

**Attachment 1**  
Parks and Recreation Subcommittee Meeting  
September 23, 2008

**PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES PLAN UPDATE**  
**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM**

**OVERVIEW**

The City will solicit and encourage public involvement in updating the 1996 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan in the following ways:

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • Article in Mercer Island Weekly describing update project and opportunities for public involvement (as listed below). | Early October  |
| • Article/announcement in Mercer Island Reporter  | Early October  |
| • Structured comment form on City website.  | Early October  |
| • Public Workshop #1  | Late October   |
| • Public Workshop #2  | Early December |
| • Planning Commission Public Hearing  | January        |
| • City Council consideration (public meeting)   | February       |

**COMMUNICATION**

The public communication program will kick-off with articles in the Mercer Island Weekly newsletter and an article or announcement in the Mercer Island Reporter. Notice regarding date/time/location and format of Public Workshop #1 will be provided. Interested persons will be directed to the City's website which will include a brief description of the current plan and the update process, as well as a structured comment form. The website will include periodic updates, particularly with regard to time/date/location of Workshop #2, Planning Commission public hearing and City Council consideration.

Notice of Workshop #1 will be mailed or e-mailed to persons who have previously expressed interest; persons who submit comments via the City's website, and other identified stakeholders. Notice of Workshop #2 will be mailed or e-mailed to persons who have previously expressed interest; persons who submit comments via the City's website; and those participating in a previous Public Workshop.

### **PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1**

Public Workshop #1 will be structured as an information sharing and gathering event. Staff and consultants will provide a brief presentation regarding the value of updating the 1996 Plan, the planning process, citizen input opportunities, and briefly summarizing the technical work undertaken so far. This will be followed by a period where staff and consultants will facilitate stations equipped with maps, hand-outs and flip charts for taking notes regarding desired facilities, routes, design issues etc. The final twenty minutes or so will be reserved for facilitators to report back to the larger group. Comment cards will be available throughout for those preferring to provide written comments.

### **PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2**

Public Workshop #2 will be an opportunity for staff and consultants to present the Public Review Draft PBF Plan Update to the public and solicit comments. Format will be similar to Public Workshop #1, except that the staff and consultant presentations will be somewhat more detailed to ensure broad understanding of the proposed Plan.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING**

Staff will present the Draft PBF Plan Update to the public and the Planning Commission. The Commission will take formal public testimony on the Draft Plan prior to formulating its recommendation to the City Council

**Attachment 2**  
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**KEY POLICY ISSUES**

**Initial Policy Direction**

On June 2, 2008 the City Council conducted a Study Session on “Key Issues” relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. A “Key Issues Memorandum” was presented by staff and discussed by Council, following which the City Council provided the following feedback:

- The “guiding principles” from the 1996 plan are still good principles
- Sustainability, routine accommodation and connectivity should be added to the 1996 list of “guiding principles”
- The City should support the School District efforts on Safe Routes to School, with “safety” also considered a guiding principle.
- Staff should come back with suggestions for parking issues on the Mercer Ways

It was recognized that the Plan Update will likely reflect a shift from an emphasis on recreational use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to a clearer balance between recreational and transportation uses.

Staff and consultants will be guided by these preliminary policy determinations as we work with the public and develop draft proposals for the updated PBF Plan. Several additional policy questions have been identified as we have undertaken the technical background work reflected by the Technical Memoranda.

**Additional Policy Questions**

- *Should the City examine “no parking” regulations to maintain pedestrian access to shoulders?*

In many areas, parking on the shoulders is a significant problem that hinders the utility of the shoulders for pedestrian and bicycle use. While this problem has been particularly noted along the Mercers, it is also a potential issue in many other neighborhood areas. The concern is most significant when the right-of-way (ROW) is used extensively by both vehicles and non-motorized movement. However, in most cases the parking is not in violation of city ordinances.

- *Should the City develop a policy for vegetation encroachment management?*

Overgrown vegetation can hinder the function of pedestrian and bicycle facilities either by directly hindering movement or by hindering visibility for the safe use of the facility. As such management of vegetation is an important part of maintaining these facilities. However the recommendation could raise issues along streets with constrained right-of ways, if it is pursued too aggressively to the extent that it changes the character of the road way or path. Since the visual appearance of the streetscape is closely associated with the character of neighborhoods, such actions could be seen as changing neighborhood character. Ideally, an effective policy could assist in balancing between the need to manage vegetation along pedestrian and bicycle routes and the potential impact on neighborhood quality

- *Should the City Council establish an ad-hoc committee to study and develop recommendations on how best to address East, West and North Mercer Way needs?*

This was proposed by the 1996 PBF plan and continues to be an appropriate need for the city to address. Although improvements have been made pursuant to the plan, significant issues concerning facility use and parking conflicts remain.

- *Should new private development provide the facilities they need as part of the development process?*

New development creates a need for or impacts pedestrian and bicycle facilities similar to how those developments may affect other transportation systems. One of the sites examined illustrates the importance of evaluating during the development review process the impact of new development on the need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to serve such development. Requiring developer participation is subject to the same “nexus” and “proportionality” tests as are other mitigation requirements.