



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5806
February 2, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5806: Thrift Shop Operations Update	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive report and provide direction on next steps.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations/Public Works Director
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Thrift Shop Renovation Project - Project Report
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

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

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to provide the City Council with an update on the input received from the community about possible alternative locations to conduct Thrift Shop donations processing.

BACKGROUND

At the June 16, 2020 City Council meeting (see [AB 5711](#)), the City Council discussed funding for a capital project to remodel the Thrift Shop and the former Recycling Center. The proposed project included a minor remodel of the Thrift Shop, resulting in an expanded retail floor space, relocation of restrooms, and addressed other facility needs. The project also included a remodel and activation of the former Recycling Center (northwest corner of Mercerdale Park) to support donation processing. The City Council authorized staff to retain architectural services and begin the preliminary design for these two facilities.

At the September 22, 2020 City Council meeting, two options for remodeling the Thrift Shop were provided for City Council consideration. Both options included relocating the existing production spaces (donation processing areas) from the Thrift Shop to the Recycling Center. A summary of the options developed for further analysis can be found in [AB 5753](#).

At the November 17, 2020 (see [AB 5778](#)) City Council Meeting, the Council requested a public process be completed to solicit ideas from the community about alternative locations to conduct Thrift Shop donations

processing. In early December 2020, the City launched the [Thrift Shop Page on Let's Talk](#) to solicit input and ideas from the community. Public input was accepted thru January 26, 2021 and the City received seven comments on the proposed location and 26 contributions to location ideas (see Exhibit 1).

CITY HALL PARKING LOT

Many public comments received included a recommendation to consider building the donations processing facility in the City Hall Parking Lot. While the footprint of the proposed processing facility will fit within this location and the space is temporarily underutilized due to COVID-19 Pandemic operations, it presents many challenges logistically when City Hall returns to normal business operations.

This facility has approximately 110 parking spaces for City operations, including public parking for City Hall, Municipal Court ("Court"), and Maintenance building operations. Prior to the Pandemic, the parking lot was often near capacity (Monday thru Friday) when used by City staff and visitors. On Court days, this parking lot exceeded capacity, with cars parking in driveways and along curb lines. Residents that attended City Council meetings in-person were challenged to find an available parking space when public meetings overlapped with City Hall business hours. In addition to the parking needs associated with City operations, this lot is designated as overflow parking for the nearby Mercer Island Boat Launch during weekend hours.

To accommodate the processing center footprint as proposed in [AB 5753](#) in the City Hall parking lot, at least 25 parking spaces would need to be converted to allow for the necessary turning radius for traffic flows and the building itself.

Just south of the City Hall parking lot, the lower yard of the Maintenance Facility is used by the Public Works Teams as material storage for sweeper debris, vegetation, utility, and road projects. Heavy equipment rolls in and out of this lower yard throughout the day and is closed to the public for safety reasons. Expanding the footprint of the processing center into this space is not recommended.

Although space and operational limitations present significant challenges at this location, some minor modifications in accepting donations (such as utilizing shipping containers as temporary collection and storage facilities during the Pandemic) may be an option at the City Hall site or at other City facilities. Further analysis is needed to determine the volume, size, and operational requirements (such as acceptance days and appropriate resource levels).

In addition to the public input received, staff also inquired about available space on Mercer Island School District properties and other commercial properties. Unfortunately, no additional spaces or viable options were identified.

NEXT STEPS

With the Recreation Reset process underway and the Mercer Island Community and Event Center ("MICEC") reopening anticipated later this year (end of June is likely), direction on this project is needed. While the MICEC remains a temporary solution for accepting and processing Thrift Shop donations in alignment with pandemic safety requirements, donation processing will need to change once MICEC reopens.

If the City Council desires to move forward with a remodel project for the Thrift Shop, Option B as presented in [AB 5753](#) on September 22, 2020 is a viable option for Council conversation. A summary of the Option B project description is included for reference at the top of page 3:

“Option B includes a slightly smaller interior remodel of the Thrift Shop. Identified structural walls will remain unchanged and will not require a structural or seismic upgrade or energy upgrade. Given the smaller remodel, a shorter permit and construction window is anticipated. Option B includes slightly smaller retail space, expanding to approximately 6,370 square feet (an estimated 1,790 sq. ft. increase).

Option B also includes the proposed addition of a pre-manufactured building to be installed adjacent to the City’s Recycling Center. This structure, confined to the existing asphalt and recycle center facility, includes additional space for processing donated goods while keeping the existing Recycle Center building intact, preserving the character of the building.

The estimated cost of Option B is \$1,200,000, which includes a smaller (15%) contingency. Construction for Option B is less complicated for this type of project.”

RECOMMENDATION

Suspend the Thrift Shop and Recycling Center Project and direct the City Manager to begin a Thrift Shop Restart Plan, which includes identifying short-term solution for successful and sustainable donation processing during the Pandemic.

Or alternatively,

Direct staff to move forward with Option B of the Thrift Shop and Recycling Center Remodel Project as a 2021-2022 Capital Improvement Project, complete the design, and prepare for construction.