

# DUNE PENINSULA AND WILSON WAY PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

City of Tacoma

## About the Project

This project created new waterfront park access on Dune Peninsula, remediated environmental damage, and improved active transportation opportunities. Metro Parks constructed the 600-foot-long, 50-foot-tall Wilson Way Pedestrian Bridge to address a “missing link” in a seven-mile shared-use path to allow pedestrians and cyclists to travel from downtown Tacoma to Point Defiance Park entirely via trail. The project also incorporates a new roundabout at the entrance to the park and a new boat trailer parking lot.

Although transportation benefits are substantial, the project was foremost a project to expand Point Defiance Park to Dune Peninsula, adjacent to the Asarco Superfund site. To do so, Metro Parks Tacoma worked with the Washington State Department of Ecology and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to remediate contaminated soils. The 11 acres of new park incorporate paved trails, large slides, an amphitheater, new utilities and restrooms, and a rental space for parties.

<b>Total Investment</b>	\$80.5 million
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>April 2014 – Bond approved</p> <p>June 2016 – Construction begins</p> <p>July 2019 – Bridge opens</p>

## Benefits



### Transportation

- Improves safety
- Increases multimodal connectivity by finishing seven-mile trail



### Fiscal

- Generated \$2.5 million in taxes



### Economic

- Created 60 construction jobs
- Draws over 400,000 new tourists per year



### Community & Environment

- Improves runoff water quality by 91%
- Remediates contaminated soil
- Creates 1,000 feet of shoreline and 2.5 acres of estuary
- Improves recreation with 11 acres of new park
- Enhanced youth education

## Challenges



- Funding coordination
- Oversight from multiple jurisdictions
- Seasonal weather
- Change in federal administration





## TRANSPORTATION Benefits

- Improves safety.** Prior to the project, the entrance to the park included a six-way intersection. The project added a roundabout with dedicated bike and pedestrian paths with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. The roundabout shortened nonmotorized crossings from 80 feet to 24 feet, a **decrease of 70%**, and added pedestrian refuge and striped markings.<sup>3</sup>

The Wilson Way Pedestrian Bridge spans North Pearl Street/State Route 163, providing grade separation that enables pedestrians to more safely cross the highway.
- Increases safe and convenient multimodal connectivity.** The project creates a “missing link” of **seven-mile shared-use trail**, completing the final piece of a 60-year community dream to connect Point Defiance Park with downtown Tacoma via the Ruston Way waterfront trail.<sup>1</sup> The trail is 20 feet wide and ADA-accessible.



## ECONOMIC Benefits

- Created construction jobs.** The project created **297,000 hours of labor** and created approximately **60 full-time construction-based jobs**.
- Draws tourism.** Each year, 3 million visitors visit Point Defiance Park, the second largest city park in the country.<sup>1</sup> Metro Parks estimates that the project will result in an increase of over **400,000 new visitors per year**.<sup>1</sup>



## FISCAL Benefits

- Generated construction-based tax revenue.** Project contractors paid approximately **\$2.5 million in sales and use tax** to both the State and City of Tacoma on all materials purchased or used for the work. The State received approximately \$1.7 million of this total. Taxes were not paid on construction labor and services as they are exempt per the Public Road Construction Exemption.



## COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL Benefits

- Improves water quality.** The project creates a regional stormwater facility that treats **91% of the urban runoff from over 720 acres of land.**<sup>2</sup> This runoff previously discharged into Puget Sound untreated.
- Remediates contaminated soil.** The project excavated contaminated soil created by the Asarco smelter and contained it with an artificial cap on the Dune Peninsula.
- Creates habitat.** The project reclaims over **1,000 linear feet of shoreline** and creates **2.5 acres of estuary** to provide important habitat for endangered species such as salmon and sand lance.<sup>1</sup> Plantings incorporated into the project are native.
- Improves recreation access and opportunities.** The entire Dune Peninsula is now an **11-acre waterfront park** with public access, restoring public use of a property that was previously unusable to the public. The Wilson Way Pedestrian Bridge helps create public access to the park and the trails within.
- Enhanced youth education opportunities.** The program expanded learning opportunities for students in Tacoma Public Schools' Science and Math Institute by providing opportunities for students to engage in hands-on studies to support the planning and development of the project.

## Challenges



**Funding coordination.** The project received several grants, which created challenges in tracking all grant requirements. To adhere to grant timelines, Metro Parks began construction before fully funding the project, adding uncertainty.

**Oversight from multiple jurisdictions and agencies.** The project area spanned both the City of Tacoma and the City of Ruston, a small city adjacent to Tacoma with a 2010 population of 749.<sup>5</sup> The cities have different road standards and tax rates. Both the EPA and Department of Ecology governed different environmental portions of the project.

**Seasonal weather.** Weather played a substantial role in the project, as the region experienced extremely wet winters when the project had exposed 48 acres of soil. The 2016-2017 winter set a record for winter precipitation.<sup>4</sup>

**Change in federal administration.** With the change of the federal administration in 2017, the composition of the design team from the EPA changed. Further, Metro Parks was unsure whether the new administration would continue to support and prioritize the project.



## Funding Partners

**Federal Contributions (36%)** As a Superfund site, the park project received \$28.8 million from the federal government's settlement with Asarco. The project also received a \$500,000 federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, distributed by the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

**State Contributions (14%)** The project was awarded a \$2.5 million competitive grant from the state RCO Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The State appropriated an additional \$7.5 million for the project via capital budgets.

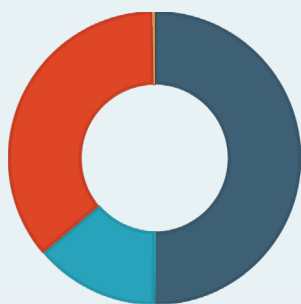
**Local Contributions (50%)** The project drew on \$39 million from bond issues by Metro Parks Tacoma. The City of Tacoma provided \$410,000 in funding from its Environmental Services Department stormwater budget.

**Private Contributions (0.3%)** The Tacoma Yacht Club, located next to the Dune Peninsula, contributed \$240,000 to the project.

## Project Prioritization

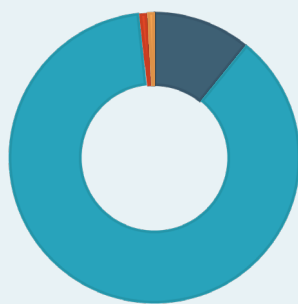
This project connected two popular community points of interest and transformed an environmentally damaged site into a public park. The voters of Tacoma decided that these investments in Point Defiance Park were important and approved a \$198 million bond issue in 2014.

### Funding Sources



- Federal
- State
- Local
- Private

### Funding Uses



- Construction
- Planning and design
- Art
- Other

#### Sources

- 1 Metro Parks Tacoma. (2013). Member Requested Local Community Project Information Form: Destination Point Defiance Missing Link.
- 2 City of Tacoma. (2011). Fiscal Year 2012 Statewide Stormwater Grant Program Application: Pt. Defiance Regional Treatment Retrofit.
- 3 Metro Parks Tacoma. (2014). 2014 Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Grant Application Form: Point Defiance Park Multimodal Entrance.
- 4 Glenn, S. (2017, April 24). It's officially the wettest winter on record. *Tacoma News Tribune*. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from Tacoma News Tribune: <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article146455299.html>
- 5 City of Ruston. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from City of Ruston: <https://www.rustonwa.org/living-in-ruston>.

Photos: Metro Parks Tacoma, 2020; Metro Parks Tacoma, 2018.  
Map: BERK, 2020.