The Ballard Locks

Keystone of Puget Sound's Maritime Economy

May 2017

As the Ballard Locks turn 100 years old, their sustainability has never been more important or more in jeopardy.

A UNIQUE NATIONAL ASSET

- The only locks in the U.S. that connects a large urban lake system directly to the ocean
- The keystone of a billion-dollar-plus maritime economic system
- A critical environmental control for the vast watersheds around Seattle
- An important safeguard for tribal fishing rights
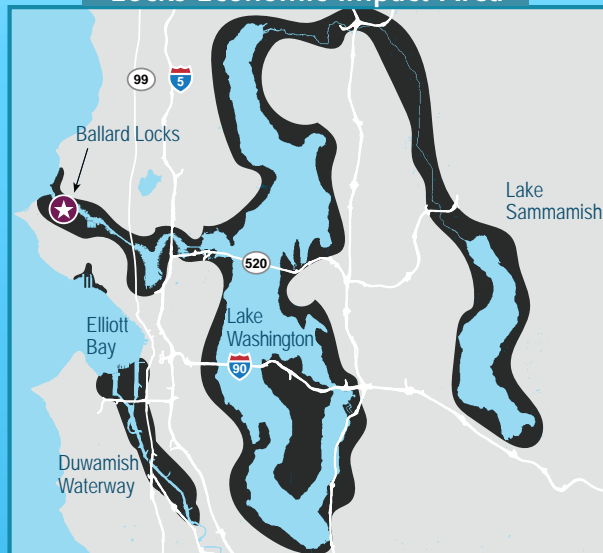- A vital piece of public-safety infrastructure

THE NUMBERS

40,000 annual transits
most in the nation

7,500 commercial vessel transits
twelfth highest in the nation

1.1 million tons of shipping

Locks Economic Impact Area

Ballard Locks

99 5

Lake Sammamish

Elliott Bay

520

Lake Washington

90

Duwamish Waterway

If the Locks were to close before the fleet could leave for the season, it would cost a whole season. — Fishing Association

THE DOLLARS & JOBS

Local businesses depend on the Ballard Locks for:

$480 million
in Locks-dependent annual sales

$120 million
in Locks-dependent annual payroll

3,000 full-time equivalent jobs
directly associated with Locks-related business activity

$545 million
in annual commercial fishing harvests by vessels that depend on the Locks

$40 million
in annual spending by 1.25 million visitors and school classes
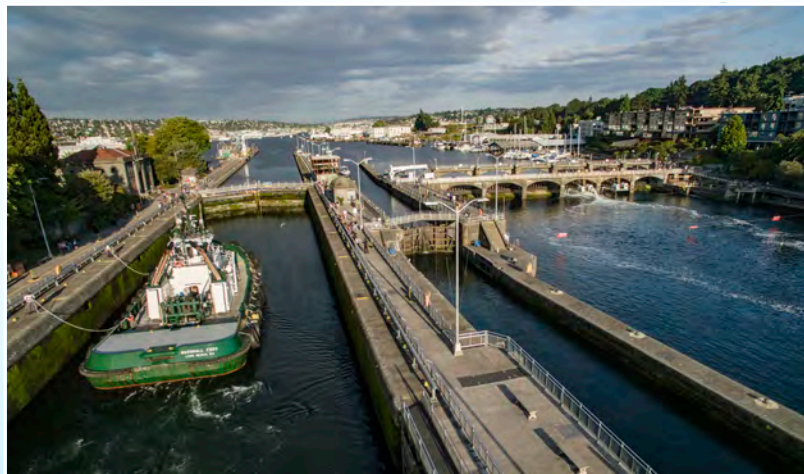
$1.2 BILLION IN TOTAL LOCKS-RELATED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The urgent need for reinvestment

Deferred maintenance threatens daily operations; lack of reinvestment threatens the regional economy.

‣ A dozen components at the Locks need major repair or replacement.

‣ An extended, unplanned closure of the Locks would have significant negative effects on at least 200 businesses and would threaten public safety.

Flat funding for routine operations and maintenance is stretched thinner each year to keep the locks operational.

‣ The potential for failure increases each year.

‣ Only a small portion of long-term needs have been addressed.

Funding Needed: 30 to $60 Million

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE VALUE

The Locks control water levels in Lake Washington and Lake Union to maintain key infrastructure that includes the Washington Route 520 and Interstate 90 floating bridges, the water and sewer systems that serve Mercer Island's 24,000 residents, and approximately 75 miles of residential, municipal and commercial shoreline and moorage.

The Ballard Locks and its fish ladder safeguard an investment of more than $125 million in freshwater salmon habitat protection and restoration over last two decades.

The Locks are the only marine access and egress point for equipment and supplies for major infrastructure projects such as the $4.6 billion renewal of the Route 520 floating bridge and removal of excavated material during construction of planned a $430 million Ballard/Wallingford stormwater tunnel.

TRIBAL RIGHTS VALUE

The Ballard Locks are key to meeting federal trust (fiduciary) responsibilities under treaties between the U.S. government and two federally recognized tribes by protecting migrating salmon to safeguard traditional and customary tribal activities.

PUBLIC SAFETY VALUE

The Ballard Locks ensure rapid emergency response for public safety vessels between Lake Washington and Lake Union and Puget Sound.