
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

Parks & Recreation Department

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Parks and Recreation Commission

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Capital Projects Overview

To: Parks & Recreation Commission

From: Paul West, Capital Projects and Planning Manager

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Mercer Island Parks and Recreation (MIPR) has a robust capital work plan in 2020. The table below summarizes eight main projects. It is notable that most of the projects listed have a grant or levy component. More detailed descriptions of two projects, Luther Burbank Dock Repair and Reconfiguration and South Mercer Backstop Upgrades follow. Three other non-park projects are summarized to illustrate the additional capital workload that comes from outside of the department. This report concludes with an outline of the Parks and Recreation Commission's anticipated role in various capital projects.

2020 MAIN CAPITAL PROJECTS		
Description	Budget	Status/Issues
PROS Plan <i>Implement a community-driven process to update the PROS plan as a document that reflects the community values for parks and recreation while providing a guiding document for parks-related investment</i>	\$175,000	Survey launch early Feb; Open House #1 on April 18; facilities assessment underway; funded through operating budget
Aubrey Davis Park Trail Safety Improvements <i>Design and construct a project using a \$500k WA Dept. of Commerce grant in accordance with the Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan</i>	\$525,000	Commission makes a scope of work recommendation to City Council in March; grant does not cover project management; DOC takes 2% for administration

<p>Luther Burbank Park Dock Repair & Reconfiguration Design <i>Three year project to redesign the main dock at Luther Burbank Park consistent with the 2006 Master Plan</i></p>	\$261,000	hiring consultant; includes \$173k RCO grant funding; requires DNR approval
<p>South Mercer Playfield Backstop Upgrades <i>Collaborate with stakeholders to design and construct improvements to reduce stray foul balls</i></p>	\$308,000	Developing stakeholder consensus on scope of work
<p>Lincoln Landing Improvements Design <i>water quality vault and stream channel reconfiguration in the street end on 76th Ave SE</i></p>	\$112,000	Refining 90% design; fully grant funded; construction est. \$600k.
<p>Luther Burbank Park Irrigation Intake Design <i>Design and permitting of a system to develop Lk Wash water rights for irrigation of park landscapes</i></p>	\$68,000	30% design is out for DNR review; Levy funded.
<p>Luther Burbank Park Waterfront Plaza Repairs <i>Repair of broken masonry and pavers along the bulkhead next to the Boiler Building</i></p>	\$35,000	Out to bid; Levy funded; work done in conjunction with the repair of Handsome Bollards artwork
<p>Luther Burbank Park South Shoreline Trail Reroute <i>Construct a new trail alignment between the Waterfront Plaza and the Swim Beach to create an accessible route and reduce impacts to the lake shoreline</i></p>	\$120,000	In permitting; Levy funded; work to be done in-house with seasonal crews and volunteers

LUTHER BURBANK PARK DOCK REPAIR AND RECONFIGURATION

Background

The main dock at Luther Burbank Park was constructed in 1974. The dock is a fixed-pier design, with multiple fingers and a concrete deck supported by wood pilings. The overall height of the dock varies, with finger pier heights ranging from about 2’ to 3’ above the water, depending on the seasonal variability of lake height levels.



Figure 1: Luther Burbank main dock in 2017

In 2014, the City completed an Overwater Structures Assessment, which included an evaluation of the docks at Luther Burbank Park. The findings identified extensive rot in the cap beams (see Exhibit 1) and a recommendation to perform repairs by 2017. Staff developed construction specifications in 2016 for the repairs and sought permits for what was anticipated to be a \$350k project. Given that the cap beams were not the only repairs needed, the project was suspended pending a discussion about the future of the docks.

Planning Process and Design/Repair Alternatives

This planning and design work is the first step in what will be a multi-year project. The project scope is anticipated to include the following:

- **Updated structural assessment:** Updating the findings and analysis of the 2014 Overwater Structures Assessment. Engineering information from this phase of work will be used to inform repair/replacement design scenarios.
- **Coastal engineering analysis:** This is a critical engineering component of the project and will determine what opportunities exist for dock re-design and reconfiguration. In particular, the consulting team will evaluate the feasibility of installing floating docks.
- **Additional public engagement:** Ongoing community engagement is a top priority as repairs and modifications to dock facilities are considered. This is especially important considering the volume of local and regional visitors to Luther Burbank Park and the many desired uses for the dock facilities.
- **Design alternatives:** The structural assessment and ongoing community engagement process will be used to inform design alternatives for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council. These alternatives will include planning level cost estimates and anticipated project timelines.

- **Intermediate design and permitting:** After a recommended dock design is selected, plans and specification will be developed with sufficient detail to initiate the permitting process.

The planning and design process described previously is intended to be iterative, with opportunities to be scheduled for input and direction as the planning work progresses.

Project Timing, Permitting and Funding

Project Timeline is currently anticipated as follows:

- 2020: Conceptual Design to 30% Design
- 2021: Permitting to 90% Design
- 2022-23: 100% Design, secure funding sources and bidding
- 2024: Construction

This planning analysis will also consider the permitting timeline and subsequent challenges related to dock repair and construction. The permitting process is complex, and depending on the type of work, the timeline is lengthy, with permits for a new or differently configured dock typically requiring a full year (or more) before final issuance. There are multiple agencies involved in dock permitting – the City of Mercer Island, the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The dock is located on Washington State Department of Natural Resources shorelands that the City leases for public access. All projects must also be reviewed by that agency prior to permitting. Given the long lead time for a project of this nature, it is important to complete the conceptual planning and design work this year to inform the development of the long-term project schedule and identify the fiscal resources needed to complete this project.

The total cost for construction of this project could be on the order of three million dollars. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) administers several grant programs that would be the backbone of the funding strategy for construction. Additional funding for specific aspects of this work could come from Washington State Parks, King County and private grant sources. Even with a successful funding campaign, it is likely that the City will need to allocate close to one million dollars to complete the project. Part of the planning work will be to explore all potential revenue sources.

Public Engagement and Demand Analysis

Public engagement regarding the future of the shoreline and the docks at Luther Burbank Park dates back to 2006, when the Luther Burbank Park Master Plan was adopted. The Master Plan calls for a reconfiguration of the main dock at the waterfront plaza “with a lower floating dock with improved finger piers for small motor craft, ‘human powered’ boats and a motorized launch boat storage.” Staff analysis since the adoption of the Master Plan indicates that a floating dock would in fact expand access and improve usability of the Luther Burbank dock.

In the summer of 2017, a time-lapse video assessment was performed, providing insight into how the dock is currently used. The vast majority of the boats utilizing the dock were small power boats, typically under 25' in length. These boaters most often tied up to the lower finger piers, which have wide wood edges. On occasion, larger boats tied up to the main piers, which sit much higher above the water and have abrasive concrete edges. There is also a scarcity of cleats along the dock perimeter, making tie-ups difficult. Kayaks, paddle boards, and other “human-powered” watercraft were not regularly observed using the dock, which is unfortunate considering the demand and popularity of these types of water activities. The piers simply sit too high above the water to make this type of use practical.

In 2018, Parks and Recreation staff conducted a survey of dock users and hired a consultant to conduct an analysis of demand for recreational moorage (Exhibit 2). That work also developed a preliminary schematic plan for the dock and a rough-order-of-magnitude cost estimate for construction to support the RCO grant which is funding this design work. This preliminary work was for scoping purposes and is not intended to guide the design process.

Going forward, Parks and Recreation staff plan to conduct public outreach in the summer of 2020 to gain input from dock users on project alternatives. This will inform conceptual design(s) that will be brought to Parks and Recreation Commission in the fall of 2020.

SOUTH MERCER PLAYFIELD BACKSTOP UPGRADES

South Mercer Playfield softball fields #1, 2, and 3 are arranged in a cloverleaf configuration. See Figure 1.



Figure 2: South Mercer Playfields #1, 2 and 3

Foul balls from batters at home plate arc over the existing backstops and land in the area between the fields where players and spectators congregate. This has the potential to cause serious injury to people. Since the source of the errant foul balls could be from any of the three fields, the incidence of stray balls in the spectator area is unpredictable. The area that is affected extends to the concession stand on the west side of the restroom building and to the first row of parking stalls in the parking lot. Cars have been damaged by foul balls and participants avoid parking in those spots as a result. It also encompasses a landmark tree in the middle of the cloverleaf.

Background

South Mercer Playfield (SMP) is the property of Mercer Island School District (MISD). Recreational facilities on this property have been developed by Mercer Island Parks and Recreation (MIPR) in conjunction with MISD.

1986 Softball fields at SMP were first built by MIPR under a 1985 interlocal agreement with MISD.

2009 Synthetic turf was added to the three infields closest to the parking lot; they went into service in spring 2010.

2011 The original clamshell backstops were retrofitted with pole extensions to support new chain link fencing and nylon netting to provide a 23' high barrier to foul balls.

2013 MIPR engaged R. W. Droll and Associates to provide an analysis of the current situation and options for addressing the foul ball problem. They produced a memo outlining several solutions. See Exhibit 3.

2015 MIPR developed a joint project with Mercer Island Little League and King County to put netting over the bleachers in three locations. This project was later cancelled because the Little League board believed it would not adequately address the problem.

2018 Mercer Island City Council included a \$300k project in the 2019-20 capital budget to upgrade the backstops in 2020. MIPR engaged D. A. Hogan and Associates to provide conceptual planning for these upgrades.

2020 On January 16, stakeholders met to discuss options for these upgrades. Representatives from MISD, MIPR, Boys and Girls Club, Mercer Island Little League, Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Commission were present. A representative from Stroum Jewish Community Center (JCC) was invited but could not attend because of illness. He was subsequently briefed on the meeting.

Analysis of Options

At the January 16 meeting, Eric Gold, principal at D. A. Hogan provided an overview of the problem and showed examples of four projects that employed three different solutions. They can be summarized as follows:

1. Build new backstops that are substantially taller
2. Suspend netting over and behind home plate to intercept foul balls as they ascend
3. Suspend netting over the spectator areas to intercept foul balls as they descend

In further exploration of Option 1, Mr. Gold said that his firm currently considers 30 foot tall backstops as a standard height. He showed an example of this at Monroe High School. He also showed an example of Auburn High School where a 50 foot tall backstop was installed. Associate Principal Nick Wold provided his first-hand experience with the Monroe High School backstops. He said that foul balls were a problem with the 30 foot tall backstop.

Option 1, potentially the mid-range cost solution, also has the added complication that replacing the backstops would impact the synthetic turf. Since the synthetic turf is 11 years old, the most efficient way to do this project would be to do both the turf and the backstops at the same time. Option 2, while possibly the lowest cost solution, affects game play. Foul balls that hit the net over home plate would be out-of-play. This takes away an element of competitive play. No stakeholder said this was a deal breaker, but that it was not desirable. Option 3 is the most costly solution, requiring many posts and a large area of netting to be effective. Netting just the bleachers has already been rejected as too limited to address the problem. Option 3 also raises the question of how to deal with the landmark tree.

All options require new posts to be installed that are substantially larger than the ones supporting the current backstops. To obtain permits, they have to be engineered for wind and snow loads. Mr. Gold also explained that the current backstops are near the end of their useful lives. They are showing signs of metal fatigue, and ultraviolet light damage typically causes the netting to fail after 10 years.

The available budget of \$300,000 is not enough to do any of the three solutions to all of the fields. Once options are narrowed, D. A. Hogan can provide further analysis of cost to one or two options that seem most likely to be successful.

NON-PARK CAPITAL PROJECTS THAT AFFECT PARKS

Parks and Recreation facilities are subject to capital projects that originate outside of our department. Nevertheless, they require staff involvement to protect the facilities and advocate for the recreational interests of Mercer Island citizens. Current projects are outlined below.

2020 NON-PARK PROJECTS		
Project	Lead Agency	Parks Role
Mercer/Entatai Sewer Interceptor <i>Regional project to install a new</i>	King County Wastewater	Coordinate with Aubrey Davis Master Plan; review landscaping,

<i>sewer line under the Mountain to Sound Trail from ICW to EMW</i>		tree replacement, trail restoration, staging; seek approval from RCO for non-recreational use of RCO-funded project sites
West Mercer Way Crossings <i>Upgrade existing MTS trail crossing and design a new crossing at Lid C field driveway</i>	MI Public Works	Coordinate with Aubrey Davis Master Plan; review landscaping; explore art/placemaking options
ADA Transition Plan <i>Complete a City-wide plan for accessibility needs in City programs and facilities</i>	MI City Manager	Parks manage the majority of public facilities and many programs that will be the subject of this plan

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION'S ROLE IN CAPITAL PROJECTS

It is beneficial for all involved for the Parks and Recreation Commissioners to be familiar with the main active capital projects. At minimum, the Commission will receive status updates when there is substantial progress or an issue to report. For larger projects and project that merit extensive community engagement, Parks and Recreation staff will seek more routine involvement of the Commission and provide a higher level detail. The table below outlines our current thoughts on Commission involvement for this year.

2020 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION'S ANTICIPATED ROLE IN CAPITAL PROJECTS	
Description	P&R Commission involvement
PROS Plan <i>Implement a community-driven process to update the PROS plan as a document that reflects the community values for parks and recreation while providing a guiding document for parks-related investment</i>	Primary guiding body; monthly status reports; special topic items; special meetings; liaison role with stakeholder groups; transmit recommended draft plan to City Council for adoption
Aubrey Davis Park Trail Safety Improvements <i>Design and construct a project using a \$500k WA Dept. of Commerce grant in accordance with the Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan</i>	Evaluate options and make scope recommendation to City Council; receive periodic status updates; special topic discussions
Luther Burbank Park Dock Repair & Reconfiguration Design <i>Four year project to redesign the main dock at Luther Burbank Park consistent with the 2006 Master Plan</i>	Representative participates in stakeholder scoping process; receive periodic status updates; special topic discussion; make recommendation to City Council
South Mercer Playfield Backstop Upgrades <i>Collaborate with stakeholders to design and construct improvements to reduce stray foul balls</i>	Representative participates in stakeholder scoping process; receive periodic status updates

<p>Lincoln Landing Improvements Design <i>water quality vault and stream channel reconfiguration in the street end on 76th Ave SE</i></p>	<p>Receive periodic status updates</p>
<p>Luther Burbank Park Irrigation Intake Design <i>Design and permitting of a system to develop Lk Wash water rights for irrigation of park landscapes</i></p>	<p>Receive periodic status updates</p>
<p>Luther Burbank Park Waterfront Plaza Repairs <i>Repair of broken masonry and pavers along the bulkhead next to the Boiler Building</i></p>	<p>Receive periodic status updates</p>
<p>Luther Burbank Park South Shoreline Trail Reroute <i>Construct a new trail alignment between the Waterfront Plaza and the Swim Beach to create an accessible route and reduce impacts to the lake shoreline</i></p>	<p>Receive periodic status updates</p>

NEXT STEPS:

Staff requests the following:

1. Clarifying questions about the projects described.
2. Feedback on P&R Commission’s level of involvement and other ways commissioners would like to be involved.