



## OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 3  
January 21, 2021  
Regular Business

### AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	Review 2003 Fire Management Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Review revised plan. Provide staff direction.	

  

<b>STAFF:</b>	Alaine Sommargren, Deputy Public Works Director
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	Lisa Anderl
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Revised Appendix M: Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space Fire Management Plan (redline version)</li><li>2. Revised Appendix M: Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space Fire Management Plan (clean version)</li></ol>

### SUMMARY

#### BACKGROUND

In light of recent wildfires affecting urban areas on the west coast, City staff received several inquiries about the potential for wildland fire in Pioneer Park, and the City's plan for mitigating fire risk and responding to a fire occurrence on Trust properties.

The Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan, adopted by City Council in November 2003, includes the Pioneer Park Fire Management Plan (Appendix M), which was intended to address these issues. This plan details the firefighting resources available to address such a fire, summarizes the challenges and mitigating factors involved in fighting a wildland fire on these properties, and outlines actions that Mercer Island Fire and Parks staff can take to minimize fire risk in the park.

#### PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATES

The plan not been updated since its adoption, and unsurprisingly, many pieces of information included are no longer current with Mercer Island Fire Department (MIFD) practices and resources. To bring this document up-to-date, staff consulted with Steve Heitman, Mercer Island Fire Chief, and Mike Mandella, Deputy Fire Chief. Exhibit 1 includes suggested edits that reflect current mutual aid agreements, updated information about fire hose reach/water availability in the park, and MIFD's assessment of the challenges that the properties present for wildland firefighting. In addition, Parks staff have updated maps of the park to include the Engstrom Open Space property, terrain information, and new fire hose reach projections.

Staff recognize that several of the action items included in the plan, meant to address areas for improvement, are not reflected in current work plans and practices. While staff has continuously worked with neighboring property owners to improve habitat value along the park boundary, staff has not recently sought to educate homeowners about fire-wise landscaping techniques or worked with them to reduce firewood and debris adjacent to the park. Such educational outreach can be prioritized in the coming year.

#### **FURTHER REVISIONS**

While these revisions correct out-of-date information, they do not present any substantive changes to the policy or staff direction presented in the original plan. The Trust may wish to explore alternative strategies for addressing wildland fire risk. Such strategies should be considered in tandem with established management plan priorities, goals, and prescriptions. If requested, staff can evaluate the effectiveness and potential impacts of specific mitigation strategies and/or work with local agencies to determine if there are updated forest management recommendations that consider both wildfire risk and forest health.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Review plan. Provide staff direction for further research and/or revisions.