2025 City of Medina Park Tree Inventory
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This is a summary of the completed Medina parks and wetlands tree inventory as was budgeted for 2025.

Overview

I completed an inventory of trees located in City of Medina parks and wetlands, identifying 1,321 trees representing 61 species. This project provides a clear picture of the City's public trees, their condition, and how they can be better managed and protected over time.

A "*significant tree*" means any tree 6 inches DBH or larger, measured 4.5 feet above ground. The inventory includes all significant trees and sub-6-inch trees that were newly planted by Public Works; naturally occurring volunteer trees under 6 inches were excluded.

Trees within street rights of way have not yet been inventoried. That work is planned for the second phase of this project in 2026.

Species Composition

The most common species found were:

- Douglas-fir – 302 trees
- Bigleaf maple – 237 trees
- Western redcedar – 184 trees

Other frequently observed native species include Oregon ash, black cottonwood, Pacific madrone, red alder, and Scouler's willow.

Tree Size Distribution

Tree sizes are weighted toward younger and mid-mature trees, indicating a healthy age range and strong future canopy potential:

- 8.8%: Greater than 30 inches DBH (legacy trees)
- 10.2%: 24–30 inches DBH
- 14.2%: 18–24 inches DBH
- 23.2%: 12–18 inches DBH
- 36.1%: 6–12 inches DBH
- 7.5%: 0–6 inches DBH (newly planted, non-volunteer trees)

Invasive Tree Species

Several non-native trees were identified in City parks and wetlands, including quaking aspen (Populus tremuloides), English holly (Ilex aquifolium), and black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia). These species are listed on the King County Noxious Weed List, which identifies plants that can spread aggressively and displace native species. Specifically, they are classified as “weeds of concern,” meaning that control is recommended but not required.

A total of 47 quaking aspen were found in the wetlands south of Medina Park. In this area, aspen is becoming the dominant canopy species, gradually replacing native cottonwood, alder, and willow. Aspen spreads through its roots, forming large colonies that make it difficult for native trees to grow.

Controlling aspen is challenging without targeted herbicide treatment, since cutting or digging the trees often causes new sprouts to form from the root system. Several heron nests were also observed in this stand, but they are no longer active. Any management work in this area should be timed carefully to avoid harming wildlife habitat and to restore a more natural wetland forest.

A long-term invasive tree management plan is recommended for this area. Efforts could include thinning or selective removal of aspen and replanting with native wetland species. Restoring a more balanced mix of native trees would strengthen wildlife habitat and improve long-term forest health.

Understory Vegetation

Invasive plants were also found in the understory (ground-level vegetation), especially in Fairweather Nature Reserve. The most common species were Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) and English ivy (Hedera helix). Both are listed as Class C noxious weeds by King County.

Class C weeds are recognized by the State of Washington as harmful to the environment, but control is encouraged rather than required. The City of Medina can choose to manage these plants, especially in natural areas where they are spreading quickly.

Although removal is not mandatory, control is strongly recommended. Blackberry forms thick patches that block sunlight and crowd out native shrubs and young trees. English ivy is more damaging long term, as it covers native vegetation and climbs into tree canopies, where it can weaken or kill mature trees. Removing these invasive plants and replanting with native species such as salal, sword fern, and Oregon grape would help restore healthy groundcover and improve habitat.

Tree Health Summary

Overall, the trees in Medina's parks and wetlands are in good to excellent condition:

- 31.6% Excellent
- 39.8% Good
- 20.2% Fair
- 6.6% Poor
- 1.8% Dead

Trees in poor or dead condition were mostly in wetland areas, where natural cycles of growth and decay are expected. No widespread pests or diseases were observed.

Urban Forest Management and Next Steps

This inventory provides information needed to actively manage and care for its trees. Moving forward, the City may wish to:

- Manage invasive and declining trees, especially quaking aspen and English ivy.
- Replant in selected areas to maintain a diverse mix of native species that are long-lived and well suited to Medina's climate.
- Replace dead or dying trees as part of ongoing maintenance, rather than only responding when problems arise.
- Continue proactive care such as mulching, pruning, and routine monitoring.

If park and right-of-way trees are not managed regularly, long-term costs and safety risks can increase as tree conditions decline. Without active management, invasive species will continue to spread, and the City could lose important tree cover and habitat value.

The second phase of the tree inventory, focused on street rights of way and other public areas, is intended for 2026 pending City Council approval.

Coordination and Oversight

This inventory provides a strong starting point for coordinated management of Medina public trees. Public Works can use this data to plan and schedule maintenance in parks, wetlands, and open spaces in a more efficient and proactive way.

The information also supports better coordination between departments when making decisions about trees, from park maintenance to development review. Over time, this shared data can help guide consistent policies, track progress, and support long-term planning for both public and private trees.

TreePlotter and Public Access

All tree inventory data has been uploaded to a program called ‘TreePlotter’. TreePlotter is the City’s new online tree management tool. Once finalized, it will allow Council, staff, and the public to view tree locations, species, and condition data in real time.

To access TreePlotter, https://pg-cloud.com/MedinaWA/