



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST REGULAR HYBRID MEETING

Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 5:00 PM

BOARD MEMBERS

Hillary Ethe, Carol Lynn Berseth,
Marie Bender, Geraldine Poor,
Andrew Rosenthal, Kipley Olson,
and Lisa Anderl

LOCATION & CONTACT

Mercer Island Community & Event Center and Zoom
8236 SE 24th Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040
Phone: 206.275.7600 | www.mercerisland.gov

We strive to create an inclusive and accessible experience. Those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the Staff Liaison's Office 3 days prior to the meeting at 206.275.7874 or by emailing Casey.Troy@mercerisland.gov

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

Individuals wishing to speak live during Appearances (public comment period) must register their request with staff at **206.275.7861** or [email](#) before 4 PM on the day of the Commission meeting. Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

Join the meeting at 5:00 PM (Appearances will start sometime after 5:00 PM) by:

- 1) **Telephone:** Call 253.215.8782 and enter Webinar ID **853 2331 6198** and Password **316105**.
- 2) **Zoom:** Click [this link](#) (Webinar ID **853 2331 6198** and Password **316105**.)
- 3) **In person at 5:00 PM:** Mercer Island Community & Event Center - 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL – 5:00 PM

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. **Open Space Conservancy Trust April 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
Recommended Action: Approve minutes
2. **OSCT26-06: Election of Officers**
Recommended Action: Appoint Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.
3. **OSCT26-07: Bench Donation Program**
Recommended Action: Discuss the status of the bench donation program, provide input to staff for development of a future work plan item.
4. **OSCT26-08: Annual Herbicide Application Report**
Recommended Action: Receive report.
5. **OSCT26-09: Pioneer Park Signage Update**
Recommended Action: Discuss next steps for updating signage on Trust Property.

OTHER BUSINESS

6. [Department Update](#)
7. [Quadrant Reports](#)
8. Topics for Future Discussion
9. [Next Scheduled Meeting – October 15, 2026 at 5:00 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST REGULAR HYBRID MEETING MINUTES April 16, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The Open Space Conservancy Trust meeting was called to order by Chair Ethe at 5:01pm.

ROLL CALL

Chair Hillary Ethe, Vice Chair Carol Lynn Berseth, Secretary Marie Bender, and Trustees Geraldine Poor, Thomas Hildebrandt, and Andrew Rosenthal were present.

Council Liaison/Trustee Lisa Anderl was absent.

Management Analyst Amelia Tjaden, Parks Operations Manager Sam Harb, Natural Resources Program Manager Lizzy Stone, and Recreation Specialist Raven Gillis were present.

APPEARANCES

Omer Cansizoglu addressed the Trust regarding Off Leash Dogs

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from February 12, 2026, Special Hybrid Meeting was presented.

It was moved by Rosenthal; seconded by Poor to:

Approve the minutes from February 12, 2026, Special Hybrid Meeting

Passed: 6 – 0

2. Community Engagement Plan for E-Bike Regulations in Parks & Open Spaces

Management Analyst Amelia Tjaden presented. Trustees asked questions and provided input.

3. 2026 Restoration and Trails Work Plan

Natural Resources Program Manager Lizzy Stone presented. Trustees asked questions and provided input.

It was moved by Bender; seconded by Hildebrandt to:

Approve the 2026 Restoration and Trails Work Plan.

Passed: 6 – 0

4. Off Leash Dog Update

Parks Operations Manager Sam Harb presented. Trustees asked questions and provided input.

OTHER BUSINESS

5. Department Report

Parks Operations Manager Sam Harb presented. Trustees received the report and asked questions. Harb noted that

6. Quadrant Reports

Northeast quadrant (Ethe & Poor): Trustee Poor reported that the Northeast Quadrant is well maintained.

Northwest quadrant (Berseth & open): Vice Chair Berseth noted the Northwest quad is noticeably improved overall and feels significantly safer, including in the Northeast area. Conditions continue to evolve depending on recent storms and ongoing project work, so it remains a dynamic environment. Active work is still in progress, which is positive to see.

Southeast quadrant (Bender & Hildebrandt): Trustee Hildebrandt reported that the Southeast Quadrant looks to be in good shape. Secretary Bender did not have anything recent to report.

Chair Ethe praised city staff for prompt and effective storm debris cleanup across all quadrants. She also highlighted significant progress by forest stewards—especially ivy removal in the Southeast—crediting expanded volunteer efforts for visible improvements. Ongoing concerns include persistent standing water and muddy areas (notably in the Northwest interior and near Island Crest), with appreciation for staff pursuing long-term solutions. Overall conditions were noted as very positive.

Trustee Rosenthal agreed to monitor the Northwest Quadrant with Vice Chair Berseth.

7. Topics for future discussion

Secretary Bender recommended including a review of off-leash dog signage at the July meeting, in alignment with the scheduled agenda item on signage.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is a Regular Meeting on July 16, 2026, at 5pm.

ADJOURNMENT at 6:24PM



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

OSCT26-06
July 16, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Officer Elections	<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:	Appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary	

STAFF:	Casey Troy, Interim Park Operations Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Lisa Anderl
EXHIBITS:	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to present the process for the election of officers for the Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT).

BACKGROUND

According to the [Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust Bylaws](#), the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary are elected annually by the Trust during the July meeting. Each officer serves a one-year term, with no term limits, allowing members to be re-elected to the same position in subsequent years.

All members of the Open Space Conservancy Trust are eligible for appointment to officer positions at any point during their tenure on the Trust. The bylaws also outline the duties associated with each officer role and the procedures for conducting elections.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Tonight, the Open Space Conservancy Trust is scheduled to appoint a new Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary utilizing the following process to elect new officers (as noted in section 3.1 of the bylaws).

The Staff Liaison shall conduct the elections for Chair as follows:

- A. Any Trustee may nominate a candidate for Chair; no second is needed.
- B. Nominees may accept or decline the nomination.
- C. If only one (1) nomination is made, it is appropriate to make a motion and obtain a second to instruct the Staff Liaison to cast a unanimous ballot for that nomination for Chair. Approval is by majority vote of Trustees present.
- D. If more than one (1) nomination is made, an open election is conducted by roll call vote.
- E. To be elected, the nominee needs a majority vote of the Open Space Conservancy Trust.
- F. Elections will continue until a Chair is elected by a majority vote of the Open Space Conservancy Trust.

G. The Staff Liaison shall declare the nominee receiving the majority vote as the new Chair.

*This process is repeated for the election of the Vice Chair, followed by the election of Secretary

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

OSCT26-07
July 16, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Bench Donation Program	<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:	Discuss the status of the bench donation program, provide input to staff for development of a future work plan item.	
STAFF:	Casey Troy, Interim Parks Operations Manager Lizzy Stone, Natural Resources Program Manager	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Lisa Anderl	
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mercer Island Public Bench Donation Guidelines 2. Pioneer Park Bench Location Map 	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Open Space Conservancy Trust with an update on the current process for identifying available bench donation locations, discuss how to address requests for donated benches in unspecified locations, and determine whether there is interest in adding a future work plan item for staff to evaluate additional bench locations within Pioneer Park.

BACKGROUND

The Bench Donation Program is administered by the Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department and provides community members with an opportunity to donate the purchase and installation of a commemorative park bench. Donated benches may include a bronze plaque with a limited amount of approved text. The program is intended to be mutually beneficial by allowing donors to recognize a loved one or share a positive community message while helping offset the cost of providing park amenities for the public. The Public Bench Donation Guidelines ([Exhibit 1](#)) have been refined over time to provide clarity and transparency for prospective donors regarding donation amounts, plaque standards, approved locations, and maintenance expectations.

In 2006, at the request of staff, the Open Space Conservancy Trust approved the Pioneer Park Bench Location Map ([Exhibit 2](#)) identifying designated locations for benches within Pioneer Park. The purpose of establishing approved locations was to provide a consistent framework for bench placement focused on the visitor experience, park aesthetics, maintenance, and staff capacity. The locations identified presented limited impact to the surrounding area for installation and sought to maintain the natural feel of the park- with a goal of balancing community need while specifically limiting the number of assets in the park. The development of the map was designed to reduce staff time needed in evaluation of other locations.

In 2019, the Trust reviewed and recommended adding an additional bench location in the northwest quadrant of Pioneer Park near the intersection of SE 68th Street and 84th Avenue SE. The Parks and Recreation Director subsequently approved the additional location- recognizing the community benefit of the proposed location.

The current Pioneer Park Bench Location Map identifies existing donated benches and approved available locations.

DISCUSSION

Staff periodically receive requests from prospective donors to install commemorative benches in locations that are not identified on the approved Pioneer Park Bench Location Map. In these cases, staff have historically directed donors to the approved locations in order to maintain consistency with the adopted bench plan while still providing an opportunity to participate in the Bench Donation Program.

More recently, staff have received an increased number of inquiries for benches in specific, donor-selected locations that are not currently designated for donation benches and at times inconsistent with program goals. While the Public Bench Donation Guidelines allow staff to consider requested locations on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to park master plans and maintenance needs, Pioneer Park has historically relied on the Trust-approved bench location map to guide these decisions in a fair and transparent way.

These requests present an opportunity to revisit whether the existing inventory of approved bench locations continues to meet community demand and the park's long-term management objectives. In considering this topic, the Trust may wish to discuss:

- The desired outcomes of the Bench Donation Program.
- Whether requests for benches outside the approved locations should continue to be discouraged or evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Whether staff should dedicate time to identifying additional donation bench locations within Pioneer Park for future Trust and Director consideration.

Staff recognizes the challenges associated with a case-by-case, situation by situation approach and recommends that requests for donation benches within Pioneer Park, at locations not currently identified on the approved bench location map, be declined until the Open Space Conservancy Trust has evaluated the appropriate number and placement of donation benches and provided recommendations for a future work plan item.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the status of the bench donation program, provide input to staff for development of a future work plan item.



Public Bench Donation Guidelines

A. Donation Amounts and Duration

The price of a donation includes the purchase of a new bench or the refurbishment of an existing bench, an initial bronze plaque, installation, and fifteen years of routine maintenance and repairs. After the fifteen-year period, existence and/or maintenance is not guaranteed, and the disposition of the gift is at the sole discretion of the City of Mercer Island. If the bench needs replacing the City will contact the donor for first right to re-donate.

1. \$3,500 for a wood or recycled plastic new Parks Standard bench.
2. A non-Parks standard bench may be considered and accepted for an increased donation amount depending on the location.
3. \$2,500 for adoption/donation to refurbish an existing park bench.

B. Approved Bench Locations

1. The Parks Maintenance Division has prepared a list of pre-approved bench locations for Pioneer and Luther Burbank Park which are consistent with Park Master plans and maintenance needs.
2. Donations of new park benches will only be accepted at pre-approved bench locations for the Parks where they have been provided.
3. All other placement locations shall be approved by the Parks Maintenance and Recreation Division with consideration to Park Master Plans and Maintenance needs, on a case by case basis.
4. We understand you may have a special place you would like the bench installed. We welcome your suggestion and desire as to where you would like the bench and will consider the location after staff review.

C. Plaque Guidelines

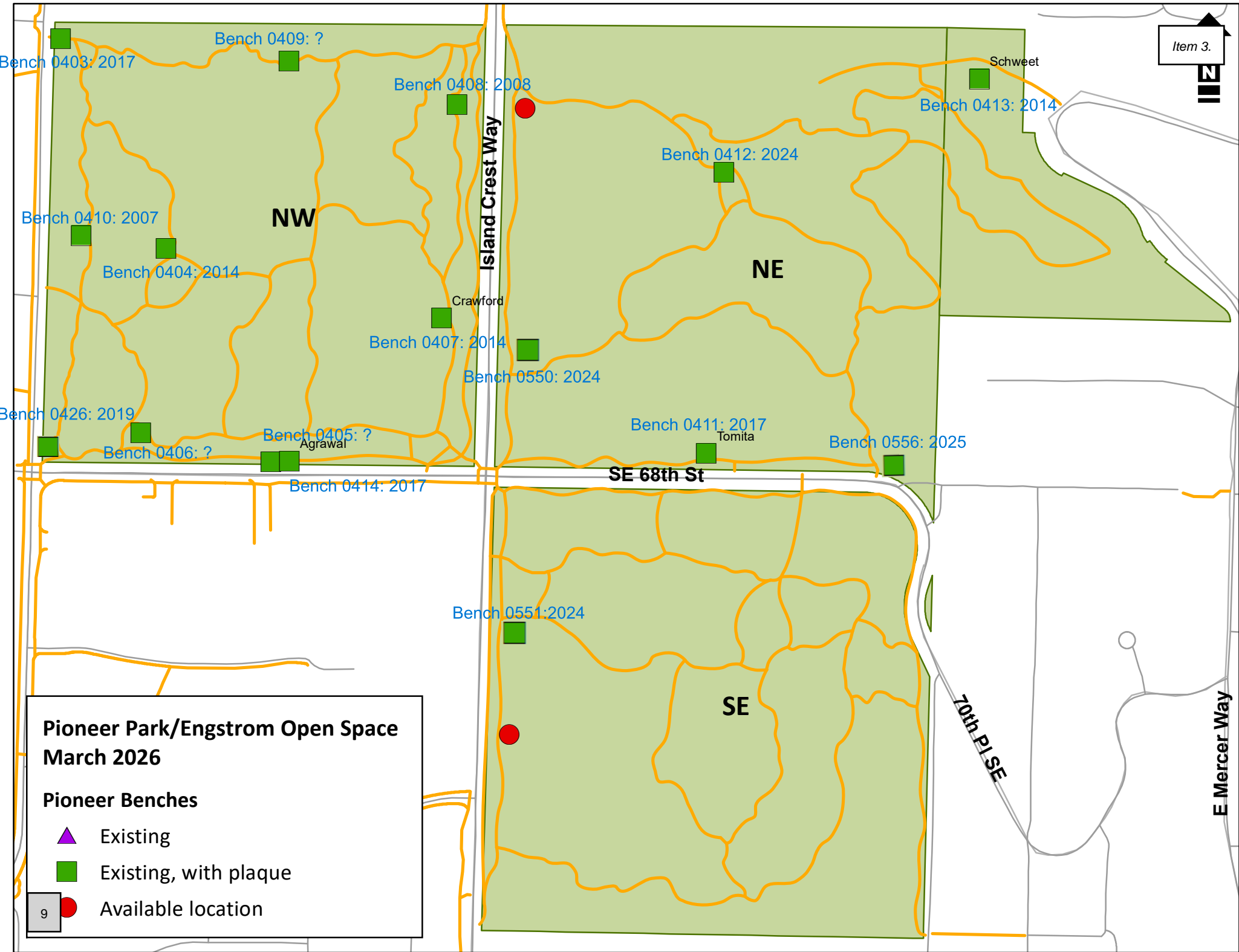
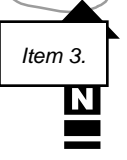
1. Your donation includes a bronze 2.25" x 8" plaque inserted onto the backrest of the bench.
2. The plaque may have three or less lines of small caps text, with approximately 30 characters on each line (including spaces).
3. Plaque content is encouraged to be a positive message without using the word memory, in memory of, etc. or the life span dates if applicable.
4. The plaque process includes opportunity for proofing by the donor.

D. Timeline: bench and plaque order, delivery, install, and donation life span

1. Refurbished benches- approximately two months.
2. New benches- approximately up to four months and installed in fall and winter seasons.
3. Your donation bench has the lifespan of fifteen years of maintenance and upkeep.




Thank you for your consideration and thoughtful donation to our community.

Contact: jeremy.jasman@mercerisland.gov



**Pioneer Park/Engstrom Open Space
March 2026**

Pioneer Benches

-  Existing
-  Existing, with plaque
-  Available location

9

Bench 0403: 2017

Bench 0409: ?

Bench 0408: 2008

Schweet
Bench 0413: 2014

Bench 0412: 2024

Bench 0410: 2007

NW

Bench 0404: 2014

NE

Crawford

Bench 0407: 2014

Bench 0550: 2024

Bench 0426: 2019

Bench 0405: ?
Agrawal

Bench 0411: 2017
Tomita

Bench 0556: 2025

Bench 0406: ?

Bench 0414: 2017

SE 68th St

Bench 0551: 2024

SE

20th Pl SE

E Mercer Way



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

OSCT26-08
July 16, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Annual Herbicide Application Report 2026	<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 report.	

STAFF:	Lizzy Stone, Natural Resources Program Manager	
EXHIBITS:	1. 2025 Herbicide Application Map 2. 2026 Monitoring and Herbicide Treatment Map	

SUMMARY

In May 2010, the Open Space Conservancy Trust adopted the Herbicide Use Protocol which prescribes the situations in which herbicide may be used on Trust properties. The protocol is updated periodically to reflect changes to best practices, which are driven by research on treatment effectiveness, environmental impact, and other factors. The protocol requires City staff to report to the Trust annually on the recent use and planned uses of herbicides for the year.

2025 REPORT

In 2025, Mercer Island’s Natural Resources team conducted monitoring for yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), knotweed (*Polygonum* spp.), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), spotted jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), and shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*) in Pioneer Park or Engstrom Open Space. Yellow archangel was the only one of those species found on Trust property.

Yellow archangel was first identified and treated in Pioneer Park in 2010. This initial treatment was largely successful and eradicated approximately 90-95% of the infestation. Regular monitoring of the area has resulted in subsequent treatments to manage remaining infestations. In 2025, lingering patches of yellow archangel were identified along the north edge of the NW quadrant, as well as in the south edge of the SE quadrant. Both populations were treated in September with a formulation of 1.5% triclopyr, 2.5% glyphosate, and 2% adjuvant. All products used were aquatic-approved formulations. Adjacent neighbors were contacted, and resources were shared about the weed, to develop a collaborative approach to eliminating the populations.

While conducting Comprehensive Weed Removal and Invasive Removal Maintenance on over 27.3 acres of Trust property, contractors removed or treated any invasive trees that were found throughout these areas. Where invasive trees were found, seedlings were manually removed, smaller trees were cut and the cut stem was painted with glyphosate or triclopyr, and larger trees were injected using EZ-Ject lance Copperhead shells containing the herbicide imazapyr. Trees that were included in these treatments are: English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), English laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*).

Additionally, contractors removed all herbaceous weeds from areas receiving Comprehensive Weed Removal and Invasive Removal Maintenance work. The vast majority of this work was manual removal of English ivy and non-native blackberry. In select patches of non-native blackberry where the roots could not be manually removed without disturbing an adjacent native plant, contractors painted cut stems with the herbicide glyphosate or triclopyr. This was needed in situations where blackberry is growing through, or directly next to, a native plant. A cut-paint herbicide application involves cutting stems to approximately 6-inches tall and immediately applying herbicide to the cut stem using a paint brush or dropper. This approach allows for targeted control of a species, without risking off-target spray to nearby desirable species.

Invasive trees and select blackberry stems were treated throughout 23.5 acres of Pioneer Park Northeast, 10.2 acres of Pioneer Park SE, and 4.9 acres of Engstrom Open Space.

Exhibit 1 shows the areas where yellow archangel was found and treated, as well as contractor zones where surveys found at least some invasive trees or non-native blackberry populations that required herbicide treatment. This map does not represent a full survey of all non-native trees and blackberry on Trust properties.

2026 PLAN

In 2026, the Natural Resources team will again be monitoring noxious weed populations in Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. The crew will survey yellow archangel, knotweed, yellow flag iris, spotted jewelweed, and shiny geranium.

Contracted crews will be conducting Comprehensive Weed Removal or invasive tree treatment work throughout 40.6 acres of Trust property. As described previously, this work will involve a thorough survey for the presence of any invasive trees or blackberry that cannot be removed manually. Additionally, contractors may encounter ivy on steep slopes that cannot be safely removed without risk of destabilizing the slope. In this case, the English ivy may be sprayed with an aquatic-approved herbicide, taking special care to avoid any nearby native plants. This comprehensive weed removal work will take place across 24.1 acres of Pioneer Park NE, 10.1 acres of Pioneer Park NW, and 6.4 acres of Pioneer Park SE. No such work will be taking place in Engstrom Open Space in 2026.

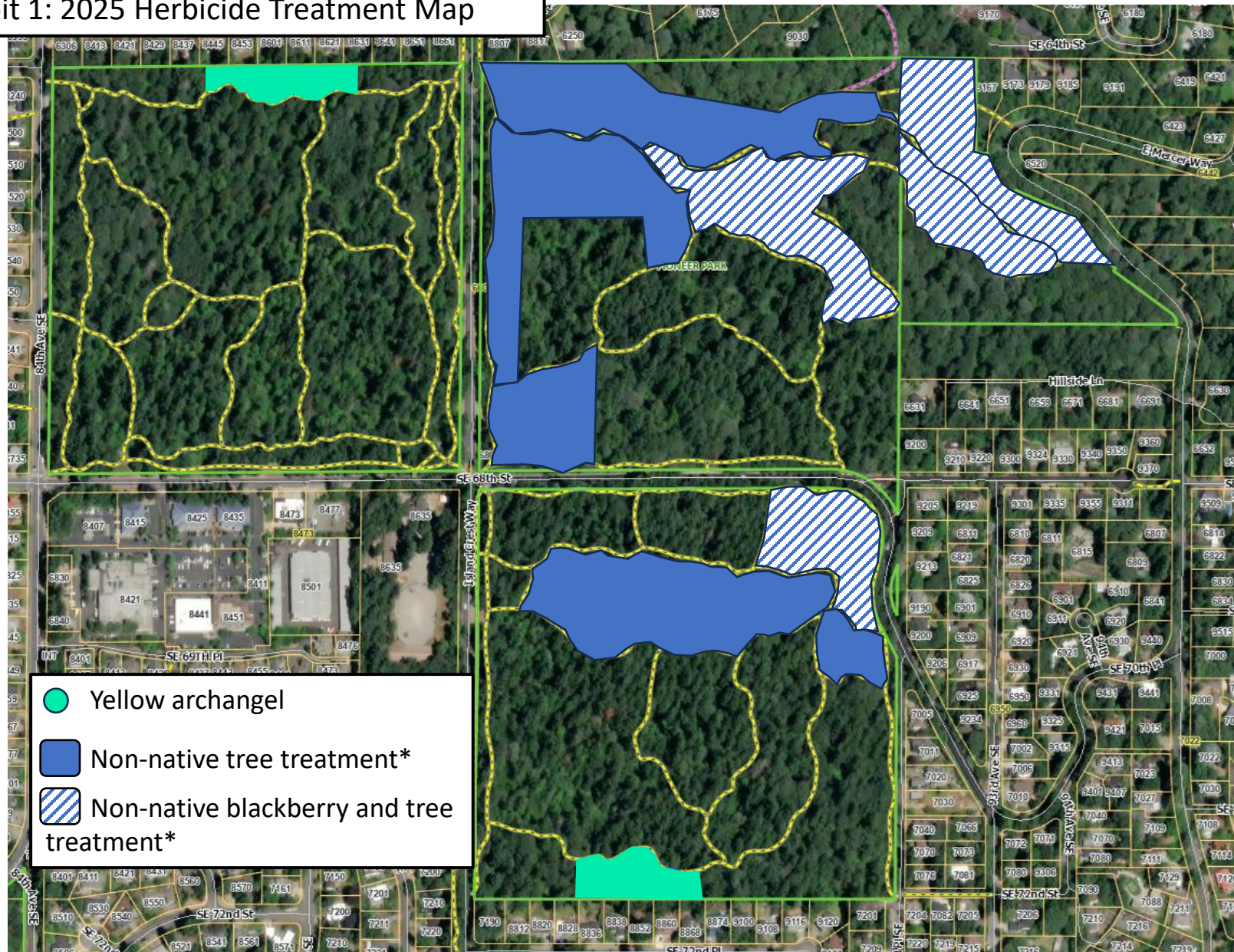
Exhibit 2 shows areas where yellow archangel has been found in recent surveys, as well as contractor zones where comprehensive weed removal work will be taking place. These contractor zones are areas where invasive tree, blackberry, or steep slope ivy treatment may occur.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report.

Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space Exhibit 1: 2025 Herbicide Treatment Map

Item 4.

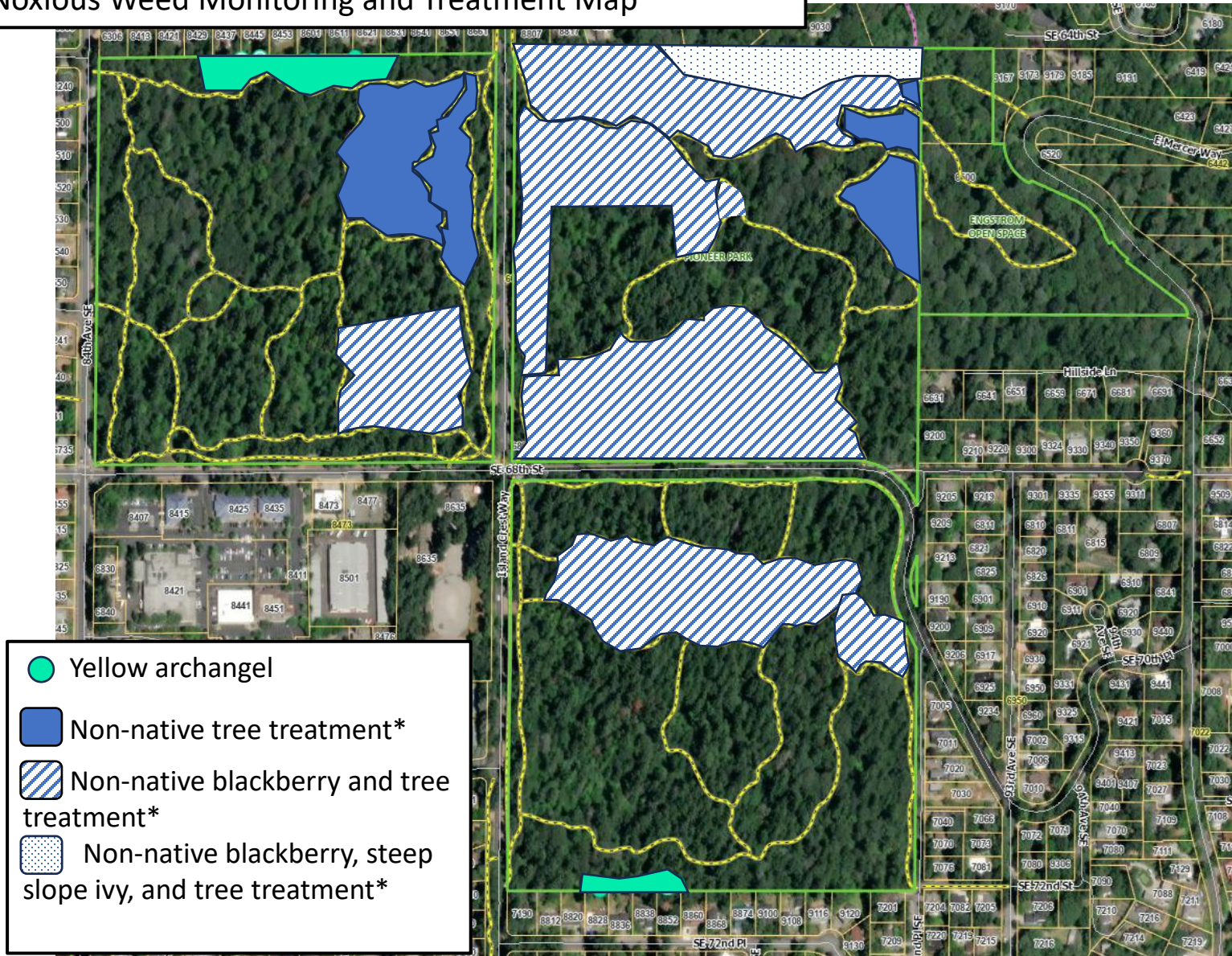


*Highlighted locations received treatment where non-native tree, blackberry, or ivy were found that could not be effectively dug up. These are sites where work was contracted in 2025. This map does not represent a full survey of all non-native trees or blackberry on Trust property.

Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space

Exhibit 2: 2026 Noxious Weed Monitoring and Treatment Map

Item 4.



13 *Highlighted locations will be thoroughly surveyed for non-native trees, non-native blackberry growing up through native plants, and ivy on unstable, steep slopes. These are sites where work was contracted in 2026. This map does not represent a full survey of all non-native trees or blackberry on Trust property.



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

OSCT26-09
July 16, 2026
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE:	Pioneer Park Signage 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 updated sign inventory. Discuss next steps for updates to signage on Trust Property.	
STAFF:	Lizzy Stone, Natural Resources Program Manager	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Lisa Anderl	
EXHIBITS:	Exhibit 1: Pioneer Park Sign Inventory – June 2026 Exhibit 2: Pioneer Park Sign Inventory Map – June 2026	

SUMMARY

In the July and October 2023 Open Space Conservancy Trust Board meetings, the Trust and staff discussed updating signage in Pioneer Park and Engstrom Open Space. In January 2024, staff presented about the Stqry platform and the Trust formed a committee to work on designing and updating signage in the park, utilizing the Stqry as desired. In October 2025, staff presented an update to a 2016 signage inventory, and it was agreed to have staff replace missing yield signs in the Southeast quadrant of Pioneer Park. These signs were replaced in early 2026.

The educational signs found in Pioneer Park Northwest, as well as the map signs found in all quadrants are out of date and due for replacement or updating. Today’s Pioneer Park Signage Update is intended to provide the Trust with a current inventory of signs, and to discuss next steps for updating park signage. The up-to-date list of signs can be found in Exhibit 1 with a map of sign locations in Exhibit 2.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss next steps for updating signage on Trust Property.

Exhibit 1

Pioneer Park Sign Inventory 2026

NE Quadrant

1. Dogs Must Be on Leash
No Harvesting
Dog Owner's Guide Box
2. Directional arrows – Island Crest Way and Ravine Trail
3. Directional arrows – 68th St and Island Crest Way
4. Directional arrows – Ravine Trail and 68th St
5. Dogs Must Be on Leash
No Harvesting
6. Entrance Sign
7. Map Sign
Dog Owners Guide Box
Dogs Must Be on Leash
No Harvesting
8. Dogs Must Be on Leash
No Harvesting

SE Quadrant

1. Attention Dog Owners (Voice/Signal Control)
No Harvesting
Yield Sign
2. Yield Sign
3. No Horses Permitted
4. Map Sign
Dog Owners Guide Box
Tobacco-Free
Attention Dog Owners (Voice/Signal Control)
5. Yield Sign
6. Yield Sign
7. Yield Sign
8. Yield Sign
9. Yield Sign

NW Quadrant

1. Map Sign
Dog Owners Guide Box
No Harvesting
2. Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
City of Mercer Island Dog Rules
3. Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
4. Recycling in Nature
5. Map sign

- Equestrian Symbol with Arrow
- Tobacco-Free
- No Harvesting
- Dog Owners Guide Box
- Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
- Entrance Sign
- 6. Earth to Sky
- 7. Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
- 8. Current Location Map
- 9. Current Location Map
- 10. Current Location Map
- 11. Current Location Map
- 12. Forest Succession
- 13. Map Sign
 - No Harvesting
 - Tobacco-Free
 - Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
- 14. Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
 - No Harvesting
- 15. Map Kiosk
 - Map Sign
 - Dog Owners Guide Box
 - Volunteer Guide Box
 - No Harvesting
 - Tobacco-Free
 - Certified Wildlife Habitat
 - Attention Dog Owners (City Code MICC 7.04)
 - Entrance Sign

Engstrom

1. Map Sign
 - Dogs must be on leash
 - No Harvesting
2. Stay on Trail

