



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6049
April 5, 2022
Consent Agenda

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6049: Apply for Washington State Historical Society Heritage Capital Funding for Luther Burbank Boiler Building Phase 1 Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Adopt Resolution No. 1624	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works		
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Patrick Yamashita, Deputy Public Works Director Paul West, CIP Project Manager		
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a		
EXHIBITS:	1. Resolution No. 1624 2. Boiler Building and Restroom Annex Visuals		
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	1. Prepare for the impacts of growth and change with a continued consideration on environmental sustainability.		

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This agenda bill authorizes staff to seek grant funding for the Luther Burbank Boiler Building Phase 1 project from the Washington State Historical Society's Capital Heritage Grant Program. It covers:

- The history of the Luther Burbank Boiler Building project
- A discussion of the need for this project
- Information about the Heritage Capital Grant Program and the Resolution required for the grant application.
- The cost estimate for this project is \$1,450,000. The grant application will be for 33% of the total project cost, which is estimated at \$483,000.
- City Council approval is needed to apply for this grant. The grant application requires the City Council to demonstrate a commitment (via resolution) to provide the matching funds for this project.

The City Council previously considered this project at the May 18, 2021 ([AB 5868](#): Luther Burbank Park Docks and Adjacent Waterfront Concept Design Recommendation) and March 1, 2022 ([AB 6021](#): Luther Burbank Docks and Waterfront Project 30% Design Recommendation) meetings.

BACKGROUND

The Luther Burbank Boiler Building (“Boiler Building”) was constructed in 1928 to house a steam plant for heating the campus of the Boys Parental School. The building was repurposed for storage in 1974 by King County, which also added restrooms and a concession stand as an attached structure (Annex) on its south side (see Exhibit 2). This construction was part of a larger park development project which also added a waterfront plaza and docks next to the building. The City of Mercer Island took ownership of these improvements with the transfer of Luther Burbank Park in 2002.

In 2015, the City learned that the lands underlying these improvements belong to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The City now leases these aquatic lands from DNR largely at no cost because it provides shoreline access to the public. However, the City pays to lease the land underlying the Boiler Building because this building is considered a non-aquatic use. The City pays approximately \$4,300 per year to DNR and this is adjusted for inflation over the life of the lease.

[The 2006 Luther Burbank Park Master Plan](#) (“Master Plan”) identifies the Boiler Building as a boating/rowing facility *“including rental/storage of human powered kayaks, canoes and small sailboats as well as being the operation center of any sailing/boating program that might be offered to serve the community”*. Since then, Parks and Recreation has used the Boiler Building to store equipment for its popular sailing and boating camps every summer. The building cannot be occupied for classes or offices because it does not meet building codes for such purposes.

In 2017, consistent with the Master Plan, the City completed a [feasibility study for the use of the Boiler Building](#). The study identified several preliminary steps needed to simply preserve the existing building as a Phase 1 project. These needs included roof replacement, seismic retrofits, and minor repairs. The study also proposed adding a viewing deck/outdoor classroom to the roof of the annex building that contains the restrooms. This scope of work included reducing the chimney height by ten feet and installing internal steel bracing to stabilize the building. Completing this Phase 1 project will allow the building to continue to be used for storage, restrooms, and concessions to support the sailing and boating programs. It also prepares the building for Phase 2, which will include additional renovations for a non-motorized small craft boating center.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

On March 1, 2022, the City Council directed staff to move forward with a comprehensive renovation of the Luther Burbank Park waterfront in two phases ([AB 6021](#)). Phase 1 is the renovation of the Boiler Building, the Annex, and the addition of a rooftop viewing deck/outdoor classroom on top of the Annex. This phase is expected to be constructed in fall of 2023.

Staff have sought grant opportunities to help fund this project and have determined that this project is eligible for the Heritage Capital Projects Program. This grant program was created by the Washington State Legislature as a program of the Washington State Historical Society to provide capital funds for projects that increase public access to history through historic preservation and history interpretation. Grant funding covers up to 33% of the cost of the proposed Phase 1 project. Staff have begun the process of applying for 2022 funding. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has given approval as the landowner. The Mercer Island Historical Society has been supporting this project with coordination of support letters and interpretation features.

Preserving the structural integrity of the building is important for several reasons. Without seismic retrofits, the building's masonry, including the 80-foot-tall chimney, could fall in an earthquake. Rebuilding the remnant structure after such an event would likely be unfeasible. The leaking roof and foundation are weakening the steel-reinforced concrete structure. Water must be controlled and kept out of the building envelope to prevent further damage.

Furthermore, this building likely could not be built in this location today. State and local regulations severely limit such development this close to the shoreline, and it is unlikely that DNR would allow a similar new building in an aquatic lease. In addition to losing this iconic piece of history, the City would give up an unparalleled location for housing a small watercraft facility.

If the application is successful, this grant will fund up to one third of the construction costs of the Boiler Building renovation. The total project cost is \$1,450,000, so grant funding is estimated at \$483,000. Additional grant funding for the renovation of the Annex and the addition of a rooftop deck is being pursued through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office.

The grant application requires a resolution containing the City Council's approval of the project, its authority to apply for the grant, and its commitment of matching funds for the project. Proposed Resolution No. 1624 meets these three conditions of the grant application. By adopting the Resolution, the City Council authorizes the City Manager to apply for the grant and commits the balance of funds needed (approximately \$967,000) to complete the project if the Washington State Historical Society includes the City's grant request in its Heritage Capital Program funding recommendation to the Governor and Legislature. Grant notification is scheduled to occur in September 2022.

NEXT STEPS

The deadline for Stage 1 (Eligibility Review) is April 14, 2022. Upon passage of Resolution, staff will seek initial review and prepared to submit the full grant application by the deadline of June 9, 2022.

If the project is not recommended for State funding, staff will seek additional grant funding opportunities to support the project.

This project will be included in the 2023-2024 Capital Improvement Program budget, which is scheduled for review and adoption by the City Council this fall.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Pass Resolution No. 1624, authorizing the City Manager to apply for the 2023-2025 Heritage Capital Grant funding for construction of the Boiler Building Roof Replacement and Seismic Retrofits (Phase 1) project according to Washington State Historical Society grant guidelines, and commit to appropriating funding sufficient to meet grant program match requirements in the City's capital budget if the grant application receives a fundable ranking.