

PROJECT ACTION MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 6C
Meeting Date: 4/21/26

DATE: April 21, 2026
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Jason Jordan, Sr. Director, Environmental & Planning Services
Project Manager: David Myers, Engineering Project Manager
SUBJECT: Fife Ditch Tide Gate Upgrades Project Authorization Increase, Project ID No. 101597.01

A. ACTION REQUESTED

Request project authorization increase in the amount of \$1,300,000 for a total authorized amount of \$1,650,000, for work associated with the Fife Ditch Tide Gate Upgrades, Project Identification No. 101597.01.

Strategic Plan Initiative: EL-3; Invest in projects that improve the quality of stormwater runoff from Port properties, embody best practices, and empower our tenants to comply with complex permits.

B. SYNOPSIS

Design and construct new tide gate structure and trash collection system at the outfall structure of the Fife Ditch at Hylebos Creek that will improve flow control of discharge water. Enhance access for safer operations and complete maintenance work near the outfall structure.

C. BACKGROUND

In approximately 1955, the Port of Tacoma (Port) and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) began work on the Industrial Development program. Over the next decade, Hylebos, Blair, and Sitcum Waterways were hydraulically dredged and expanded to their current layouts. The dredge spoils from this project were placed in upland areas adjacent to the new waterways to create industrial lands for Port expansion. Many of the natural creeks, tributaries and drainage swales that were present in the intertidal areas were filled with dredge sediments, trapping run-off and blocking the natural flow of water.

The Corps mandated that the Port redirect the flow of streams and creeks into the newly created waterways such that they could still flow through the fill areas to Commencement Bay. The Corps also mandated that the Port create drainage infrastructure to collect and direct storm water and natural runoff to the waterways. In 1959, the Port completed the design and extension of an existing ditch system located on the east side of Parcel 14 to a discharge location on Hylebos Creek. The ditch was designed to service the collective ditch systems that were part of Drainage District 23 in the Fife area.

The ditch design included two (2) outfall culverts with steel flap style tide gates to prevent tidal water from backing up into the ditch. In 2006 the steel tide gates were replaced with the rubber duck bills that are in place today.

In 1960, a study was completed by Drainage District 23 that indicated that the ditch, as designed and constructed, had insufficient capacity during heavy rain events to discharge the resultant water. In 1963, Drainage District 23 began the design and construction of the lift station located adjacent to the discharge culverts at Hylebos Creek. The Port contributed 50% of the construction cost of the lift station (\$5,780). Under an agreement with Drainage District 23 the District accepted responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and operation of the lift station and related components while the Port maintained responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the outfall culverts and tide gates. At this same time, the Corps issued an update letter to the Industrial Development Program stating that the Port was to maintain the ditch structures that it built. Since 1963 the Port has completed limited vegetation control on portions of the ditch system, collected garbage that accumulates on the outfall trash racks, and replaced the original steel flap style tide gates with rubber duck bill gates.

The rubber duck bill style tide gates work to keep creek and tidal waters from entering the ditch but do not function well under low flow scenarios in the ditch. During these periods, the water trapped behind the tide gates heats up and deoxygenates. When sufficient water builds up behind the tide gates or a rain event occurs to provide enough head pressure to open the duck bills this warm deoxygenated water dumps into Hylebos creek adjacent to several habitat sites creating an area that is unhealthy for wildlife and fish, including salmonids. The planned in line check valve style gates will function at low flow and high flow scenarios preventing the back up of stagnant water. Also, by functioning better at low flow scenarios, the overall functionality of the ditch system will improve.

This project will remove the existing duck bill tide gates, build a new chamber to accept the in-line tide gates and construct a new trash collection system that will enhance performance and make trash collection safer for Port Maintenance staff. This project will also complete maintenance dredging and vegetation control within the ditch system in the immediate area of the outfall structures.

D. PROJECT DETAILS

Scope of Project:

- Design and construct new tide gates and related structures at the ditch out falls.
- Design and construct a new trash collection system on the ditch.
- Enhance access to the tide gates and trash collection systems.
- Enhance site access to the outfall area.
- Perform ditch maintenance to remove excess sediment and vegetation.

Scope of Work for This Request:

- Complete permitting and bid the construction project
- Complete construction and close out reporting

Schedule:

Advertise for Bid	May 19, 2026
Open Bids	June 9, 2026
Notice of Award	June 25, 2026
Substantial Completion	September 30, 2026
Final Completion	November 18, 2026

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Estimated Cost of Project

The total project cost including all stages is estimated at \$1,650,000.

Estimated Cost for This Request

The total estimated cost of the completion of Design, Permitting and Construction for this project is \$1,300,000. If the cost of this estimate is anticipated to exceed the authorized amount, additional Commission authorization will be requested.

Estimated Sales Tax

The total estimated sales tax to be paid to local and state governments for this project is \$85,000.

Cost Details

Item	This Request	Total Previous Requests	Total Request	Total Project Cost	Cost to Date	Remaining Cost
DESIGN	\$ 50,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 305,895	\$ 94,105
CONSTRUCTION	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 0	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 0	\$ 1,250,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,650,000	\$ 1,650,000	\$ 305,895	\$ 1,344,105

Source of Funds

The approved 2026–2030 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) budget allocates \$916,000 to the project, with total anticipated spending of \$1,220,000. The CIP will be updated accordingly upon approval of the additional authorization and as project completion costs are further defined.

Financial Impact

Project costs will be expensed as incurred.

F. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT/JOB CREATION

This project will result in five construction positions during the work.

G. **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**

Alternative 1) Do nothing.

Alternative 2) Replace the existing tide gates and construct a new trash collection system with enhancements to the area and systems access.

Alternative 2 is the recommended course.

H. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/REVIEW**

Permitting: Federal, State and Local Environmental permits have been received. Building and Site Development permit applications have been submitted to the City of Tacoma. Access permit with WSDOT has been received.

Remediation: Sediment removed from the ditch will be disposed of at a landfill.

Stormwater: The new tide gates will eliminate the discharge of unhealthy water into Hylebos Creek, and the new trash collection system will improve debris collection and keep trash out of the creek and Commencement Bay.

Air Quality: No effect.

I. **PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

Date	Action	Amount
August 5, 2022	Executive Authorization	\$275,000
October 17, 2022	Executive Authorization	\$25,000
September 10, 2025	Executive Authorization	\$50,000
TOTAL		\$ 350,000

J. **NEXT STEPS**

Completing permitting and update plans for bidding

Complete bidding and construction