Healthier Ways to School for Lakeridge Elementary

Walking and biking to and from Lakeridge Elementary School became safer and healthier this school year with the construction of a sidewalk on SE 78th Street from Island Crest Way to Lakeridge Elementary School. The new sidewalk and several other improvements in the neighborhood are part of a “Safe Routes to School” grant project.

This project began in January 2008, with the formation of a “Healthy Ways to School” partnership between interested parents at Lakeridge, the Mercer Island School District, and the City. With the primary goal of improving walking and biking to the school, a project proposal was developed and an application was made for funding from Washington State’s Safe Routes to School Grant Program. This state program’s purpose is to help cities and school districts fund projects that provide children a safe, healthy alternative to being driven to school. In Spring 2009, the City was awarded $220,000 in state funds for improvements near Lakeridge. These funds were combined with $100,000 from the City’s “Safe Routes to School” program, approved by the City Council in the 09-10 Budget. See HEALTHY WAYS page 2

3rd Annual Leap for Green Earth Day Celebration April 24, 2010

Come and celebrate with your friends and neighbors at Mercer Island’s own unique Earth Day Celebration: Leap for Green! This year promises even more fun and excitement for kids of all ages, including the Reptile Man, Alleyoop, recycled arts and crafts with Marita Dingus, folk music from Patrick and Friends, electric bikes to try out, and a nature tour presented by Friends of Luther Burbank Park, and tons of fascinating and interactive activities. There will also be delicious food like Veraci Pizza, Whidbey Island Ice Bream, Pacific Coast Bakery, Rock Ridge Cider, and Patty Pan Grill. This is a FREE event—bring the whole family! Participants are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items to donate to the Mercer Island Food Pantry which has been seeing increased need over the last year or more. Ride your bike or walk! Visit the Green Ribbon Commission’s YouPowered booth to receive a prize if you get to the event powered by YOU!

For more information or to sign up to help: www.mercergov.org/leapforgreen or 206-275-7609

Presented by the City of Mercer Island and IslandVision with generous support from the Mercer Island Arts Council, Mercer Island Preschool Association, the Stroum Jewish Community Center, Hoop to the Beat, and Emmanuel Episcopal Church.
The Lakeridge project contains four major elements: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Encouragement. The City took the lead on Engineering and Enforcement. A new concrete sidewalk was constructed along SE 78th Street to replace a narrow gravel path along the edge of the existing roadway. The intersection of SE 78th Street and 85th Place SE was narrowed, creating room for new pedestrian sidewalks and shoulders for bicycles. Sidewalk improvements were also made near the entrance to the South Mercer Playfields, directly across from Lakeridge. A new raised crosswalk was installed across 84th Avenue SE, providing increased emphasis and visibility to drivers at this main school crossing location. To support enforcement, two radar feedback speed limit signs were installed on 84th Avenue SE, north of Lakeridge Elementary. These signs display the speed of approaching vehicles to the driver and have been shown by other local cities to be effective in reducing vehicle speeds in neighborhood settings.

In July 2009, the City Council awarded a $228,614 construction contract to Construct Company, LLC. Work crews were successful in completing the western half of the project (closest to Lakeridge) in August, prior to the new school year. The eastern half of the project was completed by mid-September.

The Mercer Island School District and parents took the lead on Education and Encouragement elements of the project. In mid-September, these two programs were kicked-off with an all-student assembly and a bicycle rodeo. The assembly focused on encouraging students to choose a “healthy” mode of transportation to get to school: walking, biking, or riding the bus. Guest speakers, including Councilmember Bruce Bassett, Lakeridge Principal Fred Rundle, and several Lakeridge Faculty discussed the personal health benefits of walking or biking, and also the environmental benefits of reducing automobile trips to and from school by walking, biking, or riding the bus. At the bicycle rodeo (for all third graders), adult volunteers and Mercer Island Police officers helped students fit their bike helmets properly and instructed students in safe riding skills.

The Encouragement program took the form of ‘passport’ tags that students attached to their backpacks to keep track of each time they chose to walk, bike, or ride the bus to school. Prize drawings were held at the mid-point and at the end of the program. Every student that participated received a small prize. For the higher achievers, prizes included bike bells, gift certificates, and lunch with the principal. More than three quarters of Lakeridge’s 575 students participated in the program and 53% of the students recorded at least two healthy trips per week for the six week program. Of all the participating students, 37% walked, 13% biked, and 50% rode the bus. Early post-project counts indicate an increase in the numbers of walkers and bikers to school compared to last year. Data collection will continue through the school year to see if these trends are sustained.

Two more ‘Passport Challenges’ are planned for the Lakeridge students in May and September of 2010.

Washington State’s Safe Routes to School program has awarded nearly $7.5 million to fund 21 projects for the 2009-2011 grant cycle. These 21 projects were the highest scoring of the 112 applications submitted statewide. This program issues a call for projects every two years. The City’s own Safe Routes to School Program was created during the 2009 Transportation Improvement Plan Update and allocates $100,000 per biennium for safe route projects. The Lakeridge Elementary project is the first time the City has received Safe Routes to School grant funding and is also the first time use of the City-funded Safe Routes to School program. In 2011, another $100,000 in City Safe Routes funding is planned for pedestrian improvements near West Mercer or Island Park Elementary Schools.

For more information about this project, contact Clint Morris, the City’s Street Engineer at clint.morris@mercer.gov, or Councilmember Bruce Bassett at brucebas@gmail.com.
Breathing a Little Easier? You Will in the Coming Years
Thousands of Trees Planted on Mercer Island

The City’s open spaces got a boost from voters in November 2008 with additional funding for restoration and tree planting work. In combination with existing project funds, the Parks Levy has allowed the City to accelerate planned restoration work and funded the planting of 7000 trees on over 35 acres of open space in 2009. Pioneer Park alone received 2700 trees, which have been planted across 16.5 acres. Other parks such as Clarke Beach, Ellis Pond, Island Crest Park, SE 53rd Open Space and Mercerdale Hillside were also planted. Planting was accomplished both by volunteer events and contracted work. Tree planting is just one part of the work included in the City’s Open Space Vegetation Plan, which planted and restored a total of 86.4 acres in 2009.

Fresh Air and a Little Dirt for a Good Cause—Volunteer in Parks!

Spring Volunteer Events in partnership with Earthcorps

| April 10 | Ellis Pond |
| April 18 | Clarke Beach |
| April 24 | Clarke Beach |
| May 8   | Island Crest Park |
| May 22  | Clark Beach |
| June 12 | Island Crest Park |
| June 24 | Pioneer Park |

There has already been an amazing start to the 2010 work on Mercer Island:

- 298 Volunteers
- 3,500 square feet of invasive plants removed
- 52,192 square feet of forest maintained

We could not have accomplished any of this without amazing volunteers in the community coming out to help. Join us this spring as we continue to improve the health of Mercer Island’s forests! For more information: www.earthcorps.org

Seeking Citizens to Serve On Boards and Commissions

The Mercer Island City Council is seeking a diverse range of citizens to voluntarily serve on several advisory boards. Appointments to boards and commissions are made by the Mayor and affirmed by the City Council. Generally, terms run June 1 through May 31, for a four-year period. Upon appointment, board members can expect to spend approximately ten hours a month serving on the board, although the level of commitment may vary.

The boards and commissions with positions available are:

- Arts Council (4 positions)
- Design Commission (2 positions)
- Open Space Conservancy Trust (2 positions)
- Planning Commission (2 positions)
- Senior Commission (2 positions)
- Utility Board (2 positions)
- Youth & Family Services Advisory Board (4 adult positions for three-year terms, current 8th graders: 3 positions, current 9th graders: 1 position, current 10th graders: 3 positions, current 11th graders: 2 positions, all for two-year terms)

For more information on each of these boards or commissions or to apply for a position, go to www.mercergov.org/ccbindex.asp, call Ali Spietz, City Clerk at 206-275-7793 or email ali.spietz@mercergov.org. Applications are available online or at City Hall. The application deadline is Wednesday, May 5, 2010.

Symbols in the Pavement for Bike Detection

The City of Mercer Island recently constructed new traffic lights at the intersection of 86th Avenue SE / SE 40 Street and Island Crest Way/SE 40th Street. These new lights are equipped with detection systems for bicyclists. The City also installed logos on the intersection pavements where the bicyclist should stand and wait for the green light. Detection of bicyclists at signalized intersections can improve efficiency, decrease delay to bicyclists, and discourage red light running by cyclists without causing inordinate delays to motorists. The City is working with Washington State Department of Transportation to install bike logos on the pavements of the other signalized intersections in the City. For more information, contact Nick Afzali, Transportation Manager at 206-275-7704.
Super Babysitting Course
Super Sitters is a program designed to train young people, ages 11 to 17, in basic babysitting skills, safety, and infant care. Those completing the course will be better prepared to provide a safer, more effective and positive babysitting experience. The course is taught by experienced, qualified Overlake Hospital Medical Center instructors, with presentations by trained professionals from the community. Graduates are awarded a certificate upon completion. For ages 11-15 years at the Community Center. $50 per course. More information: www.myparksandrecreation.com or 206-275-7609.

Saturday, April 17, 9 am to 2 pm
Wednesday, June 30, 9 am to 2 pm
Saturday, August 7, 9 am to 2 pm

Counselor in Training Program
TEENS! Learn all aspects of working with children in a Day Camp setting: leadership, communication, planning, safety and fun! Learn from experienced Day Camp directors and recreation coordinators. Each Counselor in Training will become First Aid and CPR certified. After the formal training is complete, get hands-on experience by shadowing a Camp Counselor during a week at summer camp. Starts May 12. Contact Katie Borden for more information 206-275-7862

“Smart Clocks” – Saving Water with a Perk
The Parks Maintenance Department has been purchasing and installing top of the line Irrigation Controllers for Mercer Island parks. The idea is to conserve water, without compromising overall plant health. The system uses our Mercer Island Zip Code weather data to calculate “Evapo-Transpiration” automatically.

What is Evapo-Transpiration?
It uses these variables:

- **Temperature**: Transpiration rates go up as the temperature goes up, especially during the growing season, when the air is warmer due to stronger sunlight and warmer air masses. Higher temperatures cause the plant cells which control the openings (stoma) where water is released to the atmosphere to open, whereas colder temperatures cause the openings to close.

- **Relative humidity**: As the relative humidity of the air surrounding the plant rises the transpiration rate falls. It is easier for water to evaporate into dryer air than into more saturated air.

- **Wind and air movement**: Increased movement of the air around a plant will result in a higher transpiration rate. This is somewhat related to the relative humidity of the air, in that as water transpires from a leaf, the water saturates the air surrounding the leaf. If there is no wind, the air around the leaf may not move very much, raising the humidity of the air around the leaf. Wind will move the air around, with the result that the more saturated air close to the leaf is replaced by drier air.

- **Soil-moisture availability**: When moisture is lacking, plants can begin to senesce (premature ageing, which can result in leaf loss) and transpire less water.

- **Type of plant**: Plants transpire water at different rates. Some plants which grow in arid regions, such as cacti and succulents, conserve precious water by transpiring less water than other plants.

After the calculations are done, it sends the data to the irrigation clocks. Thus, telling the clocks how much water to apply.

Problems such as broken sprinklers, mainline breaks, electrical wire faults, power outages, etc., are also now be delivered immediately to an Internet-enabled PDA, cellular phone, laptop or desktop PC for instant attention.

The City has been working with Seattle Public Utilities to receive Rebates for all of the clocks, and installation. The completed project will cost $81,500. Seattle Public Utilities has estimated a rebate of $41,500, half the amount. Most of the Island’s parks that use large amounts of water have already been converted to the “Smart Clocks”. The estimated water savings is 6,800CCF’s a year, or 5,086,400 gallons a year. That equals about $35,500 a year in reduced water costs.

For more information contact Aaron Heyer, Parks Manager at 206.275.7874 or aaron.heyer@mercergov.org.

For information on saving water, visit Saving Water Partnership at: http://savingwater.org/index.htm
The Mercer Island Arts Council presents...

Shakespeare’s 446th Birthday Party

April 17
Aljoya Conference Center
From the Streets of Shakespeare to the Court of Elizabeth
2:00 pm Literary performance featuring Tames Alan
Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Playwriting in the 16th Century
3:15 pm Lecture by Jeffrey Woolley, Director of Literary’s Shakespeare and Friends.

April 18
Aljoya Theater
Showing of the 1952 Othello starring Orson Welles
12:30 pm Cartoons and Popcorn for Families
1:30 pm Film with Introduction by Lance Rhaodes

Families of all ages are welcome to come at 12:30 to enjoy a special showing of cartoons before the showing of Othello. Othello is one of two plays performed live this summer at Mercer Island’s Luther Burbank Park.

Indoor Art Gallery
At the Community Center at Mercer View
Through May 7
NW Collage Society, committed to advancing the stature of collage as a major art medium, will present their work.

May 10 through June 18
Three artists from Oregon will represent different topics and mediums: Martin Anderson, Joan Boyle, and Marilyn Burkhardt.

Shakespeare in the Park Summer Outdoor Theatre
Luther Burbank Park Amphitheater
All performances start at 7 pm except where noted with a *

Much Ado About Nothing
July 8, 9, 10*, 15, 16, 17, 18*
Special July 10 performance as part of Summer Celebration at 2 pm
Special July 18 performance at 2 pm for double feature event
Othello
July 18, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31

Gymnasium Lighting Upgrade at Community Center

The gymnasium at the Community Center at Mercer View will be closed from April 14 through April 16 to all activities. The rest of the center will be open for business as usual during this time. The reason for the closure is to replace the high energy using 400Watt Metal Halide fixtures with low energy using T-5 fluorescent fixtures with motion control. This upgrade will also provide more uniform lighting throughout the surface of the gym floor while reducing energy usage. With the added feature of the motion controls, when the gym is not in use or a portion of the gym is not in use, the lights will be off. Maintenance costs will also be reduced substantially with the new fixtures since bulb changes will only have to occur every 3 – 4 years instead of annually. This upgrade will be paid for by two grants, 50% by Puget Sound Energy and 50% by the Federal Department of Energy EECBG grant through the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Any questions on the specific programs affected by this closure or on this project should be directed to Harvey Barnes, Community Center Operations Supervisor at 206.275.7839 or harvey.barnes@mercergov.org.

Did You Know Mercer Island is Turning 50 this year?
2010 marks the 50th year since the City of Mercer Island was incorporated. To celebrate, “Mercerversary” plans are in the works! Mark your calendar and plan to celebrate on July 10 at Summer Celebration, on July 15 as part of the Third Thursday Art Walk, and a very special birthday bash at Mercerdale Park on July 18 just before the first Mostly Music in the Park concert. Have you lived on Mercer Island for more than 50 years or do you know someone who has? If so, please send an email to info@mi50.org so that you can be featured on the special 50th Anniversary website. See you at the parties!

Third Thursday Art Walk
From May into October, downtown merchants and the Mercer Island Arts Council will stage an art walk each third Thursday, from 5:30 - 8 pm in Mercer Island’s Town Center. Join your neighbors for art, music, refreshments, surprises and fun as you walk from business to business enjoying what Mercer Island has to offer. Watch for the orange balloons!

Mercer Island Farmers Market
Mercer Island’s own Farmers Market is returning for its third season!
Sundays 11 am – 3 pm
SE 32nd Street at Mercerdale Park
June 20th – October 17th
Plus.... a special pre-Thanksgiving Market on November 21st!
Please note: There will be NO MARKET on July 11 (Summer Celebration) or August 1 (Seafair).
Find out what's happening, or find out how to volunteer by visiting the market website. Bringing in the Sun, Earth, Water and a Fresh Farmers Market with the support of the City of Mercer Island, Farm City Alliance and the WSDA Specialty Crop Program.
www.mifarmersmarket.org
**Mercer Island Communities That Care (MICTC) Presents**

**Mercer Island Leadership Forum: Turning the Tide on Underage Drinking & Drug Use on Mercer Island**

May 4, 2010, 7-9 pm  
Mercer Island High School Commons

The MICTC Coalition is hosting a forum of formal and informal community leaders about the present and future of preventing drinking and drug use among Mercer Island youth. This event will feature speaker Nancy Lee, Mercer Island resident, author, social marketing expert, and President of Social Marketing Services, Inc.

Ms. Lee will outline a new, science based prevention model “Positive Community Norms” tailored to the unique needs of Mercer Island by the MICTC Coalition. The evening will include the launch of the MICTC social norms media campaign designed to have a long term impact on underage drinking and drug use on Mercer Island in 2010 and beyond.

It truly takes a community to sustain progress in an area as complicated as preventing underage drinking and drug use. Towards this end, the second half of the evening will include Ms. Lee leading attendees in round table discussion called “Conversations That Count.” This dialogue among community leaders will focus on turning prevention data into tangible action steps appropriate for every sector of our community—a significant steps towards making prevention a community effort on Mercer Island.

Space is limited; please RSVP to Sharon Broz, MICTC Project Coordinator by April 26th. sharon.broz@mercergov.org

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**Youth Mentoring Program at IMS Targets Underage Alcohol and Drug Use**

This is the second year in which Mercer Island High School students will mentor Islander Middle School students on preventing underage drug and alcohol use. Participating high school students affiliated with the Communities That Care Youth Committee will receive training from the Youth & Family Services middle school drug and alcohol counselor Marla Mitchell. Together, they will deliver substance abuse prevention messages to IMS 8th graders. Youth mentors will bust some of the myths surrounding underage drug and alcohol use on the island and give tips on a safe transition to high school. Topics will include peer pressure, real vs. perceived substance use behaviors and “fitting in” without drugs or alcohol. This project is part of MICTC’s comprehensive prevention efforts and represents yet another community-school partnership focusing on improving the health and safety of island youth. For more information, contact Derek Franklin, MICTC Project Director at MIYFS (206) 275-7611.

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**Mercer Island Youth Job Fair**

Saturday, April 10, 10 am – to 2 pm  
Community Center at Mercer View

Are you looking for a summer job? Do you want or need to volunteer? Look no further, if you are a young person between ages 14 and 22, the Youth Job Fair is the place to be. Come ready to share your resume with local employers and talk with them about current opportunities. You can also connect with volunteer organizations.

If you are an employer and would like to host a booth, please contact Cheryl Manriquez at 206-275-7869 or cheryl.manriquez@mercergov.org.

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**Calling Youth Volunteers: V.O.I.C.E. & S.V.P.**

**Registration is Right Around the Corner!**

This summer, the Mercer Island Youth and Family Services will be offering two youth volunteer programs: Volunteer Outreach in Communities Everywhere (VOICE) for high school youth, and Summer Volunteer Program (SVP) for middle school youth. Registration will open at 9am on Monday, March 22 and close at 5pm on Monday, April 12 at www.mercergov.org/voice and www.mercergov.org/svp. For any additional information or questions, please contact Tambi Cork at tambi.cork@mercergov.org or (206) 275-7755.
Resident's of Mercer Island are encouraged to “switch out” at no charge from their own containers for garbage, recycling and yard waste. Are You Using Your Own Container for Garbage? Time to Switch it Out!

For a complete list of what can and cannot go in the yard waste cart and more information about how to recycle on Mercer Island, please visit www.mercergov.org/recycle.

Did you know that in addition to your regular yard waste such as grass, leaves, weeds and prunings, you can also put food scraps and food-soiled paper in your yard waste cart? This includes: fruits & vegetables, bread, pasta, grains, eggshells, nutshells, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags and pizza delivery boxes, paper towels and napkins and now meat, fish bones, poultry, and dairy products. Collected yard waste is processed into compost and sold to home and garden stores. For convenience, keep a container in or near your kitchen to collect kitchen scraps. Empty this container into your yard cart as needed. Possible kitchen containers:

- Used paper bags (fill and put in cart)
- Reusable plastic or metal container with a tight fitting lid
- Food scraps must only be placed in the curbside yard waste cart, not in personal cans, bags or boxes.
- No plastic of any kind in your yard waste cart, please

For a complete list of what can and cannot go in the yard waste cart and more information about how to recycle on Mercer Island, please visit www.mercergov.org/recycle.

**IMPORTANT UPDATES ABOUT GARBAGE AND RECYCLING**

Food Waste Can Be Recycled!

Did you know that in addition to your regular yard waste such as grass, leaves, weeds and prunings, you can also put food scraps and food-soiled paper in your yard waste cart? This includes: fruits & vegetables, bread, pasta, grains, eggshells, nutshells, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags and pizza delivery boxes, paper towels and napkins and now meat, fish bones, poultry, and dairy products. Collected yard waste is processed into compost and sold to home and garden stores. For convenience, keep a container in or near your kitchen to collect kitchen scraps. Empty this container into your yard cart as needed. Possible kitchen containers:

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For a complete list of what can and cannot go in the yard waste cart and more information about how to recycle on Mercer Island, please visit www.mercergov.org/recycle.

Are You Using Your Own Container for Garbage? Time to Switch it Out!

Residents of Mercer Island are encouraged to “switch out” at no charge from their own containers for garbage, recycling and yard waste to standard wheeled carts provided by Allied Waste Services. Call Allied Waste Customer Service (206-682-9730), for delivery of a new cart(s). Ask the Representative to help you achieve the right sizes and mix of carts for your family and to accommodate your specific needs for garbage, recycling and yard waste. The City's new contract with Allied Waste makes it more convenient than ever before to be part of the solid waste solution and help our community retain its image for responsible disposal and recycling.

There is no rental fee for any cart size. Depending on your needs, you can get a 20 gallon insert cart to replace your old "mini" can, a 32 gallon cart to replace your old 32/35 gallon can, or a 64 gallon cart or 96 gallon cart to replace multiple smaller cans.

You will like these new wheeled containers because they have an attached sealed lid that prevents animals or birds from scattering debris. These containers will help keep Mercer Island clean, debris free, and more efficient. These new carts have a handle and wheels to make them very easy to move about, even with heavy loads. These new carts are made to fit the mechanical dumping lifts mounted on the Allied Waste trucks, which can reduce personnel injuries and speed up the collection routes. For more information, please call Allied Waste Customer Service 206-682-9730. Thank you!
Emergency Preparedness Training Opportunities

2009 was the year for planning and creating the ground work for Mercer Island Emergency Preparedness, 2010 is the year for training. Due to limited city resources (staff that reside on the Island) and the potential for Mercer Island to be truly an Island in a disaster, we are asking citizens and businesses to prepare to be self sufficient and shelter in place for 7 days.

We are also asking citizens to volunteer to assist in a disaster. We have various different teams that could use your help and monthly training to assist us in getting prepared.

April 17, 2010, 9 am to noon
Emergency Well Training
at Mercer Island’s Emergency Well Site
4320 88 Ave SE

RSVP to Officer Jennifer Franklin at 206-275-7905 or jennifer.franklin@mercergov.org. Additional training is listed on the Emergency Preparedness Page on the City’s website under the calendar.

Andrew King 2009 MIPD Citizen of the Year

At the 2009 Officer of the Year awards University of Washington student Andrew King, son of Islander Jason King, joined the MIPD spotlight as the winner of this year’s Citizen Volunteer Award. Andrew King was recognized for the volunteer work he put in over last summer and Christmas break in assisting with Mercer Island Emergency Preparedness.

Jason King was awarded the same honor last year due to his continual support and work with getting Mercer Island prepared to be self sufficient for 7 days. A huge thank you goes out to not only Andrew and Jason King for all of their work and support in preparing our Island to get prepared, but to all of our Mercer Island Volunteers, your assistance and support are what make our program work, thank you!