



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Item (5)  
December 1, 2022  
Regular Business

## AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

|                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>TITLE:</b>              | Recreation Division: 2022 Services Update / 2023 Proposed Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only<br><input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Motion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |
| <b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b> | Receive Report   |  |

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>STAFF:</b>           | Ryan Daly (Recreation Manager) |
| <b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b> | Craig Reynolds                 |
| <b>EXHIBITS:</b>        | N/A                            |

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to provide a summary of the services offered by the Recreation Division in 2022, and to inform on anticipated services to be offered and expanded in 2023. Staff will return in Q1 of 2023 to provide the *2022 Recreation Division Annual Report* which will contain financial and cost recovery outcomes and participation numbers for 2022, and will identify areas of opportunity and focus for the following year.

### BACKGROUND

In 2021 the Recreation Division successfully completed the *Strategy for the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC) and Recreation Programs and Services* ([Reset Strategy](#)). The Reset Strategy was endorsed by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the City Council in 2021. The Division has been dedicated to following the Reset Strategy as a roadmap for restoring and establishing services, and in providing transparency to the public on Division operations.

Staff applied the Reset Strategy for the development and delivery of Division services and have implemented services through a phased approach as identified within. Based on a variety of factors, the phased approach has evolved based on available resources, community needs, and unforeseen circumstances. Staff has embraced the need to be flexible with service delivery to enable adaptability in meeting community desires for recreation services.

### 2022 SERVICES

Following the implementation of the Immediate Action Plan and Phase 1 during 2021 (as outlined in the Reset Strategy), City Council, through a mid-biennium budget adjustment, authorized resources necessary to deliver expanded recreation services in 2022.

Below is a list of services which were developed and/or implemented in 2022.

*\*Offered previously in 2021 and continued through 2022.*

- ✓ Division administrative services\*
- ✓ Policy evaluation and development\*
- ✓ Staff liaison support to Parks and Recreation Commission and Arts Council\*
- ✓ Arts & Culture Workplan \*
- ✓ Summer Camps\*
- ✓ Picnic Area Rentals\*
- ✓ Boat Launch Parking Permits\*
- ✓ Athletic Field Rentals and Park Permitting\*
- ✓ P-Patch Coordination\*
- ✓ Gym Drop-In activities\*
- ✓ Special Event Permitting\*
- ✓ Outdoor Fitness Rentals\*
- ✓ Art Gallery at MICEC\* and City Hall
- ✓ Batting Cage Rentals
- ✓ Outdoor Recreation Programs (family/mixed age)
- ✓ Renewal of MICEC Annex Lease
- ✓ Drop-in access to full MICEC facility
- ✓ MICEC Facility Rentals (full-facility)
- ✓ Fitness Center access
- ✓ Develop and implement donation/gift policy and procedures
- ✓ Volunteer Services
- ✓ Expansion of City-coordinated special events (*Summer Celebration, Shakespeare in the Park, Juneteenth, Hallo'weekend, Rocktober*)
- ✓ City support of 3<sup>rd</sup> party community events through sponsorship and facility access (*Art Uncorked, Rotary Dance for Peace, MIPA Toy Swap, MIPA Carnival, Menorah Lighting, and more*).
- ✓ Program offerings through community partnerships and rentals.
- ✓ Sponsorship, grant, and donation solicitation and acceptance

### **Service Delivery:**

Staffing related challenges were persistent in 2022. The Division saw delayed recruitment and hiring of staff due to pandemic related issues, and also saw some staff transition from the organization. Delays in hiring led to delays in service expansion. The service delivery model of the MICEC relies heavily on casual/seasonal labor to provide support for after-hours rental and program operations. Unfortunately, due to limited casual/seasonal labor this workload was transitioned to full-time staff which impacted the expansion of other services, the recognition of the fully proposed operating hours of the MICEC, and at times overwhelmed staffing resources. These challenges were compounded periodically by absenteeism related to Covid-19.

The thoughtful restructuring of the Division in 2020-2022 proved beneficial to meeting scheduling needs at the MICEC. Full-time coordinating, supervisory and managerial staff had been broadly trained and were able to adapt and flex schedules to meet immediate rental and programming needs due to position vacancy and

absenteeism. Though not a sustainable approach, this structure allowed for staff to meet rental demands despite numerous vacancies, which lead to the recognition of revenues that might have otherwise been lost.

Despite hiring challenges, 2022 has been a successful year. The Recreation Division took significant strides in expanding facility access and engagement opportunities with the Mercer Island community. The MICEC returned to full operational status offering a variety of rental opportunities and drop-in programs. The automation of processes and the implementation of new policy has placed the Division in a position to expand on current service offerings in the future.

At the conclusion of 2022, the MICEC is near pre-pandemic operating hours and providing the same variety of pre-pandemic rental services. Staff is confident the business model for the MICEC and the work to streamline other service offerings will provide enhanced opportunity for manageable growth of the programmatic services offered, meeting a larger community need, and while generating increased revenues.

Staff re-engaged the community through an expansion of special events, including the much-appreciated return of Summer Celebration. City-coordinated special events were delivered on a scale not seen since 2018 and have a renewed focus on supporting the local business community and including arts and cultural elements. This year special events have been widely supported through generous sponsorships, and the in-kind donation support of volunteers and community groups.

### **Boards and Commissions**

A key function for the administration staff of the Recreation Division is providing staff liaison support to the Parks and Recreation Commission and Arts Council. In 2022 the Parks and Recreation Commission met (13) times, and the Arts Council met (6) times. In addition to these public meetings, both boards developed various committees that met numerous times throughout the year. Outcomes from both advisory boards are highlighted below.

#### **Parks and Recreation Commission Outcomes:**

- Recommended the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS)* to City Council.
- Recommended *Luther Burbank 30% Design* to City Council.
- Recommended *Bike Skills Area location* to City Council.
- Endorsed *Special Event Sponsorship Policy* (received City Council adoption).
- Endorsed of *Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy*.
- Development of *Aubrey Davis Trail Safety Project 30% Design* (work continuing into 2023).
- Development of *Gift Acceptance Policy* and provided input toward procedural elements
- Engaged King County Library System and provided input toward expansion of hours and services.
- Cut the ribbon at the new Mercerdale Inclusive Playground!

#### **Arts Council Outcomes:**

- Established committees to support special events, Public Art, the Mercer Island Arts Summit, and various policy work.
- Hosted the *Mercer Island Arts Summit*.
- Adopted *2023-2024 Arts & Culture Priorities*.

## 2023 PROPOSED SERVICES

At the time of this writing the City Council is deliberating on the approval of the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget. Recreation Division staff submitted a budget request which retains current staffing levels (9.5 FTE / 1.0 LTE-Casual Labor) and maintains current service levels.

Though services and staffing levels remain consistent with those of 2022, staff endeavor to be creative in the development of community relationships and in optimizing allotted resources to expand services. Staff believes collaboration with community partners, leveraging facility assets, and maximizing resources will assist in meeting demands for increased recreation services on Mercer Island.

**In addition to services offered in 2022, the Recreation Division will expand services in 2023 in the following areas:**

- Donation and Gift Acceptance
  - Soliciting and accepting monetary and park and facility asset gifts (benches, picnic tables, equipment, etc.)
- Re-establish limited Senior-Aged Programming
  - Educational, social, and fitness based.
- Expand Youth and Specialized Recreation Programming.
  - Utilize community partnerships and contractors to deliver expanded opportunities.
- Expanded Division marketing and communications
  - Target market recreation facilities to generate additional revenues and meet community recreational needs.
  - Expand MICEC and facility rental business functions to generate additional revenues.
- Increase passive and drop-in access at the Mercer Island Community Center

Next steps:

Once financial outcomes are finalized in Q1 of 2023, staff will submit to the Commission the *2022 Recreation Division Annual Report*.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive Report.