City of Mercer Island News

Vol. 5  Summer 2010

Mercer Island Faces Largest Budget Shortfall Since the 1970s

City Developing Leanest Budget Yet, Service Cuts Likely

As with the rest of the country, tough financial times have fallen on the City Mercer Island. The national and regional recession has forced Mercer Island into its most significant budget shortfall since the late 1970s. Assuming the City makes no increases to the budget next year, it faces a deficit of more than $745,000 in 2011 and another $840,000 in 2012.

To address the deficit, City Manager Rich Conrad has, once again, asked department heads to find new ways to save money as he prepares the biennial budget for the City Council to review this fall. “We’ve always operated on a lean budget, but with sales tax revenues down, we have to do even more trimming from the budget in 2011 and 2012,” he said.

With revenues on the decline, the City has instituted a number of cost-saving measures such as forgiving cost of living adjustments for employees in 2010, leaving a number of vacant positions unfilled and postponing market-based raises. “Despite these continuing efforts, we still have to cut back on the budget, which will likely mean cut backs on the programs and services we offer.”

In the coming months, Mercer Island will continue to provide updates about the 2011-2012 budget situation, including opportunities for the public to share its opinion.

Conrad will present the proposed budget to City Council for review in early October. The public is invited to attend the budget meetings, which will take place on Monday evenings. Approval of the budget is anticipated in late November or early December.

First Community Campout Brings Families Together for Outdoor Fun

Eighty participants from 24 different families participated in the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department’s inaugural Community Campout at Luther Burbank Park on July 17 and 18. The overnight camp allowed families to enjoy a number of fun outdoor activities and a night out under the stars.

Campers partook in a variety of outdoor activities, including kayaking, arts, crafts, fishing, volleyball, board games, a hooping exercise, karate, Fun Mobile play, beach activities and much more. Campers roasted marshmallows around a bonfire and watched a movie on a giant screen at the beach on Saturday night. They brought their own camping equipment.

Parks and Recreation provided meals over the weekend, including dinner Saturday night, breakfast Sunday morning and snacks throughout the day.

For those of you who missed out on the Campout, Parks and Recreation plans to schedule the event again for next year. Check the Spring/Summer Recreation Guide in 2011 for details.
**Recreation Facilities Upgrades and Repairs**

**Community Center Terrace**

**Repair Scheduled for September**

The outdoor terrace at the Community Center at Mercer View (CCMV) is scheduled to close from August 30 through October 1 for repair. The CCMV will close the outdoor terrace to allow crews to repair damage caused by the settlement of soil below the surface. Repair time may vary depending on island weather conditions.

The CCMV will maintain normal business hours while the terrace is repaired.

Residents should anticipate some noise and heavy machine activity during repair time around the CCMV, as well as traffic disturbance on the road leading to Luther Burbank Park (corner of SE 24th Street and 84th Avenue SE).

The CCMV is located at 8236 SE 24th Street and is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 9:00pm; Saturdays from 8:00am to 10:00pm; and Sundays from 11:00am to 6:00pm.

For more information about this project, contact Jana Raasch, CCMV Manager, at jana.raasch@mercergov.org or 206.275.7845.

**Upgrades and Improvements to South Mercer Playfields Underway**

Construction of the 2010 South Mercer Playfields Building Remodel and Equipment Upgrades project began mid-July at the South Mercer Playfields (at SE 78th Street and 84th Avenue SE) and is scheduled for completion by winter 2010. The project will add new amenities to the playfields, including a new food concession area, a covered batting cage, and an electronic scoreboard at Field #1. The City’s contractor, Advanced Construction Inc., will also remodel the restroom building.

All existing ball fields, bullpens, and the children’s playfield will remain open during the project. Temporary public restroom facilities will be available while the restroom building remodel and expansion is underway.

The City is managing this capital improvement project for the Mercer Island School District as provided in the interlocal agreement between the City and the school district. The City completed a related project in March of this year that replaced the dirt infields with synthetic turf on Fields #1, #2 and #3.

For more information, please contact Joan Weiser, Project Manager, at joan.weiser@mercergov.org or 206.275.7880.
Residential Roadway Resurfacing Projects in Progress

The City of Mercer Island is performing roadway resurfacing work in four residential neighborhoods this summer. The City Council approved the repaving project as part of this year’s $1.1 million Residential Street Program at the June 7, 2010 Council meeting.

Repaving has occurred on Greenbrier Lane and in the neighborhood south of Mercer Island High School (from SE 42nd Street south to SE 44th Street, and from 87th Avenue east to 92nd Avenue). Shoulder grading, pavement markings and utility adjustments on these roads is underway now and should be completed by the end of August.

In late August, the City will repave roads in the Lakeview Highlands neighborhood (off West Mercer Way, including 77th Ave, 78th Avenue, and 79th Avenue). The project will then move to Avalon Drive and Avalon Place in September to repair and repave the roadways there.

All work on the residential resurfacing project is scheduled for completion by October 1.

During paving days, portions of these neighborhoods will be closed to traffic in order to pave the streets. Expect paving work to occur Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 5:00pm. Access to and from homes may be limited during these construction hours. Roads will reopen at the end of the work day at 5:00pm. The City’s contractor will post signs several days in advance informing residents of specific paving dates.

For more information, contact Clint Morris, Street Engineer, at clint.morris@mercergov.org or 206.999.8041.

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Share the Road Traffic Safety Tips

A Message from the Mercer Island Police Department & the Mercer Island Development Services Group

Summer is in full bloom. Children are out of school for a little while longer, the sun is shining, and daylight hours extend well into the evening. Please do your part to be a good neighbor. Share the road, be courteous, and pay attention. Here are some basic reminders for all users of our roadways. For more information on traffic safety, visit the Mercer Island Driver, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Safety website at www.mercergov.org/sharetheroad. For general questions about transportation or neighborhood traffic concerns, contact Nick Afzali, Transportation Manager, at nick.afzali@mercergov.org or 206.275.7704.

### Tips for Drivers
- **Adhere to the Speed Limit.** The speed limit in our neighborhoods is 25 miles per hour unless posted otherwise.
- **Pay Attention.** Expect the unexpected. Use caution in residential areas and near schools and playgrounds. Drive slowly in these areas and be ready to stop quickly.
- **Set a Good Example.** Children learn from their parents and copy what they see. Obey the law, be courteous, pay attention, and avoid multi-tasking.
- **Avoid Distractions.** Don’t talk on the phone, eat or drink, read, or do other things that take your focus off driving. Follow the Washington Cell Phone Law and avoid a $124 fine by not talking on your phone or texting while driving. Be a defensive driver.
- **Share the Road with Pedestrians and Bicyclists.** Pedestrians and bicyclists have as much right as drivers to use the road. Pedestrians and bicyclists are not as visible as vehicles, so be on the lookout for them. Please be courteous. Stop for pedestrians waiting to cross the street. and only pass bicyclists when there is adequate space and visibility to do so safely.

### Tips for Pedestrians
- **Use Crosswalks.** Cross at marked crosswalks when crossing busy streets. Don’t assume that drivers will stop for you just because you are in a crosswalk. Make sure all drivers see you by making eye contact with them before crossing the street.
- **Walk in Appropriate Areas.** Walk on sidewalks and paths where available. If sidewalks are not available, walk on the edge of the road or on the left shoulder of the road, facing the flow of traffic.
- **Be Seen.** Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if you are walking near traffic. Carry a flashlight when walking in the dark.
- **Keep Children Out of the Roadways.** Do not let kids play near traffic or in the street. Teach them how to safely cross the street and do not let them cross alone until you are.

### Tips for Cyclists
- **Follow the Rules of the Road.** Ride in a responsible manner. Obey traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings. Bicyclists must follow the rules of the road like other vehicles. Follow lane markings and always signal before turning. Be courteous.
- **Communicate with Drivers.** Stay out of drivers’ blind spot. Don’t follow cars too closely. Make eye contact with drivers. Assume that they don’t see you until you are sure that they do.
- **Signal When You Are Passing.** Provide a verbal warning or sound your bell to alert pedestrians and other bicyclists that you are passing.
- **Be Seen.** Use headlights and tail lights to improve visibility.

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Visit the City website! www.mercergov.org
Emergency Preparedness

New Emergency Well Ready to Supply Water in Event of Earthquake, Disaster

The City of Mercer Island recently completed construction of an emergency well that will supply water for essential uses to Island residents in the event of a natural disaster or other major emergency. The Mercer Island Quarterly sat down with City Maintenance Director Glenn Boettcher to learn about the new emergency well.

Why did the City build this well?
It is better to be safe than sorry, especially when you live on a fault line. Seismic studies show that Mercer Island sits squarely above the Seattle Fault, so the City built the emergency well as a precaution in the event that its normal water supply from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is cut off during a natural disaster or other emergency.

Will the emergency well stay operational if we have a major earthquake?
Yes. The well system was designed to withstand a major earthquake on the Seattle Fault measuring 6.7 on the Richter Scale, with fault ruptures at the surface of the ground.

Where is the emergency well located?
The emergency well is conveniently located in Rotary Park, in the center of the Island next to the Mercer Island Library.

Does the well connect with the City’s existing water system?
No. The emergency well operates independently of the current water supply. The well produces relatively small flows that are not sufficient to move through miles of pipes across the Island’s challenging topography.

How will residents get water from the well?
Water from the emergency well will be distributed in two different ways, depending on conditions at the time:
1) Water will be distributed at the well facility in portable containers that the City has stored at the site of the emergency well. Later this summer, the City will distribute these containers to residents to store in their homes.
2) Water will be distributed via emergency volunteer crews that drive around the Island with large holding containers.

Who will operate the well in the event of an emergency?
The well facility was designed to incorporate the involvement of City emergency preparedness volunteers who are specially trained to assist City utility crews in operating the well. Volunteers have been assigned to one of five groups: 1) well operations, 2) on-site dispensing, 3) bulk loading, 4) remote distribution, or 5) traffic control. The City has developed an Operations Guide that provides volunteers with step-by-step instructions on how to operate the well.

With the new emergency well, do I still need to store water at home?
Yes. Even though the city now has an emergency well, residents should store their own emergency water and other supplies so they are ready should disaster strike. Residents should prepare for an emergency by storing at least a three-day supply of water in their homes, with one gallon of water per person per day, in addition to other supplies. For more on how to prep your family for an emergency, visit www.mercergov.org/emergencyprep.

For more information on the emergency well, visit www.mercergov.org/maintenance.

Upcoming Public Safety Events & Trainings

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.21.10</td>
<td>Volunteer Search &amp; Rescue Training</td>
<td>Main Fire Station</td>
<td>9:00am-12:00pm</td>
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<td>Citywide Disaster</td>
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<td>10:00am-11:00am</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.22.10</td>
<td>Drill</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
<td>1:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.16.10</td>
<td>Basic Fire Fighting Training</td>
<td>Main Fire Station</td>
<td>9:00am-12:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency Preparedness Lead Volunteer Meeting</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
<td>11:00am-1:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.28.10</td>
<td>Disaster Metal</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
<td>9:00am-12:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.13.10</td>
<td>Health Training</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
<td>12:00pm</td>
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For more information or to register, contact Emergency Preparedness Officer Jennifer Franklin at jennifer.franklin@mercergov.org or 206.275.7905.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update in Process

The Federal Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local governments like the City of Mercer Island to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to receive certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance. Per the Act, Plans must be updated every five years. Mercer Island sent the plan to state officials last month for review and preliminary approval.

Mitigation plans provide a framework for risk-based decision making to reduce damages to lives, property, and the economy from future disasters.

To view the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, visit www.mercergov.org/maintenance. For more information, contact Maintenance Director Glenn Boettcher at glenn.boettcher@mercergov.org or 206.275.7802.
**Sustainability**

**Summer Celebration! Gets Greener**

Summer Celebration! continued to strive towards becoming a more “green” festival by adopting sustainable practices at this year’s July 10 and 11 festivities.

The Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department, which sponsored the Summer Celebration! weekend, used a hybrid mobile solar power system to power the entertainment stage instead of a gas generator. The solar panel generator provided all the electrical needs for the entertainment stage, including the sound system, without producing emissions or fumes.

Food vendors also played a role in reducing waste. Parks and Recreation required food vendors to use compostable plates and food containers rather than foam and plastic food containers.

The use of recycled products such as recycled napkins and some other paper products increased. While the cold drink food vendors were unable to find a substitute for foam cups for frozen drinks, they have committed to finding a solution before the 2011 festival.

*The Parks and Recreation Department used a solar powered generator instead of a gas powered generator at this year’s Summer Celebration! festival.*

**Help End Summer Hunger: Donate to the Mercer Island Food Pantry**

You can help end summer hunger for Mercer Island children and their families by donating to the Food Pantry located at the Luther Burbank Administration Building (2040 84th Avenue SE).

In tough economic times, even a small contribution can help. The Food Pantry is in need of non-perishable food item donations such as canned fruit, peanut butter and jelly, canned vegetables, pasta and tuna to help feed the growing number of families in need of nutritional assistance.

Donations are accepted between 8:30am and 5:00pm on Mondays and Fridays and between 8:30am and 7:00pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

For more information, contact Family Assistance & Employment Coordinator Cheryl Manriquez at cheryl.manriquez@mercergov.org or 206.275.7869.

**Green Ribbon Commission Seeks Nominations for Local Green Heroes**

The Green Ribbon Commission seeks nominations for local “green heroes,” including individuals, groups and businesses that have promoted environmental sustainability on Mercer Island by building community awareness of green activities such as waste and energy use reduction, or buying local products.

The Green Ribbon Commission will recognize green heroes at an upcoming event celebrating green advances on Mercer Island. The celebration will feature local food and beverages.

To nominate a local green hero, send an email to greenribbon@mercergov.org.

To nominate a local green hero, send an email to greenribbon@mercergov.org.

The Mercer Island Green Ribbon Commission works to develop innovative ways to educate the community to encourage sustainable behaviors that will result in reducing our individual and the community’s carbon footprint.

For more information, visit the Green Ribbon Commission webpage at www.mercergov.org/GreenRibbonCommission.

**Youth & Family Services**

**Mercer Island Thrift Shop**

Sustain your wallet & maintain your style

7710 SE 34th Street
206-275-7760

Store hours:
Mon - Fri 10 to 7
Saturday 10 to 5

www.miyfs.org
Indoor Art Gallery
Enjoy the beautiful artwork of regional visual artists at the Mercer Island Community Center Indoor Art Gallery (8236 SE 24th Street). The current exhibit features “Urban Naïve” art by well-known native Central and South American artists Jose Orantes and Blanca Santander. The exhibit runs from Monday, August 2 through Friday, September 10.

The Gallery is open to the public at the following times:

♦ Monday—Friday | 6:30am-9:00pm
♦ Saturday | 8:00am-10:00pm
♦ Sunday | 11:00am-6:00pm

Artwork is available for purchase, with a percentage of the sale going to support arts and cultural programming by the Mercer Island Arts Council. Exhibits change approximately every two months.

The Mercer Island Arts Council Presents

I-90 Outdoor Sculpture Gallery
Enjoy the art at Mercer Island’s own award winning outdoor sculpture gallery. Presented by the Mercer Island Arts Council, the I-90 sculpture gallery is located along the I-90 corridor on Sunset Highway between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE. Many of the sculptures are available for purchase.

For more information on buying or exhibiting a sculpture, contact Parks and Recreation at 206.275.7609.

Third Thursday Community Art Walk
Enjoy a nice night out and about while supporting local artists at the Third Thursday Community Art Walk. Third Thursday is a fun, family event where you can enjoy the art, food, entertainment, and culture Mercer Island has to offer.

Third Thursday takes place from 5:30pm to 8:00 the third Thursday of every month (May through October) in the Town Center. Just look for the orange balloons.

Remaining Third Thursday Events:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.19.10</td>
<td>Arts Council 25th Anniversary &amp; Street Bazaar</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.16.10</td>
<td>Alive After 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.21.10</td>
<td>Harvest Festival</td>
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For more information, visit www.mercergov.org/artscouncil.

Events & Activities

Get out and Play during the 2010 Worldwide Day of Play September 25
Bring your kids for an afternoon of fun at the 2010 Worldwide Day of Play on Saturday, September 25 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm at Mercerdale Park (77th SE & SE 32nd). The Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department will provide equipment for games and activities such as volleyball, croquet, gunny sack races and tug of war.

Sponsored by Nickelodeon, the Worldwide Day of Play is designed to encourage families to turn off the TV and get active.

For more information on the 2010 Day of Play on Mercer Island, visit www.miparks.net.
Celebrate National Senior Citizen’s Day

In celebration of Mercer Island residents 55 and older, Parks and Recreation will provide free activities and a BBQ lunch on National Senior Citizen’s Day, August 19. Transportation is available.

Call 206.275.7609 to reserve your spot for lunch and to request a ride.

Date: Thursday, August 19, 2010
Time: 10:30am – 1:00pm
Course Number: 10839
Age: 55 and older
Fee: Free
Location: Community Center at Mercer View (8236 SE 24th Street)

Catch a Concert at Mostly Music in the Park

Mercer Island Parks and Recreation and the Mercer Island Arts Council proudly present Mostly Music In the Park, a free community concert series featuring music from around the globe.

Concerts are open to the public and take place annually in July and August on Thursdays and Sundays from 7:00pm to 8:30pm at Mercerdale Park (77th SE Street and SE 32nd Avenue). The remaining concert dates include:

♦ Thursday, August 12: Global Village (World fusion/Latin jazz)
♦ Sunday, August 15: Kings of Swing (Big Band swing music)

For more information, visit the www.mercergov.org/mostlymusic; write the Mercer Island Arts Council Staff Liaison Amber Britton at amber.britton@mercergov.org; or call 206.275.7609.

Events & Activities
Mercer Island Parks and Recreation
Forest Stewardship Opportunities

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Register</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.12.10</td>
<td>Invasive removal</td>
<td>Luther Burbank, north</td>
<td>10:00am-2:00pm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.earthcorps.org">www.earthcorps.org</a></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>wetlands (parking lot)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.14.10</td>
<td>Invasive removal</td>
<td>Ellis Pond (90th Ave SE, south of SE 45th)</td>
<td>10:00am-2:00pm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.earthcorps.org">www.earthcorps.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.21.10</td>
<td>Invasive removal</td>
<td>Mercerdale Hillside (76th Ave SE at SE 37th)</td>
<td>3:00pm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mtsgreenway.org">www.mtsgreenway.org</a></td>
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<td>9.18.10</td>
<td>Invasive removal</td>
<td>Luther Burbank, north</td>
<td>9:00am-3:00pm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mtsgreenway.org">www.mtsgreenway.org</a></td>
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Free Outdoor Movies at Mercerdale Park August 14 & 28

Pack your lawn chairs, blankets and flashlights and enjoy outdoor films at Mercerdale Park (77th SE & SE 32nd) this August 14 and 28. Presented by the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Department, the outdoor films program this year includes nighttime showings of Twilight—New Moon and Planet 51.

Concessions will be available for sale at the park.

During inclement weather, films will be cancelled. Call the Community Center at Mercer View at 206.275.7609 to confirm cancellations on bad weather days.

Show times:
♦ Twilight—New Moon (PG-13) | 08.14.10 | Dusk (approx. 9:00pm)
♦ Planet 51 (PG) | 08.28.10 | Dusk (approx. 8:30pm)

Twilight—New Moon is the second chapter of Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight saga in which the romance between mortal Bella Swan and vampire Edward Cullen grows even as ancient secrets threaten to destroy them.

Planet 51 is an animated film about how Chuck the astronaut discovers that humans are not alone in the galaxy.
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Councilmember Dan Grausz
dan.grausz@mercergov.org
Councilmember Steve Litzow
steve.litzow@mercergov.org

To learn more about the Mercer Island City Council, please visit the City website. Council Meeting agendas and supporting documents are uploaded to the website the Friday before each meeting.

www.mercergov.org

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Your community. Your government. Your Mercer Island.

Tune in to MI-TV
Mercer Island’s own cable station, MI-TV Channel 21, is on air. The station airs City Council meetings as well as educational programming and important announcements.

10:00am Council Meeting Replay
7:00pm Council Meeting Replay

Council meetings are also available online. Visit www.mercergov.org/MITV for more information.