PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
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TO: City Council

FROM: Parks and Recreation Commission

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SUBJECT: Luther Docks and Adjacent Waterfront 30% Design Recommendation

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The Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Commission is pleased to transmit its recommended 30% design (Exhibit 1) for the Luther Burbank docks and adjacent waterfront. The 30% design is a comprehensive renovation of a well-loved shoreline facility. It is approaching its fifty-year anniversary in 2024, coincidentally the year being anticipated for completion of this renovation. Several generations of Mercer Island residents have enjoyed summers spent boating, fishing, sunbathing, dog walking or simply contemplating the lake from the end of the dock. Also, next year will mark the twenty-year anniversary of the City's ownership. We are at a point where maintenance alone is no longer sufficient to preserve this facility.

The proposed project continues the focal role that this location plays in the larger park that is devoted primarily to passive recreation, as envisioned in the Luther Burbank Park Master Plan. Demand for aquatic recreation has been strong in the Mercer Island community and this design meets a wide spectrum of interests from passive and informal uses to specialized boating facilities and programs. The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) developed this design with the Public Works Department and its design team. The PRC reappointed its Luther Docks Subcommittee to delve into the design in fall 2021. The full PRC reviewed the subcommittee's preliminary product and approved it (with modifications?) on XXX, 2022.

Overview of the 30% Design

Docks – the dock configuration remains essentially the same as in the Concept Design (Exhibit 2) approved by City Council on May 18, 2021, but with the new floating docks moved further offshore. As in the Concept Design, the south piers would be removed and replaced with an outer dock for small powerboats and an inner dock for non-motorized small craft. The north pier would be renovated for

large powerboat moorage while maintaining long-standing uses such as sunbathing and fishing. The design team reviewed this design with permitting agencies. They concluded that the docks will require shoreline variances for the width of the docks and the amount of grating on the outer floating dock. The design team modified the 30% design in anticipation of the variance process in the following ways:

- Moving the floating docks further offshore to reduce impacts on fish habitat
- Providing grated decking in the nearshore span of the dock from the waterfront plaza to the first intersection.

Additional mitigation measures may be needed in the course of permitting, such as providing some grated openings in the outer floating dock. The design of these modifications would take place in conjunction with a biological assessment in the 60% design phase. The objective would be to ensure that there is no net loss of biological function from the current condition. The iterative nature of the shoreline variance process leads the PRC to recommend that City Council approve the design and also allow for design modifications as needed to complete a successful shoreline variance process.

Cobble Beach – The 30% design determined the footprint of this element. Four trees, three non-native poplars and one bigleaf maple, will be removed and replaced with six native trees. This enables the construction of the wider beach and ADA access to ordinary mean high-water. Removable mats will provide seasonal access to the water at lower water levels. Other design elements include natural stone seating integral to the rockery to provide a resting spot at the beach.

Overwater Stairs – The design of this element advanced with structural and permitting analysis. The ***Handsome Bollards*** are to remain, with five openings in the chain barrier to allow users to access the stairs. A four-foot-wide platform with grated decking leads to two steps, also grated, that function as bleacher seating and allow users to reach the ordinary mean high-water level. Surface design and signage will alert users to the drop off from the stair edge which is approximately 3½ feet off the lake bottom. The total overwater coverage of the stairs and the proposed docks will be equal to the existing coverage of the current docks. The beam holding up the outboard edge of the stairs will be submerged at ordinary mean high-water. This will require a shoreline variance. The request for this will be packaged with the variance application for the docks.

Several commissioners have raised questions about the safety needs that come with these stairs. Access to the stairs is limited to the openings in the chain between the ***Handsome Bollards***. This controlled access will help cue park users to pay attention to where they are going. The design team will also add certain safety features such as signs and decking markings to alert user at the stairs' edge in the 60% design phase. Because this element is a unique feature, existing design standards are difficult to apply. For this reason, PRC recommends that an additional safety analysis of the stairs by a specialist with relevant expertise should be included in the scope of work for the 60% design.

Plaza Elements - The plaza will be repaved with a combination of poured concrete and pervious concrete unit pavers. Low-impact development (LID) stormwater elements will be incorporated under

the plaza to transmit and buffer storm flows across the site. At the north end of the plaza, an ADA accessible route will connect the existing shoreline trail to the waterfront. A new lake water irrigation intake will be installed in the bulkhead at the north end of plaza to draw water for park landscape irrigation. Along the east wall of the boiler building, two benches will provide seating. A new kiosk will be located to the south of the restrooms. An ADA ramp to the outdoor classroom will run from the south shoreline trail up to where it connects to the elevated ramp behind the restroom. It will have a compacted gravel surface. At the south end of the plaza, a landmark tree will be planted in a soil matrix that extends underneath the plaza. Pending engineering analysis, this configuration will allow the tree to achieve its full size in the plaza location and integrate with the LID drainage system. A picnic table will be located nearby.

Restroom Building Elements – In the 30% design, the restroom building will be renovated with new toilet facilities and lighting. The concession stand will also receive sufficient renovation to accommodate a boat rental concession. The new outdoor classroom on the roof of the building will have Bison hardwood panel deck and steel railings with stainless steel cable infill. This railing will provide the best visibility for those seated at the classroom level. An elevated ADA ramp on the back of the building will be supported on concrete piers and connect to the on-grade ramp to the south of the building.

Issue Resolution

Several issues were flagged by the PRC in the Concept Design that were to be addressed in the 30% design. Here is a summary of those issues:

Element	Issue	Status
Cobble Beach	PRC was concerned about impacts of expanding the beach on existing trees.	The 30% design determined that four trees, including three non-native poplars, will be removed and replace with six native trees
Plaza Pavement	PRC wanted to look at options in 30% design.	The eastern portion of the plaza will be permeable unit pavers. These will integrate with an LID drainage system. The western portion will be poured concrete.
Plaza Trees	PRC wanted the design team to propose a number and location for replacement tree(s).	The three suppressed trees will be replaced by one tree at the south end of the plaza. The tree will be planted with sufficient soil volume to achieve landmark stature.
Overwater Stairs	PRC wanted to evaluate cost, aesthetics and environmental impacts in the 30% design.	The 30% design integrates ***Handsome Bollards*** and preserves them in the existing location. The design team engaged the Arts Council this topic and will return for further consultation at 60% design. The overwater stairs are open

		grated decking on six pin piles. It is located over a heavily impacted portion of the shoreline. This element is expected to be feasible from initial permitting analysis. Cost ($61K) is realistic for the function this provides.

Cost Estimate

The preliminary probable cost for the project at 30% design is estimated to be $4.05 million dollars. See Exhibit 3. This includes design, 10% construction contingency, sales tax and construction escalation to 2024. This estimate was completed in early fall and does not include any of the mitigation measures discussed in this report. At this time, the design team estimates that approximately $2.10 million of the budget may come from local, state and federal grants.

Conclusion

This design is feasible and appropriate for the location. It meets the needs of a wide range of park users. The regional draw of this park makes funding partnerships attractive to public and private sources. The Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously endorses the design for continued development and further recommends that the design process be given the flexibility for modifications needed to support the shoreline variance application.