



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

**PRC 26-06
March 5, 2026
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PRC 26-06: Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan: Hand-off memo	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Move to approve the hand-off memo and authorize the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission to present the recommendation to the City Council.	

STAFF:	Kellye Hilde, Deputy Public Works Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Hand-off Memo 2. Site Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to finalize and approve the hand-off memo to the City Council.

- On March 18, 2025, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) authorized staff to proceed with developing a Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park ([AB6641](#)).
- The City Council allocated \$1,500,000 in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program for the planning, design, and construction of the improvements at Deane’s Children’s Park, including the development of the new Site Plan. The scope of work for the first phase of construction at the park will be determined through this planning process.
- The Site Plan will address universal play standards with a new layout and will include a phasing plan, cost estimate, and recommended funding strategy for replacing equipment and amenities.
- Between April and May 2025, the project team conducted the first round of outreach through an online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths to gather input on priorities for the Site Plan.
- Key themes from the first round of engagement included strong support for inclusive and accessible play, preserving the park’s natural and wooded character, and incorporating imaginative and nature-based design elements.
- Based on this input, two early design concepts were developed: *The Quest* and *Woodsy Wonders*.
- Between July and August 2025, the project team conducted the second round of outreach through an online survey, project booths at four community events, and a discussion with the Friends of Dragon Park to gather input on a preferred concept and preferences on the look, feel, and character of play equipment.
- Key themes from the second round of engagement included strong support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept, and a focus on imaginative, inclusive play experiences that preserve the park’s natural character.
- On September 4, 2025, the project team facilitated a site tour with the Commission to provide an on-the-ground perspective of the two design concepts under consideration. Following the site visit, the Commission expressed support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept and recommended moving forward with refining this option into the preferred plan ([PRC 25-10](#)).
- Staff met with the Arts Council on October 15, 2025, to review the Site Plan and discuss integrating public art and placemaking elements consistent with the Treehouse Adventure theme, utilizing the 1% for Art in Public Places funding generated by the project. The Arts Council expressed support for

the theme and recommended engaging students involved in the original outreach to inform specific art elements [\(AC 25-05\)](#).

- On November 6, 2025, staff presented preferred Site Plan to the Commission for review and direction. The presentation highlighted the inclusive design principles guiding the project, key play features, proposed parking improvements, and a preliminary phasing plan. The discussion confirmed that the Site Plan reflects community input and is moving in the right direction [\(PRC25-15\)](#).
- On February 5, 2026, the Commission voted to recommend the [Site Plan](#), as presented, following review of the public engagement process, design framework, and long-term vision outlined in the Site Plan Report. During this meeting, the Commission also directed the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a hand-off memo to the City Council outlining their recommendation.

BACKGROUND

SITE PLAN OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF WORK

In the fall of 2024, the City engaged Berger Partnership as the design consultant to facilitate the development of a new Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park. The plan will address cohesive integration of the Bike Skills area and the playground structures, with the goal of modernizing the park area to meet universal play standards. The plan will also address improvements to pedestrian and bike circulation, restroom and picnic shelter replacement, parking, and other potential park improvements. The final Site Plan will include a cost estimate, phasing plan, and funding strategy.

The planning, design, and construction of Deane’s Children’s Park will occur in multiple phases:

- Phase I: Develop a Site Plan through a community engagement process that will address universal play standards including a new park layout and phasing plan for the replacement of equipment and amenities. The Site Plan will also include cost estimates and a funding strategy. The Parks and Recreation Commission will review the proposed alternatives and present a recommendation to the City Council for adoption.
- Phase II: The Site Plan will identify the first phase of capital improvement work, including anticipated replacement of one or more playground structures. The project will advance through detailed design, permitting, and phased construction that is anticipated to take place from 2026-2027.
- Future Phases: The anticipated scope of improvements for Deane’s Children’s Park as a whole will exceed the initial budget allocation. Future capital improvements will be recommended for implementation in phases, to include continued opportunities for community fundraising and grants.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The Site Plan development process is expected to take about one year and is divided into five major steps:

- Project Kickoff and Site Assessment: Q4 2024 – Q1 2025 (complete)
- Pre-Design and Pre-Engagement: Q1 2025 (complete)
- Concept Development: Q2 – Q3 2025 (complete)
 - Identify gaps, needs, and priorities of project, and gather input on play elements
 - Develop concept alternatives
- Final Design Recommendation: Q4 2025 (complete)
 - Refine concept alternatives into one final design as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission
- **Site Plan Adoption: Q1 - Q2 2026 (we are here)**

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- Parks and Recreation Commission to provide the Site Plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission’s recommendation came as a result of a robust community engagement process which began in April 2025. This process included numerous touchpoints with the community, as well as with boards and commissions:

- April–May 2025: First round of outreach – online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths.
- July–August 2025: Second round of outreach via survey, community events, and Friends of Dragon Park meeting.
- September 4, 2025: Commission site tour and selection of preferred concept to refine
- October 15, 2025: Arts Council review
- November 6, 2025: Refined preferred plan presented to PRC
- February 5, 2026: Site Plan presented to PRC

Data Collected:

- Reached over 1,200 students across 54 K – 5 classes at four elementary schools to vote on play features and park themes.
- Collected nearly 160 ‘Design Your Own Park’ submissions from elementary students providing insight into students’ park ideas and vision.
- Hosted Open House at Island Park Elementary, attended by approximately 20 community members.
- Conducted two online community surveys, received a total of 174 responses:
 - Survey #1 available April 21 – May 23, 2025, and received a total of 102 responses
 - Survey #2 available July 12 – August 12, 2025, and received a total of 72 responses
- Hosted project booths at four community events to gather input and vote on design concepts and play equipment themes, engaging over 500 attendees.

At the [February 5, 2026](#), Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting, the Commission reviewed the proposed Site Plan and approved the following:

1. “To recommend the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan, as presented, to the City Council for adoption”.
2. “To direct the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a hand-off memo to be approved by the Commission during the March 5, 2026, Regular Meeting”.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

The goal for tonight’s meeting is to finalize and approve the draft hand-off memo (Exhibit 1). During the meeting, the Chair will facilitate discussion, and the Commission will vote on the inclusion of each proposed consideration to be transmitted to Council. Approval of the memo will formalize the PRC’s recommendation and accompanying guidance.

HAND-OFF MEMO

The Chair and Vice Chair worked with City staff to compose a memo to the City Council summarizing the Commission’s review and recommendations outlined during the February 5, 2026, meeting. The document outlines the background for the planning effort, including the park’s identification in the 2022 PROS Plan for playground replacement, subsequent site assessments, and the decision to develop a comprehensive Site Plan to guide coordinated improvements.

The document outlines the robust community engagement process, key themes that shaped the preferred concept, and clarifies that the Site Plan provides a long-term, programmatic framework rather than detailed construction documents or funding commitments. It also identifies the Commission’s priorities and considerations to guide future phased design, implementation, and funding efforts consistent with accessibility, inclusivity, and preservation of the park’s natural character.

NEXT STEPS

The Site Plan is scheduled to be presented to the City Council at the April 7, 2026, Regular Meeting. Staff requests that the PRC designate the Chair, Vice Chair, or another Commissioner (if neither officer is available) to formally present the Commission’s recommendation to the City Council at that meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Move to approve the hand-off memo and authorize the Chair to present the recommendation to the City Council at the April 7, 2026, Regular Meeting.