

PARK AREA NAMING POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes the criteria for the naming of City of Mercer Island owned park and recreation facilities, parks, park features, trails, open space areas, and select right-of-way spaces (collectively, “Park Areas.”)

Definitions

Open space areas: areas purposefully left predominantly in a vegetated space to create urban separators and greenbelts and to: 1) sustain native ecosystems, connect and increase protective buffers for environmentally critical areas; or 2) provide a visual contrast to continuous development, reinforce community identity and aesthetics; or 3) provide links between important environmental or recreational resources.

Park and Recreation Facilities: buildings that are maintained by the Parks or Recreation division of the City.

Park Areas: Park and Recreation facilities, Park Features, Open Space Areas, Right-of-Way Spaces, and Trails as defined in this policy.

Park Features: sub-areas of parks that may be suitable for naming, including batting cages, courts, dog parks, galleries, gardens, pavilions, playfields, playgrounds, pools, p-patches, shelters, skate parks, stages, theaters, walking paths, etc.

Parks: without limitation, any public area created, established, designated, maintained, provided, or set aside by the City for the purposes of public rest, play, recreation, enjoyment, or assembly, and all buildings, facilities, and structures located thereon or therein, as well as all associated areas, including but not limited to parking lots.

Right-of-way spaces: public land areas zoned for right-of-way use. This policy applies to right-of-way spaces that have been designated for public recreation use and as such may benefit from a common name that can be used by City staff and residents.

Trail: a marked or established path or route meant primarily for recreational and/or educational use.

Policy

1.0 General Policy

The selection and approval of the name for a City owned Park Area shall be the function of the City Council. The City Council may choose to commence a community engagement process to solicit suggestions for a Park Area name.

2.0 Naming Criteria

The following criteria are recommended for the City Council’s consideration when evaluating potential naming proposals:

- a. Context, location, and features: Names may be based on location or distinctive, predominant, and defining natural, geological, or other feature.
- b. Historical significance: Naming proposals with historical significance should be associated with the lives of persons of citywide significance, an existing or proposed historic property or building, or an event of historic significance on Mercer Island.
- c. Public service: Naming proposals may be considered for individuals or organizations who have enhanced the quality of life for Mercer Island residents through outstanding public service including exceptional contributions to the parks system.
- d. Donations: Naming proposals may be considered for individuals or organizations that make a significant direct property or monetary contribution to the City of Mercer Island and the naming is a stipulation of the donation. The naming and acceptance of property is subject to all other applicable policies of the City.

3.0 Disqualifying Criteria

Any names that fall under the following criteria will not be considered:

- a. Names too similar to existing names of Mercer Island Park Areas, including parks or facilities in neighboring jurisdictions.
- b. Names of public officials who currently hold office or staff currently employed by the City.
- c. A name that by contemporary community standards is derogatory, offensive, distasteful, or is culturally or socially inappropriate.
- d. Names of other public entities, including names of cities, towns, and governmental agencies, unless the entity contributes significantly to the establishment or maintenance of the park or facility.

4.0 Duration of Name

The naming of Park Areas shall be approached with the intention that names are permanent unless they fall under a time-limited sponsorship agreement or for other reasons as determined by the City Council. The City Manager may assign a temporary name to a Park Area until the time at which a permanent name is selected.

5.0 Renaming

The City Council may elect to rename a Park Area if the name fails to meet the criteria set forth by this policy. The process for renaming a Park Area will adhere to the same criteria established herein and will occur at the direction of the City Council.