



City of Seattle
Seattle Public Utilities

February 4, 2011

Dear Ballard Residents –

Thanks to those who attended the community meeting on Feb. 2. Your input will help us to improve communications with you and work together to find solutions that meet the needs of the community while piloting the use of roadside raingardens for combined sewer overflow (CSO) control in Ballard.

Some of the key points we heard at the meeting:

- The 72-hour draining standard is not reasonable.
- The amount of ponding in some raingardens is unacceptable.
- There are safety concerns about mosquito breeding and the depth of the raingardens (with or without water).
- There are questions about the plantings and future maintenance plans for the raingardens.
- The community wanted all of the raingardens that aren't working to be removed and for the inefficient ones to function and look better.
- The community wants to provide input about issues to resolve and potential solutions.
- The community wants to see an action plan and provide input to it.
- The community wants a system for ongoing communication and input.

In response to the meeting, we are recommending two next steps:

- 1) **Move ahead with the plan to install drain holes between the cells of each rain garden** in order to reduce the depth and duration of ponding as quickly as possible. We plan to start this work on Wednesday, Feb. 9, depending on the weather. Water in the cells may need to be removed prior to the holes being drilled. This work would also involve filling the cell that is closest to the corner as a temporary measure. We anticipate that this work can be accomplished within 2-3 weeks' time and should take care of the immediate concerns regarding standing water.
- 2) **Work in close partnership with the community to determine next steps.** Specifically, we would like to explore:
 - What should be done to improve the functionality of the existing raingardens?
 - What design modifications to address aesthetics and safety should be pursued?
 - Should the design standard be reduced from draining within 72 hours to draining within 24 hours, and, if so, what does that mean for the effectiveness of the raingardens in CSO control?
 - Should any of the raingardens be removed entirely?

To explore these questions, **we are proposing establishment of a task force of community members** to work with the City. We are looking for a group of 6-10 and would like one or two representatives from each of the five areas where roadside raingardens have been constructed.

We would like nominations of one or two people from each of the project areas who would be good representatives and able to share information between the task force and the residents. Please respond with the names and addresses of any nominees by Friday, Feb. 11. Just send an e-mail to SPU_BRR@seattle.gov or call (206) 386-9161.

We want to express our appreciation to the community for participating in this pilot project and for constructively sharing your concerns at the Feb. 2 meeting. We understand that there are issues with the design of the existing raingardens that need to be addressed, and we are committed to working in partnership with the community to address these concerns and to evaluate the future use of raingardens to address the CSO control needs within the Ballard community. Thank you for your input and your patience. We are committed to working with you to make things better.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ahern, Deputy Director
Seattle Public Utilities