

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What is a 'feasibility study'?*

A: A 'feasibility study' is the Corps' process to investigate and recommend solutions to water resource problems. The study includes the documentation of our recommendation for Corps participation in construction of a project. The result is a report that will be submitted to Congress with an accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Corps seawall study will decide three things: 1) whether the seawall meets the Corps interest in storm damage reduction, 2) which alternative plan is recommended for authorization, and 3) what level of Corps funding is recommended for construction.

Q: *How is the Corps seawall study related to the viaduct replacement project?*

A: The Corps seawall study is closely related to the viaduct replacement project. The viaduct replacement project includes the replacement of the Alaskan Way Seawall in the same area as the Corps seawall study, yet the viaduct replacement project was initiated years earlier. The Corps seawall study is joining the viaduct replacement project already in progress. Much of the preliminary engineering for the seawall has been completed by the viaduct replacement project. The Corps seawall study will utilize all applicable information and coordinate closely with the viaduct replacement project to lead synchronized seawall replacement efforts. The Corps seawall study will determine if the Corps can be an additional funding source for seawall construction.

Q: *Why is the Corps writing another EIS on the seawall?*

A: The seawall replacement is included in the viaduct replacement project DEIS, as a secondary project element, from a transportation perspective. In the Corps seawall study, the

seawall is the primary element, from a storm damage reduction perspective. Because of this difference in agency authorities (transportation and storm damage reduction), a separate EIS document must be written. The Corps EIS will include, by reference or incorporation, all applicable seawall work done by the viaduct replacement project. By reviewing and including their seawall work, the Corps seawall study can reduce the feasibility study time and effort.

Q: *What will happen to the seawall if the City chooses the viaduct tunnel option?*

A: Under the City's tunnel alternative, the tunnel wall functions as the seawall for approximately 1/3 of the total length of the seawall. The tunnel wall will be included as an alternative in the Corps' seawall study, to be combined with a different alternative for the remainder of the length. The Corps' recommendation may include authorization of the tunnel wall alternative and funding based on cost-share of seawall costs.

Q: *What happens to the seawall if the City chooses the viaduct rebuild option?*

A: Without the tunnel wall selected as the seawall alternative, the Corps would recommend, for authorization and funding, the construction measure that best addresses the seawall's degraded condition.

Q: *How much will the seawall cost?*

A: The study will cost \$9.5 million. That is cost-shared between the Corps and City, 50/50 with the City's share provided in work-in-kind. The construction will cost \$600 to 800 million. Normally, the Corps cost-share of construction is 65% federal, 35% local.

Q: *How does the Corps obtain funding for the study?*

A: The Corps Seawall study receives funding annually and the federal appropriations process. The study completes nationally for funding with similar types of projects. Once the draft feasibility report and DEIS are both complete, the recommended plan may be authorized for construction and funded by Congress.

Q: *What makes up the existing seawall structure?*

A: The seawall is made up primarily of battered timber piles and a timber relieving platform, all made with untreated wood. The seawall structure spans up to 60' from the waters edge and is located 13' under the surface of Alaskan Way. The untreated timber is vulnerable to marine borers that will eat and degrade the timber structure. The timber is protected from the seawater (carrying the borers) by a steel master pile and a marine borer-resistant wood, called Ekki wood. Along the length of the seawall, there are many variations on the seawall structure, including the provision of a steel tie-rod and placement of large rock at the base of the wall. These structural variations depend on the surrounding conditions, for example deep or shallow adjacent waters. Typical sections of the two most prominent types of seawall - Type A and Type B - can be viewed [here](#).

Q: *What will make up the new seawall?*

A: We are currently looking at three construction methods for a new seawall, each with a different structural make-up. To view descriptions and example cross-sections, see our [scoping information packet](#).