



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

**AB 4303
June 2, 2008
Regular Business**

ISLAND CREST WAY TRAIL PROJECT	Proposed Council Action: Approve revised scope and authorize additional budget.
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DEPARTMENT OF	Maintenance (Joan Weiser)
COUNCIL LIAISON	n/a
EXHIBITS	1. AB 4280 2. Trail Alignment Recommended Option
APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER	 5/28/08

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$	135,000
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$	100,000
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$	35,000

SUMMARY

At the April 21, 2008, City Council meeting (Exhibit 1) staff presented several trail completion options and recommended Option C, a meandering trail of 5/8" gravel where feasible and a gravel shoulder of 5/8" rock next to the roadway in areas from Wildwood Park south where a meandering section is considered cost-prohibitive. At the meeting, neighbors requested that more of the trail from Wildwood south be located off the road shoulder and meander where it is not necessary to build retaining walls. The area in the vicinity of the hill was particularly important to neighbors as a location where a trail separated from the road is needed due to the limited sight distance to walkers.

Council ultimately directed staff to address the following objectives:

- Propose a trail surface that meets the needs of pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers.
- Address the different needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Propose a plan that is safe to both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Address the replanting needs.
- Keep the project as close as possible to the original budget.
- Consider timing and staging (or phasing).

Trail Surface that meets the needs of pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers, phasing

A 5/8" gravel trail surface will meet the needs of pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers. The Lakeridge Elementary trail surface is 5/8" rock and is used by both students on mountain bikes and parents pushing "fat tire" strollers. There is no significant difference in performance between a 5/8" and 1/4" rock surface.

Tires of wheelchairs are similar to “fat tire” strollers and mountain bikes. However, due to the site grades and because construction of the trail will utilize tree-friendly techniques where the gravel will not be mechanically compacted, the trail will not be considered wheelchair accessible.

Due to the steepness of the hill portion of the trail, some erosion of the gravel trail by the mountain bikers and pedestrians in this section can be expected. Correcting the damage from erosion will require increased maintenance and could somewhat reduce usability of the trail. If erosion becomes problematic, consideration should be given to paving the hill portion of the trail as a later project.

A plan that is safe to both pedestrians and bicyclists, phasing

Bike commuters and others who use bicycles for transportation require a direct route, a paved surface and should be separated from the trail to ensure the safety of all user groups. Current traffic volumes along this stretch are significantly lower than other sections of Island Crest Way and can accommodate bicyclists who would prefer to use the roadway. With the pedestrians and recreational bikers using the trail, bike commuters will enjoy less competition for space to ride along the road.

As a future enhancement, adding an asphalt shoulder adjoining the road at the steep hill portion of the trail will allow road bikes to safely navigate the steep terrain while separated from vehicles. Staff recommends evaluation of this enhancement as a later phase of work and as part of the 2009 TIP update.

Policies regarding bicycle lanes will be developed during the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan update. Creating dedicated bike lanes along this section of Island Crest Way should be considered in the context of the new PBF Plan.

Landscaping

Upon direction from Council, staff will proceed with developing a replanting scheme to buffer the trail from the road and fill in areas where hazardous trees were removed. Staff recommends planting drought tolerant trees and native shrubs. Landscaping design would be completed as a separate phase of this project and planting would occur in the late fall and winter of 2008 as recommended for maximum survivability of planting in non-irrigated areas. Staff will discuss with the neighborhood opportunities to participate in planting and maintaining the landscaping during the critical two-year plant establishment period. Upon direction from Council, staff will return to Council later this summer with the replanting plan.

King Conservation District (KCD) funds will be used to cover the cost of replanting. The amount of funding currently available to Mercer Island is \$55,379. It is estimated that this total will be \$71,412 by the end of the year.

Recommended trail completion project

Staff recommends the following trail completion project, a refinement of staff's original Option C. A significant portion of this work can be accomplished with in-house labor, including pipe installation, pathway excavation and gravel placement. Those sections that can not be completed in-house will be packaged for bid. Key components of this option include:

1. Construct a 5-foot-wide gravel trail with a surface of 5/8” rock. This surface will meet the needs of pedestrians, mountain bikers and strollers. Due to the steep terrain and tree-friendly construction techniques, the trail will not be wheelchair accessible. As a future enhancement and as mitigation for erosion, paving the hill portion of the trail could be considered in the future.
2. Bike commuters will continue using the edge of the paved roadway, which will be less congested and safer because of relocating the other competing user groups to the trail. As part of the 2009 TIP

update, creating an asphalt shoulder at the steep hill portion and adding dedicated bike lanes as a future PBF project could be considered in the future.

3. The trail will meander through the trees except at the steep hill portion where the trail will be separated from the road shoulder by a 3-foot-wide landscaping strip from SE 74th PI southward approximately 235 feet to the top of the hill. The trail alignment from the top of the steep hill south to 78th Avenue SE will meander through the trees, provided the alignment allows gravel delivery direct to the trail bed. Refer to Exhibit 2 which depicts the recommended trail alignment.
4. Include a spur into Wildwood Park. Because volunteers recently cleared this side trail, completion of the spur can now be accomplished within the project budget.
5. Use drought tolerant and native plants to buffer the trail from the road and fill in areas where hazardous trees were removed. Staff will return to Council later this summer with the replanting design prior to proceeding. Planting to occur in late fall and winter 2008.

Project budget and expenditures

ISLAND CREST PEDESTRIAN TRAIL (SE 71st to SE 78th ST) ESTIMATED PROJECT COST SUMMARY	
	Option C Revised 5/8" Gravel Trail built with CMI labor
Tree Removal, Site Clean-up, Eagle Mitigation *	\$59,000
Project Management	\$10,000
Construction Cost Estimate	\$60,000
Construction Contingency @ 10%	\$6,000
Total Project Cost	\$135,000
<u>Budget Available</u> PBF - ICW-SE 71st to SE 78th	\$100,000
Redirection Required from PBF - Annual GAP Completion	\$35,000
** Landscape restoration work would be completed following trail construction and would be funded with KC Conservation Futures funds.	

The budget requested includes the original \$100,000 budgeted for the project and an additional \$35,000 from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Gap Completion project. No other projects are competing for the Gap Completion funding this year.

Schedule and next steps

Upon Council’s direction, staff will immediately proceed with contractor selection for elements of the project that cannot be built with in-house labor. The trail is anticipated to be completed by this Labor Day.

Landscaping design would be completed in time for installation during this fall/winter 2008 following City Council authorization.

RECOMMENDATION

Project Manager

MOVE TO: Authorize staff to proceed with the construction of the Island Crest Way Trail Project as described in Option C Revised and re-direct \$35,000 from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Gap Completion project to the trail project. Authorize staff to proceed with landscaping design work. Evaluate a shared asphalt trail at the "steep hill" section as a second phase and as part of the 2009 TIP update. Evaluate adding bike lanes as part of a future PBF project.



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

**AB 4280
April 21, 2008
Regular Business**

ISLAND CREST WAY TRAIL PROJECT	Proposed Council Action: Approve revised scope and authorize additional budget.
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DEPARTMENT OF	Maintenance (Joan Weiser)
COUNCIL LIAISON	n/a
EXHIBITS	1. Proposed Alternatives
APPROVED BY CITY MANAGER	

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$	135,000
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$	100,000
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$	35,000

SUMMARY

Project Background

This South End trail project was identified in 2004 as part of a neighborhood campaign in support of establishing a pedestrian and bicycle connection along Island Crest Way between SE 78th Street and the Pioneer Park trails. This project was originally budgeted at \$100,000 as a shoulder improvement along Island Crest Way in the 2005 – 2010 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and scheduled for completion in 2007. Leveraging project dollars with economies of scale, this shoulder improvement was originally planned to be constructed in conjunction with the 2007 Residential Street Overlay project

Neighborhood residents at a City Council meeting in April 2007 voiced concerns with the paved shoulder design and requested that staff consider design alternatives, including a meandering pathway separated from the roadway.

In a May 1, 2007 memo, staff notified the City Council that, in response to neighborhood concerns, the project was being delayed and removed from the 2007 Residential Street Overlay project, enabling staff to develop four design alternatives, including relocating the trail off the shoulder and onto the unimproved right of way (ROW) west of the drainage ditch along the west side of Island Crest Way. Staff presented these four alternatives at a community meeting held on September 11, 2007, and the community preferred (44 out of 51 votes) a 5 foot wide multi-purpose gravel trail sited amongst mature trees (Option 4). Thirty-six residents attended the meeting along with staff and Councilmember Dan Grausz.

On October 2, 2007, staff communicated to the neighborhood that the City would proceed with the 5 foot wide meandering gravel trail and noted that, if there was a problem with the project cost exceeding the \$100,000 approved budget, the project may be phased and that construction of the north half would be a priority. Instead of following our agreed upon practice of bringing projects back to Council when the scope of the project has a significant change, staff proceeded with the understanding that, as long as the project

budget of \$100,000 was not exceeded, work could proceed on the separated multi-purpose trail as supported by the neighbors.

From December 2007 thru March 2008, brush cutting, hazardous tree removal and general site clean-up was completed as needed to finalize the trail alignment and design. Certified arborists carefully identified and managed the removal of 30 large hazardous trees (originally estimated at 37). A tree planting project to create eagle habitat at Clarke Beach was also completed as mitigation for the tree removal.

In February 2008, trail construction bids were received and all exceeded the approved project budget. Several factors contributed to the high bids. To minimize damage to existing trees while constructing the trail, contractors were required to use smaller equipment to excavate unsuitable soils and to place gravel. Much of the work was also specified as hand-work, requiring more laborers and more days to complete the work tasks. Substantial site clean-up was required to remove decades of accumulated partially buried debris. Quantifying the volume of debris was not possible. So, the bids received were based on generous estimated quantities. In March 2008, staff elected to proceed with the site clean-up to eliminate the uncertainty and possibility of high bids if the project was re-bid. Also, labor rates as well as material costs and fuel costs increased substantially in 2007 resulting in higher than expected bids. For example, state-mandated landscape wages more than doubled and trail construction rates increased 6%.

To date, \$56,848 of the original \$100,000 budget has been spent.

Trail Completion Options

Consequently, staff is now presenting the following trail options to Council and requesting Council authorization to proceed with one of these options towards completion of the Island Crest Trail project. The options are described graphically in Exhibit 1. Staff recommends Option B because it improves pedestrian safety along Island Crest Way between SE 71st St and SE 78th St and implements the neighborhood preferred option along the most heavily used portion north of Wildwood Park.

Option A: \$206,848 (Original TIP proposal)

Build the project as originally scoped in the TIP, providing a paved shoulder along the west side of Island Crest Way between 78th Ave SE and 71st Ave SE.

Option B: \$261,574 (Neighborhood Preference Previously known as Option 4)

Build the project as designed and bid, providing a meandering gravel trail with a top dressing of ¼' rock (a surface similar to Pioneer Park) the full project length from SE 71st St to SE 78th St, and a short trail extension into Wildwood Park. This option requires installation of two rockeries, pipe installation, hand labor and small equipment to maneuver around trees, grading, and gravel placement.

Option C: \$132,848 (*This is the option staff is recommending.*)

Build a combination of a meandering gravel trail of 5/8" size base rock where feasible and a gravel shoulder of 5/8" rock in areas where a meandering section is cost-prohibitive. A significant portion of this work can be accomplished with in-house labor, including pipe installation, pathway leveling and gravel. Those sections that can not be completed in-house will be packaged for bid. This alternative differs from Option B in three significant ways:

1. A trail surface of 5/8" base rock (similar to the Lakeridge Elementary School trail) rather than a compacted and smooth surface top dressed with ¼" rock (similar to the Pioneer Park).
2. The trail alignment on the road shoulder (from Wildwood Park south to 78th Ave SE) rather than separated from the road and meandering through the tree canopy.
3. No trail extension into Wildwood Park.

Landscaping

Neighbors are requesting that extensive landscaping be added to the project to buffer the trail from the road and fill in areas where hazardous trees were removed. Staff recommends planting drought tolerant trees where hazardous trees were removed and planting native shrubs in the right of way and meandering trail alignment. Landscaping work would be completed as a future phase of this project this fall and winter. Staff would return to Council with a replanting plan for this project before proceeding.

In terms of funding, King Conservation District (KCD) funds could be used to cover the cost of landscaping. The KCD is a non-regulatory agency which helps manage and protect King County's natural resources. The KCD's activities are funded primarily through a per-parcel assessment on all properties within the District's boundary, which includes most cities in King County. [This appears as an "other charge" from KING CD of \$9.98 on property tax bills in 2008]. One-fifth of the funds collected are distributed to local municipalities for natural resource management and conservation projects. These funds are in effect earmarked for any viable City project that promotes natural resource management and are almost guaranteed to be granted. The amount of assessment funding currently available to Mercer Island is \$55,379. It is estimated that this total will be \$71,412 by year-end 2008. Staff believes this amount is more than adequate to allow extensive tree replacement and other landscaping.

Project Budget and Expenditures

The estimated cost of the three alternatives is presented in the table below.

The budget available includes the original \$100,000 budgeted for the ICW Trail and an additional \$35,000 from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Gap Completion project. The Gap Completion is funded at an annual amount of \$35,000 with the goal of constructing small sections of Pedestrian and Bicycle facilities where gaps in the trail system exist. These funds were used to complete the trail near Lakeridge Elementary in 2007, but have not been committed to a specific use for 2008.

ISLAND CREST PEDESTRIAN TRAIL (SE 71st to SE 78th ST) ESTIMATED PROJECT COST SUMMARY			
	Option A Asphalt Trail at Road Shoulder (Original Scope)	Option B Meandering Gravel Trail (Neighborhood)	Option C Gravel Trail built with City Staff Labor (Close to Orig Budget)
Tree Removal, Site Clean-up, Eagle Mitigation *	\$56,848	\$56,848	\$56,848
Project Management	\$18,000	\$27,950	\$10,000
Construction Cost Estimate	\$120,000	\$160,705	\$60,000
Construction Contingency @ 10%	\$12,000	\$16,071	\$6,000
Total Project Cost	\$206,848	\$261,574	\$132,848
Budget Available			
PBF - ICW-SE 71st to SE 78th	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
PBF - Annual GAP Completion	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Appropriation Required	\$71,848	\$126,574	\$0
* This work has already been completed and paid for.			

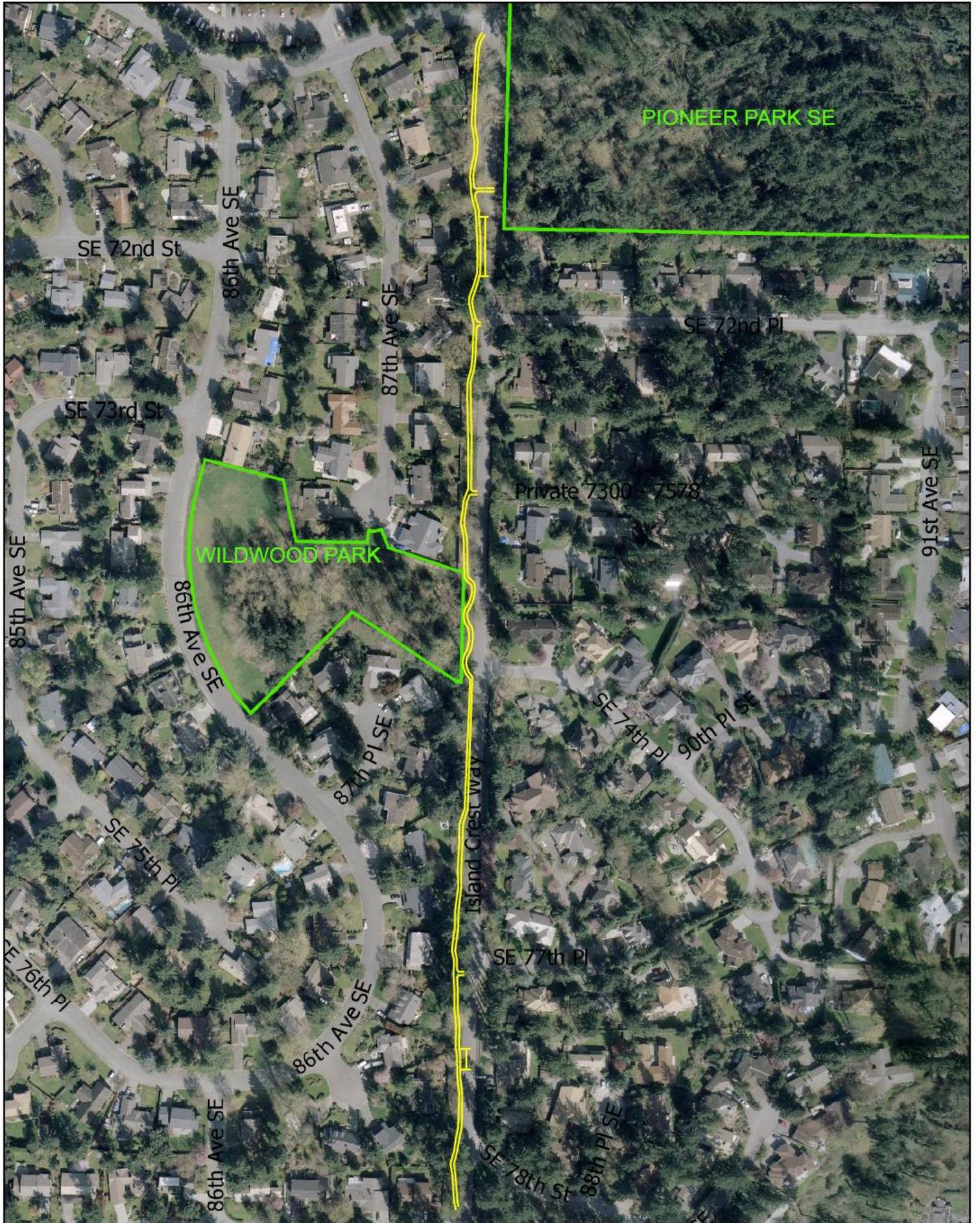
Schedule and Next Steps

Upon Council's selection of a preferred option, staff will immediately proceed with contracting the work. The trail construction portion of the project is anticipated to be completed by Labor Day 2008. Landscaping design would be completed in time for installation in fall/winter 2008, the preferred planting season, following City Council authorization.

RECOMMENDATION

Project Manager

MOVE TO: Authorize staff to proceed with the construction of the Island Crest Way Trail Project as described in Option C and re-direct \$35,000 from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Gap Completion project to the trail project.



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WILDWOOD PARK

Private 7300 7578



Information & Geographic Services
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AB 4303
Exhibit 2
Page 9

