



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

**AB 6642
March 18, 2025
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6642: Scope of Work for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure 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
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the scope of work and community engagement plan for the Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure Plan	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Kellye Hilde, Deputy Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Project Location Map
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	\$ 251,845
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ 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 Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure Plan (Capital Project 90.25.0013).

- Located on the southeast shoreline of Mercer Island, Clarke Beach Park features a beach area, overwater amenities, a steel wall-enclosed swim area, and restrooms. Groveland Beach Park is located on the southwest shoreline and includes an active beach with a dock, swimming area, and restrooms.
- Both parks were developed in the 1960s/70s, and their overwater structures and other amenities are aging and in need of replacement.
- The [2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan \(PROS Plan\)](#) identified the need for a joint planning effort to efficiently prioritize capital projects at Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks. Given that both parks are on the waterfront and facing similar infrastructure challenges, the decision was made to combine the planning work.

- From August 2023 to December 2024, the Project Team performed an assessment at both parks and collected preliminary feedback from the Mercer Island community about their current uses and future needs for these parks.
- The preliminary assessment indicated that the in-water structures at both parks need to be addressed within the next 5 to 10 years to avoid future deterioration or loss. Soil erosion and settlement, accessibility issues, and concerns about park safety also emerged through the background evaluation.
- Staff propose developing a Joint Infrastructure Plan for Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks that prioritizes repair and/or replacement of overwater and shoreline infrastructure for capital reinvestment. Improvements for uplands infrastructure and amenities such as restrooms, trails, and parking will also be considered for renovation in the future as resources allow.
- This planning effort is anticipated to conclude in Q1 or Q2 2026. Project information, upcoming outreach events, and more details will continue to be available on Let's Talk at www.mercerisland.gov/cgip.

BACKGROUND

PROJECT INITIATION

Developed in the 1960s and 1970s, Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks (Exhibit 1) are two of three major public waterfronts located on Mercer Island. These parks offer amenities such as docks, swimming areas, concrete bulkheads, walking paths, picnic and barbeque areas, restroom facilities, and more. However, many of these features are at or nearing the end of their useful life and will need to be replaced or removed soon. Waterfront access at both parks is located at the bottom of steep hills, and accessibility improvements must be evaluated where feasible.

The 2022 PROS Plan identified the need for a joint planning effort to efficiently prioritize capital projects for these parks and to navigate the challenging regulatory environment for implementing shoreline improvements. To begin this planning effort, the City Council approved the Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Master Plan (PA0157) with the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP). In July 2023, the City engaged Berger Partnership as the design consultant to facilitate the planning effort.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

An analysis of existing conditions at both beach parks was conducted from August 2023 to December 2024 and included:

- Topographic surveys, bathymetric (underwater topography) surveys, and delineation of the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM)
- Condition assessments of the in-water structures, including docks, swim enclosures, and concrete bulkheads
- Accessibility audit of the existing restroom facilities
- Critical area reconnaissance
- Geotechnical review to inform future study and permitting
- Background survey to gather information on current community uses, access challenges, recreational opportunities, and other needs to be considered in the planning process (229 responses).

A brief summary of the assessment of existing conditions is provided below.

Condition of Overwater Structures

The overwater structures at Clarke have reached the end of their useful lives, and immediate repairs are recommended to prevent further deterioration. Overwater structures at Groveland are in fair to good condition and should be monitored with routine inspections to minimize further deterioration.

Restroom Accessibility

Facilities at both parks do not comply with federal and local accessibility standards. Non-compliant conditions include inadequate maneuvering clearances and turning space, lack of wheelchair-accessible stalls, inaccessible reach heights and amenities, and inadequate accessible paths to the buildings. Some issues could be resolved with little impact on the existing structures, while others require significant alterations to the buildings and plumbing systems.

Geotechnical Review

Both sites show signs of soil settling, including under asphalt footpaths, at beach areas, and near the playground at Groveland. Specific issues at Clarke Beach include a sink hole beneath the concrete steps, which was repaired by Parks Maintenance staff in fall 2023 but may worsen due to continual erosion. Chronic settlement at Groveland Beach is causing a stormwater outfall pipe to fracture. Further geotechnical investigation will be required during the design and construction of improvements at both parks to address ongoing soil settling.

Background Survey on Community Uses and Needs

Currently, the most common reason for visiting both parks is beach access, followed by strolling/walking at Clarke and swimming at Groveland. The community's primary concerns include accessibility, park maintenance, amenities (such as picnic tables and trash receptacles), and park safety.

CHALLENGES OF RENOVATING WATERFRONTS

The City is undertaking a major design process to renovate the Luther Burbank Park docks and waterfront, which will greatly inform future waterfront projects of a similar scale and complexity. Here are some of the issues that should be considered when preparing the Joint Infrastructure Plan:

- 1. Diversifying Recreational Offerings/Evaluating Intensity of Beach Park Use** – Beach parks experience high intensity use during the peak summer season. Exploring the potential to diversify waterfront activities across the three major beach parks is something that should be evaluated.
- 2. Strict Regulatory Environment** – Permitting for the Luther Burbank dock and waterfront project has been a multi-year process, and staff anticipate similar permitting timelines for future projects at Clarke and Groveland. Early planning work to strategize on the timing and phasing of these projects is necessary.
- 3. Costs to Reinvest in Waterfront Infrastructure** – Reinvestment in waterfront infrastructure is expensive and can take many years to design and construct, resulting in multi-year capital funding needs. A strategy for funding capital improvements at Clarke and Groveland will need to be developed as part of this joint planning effort.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATION TO PURSUE FOCUSED INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Based on the analysis of existing conditions and specifically the condition of the waterfront infrastructure at both parks, the staff recommends shifting from developing a joint park “Master Plan” to developing a joint park “Infrastructure Plan” for Clarke and Groveland. The primary reason for this shift is to determine the future of the in-water structures, which include docks, swimming piers, concrete bulkheads, and an enclosed swimming area.

There is significant value and efficiency in continuing a joint planning effort for Clarke and Groveland, including keeping the City competitive for grants and other outside funding. For example, shoreline restoration at Clarke Beach has been previously identified as a priority for the Water Resource Inventory Area 8 (WRIA 8) work plan and is a strong candidate for WRIA 8 grant funds. Planning for and designing improvements concurrently will enable the City to take advantage of potential mitigation credits earned for shoreline restoration at Clarke.

The proposed scope of work for the Joint Infrastructure Plan will address the following items:

1. Dock and shoreline improvements
2. Shoreline erosion control and stabilization
3. ADA accessibility
4. Restroom renovations/replacement
5. Parking and wayfinding/signage

Early concepts for dock and shoreline improvements may proceed through preliminary design during the joint planning effort to fast-track grant applications, fundraising, permitting, and construction, with approval of the City Council. Renovations of upland infrastructure and amenities, such as restrooms, trails, and parking, would likely be designed and constructed in the future as resources allow.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Community engagement for the Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure Plan will focus on evaluating recreational offerings at each park, exploring alternatives to improve the shoreline and dock areas, and addressing accessibility. Design alternatives will be developed and shared with the community to inform the preferred design for each park.

The Project Team proposes the following community engagement plan:

- Up to two online surveys to provide information about the project, collect input about community priorities, and gather feedback on design alternatives.
- One Open House to present design alternatives for community input (may be in-person or virtual).
- Check-in meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) to seek feedback on the design alternatives and prepare a final recommendation on the preferred Infrastructure 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 Infrastructure 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 and the Mercer Island School District.

ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMELINE

The Infrastructure Plan development process is expected to take about one year and is divided into four major steps:

- Project Kickoff and Site Assessment: Q3 2023 – Q4 2024 (complete)
- **Pre-Design and Pre-Engagement: Q1 2025 (current)**
- Draft Plan Development: Q2 – Q4 2025
 - Collect community input on priorities and improvement opportunities
 - Develop and refine design alternatives based on community feedback and input from Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Identify preferred Infrastructure Plan for each park
- Plan Review and Adoption: Q1 – Q2 2026
 - Parks and Recreation Commission to provide Infrastructure Plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption

PROJECT BUDGET AND FUNDING

The City Council approved \$251,845 in the 2025-2026 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program to support this joint planning effort. Staff are in the process of finalizing the project scope to complete the Joint Infrastructure Plan.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval from the City Council, staff will finalize the community engagement plan and proceed with next steps, including commencing the community engagement process this spring/summer. Upcoming community engagement opportunities, such as event dates, survey links, and other information, will be shared on Let's Talk (www.mercerisland.gov/cgip) as soon as they are available.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the scope of work and community engagement plan for the Clarke and Groveland Beach Parks Joint Infrastructure Plan and direct the City Manager to commence the planning work.