



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6641  
March 18, 2025  
Regular Business**

**AGENDA BILL INFORMATION**

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 6641: Scope of Work for Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Approve the scope of work and community engagement plan for the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan.	

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Public Works
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Kellye Hilde, Public Works Deputy Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Island Crest Park Site Map 2. Deane’s Children’s Park Map
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	3. Make once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks.

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ 195,300
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ 1,500,000
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ n/a

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda bill is to provide an overview of the planning approach and present a summary of the scope of work and community engagement plan for the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan (Capital Project 90.25.0015).

- Deane’s Children’s Park is an expansive play area at Island Crest Park that includes multiple playground structures, the iconic “dragon”, the Bike Skills area, a picnic shelter, a small restroom facility, walking paths, and limited parking.
- The [2022 Parks, Recreation, And Open Space Plan \(PROS Plan\)](#) included a conditions assessment of park infrastructure and amenities and revealed that most playgrounds in the Mercer Island parks system are not ADA accessible. In addition, the assessment indicated that all playground structures would be due for replacement over the next two decades.
- The Deane’s Children’s Park playground structures were identified for early replacement in the 2023-2028 Parks Capital Improvement Program (Parks CIP).
- In November 2022, Mercer Island community members voted to renew the parks levy that was set to expire at the end of 2023. The parks levy includes dedicated funding for playground replacements across the Mercer Island parks system.

- During early work on the playground replacement plan, staff identified Deane’s Children’s Park as a good candidate for ADA improvements and conversion to universal play equipment, similar to the approach taken at Mercedale Park. The topography of the play area is relatively flat, and the site is flexible, allowing equipment and structures to be reorganized to meet universal play standards.
- In addition to the playground equipment replacement, Deane’s Children’s Park includes a picnic shelter and storage shed at the end of its service life, and a small single-user restroom that is located outside the play area and is not easily accessible.
- Finally, the Bike Skills area was relocated to Deane’s Children’s Park in 2023.
- Given the combination of planning needs mentioned in the previous bullets, staff made the decision to pause the playground replacement project and instead pursue the development of a new Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park. 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.
- 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 City entered into a contract with Berger Partnership in the amount of \$195,300 to facilitate the planning process and development of the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan.
- This planning effort is anticipated to conclude in Q4 2025. Project information, outreach events, and more details will be available on Let’s Talk.

## **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. The City acquired Island Crest Park in 1968 and renamed the play area Deane’s Children’s Park in 1985, 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 a major park renovation completed in 2005.

### **2022 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN (PROS PLAN)**

The 2022 PROS Plan included a conditions assessment of park infrastructure and amenities. This assessment helped guide the development and prioritization of the 6-year Parks Capital Improvement Program (Parks CIP). The assessment revealed that most playgrounds on Mercer Island do not meet ADA or universal accessibility standards, and much of the playground equipment is not accessible. Additionally, ten out of the 18 playgrounds in the park system were approaching the end of their useful life, including play structures at Deane’s Children’s Park and almost all of the playground equipment would need to be replaced over a twenty-year period. Deane’s Children’s Park was one of the five playgrounds with equipment slated for replacement in the 2023-2028 Parks CIP.

### **2022 PARKS LEVY**

In November 2022, Mercer Island community members voted to renew the parks levy that was set to expire at the end of 2023. The renewed 16-year levy provides continued funding for parks operations and maintenance, in addition to funding Pioneer Park forest management and the replacement of 15 play

structures. Deane’s Children’s Park was prioritized for early replacement due to the age and condition of equipment and the desire to provide universally accessible play opportunities.

## **DEANE’S CHILDREN’S PARK SITE CONDITIONS/EARLY ASSESSMENT**

A preliminary assessment of existing conditions was conducted from 2023-2024. Key takeaways from these findings are divided into three categories:

### ***Play Equipment***

Play equipment at Deane’s Children’s Park was installed in 2005 and 2012. Except for the “dragon,” the existing play equipment is nearing the end of its useful life. The timber curbs framing the play areas do not meet accessibility standards and the existing play equipment is not truly accessible. Additionally, the park’s play equipment lacks diverse and inclusive play opportunities for all users.

### ***Park Amenities***

In addition to the play equipment, the park includes several amenities that require replacement. The original restroom that was decommissioned and converted into a storage shed is nearing the end of its useful life, as is the picnic shelter. The single-user restroom serving Deane’s Children’s Park and the Bike Skills area is located at the eastern edge of the property next to the parking lot, making it difficult to access. Site furnishings, including picnic tables and park benches, do not meet accessibility standards, and many are in disrepair.

### ***Site Circulation***

The park lacks clear wayfinding to the various play areas, which are spread out and do not offer clear sightlines, making overall site navigation confusing. The existing trails and pathways throughout the park require upgrades to meet accessibility standards and should be clearly defined to distinguish accessible from non-accessible paths. Furthermore, the accessible parking spaces in the parking lot do not comply with accessibility standards.

Along with the key takeaways from the preliminary assessment, it is important to note the relocation of the Bike Skills area to the northwest quadrant of the park, adjacent to the play area. The park amenities and overall site circulation will need to consider both user groups, ensuring restroom facilities and picnic shelters are centrally located, providing clearly defined paths for riders entering the Bike Skills area versus play areas, and developing amenities that meet accessibility standards. For these reasons, the scope of the playground replacement needs to be broadened to include the Bike Skills area, ensuring a cohesive plan for Deane’s Children’s Park.

## **ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

### **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 include multiple phases:

- **Phase I:** Develop a Site Plan in 2025 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 likely exceed the initial budget allocation. Future capital improvements will be recommended for implementation in phases, to include continued opportunities for community fundraising and grants.

### **UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND ADA ACCESSIBILITY**

To ensure the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan reflects principles of accessibility and inclusivity, the designs developed will be reviewed for visitors of all abilities by Kanics Inclusive Design Services, a consulting firm that specializes in developing inclusive play opportunities. Additionally, Kanics will be completing an inclusive playground evaluation at five other playgrounds on the Island, including Aubrey Davis East and West, Luther Burbank Park, South Mercer Playfield, and Mercer Island Community and Event Center. As part of the evaluations, a comprehensive report for each playground will be created, detailing recommendations for improvements.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

Community engagement for the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan will focus on identifying the needs and priorities of the project, gathering input on various play elements to inform the development of the design concept alternatives, and gathering feedback on concept alternatives to inform the final recommendation.

The proposed community engagement plan is as follows:

- Up to two public meetings/events - may be a combination of in-person and virtual opportunities.
- Up to two online surveys run concurrently with the public meetings/events to collect additional input and reach community members that are unable to attend the events.
- Check-in meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) to seek feedback on the design concept alternatives and prepare a final recommendation on the Site Plan for review and adoption by the City Council.
- Regular updates posted on Let’s Talk, including key dates, surveys, and other project information, as well as tools such as quick polls for ongoing engagement outside of the open house and surveys.
- Engagement with park neighbors and community groups to share project information, promote events, and seek feedback on the Site Plan.

Opportunities will be promoted through all City channels, including the MI weekly e-newsletter, social media, and on-site signage, as well as shared through outlets such as the Mercer Island Reporter, the Mercer Island School District, and Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA).

## ANTICIPATED 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 (current)**
- Concept Development: Q2 – Q3 2025
  - Identify gaps, needs, and priorities of project, and gather input on play elements
  - Develop concept alternatives
- Final Design Recommendation: Q3 – Q4 2025
  - Refine concept alternatives into one final design as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Site Plan Adoption: Q4 2025
  - Parks and Recreation Commission to provide Site Plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption.

## PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING

While Deane’s Children’s Park was identified for a playground replacement in the 2022 Parks Levy, the Levy funding does not include resources for broader site improvements. The City Council allocated \$1,500,000 in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program for the Site Plan, and the planning, design, and construction of the first phase of work. The City executed a contract with Berger Partnership in the amount of \$195,300 to lead the planning process and develop the Site Plan. The scope of the first phase of park improvements will be determined through the site planning process and will include replacement of one or more playground structures.

## NEXT STEPS

Upon approval from the City Council, staff will finalize the community engagement plan and proceed with next steps including an initial survey and project open house. The Let’s Talk page will also be launched.

Of note, a group of community members have recently organized as the “Friends of Dragon Park” with the goal of supporting fundraising efforts for the park improvements. This partnership, as well as others grant opportunities, will be critical to funding the needed improvements at this park.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the scope of work and community engagement plan for the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan and direct the City Manager to commence the planning work.