



# MEMORANDUM

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## *Parks & Recreation Commission*

**DATE:** April 20, 2021

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
Rory Westberg, Chair  
Peter Struck, Subcommittee Chair  
Lyn Gualtieri  
Sara Berkenwald  
Jodi McCarthy, Vice Chair  
Don Cohen  
Amy Richter

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation of Strategy for Mercer Island Community Center & Recreation Programs and Services.

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The Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) recommends the City Council adopt the Strategy for the Mercer Island Community & Event Center and Recreation Programs and Services. Additionally, the PRC recommends City Council allocate sufficient resources for Recreation Division administration and for the development and implementation of programs and services within a Phase 1 “acceleration” of the reset timeline (Attachment 1).

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

The recommended Strategy is the culmination of PRC input through six-months of public meetings and workshops regarding Recreation Division cost recovery, service and program priority, resource allocation, pricing strategy, and policy needs and updates.

Extensive consideration was given to the sustainability of the long-term financial and operational structure of the Recreation Division beyond recovery from the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. The Strategy reflects foundational policy development needs to support the success of the Recreation Division.

Significant public health guidelines began to change after completing an initial draft Strategy, phased implementation timeline, and associated Phase 1 services. In response to increasing public demand for Recreation Division services and the rapid expansion of vaccine availability, the PRC tasked the Reset Team with developing an accelerated version of the Strategy’s timeline for evaluating and implementing programs and services in Phase 1. A comparison of the originally proposed and accelerated phases for services are included for Council’s consideration (see Attachment 1).

## Background

In November of 2020, the consultant-led Reset Team began compiling data and information to inform the development of the *Strategy for Mercer Island Community & Event Center and Recreation Programs and Services* also referred to as a “reset plan” for the and the Recreation Division and Mercer Island Community and Event Center’s programs and services. This reset plan would be developed to create a foundational approach to service delivery. This plan would not commit to bringing back all previous programs and services, but rather to develop methods for evaluation, development, and implementation in order to ensure success in meeting the community’s needs through various services. The project has included analysis of past programs and services, fees, staff, supply and building costs, community need, and the opportunities and challenges that come with the opportunity to reintroduce services and open facilities.

The PRC was engaged in early December 2020 with attention to receiving community input, discussing, and deliberating, focusing on policy level decision making, and providing advice and recommendations to the City Council.

## Public Engagement

Community input was critical to the development of the recommended Strategy. Engagement was sought through the entire process and helped to identify priorities and community needs. Over the six-month development process, community input was provided through: public appearance opportunities at **all** PRC meetings and workshops, a community-wide survey, numerous social media posts, and ongoing engagement through the Let’s Talk platform.

## Timeline of Commission Engagement

- [December 3, 2020](#): Reset/Recovery project is introduced to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- [January 7, 2021](#): Framework, goals and near-term timeline shared with PRC.
- [January 21, 2021](#): Discussion on the development of a Recreation Division cost recovery philosophy.
- [February 4, 2021](#): PRC discusses and creates Cost Recovery Pyramid, designating which programs and services will receive more or less tax support based on who benefits from them.
- [February 25, 2021](#): Presentation of community survey results, fee study comparison data, and possible programs and services to first be introduced.
- [March 4, 2021](#): Presentation of draft Long-term Reset Phasing Plan, Phase 1 resource plan, and a list of policies, procedures, and program development for future attention.
- [March 18, 2021](#): Presentation and discussion of draft Strategy and Phase 1 resource plan and accelerated plan, City’s future differential pricing policy, and draft Fee Schedule for Phase 1 programs and services.
- [April 1, 2021](#): Commission moved and approved the following motions:
  - 1) Endorse the Strategy for Mercer Island Community Center & Recreation Programs and Services (with the scrivener’s edits described to the commission) and recommend City Council's endorsement of the same.
  - 2) Recommend City Council allocate all resources necessary to successfully implement the Phase 1 ‘accelerated’ proposal.
  - 3) Approve the recommendation memo and authorize the chair to transmit it to the Mercer Island City Council.

# Reset Strategy for the Mercer Island Community & Event Center and Recreation Programs and Services

## Timeline

### Phase 1: Foundational

2021

Maintenance/custodial services  
Administrative services  
Gym rentals  
Community and Event Center facility rentals (exclusive use; partial scale)  
Inclusion services  
Scholarship program

#### **Immediate Action Plan and Current Services:**

- Summer camp
- Reset planning
- Field rentals
- Boat launch permits
- Private lease of Annex
- P-Patch use
- Special use approvals for parks

### Phase 2: Structural

2022

Community and Event Center facility rentals (exclusive use; full scale)

Fitness center and drop-in/self-directed sports

Development of school break programming

Development of preschool-aged programming

Development of programming for seniors that are social service-focused (fewer resource needs)

Park shelter rentals

Community partnerships & volunteers

Community-wide special events or open special programs (no pre-registration)

MICEC available as gallery space for Arts Council programming

#### **Phase 1 'Accelerated'**

**\*Items in RED indicate being recommended as 'accelerated' into Phase 1.**

### Phase 3: Established

2023

Therapeutic/adaptive/specialized recreation services

Work study/internship/community service

Adult beginner/intermediate programs, possibly including programs for seniors that are human service-focused (more resource needs)

Youth beginner/intermediate programs

Senior transportation

Mixed age/family programs

Adult advanced/competitive programs

Youth advanced/competitive programs

Tournaments

Trips

Private/semi-private lessons, taught by City instructors/contractors

Special events (not City-sponsored/external party; substantial)