

Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust
Pioneer Park Master Plan

City of Mercer Island
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Mercer Island Park Department
8236 SE 24th
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206-236-3545

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Mercer Island City Council

Susan Blake

Bryan Cairns, Deputy Mayor

Judy Clibborn

Sven Goldmanis

Dan Grausz

El Jahncke

Alan Merkle, Mayor

Mercer Island Parks and Recreation

Peter M. Mayer, Director

Gary Feroglia, Trust Liaison

Greg Brown, Parks and Recreation Manager

Paul West, Park Arborist

Stephanie Cangie, Administrative Support

Mercer Island Conservancy Trust

Ira Appelman, Secretary

Bryan Cairns, Council Liaison

William T. Duvall

Tové Lund (former Chairperson)

Gail Magnuson

Sidney Gilmor McCready (former Trust member)

Jim Owens

Robert Stagman, Vice Chair

Henry Steinhardt (former Trust member)

Marguerite Sutherland, Chair

Consultants

MacLeod Reckord

Terry Reckord, Principal

Vinita Sidhu, Project Designer

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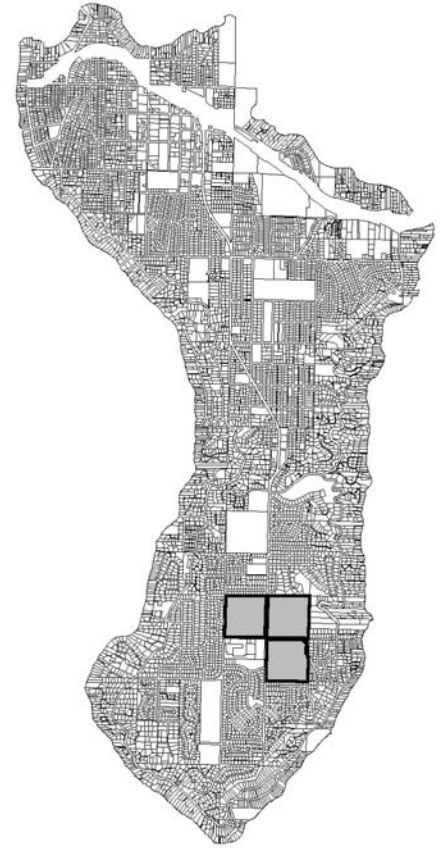
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PREFACE

Pioneer Park is an invaluable resource to the citizens of Mercer Island. This predominantly wooded property covers approximately 113 acres in the south central portion of the island. Its significance to the community is manifold. It is the last piece of second growth forest of its size on Mercer Island. It is a place to take a walk or ride a horse, a place in which to appreciate and observe native wildlife and plants, a place to have a picnic, and a place in which to remember the Island's past.

In Fall 2000, the Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust and the City of Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department initiated the development of a long-term Master Plan for improvements to Pioneer Park. This process was driven by a commitment to proper stewardship of this unique resource. The planning team began the process by carefully formulating a program of park elements and improvements that would provide for reasonable public access and use while protecting the long-term health of the resource. Much discussion focused on the role of Open Space in the community, the role of the Trust as stewards of this property, and on the appropriateness of adding new park elements to a predominantly undisturbed forest setting.

The purpose of this plan is to address physical improvements that would improve access and enhance public use of the park. The Master Plan serves as a guideline. The development of a forest management plan for Pioneer Park is equally as significant and will be prepared in a separate planning process. The combination of these two plans will ensure that Pioneer Park remains a place of natural beauty for future generations of Island residents to enjoy.



For the purposes of this Trust, “Open Space Property” means any undeveloped parcel of real property, although not necessarily completely natural and undisturbed, whose existing openness, natural conditions or present state of use, if retained, would maintain or enhance the present or potential conservation of natural or scenic resources of Mercer Island and which has been declared to be Open Space Property by the City Council with the intent that any future use of the property be limited to passive and low impact forms of use such as walking, jogging or picnicking.

City of Mercer Island
Ordinance No. B-93

HISTORY OF PLAN DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

By the end of the nineteenth century, the land that now forms Pioneer Park was almost entirely logged, leaving uncut only a few old-growth trees. Today the site is densely covered by a mix of second-growth Cedar, Douglas fir and Western hemlock. The property was privately owned by the Walker-Ames family until 1931 when, as specified in the will of Maud Walker-Ames, it was given to the University of Washington. When the City of Mercer Island purchased the land through a bond issue from the University in 1964, it became one of the first pieces in Mercer Island's fledgling park system, the city itself having been incorporated only four years earlier.

In 1969, in response to a proposed golf course development, the citizens of Mercer Island voted to maintain the park as a natural area. Shortly thereafter, in recognition that little was known about the park's natural resources, the Mercer Island Park Board authorized a group of volunteers from the Mercer Island Environmental Council to begin a research project on Pioneer Park. In 1972, *The Natural History of Pioneer Park* was published, including chapters on soils, plant communities, mushrooms, birds and mammals.

The following year, the Pioneer Park Concept Plan was prepared, recommending passive recreational uses for the park and designating primary uses for each quadrant. The NW quadrant was conceived as serving families with facilities to include pedestrian/bicycle trails, an equestrian trail along the perimeter, benches, trash receptacles, and a picnic area. In the SE quadrant, pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails were proposed and in the NE quadrant, facilities for environmental education, including trails, interpretive markers and portable toilets were proposed.

A second golf course proposal was made in 1976. In response the City recommended that a golf course be developed on school district land and other improvements be made at Pioneer Park. A vote went to the public to fund these improvements. In the end, though receiving majority support, voter turnout was too low to support implementation.

Park improvements were made in 1983, when \$100,000 was raised through a park bond issue to fund trail improvements, signs, benches and interpretive material. A third request for a golf course development at Pioneer Park was made in 1990 and once again Mercer Island citizens debated the merits of preserving versus developing Pioneer Park. In the heat of this debate, efforts were made to reprint *The Natural History of Pioneer Park*. The first edition had sold out quickly and it was thought that this publication should be more widely available as it provided de-

tailed information on Pioneer Park's natural resource base. This second edition added "A Walk in Pioneer Park," an interpretive guide designed to coordinate with a series of numbered stations along a trail in the NE quadrant.

The golf course proposal was again rejected as were other proposals for "active" uses over the years, including tennis courts, athletic fields, and a community center. In 1992, the Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust was established through Ordinance No. B-93 as a way to protect and preserve the park in its natural state. The declared purposes of the Trust are:

- Receiving and holding all Open Space Properties transferred to the Trust by the City Council, or by other governmental or private land owners with the approval of the City Council, in perpetuity, or until such time as this Trust is terminated or any such Open Space Property is removed from this Trust by the occurrence of one or more of the conditions set forth in this Trust;
- Protecting, maintaining and preserving the Open Space Properties; and,
- Insuring that the development and use of the Open Space Properties are both consistent and compatible with the intent and purposes of this Trust and the guidelines and policies enacted pursuant to this Trust.

Pioneer Park has been the only property transferred to the Trust by City Council to date. The ordinance establishing the Trust also outlined the purpose of an "Open Space Property" which contained these criteria:

- An undeveloped parcel, although not necessarily completely natural and undisturbed;
- The existing openness, natural conditions or present use of the property, if retained, would maintain or enhance the present or potential conservation of natural or scenic resources of Mercer Island;
- The future use of the property would be limited to passive and low impact forms of use such as walking, jogging, or picnicking;
- All improvements and uses of the property should not change the character or impair any of its ecological, aesthetic or natural attributes;
- All improvements should be limited to those which are consistent and compatible with passive and low impact uses of the property.

In 1994, the Mercer Island City Council approved *Policies For Protecting, Maintaining And Preserving Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust Properties*. The general policies contained in this document reiterated the purposes and criteria for Open Space provided in the ordinance. This document also contained a section titled "Policies for Specific Open Space Properties: Pioneer Park Site Management Plan."

The two goals of the *Pioneer Park Site Management Plan* are to preserve the ecological integrity of the park and to allow human activity in a manner that does not adversely affect the surrounding environment. Five guiding principles are outlined in the plan as follows:

1. Preservation of the park in its natural state;
2. Recognition of the role of trails connecting the park sections to one another and to the community;
3. Provision for recreational activities compatible with the park's natural state;
4. Designation of areas of use to protect the natural ecosystem and enhance the enjoyment of the park;
5. Limitation of man-made facilities in the park.

The plan goes on to make specific recommendations. Among these are basic trail specifications for four trail types, Primary Access, Primary Recreation, Secondary Recreation and Unimproved Recreation. It calls for signage, disability access, as well as drainage improvements and trip hazard reduction on main trails. The plan also specifies that park structures and amenities should be either made using fallen logs from the park or designed to blend with the natural environment. Education and interpretation are recognized as key functions of the park. To this end, the plan outlines types of programming that would achieve these functions. The plan concludes with recommended improvements specific to each quadrant of the park. These include benches, trash receptacles, signs, educational station markers, as well as a picnic area and restroom in the Northwest quadrant.

In 1995, the *Pioneer Park Management Plan* was prepared by Susanne K. Friedman of the University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture. The study was commissioned to address issues pertaining to the NE quadrant and focused on trail access to the ravine, and improvements to the existing viewpoint and nature trail. Slope, soil and vegetation analyses formed the basis for the plan recommendations. One result of the plan was the Trust's decision to not pursue trail access to the ravine. This decision was based on the unstable condition of the slopes down to the ravine, high estimated engineering and construction costs and potential liabilities. As an alternative, the plan recommended maintaining access to the ravine via the service road from East Mercer Way. Other recommendations include removal of invasive plant species, re-vegetation of the southern slope of the ravine and the viewpoint area, fencing the viewpoint to curtail foot traffic to the ravine, and updating the marker system along the already established nature trail. At this time, the viewpoint has been restored, but the marker system has not been updated.

In 1996, Sarah Reichard, Ph.D. prepared the *Pioneer Park Invasive Plant Report and Recommendations* in which she identified four non-native species of concern in the park, English Ivy, Herb Robert, Himalyan Blackberry and English Holly. She made recommendations specific to each of these species and some general recommendations to guide

the Parks department and volunteer groups as they work to control these invasive plant populations.

In 1999, Robert Edmonds, Ph.D. was commissioned to prepare the *Management Plan for Tree Diseases in Pioneer Park*. The study's objectives were as follows:

- Determine the extent and spatial distribution of tree disease in Pioneer Park,
- Report of the general health of the forest in the park, and
- Develop a management plan for root diseases, particularly laminated root rot.

A number of tree diseases were identified on the site, the most significant of these being laminated root rot which affects Douglas Fir trees. The study recommends alternative approaches to addressing this and other disease problems in the park and includes an aerial map of areas most effected by laminated root rot, indicating that there are pockets of diseased Firs in each quadrant of the park.

Over the past few years volunteer groups and work crews funded by Council have regularly worked to remove invasive plant species and reforest areas where there have been diseased and dying trees. The City's maintenance staff has been responsible for annual trail maintenance, including brushing, surfacing, and removal of storm damage. Eagle Scouts have also regularly offered their support and interest in improvement projects in Pioneer Park. This Master Plan has been prepared to synthesize previous planning efforts and to serve as a guide for the Trust and Parks Department as they continue to work to preserve and improve upon this treasured natural resource.

EXISTING CONTEXT

Pioneer Park is composed of three distinct quadrants intersected by Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street. The site is predominantly wooded with development limited to facilities for passive activities. Following is a summary of those existing conditions at Pioneer Park that were integral to this Master Planning process.

Natural Systems

The park sits at the crest of the island, sloping to the east and west from Island Crest Way. The NW quadrant has the gentlest terrain of the three



quadrants. The steepest slopes occur in the NE quadrant where a ravine with grades as high as 80% in the steepest areas cuts through the site, entering at the north edge of the quadrant and flowing out at the east edge. In the *Pioneer Park Management Plan* (1995), Susanne Friedman notes that this ravine is classified as a landslide hazard area and steep slope hazard area according to King County standards. The highest point in the park is located in the northwest corner of the SE quadrant. The east half of this quadrant descends somewhat steeply to the street edge with grades ranging from 10 to 35%.

Mary Kenady, in the chapter on “Plant Communities” in *Pioneer Park a Natural History*, describes six distinct plant associations in the park: forest edges, two types of interior forest, slopes and hillsides, the ravine, and what she refers to as special areas. She notes that if the forest were allowed to evolve naturally, Western hemlock would be the climax species. Plant species present in Pioneer Park today are typical of an intermediate stage second-growth forest in the Puget Sound region. Some of the most common canopy trees are Douglas Fir, Red Alder, Western Hemlock, Western redcedar, Willow, Big Leaf Maple, Madrona, and Pacific dogwood. Species found in the understory include salal, Red elderberry, Oregon grape, Sword fern and bracken fern. Invasive species of concern in the park include English Ivy, Herb Robert, Himalayan Blackberry and English Holly.

User Groups

The park is used by pedestrians, horseback riders and cyclists. Some come for exercise, others to enjoy the natural beauty of the site. Equestrian use of the park has been limited to the Southeast quadrant and to the eastern and southern perimeter trails in the Northwest quadrants. Equestrian users are primarily traveling to the park from the north along the west side of Island Crest Way or from the Saddle Club, located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street. Pioneer Park is the only public facility on the Island where one can ride a horse, and is highly valued by equestrian groups. Currently few cyclists use the park. With the exception of the paved pathway on the east side of Island Crest Way in the NE quadrant, the trails are primarily suited to mountain bike use. Pedestrians, including runners, walkers and dog walkers, use trails throughout the park, with the NW quadrant receiving the highest use.

Access and Parking

There are a number of points of access into each quadrant of the park. Park users arriving by vehicle most commonly park along 84th Avenue SE, along Island Crest Way adjacent to the SE quadrant and at the east end of SE 68th Street. The park can also be accessed by Mercer Island Public Transit, which has bus stops along Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street. Informal trailheads are dispersed along the roadside perimeter of each of the three quadrants.

Trails and Circulation

Pioneer Park is crisscrossed by trails ranging in scale from overgrown paths less than two feet in width to more established 6 feet wide trails surfaced with gravel. These trails have developed into an organic pattern over the course of the park's history, with an unclear hierarchy. The NW quadrant has the most trails and is the most well used of the three quadrants. Due to the steep terrain in the NE quadrant and previous planning decisions to retain this quadrant for environmental education, fewer trails have been established here.

The division of the park by Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street causes difficulties in circulation among the three quadrants. Crosswalks exist at the intersection of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street and at the intersection of 84th Avenue SE and SE 68th Street. At other locations park users must fend for themselves to get from one quadrant to another. The Island Crest/68th Street crossing is used frequently by equestrians traveling from the north to the Saddle Club or to equestrian trails in the SW quadrant. The crossing is not well-suited for horses, and many riders cross 68th Street slightly to the west of the intersection. The City is currently studying ways to provide a safer crossing at this intersection.

Amenities

Existing amenities in the park include benches, a picnic table, hitching posts, interpretive signs, and trash receptacles. Most of the existing trash receptacles were recently installed at park entries and match those recommended as part of this Master Plan. There are only two benches and one picnic table in the park, each of a different style. One bench



Map of the existing trail system in Pioneer Park based on a survey of trails prepared by the Sammamish Orienteering Club in 1985.

and picnic table form an informal picnic area in the southeast corner of the NW quadrant and the other bench is at the north park entry from 84th Avenue SE. Hitching posts are located at four entries in the NW and NE quadrants. Three interpretive signs were recently installed in the NW quadrant as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Adjacent Properties

Pioneer Park lies within a predominantly residential neighborhood within walking distance from three public and two private schools. Residential properties abut the park along its north edge, on the east side of the NE quadrant and on the south side of the SE quadrant. The quadrant to the south and west of the park contains a mix of commercial development and private recreation facilities. The Mercer Village, a small shopping plaza with various businesses, is located along SE 68th Street to the east of 84th Avenue and directly across the street from the Northwest quadrant. Just east of the Mercer Village is the Sunnybeam School and the Saddle Club. The Saddle Club is the only equestrian facility of its kind on the island and is a center for equestrian events on Mercer Island. South of the Saddle Club is the Mercer Island Country Club. To the northeast of the park, a trail developed in an easement for sewer line access connects the northside of the ravine in Pioneer Park to East Mercer Way, a scenic drive along the east edge of the island.

KEY ISSUES

The first Trust meeting for the Pioneer Park Master Plan was held on September 20, 2000. Initial discussion focused on programming and master plan goals. The two major goals of the Trust were to increase use of the park and to improve the image of the park. The underlying objective was to establish a strong constituency who would value and support the park thereby creating the best defense against encroachment into and development of Mercer Island's last significant open space. A number of questions arose on how to achieve these goals, such as: What are potential open space uses? What has been done in other open space/natural areas? How can we attract people to the park and not disturb its natural systems?

Open Space Uses

Discussion on the role and use of open space properties re-surfaced at intervals throughout the master planning process. The Trust hoped that this Master Plan might serve as a model on how to address other open space properties that would come under Trust management in the future. It was concluded that various existing uses at Pioneer Park were appropriate for an open space property. Such uses include walking, jogging and picnicking. It was also concluded that facilities that support these passive activities without causing substantial impacts were also appropriate in an open space property. These include earth or gravel trails, benches, picnic tables, street edge parking areas, signage, and established entries. It was harder to determine and define an acceptable level of passive facility development.

In Article I of Ordinance B-93, which established the Open Space Conservancy Trust, the accepted uses of open space properties are specified as being limited to "passive and low impact forms of use such as walking, jogging or picnicking", which shall not "change its character or impair any of its ecological, scenic, aesthetic or natural attributes." In *Policies for Protecting, Maintaining and Preserving Mercer Island Open Space Conservancy Trust Properties* it is stated that "Additional uses of the Open Space property consistent with the limited uses described in Article I of the Trust may be proposed. Any such additional uses shall be referred to the Trustees for review and recommendations before they are permitted."

Within these parameters there are still many possibilities. Among the Trust members there was interest in exploring alternative and innovative ways to use and experience open space, providing facilities that would attract children and make Pioneer Park an exciting place to visit. Some initial ideas that arose include a tree fort for interpretive viewing of the forest from different vantage points, an outdoor classroom for environmental education in a woodland setting, and art installations.

Alternative concept designs considered how to include these elements and other in the park.

Programming/Scoping

The Trust met again on October 26th, 2000 to define a scope of work for the master planning process. At this meeting it was decided that *The Pioneer Park Site Management Plan* should serve as a guide for the development of this Master Plan. It was agreed that the Master Plan should “provide a comprehensive plan for improvements to the park that will enhance and encourage public use and visual enjoyment” of the park and that forest management would be addressed in a separate planning process. This preliminary scope included the following general items and items specific to each quadrant:

General Items

- The theme for all improvements should be natural in appearance and blend into the woodland character of the park.
- Park furniture to include benches, litter receptacles, etc.
- Signage: directional, regulatory, informational, educational, etc.
- Parking: should be limited, not encroach into the park, encouraged along 84th Avenue SE, no parking along Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street or along SE 68th Street west of Island Crest Way. Improvements should be made along Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street that eliminates and/or discourages parking.
- Access points to the park should be established that are inviting and encourage use.
- Identify and mark the park boundaries where adjacent to private property owners along SE 63rd and SE 72nd Streets.
- Review current trail standards as to width, surfacing, develop horse trail standards and location for trails throughout the park.
- Horse barriers to limit access to pedestrian trails?
- Trails for bicycles?
- What are some of the other recreational amenities and uses that are appropriate for urban open space areas that would reach a large population of users?
- Continue reforestation in the established areas of diseased and dying vegetation.
- All improvements should be designed to quality maintenance standards and with maintenance cost impacts in mind.

NW Quadrant

- Retain and expand the existing trails.
- Develop an informal picnic area around SE 68th Street & 84th Avenue SE that is ADA accessible.
- Hard surface trail (designed to be ADA accessible) that would provide an urban forest experience.
- Improve the horse crossing to the Saddle Club stables along SE 68th Street.
- Improve the horse trail and surfacing along Island Crest Way.

NE Quadrant

- Trail improvements, surfacing, location, etc.
- Establish a nature trail in this section or others?
- Revisit access into the ravine and access from East Mercer Way.
What is the stability of the ravine slope?

SE Quadrant

- Identify and improve the interior trail system.
- Develop horse trail standards.
- Retain and expand existing perimeter trails.

A work session of the Trust, Parks staff and consultants was held on November 29th to discuss these program elements in more detail. Following is a discussion of the elements and key issues that arose in this first phase of the planning process.

Trails

Almost all visitors to Pioneer Park experience this natural area through use of the park's extensive trail system. For this reason improvements to the trail system were considered a crucial component of this master plan. Across the park there was a need to establish a clear hierarchy of major and minor loop trails. In addition the Trust felt that there was a moral obligation to add an ADA accessible trail loop that would connect to ADA parking and to the picnic area in the NW quadrant. Generally speaking, the extent of the existing trail system was deemed adequate, however there was a desire to revisit the ravine area in the NE quadrant and once again explore the possibility of a trail connection down the south slope. Whether or not improvements should be made to facilitate trail use for bicyclists was also a topic of discussion. It was noted that few cyclists currently use the park.

Many of the equestrian trails in the park are suffering from poor drainage and are not built or maintained to established standards set by the U.S. Forest Service. In "Pioneer Park Equestrian Trails Maintenance Needs" (see Appendix) Gail Magnuson outlined the criteria that the equestrian trails in Pioneer Park should meet. These include standards for trail width, vertical clearance, pruning, trail surfacing, obstruction removal and signage needs.

Crossings

Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street pose considerable risks to trail users attempting to travel from one quadrant to another. Of particular concern is the intersection of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street. Crossing from the northwest corner of this intersection to the southwest corner involves stopping at a traffic island not large enough to safely accommodate a horse and rider. Crossing options at this intersection were explored early in the master planning process. One sug-

gested option adds a mid-block crossing west of the intersection allowing equestrian users to cross from the NW quadrant to the Saddle Club. It also adds a mid-block crossing from the Saddle Club to the SE quadrant across Island Crest Way. City staff reviewed various options and proposed an option that removes the traffic island at the intersection, eliminates the free right turn, and widens the landings at the southwest and southeast corners of the intersection. In this option horse and riders would cross at the intersection and either travel south to the Saddle Club entrance along the west side of Island Crest Way or cross again to the SE quadrant of the park. (Note again that the City Engineer is currently exploring ways to improve safety at this intersection.)

A need for safe pedestrian crossings at the north and east ends of the park as a way to travel between the NW and NE quadrants and the NE and SE quadrants was also identified.

Picnic

There was interest expressed in expanding the picnic area in the southwest corner of the NW quadrant. Part of this expansion would add improvements to make it an ADA accessible facility. Two scales of picnic development were considered initially. Both options add picnic tables in the grassy areas north of SE 68th Street, and one expands the picnic area development to include a restroom structure and picnic shelter. Both options provide an accessible trail connection to accessible parking at the south end of 84th Avenue SE.

Entries & Parking

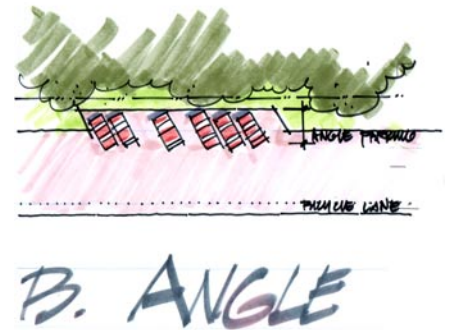
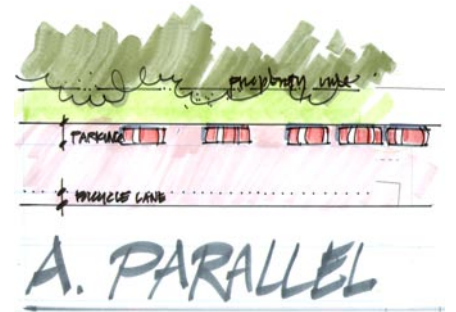
Improving the image of the park was one of the Trust's main goals for this Master Plan. To a great extent, the image of the park is defined by the appearance of its entries and by its "drive-by" view, and the Trust wanted the entries to be more inviting and better defined. They wanted to minimize the visual impact of parking and improve the roadside appearance of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street by discouraging parking in the grassy shoulder areas along these roads.

A number of parking options were discussed early on in the process. 84th Avenue SE was identified as the best location for a formalized parking solution if the need was identified. Option A maintains the existing pattern of parallel parking along this road. Option B creates two angle parking areas, one at the north end and one at the south end of 84th Avenue SE. Option C created a parking lot at the south end of 84th Avenue SE.

The Trust was strongly opposed to the concentration of parking into formal parking areas, feeling that this would both upset residents in the neighborhood and also encroach too far into the park. It was suggested that small groupings of parking be dispersed along 84th Avenue SE,

Island Crest Way south of SE 68th Street and SE 68th Street east of Island Crest Way.

There was some discussion on how much parking would be necessary if use of the park were to increase. Phasing the development of parking was suggested as a way to expand in response to demand. Another option that was discussed is the possibility of temporary parking solutions through shared use of the Mercer Village and/or Saddle Club parking areas during off-peak hours for those facilities.



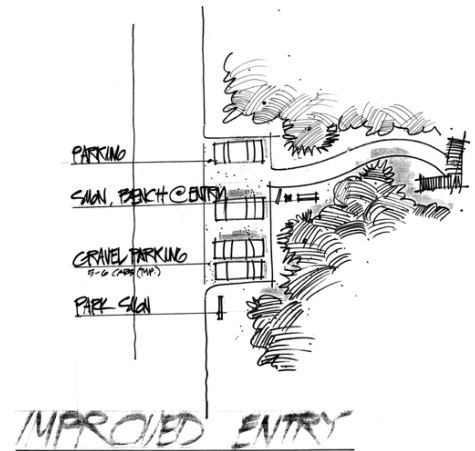
ALTERNATIVE PLAN CONCEPTS

Alternative concept plans were first presented at a Trust meeting held on May 10, 2001 and then presented to the City Council for review and comment on May 21, 2001. Based on the scope of work developed by the Trust, two plans were conceived. Both plans included core program elements that would improve and clarify existing (passive) park uses, improve access and increase safety. These are:

- A more clear hierarchy of pedestrian trails, with uniform construction and development of a series of "loops," reasonable connections and new/improved park "entries";
- Addition of an ADA accessible loop trail in the NW quadrant that connects to the improved picnic area and ADA parking along 84th Avenue SE;
- Improved, more organized equestrian trails in the SE quadrant;
- Gravel parking areas for 4 to 5 cars at existing entry points;
- Improved/safer road crossings at the intersection of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street, at the east end of the park to cross SE 68th Street, and at the north end of the park to cross Island Crest Way;
- Interpretive signing added along the established nature trail route in the NE quadrant;
- Improvements at the existing overlook in the NE quadrant and the addition of a viewpoint in the SE quadrant;
- Picnic improvements (furniture only) in the southwest corner of the NW quadrant;
- Improvements to Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street to include street tree planting as typical along Island Crest Way north of the park;
- Boundary marking/demarcation at abutting residential properties;
- Development of new Pioneer Park "rustic" furniture designs (benches, signs, etc.).

Plan B included these core elements and added facilities for additional open space uses. These are:

- An expanded Picnic Area in the southwest corner of the NW quadrant, including a shelter/structure and (seasonal) restrooms as well as the addition of smaller satellite picnic areas in the NE and SE quadrants;
- An outdoor "classroom"/teaching venue in the NW quadrant;
- Art walks/trails along Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street and along SE 68th Street west of Island Crest Way;
- An interpretive viewing tower in the SE quadrant;
- Trail access to the creek/ravine in the NE quadrant;
- Formalized angled parking with bulbed out curbs for street trees along 84th Avenue SE.



Draft Plan

Based on comments received from the City Council and staff, as well as internal discussions, the Trust narrowed down the list of elements proposed in Plans A and B, and voted on first priority and second priority improvements for the park at a meeting held on June 7, 2001.

Among the changes was the elimination of the viewing tower and art installations. This was the result of some discussion about the appropriateness of these elements. It was felt that these features would change the character of the site and lead to concentrated use of the park in these areas. Proposed street tree plantings on Island Crest Way were modified to blend more with the naturalistic plantings on the perimeter of the park. The typical street tree plantings applied to the north on Island Crest Way were noted as being too formal and urban for Pioneer Park.

There was strong support from the Council for improvements to the trails and upgrades to comply with ADA accessibility standards. There was also support for an outdoor classroom facility. There was concern from the Council that this park not be thought of as a neighborhood park and that improvements be made to accommodate visitors from all parts of the Island. To that end, there was discussion on whether adequate parking was provided. Expanding the picnic area received mixed reviews with some concern expressed that the facility should not be overdeveloped.

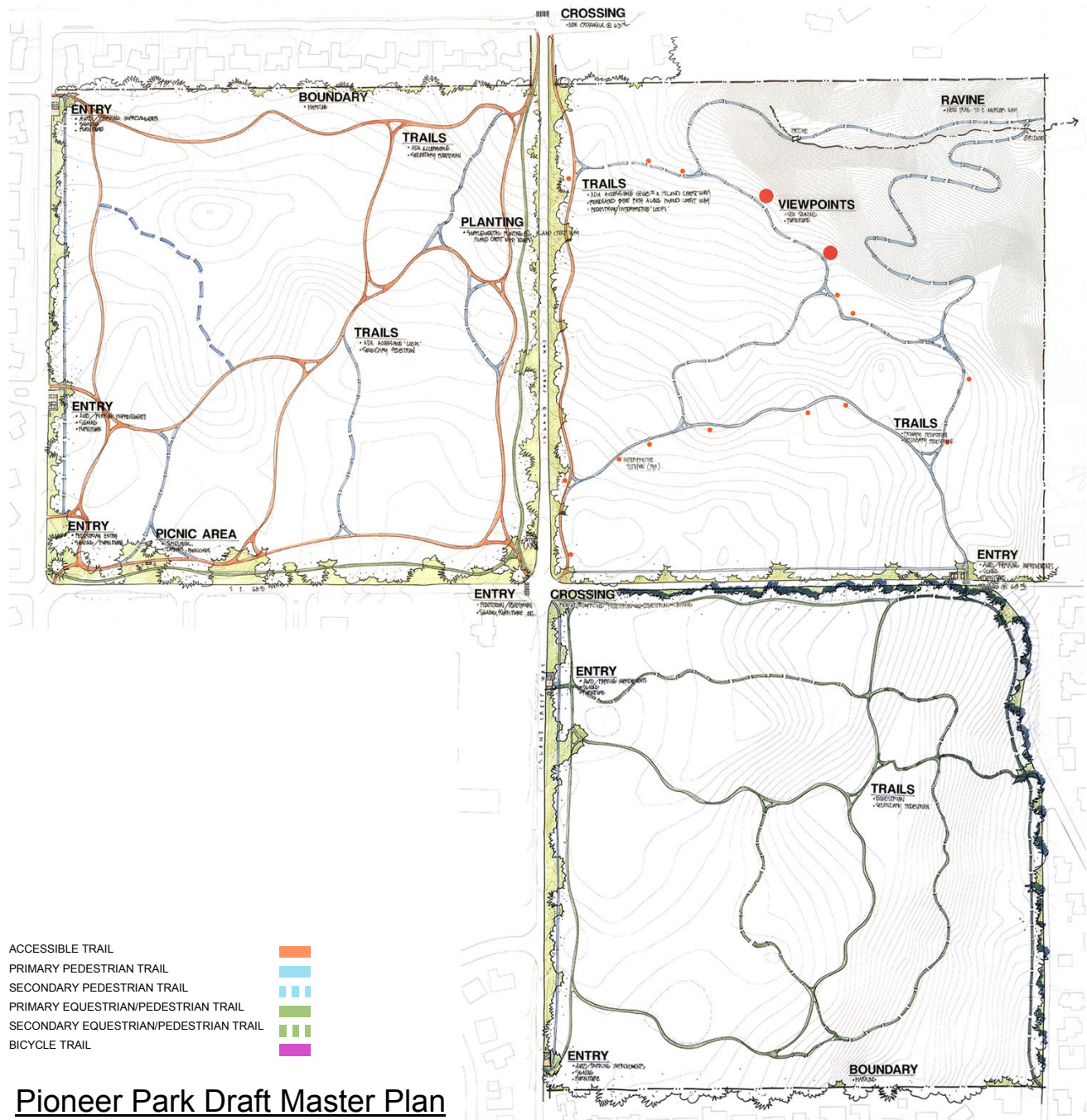
Following are the first priority and second priority proposed improvements that formed the basis for the Draft Master Plan.

First Priority Improvements:

- A more clear hierarchy of pedestrian trails, with uniform construction and development of a series of "loops," reasonable connections and new/improved park "entries";
- Addition of an ADA accessible loop trail in the NW quadrant that connects to the improved picnic area and ADA parking along 84th Avenue SE; ADA improvements would be designed to match the rustic/natural character or other park improvements and facilities;
- Slightly expanded/organized gravel parking areas at existing entry points along 84th Avenue SE, Island Crest Way south of SE 68th Street, and along SE 68th Street east of Island Crest Way;
- Improved/safer road crossings at the intersection of SE 68th Street and Island Crest Way (providing a safe crossing for equestrians between the NW and NE quadrants and the Saddle Club), at the intersection of SE 63rd Street and Island Crest Way and at the east end of SE 68th Street between the NE and NW quadrants;
- Improvements at existing overlooks in the NE quadrant;
- Improved, more organized equestrian trails in the SE quadrant;
- Trail access to the creek/ravine in the NE quadrant;
- An expanded Picnic Area in the southwest corner of the NW quadrant, including a shelter/structure and (seasonal) restrooms as well as the addition of smaller satellite picnic areas in the NE and SE quadrants;

Second Priority Improvements:

- Boundary marking/demarcation at abutting residential properties;
- Development of new Pioneer Park "rustic" furniture designs (benches, signs, etc.) to be located at picnic areas, viewpoints, and entries;
- Nature trail with interpretive signing based on "A Walk in Pioneer Park," established in the NE quadrant;
- Improvements to Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street to prevent parking and improve the character along this part of the roadway; proposed plantings should match the natural character of the park, both in layout and the selection of species;
- An outdoor "classroom"/teaching venue in the NW quadrant.



Pioneer Park Draft Master Plan

The draft plan was presented to and reviewed by the Trust at a meeting held on June 20, 2001. At this meeting the Trust requested revisions to the Draft Plan. It was decided that the development of an outdoor classroom developed in the interior of the NW quadrant was too high impact for this open space property. As an alternative, it was suggested that the picnic area and shelter could serve as an informal site for outdoor classroom functions. Changes made to the park trail plan include continuing the horse trail in the NW quadrant along SE 68th Street to 84th Avenue SE so that riders could ride in the grass strip along 84th, extending the ravine trail so that it creates a loop route, and changing the trail on the eastside perimeter of the SE quadrant from a pedestrian trail to an equestrian/pedestrian trail. At this meeting the Trust also decided to use the City's Park Department standards for signs and park furniture instead of creating new standards specific to Pioneer Park. One last change moved the gravel parking area along 84th Avenue farther north so that it would be farther away from the intersection with SE 68th Street. The former parking area site would become a pedestrian only entry. Both entries would have accessible trail connections to the picnic area and to the accessible loop trail system in the NW quadrant.

The Trust reviewed the revised Draft Master Plan on July 5, 2001 and developed a phasing plan that reflected first priority and second priority improvements. In this preliminary phasing plan, most improvements would occur in Phase I. Phase II would add a seasonal restroom at the picnic area in the NW quadrant, would complete the ravine loop, and would upgrade the existing paved trail in the NE quadrant to match the Bicycle Trail design standards recommended in this Master Plan.

Public Input

The revised Draft Master Plan was presented for public review and comment at an Open House held on August 2nd at Pioneer Park. Throughout the planning process, citizens had the opportunity to participate by attending Trust and City Council meetings at which the park was discussed. This Open House was organized as a way to directly reach out to Island residents. The meeting was well-attended, and citizens expressed strong opinions about the Draft Plan and the various design elements. These comments (see Appendix) were considered in the evolution and development of the Final Plan.

FINAL MASTER PLAN

This section includes Master Plan recommendations for trail design, entry and roadway improvements, viewpoint improvements, park furniture, planting and signing. These recommendations are meant to serve as guidelines for the City of Mercer Island as it works to implement the Master Plan.

Park Plan

On the next three pages are plan drawings of proposed elements in each of the three quadrants. Following is a quadrant-by-quadrant summary description of recommended Master Plan improvements at Pioneer Park:

NW Quadrant

- A better organized and structured trail system;
- Creation of accessible perimeter loop trails with connections to an entry along 84th Avenue SE;
- Improvements to equestrian trails along Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street;
- Improvements to secondary pedestrian trails;
- Better defined entries, including two principal entries along 84th Avenue;
- Boundary marking along the north edge of this quadrant;
- Naturalistic plantings along Island Crest Way, with emphasis on native materials.

NE Quadrant

- Improvements to the primary and secondary pedestrian trail system;
- Development of a new trail loop that would connect the ravine area to the existing trail system;
- Addition of interpretive signs along the established nature trail route;
- Improvements at the two viewpoints overlooking the south slope of the ravine;
- Better defined entries, including one principal entry from SE 68th Street.

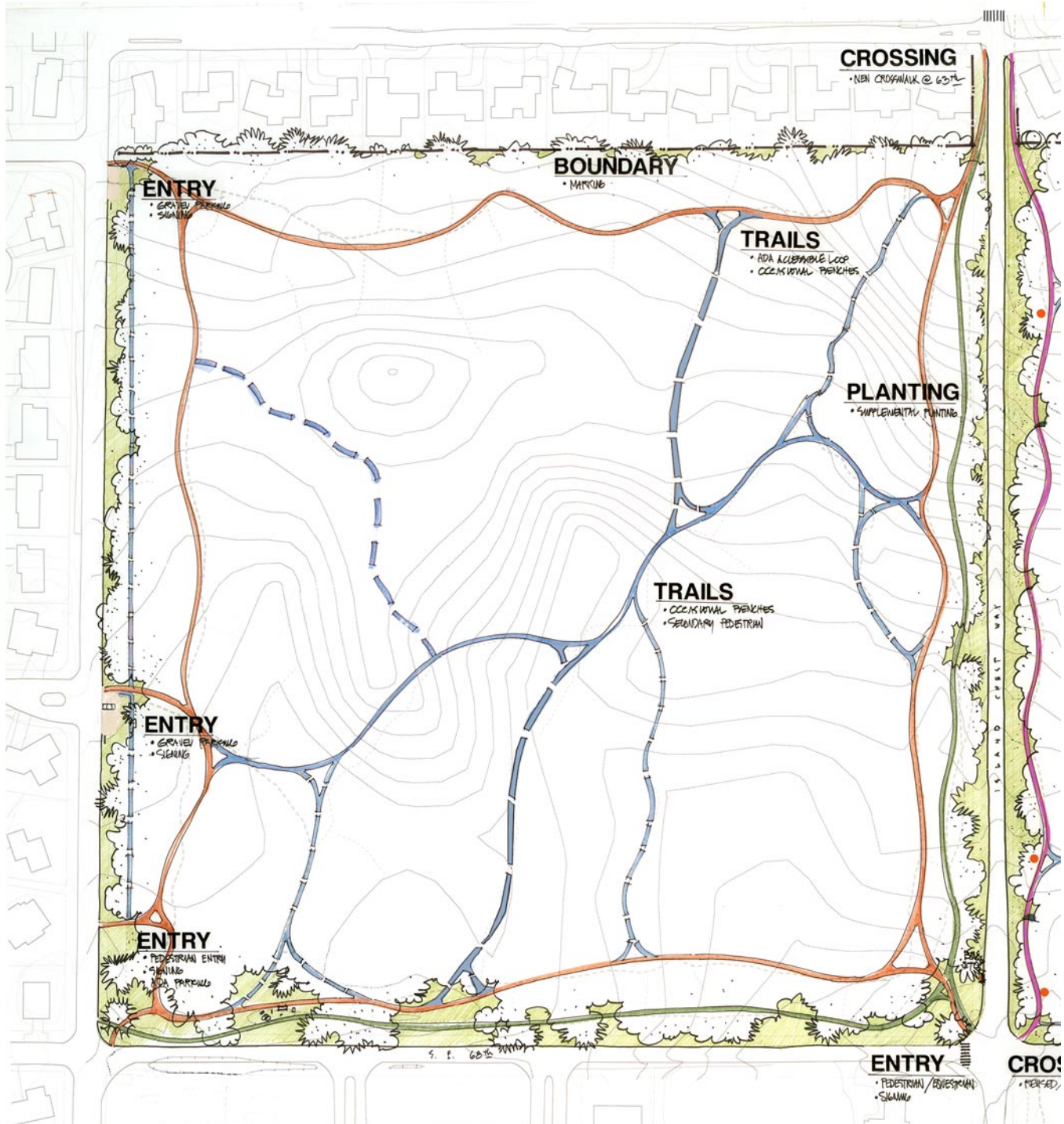
SE Quadrant

- Better structuring of the equestrian trail system to create a hierarchy of primary and secondary equestrian trails;
- Improvements to the primary pedestrian trail along Island Crest Way;
- Better defined entries, including one principal entry along Island Crest Way, one entry from SE 68th Street and one entry from 92nd Avenue SE;
- Boundary marking along the south edge of the quadrant.

Schematic Only

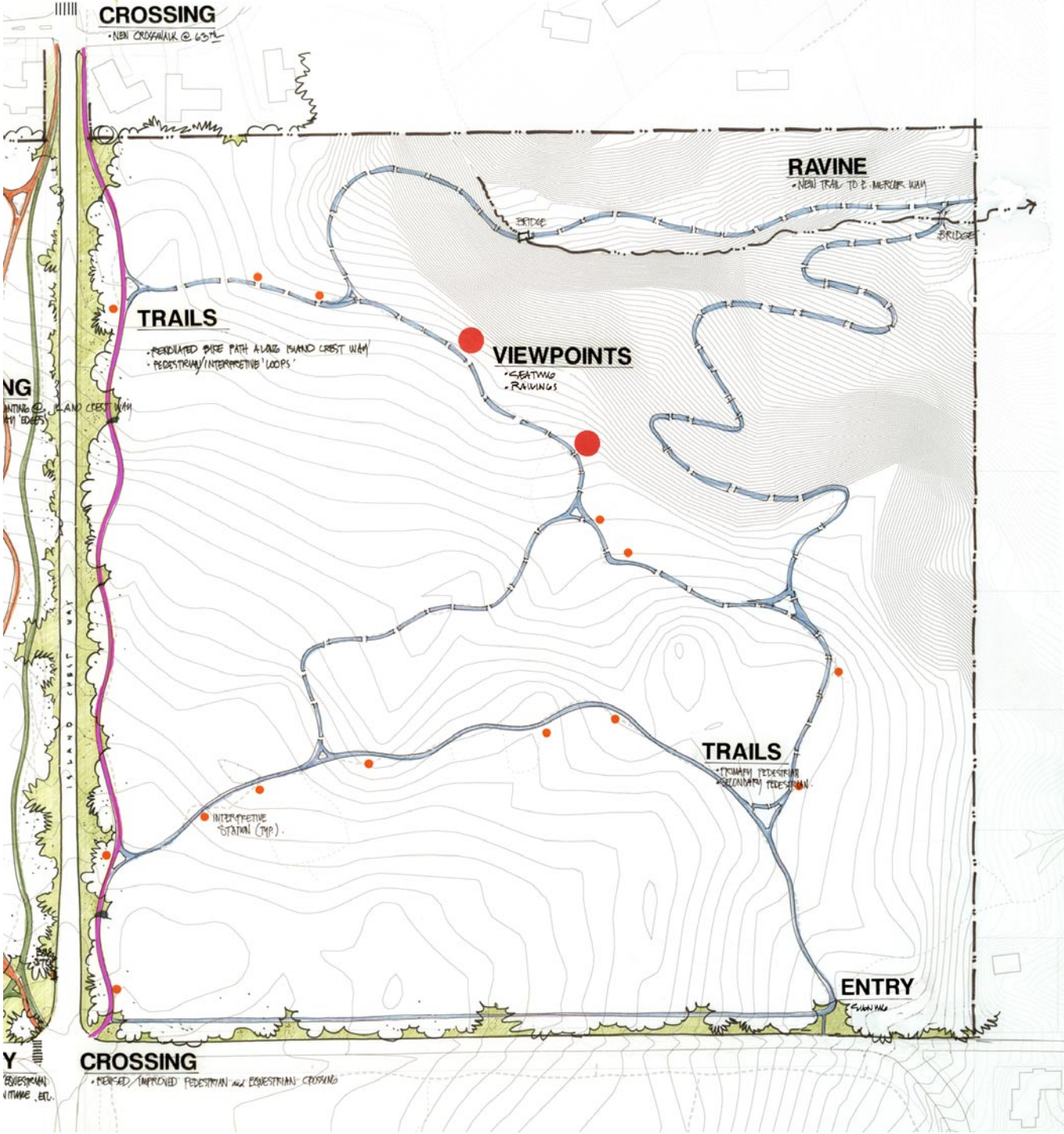
NW Quadrant

- ACCESSIBLE TRAIL
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- PRIMARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- BICYCLE TRAIL



NE Quadrant

- ACCESSIBLE TRAIL
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- PRIMARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- BICYCLE TRAIL



Schematic Only

SE Quadrant

- ACCESSIBLE TRAIL
- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- PRIMARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- SECONDARY EQUESTRIAN/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL
- BICYCLE TRAIL



Following is a more detailed discussion of the various design elements included in the Plan.

Trail Design Standards

This Master Plan recommends establishing a clear hierarchy of trail types to serve the needs of park user groups. The six typical trail cross sections differ in terms of scale, accessibility, and surfacing material. It is recommended that the existing trail network be selectively upgraded to meet these standards, thereby increasing durability and improving accessibility.

Width

Proposed trail widths range from 2 feet minimum for a secondary pedestrian trail to 8 feet maximum for a bicycle trail. Trail width was determined by the level of use expected for the trail and by the type of user the trail would serve, as well as existing trail widths. The Accessible and Primary trails are designed to receive the highest use. The bicycle trail has the highest width standards due to the amount of space required for two-way bicycle traffic. (Note: The bicycle trail is in the Island Crest Way ROW and is part of the Island’s Non-Motorized Transportation system.) Interior and secondary trails will not be widened beyond their existing widths.

Shoulder

Two feet graded shoulders are recommended for the bicycle trail. Shoulders protect the trail edge and provide a clearance zone between the trail and adjacent vegetation.

Horizontal Clearance

A clear (“brushing”) width on both sides of the trail serves to protect trail users from injury or accident and to reduce frequency/intensity of maintenance.

Vertical Clearance

As with horizontal clearance, vertical clearance is recommended as a maintenance measure to prevent injuries and accidents. Increased vertical clearance is necessary on equestrian trails due to the greater height of a horse and rider.

Grade

Recommended grades are based on the type of user the trail is expected to serve. Accessible trails must be less than 5% to provide a safe trail experience for the disabled. Primary trails should, where possible, maintain grades of less than 10% to accommodate users of all ages and abilities. Secondary trails may be steeper, providing a more challenging trail experience.





Cross Slope

A cross slope of 2% is recommended where feasible on all trail types to improve drainage of surface water.

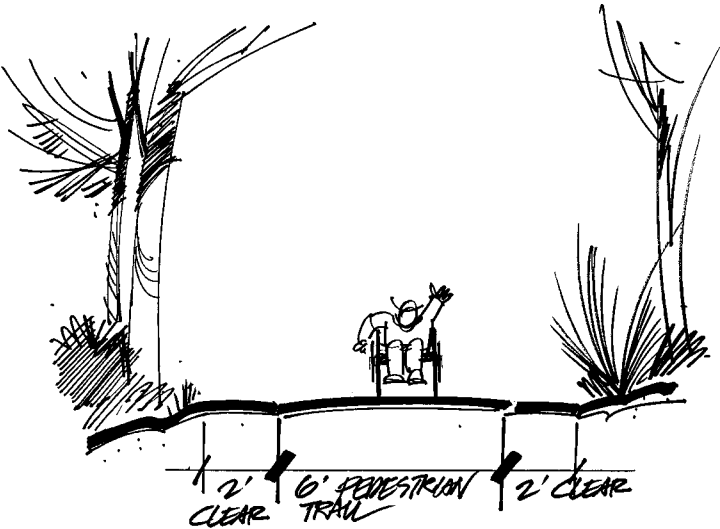
Surfacing

Recommended trail surfacing was determined by the expected level of use of the trail, the type of user the trail would serve, and its impact on the park experience. Crushed (3/8") rock is proposed to provide an even surface on the Accessible Trail. A compacted subgrade will add durability to the trail surface and improve surface water drainage.

A mineral (non-organic) surface (not crushed rock) is proposed for all interior trails. A sub-base of rock is proposed in areas of poor drainage in order to improve stability.

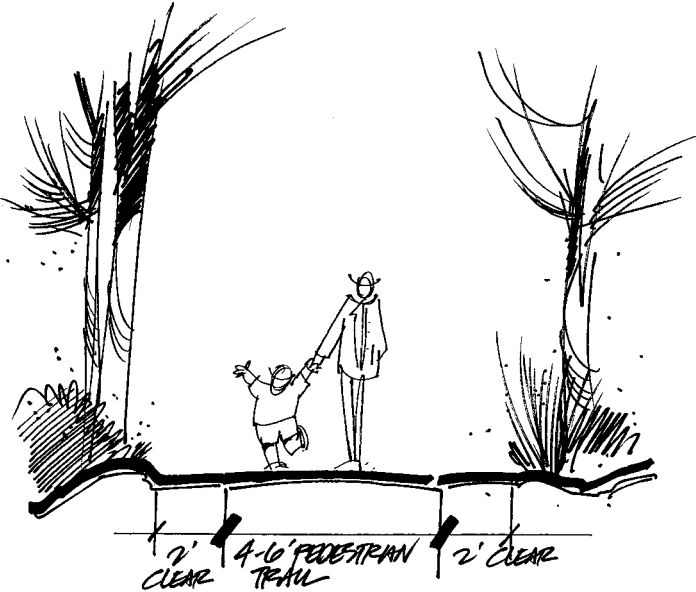
Drainage

Drainage improvements in wet/muddy trail sections may include gravel subgrade, culverts, trench drains and water bars where appropriate and consistent with trail character.



ACCESSIBLE TRAIL

Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Accessible Trail	6' minimum	2' clear	trail width + 2' minimum	10' minimum	5% maximum	2% maximum	fine crushed rock (3/8")



PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN TRAIL

Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Primary Pedestrian Trail	4' minimum 6' preferred	NA	trail width + 2' minimum	8' minimum	8% to 10% maximum preferred	2% maximum preferred	compacted earth/mineral

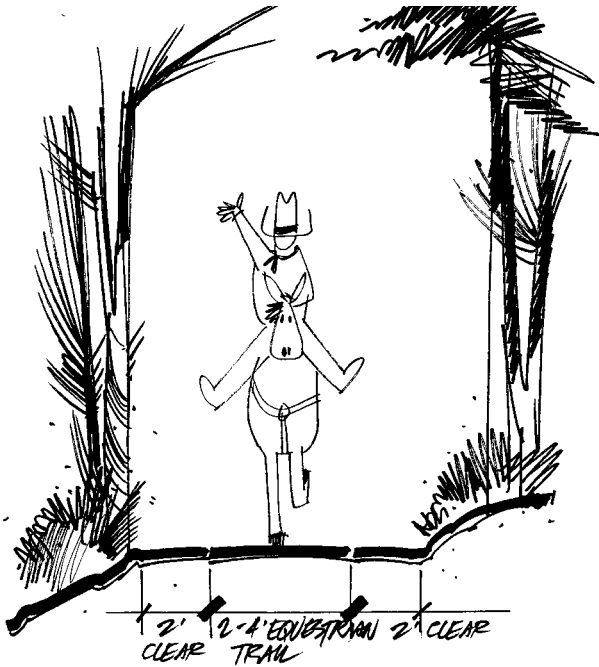
Schematic Only



Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Secondary Pedestrian Trail	2' minimum 4' preferred	NA	trail width + 2' each side	8' minimum	NA	NA	natural/mineral



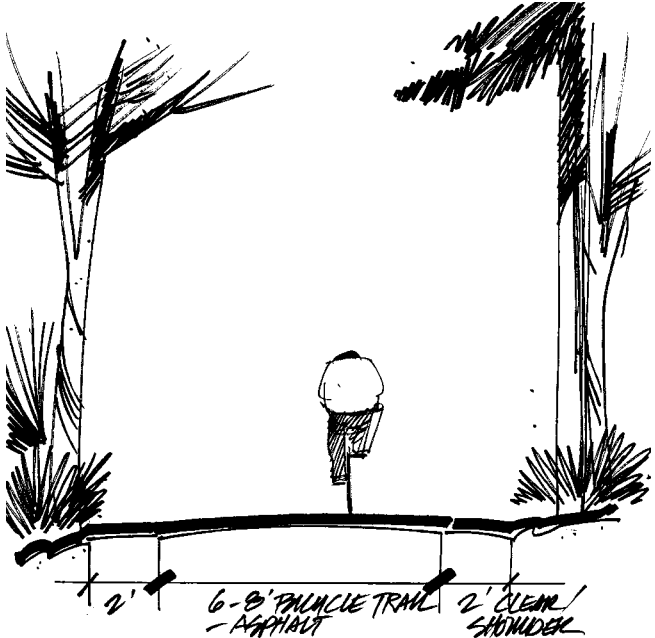
Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Primary Equestrian/ Ped. Trail	4' minimum 6' preferred	NA	trail width + 4' minimum	12' minimum, 14' preferred	8% to 10% maximum preferred	2% maximum preferred	equestrian trail surfacing or compacted earth



SECONDARY EQUESTRIAN/PED. TRAIL



Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Secondary Equestrian/Ped. Trail	2' minimum 4' preferred	NA	trail width + 4' minimum (2' each side)	12' minimum, 14' preferred	NA	NA	natural



BICYCLE TRAIL



Trail Type	Width	Shoulder	Horizontal Clearance	Vertical Clearance	Grade	Cross Slope	Surfacing
Bicycle Trail	6' minimum 8' preferred	2' graded	trail width + 2' minimum	10' minimum	5% preferred, 11+% over distances < 50 feet	2% maximum	asphaltic concrete

Note: See Mercer Island Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

Entry Improvements

Improvements at entry points into the park fall into one of two types, entries with parking and pedestrian only entries. Entries with informal gravel parking areas are proposed at three locations on the park perimeter:

- At the north end of the NW quadrant along 84th Avenue SE
- At the east end of the NE quadrant along SE 68th Street
- Towards the north end of the SE quadrant along Island Crest Way

At each of these entries, existing gravel parking would be identified and delineated; a trail connection would be provided from the parking area to the interior trail system; and an orientation sign with a park map may be located adjacent to the trail (at least one per quadrant).

Accessible entries are proposed at locations where the perimeter trail connects to the street. A handicap parking stall will be added on 84th near SE 68th.

At selected pedestrian entries throughout the park, it is recommended that informational signs be added to guide park users through the park. Following are the pedestrian only entries into the site:

- At the north end of the NW quadrant from Island Crest Way.
- At the north end of the NE quadrant from Island Crest Way.
- At the intersection of Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street to the NW, NE and SE quadrants.
- At the west end of the NW quadrant from SE 68th Street.
- At the east end of the SE quadrant from SE 68th Street.
- Near the intersection of SE 70th Place and 92nd Avenue S. to the SE quadrant.
- At the southeast corner of the SE quadrant from 92nd Avenue S.

Roadway Improvements

Roadway improvements outside of the park boundaries will need to be designed and implemented in coordination with the City of Mercer Island Design Services Group.

Three new crosswalks are proposed to provide a safe way for park users to travel between the NW and NE quadrants at the north end of the park and between the NE and SE quadrants near the east end of the park:

- Across Island Crest Way at its intersection with SE 63rd Street.
- Across SE 68th Street at the east end of the park.
- Across SE 68th at the intersection with Island Crest Way (to be coordinated with the Design Service Group).

Roadside plantings are recommended along Island Crest Way to improve the drive-by experience of the park. Plantings should use a palette of primarily native species typical of Pioneer Park’s forest edge plant community as described in “Plant Communities of Pioneer Park” by Mary Kenady (see *Pioneer Park a Natural History*, 1990). Grass should replace areas of gravel on shoulders of Island Crest Way north of 68th. Also, existing utility cabinets on the shoulders of Island Crest Way will have screen planting added, and future cabinets should be installed underground.

Viewpoint Improvements

Viewpoint improvements are recommended in two locations in the NE quadrant overlooking the south slope of the ravine. At each viewpoint, the addition of minor grading, as well as benches and railings, would enhance the view experience.



Park Furniture Design Standards

It is recommended that new furniture at Pioneer Park conform to those design standards currently used in other Mercer Island parks for trash receptacles, benches and picnic tables. Benches will be installed at selected park entries, viewpoints, and at reasonable intervals along the trail system. Also, Park staff may use logs/down trees to construct more “rustic” park elements (benches, wheel stops at entries, etc.).



Signing

It is recommended that new signs installed at Pioneer Park conform to those design standards currently used in other Mercer Island parks. Signs at Pioneer Park are proposed that would serve the following functions:

Boundary Marking The installation of fiberglass markers located along the park boundaries adjacent to private property owners would define the park edges and prevent encroachment into the park. This is of greatest concern along the north edge of the NW quadrant and along the south edge of the SE quadrant.

Informational/Map Signs The addition of informational/map signs (“you are here”) at entries into the park would serve to guide and inform park users on rules of the park and the park’s trail system.

Interpretive Signs The addition of a limited number of interpretive signs along the nature trail in the NE quadrant, described in “A Walk in Pioneer Park” (see *Pioneer Park a Natural History*, 1990), would educate people on Mercer Island’s natural systems and would enhance the trail experience.

Entry Sign(s) Existing park “name”/entry signs will be replaced (as they deteriorate) with new signs per Park Department standards.



CONCLUSIONS

The original purpose of this planning process was to suggest and evaluate a variety of physical improvements designed to improve access and enhance public use. This Master Plan is a result of that process. It reflects the clear desire on the part of the Conservancy Trust Board and the citizens of Mercer Island to maintain the natural character of the park, and to enhance public use in ways that preserve and protect the park's valuable natural and aesthetic resources.

Amending the Master Plan

Amendments to the Pioneer Park Master Plan shall be considered once a year. Any requests for amendment shall be submitted to the Trust Board by June of each year with action taken by the Trust Board before the end of the calendar year. No fee shall be charged for requested amendments.

Appendix

Cost Estimate

MacLeod Reckord

Landscape Architects

Cost Estimate

Project: Pioneer Park

Phase: Master Plan

Date: 10-08-01

By: TR/VS

ITEM & DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT COST	ITEM TOTAL	SUBTOTAL
MOBILIZATION (3%)	Allow	LS			9,261
DEMOLITION	Allow	LS		4,000	4,000
ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS Surfacing Furniture (signs) Tire Stops	3	EA	2,200.00	6,600	6,600
TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS Perimeter/ADA Primary Pedestrian Secondary Pedestrian Equestrian Ravine "Loop" Drainage	5,250 1,500 10,400 9,800 1,600 Allow	LF LF LF LF LF LS	13.00 8.00 6.50 4.50 22.00 9,000.00	68,250 12,000 67,600 44,100 35,200 9,000	236,150
STREET CROSSINGS (3)	Allow	LS		6,000	6,000
VIEWPOINTS	2	EA	1,200.00	2,400	2,400
INTERPRETIVE SIGNING	Allow	LS		5,500	5,500
PLANTING Trees, Irrigation, Lawns, etc.	Allow	LS		12,000	12,000
BOUNDARY MARKING	Allow	LS		8,000	8,000
CONTINGENCY (10%)					28,065
					Subtotal:
					317,976
					Fees, Survey (15%):
					47,696
					TOTAL:
					\$ 365,673

Pioneer Park Equestrian Trails Maintenance Needs

PIONEER PARK EQUESTRIAN TRAILS MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Horses and riders have needs that are not always obvious to non-riders. While horses are fairly nimble and sure footed, a horse and rider occupies a substantial amount of space, both in terms of height and width. To provide a safe place for all trail users in the southeast quadrant (both horse and rider, joggers, mountain bikers, and casual walkers), the following criteria need to be maintained. These are described generally immediately below, as well as some national standards as applicable.

1. Trails Must be Wide

The trails need to be wide enough so that a horse and rider can navigate without having brambles, branches, or other flora scratch at the horse or rider. They also need to be wide enough so that two trail users can pass one another, e.g. when a horse and jogger meet one another, or when a horse and cyclist meet. The U.S. Forest Service standard calls for four foot width, while Bridle Trails State Park in Bellevue uses a six foot standard. Most of the trails in the Park are four feet, especially in the eastern part of the parcel. Spots that are narrower than four feet should be widened to this minimum width. Addition of passing turnouts at appropriate intervals should be considered.

2. Trails Must be Pruned High for Vertical Clearance

Vertical clearance is probably the most critical maintenance concern that is least obvious to non-horse riders. Clearance that is high enough for a horse to pass below, but not high enough for horse and rider result in the rider either being swept off her horse, or require the rider to crouch down to avoid being poked in the eye or head with sometimes heavy and often wet branches.

The U.S. Forest Service standards call for horse trails to be pruned to a minimum height of 12 feet. In the Pacific Northwest, a 14 foot standard is more appropriate because wet weather makes branches droop, reducing vertical clearance. A 14 foot height when pruning also minimizes the number of times the trails must be pruned during the year.

3. Pruning Methods Must Not Create Sharp Objects

Care must be taken when pruning so that sharp edges are not created at the height of the horse and rider. These sharp edges become hazardous, as if a horse spooks and begins to run, sharp sticks will literally create plunge cuts in either the horse or the rider. Eyes are also at risk. Routine pruning (at least in the spring after the growth is complete), as well as spot maintenance after storms, is required at a minimum.

4. Footing Should not Put the Horse and Rider at Risk

Mud, large rocks, and sharp objects also create problems. In Pioneer Park in particular, mud is a problem for both horses and pedestrians, especially in the western entrance to the Park. These areas should be dug out during the summer, allowed to dry, and then filled with large drain rock, over which 5/8 minus rock should be placed as the wearing course. While hogs fuel or chips appear to provide at least a short term solution, they simply rot and create more of a bog. Bridle Trails State Park used to have a significant mud problem, which they have solved by replacing the muddy areas with 5/8 rock over drain rock. It is important that oversized or quarry spall rock is not installed as a wearing course, as they damage horses' feet. Treatment of the muddy areas will stop the continual "widening" of the trail as hikers attempt to go around the mud. However, all the trails should not be rock, but left as solid dirt wherever possible.

5. Windfalls and Other Objects in the Trail Should be Minimized

For horses, at least, it is not important that all logs be removed from the trail. The horse can simply walk over most obstructions, as long as they are not more than 12 inches off the ground. However, when fallen limbs are cut up, they need to be fully cut so that the entire trail is clear of the obstruction. Otherwise, a horse may walk into the side of a cut log, putting the rider in jeopardy if the horse stumbles. The horse also puts its legs at risk as well.

6. Signage Helps

As you know, equestrian use is restricted to the southeast quadrant of the Park. The City has done a good job of posting where horses are *not* allowed; it would also be of benefit to post signs at the entrances of the southeast quadrant that horses *are* allowed in that area. Such notice will alert other users that they may encounter horses in the park, so that they may stay alert and be comfortable when they meet a horse on the trail. The signs may also give hikers and cyclists guidance on how they should react when meeting a horse, e.g. that cyclists should stop and dismount, if necessary, to allow the horse to pass.

7. Conclusion

Horse riding has been a tradition on the island and is beneficial to all. The presence of horses is a reminder of our rural past, provides diversity in recreation as well as a learning experience for both rider and persons who see the horses, either in the barn, in the ring, or on the trail. Implementing the suggestions above will maximize safety and enjoyment for all.

Public Comments



**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY
TRUST**

**Action Item:
September 6, 2001**

Project:	Pioneer Park Master Plan
Description:	Public Response to Draft Pioneer Park Master Plan
Presenters:	Pete Mayer, Director of Parks and Recreation Paul West, Park Arborist
Exhibits:	Survey Tally Spreadsheet Public Comment Summary Letters and Emails

I. PROCESS

The Open Space Conservancy Trust decided at its July, 2001 meeting to undertake a process to solicit feedback from the general public on the draft Pioneer Park Master Plan. The Trust requested that Parks staff organize a multi-faceted outreach effort centered on an Open House at the park that was scheduled for August 2nd.

In response, Parks staff developed several media:

- a) A 4-page *Draft Pioneer Park Master Plan* brochure describing the planning process, summarizing the elements of the plan and inviting public comment;
- b) A *Public Feedback Form* that was inserted into the brochure. This form solicited numeric ratings as well as written comments on the plan elements;
- c) A posting of the brochure and feedback form on the City's website;
- d) One full size set of plan graphics that was prepared by MacLeod Reckord for display at Summer Celebration and the Open House;

DRAFT

- e) Two smaller graphic displays summarizing the plan that were placed at City Hall and the Library a week prior to the Open House;
- f) A flyer advertising the Open House;
- g) Three sandwich boards stationed at Pioneer Park
- h) A display sign at Mercedale Park
- i) A Mercer Island Reporter article published prior to the Open House;

Media were employed as follows:

- The full-size graphic display, meeting flyers, brochures and feedback forms were available at Summer Celebration booth.
- The brochure and feedback form were mailed to every address within 300 feet of the park two weeks prior to the Open House.
- The Open House flyer was posted at ten trail entries to the park two weeks prior to the event.
- The Open House was advertised on three sandwich boards placed at main intersections of the park one week prior to the event. The brochure and feedback form were available on these sandwich boards.
- The full-size display and summary display, as well as the brochure and feedback form were employed at the Open House on August 2nd.

II. RESULTS

A. Public Participation

Parks and Recreation staff received 96 completed Public Feedback Forms as of 8/13/01 (see attached tally and comment summary). In addition, we received four letters and five emails (attached). Sixty-eight people signed in at the Open House. Trust Board members, consultants and Parks and Recreation staff also received informal oral comment at the Open House.

B. Summary Results - General

Written and oral responses received to date reinforce the public's desire to protect the natural character of the park as much as possible. Respondents generally favored doing less on all plan elements except the street crossings. Respondents were, on average, most concerned about proposals for entries, trail improvements and picnic/educational facilities.

It is apparent from some feedback received that lack of detail about the elements contributed to misunderstanding and misinformation about the master plan. For

example, some respondents assumed that the ADA trail surface would be paved. Other respondents assumed that boundary markings meant fences. It is possible that the conceptual nature of the plan in general created uncertainty which fostered fears of overdevelopment.

However, it is also clear that many respondents gave consideration to the elements as proposed and were not simply naysaying. For example, several respondents distinguished between the picnic area (in favor) and the restroom (opposed). Widths of trails were referred to several times, and trail surfaces were discussed in some detail.

Summary Results – Specific Elements

Entries

Entries received the lowest rating of all the elements. Concerns included size and configuration of parking areas, size and number of signs, benches being unnecessary at these locations, and attracting more visitors to the park.

Trails

Trails received the most written comments and the second lowest rating. Concerns centered around the impact of wider gravelled trails in the park. Many people like the natural dirt trails that currently exist and find gravel to be incompatible with the park's character, at least for interior trails. Some concerns were also voiced about having to take out trees to widen trails. However, several respondents liked the idea of all-weather trails and better drainage. There is also some concern about horses and bicycles sharing trails with pedestrians.

Picnic/Educational Facilities

This element received the third lowest rating. Many respondents did not want restrooms in the park. The shelter was also questioned by many respondents. Several pointed out other picnic opportunities on the island.

Street Crossings

Street crossings were popularly supported.

Interpretive Signs

Interpretive signs received mixed ratings and comments. Again, the concerns were too many and too big. The existing signs in the NW quadrant were criticized for this. Some felt they were not needed at all.

Planting

This element received somewhat positive ratings and comments. There was strong opinion to take care of the invasive plant and root rot problems. Another common

concern was to plant only natives. A few comments advocated for more open, grassy areas.

Boundary Markings

Boundary markings received mixed ratings and comments. There was clearly some question about the details of this element. Most comment stated that this is unnecessary.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

General Approach

Invitational public process typically does not generate supportive comment. Those who participate often are motivated by disagreement with the proposal. We can assume that there are some people who favor the current draft of the master plan but did not respond because they were generally satisfied. Nevertheless, it is significant that the vast majority of the comment received favored less improvement than proposed. If public opinion truly favored this overall level of development, we might expect to see some opinion favoring more development. This was almost never the case.

To be responsive to this public comment, staff recommend that the Board: 1) clarify which element details will inherently preserve the existing landscape character (such as regravelling existing gravel trails) and 2) modify certain details of elements that change the landscape character to reduce or mitigate their impacts.

Options – Specific Elements

The following lists are possible options for clarifying and modifying existing element details. These are gleaned from public comment and are not necessarily the recommendation of staff. These options were selected to meet the objectives of the original plan elements while responding to public feedback.

Entries

- Reduce or eliminate benches at entries; install only in park interior.
- Specify limits on number, type, size and placement of signs at entries.
- Limit developed parking areas to fewer (suggested number: 3) vehicles.
- Eliminate some or all parking areas currently proposed.
- Design parking areas to prevent removing any trees or impacting significant vegetation.

Trails

- Reduce 2-foot clearance limits on some or all trail cross sections.
- Reduce number of trails to be gravelled.
- Show existing and proposed earth surface trails.

DRAFT

- Reduce extent of primary trails.
- Keep some or all existing earth surfaces and shift focus to improving drainage on trail surfaces; utilize turnpike or puncheon on poorly drained trail sections.
- Consider a bark trail surface detail if maintenance resources can be secured.

Picnic/Educational/Viewpoint Facilities

- Eliminate restroom from plan.
- Substitute porta-potties with screen
- Locate restroom off-site at Mercer Village or Firestation 92.
- Eliminate shelter from plan.
- Specify shelter and/or restroom size, design and placement to blend with its surroundings.
- Design picnic/educational facility to prevent removing any trees or impacting significant vegetation.
- Limit viewpoint improvements to benches and railings

Street Crossings

- Keep in plan.

Interpretive Signs

- Limit size of signs.
- Reduce number of signs.
- Specify placement for signs to minimize intrusiveness.
- Specify rustic standard to blend with existing landscape.

Planting

- Specify native-only palette.
- Specify placement in existing shrub and forested areas.

Boundary Markings

- Specify size, height and spacing limits.
- Specify material, design.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Open Space Trust Board select from the options above or generate other options for addressing public feedback. These revisions would then be incorporated into a revised Master Plan for presentation to City Council.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Entries	Trails	Picnic	Crossings	Interpretive	Planting	Boundary	
2	1	1	1	3	3	1	2	
3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	
4	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	
5	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	
6	1	1	1	5	1	2	1	
7	3	1	3	4	2	2	3	
8	2	2.5	3	3	2		1	
9	2	3	4	3	4	4		
10	1	4	4	1	4		1	
11	3	1	1	3	3	4	4	
12	1	1	1	3	3	3	4	
13	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	
14	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	
15	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
16	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
17	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
18	3	3	2	5	4	4	3	
19	3	5	4	5	4	4	3	
20	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
21	3.5	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	
22	1	2	3	2	3	5	3	
23	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	
24	2	1		3	3			
25	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	
26	1	1	1	5	3	1	1	
27	2	1	2	3	2	3.5	3.5	
28	3	3	4	4	1	2	2	
29	1	1	2	4	3	1	1	
30					1			
31	3	3	4	6	3	6	4	
32	1	3.5	2	3		2	3	
33	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
34	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
35	4	4	2	3	2	3	3	
36	1	1	1	2	2.5	2	2	
37	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
38	2	3	1	3	3	3.5	3.5	
39	2	4	4	4	1	3.5	3.5	
40	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
41	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	
42	3	4	1	1	2	5	3	
43	4	1	2	2	4	3	3	
44	3	2	3	3	3		3	
45	4	4	5	5	4	3	4	
46	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	
47	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	5	3.5	4.5	
48	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	
49	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
50	2	2	3	4	1	3	2	
51	2	3	1	1	1	3	2	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Entries	Trails	Picnic	Crossings	Interpretive	Planting	Boundary	
52	3	3	1	3	3	1	3	
53	1	1	1		1	4	1	
54	4	4	6	5	4	4	4	
55	1	1	1	3	3	5	2	
56	4	3	5	3	3	2	4	
57	1							
58	1.5	1		3.5		3.5	1.5	
59	1	1	3.5		3.5	1	1.5	
60	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	
61	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	
62	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	
63	2	3	5	4	4	6	5	
64	2	2	1	3	1	2	4	
65	3	1	4	3	3	3	2	
66	3	3	2	4	2	4	3	
67	1	2	1	3	3	3	3	
68	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	
69	1	3	3.5	3.5	2	3.5	2	
70	6	6		3	1	1	2	
71	1	3	1	3	3	1	2	
72	3		2	3	2	3	3	
73	2	4	2	3	3	3	4	
74	3	2	2	3		3	3	
75	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1.5	3.5	3.5	
76	1	2	1	3	2	4	3	
77	2	3	1	5	3	4		
78	3	5	5	5	5			
79	3	3	3		5	2		
80	2	1	2	5	2	3	3	
81	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	
82	1	1	2	3	4	4	1	
83	1	2	1		1	1		
84	3	4	2	2	1	3	3	
85	2	2	2	3	2	3		
86	1	1	1	3	1	2	3	
87	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	
88	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	
89	3	3	1	4	2	3	3	
90	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	
91	3	1		4	3	3	3	
92	2	2	2	6	4	6	3	
93		1	3	3	3	3	3	
94	3.5	1.5	3.5	5.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	
95	2	1	1	3	3	6	3	
96	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	
97	5	5	5	6	6	2	1	
98	2.22	2.34	2.38	3.18	2.61	2.92	2.60	average
99	1.13	1.27	1.32	1.21	1.20	1.29	1.07	std dev.

Pioneer Park Master Plan
Public Comment Summary

These are the written comments that were received on the feedback forms distributed with the flyer. Letters and emails received are attached to this document.

Entries

Please, could we have garbage cans on the perimeter of the park?

I like the proposed new paths and pull in parking!

Five trailheads is too many.

Favor a minimalist approach: benches inside the park, signs very small, if at all.

Don't overdo. I have never seen more than three cars parked at an entrance. If you have the parking areas, why do you need signs, benches, and plantings.

Make more unobtrusive.

Signs should include trail maps.

Parking needed in SE quadrant. 84th Av as nice neighborhood appearance. Be careful with parking lots.

Parking invites people to bring dogs to roam off leash. Enforce leash laws.

I would prefer to see the park maintained as it is.

Five entries seem excessive. Why not do three in phase one and see how they are used.

Concentrate on the trails and returning the trees/plants to their native origins.

Please leave this gem alone – it is unique – just take care of the trees.

The entries are here now and visible.

There is a blind curve at SE 68th and SE 70th Pl. It is already very dangerous for pedestrians and drivers. There have been numerous car accidents at SE 68th and SE 70th.

Adding a parking area would make this area a disaster.

No more parking spaces needed.

Crushed rock preferable to chips.

Post some rules for use and then enforce these rules.

Establish park rules of-the-road and post.

This might encourage nighttime use by teenagers. This already occurs and any addition of benches and parking could potentially make matters worse.

The off street parking is adequate on three trailheads. Why not mark the road with parking slots; its a lot less expensive.

Don't over do it! The indigenous species can't take much more traffic; either can the humans.

The shoulders of the road provide adequate parking.

Encourage walking and biking to the park to eliminate vehicle parking.

I am always interested in phasing and cost to evaluate plans.

I think the current entries work.

Parking for six cars is too much. Rarely, unless a group is meeting, are there more than three cars at any one time at the current parking areas.

Signs that explain that horses are allowed.

Less is more. This is a natural setting. It's good as it is. It's okay to have a space that's not crowded.

Trails

A 6-foot width seems unnecessarily wide. Does wheelchair access imply paving? This is far too much improvement for a small number of people.

Grading secondary trails to a 4' width is excessive. Root systems will be destroyed, along with the feeling of walking on animal or ancient Indian trails.

On Luther Burbank's paved walkways, I have never seen a wheelchair. We do not need wheelchair access in this park. Gravel paths are not the easiest things to walk on.

Bellevue has used wood chips and bark which are ideal. True they have to be replaced every six months...

I would recommend benches along the paths for rest stops. We do not need benches at the entries.

I like small footpaths.

I like the idea of a loop trail

I would not like to see bike access into the park. Along the periphery is OK. Bikers are dangerous when going fast.

Consideration of access is a thoughtful touch and much appreciated.

Do not ruin nature trails.

Ravine and loop trail good ideas. Leave some trails narrow and primitive.

Horses and Bike riders make the trails not usable for hikers in winter with ankle deep mud. Need pedestrian only trails in all quadrants.

The horse trails should be removed from the NW quadrant. There is too much focus on utilizing the NW quadrant.

I do not think paths within the park – in the interior – should be improved with bikers in mind. This park (each quadrant) is too small to accommodate them except on the perimeter and would those paths be paved?

Keep horses out of all park property – excessive maintenance cost without any additional cost to the owners.

Keep many trails narrow. Crushed rock or cinders on some trails would keep them dryer.

Very important - - provide some trails that we can use in wet weather and not go home muddy!!

Improve drainage along all of the trails.

Keep trails narrow in the NE quadrant. Have the NE quadrant be the most natural because it is very pleasant to walk here and be almost by myself.

Adding gravel would be satisfactory on the trails perimeters of parks – good drainage.

However, it is noisy and prevents bird watching.

Inside trails could be wood chips like they are on the Bellevue marsh trails.

More dirt/wood chips than gravel.

Mud is natural. Cement, gravel and asphalt are hard, ugly and formal. We can use the Lid Park if we want cement!

Please, no gravel (especially through the heart of the park) it ruins the natural atmosphere.

Keep interior trails natural; use wood chips, like in the Mercer Slough. If some light gravel is needed for horses or wheelchairs, put on perimeters.

Keep horses out of NW corner. Horses do not mix with walkers. Also, riders need to pick up their horses' messes.

There are plenty of trails for horses already existing on MI

I like the natural paths better.
Paths for walkers and horses in SE quadrant.
No need for bicycles in the park.
Make the NW quadrant bike and dog free.
Just enough to clear the paths from overgrown bushes.
The main trails circling the park could be upgraded but please leave the interior trails for those of us that like to go on “trails”.
The “loop” jogging trail in the NW quadrant is great and is used a lot!
A double trail works best. One half paved for kids, bikes, blades etc. and one half for jogging grade soft trail.
Horses should be banned unless riders clean up manure. Dog owners are required to do this.
Please, no bicycles in these parks, but good gravel walking paths throughout are definitely needed.
I would like walking paths that don’t puddle and aren’t boggy mixes. I love walking in the NW quad. EMW is too crowded with bicyclists for me to walk there safely.
The plan shows over development of wheelchair accessible paths throughout. Keep them to the perimeter of the park.
I prefer softer surfaces for walking and jogging. It is easier on the joints. There are plenty of hard surface trails and tracks on the island. Some improvement of trails are ok but don’t make them too hard.
Keep trail improvements to a minimum, wild life lives here also.
Horse trails need height clearance but don’t over improve and turn them into highways!
Keep it natural. Don’t make improvements on surfaces of trails. Gravel from several years ago was almost too much.
Not enough improvement especially from East Mercer Way and up.
I love nature/interpretive walk. Make sure it wears well and has budget for maintenance.
Recognize that strollers, bikers and wheeled vehicles will be on ADA wheelchair trail too.
Improvements to where horse trails get impossible to walk during the wet season.
Secondary pedestrian trail shown along 84th Ave is now a meandering curbside trail, not a straight run, thirty-five to forty feet in from the street. It should remain as it is. Proposal for “accessible trail” in NW quadrant is too extensive; too much and too wide. The hard trail makes use by joggers, who need a soft surface away from car fumes, very difficult and unusable. Accessible trail also invites bicyclists which is incompatible with walking.
Try to leave some of the tertiary trails that are in near natural state. I like the idea of connecting new trails to the ravine.
The trails are ok if the Parks would keep the weeds cut back.
The only thing wrong with the present park is the lack of trail maintenance i.e. weed removal.
Keep only the outside rails gravel and the rest use mulch please.
I’d like to see the ravine loop constructed. Please don’t make the trails wider than four feet.
Walking trail too wide! I strongly prefer wood chips to crushed rock. Chips are nicer under foot, quieter and, if wet outside, we’re wearing appropriate foot gear anyway.

The trails in the NW quadrant are nice for walkers and bikers. I don't think they need to be wider. In the SE and NE quadrants, the trails need to be wider and higher in clearance. Higher clearance for tall walkers and people riding horseback. A jump trail would be nice in the SE quadrant.

Four feet for people and six feet for horses.

Spend money on trails and reforestation first and left over money on structures and tables.

Be sure ravine trail is on stable site.

Wheelchair access to interior and perimeter of NW section is a good option. Many south end residents are wheelchair bound or in need of a firm surface to walk on. Gravel only and not blacktop.

Proposed paths are too wide. Gravel is noisy and difficult for wheel chairs.

Do not make the paths too wide and no concrete.

Resurfacing (if gravel and not pavement) for wheelchair is ok. Six foot paths are ok but I am really opposed to a new ravine trail. There is too much erosion as it is and there is no need to open up that section. Too expensive to maintain and the view from the ravine overlook, without trails, is its asset.

Don't gravel all of the trails but just the muddy parts.

Leave as many of the trails packed dirt as possible. Only change the surface where needed for high use, mud, wheelchairs etc.

In the equestrian section, leave a small trail with log obstacles for jumping. Just don't clear a couple of logs when they fall.

Create a wide area with good visibility where horses can safely canter.

All trails in SE quadrant should be widened at least four feet for the horses.

Possibly more trails for horses.

These trails are a great way to loosen up our horses but our rides become disappointing when walkers yell at us when we are on our horse trails.

Having wider, gravel trails would completely change the ambiance of the park. I prefer smaller woodland footpaths so I can feel like I'm the only one in the woods and feel closer to nature.

Way too wide and way too improved. Do make the wheelchair improvements but don't lose our lovely woodland paths. Don't make them into typical urban sidewalks in the woods.

Motorized bikes should be prohibited in all quadrants.

Bikes should be allowed on trial basis only and only in the SE quadrant.

Do not widen trails or change their present location or surfacing. This is supposed to be a "natural" pristine setting.

Picnic/Educational Facilities

Make more grassy areas in Pioneer Park near QFC.

No restrooms in the park.

The virtue of the park lies in its wildness. Why should this little patch of woods have to make room for a developed picnic site?

Still more excess! Location is wrong. If anywhere, it should be in the park's interior so the experience is of the park's natural beauty, not urban hubbub.

Picnic facilities are available at Luther Burbank.

Too near the horse trail
Rustic shelter and restrooms seem to invite vandalism.
Add one more picnic table (without cement pads) and eliminate shelter/education facility.
No, not needed.
Not necessary at all. There are plenty of parks on MI. Clarke beach is available and not used!
Keep on perimeter only, across from shopping.
Picnic area ok is next to the one that is there already.
There are many other parks for children to play and to be formally educated. Educate our children to respect nature as it was meant to be.
Please, no more picnic areas needed on MI.
The park should remain as natural as possible. There are enough other parks on the island that provide picnic facilities.
A restroom is nice, as well as picnic tables. An outdoor classroom is unnecessary and too much development.
I have regularly used Pioneer Park and I have never seen one person using/reading the master pioneer signs and educational boards.
There is an under utilized shelter at Dean's Children's Park.
Not necessary, we have picnic facilities at Clark Beach, Groveland and Luther Burbank.
No need for restrooms. Some picnic tables at periphery are ok.
No covered shelter or "educational" facility needed.
This trust was created to maintain the natural forest – it is not really a park. Perhaps it should be renamed "Pioneer Forest" or "Preserve" or "Pioneer Refuge". Please do not add improvements such as restrooms.
No bikes in the park.
I see no need for picnic and educational facilities. There is no shortage of such in other island parks.
No picnic area needed. There are other parks for this need. This should be for nature.
Move forward to phase number one, including the bathrooms.
Picnic facilities would only invite off islanders. In years past there were educational signs and like everything else they were not maintained.
Consider the lack of safety for children in regards to the busy street next to the proposed location. Would a barrier be necessary or street crossing?
People use Luther Burbank for picnics. Another area is not needed.
Hardly anyone uses the picnic table that is there now, so there is not a need for more.
No porta potties!
Some development good.
Another picnic table or two and a small rustic shelter would be fine but restrooms is overkill. There are some at QFC, Starbucks, Sunnybear.
Leave it natural; people can picnic at the other parks. Picnics create garbage and unnatural food for the animals.
If trees have to be cut down to build a shelter, don't build it.
Horses should be allowed in this area.
Too big – only a few tables.
We do not need another picnic shelter. The one in Island Crest Park goes empty. Why build another?

This is a terrible idea. Will encourage drinking alcohol and smoking pot/cigarettes. Will create a health problem to with the increased trash and increased rat and raccoon populations. Big mistake!

Benches and a restroom and trail improvements are not wanted or needed to keep Pioneer Park the wonderful place it is already. We are very unhappy about the plan.

Street Crossings

I suggest a marked crossing a the east end to connect the NE and SE sectors, including a foot bridge over the ditch on the south side of 68th and a warning sign on the curve.

Safety is most important. The free right turns can be a hazard to pedestrians.

Consider safety of pedestrians also at 68th and Island Crest. Horses sometimes walk up with no warning and pedestrians have right of way.

All we need is for traffic to slow down and observe the speed limits.

Do horses pay a tax as others do? What do they accomplish except cost the City

additional money – The owner's don't pick up after them in the park or on the streets.

I am glad horse back riders will be encouraged to cross at 68th and ICW instead of where they are now crossing for matters of safety.

Improve at Island Crest.

Good idea to work on street crossings.

Should be worked on.

Use lights similar to the lights at Island Park School.

Street crossings are not a factor for me.

I think that placing the parking lot spaces near 68th street at the SE section is a very bad idea. School buses stop near there and it is a dangerous curve! Accidents will occur.

Needs to be safe for horses and bikes.

I don't like proposed parking; current parallel parking seems sufficient.

A horse crossing would be nice between the Saddle Club and the SE quadrant because lots of horses cross there.

You should put a crosswalk at the bus stop on the NE corner of the NW quadrant because lots of people with dogs cross there to walk in the park. Good plan also for horses.

Four way cross needs flashing lights activated by pedestrians.

I understand the need for better horse crossing.

Crosswalks needed – blind corners – move to straight away.

Crossing Island Crest Way and 68th is very difficult. Cars must be made to slow down.

Need horse crossing signs at intersection and approaching intersections.

The safety of our children is a must. Please approve this!

I would love to see safe crossings for horse and rider across to Pioneer Park from Mercer Island Saddle Club. The park is so much appreciated by the Saddle Club and the improvements are wonderful. We vote yes!!

Pedestrians and horses have the right of way.

Add signs for horse crossing.

We need marked crosswalks. This is good.

We absolutely do not need twenty-five parking spaces. Six to eight new spaces, total, in groups of two to three might be okay.

Interpretive Signs

Why not let it be? Why do we have to manipulate and control the park?

The pilot signs in the NW sector are a well-intentioned start, but are mounted too high for their primary target audience: children. Small, inobtrusive signs identifying specific trees would be helpful.

I have never noticed a sign.

I like the use of interpretive signs, however the signs in the NW quadrant are quite ugly. Lower the sign face 2-3 feet.

Consider changing mounting method for signs – too bulky and massive – don't overdo signs – can be intrusive. Brochure identifying plants would be nice at entry point.

The signs already are too much clutter.

Use the kind of education/interpretive signage/display that is in use within the NW quadrant.

No, we don't need this.

Leave all signs on the perimeter of park only.

I would like to see the park left alone and as natural as possible.

Signs only on the perimeter - - let us walk the interior without "mans" signs and just enjoy nature.

Not necessary.

Don't detract from the "natural" setting too much.

The educational signs don't seem to get used.

You can't have too much.

They wouldn't be kept up, just another waste of money.

The proposed signs sound good.

Limit signage to a few trail heads. Big signs, like the new ones put in by Eagle Scout, are invasive. We go there for the lack of human intervention; to see nature at work. We don't need everything spelled out for us. Any signs should be discreet and blend in color with the surroundings. The old system interpretive signage with posts and a flyer might not be a bad way to go. Flyers could increase litter but would be used only by those who were really interested.

No interpretive signs at overlook. We are interpreted to death. Resist the impulse for signs; it's beautiful the way it is.

Take out what is there now.

Don't take too much space.

Signs interfere with the beauty of mother nature.

Signs or okay; just not everywhere and not like at the entrance to Dragon Park!

Too much improvement; you look at them only once.

Planting

What is the consideration for planting non-native trees? Concern that this will change ecology/habitat.

No non-natives species. The plantings should be a continuation of the natural landscaping of the park, so the motorists get the feel of it as they drive by.

I have never seen anyone park on Island Crest Way. I do not agree we need more plantings.

Only maintain health of forest. I have never noticed a problem with cars parking on Island Crest Way.
Need to remove Ivy more than anything else.
Spend any funds on removal of dead, diseased and rotted trees. Remove all non-native species and plant mostly native trees.
Want native plant material - - native to our area.
Good to work on removing the ivy.
Use plants that improve wildlife habitat.
Get rid of the stinging nettle which is taking over areas rapidly.
Yes, take care of the trees.
Protect the trees and take care of the plants.
Keep natural but cut back nettles.
No more cutting of trees, it is nice to walk the trails without seeing the cars.
More planting of native trees and shrubs.
What planting? Who decides what, when and where to plant?
I we want to encourage public use and increase utilization, we need more green lawns and open space.
I pass the park often during the day and have never observed cars parked on the lawn.
Increasing quantity of native plants sounds like a good idea.
Take care of what we have.
There is little point in planting unless the exotics are removed. There has been no follow-up on past removal efforts; again a waste of money.
Things planted died for lack of water and Holly removed came back strong along with Ivy.
Remove as much Ivy and Blackberry as is possible.
Keep it natural.
Less trees! Need more meadow like areas in the middle like Lincoln Park in Seattle.
Concentrate on protecting threatened plants and keep it natural.
Ok, as long as it is NW native plants.
Plant anything that is already there.
Make sure they are not poisonous.
Plant more trees to replace dying ones.
More attention and money to restoring areas infested with root rot.

Boundary Markings

Not needed. Let residents build their own fences
Not necessary.
Doesn't seem necessary.
One of the special pleasures of P.P. is that it is not heavily used and its trails give City dwellers a tiny sense of wilderness within an urban area.
Anyone can go there if they are curious enough to explore inside its boundaries. Too much development would destroy that. Once its gone, it's gone.
Please leave it alone!
None – this is a ridiculous work of public funds. The park is fine as is.
Discreet boundary markings are OK.

Not needed.

Not a factor for my use.

Is this to keep neighbors from dumping yard debris in the park? I don't understand a need for this.

Only with small and sparse signage!

It is ridiculous to do this and spend the money. If there is an issue regarding whose tree is rotting or needs to be trimmed, do that on a case by case basis and when needed.

General

Why cant the park be a relaxing place for people who don't want crowds.

We don't need a golf course! Preserve the woods and trails.

No Golf Course!

Maintain the park as natural as possible.

Make it a golf course.

The plan imposes too much development.

I feel you're overreaching. The charm of the park is its naturalness.

Any financial resources that are burning a hole in your pocket should be used for the forestry management plan. More attention should be paid to solving the root rot problem. Leave well enough alone. Don't widen all the paths. There's always the lid park for that.

Maintain as much undeveloped area as possible.

Trim trails often. Keep trail grounds in better shape year around. Keep bikers and horses off the trails.

What's wrong with it now? Why does it need to be changed? Who is going to pay for it?

Stop spending money. Our taxes are already too high.

Thank you for all your efforts.

I am much more concerned about invasive plants and everless evergreens and more weeds, brambles, weed trees.

Please do not wreck the only patch of remaining forestland we have.

I believe the plans put forth are counter to the original concept that this remain in as natural undeveloped state as possible.

Pioneer Park is superb as it is. Leave it alone!

Please leave the park alone – it is a beautiful charming “walk the woods” – such a rare treat in the City.

Horses – for the free benefit of eight to ten horses, half of the SE quadrant is usually all but unusable. Why aren't the horse people required to repair the damage their animals create? Also, all horse riders should be required to clean up their animals droppings.

Debris – I believe the City could afford a chipper and tractor that would fit on most of the trails and would allow the chipping of all the dead limbs and trees.

How many people use the parks or have ever used the park? If you can't answer that, you expect people to pay money for improvements. In the past, I did some dog walking, so I'm a bit familiar but it's not worth spending any real money on the project. Forget it!

Have minimum of expense, if any, is my suggestion.

Some parking (per plan ok).

I like the idea keeping Pioneer Park natural (no amphitheater, botanical garden etc.)

Let's call it Pioneer *Forest* and keep it as such.

I would appreciate a restroom facility in SE or NE section of park if it was partially hidden and could be properly maintained.

Keep the doggie poop bag dispensers.

At least one quadrant where dogs are allowed off leash and under voice control.

Maintain beauty of urban forest.

Do not put money into two restroom facilities, maybe not even one - - put a bldg. across the street. Better use of dollars would be a complete bicycle/running lane around the south tip. One has been incomplete for fifteen years.

People who use the park leave beer bottles at SE 68th and 70th SE Pl. If the proposed improvements bring more people into Pioneer Park, there could be more beer parties. I suggest the police patrol the park on their bicycles.

People who walk with their dogs should always have their dogs within sight. While walking on the trails, I frequently meet large dogs tow to three minutes before their owners appear. My fear is that I will be bitten before the owner comes into view.

The Islands roads have become congested. I am not eager to have people come to Pioneer Park from off the Island thus contributing to the traffic.

No horse exercise rings should be built.

There is conflict horses and people. Could SE section be improved so that horses could be excluded completely form NW section, particularly from 68th street grass area.

Pioneer Park was designed to be a sanctuary.

Absolutely, no porta potties.

Bench in ravine over look area.

Spend less on construction and more on upkeep/maintenance with periodic rehabilitation. Occasional visits by police, especially late evenings when beer parties occur in the NE quadrant.

I am willing to volunteer with park planning and maintenance.

I would like to see the park retain it's feeling of a forest with its trails and rustic appearance and not paved over as other parks are in the area.

The south end has no "gathering place".

I would love to create a more open lawn type concept, such as the north islanders have with the Lid Park. A gathering place for south island folks to blade, bike, picnic, frisbee etc. with their kids.

Has anyone ascertained the number of horse riders that are non-residents? i.e., those who are no paying taxes for upkeep of parks on the island.

Please don't promote over use. Keep it as a nature refuge. We need one "natural Preserve" here.

Enhancement of wildlife habitat should be the primary goal of any improvements. If you make the park too accessible, it will have a negative impact on wildlife. Island Crest Park should be included in the Open Space Conservancy Trust also.

Continue emphasis on doggy-bags.

I am looking forward to seeing more plans and the improvements.

Please don't over develop, it's lovely as is.

Please keep the "natural" setting of the forest. It is good to improve and maintain the trails but less improvement is more enjoyment.

I would like to see the park remain as natural and undeveloped as possible. Certainly, wheelchair access is important but lets limit it to a single trail and leave all the rest undisturbed.

I am an avid horse lover and own two that my family keeps at the Saddle club. Please keep in mind, that for people without horse trailers, the park is the only open green natural space to ride.

No decking on overlook! A bench or two is ok but could be subject to past actions of being thrown into the ravine. Some worry that it invites teens to drink, etc. I think teens search for more private areas but maybe I'm wrong.

Those statues are an eyesore and scare horses. They also take away from the natural look of the park.

No decking and railings at viewpoints. There is not much land in the park and if it is built on, there will only be less of it.

People need to be informed where horses are allowed to be because angry joggers inhibit our "fun" trail rides. The SE quadrant is for horses. Need signage.

I would like to see in the plan more for horses.

I don't think any motorized vehicles should be allowed in the park. I'd like it to be a quiet place to walk, jog and bike without the noise of dirt bikes.

Protect the trillium.

What lives in Pioneer Park? We need an animal survey. How will these animals be affected by proposed "improvements"?

Home owners are using areas of the park as their own private dump. Make them clean it up where they have dumped.

Get the big huge electrical boxes off the poles along Island Crest Way.

The Plan is awful! As a frequent visitor, I like to walk alone. It is a grave mistake to think that "improvement" means higher use. No forest setting can accommodate higher use well. The more people in the woods equals the more trash there will be and more risk of fire. Right now, people move through the woods and do not bring food or beer or cigarettes.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bob Reitingger [mailto:bohr@solarsystems.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2001 16:49

To: 'miparks@ci.mercer-island.wa.us'

Subject: pioneer park feedback..

I use Pioneer Park almost daily and I wanted to voice my support for the Master Plan. One suggestion: dog waste continues to be a problem in some areas especially down on 68th in the NE quad. Could we put in place some more pit-stop baggy stations?

Regards,

Bob Reitingger

Solar Systems & Peripherals

8134 304th Avenue SE

Preston, WA 98050 USA

bohr@solarsystems.com www.solarsystems.com

1-800-253-5764...117

Fax: 425-222-7388 Other Phone: 425-222-7588

"Without struggle, there is no progress." Frederick Douglass



Bob Reitingger.vcf

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-----Original Message-----

From: Martin Kasischke [mailto:flowera@earthlink.net]

Sent: Wednesday, August 01, 2001 13:04

To: miparks@ci.mercer-island.wa.us

Subject: Park Master Plan

I believe that the Pioneer Park should not be changed. I walk in it almost everyday. It is a forest and it is like a magic land. Your ideas are not appropriate and would damage a wonderful setting.

We live in a world of concrete and the Park is a place where we can escape and there is a sense of being there without any sense of others. The trails are many and provide a place to meditate and enjoy nature.

Please do not attempt to change the forest and vegetation.

Bikers and horses do not belong in this park.

Please do not destroy the wonder of Pioneer Park with the changes you have described.

Ann Adams

-----Original Message-----

From: Martin Kasischke [mailto:rejoicing@home.com]

Sent: Wednesday, August 01, 2001 18:43

To: Pete Mayer, Director

Subject: Pioneer Park

Dear Mr. Mayer:

Pioneer Park is one of the few remaining natural areas on Mercer Island that is relatively undisturbed and accessible to residents. It should remain that way.

Walk with me through the park and you will see that the primary trails are already more than 6 feet wide. It is only when the trail narrows to pass between the trees that these trails are reduced below 6 feet. Park visitors will be glad to briefly walk single file to save those trees. As we walk the paths, you'll enjoy the serenity and pleasure the park offers in its' present state. Then imagine elderly citizens or strolling families trying to avoid a careening cyclist coming head-on at warp speed. Now imagine those citizens colliding with skate boarders and roller bladers while stepping around the horse droppings.

Once your construction equipment violates the sanctity of that nearly pristine park, it can never be restored to its' natural state. Bulldozers, road graders and cement trucks will destroy all that has been carefully preserved for so many years. The Pioneer Park Master Plan is a bad idea and should be immediately killed.

Sincerely,

Martin Kasischke
6876 83rd Av. SE
Mercer Island

—

-----Original Message-----

From: Rob Kaplan [mailto:Rob@NiceAdvice.com]

Sent: Friday, June 15, 2001 10:26 AM

To: pete.mayer@ci.mercer-island.wa.us

Subject: from Rob Kaplan and about Pioneer Park

Dear Mr. Mayer,

Thanks, very much, for introducing me to Marguerite Sutherland and for arranging for me to see the Pioneer Park preliminary plans.

I plan to attend the next meeting about the Pioneer Park planning on June 20th, but because there is a chance I will have to be out of town on business, I send you written record of my concerns in the hope they can be recorded.

My family lives at 6735 84th Avenue SE - at the corner of 68th and 84th. Ours is the only house along 84th Street with a front door facing Pioneer Park. It's a view we value and appreciate.

The Pioneer Park plan contemplates adding parking near the intersection of 84th and 68th. I propose the parking be shifted elsewhere:

- The intersection of 68th and 84th is very busy - especially during the morning and evening commuting hours. Adding formalized parking anywhere in the immediate vicinity will only make congestion worse.
- The park is busiest when the roads are busiest -- during morning and evening commuting hours. Adding parking for 10 or 15 cars would only make rush hours noisier and busier.
- The south side of 84th on the intersection is a school bus stop morning and evening. Congestion and traffic from parking would make it a more hazardous area.
- And, speaking selfishly, I would much rather walk out my front door and look at the trees than to look at, and listen to, cars and people coming and going. Our family already has to endure enough congestion and traffic from our neighboring intersection. We respectfully ask that you not degrade the situation.

There is an existing trailhead entrance to the park along 84th closer to SE 66th Street. I suggest the committee examine this entrance for parking. It is not as congested an area, and its neighbors have houses oriented in the opposite direction.

Please let me know if I can be helpful to the committee in any way, or if I can supply more information about this situation.

Thanks very much

Rob Kaplan

rekaplan@home.com
206.275.3700