



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**PRC 26-08
March 26, 2026
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PRC 25-08: Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure Plan Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive project update and provide feedback on the preferred Infrastructure Plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks.	

STAFF:	Kellye Hilde, Deputy Public Works Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager	
EXHIBITS:	1. Project Location Map 2. Concept Alternatives Community Engagement Summary 3. Groveland Beach Park Preferred Plan 4. Clarke Beach Park Preferred Plan	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to update the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) on the process to develop a joint Infrastructure Plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks (Exhibit 1).

- On March 18, 2025, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) authorized staff to proceed with developing a joint infrastructure plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks. ([AB 6642](#))
- The City Council allocated \$251,845 in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program for the joint planning effort.
- The infrastructure plan will prioritize repair and/or replacement of the overwater structures and shoreline features; improvements to upland infrastructure and amenities such as restrooms, trails, and parking will be considered for renovation in the future as resources allow.
- On May 1, 2025, staff provided an update on the planning process, including key findings from preliminary site assessments and a background survey on community uses conducted in fall 2024 ([PRC 25-05](#)).
- Three design alternatives were developed for each park and were shared with the community for feedback from October to December 2025 via virtual open house presentations, an online survey, pop-ups at community events in October 2025, meetings with park neighbors and Mercer Island students, and other outreach methods.
- Key themes from this engagement included a preference for a mix of beach and grassy areas, prioritizing repair or replacement of pier and dock infrastructure at both parks first, and enhancing accessibility at Clarke Beach.
- On October 20, 2025, staff presented the design concept alternatives to the Commission for review and direction ([PRC 25-11](#)). The presentation also highlighted existing conditions and early findings from community engagement. The Commission expressed support for a mix of features included in the concepts for Clarke Beach, including two piers, large grassy areas and picnicking options at the waterfront, maintaining informal swimming access, and prioritizing ADA accessibility between park amenities. At Groveland Beach, the Commission generally preferred concept 2 overall and recommended that staff conduct additional outreach to

Mercer Island youth and teens about the park.

- During the Commission update on March 26, 2026, staff will share results of community engagement efforts and provide an overview of the preferred plan for each park for review and consideration.
- This planning effort is anticipated to conclude by the end of Q4 2026. Project information is available on Let's Talk at www.mercerisland.gov/cgip.

BACKGROUND

INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF WORK

The [2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan \(PROS Plan\)](#) identified the need for a joint planning effort to efficiently prioritize capital projects for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks. On March 18, 2025, the City Council authorized staff to move forward with developing a joint infrastructure plan that prioritizes the repair and/or replacement of the parks' overwater structures and shoreline features and may address the following:

- Dock and beachfront improvements
- Shoreline erosion control and stabilization
- ADA accessibility
- Other amenities, such as restrooms, wayfinding/signage, and parking

The joint infrastructure plan will include preferred plans and cost estimates for both parks that will be further developed and implemented as resources allow.

ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE

The joint planning process is expected to conclude in 2026 and is divided into five major steps:

- **Project Kickoff and Site Assessment: Q3 2023 – Q4 2024 (complete)**
 - Evaluate existing conditions, including topographic surveys, in-water structure assessments, accessibility audit, and critical area/geotechnical review
 - Background survey to learn about community uses, access challenges, and needs (229 responses)
- **Pre-Design and Pre-Engagement: Q1 2025 (complete)**
- **Concept Development: Q2 – Q4 2025 (complete)**
 - Develop concept alternatives using site assessment and background survey data
 - Collect community feedback on concepts
- **Infrastructure Plan Recommendation: Q4 2025-Q3 2026 (we are here)**
 - Refine concept alternatives into preferred plan for each park as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Meet with the Arts Council to discuss 1% for Art in Public Places opportunities to incorporate into the preferred plan for each park
- **Infrastructure Plan Adoption: Q3-Q4 2026**
 - Parks and Recreation Commission to provide the joint infrastructure plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The public engagement plan approved by City Council includes the following engagement opportunities:

- One Open House to provide information about the project and present design alternatives for community input (virtual or in-person)
- Up to two online surveys to gather additional community feedback on design alternatives and preferred options

-
- Two staff-led PRC meetings to gather feedback on design alternatives and prepare a final recommendation on the preferred infrastructure plan for review and adoption by the City Council (additional PRC updates provided as part of the Department Report)
 - Regular updates posted on Let's Talk, including key dates, surveys, and other project information, as well as tools such as quick polls for ongoing engagement outside of the open house and surveys as needed
 - Engagement with park neighbors and community groups to share project information, promote events, and seek feedback on the joint infrastructure plan

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

From October to December 2025, the project team conducted in-person and virtual engagement to collect community input on the design alternatives for each park. Each concept generally represented a different level of investment in park features, with individual elements designed to be interchangeable. For example, a dock configuration from one Clarke Beach concept and a picnic area design from another could be combined in the preferred concept for the infrastructure plan. Community members were encouraged to “mix and match” their preferred elements as they participated in outreach opportunities.

Methods of engagement included:

- **“Virtual Open House” Presentations:** The project team recorded presentations that outlined the existing conditions and walked through the design alternatives for each park. Community members were encouraged to view the presentations before taking the online survey. (124 total views)
- **Digital Concept Boards:** Each concept was also presented on digital boards on Let's Talk. Boards included overall designs and shoreline enlargements to provide greater detail on proposed waterfront features. Community members could review these boards in advance and reference them while completing the survey. (653 total downloads)
- **Online Survey:** An online survey was open from October 3 to November 3, 2025. It asked about preferences for waterfront amenities, pier/dock configurations, and upland improvements at each park, as well as park-specific questions regarding accessibility and recreation priorities. Respondents could provide input for one or both parks. (180 total responses)
- **Pop-Ups at Community Events:** Instead of hosting a stand-alone open house, staff participated in the Mid-Autumn Festival at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center on October 5 and the Town Center Trick-or-Treat on October 31, and shared information at Arbor Day at Clarke Beach on October 25. Community members received information about the project, reviewed concept boards, and were invited to complete the online survey. (200+ project booth visitors)
- **Park Neighbor Engagement:** A mailer with project information and survey link/QR code was sent to residents living within a 1,000-ft radius of each park (400+ households), and neighbors were invited to meet City staff to discuss the planning process and specific neighborhood concerns and needs. One neighbor of Groveland Beach accepted the offer to meet, and staff joined them for a park walk on October 16.
- **Mercer Island Student Engagement:** On December 11, staff also met with 15 students in grades 6-8 via the Islander Middle School Principal's Student Advisory to learn more about their needs for the parks, including opportunities for play and hanging out at Groveland Beach.

Key themes from this community engagement effort included:

Groveland Beach Park

- Preference for grass seating areas and picnic pockets at the waterfront
- Strong support for a new floating dock with an expanded platform and/or detached floating dock
- Preference for upgrades to the play area in the existing location, including adding seating
- Interest in a boardwalk and/or viewing deck, but priority should be given to making improvements at the waterfront and to the current play area first
- Overall, improving dock/pier amenities is most important for the infrastructure plan, while improving play opportunities and enhancing accessible pathways are least important

Clarke Beach Park

- Strong support for accessibility overall
- Preference for a combination of grass areas, tiered seating, and natural features at the waterfront
- Strong preference for two pier structures (either repaired or replaced) over a single pier
- Support for amenities (picnic areas, benches, etc.) that facilitate individual rather than group experiences
- Overall, improving dock/pier amenities is most important for the infrastructure plan, while providing new play opportunities is least important

A detailed summary of this engagement is provided in Exhibit 2.

OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH YOUTH/TEENS

At the October 20, 2025, meeting, the Commission recommended that staff conduct additional outreach with Mercer Island youth and teens to learn more about their preferences for recreational amenities at Groveland Beach. Staff conducted the following outreach:

- Met with Islander Middle School students on December 11, 2025, and with Mercer Island High School students on March 3, 2026, to collect input on the existing sand volleyball court and opportunities for hangout space and activities at Groveland
- Launched a teens-only online survey to solicit more feedback (125 responses as of March 19, 2026)
- Joined the *Breakfast on the Bridge* broadcast on March 17 to discuss the project and promote the teens-only online survey

During the Commission meeting, staff will share the results of this outreach and seek further input from the Commission to refine a youth/teen-centric space for the preferred plan for Groveland Beach.

PREFERRED INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The project team refined the design concepts into a preferred plan for each park (Exhibits 3 and 4). The preferred plans reflect input received during the community engagement process, feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission, considerations of site constraints, and City staff input. A summary of elements included in each preferred plan is provided below. Staff will review the preferred plans in detail during the Commission meeting.

Groveland Beach Park

- **Waterfront Amenities:** The preferred plan removes the concrete bulkhead and replaces it with a gradual transition from sand beach to gravel mix to support fish habitat while maintaining the sandy swim beach. A wide grass terrace with oversized seat steps offers additional space for lounging, and new paths provide accessible routes from the restroom to the dock and the beach. The restroom would be updated and/or replaced with a gender-

neutral stall facility.

- **Dock Configuration:** The existing swim dock will be replaced with a new pier structure that includes a floating swim dock, a fixed pier platform with a diving board and hammock, and two gangway connectors.
- **Upland Improvements:** The preferred plan replaces the existing playground with a nature-inspired play area for ages 2-12+. Improvements to the trail and stairs at the south end of the parking lot enhance access to the beach. The preferred plan also identifies a future opportunity for an ADA-accessible boardwalk extending from the north end of the parking lot to a new overlook seating area and connection to the play area.
- **Teen Hangout Space:** A designated teen hangout space is identified on the beach that would be refined with Mercer Island youth/teens during future design efforts.

Clarke Beach Park

- **Waterfront Amenities:** The preferred plan removes the concrete bulkheads to support shoreline restoration and replaces them with gradual beach transitions, a gravel mix for fish habitat, and natural beach elements such as logs, boulders, and plantings. The enclosed swim area, including the sheet pile wall, would be removed and replaced with a rope-delineated swim area to maintain informal swimming opportunities at Clarke Beach. A flat grass area near the existing picnic area, along with concrete seat steps, provides additional space for lounging. The restroom would be replaced with a gender-neutral facility.
- **Pier Configuration:** Both existing piers would be restored in their current configuration. Shoreline vegetation between the piers would be enhanced, and the trail leading to the smaller pier at the south end of the park would be improved.
- **Upland Improvements:** The preferred plan maintains and renovates the existing picnic area as well as improves existing pedestrian connections to East Mercer Way.
- **ADA Accessibility:** An ADA-accessible path would connect the parking lot to the waterfront. Existing ADA parking stalls would be improved and expanded.

COMMISSION FEEDBACK ON PREFERRED INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Staff seek the Commission's feedback on the preferred plans for each park to inform their refinement into the final infrastructure plan. The questions below are intended to guide the discussion, confirm the plans reflect community input, and identify any areas for adjustment.

1. Do the preferred plans reflect the City Council's priorities and the community's preferences? Are there any gaps or adjustments needed?
2. Based on the youth and teen engagement conducted to date, does the Commission support the inclusion of a designated teen hangout space at Groveland Beach Park?
3. Do the preferred plans support the goal of providing equitable access to amenities across all waterfront parks?
4. Do the preferred plans establish a clear long-term vision for the waterfront parks?

During the March 26 meeting, staff will collect the Commission's input on these questions and other feedback on the preferred plan for each park.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will refine the preferred plan into the final Infrastructure Plan for each park and prepare corresponding reports. Staff will present the final Joint Infrastructure Plan and report to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review at the June 4, 2026, Regular Meeting, at which time the Commission will be asked to provide a recommendation to City Council for adoption of the Joint Infrastructure Plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive project update and provide feedback on the preferred Infrastructure Plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks.