



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR HYBRID MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM

## COMMISSIONERS

Chair Ashley Hay  
Vice Chair Rory Westberg  
Commissioners: Peter Struck, Jodi McCarthy,  
Don Cohen, Sara Marxen, and Mar Brettman

## LOCATION

MICEC – Slater Room Council Chambers  
and via Zoom  
8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040  
Phone: 206.275.7609 | [www.mercerisland.gov](http://www.mercerisland.gov)

*We strive to create an inclusive and accessible experience. Those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the Staff Liaison's Office 3 days prior to the meeting at 206.275.7870 or by emailing [ryan.daly@mercerisland.gov](mailto:ryan.daly@mercerisland.gov).*

The virtual meeting will be broadcast live on Zoom and recorded and saved on the City Council's [YouTube Channel](#)

**Registering to Speak:** Individuals wishing to speak live during Appearances will need to register their request with staff at **206.275.7861** and leave a message or [email](#) before 4 PM on the day of the Commission meeting. Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

**Join by Telephone at 5:00 PM:** Call **253.215.8782** and enter Webinar ID **825 9108 6996** and Password **896196**.

**Join by Internet at 5:00 PM:**

- 1) Click [this link](#)
- 2) If the Zoom app is not installed on your computer, you will be prompted to download it.
- 3) If prompted for Webinar ID, enter **825 9108 6996** and Password **896196**.

**Join in person at 5:00 PM:** Mercer Island Community & Event Center - 8236 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Mercer Island

## CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL – 5:00 PM

## APPEARANCES

This is the opportunity for anyone to speak to the Commission about issues of concern.

## STAFF LIAISON REPORT

1. Staff Liaison Report and Planning Schedule

## REGULAR BUSINESS

2. **Approve the minutes for February 5, 2026 Regular Hybrid Meeting**  
**Recommended Action:** Approve minutes.
3. **PRC 26-05: Parks Minor Capital Update: Asphalt & Concrete Repairs**  
**Recommended Action:** Receive report.
4. **PRC 26-06: Deane's Children's Park Site Plan: Hand-off memo**  
**Recommended Action:** Move to approve the hand-off memo and authorize the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission to present the recommendation to the City Council.

## OTHER BUSINESS

5. Absences and Commissioner Reports

## ADJOURNMENT



**Department Report  
[Placeholder]  
Coming soon**



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

## 2026 PLANNING SCHEDULE

Items are not listed in any particular order.  
Agenda items & meeting dates are subject to change.

### REMINDER: NO MEETINGS IN AUGUST

<b>MARCH 26, 5:00 PM (SPECIAL MEETING)</b>		<b>STAFF WORK</b>	<b>AGENDA GO LIVE</b>
<b>PASSOVER APRIL 2-9 (MOVED FOR PASSOVER)</b>			
Absences:			
<b>TIME/TOPIC</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	
	PRC 26-XX: Clarke and Groveland Joint Infrastructure Plan: Project Update	Sarah Bluvas	
	PRC 26-XX: Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy Update	Jeremy Jasman	
	PRC 26-XX: E-bike Policy Development- Community Engagement Plan	Amelia Tjaden	

<b>MAY 7, 5:00 PM</b>		<b>STAFF WORK</b>	<b>AGENDA GO LIVE</b>
Absences:			
<b>TIME/TOPIC</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	
	PRC 26-XX: Recreation Division Annual Report	Ryan Daly	
	PRC 26-XX: KCLS - Mercer Island Branch Operations Update	KCLS	
	PRC 26-XX: PROS Plan Update- Intro	Shelby Perrault	

<b>JUNE 4, 5:00 PM</b>		<b>STAFF WORK</b>	<b>AGENDA GO LIVE</b>
Absences:			
<b>TIME/TOPIC</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	
	PRC 26-XX: Parks Capital Project Update	Kellye Hilde	

<b>JULY 2, 5:00 PM</b>		<b>STAFF WORK</b>	<b>AGENDA GO LIVE</b>
Absences:			
<b>TIME/TOPIC</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	
	PRC 26-XX: MICEC Fee Waiver Policy	Ryan Daly	

<b>AUG 6, 5:00 PM – CANCEL</b>		<b>STAFF WORK</b>	<b>AGENDA GO LIVE</b>
Absences:			
<b>TIME/TOPIC</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	

SEP 3, 5:00 PM Absences:		STAFF WORK	AGENDA GO LIVE
TIME/TOPIC		STAFF	
	PRC 26-XX:		

OCT 1, 5:00 PM Absences:		STAFF WORK	AGENDA GO LIVE
TIME/TOPIC		STAFF	
	PRC 26-XX:		

NOV 5, 5:00 PM Absences:		STAFF WORK	AGENDA GO LIVE
TIME/TOPIC		STAFF	
	PRC 26-XX:		

DEC 3, 5:00 PM Absences:		STAFF WORK	AGENDA GO LIVE
TIME/TOPIC		STAFF	
	PRC 26-XX:		

**Pending:**

Project - Proposal for Year-round programming at Luther Burbank (2026)

**ANNUAL AGENDA ITEMS**

- KCLS - Mercer Island Branch Operations Update (May)
- Annual PRC Chair/Vice-Chair Elections (June)
- Annual Bylaws Review (June)
- Recreation Division Annual Report



## **PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR HYBRID MEETING MINUTES February 5, 2026**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Hay at 5:00 pm.

### **ROLL CALL**

Chair Ashley Hay, Vice Chair Rory Westberg and Commissioners Peter Struck, Sara Marxen, Don Cohen, and Mar Brettmann were present. City Council Liaison Craig Reynolds was present.

Commissioner Jodi McCarthy was absent.

Deputy Director of Public Works Kellye Hilde, Capital Parks Manager Shelby Perrault, Management Analyst Amelia Tjaden, Recreation Manager Ryan Daly, and Recreation Specialist Raven Gillis were present.

### **APPEARANCES**

John Hamer, MI Resident, addressed the PRC regarding Deane's Children's Park

### **STAFF LIAISON REPORT**

#### **1. Staff Liaison Report & Planning Schedule Update**

Recreation Manager Ryan Daly reported on the following:

- Project Updates
  - Super Blue Friday!
  - Gateway Installation Damage
  - Clarke & Groveland Joint Infrastructure Plan
  - Parks Maintenance work
- Programs/Events
  - 20226 Lunar New Year
  - Senior Resource Fair
  - MIVAL Art Workshops
  - Open Art Studio
- Parks and Recreation Commission Planning Schedule

### **REGULAR BUSINESS**

#### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from November 6, 2025, Regular Hybrid Meeting and November 12, 2025, Joint PRC/OSCT Special Hybrid Meeting were presented.

It was moved by Westberg; seconded by Struck to:

**Approve the minutes from November 6, 2025, Regular Hybrid Meeting and November 12, 2025, Joint PRC/OSCT Special Hybrid Meeting.**

Passed: 6 – 0

**4. PRC 26-03: Planning Update for E-Bike Regulations.**

Management Analyst Amelia Tjaden presented. Commissioners asked questions and offered input.

**5. PRC 26-04: Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan: Site Plan Recommendation**

Deputy Director Public Works Kellye Hilde and Capital Parks Manager Shelby Perrault presented. Commissioners asked questions and offered input.

It was moved by Hay; seconded by Westberg to:

**Recommend the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan, as presented, to the City Council for adoption**

Passed: 4 – 2

It was moved by Westberg; seconded by Struck to:

**To direct the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a hand-off memo to be approved by the Commission during the March 5, 2026, Regular Meeting**

Passed: 6 – 0

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**7. Absences and Commissioner Reports**

Vice Chair Westberg reported that he will not be able to attend the regular meeting on March 5, 2026.

Commissioner Cohen reported on his recent visit to Groveland Park where he observed multiple bald eagles and deer and it was a strong reminder that Groveland Park and Clark Beach are not only seasonal recreational spaces but also year-round wildlife habitat and important to keep in mind.

Commissioner Struck highlighted the uplifting student input included in the packet, noting the creativity and personality reflected in their responses.

Chair Hay shared the following on behalf of Commissioner McCarthy in her absence: Commissioner McCarthy recently visited First Hill Park and was very impressed with the space, specifically noting her appreciation for the tall play structure and the large slide as a key feature of the previous playground.

Chair Hay asked for a motion to excuse Commissioner McCarthy's absence.

It was moved by Struck; seconded by Cohen to:

**Excuse Commissioner McCarthy's absence from the meeting**

Passed: 6 – 0

**ADJOURNMENT at 8:06 pm**

DRAFT



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

**PRC 26-05**  
**March 5, 2026**  
**Regular Business**

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	PRC 26-05: Parks Minor Capital Update: Asphalt & Concrete Repairs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Receive report	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Sam Harb, Parks Operations Manager Brian Sherman, Parks Maintenance Team Lead Jane Frazee Dowd, Parks Maintenance Team Member
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Parks Asphalt & Concrete Repairs Presentation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission with an update on asphalt and concrete repairs that have taken place in park spaces over the last year and to introduce a presentation on four specific park sites where repairs occurred.

- The City of Mercer Island’s Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan (PROS Plan) includes two goals which inform on the importance of maintaining asphalt and concrete areas within parks.
- The City Council approved biennial budget funding for projects considered Minor Capital which includes- repairs for sidewalks, pathways, plazas, and pavement patching, restroom fixture replacement, park bench replacement, tree work, and playground repair.
- In 2025 staff conducted field assessments and identified 82 sites in need of repair, primarily due to root damage from nearby trees as well as surface age and decline of pavement integrity.
- A scope of work was developed and a request for bids was completed, and the asphalt and concrete repair projects were awarded to a qualified contractor.
- Various staff across multiple teams supported this work including the CIP Inspector, parks maintenance staff, and City Arborist with a focus on minimizing impacts on tree health.
- The contracted work was completed in November of 2025.

## BACKGROUND

Maintaining asphalt and concrete surfaces in parks is essential for safety, accessibility, and long-term cost efficiency. Well-maintained paths, sidewalks, plazas, and parking areas reduce trip hazards, prevent water intrusion that can lead to cracking and structural failure, and ensure compliance with ADA accessibility standards. Regular sealing, crack filling, and surface repairs help extend the lifespan of pavement, minimizing the need for costly full replacements. In addition, smooth and properly maintained surfaces improve the overall user experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and recreational users, while enhancing the park’s appearance and supporting community pride. Proactive maintenance ultimately protects public investment and keeps parks safe and welcoming for all visitors.

The City of Mercer Island's Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan (PROS Plan) includes two specific goals which inform on the importance of maintaining asphalt and concrete areas within parks:

- Goal 1 – Planning, Acquisition & Access: Provide high quality, welcoming, and inclusive parks and recreation system that meets community needs now and in the future.
- Goal 2 – Maintenance & Operations: Provide the Mercer Island community with safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.

The City Council approved Capital Improvement Program biennial budget allocates funding to address repair needs that are too small for a largescale capital project but above the scope of ordinary or regular maintenance. Some of these projects may include pavement patching, restroom fixture replacement, park bench replacement, tree work, and playground repair. This allocation is titled Parks Minor Capital within the Capital Improvement budget and includes the following project justification:

- Pavement, parks furnishings, and landscaping wear out and become unsafe over time. Many of these projects are too small to define as a separate project. On a recurring basis, equipment, facilities and amenities must be repaired or replaced as they reach the end of their useful lifecycle. This project is identified in the 2022 PROS Plan.

## ISSUE/DISCUSSION

In 2025 staff completed a robust field assessment of the Mercer Island Parks System to identify areas of uneven damaged asphalt and concrete surfaces. Repair locations were identified to reduce trip hazards, enhance safety and accessibility, and ADA compliance concerns.

Staff identified 82 sites in need of repair primarily due to root damage from nearby trees as well as surface age and decline of pavement integrity. These sites included pedestrian trails, sidewalks, plazas, ADA stalls, baseball dugouts, the community center preschool play area, and stairs. Each site was assessed for needed repairs, a scope of work and cost estimate was calculated, and the project was put out to bid on the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) small works roster- which is a listing that connects businesses with public agencies in Washington State for small works, goods & services, and consulting opportunities.

Staff utilized feedback and advice from various City work groups including Right-of-Way, Capital Improvement Program, and the City Arborist to develop the following scope of work, with a focus on limiting impacts to natural areas and existing trees:

- Cut and removal of damaged surfacing.
- Remove intrusive roots or other obstructions
- Grind down uneven concrete areas of less than 2 inches difference.
- Follow specific specifications for asphalt, concrete, and rebar installation
- Expand tree wells at Mercerdale park, install root barrier and backfill voided areas using 3-way topsoil blend.

The contract was awarded to a qualified contractor with a total project cost of \$199,351.80.

Once the project commenced it became clear that additional specialized work was needed at specific sites to mitigate tree root impacts. Staff submitted a change order to ensure the required work maintained and

protected tree roots for surrounding tree health, identified specific trees which would need to be removed due to poor health, expanded tree wells to enhance root growth, and identified additional locations for repairs.

Tonight, staff will provide a presentation that will give insight into the importance of this work, how work was performed, and circumstances encountered at four specific and unique sites:

- **Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC) – Annex Area: Creative Learning Center**
  - Park Maintenance Staff were alerted to the repairs needed within the annex by the Facilities Team to improve the safety and accessibility of the preschool play area. The goal was to have the work done with minimal impacts on the preschool staff and students' regular programming. Safety was a top priority while the work was done. The Preschool Staff, Park Maintenance Team and Recreation Team coordinated for the students to utilize areas inside the MICEC while work was done. This work was completed for the most part over a weekend and after hours to limit impacts.
- **Island Crest Park – Parking lot and Ballfields**
  - Access to and from the ADA parking stalls was impaired due to tree root intrusion from the adjacent sycamore tree. Prior work was done to grind down the uneven seams of the concrete, but the damage worsened over time. A full replacement of the surrounding concrete pads was needed which included the sidewalk going from the ADA stalls, past the third base dugout to the main plaza area. Tree roots that created the damage were cut, the tree was maintained as this species is especially resilient to tree root removal. A temporary fence was built to minimize the impacts to recreation programming during the repair work in the dugout areas- ensuring no rentals or programs were canceled.
- **Aubrey Davis Park – Lid C**
  - This is a heavily used recreation area for lacrosse, soccer and events during the summer season as well as cyclists using the I-90 trail and regular park goers year-round. The main sidewalk connecting the park plaza and I-90 trail was greatly damaged from a mature maple tree root. To maintain the health of the tree, a foam underlay repair was utilized, which is a best-practice used on mature tree roots with slow growth potential. This repair process adds a foam layer between the existing root and the new concrete surface. When the root grows it pushes into the foam without impacting the concrete above.
- **Mercerdale Park – Sidewalk, Plaza**
  - Mercerdale Park is the heart of our parks within the city. It hosts countless events throughout the year including our annual Summer Celebration and weekly Farmers Markets in the summer months as well as daily park goers and community members. The park's centerpiece is a giant sequoia in the plaza planter bed. Park Maintenance team members consulted with the City Arborist on how to best maintain the tree's health and complete the plaza repairs. One of the sequoia's main roots intruded 36 feet into the plaza area buckling many of the concrete panels. To mitigate any future damages to the replaced concrete areas the tree's planter bed area was expanded to allow for future root growth. In the areas where the root would extend, new surface steel plates were installed atop the root to allow for growth while limiting surface impacts. The

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sequoia was treated with Cambistat, a growth regulator to slow the tree growth and improve tree health.

- The sidewalk along the street in Mercedale Park was also heavily damaged by the street tree roots. After consultation with the City Arborist, it was decided that the main roots from two of the four trees would be removed requiring those trees to be replaced as they may pose a safety hazard after the main root was removed. Those trees were replaced with *Zelkova serrata*, musashino trees that have a vertical growth pattern making for ideal street trees. The tree wells, the area directly surrounding the trees, were expanded significantly for all four trees to minimize root impact to surrounding concrete.

## NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to monitor areas of concern within our parks and utilize recurring minor capital funds to repair aging infrastructure as they reach the end of their useful lifecycle.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report. No action necessary.



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PRC 26-06  
March 5, 2026  
Regular Business

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	PRC 26-06: Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan: Hand-off memo	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Move to approve the hand-off memo and authorize the Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission to present the recommendation to the City Council.	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Kellye Hilde, Deputy Public Works Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Draft Hand-off Memo 2. Site Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to finalize and approve the hand-off memo to the City Council.

- On March 18, 2025, the Mercer Island City Council (City Council) authorized staff to proceed with developing a Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park ([AB6641](#)).
- 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 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.
- Between April and May 2025, the project team conducted the first round of outreach through an online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths to gather input on priorities for the Site Plan.
- Key themes from the first round of engagement included strong support for inclusive and accessible play, preserving the park’s natural and wooded character, and incorporating imaginative and nature-based design elements.
- Based on this input, two early design concepts were developed: *The Quest* and *Woodsy Wonders*.
- Between July and August 2025, the project team conducted the second round of outreach through an online survey, project booths at four community events, and a discussion with the Friends of Dragon Park to gather input on a preferred concept and preferences on the look, feel, and character of play equipment.
- Key themes from the second round of engagement included strong support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept, and a focus on imaginative, inclusive play experiences that preserve the park’s natural character.
- On September 4, 2025, the project team facilitated a site tour with the Commission to provide an on-the-ground perspective of the two design concepts under consideration. Following the site visit, the Commission expressed support for the *Woodsy Wonders* concept and recommended moving forward with refining this option into the preferred plan ([PRC 25-10](#)).
- Staff met with the Arts Council on October 15, 2025, to review the Site Plan and discuss integrating public art and placemaking elements consistent with the Treehouse Adventure theme, utilizing the 1% for Art in Public Places funding generated by the project. The Arts Council expressed support for

the theme and recommended engaging students involved in the original outreach to inform specific art elements [\(AC 25-05\)](#).

- On November 6, 2025, staff presented preferred Site Plan to the Commission for review and direction. The presentation highlighted the inclusive design principles guiding the project, key play features, proposed parking improvements, and a preliminary phasing plan. The discussion confirmed that the Site Plan reflects community input and is moving in the right direction [\(PRC25-15\)](#).
- On February 5, 2026, the Commission voted to recommend the [Site Plan](#), as presented, following review of the public engagement process, design framework, and long-term vision outlined in the Site Plan Report. During this meeting, the Commission also directed the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a hand-off memo to the City Council outlining their recommendation.

## BACKGROUND

### 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 occur in multiple phases:

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

### 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 (complete)
- Concept Development: Q2 – Q3 2025 (complete)
  - Identify gaps, needs, and priorities of project, and gather input on play elements
  - Develop concept alternatives
- Final Design Recommendation: Q4 2025 (complete)
  - Refine concept alternatives into one final design as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission
- **Site Plan Adoption: Q1 - Q2 2026 (we are here)**

- Parks and Recreation Commission to provide the Site Plan recommendation to the City Council for review and adoption.

## COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Parks and Recreation Commission’s recommendation came as a result of a robust community engagement process which began in April 2025. This process included numerous touchpoints with the community, as well as with boards and commissions:

- April–May 2025: First round of outreach – online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths.
- July–August 2025: Second round of outreach via survey, community events, and Friends of Dragon Park meeting.
- September 4, 2025: Commission site tour and selection of preferred concept to refine
- October 15, 2025: Arts Council review
- November 6, 2025: Refined preferred plan presented to PRC
- February 5, 2026: Site Plan presented to PRC

### Data Collected:

- Reached over 1,200 students across 54 K – 5 classes at four elementary schools to vote on play features and park themes.
- Collected nearly 160 ‘Design Your Own Park’ submissions from elementary students providing insight into students’ park ideas and vision.
- Hosted Open House at Island Park Elementary, attended by approximately 20 community members.
- Conducted two online community surveys, received a total of 174 responses:
  - Survey #1 available April 21 – May 23, 2025, and received a total of 102 responses
  - Survey #2 available July 12 – August 12, 2025, and received a total of 72 responses
- Hosted project booths at four community events to gather input and vote on design concepts and play equipment themes, engaging over 500 attendees.

At the [February 5, 2026](#), Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting, the Commission reviewed the proposed Site Plan and approved the following:

1. “To recommend the Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan, as presented, to the City Council for adoption”.
2. “To direct the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a hand-off memo to be approved by the Commission during the March 5, 2026, Regular Meeting”.

## ISSUE/DISCUSSION

The goal for tonight’s meeting is to finalize and approve the draft hand-off memo (Exhibit 1). During the meeting, the Chair will facilitate discussion, and the Commission will vote on the inclusion of each proposed consideration to be transmitted to Council. Approval of the memo will formalize the PRC’s recommendation and accompanying guidance.

### HAND-OFF MEMO

The Chair and Vice Chair worked with City staff to compose a memo to the City Council summarizing the Commission’s review and recommendations outlined during the February 5, 2026, meeting. The document outlines the background for the planning effort, including the park’s identification in the 2022 PROS Plan for playground replacement, subsequent site assessments, and the decision to develop a comprehensive Site Plan to guide coordinated improvements.

The document outlines the robust community engagement process, key themes that shaped the preferred concept, and clarifies that the Site Plan provides a long-term, programmatic framework rather than detailed construction documents or funding commitments. It also identifies the Commission's priorities and considerations to guide future phased design, implementation, and funding efforts consistent with accessibility, inclusivity, and preservation of the park's natural character.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Site Plan is scheduled to be presented to the City Council at the April 7, 2026, Regular Meeting. Staff requests that the PRC designate the Chair, Vice Chair, or another Commissioner (if neither officer is available) to formally present the Commission's recommendation to the City Council at that meeting.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Move to approve the hand-off memo and authorize the Chair to present the recommendation to the City Council at the April 7, 2026, Regular Meeting.



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND, WASHINGTON**  
2040 84<sup>th</sup> Ave SE | Mercer Island, WA 98040-3732  
(206) 275-7793 | [www.mercergov.org](http://www.mercergov.org)

DATE: March 5, 2026

TO: City Council

FROM: Parks and Recreation Commission

Ashley Hay, Chair

Rory Westberg, Vice Chair

Sara Marxen

Jodi McCarthy

Mar Brettmann

Don Cohen

Peter Struck

Craig Reynolds, Council Liaison

SUBJECT: Deane’s Children’s Park Site Plan

**Introduction**

The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) is pleased to forward its recommendation to the City Council for adoption of the proposed Site Plan, as presented. At its February 5, 2026 meeting, the Commission voted to recommend the Plan following review of the public engagement process, design framework, and long-term vision outlined in the Site Plan Report.

The Commission believes the proposed Site Plan reflects extensive community input, thoughtful analysis, and alignment with the City’s broader parks and recreation goals. This memorandum provides context regarding the purpose, scope, and function of the Site Plan to support Council’s consideration of adoption.

**Background and Planning Process**

The need for a Site Plan at Deane’s Children’s Park was driven by two key factors: the age and condition of existing playground equipment, and broader opportunities identified through a site assessment.

A systemwide assessment completed as part of the City’s 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan identified Deane’s as one of five playgrounds prioritized for replacement in the six-year Parks Capital Improvement Program (Parks CIP). The assessment noted that much of the playground equipment across the park system was nearing the end of its useful life, and many sites, including Deane’s, did not meet current ADA or universal accessibility standards. What set Deane’s Children’s Park apart was not only the condition of the equipment, but also the site’s relatively flat layout, which offered an opportunity to create a more inclusive and accessible play experience.

The on-site assessment conducted in 2024 confirmed that the needs of Deane’s Children’s Park extended beyond the playground itself. Most of the park’s amenities, including the restroom, picnic shelter, furnishings, paths and parking are outdated, in disrepair, or do not meet accessibility standards. The assessment also highlighted opportunities to integrate the nearby Bike Skills area, completed in 2023, improving circulation, amenities, and programming to serve all park users more effectively.

Given this combination of planning needs, staff made the decision to pause the playground replacement project and instead pursue the development of a comprehensive Site Plan for Deane’s Children’s Park.

The City Council directed staff to develop the Site Plan on March 18, 2025, ensuring that improvements are coordinated, strategic, and reflective of community priorities. As part of that direction, Council identified the Parks and Recreation Commission’s role to review proposed alternatives and forward a recommendation to the City Council for consideration and adoption.

#### Community Engagement and Planning Process:

- April–May 2025: First round of outreach – online survey, open house, school visits, and community event booths. Key input: inclusive and accessible play, preserving natural character, nature-based play.
- May – June 2025: Developed two preliminary concepts: *The Quest* and *Woodsy Wonders*.
- July–August 2025: Second round of outreach via survey, community events, and Friends of Dragon Park meeting. Strong support for *Woodsy Wonders*.
- September 4, 2025: Commission site tour; PRC recommended refining *Woodsy Wonders* into preferred plan.
- October 15, 2025: Arts Council review; supported Treehouse Adventure theme and recommended student engagement for art elements.
- November 6, 2025: Refined preferred plan presented to PRC, highlighting inclusive design, play features, parking improvements, and phasing. PRC affirmed plan direction.
- February 5, 2026: Site Plan presented to PRC; Commission voted to recommend the Site Plan, as presented, to City Council for adoption.

#### Data Collected:

- Reached over 1,200 students across 54 K – 5 classes at four elementary schools to vote on play features and park themes.
- Collected nearly 160 ‘Design Your Own Park’ submissions from elementary students providing insight into students’ park ideas and vision.
- Led one Open House at Island Park Elementary, attended by approximately 20 community members.
- Conducted two online community surveys, received a total of 174 responses:
  - Survey #1 available April 21 – May 23, 2025, and received a total of 102 responses
  - Survey #2 available July 12 – August 12, 2025, and received a total of 72 responses
- Hosted project booths at four community events to gather input and vote on design concepts and play equipment themes; engaging over 500 attendees.
- Engaged an inclusive design consultant to inform Site Plan development using universal design principles and evidence-based best practices for inclusive playgrounds, applying key design considerations and inclusive design principles throughout equipment selection and site layout refinement to remove barriers to participation and support development across physical, social-emotional, sensory, cognitive, and communicative domains for a variety of ages and abilities.

#### **What is a Site Plan?**

A Site Plan establishes the long-term vision for a park, providing a strategic roadmap for how the park can evolve over time. It is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of how the park is used today and how the community would like it to function in the future. Staff engaged the broader community, user groups, PRC, Arts Council, and City Council to evaluate opportunities, constraints, and long-term potential.

The result is a clear design program and framework to guide improvements over time. A Site Plan identifies desired park offerings and their general locations and relationships, but it is not a detailed design, construction document, funding authorization, or fixed implementation schedule. Detailed design, engineering, and permitting occur later, as individual project phases move toward implementation.

An adopted Site Plan is also critical for grant eligibility, enabling strategic pursuit of funding and phased, coordinated improvements. While adoption does not commit the City to specific funding or timelines, it establishes an aspirational vision and positions the City to advance improvements in phases as resources become available, ensuring future investments are intentional and reflect community priorities.

### **Site Plan Recommendation and Future Considerations**

The PRC commends City Staff's extensive engagement with our community in the development of this Site Plan. The Commission recommends this Site Plan for adoption by the City Council and has identified a few key considerations to guide future detailed design and implementation of the Site Plan. These reflect PRC priorities to ensure that the aspirational vision is carried forward thoughtfully and remains reflective of community desires. These considerations are organized into the following categories for City Council contemplation:

1. Accessibility and Inclusivity
  - a. Ensure all park areas are accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities.
  - b. Incorporate play equipment that serves a wide range of age groups, thoughtfully organized to encourage movement-oriented and imaginative play (such as circuit play) supporting durability of interest and longevity of use.
  - c. Maintain a strong emphasis on imaginative, nature-based, and inclusive play experiences throughout detailed design.
2. Preservation of Natural Character
  - a. Preserve the forested character of the park, including mature trees and understory vegetation.
  - b. Minimize impacts to tree roots and other natural features during design and construction.
  - c. Limit the expansion of impervious surfaces where feasible to protect natural drainage patterns and ecological function.
  - d. Utilize natural colors and materials for play equipment and surfacing to complement and integrate with the surrounding landscape.
3. Design Review and Phasing
  - a. The Commission requests the opportunity to review and provide input on each phase of improvements at the 30% design stage to confirm alignment with the adopted Site Plan and established community priorities.
  - b. For each phase of improvements, the project consultant shall prepare a report confirming the design meets accessibility requirements and inclusive design standards.
  - c. Direct staff to seek and develop opportunities for alternative funding – to include grant and donor recognition opportunities, non-profit and corporate sponsorships, and establish ways to support community-led fundraising efforts.

### **Conclusion**

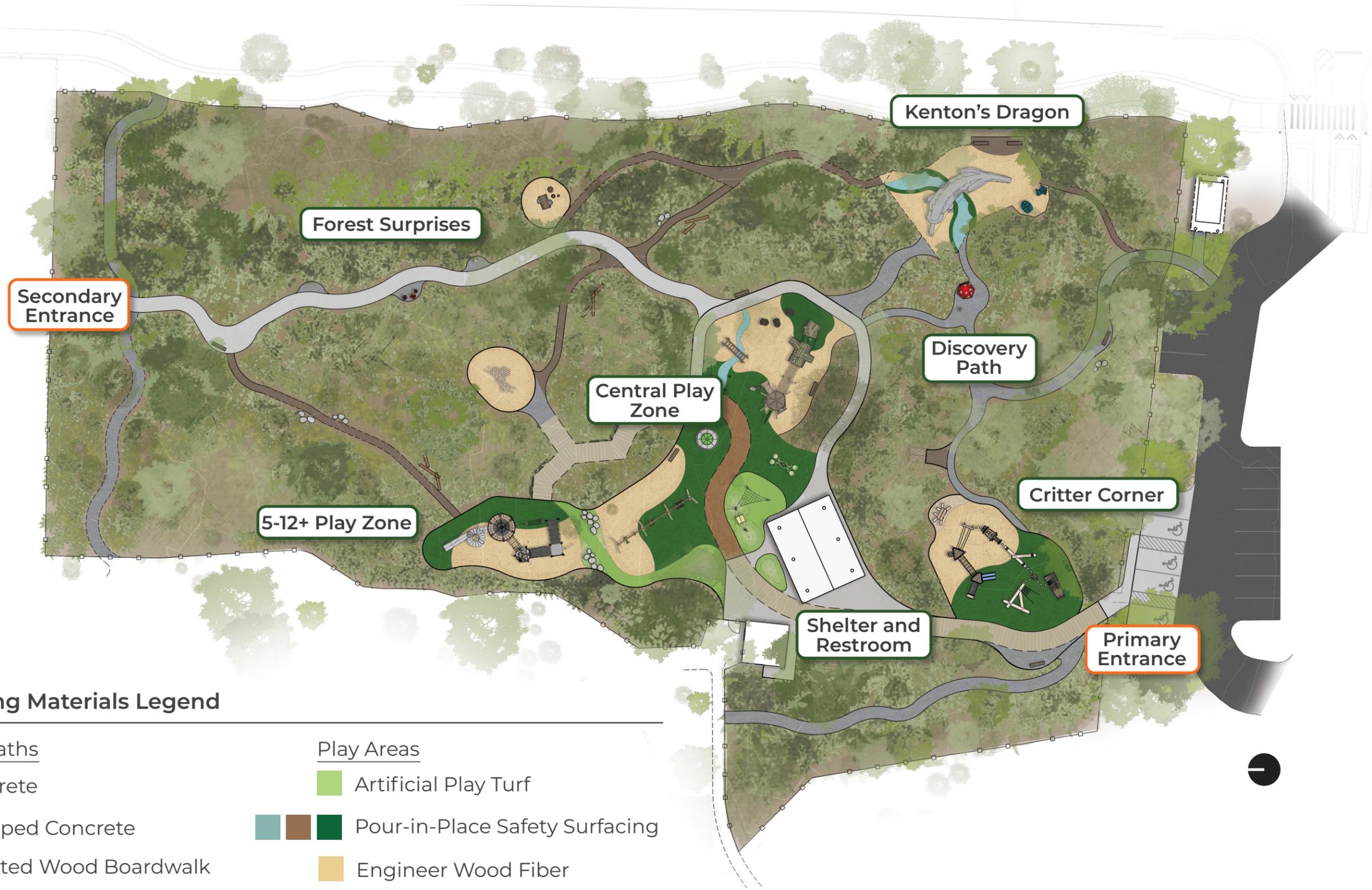
The proposed Site Plan represents a shared vision for the long-term evolution of Deane's Children's Park. It reflects extensive community engagement, careful site analysis, a strong commitment to

accessibility and inclusivity, and preservation of the park's natural character. Adoption of the Site Plan affirms this vision and establishes a clear framework to guide future improvements in a coordinated and strategic manner.

The Commission recognizes that implementation will occur incrementally. Individual phases will advance as funding becomes available through the Parks CIP, grants, partnerships, and other resources. As such, the timing, sequencing, and specific scope of improvements may evolve to reflect funding realities, regulatory requirements, and emerging community needs.

Because the Site Plan provides a programmatic framework rather than detailed construction documents, certain elements may be refined during future design phases. Specific play equipment or materials identified conceptually may change due to product availability, cost considerations, or advancements in inclusive play design standards. Any refinements should remain consistent with the Plan's guiding principles: fostering imaginative and nature-based play, enhancing accessibility for users of all ages and all abilities, preserving the forested character of the site, and integrating improvements thoughtfully within the landscape.

With these considerations in mind, the Parks and Recreation Commission is pleased to forward this Site Plan to the City Council for adoption, confident that it provides a durable and flexible roadmap for creating an inclusive, nature-centered, and community-supported park for generations to come.



Surfacing Materials Legend

Trails / Paths

- Concrete
- Stamped Concrete
- Elevated Wood Boardwalk
- Gravel
- Mulch

Play Areas

- Artificial Play Turf
- Pour-in-Place Safety Surfacing
- Engineer Wood Fiber

# Play Equipment Site Plan



## Play Equipment Legend

### Critter Corner

- 1 Songbird
- 2 Leaf Stepper
- 3 Log Steppers
- 4 Log Pile 3.2
- 5 Log Tangle 2.2
- 6 Log Pile 2.1
- 7 Howler
- 8 Discovery Table

### Central Play Zone

- 14 Fallen Log
- 15 Pinecone Climber/Tunnel
- 16 Wobble Bridge
- 17 Akadinda Marimba
- 18 Cattail Chimes
- 19 We-Go-Round
- 20 We-Saw
- 21 Tent Net Hammock
- 22 Communication Board
- 23 Swing Combination

### 5-12+ Zone

- 24 5-12+ Tower Combination
- ### Forest Surprises
- 25 Moku-Yama 4.1
  - 26 Handpipes
  - 27 Mushroom Ensemble
  - 28 Honeycomb Congas
  - 29 Log Stepping Forms
  - 30 Hollow Log Link
  - 31 Magnacus
  - 32 Dragon Eggs

### Discovery Path

- 9 Alpine Hut
- 10 Acorn Seat
- 11 Triple Wonder Play Panel
- 12 Harmony Flowers
- 13 Mushroom Playhouse

*Note: specific play equipment collections shown are subject to change if unavailable at the time of implementation. Any substitutions will meet the same design intent and play goals.*