



P-Patch Discussion

Parks & Recreation Commission

September 7, 2023

Tonight's Discussion

Background of Program

Current process

Determine Objective and Goals of Program

Next Steps



Background

- The Mercer Island P-Patch was established in 1977, behind the former Mercer View Elementary School.
- Located behind the MICEC, it currently occupies approx. 49,000 square feet (1.1 acre) of park space.
- Includes 50 plots, varying in size, slop, and visual appearance.
- Consistent waitlist of 20 people.
- Most plots are surrounded by participant-constructed fencing to keep wildlife out, using various methods and materials.



Current Process

Mercer Island Parks & Recreation staff are responsible for coordination and management of the P-Patch program, which includes:

- Establishing guidelines
- Assigning plots
- Communicating with participants
- Collecting program fees
- Performing routine area maintenance (wood chips, access to irrigations, trash and debris removal, maintaining pathways)



The program utilizes a current set of guidelines, which address plot allocation, maintenance responsibilities, acceptable gardening practices, and safety measures.



Pros Plan Goals

- **Goals 3** – Environment & Sustainability: Provide a high quality, diversified open space system that preserves and enhances urban forests, critical habitat, and other environmental resources. Incorporate sustainability practices into operations, maintenance, and planning.
- **Goal 5** – Recreation Facilities & Programming: Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and abilities.
- **Goal 6** – Arts & Culture: Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences.
- **Goal 8** – Administration & Fiscal Sustainability: Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.



Questions for Discussion

- Should participation in the P-Patch: be open to all, prioritized by residency, or exclusive to Mercer Island residents?
- Should participants be permitted to have multiple plots?
- Should temporary structures be permitted within plots – if so to what degree? (fences, sheds, cabinets, trellises, raised beds, enclosed areas)
- Should plots be permitted to display signage? Should decorations, or items not associated with gardening or plot cultivation be permitted?
- Should only organic- gardening products be allowed in the P-Patch?
- Should plots be required to maintain a standard of care? (weed free, use of standard material, fence in upright position, etc.)



Purpose Statement

Proposed Purpose Statement:

- *The Mercer Island P-Patch is a community garden program coordinated by the City of Mercer Island and cultivated by local gardeners who take pleasure in nurturing their own harvests through environmentally sustainable practices. The P-Patch program enables food and ornamental plantings in individual plots which provides opportunities for connection within the community, provides increased food security, and supports improved mental health for visitors and participants alike.*



Proposed Program Objectives

- *Provide and allocate designate plot areas for community gardening.*
- *Enable gardening and gathering opportunities which improve both mental and physical health.*
- *Align participation with maintaining the natural character of the park and minimize unnatural physical and visual impacts to the surrounding park and neighborhood area.*
- *Provide an environment that enable participants of different ages and demographics to come together, interact, and cultivate meaningful relationship through gardening.*
- *Utilize garden plots and the surrounding area to enhance biodiversity and contribute to the preservation of the environment.*



Next Steps

- Staff will utilize the input gathered tonight and return to a future PRC meeting with revised P-Patch Guidelines for endorsement.

