



# ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item #5  
September 14, 2021  
Regular Business

## AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	Arts Immediate Action Plan: Project Updates	<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 report.	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Ryan Daly, Operations Transition Team Manager
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	

## SUMMARY

The Arts Council endorsed the 2021 Arts Immediate Action Plan during the [April 14, 2021](#) Regular Meeting. This endorsement included a limited workplan of three arts programs in 2021:

- Host a limited Mostly Music in the Park concert series in August and September
- Reopen the Mercer Island Gallery (as it aligns with the reopening of the Mercer Island Community & Event Center)
- Coordinate a Community Arts Project that reflects on and responds to Mercer Island’s COVID-19 experience

To support this workplan, the City Council appropriated \$20,000 to the Recreation Division budget for Mostly Music in the Park and reopening the Mercer Island Gallery on April 20 ([AB 5848](#)) and accepted the 4Culture Arts Sustained Support grant of \$10,580 as part of the first quarter budget adjustment on May 18 ([AB 5874](#)). In coordination with the City Council appropriated funds, the Recreation Division assigned staffing resources to develop and implement the Arts Immediate Action Plan.

During the [July 14, 2021](#) Regular Meeting, the Arts Council received a presentation by The Moonlight Collective regarding a temporary art experience: *The Prairie of Possibilities*. After receiving the presentation, the Council moved to:

- Pursue *The Prairie of Possibilities* as part of the 2021 Community Arts Project;
- Direct staff to negotiate a final project scope with The Moonlight Collective; and
- Utilize 4Culture Sustained Support funds to support this project.

Tonight, staff will update the board on the implementation of the Arts Immediate Action Plan.

## **MOSTLY MUSIC IN THE PARK**

This year's Mostly Music in the Park (MMIP) series was developed by a working group of staff and current/former Arts Council members and coordinated by the Recreation Division. The working group selected bands and developed the following MMIP event framework:

- Venue: The Pergola at Mercerdale Park, 77th SE & SE 32nd, Mercer Island, WA 98040
- Dates (3): Thursdays, August 19, 26, and September 2, 2021
- Performance time: 7-8:30 pm
  - 6pm-7:30pm on September 2
- Anticipated crowd size: 200-500 people
- Vendors and/or food trucks will not be permitted.
- Social distancing and applicable guidelines will inform the planning process.

The following bands were selected: Olson Bros Band (Aug. 19), Dynamite Supreme (Aug. 26), and LeRoy Bell and his Only Friends (Sept. 2).

### **August 19, 2021- Olson Bros Band**

A crowd of approximately 300 patrons attended the kick-off MMIP concert on August 19. This was the first event coordinated and offered by the City of Mercer Island since December of 2019 and was extremely well received. Staff were on hand (and masked), reintroducing the Recreation Division and Arts Council to the community. Below are some staff/patron observations regarding the event:

- The park looked GREAT!
- It was an early arriving and diversely aged crowd.
  - People began staking out spots about an hour ahead of the show.
  - Staff spoke with new residents, who were very appreciative of the atmosphere and also perhaps surprised by the community feel.
- The band rocked!
- Many people brought local take-out food.
- Some attendees wore masks/some didn't. A few people grabbed masks from the free supply at the info booth.
  - Informational signage was posted throughout the event area and five (5) hand sanitizer stations were dispersed amongst the crowd.
  - Patrons seemed to be comfortable masked or not.
- Though the crowd was rather large, groups did a good job distancing.
- Community response and feel was outstanding and appreciative!
  - Staff expected to receive some criticism about either promoting masks or not requiring them to be worn. But that didn't occur.
- Mercer Island Thrift Shop staff was on hand cross-promoting with the event.
- Food trucks and vendors would be appreciated in the future.

### **August 26 and September 2 MMIP Concerts Canceled**

A person present at the August 19 concert subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. Public health protocols were followed, and the individual was masked the entire time while at the event. However, with this information and recognizing the significant increase in regional COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations, and

with the best interests of community and staff health in mind, staff and City leadership decided to cancel the remainder of the series (Aug. 26 and Sept. 2).

### **MERCER ISLAND GALLERY**

Throughout the summer, staff have worked with a working group of Arts Council members and Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) representatives to explore the potential of hosting the MIVAL Holiday Show at the Mercer Island Gallery inside the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC). It is anticipated that the Holiday Show will be permitted to occur in the MICEC during general operating hours. Staff continue to work with MIVAL, City leadership, and the City's Emergency Management team to ensure the ability to offer safe public access to the MICEC as COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations continue to climb. Staff plan to return to the next Arts Council meeting with an update on the status of hosting the MIVAL Holiday Show this year.

### **THE PRAIRIE OF POSSIBILITIES BY THE MOONLIGHT COLLECTIVE**

Staff worked collaboratively with The Moonlight Collective to negotiate and develop a scope of work for *The Prairie of Possibilities* interactive arts installation. At the time of this staff report, The Moonlight Collective has signed and returned the services agreement. The scope of work for this installation includes the following project details:

*The Prairie of Possibilities* offers a dreamscape for Mercer Island residents to safely explore and experience together. Visitors will be invited to walk through a "field" of 1,512 glowing fiber-optic grass stalks that create a whimsical, ever-changing landscape of light and sound. Inspired by the natural cycle of four seasons, the installation features four 15-minute, distinct lighting patterns and accompanying music. The grasses attach to bases that will be arranged in a circle approximately 130' in diameter, with a 40' central clearing and 10' aisle providing through access (Figure 1). Each base will be clustered in groups of 24, with two cables for power and ethernet connecting back to a central control station, which will require 20 amps at 120V per light base or 1,400 watts total to power lights, speakers, and laptop.

This installation will be available for the Mercer Island community to view and experience at Mercerdale Park over a Friday to Sunday timeframe. Due to shipping and import challenges, dates of install and viewing are to be determined. Equipment is currently in transit, and it is anticipated that this installation will occur in mid-October; however the draft agreement remains valid through December 31, 2021.

Because the nature of this installation is interactive, The Moonlight Collective will adhere to and/or exceed local public health requirements to ensure the safety of patrons and staff. Masks will be required by attendees, and all marketing will be directed toward Mercer Island residents. Regional advertising will not be permitted.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Receive report.