



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

**AB 6013
February 1, 2022
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6013: Review and Provide Feedback on Mercer Island Coyote Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve Resolution No. 1617, Endorsing the Draft Coyote Management Plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	City Manager
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Ed Homes, Police Chief Mike Seifert, Police Operations Commander Bio Park, City Attorney Eileen Keiffer, Special Counsel
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Proposed Resolution No. 1617 and Exhibit A – Draft Coyote Management Plan
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ 0

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to review with the City Council the Coyote Management Plan (see Exhibit 1) and to seek endorsement of the Plan.

- The City has received several recent reports from residents that may indicate coyote behavior is intensifying. In light of these recent reports, the City has requested a reassessment by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and that is currently underway.
- City Staff also drafted a Coyote Management Plan to be administered by the City Manager’s Office and MIPD, which will guide the City’s decision-making process in response to the coyotes on Mercer Island.
- The plan is based on educational materials from USDA and WDFW, and it is modeled on similar plans from other communities.
- The plan also includes steps for the City to provide guidance and suggestions to the community in the event of future encounters between humans and coyotes.
- City Staff is seeking feedback on this proposed plan and endorsement by the City Council via Resolution No. 1617.

BACKGROUND

In June of 2021, the City was made aware of a coyote attacking and killing a resident's cat. The attack was caught on video. City staff reached out to several partner agencies for guidance on how best to address this concern including Regional Animal Services of King County (RASKC) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The WDFW representatives explained that they would not be taking action as the situation did not appear to pose any current threat to human life. The City subsequently shared community updates across media channels with information on coyote and general wildlife safety.

In October, the City began receiving additional correspondence about coyotes on the Island and request for the City to address the issue. As a result, the City again reached out to the WDFW and they recommended contacting the local USDA Wildlife Services branch. The City contacted the USDA and began working with Matt Stevens, a Wildlife Biologist specializing in urban coyote behavior.

On November 3, Mr. Stevens completed an [assessment of coyote activity](#) on the Island. The assessment includes the following 7-point Decision Model that the USDA uses to determine if coyote removal is justified:

1. Coyotes rarely seen, but are heard at night
2. Increase in taking of unattended pets
3. Increase of coyote observations on streets and yards at night
4. Observations of coyotes on streets, parks, or yards during daylight hours
- 5. Coyotes chasing or taking attended pets, especially during the day**
- 6. Taking pets on leash and chasing joggers, bikers, etc.**
- 7. Coyote seen in and around children's play areas and schools during the day**

The USDA does not recommend coyote removal until number 5 of the above list is reached. According to his assessment, Mr. Stevens believed that the coyote activity on the Island rarely exceeded number 3 on the list. His assessment found that there was little to no evidence of coyote behavior on the Island being a threat to human health and safety. The only option available for coyote removal is euthanasia of the animals. It is unlawful to relocate coyotes in the state of Washington.

Mr. Stevens presented information to Island residents at a virtual meeting which was held on November 15, 2021. This [presentation](#) included general information about coyotes, the results of the Mercer Island assessment, and recommendations on how residents can protect themselves and discourage coyote activity.

City staff has continued to monitor and track Island coyote activity.

COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The City has received several recent reports from residents that may indicate coyote behavior is intensifying. In light of these recent reports, the City has requested a reassessment of coyote activity on Mercer Island by the USDA and that is underway.

Additionally, the City launched a centralized wildlife resource page on [Let's Talk](#) to share the latest updates and ways that community members can help minimize interactions with these animals.

Further, City Staff has drafted a Coyote Management Plan to be administered by the City Manager's Office and MIPD, which will guide the City's decision-making process in response to coyote activity on Mercer Island.

The plan is based on educational materials from USDA and WDFW, and it is modeled on similar plans from other communities. The plan also includes steps for the City to provide guidance and suggestions to the community in the event of future encounters between humans and coyotes. City Staff is seeking feedback on this proposed plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide feedback on draft Coyote Management Plan, and adopt Resolution No. 1617, endorsing the draft Coyote Management Plan.