Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (USACE) has prepared, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Alki Coastal Erosion Control Project located in Seattle, WA (project). It is expected that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be signed in 2020 prior to initiating construction activities on the beach. The June 2020 SEA, includes a preferred alternative using different construction practices than originally proposed within the 2019 Alki Coastal Erosion Control Project, Section 103 Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Integrated Detailed Project Report and Final Environmental Assessment (IDPR & FEA). The September 2019 document proposed the construction of a 500 linear foot seawall to provide coastal erosion protection for public utilities, roadways, and public lands. The new seawall is planned to be constructed immediately adjacent to and seaward of the existing deteriorated wall in the summer of 2020. This supplemental environmental assessment (SEA) evaluates the additional impacts of the potential installation of 75 sheet piles using a vibratory hammer during the construction of the new seawall.

AUTHORITY
The proposed seawall repair is authorized by Section 103, of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962, as amended for Beach Erosion and Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction. The USACE rehabilitation and restoration work under this authority is limited to the protection of public infrastructure at risk from coastal storm events. The City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department is the local sponsor for this project.

LOCATION
The project is located on 4701 Beach Drive SW in West Seattle, which is two miles north of Lincoln Park along the shore of Puget Sound and runs parallel to Beach Drive Southwest near Alki Point in Seattle, Washington. The project footprint encompasses approximately 500 linear feet of shoreline and is about 75 feet wide, extending from the beach area to the easterly most edge (far side) of the roadway. All lands within the vicinity are owned by the City of Seattle, including the beach area extending waterward of the project footprint.

The project is at 47.561593 N latitude and -122.404898 W longitude.
NEED
Coastal storm waves, storm surge, and storm-induced erosion threatens major public infrastructure, including a 54-inch sewer main located adjacent to the shoreline in West Seattle. The existing seawall structure built in 1927 by the Seattle “Street Department” provides some storm protection; however, it has far exceeded its intended design life and is subject to a high probability of failure in the near future. Over the years the seawall has slowly deteriorated as a result of coastal storms, despite regular maintenance, to the point that it is now in danger of a catastrophic failure similar to a 1998 seawall failure located immediately north of the proposed project site. Failure of the existing seawall could result in collapse of the sewer main causing sewage contamination into Puget Sound as well as inconveniencing more than 20,000 residential and commercial customers. The potential sewer main failure could have adverse impacts on Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that live, spawn, and feed in the Puget Sound area. Seawall failure could also result in rerouted traffic, roadway damage, and failure of water, communication, and electrical utilities located along Beach Drive SW, which runs parallel to the shoreline, offset by 30 feet.

PURPOSE
The purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of future storm damages to the utility and transportation infrastructure. Additionally, the project would reduce the risk of contaminants (including raw sewage) from impacting Puget Sound following a seawall failure.

PROPOSED ACTION
Under the revised proposed action, the recommended alternative remains the installation of a new soldier pile wall constructed immediately in front of the existing seawall structure. The finished project will remain within the original proposed project area, but includes additional construction activities that were not analyzed within the IDPR & FEA. The additional activities include the potential installation of the 75 sheet piles using a vibratory hammer along with the construction of a temporary 30-foot by 40-foot staging pad for a drill rig and two excavators.

The primary concern is that while preparing to install the piles of the soldier pile wall, there could be destabilization of the existing wall, which would threaten the 54-inch sewer pipe. The sheet piles would be used to stabilize the existing sea wall during the construction of the soldier pile wall.

Unavoidable adverse impacts associated with this project are expected to include short term construction impacts such as noise disturbance to fish, wildlife, and residents in the vicinity of operating heavy machinery; increased emissions from heavy machinery; and disruption of local traffic in the project vicinity during construction.

Given the temporary, localized, and minor nature of the anticipated effects, the USACE has determined that the proposed revised construction techniques for this project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.
EVALUATION

The USACE has made a preliminary determination that the environmental impacts of the revised proposed construction activities can be adequately evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act through preparation of an EA.

The proposed work has been evaluated pursuant to Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR 230) for evaluation of the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. In addition, consideration has been given to the need for the work and to such water quality standards as are appropriate and applicable by law. Alternatives not requiring the discharge of dredged or fill material into water of the U.S. are not available, practicable, or are more damaging to the aquatic ecosystem. The proposed discharge represents the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative and would include all appropriate and practicable measures to minimize adverse effects on the aquatic environment. A Water Quality Certification was received from the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act on August 15, 2019. As a result of the revised proposed construction activities, the WDOE was contacted on April 6, 2020 regarding the proposed changes to the project and the USACE received an amended WQC on May 27, 2020.

The USACE initiated consultation in 2013 with the SHPO and received a letter dated May 16, 2016 where the SHPO concurred with the USACE’s finding of No Historic Properties Affected. The construction limits within the 2019 IDPR & FEA are different from what was provided to the SHPO in 2013; therefore, the USACE has revised the APE and consultation is ongoing. The revised APE does not change the finding that there are no proposed changes that would affect historic or cultural resources.

Pursuant to the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), the USACE’s actions are required to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the approved State Coastal Zone Management Program. As a result of the revised project description, the USACE requested a supplemental CZMA consistency review from WDOE for the new construction activities in accordance with 15 CFR §930.41(d) on May 4, 2020. WDOE concurred with the USACE’s supplemental Consistency Determination on June 9, 2020.

In accordance with Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, federally funded, constructed, permitted, or licensed projects must take into consideration impacts to federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats. For the IDPR & FEA, a Biological Evaluation was submitted to USFWS and NMFS on August 8, 2014 for review and consultation. In correspondence dated September 19, 2014 and December 3, 2014, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service respectively concurred with the USACE’ findings. The USACE contacted both agencies to discuss the proposed changes to the project by sending an updated project description and supplemental analysis to USFWS on March 31, 2020 and to NMFS on April 24, 2020. USFWS and
NMFS added the project updates to their administrative records on April 1, 2020 and April 28, 2020, respectively.

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS
Any person who has an interest or that may be affected by the proposed project may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice, and must clearly set forth the following: the interest that may be affected, the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity, and the particular reason for holding a public hearing regarding this activity.

The decision whether to conduct the project will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered; among these are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The USACE invites submission of comment on the environmental impact of the proposal. Comments will also be considered in determining whether it would be in the best public interest to proceed with the proposed project. The USACE will consider all submissions received before the expiration date of this notice. The nature or scope of the proposal may be changed upon consideration of the comments received. The USACE will initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and afford public participation opportunities attendant to an EIS, if significant effects on the quality of the human environment are identified and cannot be mitigated.

Submit comments to this office, Attn: Environmental and Cultural Resources Branch, no later than June 24, 2020 to ensure consideration. In addition to sending comments via mail, comments may be e-mailed to vanessa.e.pepi@usace.army.mil. The Notice of Availability and Draft SEA can be found at the following website: https://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Environmental-Documents/. Requests for additional information should be directed to Ms. Vanessa Pepi at 206-764-5524, or the above e-mail address.