



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PRC 25-15
November 6, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PRC 25-15: Deane's Children's Park Site Plan Update	☒ Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive project update and provide feedback on the preferred Site Plan for Deane's Children's Park.	☐ Action Needed: ☐ Motion ☐ Recommendation
STAFF:	Kellye Hilde, Deputy Public Works Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager	
EXHIBITS:	1. Project Location Map 2. Parks and Recreation Commission – Design Concept Discussion Q&A 3. Preferred Site Plan	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to update the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) on the development of the preferred site plan for Deane's Children's Park.

- On March 18, 2025, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) authorized staff to proceed with developing a Site Plan for Deane's Children's Park ([AB6641](#)).
- The City Council allocated \$1,500,000 in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program for the planning, design, and construction of the improvements at Deane's Children's Park, including the development of the new Site Plan. The scope of work for the first phase of construction at the park will be determined through this planning process.
- The Site Plan will address universal play standards with a new layout and will include a phasing plan, cost estimate, and recommended funding strategy for replacing equipment and amenities.
- Between April and May 2025, the project team conducted the first round of outreach through an online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths to gather input on priorities for the Site Plan.
- Key themes from the first round of engagement included strong support for inclusive and accessible play, preserving the park's natural and wooded character, and incorporating imaginative and nature-based design elements.
- Based on this input, two early design concepts were developed: *The Quest* and *Woodsy Wonders*.
- Between July and August 2025, the project team conducted the second round of outreach through an online survey, project booths at four community events, and a discussion with the Friends of Dragon Park to gather input on a preferred concept and preferences on the look, feel, and character of play equipment.
- Key themes from the second round of engagement included strong support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept, and a focus on imaginative, inclusive play experiences that preserve the park's natural character.
- On September 4, 2025, the project team facilitated a site tour with the Commission to provide an on-the-ground perspective of the two design concepts under consideration. Following the site visit, the Commission expressed support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept and recommended moving forward with refining this option into the preferred plan ([PRC 25-10](#)).
- During the Commission update on November 6, 2025, staff will provide an overview of the preferred Site Plan and share preliminary play components for review and consideration.

BACKGROUND

SITE PLAN OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF WORK

In the fall of 2024, the City engaged Berger Partnership as the design consultant to facilitate the development of a new Site Plan for Deane's Children's Park. The plan will address cohesive integration of the Bike Skills area and the playground structures, with the goal of modernizing the park area to meet universal play standards. The plan will also address improvements to pedestrian and bike circulation, restroom and picnic shelter replacement, parking, and other potential park improvements. The final Site Plan will include a cost estimate, phasing plan, and funding strategy.

The planning, design, and construction of Deane's Children's Park will include multiple phases:

- **Phase I:** Develop a Site Plan in 2025 through a community engagement process that will address universal play standards including a new park layout and phasing plan for the replacement of equipment and amenities. The Site Plan will also include cost estimates and a funding strategy. The Parks and Recreation Commission will review the proposed alternatives and present a recommendation to the City Council for adoption.
- **Phase II:** The Site Plan will identify the first phase of capital improvement work, including anticipated replacement of one or more playground structures. The project will advance through detailed design, permitting, and phased construction that is anticipated to take place from 2026-2027.
- **Future Phases:** The anticipated scope of improvements for Deane's Children's Park likely exceed the initial budget allocation. Future capital improvements will be recommended for implementation in phases, to include continued opportunities for community fundraising and grants.

ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE

The Site Plan development process is expected to take about one year and is divided into five major steps:

- Project Kickoff and Site Assessment: Q4 2024 – Q1 2025 (complete)
- Pre-Design and Pre-Engagement: Q1 2025 (complete)
- Concept Development: Q2 – Q3 2025 (complete)
 - Identify gaps, needs, and priorities of project, and gather input on play elements
 - Develop concept alternatives
- **Final Design Recommendation: Q4 2025 (we are here)**
 - Refine concept alternatives into one final design as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Site Plan Adoption: Q1 2026
 - Parks and Recreation Commission to provide Site Plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The first engagement phase took place from April to May 2025. The project team gathered broad community input through an online survey, community events, and school activities to inform the development of design concepts. These efforts reached a wide cross-section of the community – including families, children, and longtime park users – to understand their experiences, priorities, and ideas for the future redevelopment of the park. Feedback emphasized inclusive and accessible play and preserving the park's natural character.

The second phase of engagement, conducted from July to August 2025, sought feedback on the draft design concepts – *The Quest* and *Woodsy Wonders* – through online and in-person outreach. The community favored *Woodsy Wonders* for its alignment with the park’s natural setting and support for imaginative, inclusive play.

A detailed summary of this engagement is provided in the September 4, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting agenda. ([PRC 25-10](#))

DESIGN REFINEMENT

On September 4, 2025, the project team facilitated a site tour with the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) during its Regular Meeting to provide an on-the-ground perspective of the two draft design concepts under consideration. During the visit, staff presented an overview of each concept, highlighting how design elements would be experienced in context and how they reflected community feedback.

Following the site visit and discussion, the Commission expressed support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept and recommended moving forward with refining this option into the preferred plan. During the meeting, the Commission discussed a selection of items for further exploration and clarification to support their input on the preferred plan; these items are addressed in Exhibit 2 and will be reviewed in greater detail during the presentation.

PUBLIC ART INTEGRATION - OPPORTUNITIES

Staff met with the Arts Council during their October 15, 2025, Regular Meeting to provide an overview of the Site Plan and discuss opportunities for public art integration consistent with the Treehouse Adventure theme from the *Woodsy Wonders* concept ([AC 25-05](#)). The meeting focused on seeking input on integrating public art and placemaking elements using the 1% for Art in Public Places funding generated by this project, with consideration for the first phase of development and additional recommendations captured in the site plan report for future phases.

During the meeting, staff explored a variety of art forms, including sculptural elements to define entryways, graphic media such as tile or paint integrated into building facades, and functional elements like benches and wayfinding. There was general support for the art forms discussed, as well as for incorporating natural materials and a treehouse-inspired nature-themed aesthetic into the park. The Arts Council recommended engaging schools and students who participated in the original outreach and emphasized that the specific art forms should be informed by student input. Opportunities for public art in the first phase will continue to be explored and refined, with direction from the Arts Council guiding implementation.

PREFERRED SITE PLAN

The preferred plan is based on the *Woodsy Wonders* concept as the primary framework for the park’s design. Key features from *The Quest* are retained, including the restroom and picnic shelter, reoriented for improved sightlines and functionality, as well as the sensory “bridge” or pathway connecting to Kenton’s Dragon. The design incorporates Kenton’s Dragon within a broader treehouse adventure theme, using subtle dragon-related elements such as themed nodes and playful discoveries like a dragon’s egg. During the meeting, staff will walk through the different play zones and present options for play equipment within each zone.

COMMISSION FEEDBACK ON PREFERRED SITE PLAN

Staff seek the Commission’s feedback on the preferred Site Plan to inform its refinement into the final design. The questions below are intended to guide the discussion, confirm the design reflects community input, and identify any areas for adjustment.

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1. Does the preferred plan reflect the types of play identified through community input? Are there any gaps or adjustments needed? (Note: play equipment options will be presented during the meeting.)
 2. Does the plan provide a thoughtful balance between structured play, active elements, and open spaces that support imaginative, unstructured play?
 3. Does the plan provide clear, inclusive access for a range of ages and abilities, including pathways, surfacing, and play elements?
 4. Are the park's character, themes, and signature elements appropriately incorporated?

During the November 6 meeting, staff will present play equipment options and collect input from the Commission on these questions and other aspects of the preferred Site Plan.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will refine the preferred plan into the final site plan and prepare a corresponding site plan report. Staff will present the final site plan and report to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review at the February 5, 2026, Regular Meeting, at which time the Commission will be asked to provide a recommendation to City Council for adoption of the Site Plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive project update and provide feedback on the preferred Site Plan for Deane's Children's Park.