



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST STAFF REPORT

Item 2
September 23, 2021
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

TITLE: RECOMMENDED ACTION:	PROS Plan: Review Chapters 4 & 9 and Assign OSCT Liaison Review and provide feedback on PROS Plan Chapter 4 (Goals and Objectives) and Chapter 9 (Open Space, Land Conservation & Stewardship). Assign an Open Space and Conservancy Trust (OSCT) member to serve as the liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission to represent OSCT interests in the ongoing review and development of the PROS Plan.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
STAFF: COUNCIL LIAISON: EXHIBITS:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Lisa Anderl 1. Draft: PROS Chapter 4 – Goals & Objectives 2. Draft: PROS Chapter 9 – Open Space, Land Conservation & Stewardship	

SUMMARY

The City is in the process of updating the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. The project team is seeking feedback from the Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) to inform further development of the following documents:

1. Draft: PROS Chapter 4 – Goals & Objectives (Exhibit 1)
2. Draft: PROS Chapter 9 – Open Space, Land Conservation & Stewardship (Exhibit 2)

OSCT members are encouraged to share specific edits/revisions and to provide suggestions on other ways these documents can be improved. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Commission for consideration in preparing the final PROS Plan draft for handoff to the City Council in early 2022.

The project team is also seeking an OSCT member to serve as the liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission to represent OSCT interests in the ongoing review and development of the PROS Plan. The OSCT liaison will be invited to attend all Parks and Recreation Commission meetings where PROS plan items are reviewed, which is likely to be a commitment of three or four meetings between now and the end of 2021.

The first complete draft of the PROS Plan will likely be available in early November and will be shared with the OSCT for review and feedback.

BACKGROUND

As directed by the City Council in September 2019, the Parks & Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC), began the process of updating the PROS Plan. The previous PROS Plan expired at the end of 2019.

The PROS Plan is a six-year plan that anticipates the programming and capital infrastructure investments necessary to meet the community's need for parks, recreation, open space, trails, arts, and cultural events. Conservation Technix was selected as the consultant to manage the process, including providing a baseline analysis of existing conditions and community needs, facilitating a community engagement process, and developing a draft framework for the final PROS Plan.

Work was suspended on the PROS Plan update in April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the end of 2020, the staff and consulting team resumed the planning process for the PROS Plan, with an initial focus on assessing the work that was already completed, adjusting the project timeline, and modifying the scope of work to reflect the need for virtual engagement strategies.

To date, work that has been completed on the PROS Plan includes a review of existing conditions, completion of a capital facilities assessment, numerous board and commission meetings, the completion of a community survey, and a Virtual Open House. More than half of the PROS Plan is currently drafted and in the process of internal review. A second community survey was released in August 2021 and the results are pending. A second virtual public meeting is planned on September 28, 2021.

The PROS Plan is intended to complement previously adopted planning documents, including the Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan, the Open Space Vegetation Plan, and all other open space planning documents.

1. REVIEW DRAFT: CHAPTER 4 – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

At the heart of the PROS Plan is the establishment of goals and objectives that provide strategic direction for the Mercer Island Parks and Recreation system. The goals and objectives are included in Chapter 4 of the PROS Plan (see Exhibit 1) and once adopted, will be appended to the Citywide Comprehensive Plan during the next update process.

The Chapter 4 draft includes eight strategic goals:

Goal 1 – Planning, Acquisition & Access: Provide a high quality, welcoming, and inclusive parks and recreation system that meets community needs now and in the future.

Goal 2 – Maintenance & Operations: Provide the Mercer Island community with safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.

Goal 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 4 – Trails: Develop and promote an interconnected community through safe, accessible, and attractive trails and pathways easily accessed by a variety of trail users.

Goal 5 – Recreation Facilities & Programming: Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.

Goal 6 – Arts & Culture: Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences.

Goal 7 – Community Engagement & Partnerships: Encourage and support community engagement and pursue collaborative partnerships to strengthen and grow parks and recreation programs and services.

Goal 8 – Administration & Fiscal Sustainability: Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.

Accompanying each goal is a list of objectives that describe a means or an outcome to achieve the stated goals.

This is the initial look at the draft of Chapter 4, with the understanding that it was prepared prior to receiving the results of the second community survey and prior to hosting the second virtual public meeting. With support from the Parks and Recreation Commission, the OSCT, and the Arts Council, staff will review outcomes of both public engagement opportunities and further refine the recommended goals and objectives.

For the purposes of this meeting, the project team is interested in receiving feedback from the OSCT on the draft goals and objectives, with a focus on Goal 3 – Environment & Sustainability.

The Chapter 4 draft has been reviewed once by the Parks and Recreation Commission and most of their recommended changes are reflected in this version. The Arts Council has also done an initial review but has not yet provided recommended changes. Areas still under development are highlighted in yellow.

2. REVIEW DRAFT: CHAPTER 9 – Open Space, Land Conservation and Stewardship

Chapter 9 (see Exhibit 2) is a background chapter covering topics related to open space, stewardship, water conservation, healthy forests, and more. This is an early draft, with a number of sections still under development as noted in yellow. This chapter is included in the PROS Plan to provide information on current day happenings and generally describes the future vision for these programs, facilities, and services. The strategic direction, themes, and priorities identified in Chapter 9 are reflected in the goals and objectives in Chapter 4.

The project team is interested in receiving feedback from the OSCT on the Chapter 9 draft.

3. OSCT LIAISON TO SUPPORT PROS PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

The project team is seeking an OSCT member to serve as the liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission to represent OSCT interests in the ongoing review and development of the PROS Plan. The liaison will be invited to attend all Parks and Recreation Commission meetings where PROS Plan items are reviewed, which is likely to be a commitment of three or four meetings between now and the end of 2021.

NEXT STEPS

The first complete draft of the PROS Plan will likely be available in early November and will be shared with the OSCT for review and feedback.

Work will continue on the PROS Plan through the end of 2021, with a hand-off to the City Council anticipated in early 2022.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1) Review and provide feedback on PROS Plan Chapter 4 (Goals & Objectives) and Chapter 9 (Open Space, Land Conservation, & Stewardship).
- 2) Assign an OSCT member to serve as the liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission to represent OSCT interests in the ongoing review and development of the PROS Plan.