BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6656
April 1, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6656: Public Safety and Maintenance Facility Site Layout	☐ Discussion Only ☒ Action Needed: ☒ Motion ☐ Ordinance ☐ Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the revised PSM Facility site layout and direct the City Manager to continue project design work in anticipation of having a schematic design and revised cost estimate ready for City Council review and approval in June.	

DEPARTMENT:	City Manager
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Robbie Cunningham Adams, Senior Management Analyst
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Public Safety and Maintenance Building Sizing and Placement Presentation
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	3. Make once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to seek City Council approval of a revised Public Safety and Maintenance Facility (PSM) Site Layout.

- At the March 1, 2024 Planning Session, the City Council directed the City Manager to commence planning for new Public Safety and Maintenance Facility (PSM Facility) on the current City Hall Campus (AB 6420).
- Design work for the PSM Facility shifted to the schematic design phase in the fall of 2024. Schematic design is the first step in taking a concept and turning it into a specific design plan, including architectural drawings and a site plan. The design work remains in this stage.
- During the earlier pre-design phase, the Design Team was pursuing a site layout that would locate the PSM Facility as far back (south) on the property as possible and within the constraints of the critical areas on the property. The goal was to reserve as much land on the north side of the property as possible to serve initially for construction staging, but in the long-term to also provide flexibility for future needs.
- Following feedback from the City Council, and meetings with Police, Public Works, Emergency Operations, and IT/GIS staff in recent weeks, the Design Team is now recommending a change to the

site layout that will move the PSM Building (main administrative building) and the Operations Building north on the site.

- This proposed revision to the site layout will reduce construction costs, increase operational effectiveness, and leave room for potential future operational capacity to ensure that this facility is positioned to serve the city over the next 50-plus years.
- The draft presentation that accompanies this agenda bill is attached as Exhibit 1 and includes diagrams showing the new proposed site layout for the PSM Facility.
- Staff will be seeking approval from the City Council for the new site layout and general alignment of the major amenities, recognizing that the design phase is still in the early stages and some refinement will be necessary as the design work continues.

BACKGROUND

Long-Range Facility Planning Begins in 2023

In early 2023, the City began a planning process to complete a Facilities Conditions Assessment for various municipal buildings and to develop a Long-Range Facilities Plan for select City facilities. Northwest Studio was selected as the consultant for this project and is supported by a variety of specialized consultants.

The Long-Range Facility Planning project was intended to be completed in two phases, the first phase focusing on a comprehensive Facilities Conditions Assessment (FCAs) for six buildings in 2023: Mercer Island City Hall, the Public Works Building, the Mercer Island Community and Event Center Annex Building, the Luther Burbank Administrative Building, the Mercer Island Thrift Shop, and the former Tully's Building. A second phase will include Facility Conditions Assessments for Fire Station 91, Fire Station 92, and the Mercer Island Community and Event Center.

The purpose of an FCA is to inventory and evaluate building and site infrastructure conditions, document observed deficiencies and develop a recommended strategy to ensure continuity of services, extend the life of each facility, or alternatively prepare to replace existing assets.

The second phase of facilities planning work included developing a Long-Range Facilities Plan for these six facilities based on assessment and data collected from the FCA process. The Long-Range Planning Work was intended to be completed in 2024 and anticipated an extensive public engagement process. Unfortunately, just as the facilities planning work was kicking off in early 2023, City Hall was closed due to asbestos contamination.

City Hall Permanently Closed in 2023

In April 2023, City Hall was temporarily closed after asbestos was detected in several locations in the building, including in the HVAC system. Although airborne asbestos was not detected during air quality tests, abatement at City Hall would be required to re-open the facility. City staff and outside experts worked extensively to identify solutions to address the asbestos contamination and evaluate the best path forward for City Hall. Two scenarios for re-occupying the City Hall building, either fully or partially, were evaluated for timeline, preliminary costs, and impact to City operations. Unfortunately, the cost of both scenarios to re-occupy City Hall exceeded the benefits due to the age and condition of the building. On October 2, 2023, Resolution No. 1650 was approved to cease City operations at City Hall and permanently close the building.

Facility Conditions Assessment Completed on Public Works Building in 2024

Given the age and condition of the Public Works building, the City Manager directed the staff and consulting teams to proceed with the facilities conditions assessment (FCA) for this building. The Preliminary Facility Conditions Assessment for the Public Works building was presented to the City Council on February 6, 2024 (AB 6402). The FCA identified multiple systems that are failing or in need of significant repair or investment. Based on these findings, the City Manager recommended the City Council prioritize the Public Works building for replacement. The Public Works building houses many essential services and some short-term reinvestment is needed to extend the life of the building until a replacement strategy is identified as discussed in AB 6477 at the May 21, 2024 City Council meeting.

At the July 16, 2024 City Council meeting, the City Council appropriated funds and authorized staff to proceed with seismic repairs to the Public Works building that are necessary to keep the Public Works building safely operating in the short-term (AB 6517).

Public Safety and Maintenance Building Pre-Design Phase Completed in 2024

During the March 1, 2024 Planning Session, the City Council contemplated the replacement strategy for City Hall and the Public Works building. The City Council directed the City Manager to commence planning for a new Public Safety and Maintenance Building (PSM) on the current City Hall Campus (AB 6420). This new facility will replace the existing Public Works building and provide a new combined home for the City's Public Works teams, Police Department, Emergency Operations Center, and the IT and GIS team.

City staff provided a design progress update on the PSM Facility during the May 21, 2024 City Council meeting (AB 6476). This presentation outlined how staff and the City's architectural consultant team, Northwest Studio, conducted workshops with the staff teams expected to be housed in the future PSM Facility to inform the ongoing design work, needs for each staff in a new facility, how a combined facility for these teams would provide operational efficiencies, and why the new building is intended to be a Level IV Risk Category Building.

Pre-design work was completed during the summer of 2024, confirming the programming and conceptual framework for the PSM Facility. During this initial planning phase, the City Manager also directed the Design Team to include an expanded customer service area at the main PSM building to house the City's Customer Service team. This is to ensure that the City has a "store front" given that no other City facilities are suited for this type of function. The customer service area addition will be discussed further during the presentation.

Public Safety and Maintenance Facility Schematic Design Phase Begins in 2024

Design work of the PSM Facility shifted to the schematic design phase in fall of 2024. Schematic design is the first step in taking a concept and turning it into a specific design plan, including architectural drawings and a site plan. The design work remains in this stage. Recent Design Team actions include tours of other public safety and maintenance buildings in the region, site visits to City facilities, and ongoing design meetings with staff.

The Design Team and select Councilmembers conducted tours of the Shoreline, University of Washington, and Kirkland police departments in October 2024. The team heard about both successes and "lessons learned" from the construction or renovation of these police facilities to help inform the design work on the PSM Facility. The Design Team and select Councilmembers also conducted a tour of the Kitsap County Public Works facility in December of 2024. This tour featured included the workspace and training space layout, ingress/egress for large vehicles and equipment, covered storage, lighting, security, and staff amenity spaces.

PSM Schematic Design Update at City Council Meetings

During the February 4, 2025 City Council Planning Session, the PSM Design Team presented the initial design concept and preliminary cost estimate for the PSM Facility (AB 6604). The Design Team received City Council feedback on design strategies and questions.

During the March 4, 2025 City Council meeting, the PSM Design Team presented a progress update on the Public Safety and Maintenance Facility (PSM Facility) design in addition to addressing questions from the prior City Council meeting (AB 6634). The Design Team presented information on the following thematic areas:

- Planning for Potential Future Operational Capacity needs at the PSM Facility
- Functions and Uses of the Operations Building and Yard
- Alternative Construction Delivery Methods.

City staff and City Council discussed moving the siting of the main PSM Building forward (north) on the property to expand the capacity of the secure areas (parking and maintenance yard) behind the main PSM Building. Staff said this was an idea worth investigating further and committed to coming back with additional information at a future Council meeting.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Proposed Revision to Public Safety and Maintenance Facility Site Layout

During the earlier pre-design phase, the Design Team was pursuing a site layout that would locate the PSM Facility as far back (south) on the property as possible and within the constraints of the critical areas on the property. The goal was to reserve as much land on the north side of the property as possible to serve initially for construction staging, but in the long-term to also provide flexibility for future needs.

Following feedback from the City Council, and meetings with Police, Public Works, Emergency Operations, and IT/GIS staff in recent weeks, the Design Team is now recommending a change to the site layout that will move the PSM Building (main administrative building) and the Operations Building north on the site.

Confirming the location of the primary buildings is critical to moving forward with the design work. Staff will be seeking approval from the City Council for the new site layout and general alignment of the major amenities, recognizing that the design phase is still in the early stages and some refinement will be necessary as the design work continues.

The draft presentation that accompanies this agenda bill is attached as Exhibit 1 and includes diagrams showing the new proposed site layout for the PSM Facility. The presentation also includes information on why the site layout revisions were proposed, some of the key findings are summarized below:

- Value engineering work performed by the Design Team identified the highest cost components of the project and challenged the team to identify less-costly design alternatives.
- One of the higher cost design elements are the retaining walls, which were proposed to be constructed in the maintenance yard to address the steep slopes on the site. Moving the structures in the maintenance yard to the north reduces the earthwork and size of the retaining walls considerably, thus lowering the overall construction costs.
- The new site layout eliminates the pedestrian bridge, which was proposed in the early design to connect the two buildings.

- Site reorganization opens new opportunities for system efficiency and cost savings. One example is that the heat-pump systems for both buildings are now planned to be housed in the Operations Building. Consolidation of this equipment lowers project costs.
- Reconfiguring the site nearly doubles the yard areas to accommodate planned operations, provide sufficient lay-down capacity, and ensure flexibility to meet future needs.
- The proposed site reorganization may result in less complex construction phasing, which will reduce project costs. The construction phasing will be finalized later in the design process, but the Design Team is mindful of the potential costs related to complex and prolonged construction phases and is working to minimize and simplify the phasing.
- The revised MIPD parking area accommodates additional equipment and addresses maneuverability and operational challenges raised by MIPD and EOC staff.
- The revised site plan addresses many other requested changes by staff to address operational flow concerns.

This proposed revision to the site layout will reduce construction costs, increase operational effectiveness, and leave room for potential future operational capacity to ensure that this facility is positioned to serve the city over the next 50-plus years.

Impact on Remaining Property Available for Future Uses

The new proposed PSM Facility layout reduces the remaining available land at the north end of the site along SE 36th St from 2.25 acres to 1.5 acres. This is still sufficient to support the construction staging needs for the project.

The City Council has not made a determination as to the future use of the reserve property on the north end of the City Hall site. The 1.5 acre of reserve (about 65,000 square feet) is comparable in size to parcels in Town Center and could accommodate another civic building or support other uses as determined by the City.

NEXT STEPS

The Design Team will return to the City Council for additional project updates this spring. Future discussions will include a follow-up presentation with the full analysis of the remaining design questions (solar panels, rainwater collection, etc.), a presentation on alternative construction delivery, a full comparison of the square footage and staffing compared to the old City Hall and Public Works administration building, discussion of construction phasing and relocation of operations, and an updated cost estimate.

The current schedule tentatively anticipates meeting with the City Council once a month, but that may change based on design progress and City Council needs. A community outreach and engagement process is also planned for this spring to answer questions and receive feedback on the PSM Facility.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the revised PSM Facility site layout and direct the City Manager to continue project design work in anticipation of having a schematic design and revised cost estimate ready for City Council review and approval in June.