



## BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

**AB 5890**  
**June 15, 2021**  
**Regular Business**

### AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 5890: Youth & Family Services (YFS) Levy Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Provide direction, if any, on the program and service components of a potential YFS Levy, exemptions, levy length, and direct staff to prepare a ballot measure ordinance for first reading.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	City Manager
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jessi Bon, City Manager
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. YFS Levy Presentation 2. Youth & Family Services Program Evaluation Proposal
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	2. Articulate, confirm, and communicate a vision for effective and efficient city services. Stabilize the organization, optimize resources, and develop a long-term plan for fiscal sustainability.

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ n/a
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ n/a
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ n/a

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to review the revised list of potential Youth & Family Services (YFS) programs and services that could be included in a levy lid lift. Deanna Gregory of Pacifica Law Group will provide an overview of the levy lid lift process, identify additional decisions to be made, and provide preliminary financial modeling for two levy scenarios (see Exhibit 1). Should the City Council desire to pursue a levy in November 2021, staff will need direction to proceed with development of a ballot measure ordinance for City Council consideration in July.

### BACKGROUND

Following the closure of the Mercer Island Thrift Shop in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, YFS and Thrift shop staff were laid off and furloughed due to the lack of revenues and funding for the YFS Department. In May 2020, the City Council established the YFS Working Group, comprised of representatives from the MIYFS Foundation Board, the City Council, and staff, to evaluate short-term and long-term funding options to stabilize the YFS Department. Although the Group reviewed four levy scenarios for long-term funding, a formal recommendation was not made, and the Group concluded its work in January 2021.

In February 2021 (see [AB 5809](#)), Ms. Gregory presented the City Council with information regarding voter considerations and the financial impact of a measure based on preliminary staffing scenarios. Levy lid lift considerations based upon lift options of (1) a one-time increase above 1% limit and (2) a multiple year increase above 1% limit for up to six years were considered. The City Council directed the City Manager to research and provide additional information regarding a single year levy lid lift option for consideration on the November ballot and to prepare the financial modeling related to a levy term.

At the April 27, 2021, City Council Planning Session, the City Council reviewed a list of potential programmatic elements to be included in a future YFS levy (see [AB 5865](#)). This included the school-based mental health counseling program (staff and supervision), along with a list of six alternative programs for consideration. The City Council discussed the options and provided direction to the staff to return with a revised list.

#### YFS LEVY POTENTIAL PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS

Staff has prepared a revised list of programmatic elements for consideration as part of a YFS levy based on feedback provided at the April 27 Planning Session, see table below.

#	PRIORITY	ACTION	OPTION	COST*
A	Base	STABILIZE	School-Based Counseling Program	\$682,000
B	Base	STABILIZE	Supervision for School-Based Counseling Program	\$54,000
C	1	RESTORE	Programs Assistant to Full-Time (0.5 FTE)	\$32,000
D	2	RESTORE	Second Middle School Counselor (0.83 FTE)	\$98,000
E	3	RESTORE	Individual, Family and Geriatric Counselor (1.0 FTE)	\$112,000
F	4	DATA	Comprehensive Evaluation Program for YFS Services	\$15,000
G	5	DATA	Senior Needs Assessment – every four years	\$30,000

#### Levy Base Proposal (Options A & B)

The two items identified as the “base proposal” include staff and supervision for the school-based counseling program.

##### Option A/Base: Stabilize long-term funding for MIYFS School Based Counseling Program:

- **Include:** Salaries and benefits for 7 positions:
  - 1 counselor at Northwood, Island Park, West Mercer, and Lakeridge elementary schools
  - 1 counselor at Islander Middle School
  - 1 counselor at Mercer Island High School
  - 1 substance use prevention/intervention professional at Mercer Island High School
- **Annual Cost:** \$682,000 (2022 salaries and benefits)
- **Benefits:** Securing long-term funding for this program ensures that youth mental health needs are met through ability to access mental health professionals in every public school on Mercer Island.

##### Option B/Base: Stabilize clinical supervision of MIYFS School Based Counseling Program:

- **Include:** Salaries and benefits for 0.45 FTE management staff
- **Annual Cost:** \$54,000 (2022 salaries and benefits)
- **Benefits:** Clinical ethics and best practices stipulate clinical supervision of formal therapeutic mental health care. The clinical supervisor reviews the practice of counselors including confirming and supporting client progress towards treatment goals, compliance with pertinent RCW and HIPAA

guidelines, and adherence to ethical standards of practice. Including funding for the clinical supervision for school-based counselors captures the full cost of the administration of the program.

The following additional options are included for consideration as part of a future YFS Levy.

Option C: Restore Programs Assistant (0.5 FTE)

In May 2020, the 1.0 FTE YFS Administrative Assistant position was eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In September 2020, a 0.5 FTE YFS Programs Assistant position was reinstated.

- **Restore:** 0.5 FTE Programs Assistant
- **Annual Cost:** \$32,000 (2022 salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Restoring the capacity of this position will allow YFS staff to meet the administrative and program support needs of the Emergency Assistance, Community-Based Counseling, and Senior Support programs, all of which are facing increased demand and reduced resources. Program support efforts include coordinating the financial workflow of emergency fiscal supports for income qualified households and senior clients related to rent, food, and other efforts to help resolve short-term financial crises.

Option D: Restore Second IMS Counselor (0.83 FTE)

In 2000, a second counselor was added to Islander Middle School as the school population was growing. In 2017, the position was eliminated due to lack of funding.

- **Restore:** Second Island Middle School Counselor position (0.83 FTE)
- **Annual Cost:** \$98,000 (2022 salary and benefits)
- **Benefit:** Current Islander Middle School enrollment exceeds the capacity of one YFS Counselor; restoring and increasing capacity will align with enrollment figures and allow the YFS school-based team to better meet the mental health demands of this age group. Middle school students continue to demonstrate need for intervention with 20.5% of 8th graders reporting clinically significant signs of depression and 14.4% of 8th graders (13.7% of 6th graders) reporting having seriously considered attempting suicide (2018 Healthy Youth Survey data).

Option E: Restore Individual, Family, and Geriatric Counselor Position (1.0 FTE)

The Geriatric Specialist position was reduced by 50% (from 1.0 FTE to 0.5 FTE) as part of the 2019 budget reductions. Senior services include two core functions: case management and mental health care. Case management includes providing information, referral, and systems navigation in areas including residential/supported living, Medicare, and rent/utility assistance. Senior mental health care focuses on grief/loss, lifecycle transitions, and end of life matters. At the time of reductions, case management services to the most vulnerable senior citizens were prioritized for the remaining 0.5 FTE, leaving a shortage of mental health support resources for this population in YFS community-based services.

In 2020, the community-based counseling program was reduced from 1.9 FTE to 1.1 FTE due to the COVID-19 pandemic, further exacerbating this shortage of mental health resources overall.

This option was revised since the April 27 discussion, combining the need for additional geriatric services and community-based counseling services into one position. This position provides flexibility to serve a range of age groups.

- **Restore:** Individual, Family, and Geriatric Counselor (1.0 FTE)
- **Annual Cost:** \$112,000 (2022 salary and benefits)

- **Benefit:** Increased capacity for senior-specific mental health care and support, including grief/loss groups, low-barrier home-based meetings and functional assessments, and support for mood, behavioral and substance use issues. In addition, this position will provide additional capacity for outreach and collaboration with the City's first responders and MIH program.

#### Option F: Comprehensive Program Evaluation – Data Collection and Assessment

This option was added at the direction of the City Council to provide resources for YFS data collection and evaluation. The YFS Department currently relies on data from the Healthy Youth Survey, which is a Statewide assessment of students. This option would provide for a Mercer Island-specific data assessment tool.

- **Include:** Funding for a Comprehensive Evaluation Program for YFS Services
- **Annual Cost:** \$15,000
- **Benefit:** Annual evaluation of YFS services to update and reinstate client surveys will track client satisfaction, progress, and efficacy of treatment plans. The evaluation program will update and streamline outputs tracking, service request and waitlist tracking and provide an annual report. This work will likely be performed by contract.

#### Option G: Senior Needs Assessment

This option was identified by staff in response to the recommendation in Option F and will provide a tool to collect and assess data related to the senior population on Mercer Island. Currently, there are few tools available to YFS to measure and evaluate the needs of this population.

- **Include:** Funding for a Senior Needs Assessment every four years.
- **Annual Cost:** \$7,500
- **Benefit:** In order to understand the needs of the senior population on Mercer Island, a consultant would administer a survey of senior residents and establish a focus group of key stakeholders and residents to assess needs and produce a key findings report. This information will assist staff in future planning for senior programming in the community.

A summary of potential outcomes that would be derived from Options F and G is attached as Exhibit 2. This data collection strategy would allow YFS staff to evaluate and report out to the community on services both from an output perspective (number of people served) and also an outcome perspective (effectiveness of programming).

### **LEVY DECISION POINTS**

Should the City Council desire to include a levy as part of the November 2, 2021 General Election, a decision will need to be made to allow sufficient time to meet the August 3, 2021 filing deadline with King County. Meeting this deadline will require adoption of a ballot measure ordinance in July 2021, with the first reading anticipated on July 6 and the second reading on July 20.

Ms. Gregory has prepared a presentation to review additional decisions the City Council will need to make to inform development of a ballot measure ordinance (see Exhibit 1). Staff are currently assuming, based on prior City Council discussions, that the potential YFS Levy is for a single-year lift option.

Additional decisions related to the levy include:

- Programs and services to be funded by the levy
- Exemptions for qualifying seniors and persons with disabilities from the levy
- A permanent or temporary levy, and if temporary the length of the levy

Each of these decision items will be presented by Ms. Gregory as part of the Tuesday's City Council meeting. Direction from the City Council is needed on each item in order to prepare the ballot measure ordinance.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Alternatives:

Option 1: Provide direction to the City Manager to prepare a ballot measure ordinance for a YFS Levy for first reading on July 6, 2021 for the November 2, 2021 General Election and confirm the following:

- Programmatic elements
- Exemptions
- Length of levy

Option 2: Take no further action.