



# ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

**Item (7)  
October 25, 2023  
Regular Business**

## AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	2023-2024 City Arts and Culture Workplan Update: Q4 2023	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Receive staff report	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Katie Herzog
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	Ted Weinberg
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	

## SUMMARY

**BACKGROUND**

The 2023-2024 City Arts and Culture Priorities were endorsed by the Arts Council at the [October 19, 2022](#), meeting. At the [January 18, 2023](#) Arts Council meeting, staff presented objectives to meet the priorities based on upcoming projects, available resources, city-wide goals, and balancing the changing needs of the community. These objectives assist in prioritizing staff’s work related to arts and culture initiatives and are woven into the Recreation Division’s workplan. At the [April 19, 2023](#) Arts Council meeting, staff presented a Q1 update in relation to prioritizing staff’s work toward the arts and culture objectives and relevant next steps.

**PROGRESS ON ARTS AND CULTURE WORKPLAN ITEMS**

The 2023-2024 priorities and objectives are listed below. Staff have provided narrative on work entering the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023 and has projected the percentage of completion for the biennium, as well highlighting relevant next steps.

**Priority 1: Strengthen community awareness of and support for Mercer Island’s arts and culture ecosystem.**

**1.1 Develop and facilitate communication tools to easily share arts and culture events with the Mercer Island community.  
(10% Complete)**

Staff have evaluated current practices and reviewed how arts and culture event information is currently shared on Mercer Island. This work has been combined with a review of overall Recreation Division communication efforts.

During Q1 of 2023, the Recreation Division began initial implementation of a new software tool through CivicOptimize to create and manage form submittals. The tool is currently being utilized for a sample of Community Center services. Staff are exploring how this tool may further integrate with

other City systems and the possibilities for expansion of usage. The desired outcome is to integrate arts and culture event form submittals with calendar functions to publicly solicit and display information. It is anticipated that this new process for public submittals will be operational in Q2-Q3 of 2024.

**Next steps:**

- Engage the City’s Communications Manager and evaluate CivicOptimize integration for calendar functions, and access by third parties for submitting data.
- If integration is possible, establish approval criteria for arts and culture event submissions, including engaging the Arts Council to develop the criteria and have the City Attorney’s Office perform a legal review.
- Develop processes for the public submitting and publishing event entries.
- Evaluate and establish resource needs, including identifying a Recreation Division staff lead for implementation and management.
- Determine feasibility for public implementation and request additional resources if required.
- Implement a new tool through the STQRY app.

**1.2 Create presence and exposure at events for the Arts Council to engage with the community. (75% Complete)**

The Arts Council Events Committee met on February 2, 2023, to discuss opportunities for the Arts Council to engage the community through events. The Committee determined that Mostly Music in the Park would provide the best opportunity for members to attend and engage the community. For the 2023 event schedule, two Arts Council members signed up and attended concerts this summer.

**Next steps:**

- Enhance and promote opportunities for Arts Council Members to attend other community events for engagement opportunities.
- Engage the Arts Council Events Committee to establish what, if any, additional level of active participation is desired, identify and secure required resources.
- Empower and encourage Arts Council Members to be present at City events.

**1.3 Maintain long-term perspectives on sustainability for arts and culture events and programming. (Ongoing)**

Staff has developed the following guidelines for arts and culture event and program vendors and partners for immediate implementation:

- Use of commercially compostable food packaging, such as trays, plates, bowls, utensils, straws, and napkins will be required.
- Beverages must be provided in marked compostable cups, unless sold in recyclable aluminum cans, glass, or plastic bottles will be required.
- Compost and recycling bins will be provided throughout all our events. The Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC) will add additional compost bins and related signage.

**Next steps:**

- Align arts and culture event and programming guidelines with sustainability work plan items identified in the City’s 2023-2024 biennial budget for Public Works and in alignment with the City’s Climate Action Plan.
- Develop and update materials to communicate new requirements.

- Evaluate opportunities through facility capital projects to enhance sustainability efforts.

## **Priority 2: Invite new dialogues and partnerships to support emerging arts and culture themes in the community.**

### **2.1 Engage in partnerships to expand activities for people of all ages within existing community arts and culture events. (Ongoing)**

To date, staff have engaged and cultivated the following partnerships to enhance arts and culture work in 2023-2024:

- **MIVAL:** Fine art sales at City events; free arts and crafts at Mostly Music in the Park (MMIP); *Island Lanterns* community art project; local art exhibits at the Mercer Island Gallery at MICEC
- **Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce:** Art Uncorked, Women's Day of Wellness, Holiday Market
- **Mercer Island Community Fund:** Funding partner for various arts and culture events
- **Seattle Shakespeare Company:** New summer camp offerings
- **4Culture:** Funding partner for MMIP, Shakespeare in the Park, and other projects/events
- **ArtsWA:** Funding partner for *Island Lanterns* community art project
- **National Endowment for the Arts:** Funding partner for *Island Lanterns* community art project
- **Youth Theater NW:** New summer camp offering at the MICEC
- **Penguin Productions:** Youth-based organization, held productions at/during City events
- **Local Artist Community:** Had 15 arts and craft vendors at Summer Celebration, selling their work

#### **Next Steps:**

- Further identify service area gaps and opportunities.
- Communicate and solicit future partnership opportunities.

### **2.2 Work with event partners to engage in environmentally friendly efforts. (Ongoing)**

Staff continue to coordinate with event partners and vendors alike with a focus on increasing environmentally friendly efforts.

In April 2023, Leap for Green, the City's Earth Day and sustainability fair, returned for the first time since 2018 and included art, live entertainment, and environmental & sustainability focused vendors. The event has been coordinated in partnership with many businesses and community organizations.

#### **Next steps:**

- Engagement with the City's new Sustainability Manager on current practices and opportunities.
- Develop a post-event evaluation process seeking partner input for continuous improvement.
- Engage partners for promotion and support on environmentally friendly efforts.
- Update requirements and education in conjunction with Sustainability Managers input.

### **2.3 Foster communication between arts and culture providers to enrich the community. (Ongoing)**

The Recreation Division took immediate steps to reorganize the division staffing model in Q1 of 2023- further committing to a flexible and adaptive strategy. The Division can now more effectively identify

opportunities for collaboration between organizations. This was and will be evident through work at Summer Celebration between the City and numerous providers and supporters.

**Next steps:**

- Identify and develop information-sharing tools and processes.
- Establish ongoing community communication opportunities.
- Promote Arts Council meetings as a forum for community input on arts and culture collaboration on Mercer Island.
- Facilitate opportunities for the Arts Council to further engage with the arts and culture community.
- Identify an Arts Council member to attend Eastside Culture Coalition meetings.
- Identify a staff member and Arts Council member to attend 4Culture LAA network meetings.

**2.4 Welcome arts and culture work that promotes sustainability, equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Ongoing)**

Staff have cultivated partnerships with community organizations, such as the Mercer Island School District (various clubs), OneMI, Stroum Jewish Community Center, Friendship Circle, MI Pride, and the Mercer Island Chinese Association to enhance and expand program offerings.

We welcome partnership opportunities that focus on sustainability, equity, diversity, and inclusion and will continue to promote that through many different organizations.

We also have a Special Event Sponsorship policy to reduce barriers for organizations to host public events in partnership with the City or as 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers.

**Next steps:**

- Seek input from partners, vendors, and users to inform future changes and enhancements to ease of access.
- Provide ongoing review of current policies to enhance access to City facilities for arts and culture programming, events, and partnerships.

**Priority 3: Complete two major City arts and culture policy projects:**

**Update the Comprehensive Arts & Culture Plan (appendix to the Citywide Comprehensive Plan)**

Staff are engaged with the Community Planning and Development Department and are currently in the process of identifying next steps on the feasibility of updating the Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan during the 2023-2024 biennium.

**Develop a Six-Year Spending Plan for the 1% for the Art in Public Places Fund**

Staff educated the Arts Council on the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund, including how it is funded and how dollars may be used. Staff anticipate returning to the Arts Council in January 2024 to kick off the work to develop a six-year spending plan.

**Priority 4: Deliver high-quality arts and culture programming to the Mercer Island community.**

**4.1 Work with partners to bring ongoing, diverse programming to the community, including a wide range of cultural and artistic themes.**

**(-Ongoing)**

To date, staff have coordinated or are coordinating the following 2023 programs and events in collaboration with community partners:

- **Mercer Island Chinese Association-** 2024 Chinese New Year Celebration
- **Stroom Jewish Community Center-** Summer Camp offerings, Sukkot at Mercerdale, Illuminate MI
- **Chabad Mercer Island-** Menorah at Mercerdale
- **Cultural Recreation Rental Partners-** Tai Chi, Naginata, Kendo, Salsa, Seattle Folk Dance
- **MIVAL:** Fine art sales at City events; free arts and crafts at MMIP; *Island Lanterns* community art project; local art exhibits at the Mercer Island Gallery at MICEC; artist selection panel for Luther Burbank Park Waterfront Improvements Art in Public Places (LBWI AIPP) project
- **Nancy Stewart:** Family Sing-Alongs, drop-in guitar and other programs
- **Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce:** Art Uncorked, Women’s Wellness, Holiday Market
- **Local businesses:** Live entertainment at Town Center events, First Friday Art Walks
- **Youth Theatre Northwest:** Various summer camp offerings
- **Mercer Island Historical Society:** Coordination for heritage and cultural components / funding for LBWI capital project
- **Mercer Island Sister City Association:** Lectures and French films, support student exchange activities.
- **Music Together:** Family music classes
- **Seattle Shakespeare Company:** Shakespeare in the Park / Wooden O; summer camp offerings
- **Movie Star and Cartooniversity, YTN, Incrediflix:** Summer camp offerings
- **OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute:** Senior lectures
- **4Culture:** Funding partner for MMIP, Shakespeare in the Park, and other projects/events
- **ArtsWA:** Funding partner for *Island Lanterns* community art project
- **National Endowment for the Arts:** Funding partner for *Island Lanterns* community art project

**Next steps:**

- Staff will continue to seek partners, promote rental space, and solicit opportunities to bring new programming to the Mercer Island community for participants of all ages.

**2023-2024 Work Plan Next Steps:**

Staff anticipates continuing progress on work plan items as identified and will provide the next update Work Plan update at the April 2024 Arts Council Meeting in conjunction with establishing Arts and Culture Priorities for 2025-2026.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

No Action Required