

## WETLAND ASSESSMENT

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# Houghton Transfer Station Mitigation Project Kirkland, Washington

Prepared for

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September 25, 2007

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## **Executive Summary**

This wetland assessment has been prepared for King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Solid Waste Division, as an element of environmental review for the proposed improvements to the Houghton Transfer Station, located at NE 60th Street and 116th Avenue NE in Kirkland, Washington (Figure 1). The proposed Houghton Transfer Station Mitigation Project includes the construction of a sound wall partially within the buffer of an offsite wetland.

A wetland delineation was conducted in the study area in June 2006. This report describes existing conditions in the study area, applicable laws and regulations, and the wetland ratings and required buffers per the City of Kirkland regulations.

The wetland delineation identified one offsite wetland in the study area. The wetland was rated as a Type 2 wetland using the City of Kirkland rating system. Wetlands of this type are required to have a standard 75-foot buffer in addition to a 10-foot building setback. The proposed alignment of the sound wall is partially within the buffer of the offsite wetland. However, this portion of the sound wall will be only 6 feet high, and will serve to replace the existing 6-foot-high fences along the west property boundary. This activity is considered normal and routine repair of a structure, and is therefore exempt from the conditions contained in Section 90.20.5 of the City of Kirkland Zoning Code (Kirkland 2005a).

## Introduction

This wetland assessment has been prepared for the King County Department of Natural Resources, Solid Waste Division, as an element of environmental review for proposed improvements to the Houghton Transfer Station, located at 11724 NE 60th Street, just east of 116th Avenue NE, in Kirkland, Washington (Figure 1).

In this report, the term *study area* is defined to include the entire area surveyed, including the wetland, wetland buffers, and the west side of the Houghton Transfer Station. The *project vicinity* includes the study area and the wider urban area beyond the study area. The project vicinity, within 0.6 miles of the study area, was evaluated as part of the wetland functional assessment and rating. A map of the project vicinity is shown in Figure 1.

A wetland delineation was conducted in the study area in June 2006. This report describes existing conditions in the study area, applicable laws and regulations, and the wetland ratings and required buffers per the City of Kirkland regulations.

Ditch conditions in the study area will be assessed in a separate ditch analysis report. A roadside ditch is located along the north side of NE 60th Street, to the south of the transfer station (Figure 2). A drainage ditch is also located between the offsite wetland and the gravel walking trail to the west of the transfer station. The proposed project may affect the ditch along NE 60th Street.

## Project Setting

The study area is located immediately west of the Houghton Transfer Station in Kirkland, Washington, to the north of NE 60th Street and east of 116th Avenue NE (Figure 1). Specifically, the study area is located in Section 9, Township 25 North, Range 5 East, at an elevation of 430 feet above mean sea level (USGS 1973), within tax parcel 1759702510 (King County 2006).

## Project Description

The Houghton Transfer Station Mitigation Project includes five components designed to increase customer and employee operational safety and to attenuate the noise associated with day-to-day operations at the transfer station. The five components of the project are: (1) increase the area of the existing transfer trailer parking by approximately 18,000 square feet to the east, (2) construct pedestrian improvements along NE 60th Street, per an agreement with the City of Kirkland, (3) replace the existing roof structure with a new, higher roof, (4) replace the sanitary sewer pump station with detention vault and gravity-flow sewer line; and (5) construct a sound wall near the west property line.

The new sound wall is the only proposed project component located within a wetland buffer. The other components of the project, which are located farther away from the delineated wetland and associated buffers, are not discussed further in this report. The purpose of the sound wall is to reduce the noise that currently travels from the transfer station to adjacent residential properties. The alignment of the new sound wall will be the same as that of the two existing fences located along the west side of the transfer station. The proposed dimensions of the sound wall are 433 feet long, 6 feet high within the buffer and the building setback area, and 12 feet high elsewhere.

## Applicable Laws and Regulations

The study area is subject to federal and state regulations pertaining to wetlands and aquatic environments. Federal regulations for wetlands include Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (U.S. Code, Title 33, Section 1344 [33 USC 1344]). Washington state laws and programs designed to control the loss of wetland acreage include Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and the Hydraulic Code Rules (Chapter 222-110 of the Washington Administrative Code [WAC]).

The study area is also subject to City of Kirkland regulations pertaining to wetlands. The City of Kirkland Zoning Code specifies wetland categories and the required wetland buffer widths and building setbacks. In addition, the Code includes requirements that address wetland and buffer modifications, restoration, and mitigation (Kirkland 2005a).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates ditches that are considered to be waters of the U.S. As noted above, the study area contains ditches that may be affected by the proposed project. The ditch analysis report will be submitted to the Corps to assist them in making a jurisdictional ditch determination for the proposed project.

## Study Objectives

The specific objectives of the wetland assessment conducted for the Houghton Transfer Station Mitigation Project are as follows:

- Conduct a wetland delineation in the study area using the routine method described in the *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987) and the *Washington State Wetlands Identification and Delineation Manual* (Ecology 1997)
- Classify wetlands in the study area using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classification system (Cowardin et al. 1979)

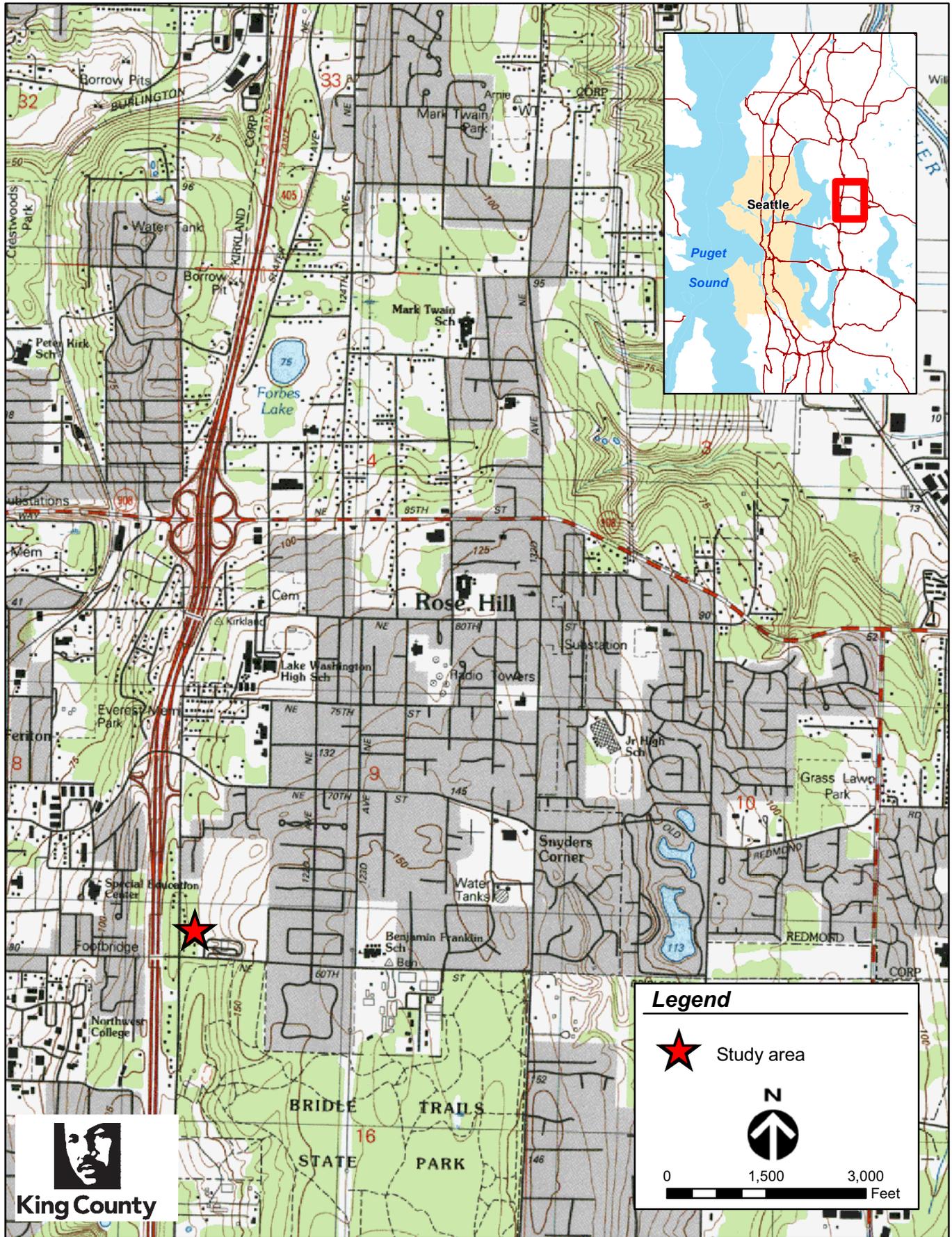


Figure 1. Vicinity map for the Houghton Transfer Station Mitigation Project in Kirkland, Washington.