



Parks Zone

PRC 25-01

January 9, 2025





Agenda

- Staff Presentation:
 - Discussion Item #1: Art in the Parks Zone
 - Discussion Item #2: Aubrey Davis Park
 - Discussion Item #3: Park Critical Areas
 - Discussion Item #4: Landings and Street Ends
 - Discussion Item #5: Wireless Communications Facilities
 - Discussion Item #6: Other Discussion Items
- Review and Discussion: Draft Parks Zone Development Regulations



Discussion Item #1: Art in the Parks Zone



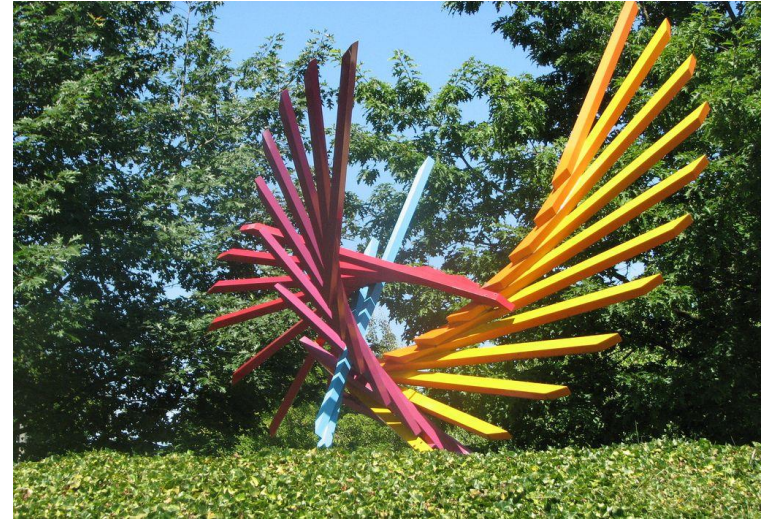
Art in the Parks Zone

- Staff attended the November 18, 2024, Arts Council meeting to present information on the Parks Zone.
- The Arts Council unanimously approved a motion recommending public art as a permitted use without any accompanying development standards (specific to art).
- The Arts Council is in the process of updating their Six-Year Public Art Work Plan and may consider recommending additional policies or guidelines for public art installations as part of the work plan update.



Art in the Parks Zone (continued)

- **Open Space Zoning Regulations:** Art is not identified as a permitted use in the recently adopted Open Space Zone.
 - Existing art in the Open Space Zone is "grandfathered in."
- **Currently, there are approximately 35 art installations in the Mercer Island parks system.**
- **Recommendation:** Include public art as an allowable use in the Parks Zone without specific development regulations (e.g. do not restrict height, size, etc.). Other development regulations would still apply such as setbacks, lighting, etc.





Discussion Item #2: Aubrey Davis Park



Aubrey Davis Park

- Aubrey Davis Park was built in 1992 to mitigate impacts from the reconstruction of I-90.
- Aubrey Davis Park encompasses 90+ acres within a 2.8-mile-long transportation corridor owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
- The I-90 corridor has been in the Public Institution Zone ([MICC 19.05.010](#)) since 1987, when the City amended its Development Code and Comprehensive Plan to prepare for the reconstruction of I-90.



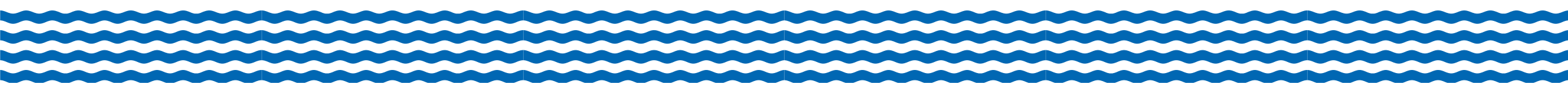
Aubrey Davis Park (continued)

- WSDOT executed several turnback and maintenance agreements with the City in the 1980s to permit the construction of recreation facilities within the WSDOT right-of-way to be maintained by the City.
- The City's airspace lease with WSDOT to maintain Aubrey Davis Park was executed in 1994 with a 40-year term expiring in 2034.
- The lease may be terminated by WSDOT on immediate notice for transportation emergencies, and terminated without penalty for transportation purposes, emergency, or default provisions.



Aubrey Davis Park (continued)

- **RCW 47.01.260(1):** “The department of transportation shall exercise all the powers and perform all the duties necessary, convenient, or incidental to the planning, locating, designing, constructing, improving, repairing, operating, and maintaining state highways, including bridges and other structures, culverts, and drainage facilities and channel changes necessary for the protection of state highways...”
- WSDOT has preemptive authority to exercise all powers over the state highway system, meaning the City has no authority to adopt conflicting provisions regarding state highways, including development regulations.
- **Recommendation:** Aubrey Davis Park should remain zoned as “Public Institution”.





Discussion Item #3: Park Critical Areas



Park Critical Areas

- The PROS Plan identifies eight parks with critical areas (Luther Burbank, Clarke Beach, Groveland Beach, Homestead, Island Crest, Mercerdale, Wildwood, and Secret).
- Critical Areas include:
 - Geologically Hazardous Areas
 - Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
 - Watercourses
 - Wetlands
 - Shorelines
- Critical Areas are regulated by:
 - MICC Chapter 19.07 – Environment
 - MICC Chapter 19.13 – Shoreline Master Program
 - State and Federal Law



Park Critical Areas (continued)

Geologically Hazardous Areas (MICC 19.07.160)

- Lands that are susceptible to erosion, landslides, seismic events, or other factors.
- Development proposals require completion of a critical area study documenting no adverse impacts to critical areas, the subject property, or adjacent properties.
- Development proposals must identify mitigation strategies for critical area impacts.
- Landslide hazard areas, seismic hazard areas, and erosion hazard areas each have specific development standards (critical area study requirements, buffer regulations, Trail regulations, etc.)



Park Critical Areas (continued)

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (MICC 19.07.170)

- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas include:
 - Areas associated with state or federally listed endangered or threatened species
 - Priority habitats and Species (PHS) identified by the WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - Bald eagle habitats
 - Watercourses and wetlands
 - Biodiversity areas.
- Development proposals must submit a critical area study identifying endangered or threatened species and their habitats.
- Critical area studies must evaluate potential impacts on habitats and adequately mitigate those impacts.



Park Critical Areas (continued)

Watercourses (MICC 19.07.180)

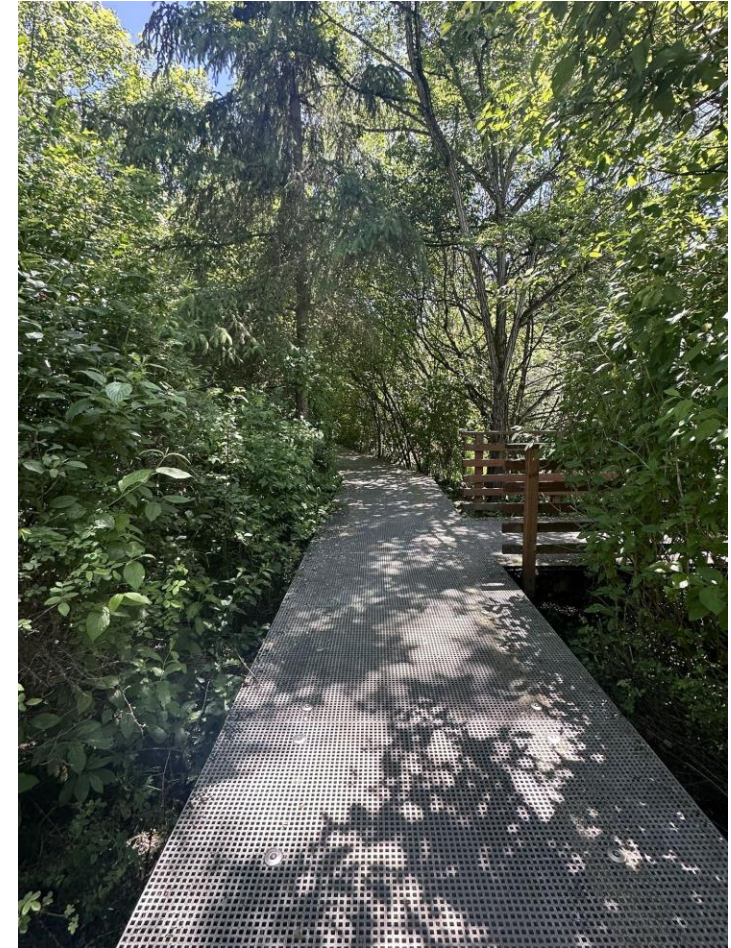
- Watercourses are streams and constructed water channels consisting of the following:
 - Type S – Shorelines of the State
 - Type F – Fish habitat
 - Type Np – Non-fish habitat
 - Type Ns – Non-fish, seasonal
 - Piped
- Development within watercourses and their buffers is prohibited unless specific exemptions apply.
- Critical area studies are required for development proposals for land with watercourses or their buffers.
- Each type has unique buffers and setbacks along with additional regulations for trails and watercourse crossings



Park Critical Areas (continued)

Wetlands (MICC 19.07.190)

- Wetlands are areas saturated or covered by water that support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.
- Wetlands are designated according to adopted federal and state manuals and classified in four categories each with unique buffers and development standards.
- Critical area studies must include wetland rating forms, a demonstration of impact on ecological function, and a mitigation plan.
- Development proposals must specifically demonstrate lack of disturbances to the wetland associated with lights, noise, toxic runoff, stormwater runoff, etc.



Park Critical Areas (continued)

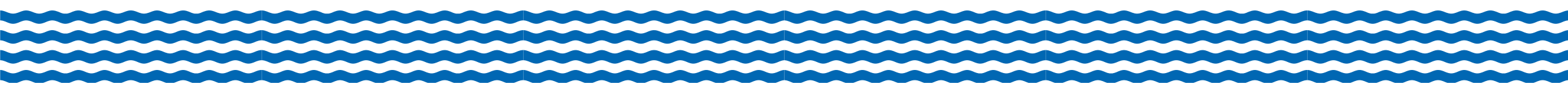
Shorelines (MICC Chapter 19.13)

- The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is adopted pursuant to State authority and requirements in RCW Chapter 90.58 and WAC Chapter 173-26.
- The SMP includes detailed regulations for an extensive list of uses within shoreline jurisdiction along with development standards that regulate setbacks, height limits for structures, hardscapes, and other standards.
- Additional requirements are provided for moorage facilities and development in or above the water including overwater structures, breakwaters, jetties, piers, docks, etc.



Park Critical Areas (continued)

- A question was posed about the possibility of split-zoning park properties to include park critical areas in the Open Space Zone.
- The MICC addresses situations where a boundary between zones divides a lot. In such cases, the entire lot must be assigned a single zone:
 - “Where a boundary between zones divides a lot into two or more pieces, the entire lot shall be deemed to be located in the first zone on the following list in which any part of the lot is located: R-15, R-12, R-9.6, R-8.4, MF-2L, MF-3, MF-2, PI, PBZ, C-O, TC, and B. The location of the zone boundary shall be determined by use of the scale appearing on the zone map unless the location of the boundary is indicated by dimensions.”
- Environmental protections sought by the split-zoning proposal are provided in existing City, State, and Federal regulations.
- **Recommendation:** Staff do not recommend further consideration of split-zoning park properties.





Discussion Item #4: Landings and Street Ends



Landings and Street Ends

- The primary use of landings and street ends is critical utility infrastructure for water, wastewater, and stormwater systems that serve Mercer Island.
- The PROS Plan classifies landings and street ends as mini parks because they offer secondary uses of passive recreation and lake access.
- Parks Zone development regulations would restrict the ability of staff and utility agencies to operate, maintain, and upgrade utility infrastructure.
- **Recommendation:** landings and street ends should not be included in the Parks Zone. The policies that guide their secondary uses should continue (see PROS Plan).





Discussion item #5: Wireless Communications Facilities



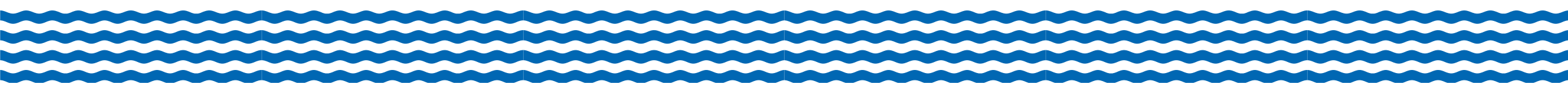
Wireless Communications Facilities

- Wireless communications facilities consist of infrastructure that transmits and receives data for wireless services, such as radio and satellite antennas and cell towers.
- Wireless communications facilities are regulated Citywide in the MICC:
 - MICC 19.06.040 (macro wireless communications facilities)
 - MICC 19.06.070 (small wireless facilities deployment)
 - MICC 19.06.075 (design and concealment standards)



Wireless Communications Facilities (continued)

- Local zoning regulation of wireless communication facilities is severely constrained by state and federal law and regulations promulgated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- Any changes to how the City regulates wireless communications facilities should be addressed as a separate and holistic City-wide project due to the many complexities involved with regulating wireless communications facilities.
- **Recommendation:** propose wireless communications facility regulations similar to the regulations in the Open Space Zone.





Discussion Item #6: Other Discussion Items



Other Discussion Items

- **Setbacks**: The development standard language proposed for setbacks is taken from the Open Space Zone with a few additional structures in parks that are proposed to be exempt from setbacks including bollards, kiosks, and parking areas.



Other Discussion Items

- **Signs:** The development standards proposed for signs was tailored to address park operation needs. Staff are recommending 16 to 18 sq ft. based on current park operations.
- **Open Space Zone:** signs are limited to 10 sq. ft.
- Many existing signs in parks are larger than 10 sq. ft.
 - Bike Skills Area sign: 12 sq. ft.
 - Mercerdale Park noticeboard: 15 sq. ft.



Other Discussion Items

- **Scoreboards:** Scoreboards likely fall under the definition of a “sign” in City Code and need to be referenced in the Parks Zone since scoreboards are present at athletic fields. Staff are recommending 200 to 220 sq. ft. as the maximum allowed size.
- The largest scoreboard in the park system is 20 ft. x 10 ft.



Other Discussion Items

- **Kiosks:** Kiosks are present in most parks and provide important information about park use and events. Staff are recommending 22 sq. ft. as the maximum size and 10 ft. as the maximum height, consistent with the Open Space Zone.
- Kiosks in the Open Space Zone are limited to 15 sq. ft. and 10 ft. in height with an exception for Pioneer Park, where kiosks are limited to 22 sq. ft. and 10 ft. in height.
- The Luther Burbank Park kiosk is the same model that is located at Pioneer Park. This model of kiosk is the largest in the park system other than the Mountains to Sound kiosk at Aubrey Davis Park, which is 8 ft. 8 in. wide and 4 ft. 5 in. in height.



Other Discussion Items

- **Trails:** The language for trail standards is taken from the Open Space Zone.
- Trail width examples:
 - Lid bathroom area at widest point: 14 ft.
 - Lid C I-90 trail: 12 ft.
 - Lid I-90 trail WZ5 area path: 12 ft. with a 2 ft. crushed gravel shoulder on each side.
 - Luther Burbank meadow trail: 10 ft. standard, 18 ft. at widest part where trail to beach meets, 14 ft. around bends.
 - Luther Burbank area close to the Admin Building at widest point: 16 ft.



Other Discussion Items

- **Buildings:** the building development standards are still in progress. The intent of this section is to allow for the larger buildings in Luther Burbank Park to continue to operate in a conforming status by identifying them by name in the Parks Zone with key details included such as size and height.
- Staff are still working to gather the specific information to populate the table in this section.
- The PRC will be asked to make a recommendation on development standards for other buildings and structures, which includes restrooms, maintenance buildings, batting cages, etc.



Other Discussion Items

- **Picnic Shelters:** The development standards for picnic shelters are proposed at a maximum height of 16 ft. and 1,200 sq. ft. of gross floor area.
- There are currently only two picnic shelters in the parks system (Aubrey Davis Park and Deane's Children's Park), but there is high demand for these facilities.
- The Luther Burbank Park Master Plan calls for the addition of a picnic shelter in the future. The shelter at Deane's Children's Park is in poor condition and anticipated for replacement.
 - The picnic shelter at Aubrey Davis Park is 15 ft. tall, 36 ft. long, and 30 ft. wide (1,080 GFA).

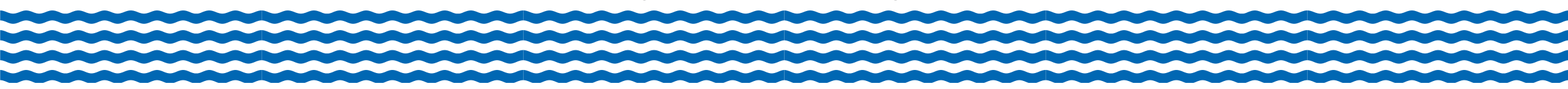


Other Discussion Items

- **Parking:** The development standards for parking were drafted to address parking design, ingress and egress, and begin to explore parking minimums and maximums.
- Placeholder language was added to address parking minimums for athletic fields as this specific park use creates high parking demands at park facilities.
- PRC feedback on “right-sizing” parking requirements is needed to further revise and develop this section of the Parks Zone.



Other Discussion Items

- **Impervious Surface:** Impervious surface standards are proposed to prohibit a “net” increase in impervious surfaces in parks with some proposed exemptions:
 - Approved Master Plan improvements are exempt. This allows for the City to undertake a public process to evaluate the addition of a new park amenity.
 - ADA Transition Plan improvements are exempt to accommodate federal ADA requirements including accessible parking.
 - Emergency access is exempt to ensure that emergency responders have suitable access to respond to emergencies in parks.
 - Public trails are exempt because surfacing other than natural soil is impervious.
 - Synthetic turf fields are exempt because conversion of natural grass fields to synthetic turf increases field capacity and is a long-term strategy to address athletic field demands
 - Utilities are exempt because they are vital facilities that require impervious surfaces to operate efficiently and effectively.
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Other Discussion Items

- **General Outdoor Lighting:** The development standards for general outdoor lighting are proposed to minimize glare, sky glow, and light trespass onto neighboring properties. This section includes shielding and installation requirements as well as exemptions for lighting that serves specific purposes or is required by state or federal law.
- **Lighting for Outdoor Performance, Sport and Recreation Facilities, and Play Fields:** The development standards for this section are proposed to meet the standards of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), minimize illumination of surrounding areas, and require that lights be turned off when not in use.



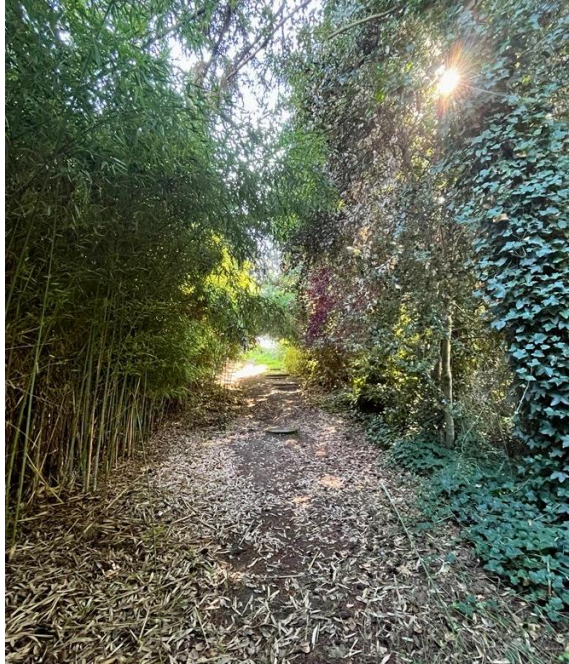


Photos: Landings and Street Ends



77th Ave SE Landing

- Joint-use sewer services (2)
- Sewer stub (1)
- Storm main (1)
- Catch basins (5)



Calkins Landing

- Sediment vault (1)
- Storm mains (2)
- Catch basins (3)
- Sewer vent lines (2)



Forest Landing

- Pumps (2)
- Generator (1)
- Pressurized sewer mains (4)
- Sewer mains (2)
- Storm main (1)
- Sewer stub (1)
- Catch basin (1)



Franklin Landing

- Sewer mains (3)
- Storm mains (3)
- Catch basin (1)



Fruitland Landing

- Pumps (2)
- Generator (1)
- Pressurized lines (3)
- Sewer mains (4)
- Storm main (1)
- Storm lateral (1)
- Sewer stubs (4)
- Catch basins (3)



Garfield Landing

- Storm mains (2)
- Catch basin (1)



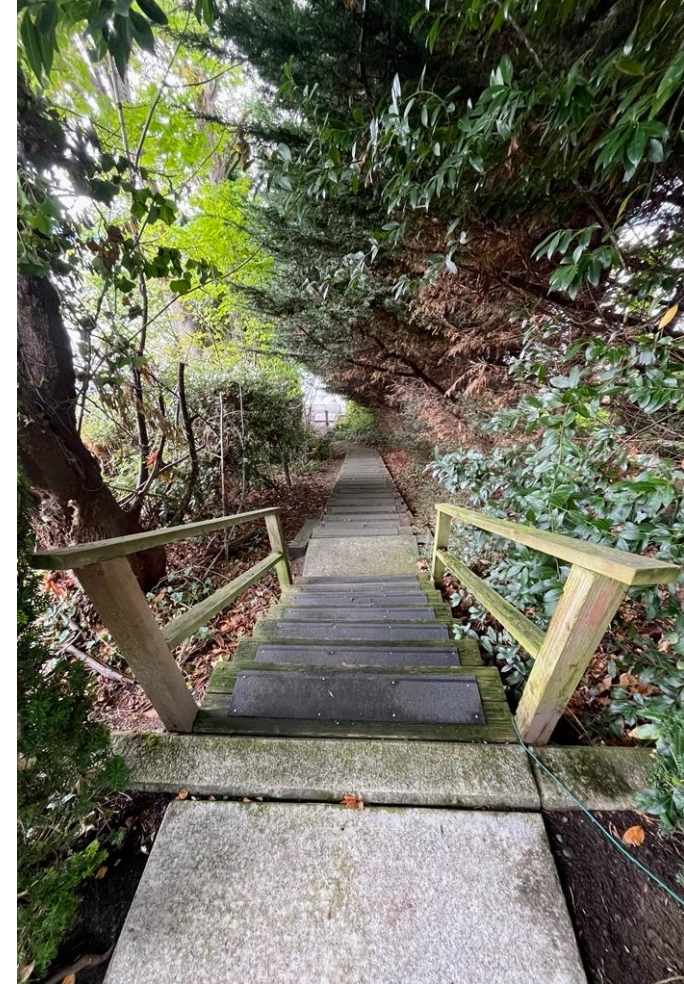
Lincoln Landing

- Storm mains (2)
- Sewer mains (4)
- Catch basins (2)



Miller Landing

- Pumps (2)
- Generator (1)
- Pressurized sewer mains (5)
- Sewer mains (4)
- Storm mains (2)
- Storm lateral (1)
- Catch basins (4)



Proctor Landing

- Sewer mains (3)
- Sewer vent line (1)
- Storm line (1)
- Special sewer catch basin (1)
- Sewer stub (1)



Roanoke Landing

- Storm main (1)
- Sewer main (1)

