



LOWER TAYLOR CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Taylor Creek is located near the south end of Lake Washington in southeast Seattle. The creek originates in unincorporated King County and passes through a natural area ravine known as Deadhorse Canyon within Lakeridge Park. It then flows through residential yards and a culvert under Rainier Ave S before discharging into Lake Washington. The condition of the Rainier Ave S culvert, along with other barriers in the creek, prevents fish passage upstream to good quality habitat in Deadhorse Canyon. The lower stream is also confined in a small channel that produces poor habitat conditions and occasionally floods.

In 2011, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) began engaging the nearby community in discussions about habitat restoration at the site. Those discussions identified a number of concerns about how public access could affect the surrounding residential neighborhood. SPU determined that an open, collaborative process was needed to examine different options for public access to the site and the associated benefits and challenges. This “Public Access Options Analysis Report” is the product of that process. This report documents the analysis process, detailing the evaluation of public access and collaboration between SPU, Parks, the Interdepartmental Team, and the broader community, and provides a staff-level access recommendation.

SPU considered five public access options – No Access, Viewpoint, Scheduled Access, Limited Access, and Open Access – and evaluated each based on six criteria – *Habitat Improvements; City Cost, Operations and Maintenance; City Safety and Liability; Community and Neighborhood Amenities; Potential Neighborhood Impacts; and Traffic Safety and Mobility.*

Based on these criteria, City of Seattle staff recommends providing some form of Open Access to the lower Taylor Creek site, contingent upon further investigation and design around issues raised from the community during this process. This option is recommended because it is consistent with City Comprehensive and Shoreline Management goals and policies and provides broader community benefits (e.g., increased shoreline access, additional open space, education and stewardship opportunities).

There are concerns about how public access may affect the stream and surrounding habitat, the immediate neighborhood, and traffic in the area. The recommendation for some form of Open Access is contingent upon designing a project that:

- Protects the restored habitat conditions and the fish and wildlife living in the area;
- Assures safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles to the site and through the area;
- Balances project costs with environmental and social benefits and is within budgeted resources;
- Minimizes adverse neighborhood changes and maximizes neighborhood amenities;
- Provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility as required;
- Avoids and minimizes impacts to playfield uses; and
- Promotes positive use of the space.