

PROJECT ACTION MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 6E
Meeting Date: 6/17/25

DATE: June 9, 2025
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsors: Debbie Shepack, Sr. Director Real Estate & Jason Jordan, Sr. Director Environmental and Planning Services
Project Managers: Elly Bulega, Engineering Project Manager II & David Myers, Engineering Project Manager II
SUBJECT: Neptune Environmental Clean-up and Pre-development Improvements & Neptune Mitigation Project Authorizations

A. ACTION REQUESTED

Request project authorization in the amount of \$290,000 for a total authorized amount of \$640,000, for work associated with the Neptune Environmental Clean-up and Pre-development Improvements, Project ID #101690.01.

Request project authorization in the amount of \$1,250,000 for a total authorized amount of \$1,600,000 for work associated with the Neptune Mitigation, Project ID #101711.

Strategic Plan Initiative: EL-1: Remediate contaminated Port properties in a manner that ensures protection of human health and the environment while enabling economic development.

Strategic Plan Initiative: EL-4: Create wetland opportunities and improve fish habitat independent of regulatory obligation.

B. SYNOPSIS

This request is for two separate projects related to the planned development on Parcel 112. The goal of these projects is to begin the remediation process for the autofluff contamination found on Port Parcel 117, permanently eradicate the invasive Mediterranean vineyard snails from the wetlands located on Parcel 117 and create mitigation at Parcels 12 and 37D for the Parcel 117 planned development wetland impacts.

C. BACKGROUND

PARCEL 117 SNAIL ERADICATION

In November 2005, invasive Mediterranean vineyard snails (*Ceratomyxa virgata*) which have high potential for invading and destroying large segments of Washington's agriculture (wheat, hay, and barley) were discovered on the Hylebos / Blair Peninsula (Figure 1). Due to the danger of the snails being transported off the peninsula and the risk that the snails pose to the grain industry and the economy, the Port, in coordination with the Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture, have attempted multiple eradication methods since 2006. The eradication methods have been successful at all locations except Port

Parcel 117 (Figure 2). Attempted eradication methods include vegetation management, application of pesticides, goats, snail bait, steam treatment, and removal and burning of the vegetation. The presence of detectable snails went from the area shown in Figure 1 in 2006 to Figure 2 in 2022 - 2024.

The western portion of Port Parcel 117 differs from the other infested Port properties because it contains wetland areas that act as a refuge for the snail population. After nearly 20 years of snail eradication without success on Port Parcel 117, the Port proposes to implement a project to eradicate the highly invasive Mediterranean vineyard snails through complete vegetation removal and capping with consolidated fill material.

Adult snails mate and lay eggs in autumn and winter. Eggs are buried in shallow topsoil. Juveniles grow and mature through the spring. During hot, dry summer conditions, snails enter into dormancy. The purpose of the project is to modify the site condition that facilitates the snail's specific life cycle to cease reproduction. The snail eradication effort involves grading the Port Parcel 117 site during the dry summer months to a level condition and then placing approximately six inches of consolidated fill material over site areas including the wetlands and buffers. The site will be monitored for three years post-construction by WSDA to verify the snails have been eradicated.

PARCEL 117 REMEDIATION

In conjunction with the snail eradication effort, the Port will also begin the remediation process for historic contamination. Port Parcel 117 is subject to an enforcement order with the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) for investigation and cleanup under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). Releases of hazardous substances occurred from unauthorized dumping that occurred from approximately 1946 until at least 1991. Portions of Port Parcel 117 adjacent to and within the area populated by the snails were tested for hazardous substances in soil and groundwater in August 2024. Concentrations of hazardous substances were detected at concentrations exceeding Ecology screening levels. The Port has proposed an interim action under the agreed order to grade and cap the contaminated soils along the common property line with the Clean Earth dangerous waste facility. (Figure 3) That work will be integrated with this snail eradication effort.

No other site developments are proposed at the site under this project. But the Port is planning for future development on the site, that will permanently cap all of Parcel 117 and adjoining properties, modifying the site condition that facilitates the snail's specific life cycle to cease reproduction. This future development of Parcel 117 cannot occur until snail eradication is complete.



Figure 1: Location of invasive snails at the Hylebos / Blair Peninsula in 2006.



Figure 2: Parcel 117. Location of invasive snails at the Hylebos / Blair Peninsula in 2022 -2024.

OFFSITE WETLAND MITIGATION FOR PARCEL 117

The snail eradication project will include Stormwater best management practices and the implementation of offsite wetland mitigation as compensation for the proposed wetland impacts. The Port will use an innovative mitigation approach per Tacoma Municipal Code to provide mitigation for the necessary onsite wetland impacts. The project includes the implementation of compensatory wetland mitigation at two offsite locations owned by the Port. The Port will implement a combination of wetland reestablishment, wetland enhancement, and wetland buffer enhancement on two adjoining tax parcels located at 3802 Taylor Way (jointly referred to as Port Parcel 12) (Figure 4). The Port will also implement wetland enhancement within an existing wetland west of the Gog-le-hi-te I Habitat Restoration Site at 1419 Lincoln Avenue (Figure 3). In addition, the Port will apply available credits from the Lower Wapato Creek Habitat Project, an approved Port-owned advanced mitigation site.



Figure 3. Extent of autofluff on Port Parcel 117.

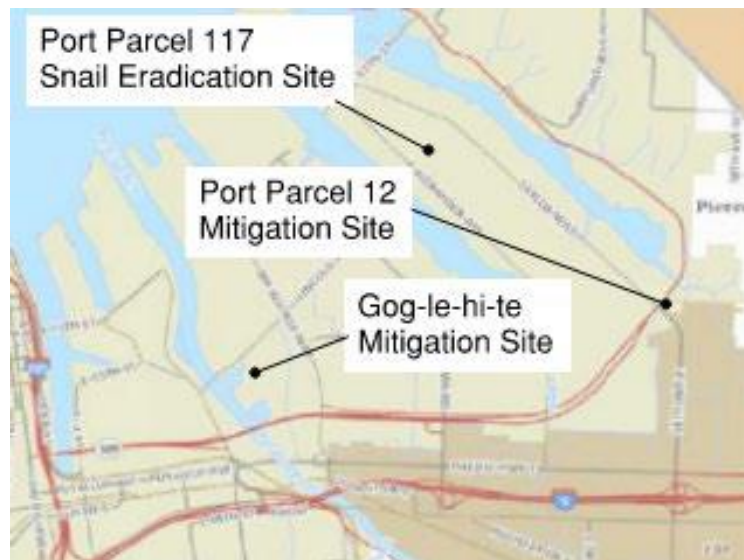


Figure 4. Proposed snail eradication offsite wetland mitigation locations.

D. PROJECT DETAILS**NEPTUNE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP AND PRE-DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT*****Scope of Project:***

1. The Port is going to conduct snail eradication efforts across the property by filling the wetlands, and grading the entire site, then placing approximately 6 inches of compacted gravel across the entire site.
2. The hazardous autofluff present in the sloped area along the eastern part of the property boundary will be capped as an interim action. This will include the installation of a containment wall (e.g. ecology block or similar), then placement of asphalt on top.
3. Decommissioning of monitoring wells on the property prior to site grading and capping activities.

Scope of Work for This Request:

1. Provide design for vegetation removal, grading of the entire site, backfilling of the wetlands and installation of compacted gravel, as part of the snail eradication.
2. Provide design for shoring retaining walls that will be used to contain and cap the autofluff in place.
3. Provide design for decommissioning of the monitoring wells.

Schedule:

Advertise for Bid	Q1 2026
Open Bids	Q2 2026
Notice of Award	Q2 2026
Substantial Completion	Q4 2026
Final Completion	Q4 2026

NEPTUNE MITIGATION***Scope of Project:***

- A. Complete required ditch maintenance in the Drainage District 23 ditch between 4th Street and 54th Street
- B. Complete approximately 5 acres of wetland reestablishment and enhancement at Parcel 12.
- C. Complete approximately 2 acres of wetland enhancement at Parcel 37D

Scope of Work for This Request:

- A. Ground water monitoring and reporting including hydrologic and hydraulic modeling – both parcels
- B. Phase 1 design – Parcel 12 only
 - a. Vegetation control and clearing plan and permitting
 - b. Finalize prior homeless encampment cleanup plan
 - c. Design and permitting associated with DD 23 ditch maintenance including dredging
 - d. Design and permitting site access drive
 - e. Design and permitting fencing modifications

- C. Habitat mitigation design and cost estimating to 30% - both parcels
- D. Environmental permitting for habitat construction – both parcels

Schedule:

Ground water monitoring and reporting, Vegetation Control and DD 23 Maintenance design and permitting	July 2025 thru April 2026
Vegetation control and DD 23 Maintenance dredging construction	Summer of 2026
Design and Permitting of Habitat areas	July 2025 thru April 2027
Construction of Habitat areas	Summer of 2027
Planting and site Maintenance	Fall of 2027 thru Spring of 2030

E. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**NEPTUNE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP AND PRE-DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT****Estimated Cost of Project**

The total project cost including all stages is estimated at \$4,400,000.

Estimated Cost for This Request

The total estimated cost of the Design for this project is \$640,000. If the cost of this estimate is anticipated to exceed the authorized amount, additional Commission authorization will be requested.

Estimated Sales Tax

The total estimated sales tax to be paid to local and state governments for this project is \$318,000.

COST DETAILS

Item	This Request	Total Previous Requests	Total Future Request	Total Project Cost	Cost to Date	Remaining Cost
DESIGN	\$ 290,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 0	\$ 640,000	\$ 209,464	\$ 430,536
CONSTRUCTION	\$ 0	\$0	\$3,760,000	\$ 3,760,000	\$ 0	\$ 3,760,000
TOTAL	\$ 290,000	\$350,000	\$ 3,760,000	\$ 4,400,000	\$ 209,464	\$ 4,190,536

Source of Funds

The 2025-2029 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) allocates \$500,000 for work associated with the Neptune Environmental Clean-up and Pre-development Improvement, Project ID #101690.01. The CIP will be updated during the 2026 budget process.

Financial Impact

Costs associated with the Neptune Environmental Cleanup and Pre-development Improvement, Project ID #101690.01, will be expensed as incurred.

NEPTUNE MITIGATION**Estimated Cost of Project**

The total project cost including all stages is estimated at \$10,900,000.

Estimated Cost for This Request

The total estimated cost for this request for the mitigation projects is \$1,600,000. If the cost of this estimate is anticipated to exceed the authorized amount, additional Commission authorization will be requested.

Estimated Sales Tax

The total estimated sales tax to be paid to local and state governments for this project is \$0.

COST DETAILS

Item	This Request	Total Previous Requests	Total Request	Total Project Cost	Cost to Date	Remaining Cost
DESIGN	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 2,400,000	\$ 44,784	\$ 2,355,216
CONSTRUCTION	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 8,500,000	\$ 0	\$ 8,500,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 10,900,000	\$ 44,784	\$ 10,855,216

Source of Funds

The 2025-2029 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) Budget allocates \$3,700,000 for work associated with the Neptune Mitigation, Project ID #101711. The CIP will be updated during the 2026 budget process.

Financial Impact

Costs associated with the Neptune Mitigation, Project ID #101711, will be capitalized as a non-depreciating land asset.

F. ECONOMIC INVESTMENT/JOB CREATION

These actions will not create any permanent jobs. But the Port is currently in contract negotiations (subject to Commission approval), to develop the entire Port Parcel 117 and the adjacent parcels upon completion of the snail eradication efforts and capping of the autofluff

G. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS**Snail Eradication**

The US and WA Department of Agriculture support the development of the site as a means to eradicate the snails from the property. There are no other alternatives.

Autofluff Cleanup

Alternative 1) For the autofluff, the Port has the option to excavate and dispose of the autofluff offsite during snail eradication or,

Alternative 2) Contain and cap the autofluff in place due to the presence of snails in the area of the autofluff. Containing and capping the autofluff reduces the risk of transporting the snails off site during removal.

Alternative 2 is the recommended course.

Mitigation

Critical area impacts on Parcel 117 will be mitigated for at Parcels 12 and 37D thru wetland re-establishment and enhancement.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/REVIEW

Permitting: All applicable permits will be obtained before the contract is awarded.

Remediation: The autofluff on Port parcel 117 will be capped in the interim until the snails are eradicated from the site. The backfilled wetlands will be mitigated. Best management practices will need to be followed during snail eradication to prevent transportation of the snails.

Stormwater: The ground disturbance work will require stormwater runoff to be treated. Stormwater treatment will be installed as required by MS4 and ISGP permits.

Air Quality: There will be no main emission sources associated with the project. The re-establishment and enhancement of the wetlands will provide additional vegetation to support clean air, flora and fauna in the surrounding areas.

I. PREVIOUS ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

Date	Action	Amount
July 30, 2024	Executive Authorization for Parcel 117	\$75,000
September 5, 2024	Executive Authorization for Parcel 117	\$75,000
April 1, 2025	Executive Authorization for Parcel 117	\$100,000
TOTAL Parcel 117		\$250,000
March 12, 2025	Executive Authorization for Neptune Mitigation	\$350,000
TOTAL Neptune Mitigation		\$350,000

J. NEXT STEPS

Complete design and return to Commission for construction authorization at a later date.