



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST SPECIAL VIDEO MEETING

Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 5:00 PM

BOARD MEMBERS:

Chair Marie Bender
Vice Chair Thomas Hildebrandt
Secretary Craig Olson
Board Members: Lisa Anderl, Carol Lynn Berseth,
Hillary Ethe, Geraldine Poor

LOCATION & CONTACT

Mercer Island City Hall – Zoom Meeting
9611 SE 36th Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040
Phone: 206.275.7706 | www.mercerisland.gov

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the Staff Liaison at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 206.275.7706.

Virtual Meeting Notice

The virtual meeting will be broadcast live on Zoom and recorded and saved on the City's [YouTube Channel](#)

Registering to Speak: Individuals wishing to speak live during Appearances will need to register their request with the City Clerk at 206.275.7793 or email deb.estrada@mercergov.org and leave a message before 4 PM on the day of the meeting. Please reference "Appearances" on your correspondence. Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

Join by Telephone at 5:00 PM: To listen to the meeting, or speak under appearances, via telephone, please call **253.215.8782** and enter Webinar ID **892 3144 2788** and Password **865992** when prompted.

Join by Internet at 5:00 PM: To watch the meeting, or speak under appearances, over the internet via your computer, follow these steps:

- 1) Click [this link](#)
- 2) If the Zoom app is not installed on your computer, you will be prompted to download it.
- 3) If prompted for Webinar ID, enter **892 3144 2788**; Enter Password **865992**

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL, 5:00 PM

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approve minutes of the January 21, 2021 Special Meeting
2. PROS Plan Update
3. Code of Ethics – Informal Opinion
4. Forest Health Survey: 10-year Update
5. Restoration Work Plan
6. Letterboxing Program Update

OTHER BUSINESS

7. Boards & Commissions Chair Meeting Report
8. New Email Addresses & Public Records Requests
9. Board Terms & City Updates
10. Quadrant Reports
11. Next Meeting

ADJOURNMENT



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 21, 2021

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Bender called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

Chair Marie Bender, Vice Chair Thomas Hildebrandt, Secretary Craig Olson, Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth, Trustee Ethe, Trustee Geraldine Poor, and Council Liaison Lisa Anderl participated remotely using a video teleconferencing platform by Zoom.

Staff participating remotely included: City Clerk Deborah Estrada, Deputy Public Works Director Alaine Sommargren, and Natural Resources Specialist Kim Frappier.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES: There were no public appearances.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

(all) Review and Consider Approving Minutes of the January 21, 2021 OSCT Regular Meeting

It was moved by Berseth; seconded by Thomas to:

Approve the minutes as amended.

Agreed by unanimous consent. Motion passed: 7-0.

(III) 2021 Annual Report and Work Plan

Natural Resources Specialist Kim Frappier presented the draft *2021 Annual Report to Council* for review and discussion. She noted that the 2021 Annual Report will be presented to City Council on the consent calendar on March 16, 2021 and will include the 2021 Work Plan.

Discussion and Board Direction:

2021 Annual Report

Regarding the section on volunteers, Trustees inquired how the bulk of community engagement was conducted. Natural Resources Specialist Frappier reported that this was all conducted remotely through social media and direct emails from City staff and EarthCorps to their volunteer base. Chair Bender requested that in the section titled "Background", additional information be included to describe the plans referenced for the benefit of those that are new to the work of the Trust. She asked for further explanation to be included about the purpose of the Open Space Vegetation Management Plan versus the Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan and 2008 Forest Health Survey. Council Liaison Anderl suggested that a footnote or appendix be added that defines the restoration tasks listed in the report. Trustees also suggested including hyperlinks to all the external reports referenced in the Annual Report so that readers could easily access them for more information. Natural Resources Specialist Frappier will make the suggested revisions and submit to Chair Bender for final review.

2021 Work Plan

Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren presented the updated draft of the 2021 Work Plan. Trustee Poor requested that the wording be amended in the Letterboxing item to read "reaching out to volunteers about *potential* for launching the program" given that we do not yet know whether this will be feasible. Staff will update this language and finalize the work plan to present to City Council.

(IV) Fire Management Plan

Deputy Public Works Director Alaine Sommargren provided an overview of the history of the fire management plan which was adopted as an appendix to the Pioneer Park Management Plan in 2003. She explained that the fire management plan was reviewed by both Fire Chief Steve Heitman and Deputy Chief Mike Mandella as well as Public Works staff. Staff provided logistical updates to the plan that included the addition of Engstrom Open Space, firefighting resource updates, hose reach information and map, and an evaluation of mitigation and risk factors. There were no substantive additions or changes made, mainly updates to existing information.

Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren presented information about facets of the original plan in need of further Trust discussion and consideration particularly within the vegetation management section of the plan. Topics included (1) an education campaign, (2) park patrols, (3) neighbor partnerships, (4) removal of logs and branches adjacent to boundaries, and (4) whether Trustees would like staff to do further research on fire mitigation strategies.

- (1) Education Campaign: Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren reported that staff will implement an educational outreach effort this year to those private property owners who share a boundary with Trust properties. Staff will work with the Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Coordinator from the King Conservation District (KCD) for consultation and to acquire educational resources. She will share the educational resources to be used with the Trust at the March or July meeting. Trustees suggested that this information also be shared on the City website.
- (2) Park Patrols: Sommargren noted that staff are already currently doing park patrols. Natural Resources and Parks Maintenance staff as well as the Seasonal Trails and Restoration Crew conduct regular site visits addressing issues regarding party pits and encampments. This does not require a change to current operations.
- (3) Neighbor Partnerships: The plan section that discusses “neighbor partnerships” under the vegetation management section, requires revision and clarification. Staff will revise this section to clarify expectations and the role of City staff versus the homeowner. The City does not want to give private property owners permission to cut and prune City trees at will or conduct other vegetation management tasks on City property. Instead, we would follow our Forest Stewardship program model with those homeowners that expressly reach out to the City with a request to steward the park property adjacent to their property. These property owners would then work under the supervision of City staff in accordance with the Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan (PPFMP).
- (4) Removal of logs and branches: The Vegetation Management section includes a statement that calls for the removal of logs and branches from the boundary of Trust properties. This section requires revision as it is not consistent with the PPFMP, does not reflect the size, type, or benefit of downed wood for retaining soil moisture, and does not designate the size of the area to be included. Staff propose doing additional research on this issue so that we develop a plan that is grounded in fire and forest management science – versus an arbitrary prescription to just remove all downed wood and snags.
- (5) Further research on fire mitigation strategies: Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren noted the importance of identifying specific restoration strategies and practices that could also mitigate fire risk. Staff would like to research this further and include in an update to the vegetation management section. This would build off the City’s current forest management practices with integration of recommendations from the KCD Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Coordinator.

Trustees provided staff with some general edits for grammar and clarity within the plan. There was general discussion about fire management and the role of the fire department.

Board Direction: Staff shall draft an update to the Vegetation Management section of the Fire Management Plan as noted in the five issues outlined above. This will be presented to the Trust at the May 20th meeting.

(V) Engstrom Open Space

Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren reported that the Engstrom Open Space title is still held by the City of Mercer Island. After reviewing the minutes from 2010 and 2011, it was reported to the Trust that the title had been transferred, so there was some error that occurred 10 years ago. City leadership is committed to doing a legal review of this issue. Due to the current workload of the City Attorney, this is not likely to happen until the end of the year. She noted that despite this discrepancy, the management of Engstrom Open Space is still under the purview of the Trust as it has been during the past 10 years.

Board Direction: Staff will present an update on the Engstrom Open Space title during the September board meeting.

(VI) Quadrant Reports

NW Quadrant: Trustee Poor and Secretary Olson

NE Quadrant/ Engstrom OS: Vice Chair Hildebrandt and Trustee Berseth

SE Quadrant: Chair Bender and Trustee Ethe

Trustees discussed the impacts from the storm on tree failures and trail closures and the excellent work done by Parks Operations staff. Trustees noted concern over a truck that has been parked along Island Crest Way adjacent to Pioneer Park filled with wood. The truck continuously drives off the shoulder and is creating muddy ruts along the grassy area. Staff will monitor this situation and report back to the Trust.

(VII) General Updates

Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren reported on the extensive efforts by Parks Operations staff to clean up after the most recent storm event. Trails Specialist Andrew Prince cleared 32 trail obstructions and worked 23 hours at Pioneer Park alone clearing trails and moving and bucking downed trees. It was a tremendous effort and wanted to recognize his hard work.

Deputy Public Works Director Sommargren noted recent staff changes including her promotion from Parks Operations Manager to Deputy Public Works Director. She reported that the City is currently hiring for the new Parks Operations Manager. She said that for now she will continue to be the staff liaison to the Trust, but eventually this role will transfer to the new Parks Operations Manager.

(VIII) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

Adjournment: 6:22 PM

Olson moved; Berseth seconded to: **Adjourn the meeting.**

Agreed by unanimous consent. Motion passed: 7-0.

Marie Bender, Chair

Attest:

Kim Frappier, Scribe



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 2
March 18, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	PROS Plan Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive update	

STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Lisa Anderl
EXHIBITS:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Open Space Conservancy Trust with a project update for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

BACKGROUND

As directed by the City Council in September 2019, the Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Commission, began the process of producing an updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. The [current plan](#) expired at the end of 2019. This is a six-year plan that anticipates the programming and capital projects necessary to meet the community’s need for parks, recreation, and open space, as well as trails, arts, and cultural events. Conservation Technix was selected as the consultant to manage the process, including providing a baseline analysis on existing conditions and community needs, conducting a multi-faceted community engagement process, and developing a draft framework for the final PROS Plan.

Work was suspended on the PROS Plan update in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

PROS PLAN RESTART

At the end of 2020, the staff and consulting team resumed the planning process for the PROS Plan, with an initial focus on assessing the work that was already completed, adjusting the project timeline, and modifying the scope of work to reflect the need for virtual engagement strategies. To date, work that has been completed on the PROS Plan includes a review of existing conditions, one presentation to the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Arts Council, an process update to the OSCT (September 2019), and the completion of a [community survey](#).

On January 19, 2021, the City Council and Parks & Recreation Commission held a [Joint Study Session](#) to discuss the project re-start process.

NEXT STEPS

On Tuesday, March 23 a virtual public meeting will be conducted to include a presentation and provide opportunity to receive community input through live polling and breakout discussions. Following this virtual meeting, the staff and consulting team will utilize input to inform the next steps of the process. Due to the time lapse, additional input is anticipated from both the Arts Council and the Open Space Conservancy Trust will be requested later this year, ahead of the transmittal of the Parks and Recreation Commission’s recommendation to the City Council.

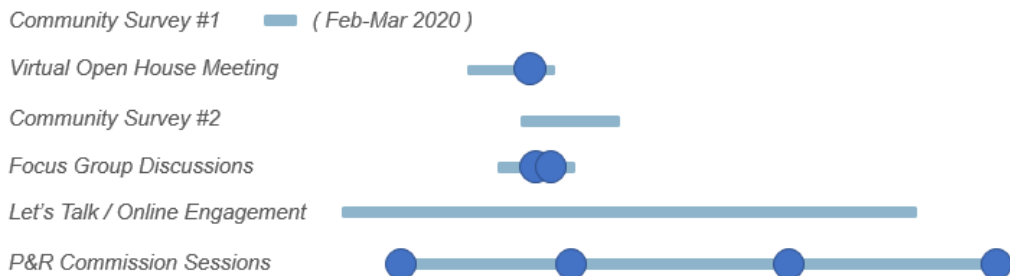
Below is the updated project timeline, specific dates and meeting will be updated as information is available.



Project Timeline



Public Involvement



RECOMMENDATION

Receive update.



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 5
March 18, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	2021 Restoration Work Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the 2021 Restoration Work Plan	

STAFF:	Alaine Sommargren, Deputy Public Works Director Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Lisa Anderl
EXHIBITS:	1. 2021 Restoration Maps

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

City staff reports to the Trust board each year on planned forest restoration activities in Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. Restoration activities are performed by professional contractors, volunteers, seasonal crew members, and Natural Resources staff. Restoration work is guided by the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan and the 10-Year Update to the Open Space Vegetation Management Plan.

2021 RESTORATION WORK PLAN

Professional Contractors

In 2021, professional contractor work is scheduled in all three quadrants of Pioneer Park as well as Engstrom Open Space. In Pioneer Park, work will largely focus on launching comprehensive invasive removal efforts as outlined in the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan (see maps in Exhibit 1). The following contractor work is currently out to bid. If the bids come within budget, the contracts will be awarded in late March. Field work is slated to begin in late April and continue through the end of the year. Staff will update the Trust Board if the work plan changes due to budgetary constraints.

- **Comprehensive invasive removal** is scheduled in approximately 18 acres of the SE quadrant (PP0902a, PP0902b, PP0902c, and PP1001). This is consistent with benchmarks outlined in the Pioneer Park Forest Health Plan which calls for 15.5 acres of ground ivy and herbaceous weed removal in 2021.
- **Invasive removal maintenance** is scheduled for 3.3 acres of Pioneer NW (PP1902a) and 3.2 acres of Engstrom Open Space (EN1001a). These sites are now on a regular long-term maintenance schedule after receiving at least three years of comprehensive invasive removal.

- **Ivy ring creation** will continue in 3.3 acres of the NW Quadrant (PP2001) and 3.6 acres of Engstrom Open Space (EN1001c).
- **Fall planting** is scheduled on 4 acres of the NE Quadrant (PP1004a).
- **Watering of new plantings** is slated for two sites in Pioneer Park’s NW quadrant - one at the junction of the Woodpecker and Dogwood trails within PP1801 and the second is the 2020 Arbor Day planting site at the NW trailhead entrance.
- **Invasive tree treatment** is scheduled for 2.4 acres of the NE quadrant of Pioneer Park (PP1004d).

CONTRACTOR WORK SUMMARY

Site	Area ID	Project Area (acres)	Restoration Task
Pioneer Park NW	PP1801/ NW Entrance	0.2	Water Plantings
Pioneer Park NW	PP1902a	3.3	Invasive removal maintenance
Pioneer Park NW	PP2001	2.3	Ivy rings
Pioneer Park NE	PP1004a	4.0	Fall Planting
Pioneer Park NE	PP1004d	2.4	Invasive Tree Treatment
Pioneer Park SE	PP0902a	5.4	Comprehensive Invasive Removal
Pioneer Park SE	PP0902b	6.1	Comprehensive Invasive Removal
Pioneer Park SE	PP0902c	0.9	Comprehensive Invasive Removal
Pioneer Park SE	PP1001	5.4	Comprehensive Invasive Removal
Engstrom Open Space	EN1001a	3.2	Invasive removal maintenance
Engstrom Open Space	EN1001c	3.6	Ivy rings

Natural Resources Crew

During the 2021 field season, the Natural Resources crew will continue to monitor and treat noxious weed populations on all Trust properties. Noxious weed species slated for monitoring, removal and/or treatment include spotted jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and knotweed (*Polygonum* spp.) in the SE quadrant located within PP1002. Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) will also be treated along private property boundaries within each quadrant.

The seasonal crew will conduct planting maintenance and blackberry knockdown in select areas of PP1002 in the SE quadrant – targeting saplings in canopy gaps where Himalayan blackberry is growing robustly and inhibiting tree survival and growth. In addition, planting maintenance will be done in the two small plantings installed in 2020 in the NW quadrant where watering is being done by professional contractors at the NW trailhead of the NW quadrant and at the junction of the Woodpecker and Dogwood trails.

The Natural Resources Crew will also be available to respond to restoration related issues and tasks as they arise throughout the field season.

Volunteer Stewardship

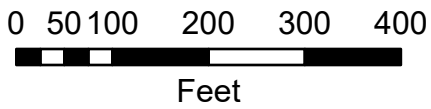
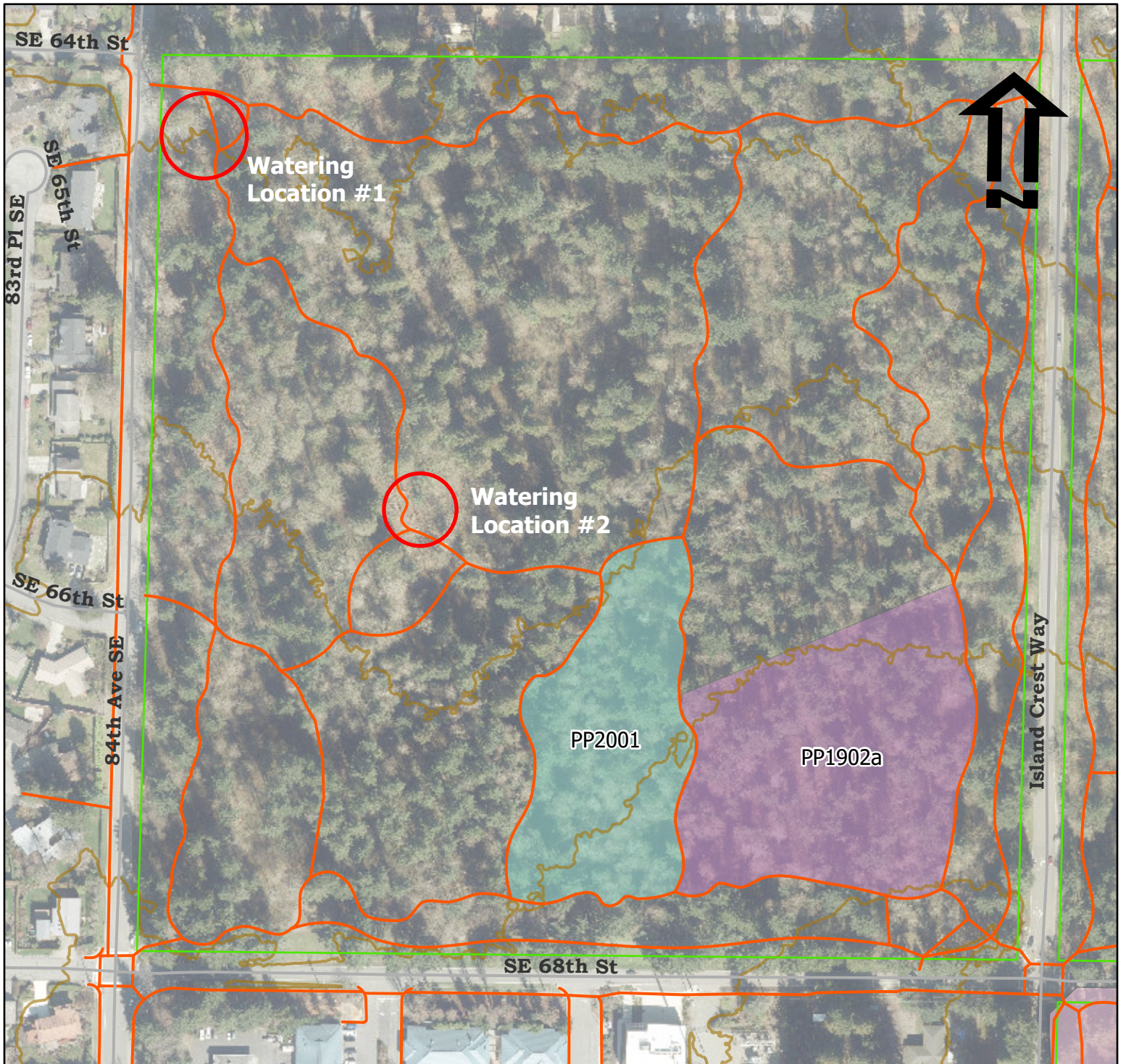
Due to ongoing COVID-19 safety concerns and programmatic changes at EarthCorps, the City has not secured a Professional Services Agreement for volunteer management services for 2021. Natural Resources staff will be working with EarthCorps in the next couple of months to develop a plan for revised volunteer event offerings, similar to what was offered in summer of 2020, most likely starting in early summer of 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the 2021 Restoration Work Plan.

Pioneer Park NW Open Space Restoration 2021

Item 5.

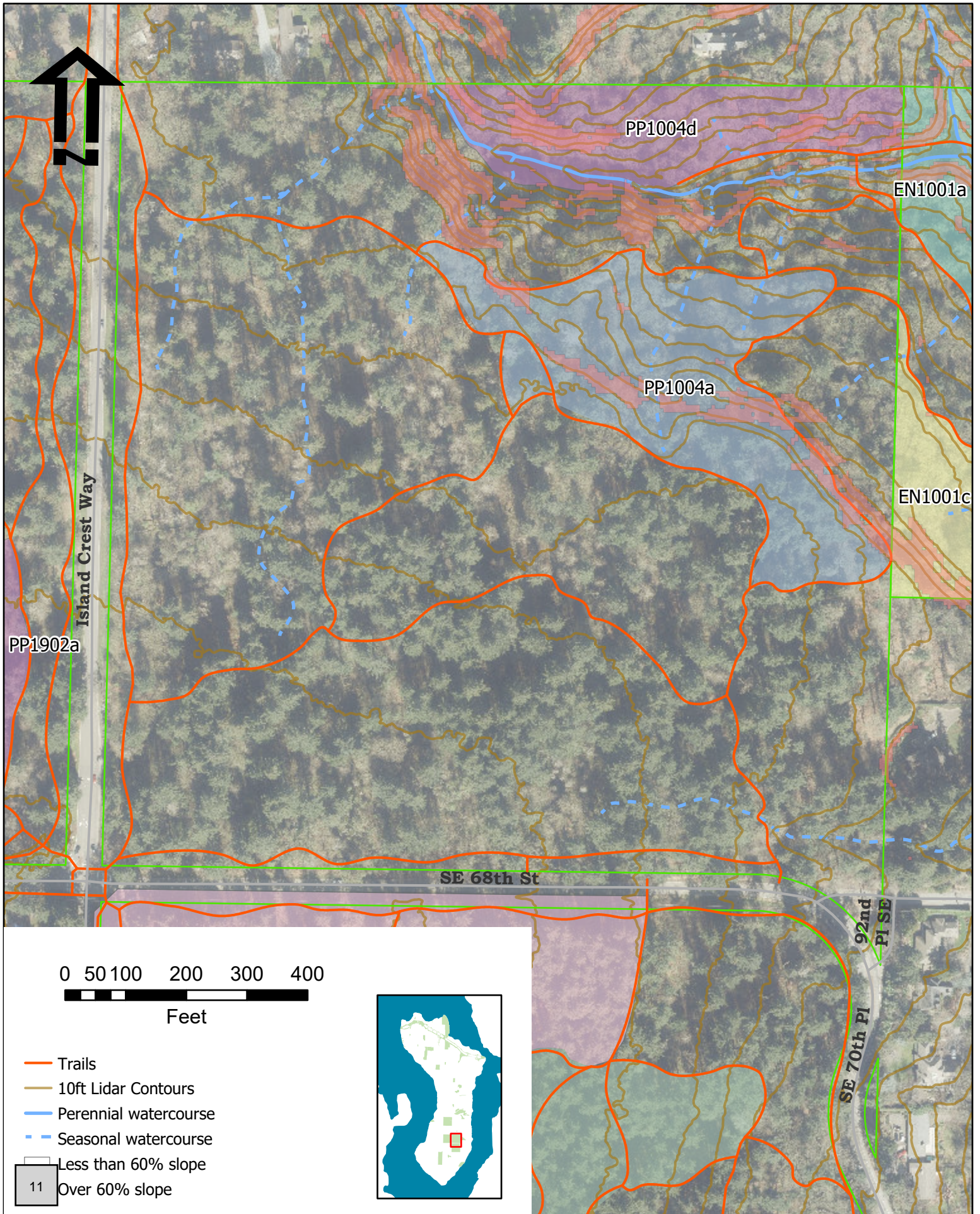


- Trails
- 10ft Lidar Contours



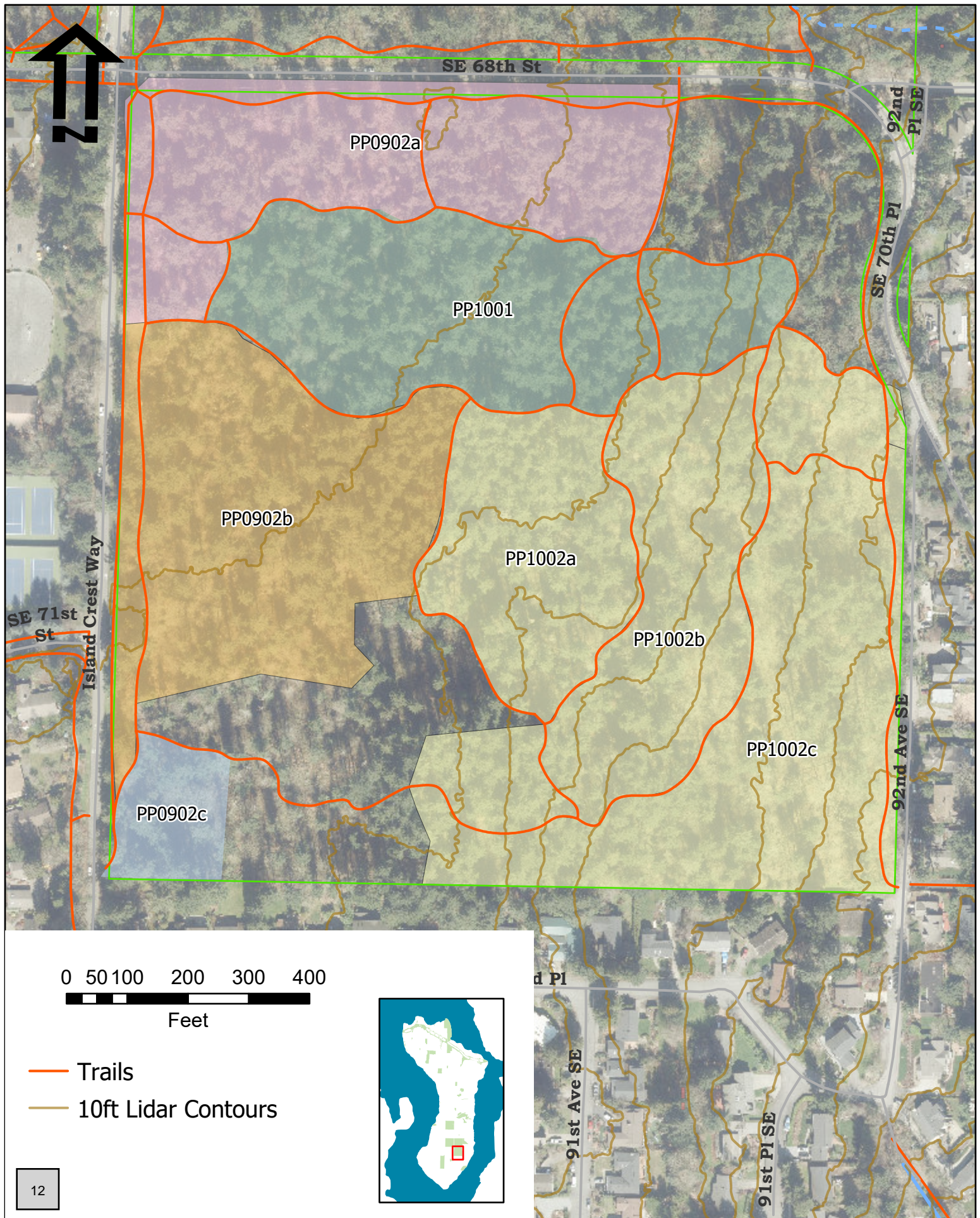
Pioneer Park NE Open Space Restoration 2021

Item 5.



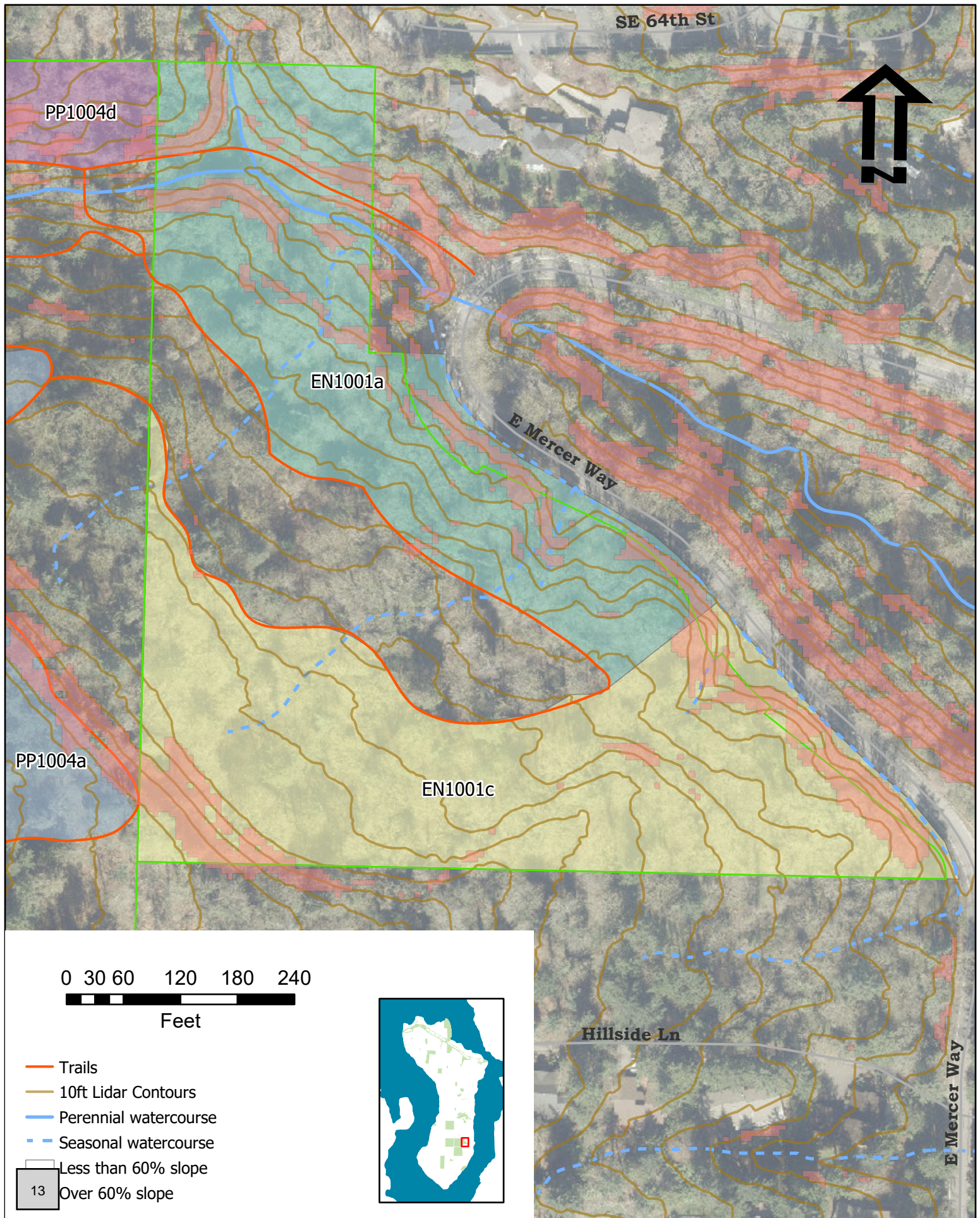
Pioneer Park SE Open Space Restoration 2021

Item 5.



Engstrom Open Space Restoration 2021

Item 5.



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Feet

- Trails
- 10ft Lidar Contours
- Perennial watercourse
- Seasonal watercourse
- Less than 60% slope
- Over 60% slope

13