



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5691
May 19, 2020
Public Hearing

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5691: 2021-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Public Hearing & Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive comments from public hearing and provide feedback to staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Patrick Yamashita, City Engineer
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detail of Proposed Expenditures 2. Street Fund Balance 3. Project Descriptions 4. Map of Proposed Six-Year TIP Roadway and PBF Improvements 5. Map of PBF on the Mercer Ways
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for the impacts of growth and change with a continued consideration on environmental sustainability.

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

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (“TIP”) is a planning tool used to identify specific projects that serve to maintain, preserve, and maximize use of the existing roadway and trail systems. The TIP balances revenues and expenditures within the Street Fund through programming and phasing construction of projects.

RCW 35.77.010 requires cities to formally adopt a TIP annually and submit it to WSDOT and the Puget Sound Regional Council (“PSRC”) by July 1. A public hearing on the draft TIP is a requirement of State law and is incorporated as part of the City Council meeting. Once the TIP is adopted, projects are budgeted and funded through the City’s Capital Improvement Program (“CIP”) during the biennial budget process.

The TIP is also used to coordinate future transportation projects with needed underground utility improvements so that utility work is budgeted and programmed to occur prior to roadway projects. All arterial street and pedestrian and bicycle facility (“PBF”) projects must be included in the TIP to be eligible for State and federal funding.

The draft TIP is an update of the [2020-2025 version](#) adopted by the City Council in 2019. Individual projects/programs are combined, where feasible, to create economies of scale for construction.

The draft 2021-2026 TIP includes transportation improvement projects and programs in the following categories:

1. Residential Street Resurfacing
2. Arterial Street Improvements
3. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (PBF) – New
4. East link Traffic/Safety Mitigation projects
5. Other

At the May 19, 2020 meeting, the City Council will conduct a public hearing on the draft 2021-2026 TIP and provide feedback to staff to inform development of the final TIP. A final version of the 2021-2026 TIP will be presented for review and adoption at the June 16, 2020 City Council meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The formal public comment period for the TIP, originally scheduled for March 16 thru March 31, 2020 was extended to May 19th (public hearing date) due to the coronavirus Pandemic (“Pandemic”). Notices advertising the opportunity for public comment were posted on the City’s website, in the Mercer Island Weekly, in the Mercer Island Reporter (March 13 and March 18), and on [Let’s Talk](#). Additional information was available on the City’s TIP webpage (www.mercergov.org/TIP). Both Let’s Talk and the City’s TIP webpage provides users with access to TIP maps, FAQ’s, and related information to learn more about the TIP process and to submit comments online.

Prior to the public hearing, a total of eight public comments were received.

- Non-transportation related remarks (5 comments),
- Transportation related but non-TIP project requests (2 comments), and
- Request for bike lanes in both directions on the Mercer Ways to accommodate residents who commute by bike and the ability to travel safely in both directions (1 comment).

Public comment will also be taken during the public hearing for the TIP at the May 19, 2020 City Council meeting. Legal notice for the public hearing was published in the Mercer Island Reporter on March 11 and March 18, 2020 and again on May 13, 2020.

STREET FUNDING

The TIP is funded by a combination of revenues which includes:

- Real Estate Excise Tax (REET),
- Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT),
- Vehicle License Fees from the Mercer Island Transportation Benefit District (TBD),
- Transportation Impact Fees (approved by Council in January 2016),
- Multimodal Transportation (approved by the State as part of ESSB 5987 in July 2015), and

- Grants (when they are available).

With the exception of REET funding, all other revenues are dedicated solely to the Street Fund.

In 2018, and as part of the 2019-2020 budget process, the City Council approved a reallocation of REET funding. To maintain reasonable levels of reinvestment across all types of City infrastructure (streets, parks, and buildings), 45% of total REET funds are allocated to Street projects and 55% of REET funds are allocated to CIP projects (park and building).

Council adopted Ordinance 14C-11 directs vehicle license fees collected under the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) to the operation, preservation, and maintenance of principal arterials of regional significance, high capacity transportation, and/or public transportation. The following programs were funded with vehicle license fees: Metro Transit Shuttle Service, Street Right of Way Maintenance and Operations, and portions of arterial street improvements.

On November 5, 2019, ballot measure Initiative 976 passed with a statewide majority. [AB 5607](#) outlined in detail the pending impacts of the passage of I-976. An injunction that stopped the initiative from taking effect after it was approved by voters in the fall has remained in place. The Washington State Supreme Court issued an order on April 29, 2020 agreeing to hear the case challenging I-976 this spring.

Should the State Supreme Court rule I-976 constitutional, the City will lose roughly \$410,000 annually, 13% of the Street Fund's annual revenues. This amount includes an estimated \$375,000 in vehicle license fees through the Mercer Island TBD, and \$34,000 in fees each year from the State's Multimodal Transportation Account, which is dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

If upheld, I-976 will reduce State and local transportation revenue by repealing the authority of City and Transportation Benefit Districts to use vehicle license fees as a revenue source. This will significantly impact the City's ability to fund future transportation improvement projects.

The State Department of Licensing has committed to collecting vehicle fees and taxes until directed otherwise by the courts. City staff are tracking vehicle licensing fees received as of December 2019 and those revenues are deferred, pending the court ruling. As a result, several projects were delayed or reprogrammed to address the revenue loss impacts.

STAFF RESOURCES

The 2021-2026 TIP takes into account staff capacity and other resources needed to successfully implement the proposed infrastructure work. Due to a key staff retirement in May 2020 and other workforce impacts related to the Pandemic, the number of projects included in the draft 2021-2026 TIP was reduced as compared to prior years. A number of the currently funded TIP projects are also delayed due to the impacts of the Pandemic.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The following describes the TIP categories and follows the same order as the Detail of Expenditures in Exhibit 1. The proposed TIP projects fall under two main categories – "Preservation & Maintenance Projects and "New Construction Projects." The Capital Improvement Program includes a budget policy that prioritizes capital reinvestment projects (preservation & maintenance) over capital facilities projects (new facilities).

Staff utilizes this policy as a guideline when prioritizing projects in the TIP to maintain a positive Street Fund balance. For specific project descriptions, refer to Exhibit 3. For a map of these projects, refer to Exhibit 4.

Section A - Preservation & Maintenance Projects

Residential Street Resurfacing

This program restores and resurfaces the City's 58 miles of public residential streets on an approximate 35-year cycle. Over the last ten years, approximately 12.4 miles of residential streets have been resurfaced with a Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) overlay and 2.8 miles have been resurfaced with a chip seal. This combined mileage accounts for almost 26% of the residential street network. HMA overlay construction for residential streets currently costs between \$350,000 and \$450,000 per road mile. Chip sealing, which was added to the program in 2012, currently costs approximately \$150,000 per road mile. The residential program also improves substandard streets in public right-of-way at the rate of roughly one per biennium, as the need arises. Selection and timing of residential resurfacing work is based upon Pavement Condition Index (PCI) ratings performed every three years as well as planned water, sewer, and storm drainage utility work.

Arterial Street Improvements

This category provides preservation and improvement of the City's 26 miles of arterial streets on an approximate 25-year life cycle. Project priorities are based on PCI, the need for underground utility improvements, condition of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and timing of other large projects. These projects incorporate reinvestment in existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Residential street overlays are linked when feasible to arterial street projects to create an economy of scale. In the next six years, resurfacing projects are planned on portions of all three Mercer Ways, SE 68th Street, SE 70th Place, Gallagher Hill Road, and SE 36th Street. In previous TIP's, the 2.6 miles of Town Center arterial streets had been a separate category. For this TIP, staff has merged Town Center Streets into the Arterial category.

Section B - New Construction Projects

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities ("PBF") – New

This category improves and adds to the pedestrian and bicycle facilities' network. Specific projects are based primarily on those identified in the 2010 PBF Plan, with input from the community and the School District. PBF "reinvestment" projects, such as asphalt overlays of existing pedestrian paths adjacent to arterial street improvements, are not included in this category. Rather, they are included in the scopes of their associated arterial street improvement projects. This category also includes ongoing program funding to implement smaller scale Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance improvements and PBF improvements.

The Roadside Shoulder Development Program was established in 2002 to create new paved shoulders suitable for pedestrian and bicycle use on the Mercer Ways. Since that time, numerous phases of work have been completed. While most of these have been on East Mercer Way, improvements have also been made on North and West Mercer Ways. Exhibit 5 shows the current status of the Roadside Shoulder Development Program. Since 2003, the City has constructed at least one shoulder project per biennium, for a total investment in the Mercer Ways roadside shoulders of over \$3.2 million.

East Link Traffic/Safety Mitigation Projects

This category was added in the 2019-2024 TIP (adopted June 2018) to reflect projects identified to mitigate traffic/safety concerns due to the I-90 center roadway closure and the opening of the East Link Light Rail station. Staff developed these projects based on the community's feedback, analysis of traffic patterns and anticipated needs for pedestrian/bicycle safety improvements on routes to the light rail station. The projects are funded through the Sound Transit settlement funds.

NEW PROJECTS AND CHANGES TO CONSIDER FROM THE PREVIOUS TIP

The following is a summary of the noteworthy changes made to the 2020-2025 TIP adopted in June 2019 to develop the draft 2021-2026 TIP. Refer to Exhibit 3 for a description of all the projects in the draft TIP.

The Town Center Street Improvement Projects category was eliminated and the projects were moved to other categories. An asphalt overlay of SE 27th Street previously planned for 2022 was moved to the Arterial Street Improvements and scheduled for 2024. The 80th Avenue and 78th Avenue Sidewalk Improvement projects were moved to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities category.

1. Arterial Street Improvements

Arterial projects can vary in scope from substantial reconstruction (as seen on SE 40th Street in 2018), to hot mix asphalt overlays (East Mercer Way in 2019), to chip seals (East Mercer Way in 2018). Staff utilizes PCI data to help determine the scope, resurfacing method, and timing of arterial street projects. Arterial work for the next six years continues to focus on preserving existing facilities through HMA overlays and chip sealing.

The primary change to the projects this year involves timing. Several existing projects were delayed by one or two years.

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (PBF) - New

- 80th Avenue and 78th Avenue Sidewalk Improvement projects – These projects were rescheduled for 2023 and 2025. Project timing was delayed due to staffing limitations and increased construction scope and cost. The scope was increased to include replacing insufficient and outdated street lighting at both locations.
- Mercer Ways Roadside Shoulders – The timing of the East Mercer Way Phase 11 and West Mercer Phase 3 projects was reversed, with West Mercer planned for construction in 2022 and East Mercer moving to 2024.
- Mid-block Crosswalk on 76th Ave SE between SE 24th and SE 27th – This new project will construct a mid-block crosswalk in the 2400 block of 76th Ave SE and was an ongoing request from the community. The project may include a pedestrian activated rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) signal, center median, ADA curb ramps and crosswalk markings. Construction may be in partnership with a future adjacent redevelopment project.
- 77th Ave SE Channelization Upgrades (SE 32nd to North Mercer Way) – This new project will modify existing channelization to provide on-street parking to support economic development in the Town Center, and provide a bike facility (sharrows) to connect to the I-90 Mountains to Sound trail in accordance with Town Center Development standards.
- PBF Plan Implementation – This project skips one year (2021) due to lack of staff resources available to manage this project.
- North Mercer Way Park and Ride Frontage Improvements – This new project will modify the frontage of the North Mercer Way Park and Ride and is planned for construction after the East Link Station is open and bus drop off/pick up is no longer needed adjacent to the Park and Ride. The project includes removal of the bus bay on the north side of the roadway, relocating streetlights, widening Mountains to Sound trail and other pedestrian/bicycle improvements to facilitate multiple users in the area.

3. East Link Traffic/Safety Mitigation Projects

- North–South Bike Route, Island Crest Way – This modified project reschedules Phase 1 and 2, originally scheduled for completion in the 2019-2020 biennium to the 2023-2024 biennium. This is due to lack of staffing resources available to manage the project.

4. Other

- Minor Capital – Traffic Operations Improvements – This small project is proposed as a biennial program to provide minor capital transportation improvements city wide to address traffic operations issues and concerns.

LOOKING AHEAD – UNFUNDED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES (“PBF”) PROJECTS BEYOND 2026

Several PBF projects are unfunded pending further evaluation of scope, confirmation of need, and availability of funding. They include:

- North-South Bike Route, Island Crest Way (90th Ave SE – SE 63rd Street) – Complete gap in N-S Bike route. Phase 3 Feasibility, Phase 4 Preliminary Design, Phase 5 Final Design and Phase 6 Construction will be proposed for funding in future years, pending outcome of Phases 1 & 2.
- 84th Ave SE Sidewalk Improvement (SE 33rd to 36th Streets) – Enhance existing gravel path with curb, gutter, and sidewalk to provide a “safe walk route” for Northwood Elementary and the High School.
- 86th Ave SE Sidewalk Improvement (SE 42nd Street to Island Crest Way) – Install curb, gutter, and sidewalk along east side of 86th Avenue where no walkway currently exists. This project would fill in a gap in the PBF network.
- Merrimount Drive (Island Crest Way to West Mercer Way) – Sidewalk improvements on both sides of roadway, requested by the community. Supports Safe Routes to School.
- 78th Ave SE (SE 40th-SE 41st Streets) – Install curb, gutter, and sidewalk on west side of roadway where no walkway currently exists. Project is a gap completion in the PBF network.
- Mercer Ways Roadside Shoulders Final Phase – Project will complete the Roadside Shoulder Development Program by constructing new paved shoulder from 8000 block of West Mercer Way around to 85th Avenue on East Mercer Way.

MOBILE ASSET DATA COLLECTION & PAVEMENT CONDITION RATINGS

As part of the ongoing effort to cost-effectively maintain the City’s street network, staff contracted for pavement condition assessment of City roadways at regular intervals (completed in 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2019). The data collected produces a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) value for each of the over 700 segments of pavement within the City’s 83.5-mile public road network. This rating process is based on collecting visual pavement distress information and computing it into numerical deduction values which are subtracted from a highest possible score of 100, resulting in a PCI score between 0 and 100. These numerical scores are bracketed into six condition ranges: Good (PCI 100-86), Satisfactory (85-71), Fair (70-56), Poor (55-41), Very Poor (40-26), and Failed (25-0).

The overall health of Mercer Island’s road network can be determined by three general indicators: the average network PCI, the amount of network backlog (defined as a PCI below 40), and the amount of network in Good condition (PCI of 100-86).

Data in 2013 gave the City’s road network an average PCI of 77. This was considered an above-average grade in the pavement rating industry. The backlog of 7.8% was considered low (below 15% is desirable) and the amount of Good condition streets at 32% was considered high (should be at least 15%). In 2016, the City’s

road network condition dropped slightly, to an average PCI score of 75. The backlog dropped to 4.0% and the amount of Good condition streets dropped to 25%.

For 2019, the City's road network condition is relatively unchanged. The average PCI score dropped one point, to 74. Backlog remained steady at 4.0%, and the amount of Good condition streets dropped one point, to 24%. Over the last six years, City road projects have repaved numerous streets in the Poor and Failed categories, which has significantly lowered the backlog. While pavement data appears to show a slight downward trend in the "Good condition" value, staff does not anticipate a large change in these three indicators in the next PCI data set.

Staff uses PCI information as the primary basis for prioritizing street resurfacing projects within the TIP. Other factors that are considered when scheduling roads for repaving are pending utility projects (storm drainage, water mains, natural gas work) and coupling with PBF improvements. Because pavement conditions change over time, data collection needs to be an ongoing process. Staff plans to collect PCI data again in the summer of 2022.

SUMMARY

Staff is seeking general feedback on the draft 2021-2026 TIP, in addition to conducting the public hearing.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive comments from the public hearing and provide feedback to staff.