



PLANNING COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PCB 25-10
May 28, 2025
Public Hearing

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PCB 25-10: Public Hearing: Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve a recommendation regarding the Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment.	

STAFF:	Carson Hornsby, Management Analyst II Alison Van Gorp, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Development
EXHIBITS:	1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment Matrix 2. Draft Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parks Zone is a proposed new zone that will establish development regulations for most City-owned and/or managed parks. The purpose of the Parks Zone is to ensure park lands are preserved and managed appropriately, in alignment with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, City code, master plans, and similar guiding documents.

- Creation of a new zone requires amendments to Title 19 of the Mercer Island City Code (MICC), the Zoning Map in MICC Title 19 Appendix D, and the Land Use Designation Table and Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) began working on the Parks Zone in October 2024 and finalized their recommendation to the City Council and Planning Commission (PC) in April 2025.
- At the April 15 City Council meeting, the PRC Chair and Vice Chair presented the PRC's Parks Zone recommendation to the City Council. The City Council approved a motion directing the PC to complete legislative review of the Parks Zone by June 2025.
- At the April 23 PC meeting, the PRC Chair and Vice Chair presented the PRC's Parks Zone recommendation to the PC.
- The PC will hold a public hearing for the Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment on May 28, 2025, and consider approving a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council is scheduled to review the PC's Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment in July 2025.

BACKGROUND

Parks Zone/Open Space Zone Background

The scope of work for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, adopted by the City Council in 2022 with [Resolution No. 1621](#), included the creation of a new Parks Zone and development regulations for the new zone. In January 2024, a preliminary draft of the Parks Zone development regulations was presented to the PRC and PC. Following community and commission feedback, the legislative review was paused, and the draft was returned to the PRC for further review. In March 2024, the PRC recommended dividing the Parks Zone planning into two phases: creating a zone for City-owned open space lands and another for public park properties.

The PRC and Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) held several joint meetings to develop legislation for the Open Space Zone. On May 8, 2024, PRC and OSCT Chairs presented a joint recommendation to the PC, which completed its review in June 2024 as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. On September 25, 2024, the PC approved a recommendation for the Open Space Zone code amendment. The City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 24C-15](#) establishing the Open Space Zone on November 4, 2024 with an effective date of December 31, 2024.

After the adoption of the Open Space Zone, the PRC shifted focus to development of the Parks Zone in October 2024. The PRC finalized their Parks Zone recommendation on April 9, 2025. The PRC Chair and Vice Chair presented the PRC's Parks Zone recommendation to the City Council on April 15, 2025, and the City Council passed a motion directing the PC to complete legislative review of the Parks Zone by June 2025. The PRC Chair and Vice Chair presented the PRC's Parks Zone recommendation to the PC at the April 23, 2025 PC meeting. The PC asked the PRC Chair, Vice-Chair, and staff questions related to the recommendation. Staff requested that Planning Commissioners provide comments, amendments, and questions and established a deadline for these materials to be submitted prior to the May 28, 2025 public hearing.

Adoption of the Parks Zone will require amendments to the Development Code and Comprehensive Plan. This PCB (PCB25-10) pertains to the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and PCB25-09 pertains to the Development Code amendments.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Draft Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Adoption of a new zone requires amendments to the Land Use Designation Table and Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan. The draft Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment (see Exhibit 2) includes drafts of the Land Use Designation Table and Land Use Map.

Draft Land Use Designation Table

The Land Use Designation Table in the Comprehensive Plan provides a summary of the City's land use designations. The draft Land Use Designation Table includes the following amendments:

- Updated description of the "Park" land use designation
- Parks Zone added to the implementing zoning designations for the Park, Linear Park, Open Space, and Public Facility land use designations

Draft Land Use Map

The Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan provides a visual representation of the City's land use designations. The draft Land Use Map includes the following amendments related to the adoption of the Parks Zone:

- SE 28th St. Mini Park changed from Single Family Residential to Park
- Rotary Park changed from Open Space to Park

With these changes, the park properties designated "Park" in the Land Use Map will be consistent with the park properties included in the Parks Zone on the Zoning Map. The draft Land Use Map also includes a number of small formatting and style changes unrelated to the adoption of the Parks Zone.

Planning Commission Proposed Amendments

Following the presentation of the PRC's recommendation on April 23, 2025, Planning Commissioners provided proposed amendments to the draft Comprehensive Plan amendment; one amendment was proposed and is included in Exhibit 1. Also included in Exhibit 1 is a proposed recommendation that is not related to an

amendment. This proposal recommends that the City Council draft a letter to WSDOT regarding the zoning for Aubrey Davis Park; more details are included in Exhibit 1.

The draft comprehensive plan amendment is provided in Exhibit 2, which includes the recommendations of the PRC along with the additional amendment proposed by the PC, as noted in brackets with green highlights that reference the log numbers in Exhibit 1.

During the May 28, 2025 meeting, staff will discuss the proposed amendment and additional recommendations, and time will be available for questions and discussion. Staff will also provide an overview of the process for approving amendments and finalizing the PC recommendation, including proposed motions, which are detailed in the Recommended Action section below.

The PC can finalize its recommendation on this matter at the May 28 meeting, or if the PC requires an additional meeting to finalize their recommendation, deliberations can be extended to the special meeting scheduled for June 10. If deliberations are to continue at the June 10 meeting, the PC may direct staff to prepare updated amendment language for consideration at that meeting, rather than making motions with specific wording changes during the May 28 meeting. This is a good option if drafting revisions to some amendments becomes too complex to resolve during the meeting.

NEXT STEPS

After holding the public hearing on May 28, the PC will begin deliberations on the Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan amendment. The Planning Commission should finalize its recommendation by mid-June. The City Council is scheduled to review the PC's Parks Zone recommendations in July 2025.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Hold a public hearing and approve a recommendation regarding the Parks Zone Comprehensive Plan Amendment and any additional recommendations.

Staff recommend the following motions:

Main Motion: "Move to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation Table and Land Use Map"

Note: once the main motion has been made and seconded, the Planning Commission can begin making amendments by motion as it sees fit.

Secondary Motion: "Move to approve the proposed amendment and amend the draft materials as presented in PCB 25-10."

Note: this motion would make the amendment outlined in Exhibit 1.

Tertiary Motion – Changes to an amendment: "Move to amend the proposed amendment as follows: [provide the proposed amendment]."

Optional Additional Main Motion: "Move to recommend that the City Council write to WSDOT and explain the allowed uses and regulatory limits under the PI Zone and proposed Parks Zone and ask whether WSDOT has any objection to Aubrey Davis Park being placed in the Parks Zone. If WSDOT has no objection, Aubrey Davis Park should be added to the Parks Zone."