



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 5622
November 4, 2019
Study Session**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5622: Draft Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan Review and Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Discuss revisions presented and provide staff direction for a final version of the master plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT OF:	Parks and Recreation	Ryan Daly, Interim Parks & Recreation Director
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a	
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City Council Consolidated List of Questions and Comments 2. Summary of Plan Development 3. Trail Width Survey 2019 4. Map of Average Trail Width 	
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	2. Prepare for Light Rail and Improve Mobility	

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

SUMMARY

This agenda bill is a continuation of the discussion on the draft Aubrey Davis Master Plan (“ADMP”) that took place at the October 15, 2019 Study Session (see [AB 5613](#)). It provides responses to Council questions (Exhibit 1) and reiterates recommended revisions to the ADMP for Council’s consideration. Adjustments or modifications proposed by the City Council will be incorporated into a revised draft ADMP that the City Council will consider for adoption on November 19.

PLAN EVOLUTION

At the October 15 Study Session, Council inquired about how and when certain elements of the plan came to be included. Staff have assembled a table (Exhibit 2) to show the development of the four main elements of the draft ADMP. It should be noted that there has only been one complete version of the plan to date. It is available in the notebooks provided to Council on October 8 and as Exhibit 1 in AB 5613 (www.mercergov.org/files/AB5613.pdf) from the October 15, 2019 Study Session.

The draft ADMP was developed with significant input from the community. Planning for the ADMP began in the fall of 2018 with project **scoping** based on input received from an initial community survey (launched August 1 and completed October 9, 2018) and four public forums (9/25/2018, 10/25/2018, and 11/8/2018, and 11/29/2018). The planning team (which includes staff from multiple City departments, members from

the Washington State Department of Transportation (“WSDOT”), and the project consultant team HBB) developed draft products to characterize how people currently utilize the park and what park amenities or uses could be included in the final plan.

Products received through initial community engagement opportunities were presented in a second phase of **vision and goals** at Open House #1 on February 28, 2019 and in a concurrent online survey. City Council previewed these products at its January 15, 2019 Study Session. The planning team then developed a set of **concept alternatives** for ideas that had been gathered. Most of these concepts were not supported based on the public feedback received through Open House #2 on April 23, 2019 and in the concurrent online survey. Staff reported this to City Council at its July 16, 2019 Study Session.

During the Study Session Council provided the planning team input on several critical questions that led to **preferred alternatives** for the plan. The planning team incorporated the preferred alternatives into the **draft master plan** that is currently under consideration.

TRAIL WIDTHS

The current width of the Mountains to Sound trail varies through different sections of the park. Some early diagrams showed the existing width as ten feet, which was questioned in public comment. To confirm the existing trail widths, staff measured the width of the paved trail in July and August 2019 (see Exhibit 3) in 100’ increments.

The average width of the existing Mountains to Sound Trail is approximately 12’ wide west of Mercer Island Town Center and is approximately 11’ wide east of Town Center to SE 35th Street and North Mercer Way. The trail eastward to the East Channel Bridge averages less than 10’ wide because of various physical constraints. Town Center was omitted from the survey because of transportation planning efforts that are studying multi-modal integration there. Exhibit 4 illustrates the width of the trail for the sections of trail listed below.

Section of Trail (west to east sequence)	Number of measurements	Average pavement width
Eastern High Rise to West Mercer Way	13	12’7”
West Mercer Way to Restroom	16	12’4”
Restroom to 76 th Ave SE	15	12’7”
Island Crest Way to Shorewood Drive	29	11’0”
Shorewood Drive to North Mercer Way	20	10’11”
North Mercer Way to East Mercer Way	14	9’10”
East Mercer Way to East Channel Bridge	7	9’8”

ADA REQUIREMENTS

The draft ADMP proposes several new trails that would comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) standards which have been adopted for outdoor recreation facilities. Neither the City nor WSDOT is required to bring existing facilities up to these standards as they currently exist. Normal maintenance and minor repairs do not trigger ADA compliance.

However, repair or replacement work that requires City building permits or WSDOT review will prompt ADA review. At that time, the extent of the work will determine the requirement for ADA accommodations. For example, a project that continues to keep the facility for the same use at the same location, will likely result in ADA improvements limited to that facility only (e.g. changing restroom fixtures with any upgrades to the

existing restroom structure or installing an ADA ramp with ADA accessible playground elements when the playground equipment needs to be replaced). A project that changes the use of the facility or results in a substantially new facility could generate a more comprehensive set of ADA accommodations (i.e. including accessible routes from designated ADA parking stalls with a redesign of the tennis court or basketball court areas). These types of improvements have been included in the ADMP but does not constitute a comprehensive ADA analysis of accessibility needs in the park (this will be completed as part of the City's ADA Transition Plan scheduled for 2020).

RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT ADMP

The following sections include specific elements of the draft ADMP that have been revised and recommended for Council consideration as part of the draft plan. The following remain identical to AB 5613 which was presented on October 15, 2019.

Planting Character

The draft ADMP includes three plant palettes as options for park areas that are to be replanted: Northwest feel, Ornamental and Sensory. Public input was sought to help identify a preferred plant palette. Input received included the following:

- The natural character of the park remains a strong community value.
- Open House #3 input was varied regarding the three plant palettes presented. No particular palette was identified as a clear preferred option.

Staff recommends specifying the "Northwest feel" palette as primary for the park and that ornamental and sensory plant palettes can be incorporated into specific project designs (e.g. playground accent plantings) or in conjunction with arts/placemaking initiatives.

Water Conservation

The draft ADMP includes two recommended options for conserving water in passive use lawn areas (non-athletic fields): 1) letting grass "brown out" in late summer and 2) converting lawn to a meadow plant mix and watering infrequently. Input received included:

- Lower maintenance meadows: almost half of Open House #3 survey respondents (21) identified lower maintenance meadows as preferred. Some comments questioned whether this would work long-term.
- Brown out lawns: Thirteen (13) Open House #3 survey respondents preferred simply shutting off water and letting lawns go brown during the summer. However, some comments received did not favor this approach.

A third option is to continue watering existing lawn areas (current practice) at current service levels. Ten (10) Open House #3 survey respondents preferred to be maintained to the current levels. **Staff's recommendation is to include all strategies in the ADMP.** Operationally, a brown out lawn strategy is recommended to be implemented on a trial basis in one or two of the water conservation areas identified in the plan. This will consist of turning off specific zones and/or sprinklers mid-summer. Following the trial, staff will evaluate results and solicit public input. This method will be implemented in 2020 following adoption of the plan.

The draft Plan also recommends the installation of lower maintenance meadows in one or two of the water conservation areas. Implementation of this recommendation will require capital funding. Water conservation trials will include temporary signage explaining the project and request public input regarding the results.

Trail Width (Revision of Label Only)

The draft ADMP has placeholders for two schematic trail cross sections which specify the width of the paved trail and the adjacent shoulders. The sketches used in earlier plan versions will be replaced by photographic representations in the revised version of the ADMP. The following input was incorporated into the draft Plan recommendation:

- Public opinion is split on preferred trail width of the Mountains to Sound Trail. Many comments in Open House #3 expressed support for a 14-foot trail width in anticipation of potential changes to AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) standards. This balances input received at previous open houses in support of keeping the trail at its current width through the Lid Park.
- The trail east of Island Crest Way would be widened by one foot to a 12-foot width (where possible) as proposed in the King County Sewer project to incorporate WSDOT's recommended trail width standards. The trail through the Lid Park is currently 12 feet wide and would remain this width going forward. Early in the planning process, this trail section was incorrectly identified as 10 feet wide. A Parks and Recreation Department survey confirmed that the trail is 12 feet wide through the entire Lid Park, varying only by inches.
- In both cross sections, the plan calls for two-foot clear zones or shoulders to be constructed or reestablished. The area of the trail rebuilt by the King County Sewer project will include two-foot-wide crushed rock shoulders on both sides of the trail. These shoulders will be allowed to grow grass, moss, or groundcovers to create a transitional edge on the sides of the trail that is walkable, does not impact necessary sight lines, and is free of overhanging vegetation.
- The majority of the trail is a WSDOT facility. If it is ever rebuilt, the trail will need to adhere to WSDOT standards at the time of design. WSDOT retains final approval authority over any trail reconstruction on its property.

Staff recommends maintaining the current trail cross sections as presented in the preliminary draft ADMP. In addition, change the width label for the Lid Park from "existing width" to "12 feet" to be factually correct and consistent with the width on the eastern section of trail.

Trail Ballfield Conflict Zone

The area directly east of 72nd Avenue SE near the restroom was identified repeatedly as a congestion area for trail and ballfield users. The draft ADMP proposes two solutions: 1) a multimodal plaza and 2) a cycling bypass trail behind the restroom.

- The trail behind the restroom received overwhelming support. This new trail option would channel cyclists behind the restroom. Twenty-six (26) respondents voted in favor through the Open House #3 survey.
- The multimodal plaza received limited support. This option would separate trails but provide a mixing zone in a plaza near the restroom. Six (6) respondents favored this through the Open House #3 survey.
- It is important to note that a trail behind the restroom would displace the maintenance facility currently used for the park. The feasibility, cost, and operational impact of relocating that facility have not been evaluated. Loss of this facility would significantly impact operational efficiency.

Staff's recommendation is to keep both options in the final draft plan as further analysis of the two options, including updated costs, and impacts to park maintenance operations are needed.

Soft Surface Trails (No Revision)

Separating cyclists and pedestrians is a consistent request of the ADMP. Two sections of soft surface trail will tie together the proposed ADA access routes and create an accessible pedestrian through-route in the center of the Lid Park. These trails will provide an alternate ADA accessible walking route in high-speed sections of the trail and increase separation of walkers and cyclists. Input regarding these soft surface trails include:

- The pedestrian path to tennis courts (from the basketball courts) was supported by seventeen (17) Open House #3 survey respondents.
- The pedestrian path along the trail (from ballfield area to underneath 72nd) was strongly supported by twenty-five (25) Open House #3 survey respondents.
- Six (6) Open House #3 survey respondents chose “neither” as their preference.

Staff’s recommendation is to retain the Soft Surface Trails in the ADMP.

New Restroom

The draft ADMP includes a restroom at the playground off West Mercer Way. It was sited in this location because utilities needs are more challenging to acquire near the Lid C field. Input regarding the new restroom includes:

- The new restroom location near West Mercer Way received support and no opposition at the Open House.
- Some commenters prefer a restroom location at the Lid C soccer/lacrosse field across West Mercer Way.
- While more people use the Lid C area in general, water and sewer utilities are particularly challenging in this area. A restroom in the Lid C location may require pumping of sewage to connect with the sewer utility infrastructure in this area.

Staff recommends amending the ADMP to consider the feasibility of both locations in early design. Staff proposes that the final location of the restroom be developed concurrently or subsequent to a new West Mercer Way crosswalk between the field and the playground.

Dog Off-Leash Area

The draft ADMP includes a fenced off-leash area at “The Stacks” east of the tennis courts. Currently off-leash dogs run at “The Stacks” regularly. This activity in the vicinity of a multi-use trail presents a safety concern that needs to be addressed. Appropriate fencing along this area of the trail would help restrict dogs from wandering onto the trail and allow dogs who don’t respond to the owners’ voice control the opportunity to use this area of the Park while off leash. Input received regarding this project include several comments from the Open House that were critical of a fenced off-leash area, while other dog owners have previously expressed a desire to have a fenced area for dogs.

As proposed, the recommendation is to retain this project in the final draft plan. This project would include extensive public input in early design phase.

COST ESTIMATING AND PRIORITIZATION

At the October 15 Study Session, the draft ADMP included prioritization of projects. Criteria for prioritization of these projects essentially mirrors the criteria used in the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Based on feedback from Council on October 15, staff has added safety as a first priority criterion. The prioritization is as follows:

- (1) Highest Priority – Projects that are **critical** to be done right away in order to maintain existing infrastructure and projects that address urgent safety issues. Postponing this project would require a higher level of effort and would be at an overall greater cost to the City in future years.
- (2) Second Level of Priority – If funding is available, it is recommended that this project be done in the biennium. However, it is not critical and, if need be, could be postponed to a later year.
- (3) Third Level of Priority – Projects for which there is strong support from the City Council or a group of citizens. However, the project is not critical to the maintenance of the City's infrastructure.

During the City's biennial budget process, projects in the ADMP will be considered by City Council alongside any other capital needs that staff may identify for the available funding. Inclusion in the ADMP does not imply that a project will be funded.

In addition, the City expects to receive a Washington State Department of Commerce grant in 2019-2020 for Aubrey Davis Park trail safety and accessibility improvements. The ADMP will be used to propose the use of that funding as well as for the development of future CIP budgets. The allocation of those funds will be considered by City Council in conjunction with the budget adjustment needed to expend the grant.

LOOKING AHEAD - ADOPTION OF THE PLAN

With City Council's direction, staff will revise the preliminary draft ADMP. If revisions do not result in new impacts, no additional environmental reviews should be needed. The planning team will return on November 19 with a revised draft ADMP and a resolution for adoption.

Meanwhile, the planning team will be in conversation with WSDOT Northwest Region about that agency's process for approval of the ADMP. The adopted plan will become a key tool for renegotiating the City's maintenance agreements with WSDOT. WSDOT staff have indicated their interest in starting this process in early 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

No formal action required. Receive report and provide direction to staff for final plan development.