

SWOT Analysis for City's Current Approach to Special Events

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for special events is a constant. Surveys clearly show that special events are a valued part of life on Mercer Island. • Customer service by Staff to event planners is excellent. • A diverse mix of public special events are available. • Events are routinely carried out without significant issues. • Many event organizers return year-after-year to seek permits from the City. • Staff and elected official enthusiasm to support community events is strong. • The City has a clear point-of-contact and a centralized approach to permitting events. • Mercer Island has several great locations for special events of all sizes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resources are limited. Staff time and attention spent on multiple events (regardless of the size or reach of an event) keeps Staff from attending to other work and community priorities. • Customized assistance to event planners is manual, inefficient, and often intensive. • City contributions to special events are sometimes not tracked and fees are not designed for cost recovery. • Level of City contribution is not tied to or aligned with City-desired outcomes, goals or policies. • Permitting requirements and process, and fees or fee waivers are not always clear to potential applicants. • City financial support for special events has been volatile from year-to-year. • The City lacks a definitive list of venues where special events of various types are allowable. • There is no differentiation between new, emerging events and longtime, recurring events in terms of resources allocated or permitting procedures. • Lack of organized volunteers that could provide City special events' assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage City resources in fostering events that promote City goals, such as enhancing economic vitality and the social capital and well-being of the community. • Provide sustaining support to community organizations and causes through assisting their events. • Continued improvement in collaboration between City departments that are involved in permitting and event support. • Implementation of new technology resulting in greater self-sufficiency for applicants (and reduced needs for Staff involvement) in the permitting process. • Grow community members' understanding of the breadth of what the City is providing or opportunities to take part in those events. • The City has a newly dedicated and capable Staff member in charge of both event permitting and community partnerships. • Create positive exposure for Mercer Island - its residents, businesses, culture, arts, schools, etc. • Generate more pride and cost recovery for various events through sponsorships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized assistance to event planners creates the potential for being inconsistent or biased. • Events that are not planned and permitted carefully have the potential to negatively affect infrastructure, neighborhoods and Staff. • Controls on City spending (in-kind or direct expenditure) are minimal. • Return-on-investment is difficult to quantify and perceptions of the appropriateness of municipal spending on special events are varied. • Staff experience in providing day-of support to special events was reduced due to changes in personnel. • City involvement in special events brings other risks that need to be mitigated, whether that be legal or environmental.

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Strengths = What does MI do well; what resources can MI draw upon; what do stakeholders see as strengths

Weaknesses = What could MI improve; where are resources lacking; what is done better in other cities; what do stakeholders perceive as weaknesses

Opportunities = What opportunities are available; what are some trends/best practices to take advantage of; how can strengths be leveraged as opportunities; what are our goals

Threats = What possible hazards exist; what threats does MI's weaknesses expose it to