

Tolt 16-inch natural gas line **PROJECT UPDATE** ▶▶▶

August 12, 2016

Dear Customer,

Last summer, crews from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and our contractor Michels worked to improve the reliability of the natural gas system in your area. We installed roughly 12,000 feet of 16-inch natural gas pipeline along the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Tolt pipeline corridor between 155th Ave NE and Avondale Rd NE.

There's still more work to be done

Due to subsurface obstruction around Cottage Lake Creek, we were unable to drill the last 1,800 feet underground between Avondale Road NE and Mink Road NE, and must finish that section to complete the pipeline installation.

Identifying a solution to finish the job

We spent some time exploring a few different options for finishing the final stretch, specifically determining how to cross Cottage Lake Creek.

After receiving feedback from the property owner, SPU, as well as the agencies that approve the necessary permits, our project team proposed a solution to replace the aging bridge at the intersection of the Tolt Pipeline Trail and Cottage Lake Creek with a new bridge, and install the pipeline underneath the new bridge. This solution would allow us to complete this work with minimal disturbance to the creek below. Construction for this effort is expected to begin in 2017.

Committed to keeping you informed

We will keep the community informed as we work towards completing this project which is necessary to provide our customers with dependable service in the future. We understand that living near a construction project can involve impacts. We thank you for your continued patience and engagement with us through this process.

If you have any questions about the project or the information enclosed, please reach out to the project team at the email address or phone number listed below. As we continue to evaluate options, we appreciate and consider your thoughtful questions and feedback.

Sincerely,

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Project Manager

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FAQs

What would the new bridge look like?

The project team is looking at bridge options that will fit the look and character of the natural landscape, possibly with wood and weathered steel. The photo to the right is an example photo from the bridge manufacturer which should give an idea of what the new bridge could look like.

Additionally, the natural gas pipeline would be installed underneath the bridge so that you can't easily see it when walking nearby.



Example photo of what the new bridge could look like.

How will the pipeline be protected?

The pipeline would be installed underneath the concrete deck bridge which will both protect the pipeline and hide it from view. The pipeline will either be coated with a fusion-bonded epoxy or flame sprayed with an 85% zinc-15% aluminum compound to protect it from atmospheric corrosion. We've also been asked about coating the pipeline in concrete. This is not a PSE standard practice for a few reasons:

- It would make the pipe heavier and increase its diameter.
- It would hamper our ability to properly inspect the pipe as required by law and our own safety and maintenance policies—essentially, it makes it harder to see if something is wrong with the pipe.
- If repairs are needed, it would make the repair process more difficult.

PSE has used concrete coating in other situations, but it's not the preferred method of protection for an aboveground pipe at this location. The project team is still considering the community's feedback and is looking into another approach that would provide a similar or better protection for the pipe than a concrete coating would.

Currently, the Tolt pipeline uses a thicker steel than the industry standard for a pipeline of this size and pressure. To provide additional reassurance to the community, we are investigating using even thicker steel for the aboveground section of pipeline.

In addition to placing the pipe underneath the bridge and out of view, we are also exploring additional ways to reduce visibility of the pipeline and discourage access, such as building a physical screen that would hide the pipe and planting vegetation underneath the bridge to reduce access.

How will this affect the creek?

The bridge as it exists today is made of wood timbers treated with creosote, which is considered a pollutant. The current bridge design also constrains water flow because the abutment walls are narrower than the natural width of the creek. These features of the existing bridge would not pass today's environmental standards.

The new bridge PSE plans to build will span the original flood plain of Cottage Lake Creek, allowing for restoration of the creek's natural flow pattern. Additionally, with input from stakeholder agencies, PSE will restore the creek banks and bed once construction is complete.

How many natural gas pipelines are installed underneath bridge structures? How many of those are next to residential areas?

Underground natural gas lines are PSE's first choice for a combination of affordability and ease of maintenance. However, above-ground natural gas lines are very common, even near residential areas. PSE's natural gas system has hundreds of pipelines installed on bridges, a number of which are located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.

Within PSE's natural gas system, approximately 20 high pressure natural gas pipelines are installed above-ground on bridges within 150 feet of residential structures. This distance is comparable to conditions near Cottage Lake Creek.

Does this solution to install the natural gas pipeline underneath the bridge trigger the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirement for environmental review?

The SEPA lead agency responsible for permitting this project is King County, and they have determined that the new bridge will require additional environmental review. Specifically, PSE will prepare a SEPA addendum to detail the potential critical area and cultural resource impacts the proposed project may have. Mitigation measures will be provided, and PSE will work with the permitting agencies to ensure that appropriate restoration is completed once construction is complete.

What about the possibility for vandalism of the pipeline?

This is something that the project team considered when evaluating this solution. As noted above, PSE's natural gas system has hundreds of pipelines installed on bridges, a number of which are located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. Other than graffiti, which does not harm the natural gas pipeline, PSE has not experienced problems with either vandalism or deliberate, malicious damage to natural gas pipelines. PSE will inspect the pipeline at least four times per year to inspect for integrity concerns, which includes checking for evidence of vandalism.

Why not dig a trench through the stream and install the pipeline underground that way?

This option was the project team's first proposal. However, due to the potential impacts to the creek bed that this solution would require, it is not considered the least impactful option, especially in a location that is considered habitat for two fish species listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act: Chinook salmon and steelhead. When reviewing both options for crossing Cottage Lake Creek with permit agencies and the Tribes, strong support emerged for a new bridge that supports the pipeline over the water. PSE does not believe that trenching through the stream would be a permissible solution while another, less impactful, solution exists.

How will the pipeline be monitored for safety?

Safety is our first priority when it comes to designing, constructing, operating and maintaining a natural gas system that serves more than 770,000 PSE customers. The Tolt natural gas pipeline will be surveyed regularly with equipment that can detect a natural gas leak. Additionally, our experienced and trained personnel will visit the site at least four times per year to visually inspect the pipeline. PSE may also decide to conduct additional inspections as needed.



When improving and operating our system, we meet or exceed strict federal and state safety requirements for pipeline safety. A quality assurance inspector will be on-site during construction to monitor the pipeline installation process from beginning to end. PSE monitors over 12,000 miles of natural gas pipeline across our 10-county service area. Learn more about natural gas safety at pse.com/safety.

If you have additional questions about the project, please reach out to the project team by emailing majorprojects@pse.com or leave us a voicemail at **1-888-404-8773**.