

JUSTICE >>> 40RWARD

SEATTLE



JUSTICE40

COMMUNITY TOUR



The Duwamish River Community Coalition (DRCC) represents an alliance of community, tribal, environmental, and small business groups affected by ongoing pollution and cleanup plans for Seattle's lower Duwamish River, a 5.5-mile-long Superfund Site. Since 2001, the DRCC has been working with the community of South Seattle's Duwamish Valley to elevate the voice of those impacted by the Duwamish River pollution and other environmental injustices. for a clean, healthy, equitable environment for people and wildlife.

WHY IS DRCC EXCITED FOR WE ACT'S J40 COMMUNITY TOUR TO COME TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

We are excited to share our community's ongoing fight for environmental justice with federal and state officials and look forward to learning more about the ways that we can get critical funding into our neighborhoods after decades of disinvestment.

PROJECTS DRCC IS WORKING ON WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Affordable housing and place keeping
- Building an Environmental Justice Community Center
- Helping the community navigate rising sea levels, storms, floods, and extreme precipitation

SOCIAL MEDIA

 @drcc_org

 Duwamish River CleanupCoalition-Technical Advisory Group

 @duwamishcleanup

 www.drcc.org



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AGENDA

SATURDAY MAY 6TH, 2023

12:00 PM- 1:00 PM

Welcoming and Lunch: Honor Mexicano will provide lunch with opportunities to meet everyone and kick off the day!

Location: South Park Hall
1253 S Cloverdale St, Seattle, WA 98108

1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Justice40ward Community Briefing: Staff from the Duwamish River Community Coalition and other local community members will spotlight community-led solutions that address environmental injustice, like those spotlighted in the Toxic Tour, while WE ACT staff and local, state, and federal officials and electeds will dive into the investments of the Justice40 Initiative. Stakeholders and community members will candidly discuss barriers, opportunities and next steps to realize benefits from Justice40.

Location: South Park Hall
1253 S Cloverdale St, Seattle, WA 98108

3:30 PM- 5:30 PM

Environmental Justice Toxic Tour: Staff from the Duwamish River Community Coalition will guide attendees through a Toxic Tour by boat to spotlight longstanding environmental injustices. Community residents and activists will share their stories and experiences as participants see the impacts on the ground.

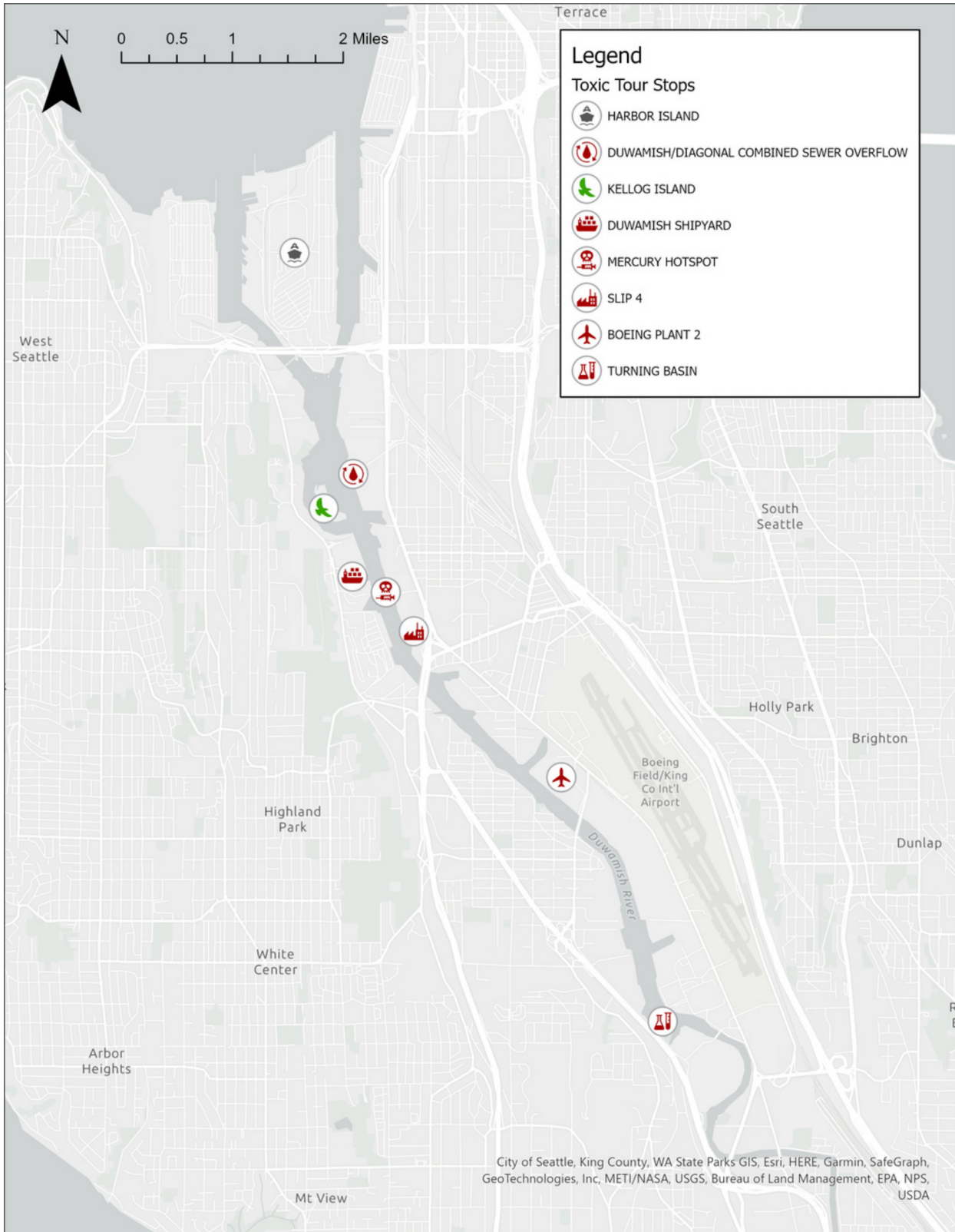
Transportation Provided

Location: South Park Hall
1253 S Cloverdale St, Seattle, WA 98108



TOXIC TOUR SITES

Today's toxic tour will highlight **eight** locations that have environmental justice concerns. At each stop, stakeholders will speak briefly about the site's relevance and how funding could dramatically improve the quality of life for the people who live there. What follows is a map of the stops and brief descriptions of each location.



Harbor Island

The Duwamish River in Seattle is a Superfund site due to industrial contamination. Harbor Island and East Waterway are areas within the site. The East Waterway has less protective cleanup standards than the adjacent Lower Duwamish Waterway.

DRCC demands a health-protective cleanup. The EPA will release a new proposed plan for the East Waterway this year. The sediment in the river, which contains toxic chemicals, must be cleaned up for the river to become healthy again. The cleanup is a long-term process requiring the cooperation of stakeholders to restore the river's health. The cleanup is expected to cost \$50 million to clean up less than 5% of the river.

Duwamish/Diagonal Combined Sewer Overflow

A big grate marks a combined sewer overflow on the east side of the river. This overflow, along with 10 others on the river, dumps untreated human and industrial waste into the river whenever there is heavy rain, making it one of the worst toxic hotspots. This site was the first to be cleaned up since being listed as a Superfund site, removing contamination from PCBs, toxic oils, and chemicals used in making plastic.

The community's involvement in cleanup decisions is crucial to ensure that the cleanup is effective and doesn't waste money. For example, when the cleanup of this site was initially planned, it would have left a toxic hotspot next to it that would have recontaminated the site within two years. However, with community involvement and advocacy, the other hotspot was included in the cleanup plan to achieve tangible benefits for the river and the community.

Kellog Island

Kellog Island and Herring House Park are essential natural and cultural sites along the Duwamish River. Kellog Island is protected and provides a habitat for wildlife. It is necessary to recognize the history and presence of the Duwamish Tribe and their contributions to the area. They help to ensure that the Superfund cleanup protects their cultural resources and the environment.

The Duwamish people have been in the Seattle/Greater King County area since time immemorial. They were the first signatories of the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855, signed by Chief Si'ahl, chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish tribes. Their longhouse today stands across the street from where one of our largest villages was located before it was burned down by settlers in 1895. They are the host tribe for Seattle, the area's only indigenous tribe. Many of our enrolled members live on Duwamish aboriginal territory, including Seattle, Burien, Tukwila, Renton, and Redmond.

Duwamish Shipyard

There are many sources of pollution in the Duwamish River, both historical and ongoing. Over the years, the PCBs and other toxic chemicals accumulated in the sediment seriously threaten the environment and public health even though they were banned over 30 years ago.

All industries and factories operating along the river must take responsibility for their pollution and work towards reducing their impact on the river. Boeing is one of the major contributors to toxic pollution in the river. Many smaller companies, like the shipyard, are responsible for some pollution. Several years ago, one of our group members found the shipyard pumping contaminated water with very high levels of heavy metals (lead, copper, zinc) into the water. The member worked with this shipyard, and today, the water pumping through these pipes is clean. Much more needs to be done to address the more significant issue of pollution in the Duwamish River.



Mercury Hotspot

The Duwamish River faces a significant health risk due to mercury contamination, and this glass recycling plant is one of the most affected hotspots. It is likely that the source of mercury contamination is historical, as there is no indication that glass recycling involves the use of mercury. The EPA is responsible for identifying the cause of every contaminated spot to determine who should bear the cleanup costs. Mercury contamination and PCBs are considered a severe health hazards by the Department of Health. The state Department of Health issued an advisory against consuming more than one bottom fish per month from the Duwamish River due to cancer risks and potential health issues for children and pregnant women. Despite the warning, many people fish in the river more than once a month, and others fish daily for food consumption. Cleaning up the river to enable fishing without risking public health is crucial. The river is a shared resource that belongs to everyone.

Slip 4

The first round of Superfund studies was presented to the community in the early 2000s. Two hundred people attended a public meeting where the worst hotspots on the river and proposed cleanup sites were discussed. Two of the most contaminated hotspots, a home and a slip on the east side of the river, were proposed as "early action" cleanup sites due to high levels of PCB contamination. Young salmon leaving the river were found to have enormous levels of PCBs. While it is safe to eat salmon from the river in moderation, all other fish should be avoided, especially by pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children.

Fishing is vital to Duwamish Valley communities, connecting them to their culture and providing affordable food. Immigrant families continue their fishing traditions, while tribes see it as part of their culture and spirituality. It is necessary to prioritize the fishing community's needs as they are among the most affected.

Boeing Plant 2

The Boeing Company was the largest contaminated river area due to the decades of airplane manufacturing before modern environmental laws. This site has been designated for early action cleanup, with the Boeing Company funding the project. The cleanup has been planned for years and is particularly important due to its proximity to South Park, where many fish and children play. The cleanup used advanced dredging technologies and successfully restored natural habitats, making it one of the best in the nation.

Turning Basin

The Turning Basin was used as an industrial wasteland, cleaned up and planted for habitat over the past few years by agencies and volunteers. Although it is now a marsh and intertidal habitat for fish and wildlife, there is still pollution in the area, including a PCB hotspot behind the boat launch. This area has yet to be proposed as an early action cleanup site, and if it is not added to the list, it could take years to see action or change. The early action cleanup plans did not address the top risk to health, which is arsenic. The Duwamish River fishermen are at risk of cancer due to arsenic exposure. The community has urged the EPA to clean up the river of arsenic and other hotspots to protect their health and the environment.



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

EJ Community Center

The Duwamish Valley community lacks affordable and accessible community spaces, limiting collaboration for climate resilience and environmental justice. To address this issue, DRCC aims to build a Climate Resilience Hub and Youth Center as a gathering space for community-based organizations, an emergency response relief station during extreme weather events, and a safe place for youth. The hub will be an energy-efficient, green facility featuring community garden beds, rain gardens, and a living wall, providing a learning center for environmental concepts and practices.

The Climate Resilience Hub will coordinate culturally sensitive, multilingual services to meet diverse community needs, provide a safe place for temporary shelter and relief during extreme heat days, and distribute necessities like food and information after disasters. The year-round programming will encourage community-building efforts, increasing resilience when emergencies occur and creating cohesion and well-being in the community.



Sewer Overflow

The Duwamish Valley community faces sewage overflow and contamination risks due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Upgrades to the outdated infrastructure are necessary to ensure safe and healthy homes for residents living along the river, particularly low-income and/or BIPOC families. Disinvestment in the community has left its infrastructure decades out of date, resulting in yearly sewer backups during the rainy season and even sewage overflows that require families to vacate their homes for cleanup. DRCC is working with the City and County to improve the existing infrastructure and reduce health risks to the community.



Affordable housing and place-keeping

The affordable housing crisis has hit our community hard, and displacement is a top concern for residents. DRCC/TAG is supporting vulnerable community members by staffing a member of the Duwamish Valley Affordable Housing Coalition member. Lack of affordable housing and displacement of people of color and low-income residents are linked with examples of environmental injustice. Access to safe and affordable housing is crucial for survival in a community disproportionately facing the burdens of climate change, and it provides stability, security, and opportunities for economic mobility.

