

ACTION ITEM MEMO

Port of Tacoma Commission



Item No: 5C
Meeting Date: 7/16/26

DATE: July 7, 2026
TO: Port of Tacoma Commission
FROM: Eric Johnson, Executive Director
Sponsor: Debbie Shepack, Sr Director, Real Estate
Project Manager: Berny Rodriguez, Sr. Real Estate Specialist
SUBJECT: Parcel 37D Conservation Easement

A. ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute a Conservation Easement on Parcel 37D, property owned by the Port of Tacoma.

Strategic Plan Initiative

EL 4 : Create wetland opportunities and improve fish habitat independent of regulatory obligation.

B. BACKGROUND

For nearly 20 years the Port has conducted efforts to eradicate the Mediterranean vineyard snail. The snail was initially detected on Parcel 117 in 2005 with the infestation spanning 300 acres across the Blair-Hylebos peninsula. Parcel 117 remains the last parcel with the invasive snails due to the presence of on-site wetlands. The current eradication effort is to fill 5.446 acres of wetlands on Parcel 117 which will also prepare the site for the recently approved Saxum Development lease.

A permit from Ecology is required in order to fill the wetlands on parcel 117. The permit calls for re-establishing and enhancing 3.118 acres of wetland at Parcel 12, and 1.938 acres of wetland at 37D. The Port will also use 2.34 credits generated at the Lower Wapato Creek Advance Mitigation Site (AMS). The location of Parcel 117 and all three mitigation sites (Parcel 12, Parcel 37D, and Lower Wapato Creek AMS) is shown on Figure 1.

In accordance with Ecology's wetland mitigation guidance, the proposed wetland at Parcel 37D should have a non-credit generating perimeter buffer of 75 feet. The buffer width is based on adjacent land use and is designed to ensure a high functioning wetland. A zero-perimeter buffer was approved by Ecology on the North and West boundaries of the Parcel 37D mitigation area due to existing wetlands.

A zero-perimeter buffer was also approved on the south side of the mitigation area because adjacent Parcel 0320034052 is reserved for a future habitat mitigation site (Figures 2 and 3)

Ecology's approval of a zero-perimeter buffer along this boundary is contingent upon documentation of legal protection from development.

Ecology has issued Administrative Order (Number 24560) that permits the wetland impacts on Parcel 117 and approves the mitigation strategy outlined above. Condition 19 of the Administrative Order states: "For the allowance of no perimeter buffer on the south side of the Parcel 37D mitigation site, the Project Proponent shall submit to Ecology (see A.2) documentation that the parcel to the south (Parcel 0320034052) has legal protection from development within 13 months of issuance of this order. Noncompliance with this condition may result in the need for additional wetland compensation."

If the required documentation is not submitted, a 75-foot buffer would need to be applied to the southern boundary of the Parcel 37D mitigation site. This buffer would not be credit-generating and would reduce the total area available for mitigation credits and could impact the project's ability to fully offset wetland impacts and potentially delay the eradication efforts while additional mitigation is negotiated.

C. TIMEFRAME/PROJECT SCHEDULE

Commission Reading	7/16/2026
Easement Execution	7/16/2026
Easement Effective Date	7/16/2026

D. ATTACHMENT

- Maps

E. NEXT STEPS

Upon Commission approval of the requested action, the Real Estate Department will finalize and record the easement document.