



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6996
September 15, 2026
Consent Agenda

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6996: Resolution Authorizing Submission of a Grant Application for the Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program for the Deane’s Children’s Park Phase II Improvements (Resolution No. 1699)	☐ Discussion Only ☒ Action Needed: ☒ Motion ☐ Ordinance ☒ Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Adopt Resolution No. 1699.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Kellye Hilde, Public Works Deputy Director Shelby Perrault, Interim Capital Division Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Resolution No. 1699 2. Deane’s Children’s Park Location Map 3. Phase II Improvements Overview
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 item is to authorize submission of a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program via the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for the Deane’s Children’s Park Phase II Improvements project.

- The Recreation and Conservation Office requires a City Council resolution (Exhibit 1) authorizing staff to submit grant applications for the Deane’s Children’s Park Phase II Improvements project. Upon authorization, staff will finalize the grant application and submit it by the October 1, 2026, deadline.
- On March 18, 2025, the City Council authorized staff to proceed with developing a Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park ([AB 6641](#)). Deane’s Children’s Park is located next to Island Crest Park (see Exhibit 2).
- The Site Plan provides a long-term vision to address improvements at the park over the next 10 to 20 years. The Site Plan includes a new layout, inclusive play area design, a recommended phasing schedule, preliminary cost estimates, and a targeted funding strategy. It prioritizes ADA accessibility through inclusive design and focuses on serving all ages and abilities.

- On April 7, 2026, the City Council approved [Resolution No. 1692](#) adopting the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan ([AB 6902](#)).
- The adopted Site Plan identifies improvements to Deane’s Children’s Park that will be implemented in multiple phases, allowing construction to occur over time as funding becomes available. Phase I focuses on foundational accessibility, safety, and infrastructure improvements, and 5-12 play zone area while Phase II builds on this work with improvements to the central play area, parking, picnic shelter, and trail connections.
- On July 7, 2026, the City Council approved [Resolution No. 1697](#), authorizing staff to apply for funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to support Phase I Improvements. Project rankings for this grant program will be made public by October 2026 ([AB 6958](#)).
- The Deane’s Children’s Park Phase II Improvements project will create a new central play area and picnic shelter, provide ADA-accessible routes, expand and reconfigure the parking area, remove invasive vegetation, add native plantings, and install new site furnishings (see Exhibit 3). The proposed Phase II improvements are described in greater detail in the Background section.
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership is a competitive federal grant program that provides funding for the acquisition, development, and renovation of outdoor recreation projects in urban communities. If awarded, the project would be subject to the following requirements:
 - A 50% funding match.
 - A notice would be placed on the deed for Island Crest Park requiring the property to remain available for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.
 - Procurement, construction, and documentation would be subject to the Build America, Buy America Act and applicable federal requirements.

BACKGROUND

PARK FORMATION

In 1962, the Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) proposed a children’s park at Island Crest Park, which was owned and operated by King County. After the plan was approved, MIPA solicited support from local organizations to purchase equipment and enlisted community volunteers to build the children’s play area. In 1968, the City acquired Island Crest Park and in 1985 renamed the play area Deane’s Children’s Park in honor of Lola and Phil Deane, Mercer Island residents who were instrumental in the park’s creation. MIPA has continued to partner with the City to improve Deane’s, including park upgrades in 2005.

SITE PLAN OVERVIEW

In 2025, the City initiated development of a Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park ([AB 6641](#)). The Site Plan establishes a long-term vision and strategic planning framework for park improvements over the next 10 to 20 years. Informed by existing site conditions and community input, the Site Plan identifies desired park amenities, the general layout and spatial relationships between features, an inclusive play area, a recommended phasing schedule, preliminary cost estimates, and a targeted funding strategy. The Site Plan prioritizes inclusive design and is intended to serve people of all ages and abilities.

The Site Plan was developed through a public engagement process and was adopted by the City Council on April 7, 2026 ([AB 6902](#), see [Resolution No. 1692](#)). As a planning-level document, it serves as the guiding framework for future project development, sequencing, and financial planning.

PREVIOUS GRANT APPLICATIONS

The adopted Site Plan identifies improvements to be implemented in multiple phases. The City has pursued grant funding for Phase I Improvements, which address foundational accessibility, safety, and infrastructure needs and advance the long-term vision for an inclusive play environment (see Exhibit 3).

On July 7, 2026, the City Council approved [Resolution No. 1697](#), authorizing staff to apply for funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to support Phase I Improvements ([AB 6958](#)). The Phase I project includes an ADA-compliant pathway connecting the parking lot to Island Park Elementary, new play equipment, utility infrastructure to support a future restroom connection, invasive plant removal and native plant restoration, perimeter fencing replacement, ADA parking expansion, and new site furnishings. The Phase I grant application has been submitted, and project rankings will be released by October 2026.

GRANT OVERVIEW

The Deane’s Children’s Park Phase II Improvements project qualifies for funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership, a competitive federal grant program administered by the National Park Service, in partnership with state led agencies. In Washington, the Recreation and Conservation Office assists with administration of this grant program.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program provides federal funding for the acquisition, development, and renovation of outdoor recreation facilities in urban areas and is intended to improve access to high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities in communities. The program is highly competitive and is funded through annual Congressional appropriations. If awarded, the grant requires a 50% local match.

The grant selection process includes state-level review and prioritization, followed by federal review and competition. State applications advanced by the Recreation and Conservation Office’s Director are submitted to the National Park Service for consideration in the national competition. Applications accepted by the National Park Service regional office are then forwarded for federal review and ranking, with final funding decisions made by the Director of the National Park Service.

The 2026 application timeline was compressed due to the recent federal announcement of program funding in July. Despite the shortened application period, the City pursued this opportunity given the availability of federal funding. The program is anticipated to be offered annually over the next four years.

The table below summarizes key information related to the grant opportunity.

Table 1: Grant Overview				
Grant Program	Source of Funds	Grant Limit	Request	Match
Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership	Federal	\$15,000,000	\$1,046,000	50%*

** To meet the 50% match requirement, several options are available, including City labor, equipment, materials, budget appropriations, King County Parks Levy funds, 2022 Mercer Island Parks Levy funds, donations, and other public or private grants.*

COMPETITION

The Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program is highly competitive, with applications evaluated and ranked at the national level. For the 2026 grant cycle, a total of

five applications from Washington were submitted, requesting a combined \$15.3M in grant funding. The Recreation and Conservation Office does not have access to the total number of applications submitted nationally or the total amount of funding requested. Based on the current federal funding estimates, approximately 20 to 45 projects are anticipated to receive awards nationwide.

Congress may appropriate an estimated \$50M - \$120M annually nationwide for the program. However, actual funding levels are subject to Congressional appropriations and federal program priorities. Given the number of applications and the limited amount of funding available, not all eligible projects will receive funding.

The program places an emphasis on supporting projects that benefit low-income communities, and several of the merit review criteria consider how projects address the needs of low-income areas. Based on the grant criteria and available demographic data, the Deane's Children's Park project is located outside the program's defined low-income community threshold. While this does not make the project ineligible for funding, it limits the project's ability to receive points associated with the program's low-income community priorities and may make it less competitive than projects located within qualifying low-income communities.

Despite this consideration, the City's application demonstrates strong alignment with other program objectives. The project will be evaluated alongside applications from communities nationwide, and an award is not guaranteed. If awarded, funding would provide an important source of financial support to implement Phase II Improvements.

GRANT PROGRAM TENURE REQUIREMENTS

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program requires properties acquired or developed with their assistance to be preserved and maintained for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. Under the [EXPLORE Act](#) (16 U.S.C. § 8464), property receiving Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance may not be converted to a use other than public outdoor recreation without written approval from the Secretary of the Interior. Any approved conversion must be replaced with property of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent recreational usefulness and location and must be consistent with the State's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

As a condition of the grant, the National Park Service requires a notice to be recorded against the deed of the property identifying the property as having been acquired and/or developed with Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance and that it be preserved for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. For this project, the perpetuity requirement would apply to Island Crest Park as a whole, rather than solely to the area occupied by Deane's Children's Park. Deane's Children's Park is not a separate parcel; it is located within Island Crest Park and relies on the larger park for access, utilities, and support facilities.

FEDERAL PROCUREMENT AND PROJECT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

As a condition of the Land and Water Conservation Fund program, the City will be required to comply with applicable federal procurement and project requirements, including the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act and Code of Federal Regulations [Part 184 – Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Requirements](#). These requirements apply to the procurement, bidding, and construction of federally funded project components.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

The Deane's Children's Park Phase II Improvements project represents the second phase of implementation of the Deane's Children's Park Site Plan. The Site Plan provides a long-term framework for implementing improvements in phases as funding becomes available; pursuit of Phase II funding does not require Phase I constructed to be completed first.

As illustrated in Exhibit 3, Phase II focuses on completing the central play zone, providing a new gathering space, expanding parking capacity, and enhancing the park's landscape and site amenities. The preliminary scope of work includes the following key elements:

- Construct the central play zone, including an ages 2-12 climbing structure, an inclusive seesaw, balancing elements, musical play features, and other associated play components. Integrated play berms will provide sensory experiences and informal seating while helping slow cyclists as they exit the Bike Skills Area.
- Improve accessibility by constructing ADA-compliant pathways connecting the expanded play areas and other park amenities.
- Construct a new picnic shelter to provide a gathering space for park users and community activities.
- Expand and reconfigure the parking area to increase parking capacity and improve circulation and access to the park.
- Remove invasive vegetation and restore disturbed areas with native plantings.
- Reconstruct surfacing to provide additional ADA-compliant parking stalls within the existing parking lot footprint.
- Install site furnishings, including benches, picnic tables, and other amenities to support park users and improve site functionality.

Staff completed the preliminary grant application in early August. Once the resolution is approved, staff will submit the final application prior to the October 1, 2026 deadline.

PROJECT DELIVERY AND FUNDING STRATEGY

The City intends to advance the design for Phase I and Phase II Improvements in tandem to establish a cohesive approach for implementing the adopted Site Plan. This joint effort allows the City to address critical site-wide considerations – such as grading, stormwater, accessibility, circulation, and utility infrastructure – ensuring early construction directly supports future improvements without costly redesigns. This approach will also help the City to capitalize on upcoming grant opportunities as they become available.

The Site Plan establishes Phase I and Phase II as distinct construction phases of the overall park improvement project. Phase I is intended to be the initial construction phase, while Phase II represents subsequent improvements identified in the adopted Site Plan. The City may construct the phases separately as funding becomes available; however, the improvements will continue to be designed as a coordinated project to ensure that each phase supports the long-term Site Plan. If sufficient funding and project timing align, the two phases could be bid and constructed together as a single coordinated project.

The City is pursuing this grant opportunity now to navigate the lengthy federal application review process well ahead of the anticipated Phase II implementation. If shortlisted, the grant timeline provides the City with sufficient time to finalize the project design, secure local matching funds, and include the project into upcoming budget cycles, including the 2027-2028 mid-biennial budget update or the 2029-2030 Biennial

Budget. Pursuing this grant does not commit the City to Phase II construction before Phase I or establish funding for Phase II at this time.

BUDGET

The total preliminary planning level cost estimate for the Deane's Children's Park Phase II Improvements project is \$2,093,000. This is a conceptual level estimate, based on the adopted Site Plan. Costs may vary as the project details are further defined. The estimate includes construction of Phase II Improvements, as well as design, engineering, and permitting costs.

If awarded the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, the City could receive up to \$1,046,000, in reimbursable funding, although the actual award may be lower. The City anticipates meeting the required local match through a combination of eligible funding sources, which may include the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program grant if awarded for Phase I Improvements, King County Parks Levy funds, City of Mercer Island 2022 Parks Levy funds, and private donations. The availability and timing of these funding sources will be coordinated with the project schedule and future budget processes.

Phase II Improvements are not currently programmed in the first two years of the preliminary 2027-2032 Capital Improvement Program; implementation is contingent on securing sufficient grants, private donations, and other outside funding. If secured, staff will recommend adding Phase II Improvements, its grant revenue, and the required local match to the adopted Capital Improvement Program, either during the 2027-2028 mid-biennial budget update or as part of the 2029-2030 Biennial Budget. Securing and programming this funding would allow the City to bid and construct Phase I and II together as a single coordinated project.

The table below outlines the conceptual level cost estimate associated with the development of Phase II Improvements.

Table 2: Deane's Children's Park Phase II Improvements Preliminary Project Costs	
Description	Planning Level Cost Estimate
Site Studies, Design and Engineering, Project Administration, and Permitting	\$300,000
General Site Preparation (Demolition, Mobilization, Surveying, Traffic Control)	\$52,000
Pedestrian Circulation	\$14,000
Play Equipment and Safety Surfacing	\$948,000
Picnic Shelter	\$553,000
Parking Lot Improvements	\$88,000
Stormwater Improvements	\$50,000
Landscaping and Restoration	\$63,000
Site Furnishings	\$25,000
Total	\$2,093,000

The City anticipates pursuing multiple grant opportunities over the next two to three years, in addition to other outside funding sources, to support implementation of the Site Plan. If the grant is not awarded, staff will pursue alternative funding opportunities, including additional grants and philanthropic contributions, and will evaluate adjustments to project phasing, scope, and schedule as needed to align with available funding.

RESOLUTION

The Recreation and Conservation Office requires City Council authorization by resolution (Exhibit 1) to accompany the grant application. The language in the body of the resolution is verbatim as requested by the Recreation and Conservation Office and includes the following provisions:

- Authorize City staff to serve in specific roles on behalf of the City for this grant application.
- Acknowledge the conditions included in a future grant agreement between the City of Mercer Island and the Recreation and Conservation Office.
- Acknowledge the timing for certifying the availability of matching funds.

NEXT STEPS

The total amount of grant funds requested from the Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program is \$1,046,000. If awarded, the grants require a 50% percent local match, which is contingent on future City Council budget approval.

The grant application deadline is October 1, 2026. The application materials will be submitted after receiving City Council approval for this resolution. The Recreation and Conservation Office's Director is anticipated to approve which proposals will advance to the National Park Service for the national competition by November 1, 2026.

Selected projects are anticipated to be notified by May 2027, with grant awards anticipated in May 2028. If the project is awarded, staff will return to City Council as necessary to accept and appropriate the grant funds.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Adopt Resolution No. 1699 authorizing the application for grant funds in the amount of \$1,046,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, subject to conditions described in Resolution No. 1699 for the Deane's Children's Park Phase II Improvements project.
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents to apply for the grant and accept the grant and conditions of the grant, if awarded.