



ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

AC 25-08
October 15, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AC 25-08: 2025-2026 City Arts and Culture Workplan Update: Q4 2025	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive staff report	
STAFF:	Katie Herzog	
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Salim Nice	
EXHIBITS:	N/A	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to provide an update on the status of the 2025-2026 City Arts and Culture Workplan as the Recreation Division progresses into the 4th quarter of 2025.

BACKGROUND

The City Arts and Culture Workplan is designed to guide staff work and initiatives related to arts and culture. The workplan is endorsed by the Arts Council and reflected in the approved biennial budget.

PROGRESS ON ARTS AND CULTURE WORKPLAN ITEMS

The Arts Council endorsed the 2025 – 2026 City Arts and Culture Workplan at the [October 16, 2024](#) meeting. Since the beginning of 2025, staff have diligently worked towards the objectives stated within the workplan. Below, the objective is listed in bold with subsequent bullet points reflecting staff progress entering the 4th quarter of 2025.

Priority 1: Deliver high-quality arts and culture programming to the Mercer Island community.

1.1 Implement three different arts and culture recreation program activities by Q4 2026.

- Petals Art Club – Spring Break and Summer Camps, after school programming and Saturday youth/guardian classes
- Mercer Island Visual Arts League – Instructed art classes at the Community Center
- Music Together – Family music classes
- Mercer Island Sister City Association – Lectures and French film showings

1.2 Collaborate with partners to implement six arts and culture focused events by Q4 2026.

- Mercer Island Chinese Association- Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival
- Mercer Island School District – Juneteenth Community Celebration
- Wooden O - Shakespeare in the Park

- Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce – Holiday Makers Market

1.3 Develop two ongoing drop-in arts and culture focused activities by Q4 2025.

- Open Art Studio – Free, monthly art with local artist.
- Sing With Our Kids – Free, weekly sing-a-longs for families.

1.4 Maintain the service level for arts and culture programming from the previous biennium.

- Staff have maintained the level of service compared to the previous year and identified opportunities for enhancement.

Priority 2: Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences which promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2.1 Coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Commission to review and develop policies to further promote access to city facilities by Q3 2026.

- Since mid-February 2025, the Recreation Facility Supervisor position has remained vacant. This role is responsible for the development and implementation of policies governing the use of recreational facilities. At this time, no formal plans or timelines have been established to fill the vacancy. However, the Recreation Manager anticipates that work on policy development will commence in Q3 2026, utilizing existing staff resources.

2.2 Collaborate with local community organizations to implement diverse community events annually in park spaces through the application of the Special Event Sponsorship Policy- ongoing.

- Chinese Wushu & Tai Chi Academy - Tai Chi in the Park
- High School Community Band - Concert in the Park
- Aljoya - Pop up concert
- Desert Rose Salon – Golden Hour Vendor Market
- Russian Chamber Music Foundation - Concert in the Park
- Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce - Art UnCorked
- Mercer Island Rotary - Leaf Art in Rotary Park

2.3 Utilize the city's communication methods in collaboration with third party organizations to promote arts and culture experiences - ongoing.

- Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce – online event calendar
- Mercer Island Youth & Family Services – Senior Newsletter
- Mercer Island City Lifestyle – monthly ads and event calendar in monthly magazine
- Staff will begin work on a policy to promote third-party coordinated activities within existing marketing efforts.

2.4 Implement 6-Year Workplan for Art in Public Places and maintain a dynamic list of public art opportunities, identify new funding strategies, and engage the community throughout the public art - ongoing.

- 6-Year Workplan for Art in Public Places was adopted by City Council in September 2025.
- Staff received a proposal for art donation and are utilizing the 6- year Work Plan to inform on next steps with the Arts Council.

Priority 3: Encourage and support community engagement through collaboration and partnerships to expand arts and culture programs with a focus on performing arts.

3.1 Identify and establish relationships with two performing arts groups to expand performance opportunities by Q2 2025.

- The Dickens Carolers- Holiday Party
- Connie Wible- MIVAL Gallery Receptions
- High School Community Band - Town Center Trick or Treating-
- Local dance organizations – Holiday Makers Market
- Live entertainment – Senior Resource Fair
- Staff utilized event partnerships such as Mercer Island Chinese Association Events, Juneteenth and Pride to increase opportunities for performing arts, and is looking toward 2026 to expand opportunities within the Mercer Island Gallery Artist Receptions, Tree Lighting, and pop-up opportunities coupled with Town Center events.

3.2 Contract with resident performing artists and organizations to perform at three existing community events by Q4 2025.

- Creation Dance Studio -Tree Lighting
- Mercer Island High School Choir - Tree Lighting
- Mercer Island High School Community Band - Town Center Trick or Treating
- Local artists – Community Center Gallery Receptions

3.3 Provide opportunities for performing arts organizations to further engage with the Mercer Island community at city-coordinated events - ongoing.

- Staff look to include and expand performances, pop-up shows, and roving acts from local arts organizations at events like Summer Celebration, Mostly Music in the Park, Juneteenth, Pride in the Park, Tree Lighting, Holiday Party and Trick or Treating

Priority 4: Incorporate principles of sustainability into the City's arts and cultural practices.

4.1 Implement procedures to incorporate principals of sustainability into preservation of public art – ongoing

- Staff are currently evaluating opportunities to enhance the management of the City's Public Art Collection. It is anticipated that the Arts Council will assist in the development of a comprehensive Public Art Maintenance Plan during the next biennium

4.2 Provide composting and recycling at all city-coordinated events by Q4 2025.

- All events for 2025 have had garbage, recycling, and compost bins provided
- Vendors are required to provide compostable plates, cups and utensils as part of their vendor agreement

4.3 Engage the Mercer Island Historical Society to provide opportunities to increase historical knowledge of Mercer Island by Q2 2026.

- Staff are collaborating with the Historical Society to recognize the United States Semi-quicentennial through various events in 2026

- Staff have partnered with the Historical Society to have a presence at various events including Summer Celebration, the Senior Resource Fair, and Leap for Green

4.4 Evaluate current art and culture programs and identify needs for a sustainable funding model for the following biennium by Q3 2026.

- Review current funding sources (grants, sponsorships, general fund) and expenditures. Identify trends and gaps
- Evaluate events to ensure community benefit is being met
- In 2026 the Arts Council will begin reviewing and recommending updates to the 1% for the Arts Fund which may allow for a broader funding model

4.5 Enhance and establish sustainability requirements for organizations to partner with the City for cultural events and programs.

- Staff have begun discussing opportunities and will be evaluating contract language and procedures in 2026

Priority 5: Complete two major City art and culture projects:

1. Update the Comprehensive Arts & Culture Plan
 - Work is anticipated to begin in October of 2026
2. Collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Commission to update the Department's "Gift Acceptance Policy" to include works of art.
 - Work is anticipated for 2026

2025-2026 Work Plan Next Steps:

Staff will continue to progress on workplan items as identified through the end of 2026. Staff will present the 2025 Recreation Annual Report at a future Arts Council meeting to inform of 2025 - 2026 workplan outcomes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

No Action Required