



# Living With Water

## How South Park is planning for future floods

The Living With Water project aims to work with residents of the South Park neighborhood to identify and develop flood adaptation strategies that respect and incorporate local community values.

### Background

In December of 2022, a “king” tide on the Duwamish River during heavy rains caused flooding that damaged more than 40 households in South Park. The flood happened just as the Duwamish River Community Coalition (DRCC) had finished a door-to-door survey with the University of Washington (UW) and local and state government partners in order to understand community strengths and weaknesses in the face of climate change.

The survey found that community members are concerned about flooding and that they support “green” or nature-based solutions to environmental hazards. It also found that neighbor support networks are one of the Duwamish Valley community’s greatest strengths.

Future flooding in South Park is expected, and the City of Seattle, along with King County, have started planning for sea level rise and bigger storms resulting from climate change. To help guide planning efforts, DRCC and UW designed this project to understand the root causes of flooding and strategies that can help protect neighbors from future floods while supporting community values and building on their strengths.



# Key Takeaways



South Park residents want to be involved in planning for future floods to make sure those plans respect impacted neighbors' priorities and values.



Nature-based solutions can reduce flood risk better than traditional seawalls and drainage pipes, known as "gray" infrastructure, alone. These solutions can be affordable and long-lasting, and provide additional environmental and health benefits.












Community members have a strong attachment to the South Park neighborhood. They prefer long-term, "green" solutions to flooding that allow them to stay in their community. Nature-based solutions better align with community values than gray infrastructure solutions.

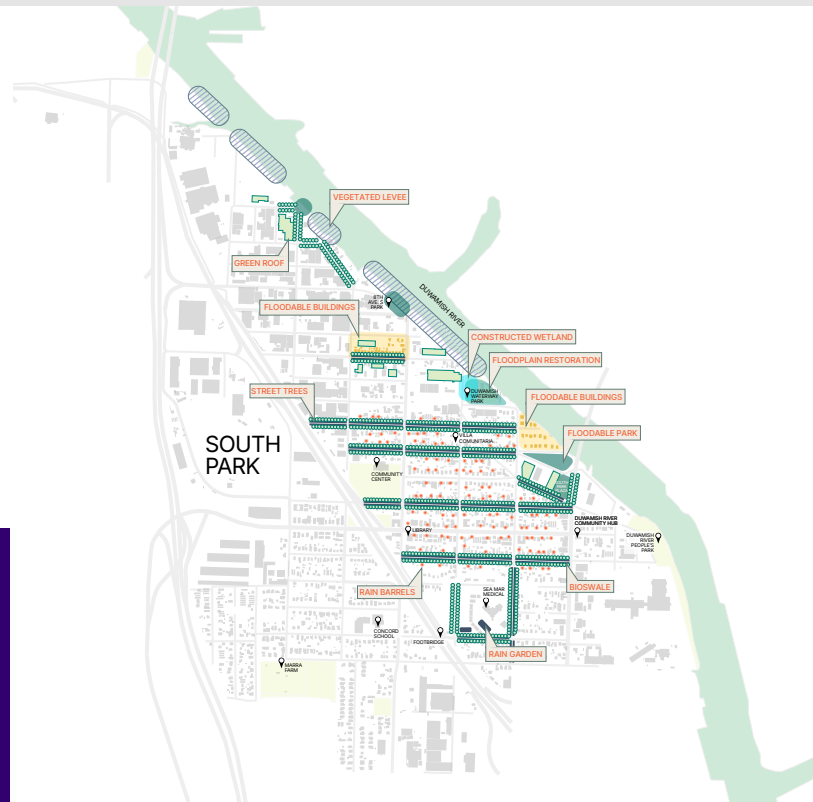


The nature-based solutions that interest the Duwamish Valley community the most include vegetated levees, shoreline restoration, floodable parks and buildings, and relocation to safer areas within the neighborhood. They cited People's Park as an example.

## Conceptual Map of Flooding Solutions in South Park

A conceptual map of flooding solutions in South Park, developed based on input gathered from a community workshop hosted in May 2025.

- |   |                        |   |                     |
|---|------------------------|---|---------------------|
|  | VEGETATED LEVEE        |  | FLOODABLE BUILDINGS |
|  | FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION |  | GREEN ROOF          |
|  | FLOODABLE PARK         |  | STREET TREES        |
|  | CONSTRUCTED WETLAND    |  | RAIN BARRELS        |
|  | BIOSWALE / RAIN GARDEN |   |                     |



**Nature-based solutions (NBS)** are "natural areas and engineered solutions that mimic natural processes."  
**"Gray" infrastructure** flood management solutions use human-engineered materials like concrete and steel.

## Looking Ahead

We hope that the information collected by the Living With Water project helps everyone involved in preventing future floods in the Duwamish Valley work together on a plan that supports the community's well-being, respects their priorities, and honors their values.

Learn more at our website: <https://cdrc.uw.edu/what-we-do/projects/living-with-water/>

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