle will provide quarterly updates to the Advisors.

4. Expectations from Participants:

Facilitated meetings will be held quarterly starting in October 2023 and will run through the 4th quarter of 2025. Virtual meetings will be 3 hours long and may include presentations, information sharing, and collaborative discussions. Partners may be asked to review materials outside of these meetings or provide feedback on deliverables. Active participation from all the Partners will ensure we are successful in coordinating our efforts around sea level rise and Seattle waterfront resilience, resulting in a stronger and more agile waterfront and transportation/freight network.

Partners wishing to withdraw from the Partnership should do so by informing the Port of Seattle. When appropriate, the Port of Seattle will coordinate with the participating entity on a suitable replacement.

Advisors will be provided meeting summaries and will be invited to present or advise the Partners on topics that are of interest or affect them. Advisors will be asked to provide timely feedback to facilitate discussions at quarterly meetings and to consult with others within their respective organizations as appropriate. Input from Advisors may be provided in writing or by presenting information to the Partners at quarterly meetings. Advisors may also provide feedback directly to Port of Seattle staff.

5. Communications:

The Port of Seattle recognizes that Partners represent public, and potentially regulatory agencies, and that strategies developed in these meetings are not equivalent to policy. It is also noted that discussion topics may require internal coordination and follow-up from participating entities.

Partners recognize that all meeting notes, reports, shared data, and correspondence regarding this Partnership are considered public records and may be made available upon request.

The media and public outreach spokesperson for this process is Danielle Butsick, or their designee, with the Port of Seattle. Any media or public engagement must first be coordinated with the other Partners. Partners, including the Port of Seattle, agree to not speak on behalf of other Partners.

Regular meetings are not expected to be recorded unless deemed necessary for a specific purpose. Partners will be notified in advance if meetings are to be video- or audio-recorded.

6. Adoption of Charter:

This charter was agreed to verbally by the Partners on 06/20/2024 and will govern all future Partnership activities.

If funding or other resources are determined to be beneficial to the group, a more formal agreement may be developed and adopted by each Partner entity.