

The Seattle Street Sink: Responding to Hygiene Needs During COVID-19 and Beyond

Handwashing is a proven strategy for reducing transmission of the Coronavirus, as well as other diseases, such as Hepatitis A. However, not everyone has access to handwashing facilities, especially when cafes and restaurants are closed due to the pandemic. This is especially true for those experiencing homelessness. The Seattle Street Sink is a simple, low-cost, way to make handwashing accessible to anyone that needs it.

Seattle has responded by opening rest rooms in city parks and other locations and by contracting with private vendors to provide mobile handwashing stations across the city. In spite of the City's efforts, there remains intense need for hygiene facilities.

HANDWASHING WHERE WE NEED IT

The team created a design that would connect to a hose bib on private property (public property requires City permission) and slow the grey water onsite. The design consists of a stock utility sink with an auto shut-off faucet (so that the water cannot be left on) and soap dispenser that drains into a standard livestock watering trough filled first with a tarp, then soil and water loving plants – a combination handwashing station and rain garden. The soap dispenser can be marked for data collection.



- Low Cost, with Each Unit Costing About \$400
- Easily Constructed
- Only Needs a Hose Bib to Connect to a Water Source
- Salmon Safe
- Handwashing “How To” Displayed Near Sink
- Optional Sharps Container
- SSS Team Available for Troubleshooting

The first prototype of the Seattle Street Sink was installed in the alley outside ROOTS between NE 42nd and 43rd Streets on May 19. So far, we have found zero design issues and tremendous support from the community and those using the sink.

The SSS team will install the sink with oversight from the host organization. Installation takes about an hour. The location site should be pre-selected with advising from the SSS team.

In order for the sink to operate, it must be within 100 feet of a hose bib, and be placed on fairly level ground. The entire structure measures 4' x 6'. In addition to locating the sink on premises, other responsibilities for hosting a Seattle Street Sink include refilling soap dispensers, maintaining the hose connection to the Seattle Street Sink, covering the cost of the water, and maintaining and caring for the sink over the long term.

SEATTLE STREET SINK TEAM

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