

RECREATION DIVISION

The Parks & Recreation Department was considerably impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Community & Event Center closed in March 2020 and all recreation programs, special events, and facility rentals were canceled. Athletic field reservations and picnic shelter/area reservations were also canceled. As a result, workforce reductions were implemented in the Spring of 2020.

During the 2021 and 2022 biennium, key recreation staffing positions were restored, and the Division focused on reestablishing operations for the Mercer Island Community and Event Center and rebuilding recreation services. During this process of rebuilding, the Community and Event Center was re-opened and pre-pandemic services were offered, a number of special events and community engagement activities, outdoor facility rentals were reinstated.

The focus for the Recreation Division during this biennium will be to build upon the restored services by increasing facility patronage, expanding the volume of rentals, and increasing summer camp and Community Center drop-in opportunities and attendance.

2023-2024 Work Plan

1. **Goal: Focus efforts and actions to be an environmentally and fiscally sustainable, connected, and diverse community. (Adopted City Council 2023-2024 Priority, see AB6064)**

- 1.1 Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission and Arts Council to develop policies identified in the Recreation Reset Strategy. This work began in the 2021-2022 biennium and will continue in 2023-2024.
 - 1.1.1 Complete implementation and integration of Civic Optimize, a software tool which will enhance the permit and rental process, increase customer satisfaction, and optimize staff review efficiency. Research, develop and implement procedures for the use of technology-based tools by Q4 2024 to improve customer service and reduce permit turnaround times.
 - 1.1.2 Establish resource needs, program implementation, and evaluation tools in preparation for the future expansion of recreation services to include various youth, senior, and adult programs.
- 1.2 Expand drop-in programming and rental opportunities for the Mercer Island Community and Event Center and outdoor facilities.
 - 1.2.1 Achieve MICEC rental occupancy level of 1,500 bookings by end of Q4 2023; 2,000 bookings by end of Q4 2024.
 - 1.2.2 Achieve drop-in programming participation of 2,000 individuals to the fitness room and 6,000 drop-in sports participants by end of Q4 2023.
 - 1.2.3 Expand drop-in programming to increase diversity of offerings by 25-50% by Q1 2024.
- 1.3 Achieve post-rental and drop-in programming participation satisfaction levels of 85% by Q4 2023 and 90% by Q4 2024.
- 1.4 Collaborate with local community organizations to partner on special events, programs, volunteerism, and other community engagement opportunities.

- 1.5 Develop and enhance external communication and marketing for Division services to improve cost recovery levels.
- 1.6 Provide staff support for the Parks & Recreation Commission and the Arts Council.
- 1.7 Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences through ongoing community partnerships.
- 1.8 Expand and enhance opportunities for recreation service sponsorships and park asset and property donations.

2. Make once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks. (Adopted City Council 2023-2024 Priority, see AB6064)

- 2.1. Collaborate with the City Manager's Office on the development of the Comprehensive Facilities Assessment to include the Annex Building and the Mercer Island Community & Event Center.
- 2.2. Collaborate with the Finance Department to revise the replacement cycle for MICEC technology and equipment and ensure financial sustainability of the MICEC Technology and Equipment Fund to meet the long-term needs of the community.
- 2.3. In collaboration with the Finance Department and Capital Projects Team, revisit the funding plan (aka the sinking fund) for the replacement of synthetic turf athletic fields.

3. Goal: Provide emergency response services related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and other City emergencies.

- 3.1. Continue to support city-wide response and coordinate the Operations Section of the Emergency Operations Center.
- 3.2. Utilize the MICEC to host shelter operations, and to meet cooling and warming center needs.