

Exhibit 1- Draft Sport Court Allocation and Use Policy (Updated 1/5/2026)

Sport Court Allocation and Use Policy

City of Mercer Island

Purpose

The City of Mercer Island uses the following allocation and use policy for all City of Mercer Island managed Sport Courts. This policy describes principles guiding the appropriate use and reservation of Sport Court facilities.

Scope / Background

Tennis and pickleball court space are a finite resource, but the range of potential users and uses are expansive. This policy guides the purposeful allocation of court space to ensure that the facilities are used to achieve City of Mercer Island, Recreation Division, and community goals, with consistency to stated principles.

Definitions

1. Director: director of the public works department, or designee.
2. Drop-in Use: Informal, first-come, first-served use of courts- guided by established and posted court rules.
3. City Coordinated Uses: Activities, programs, events, or reservations that are organized, scheduled, or directly facilitated by the City.
4. Private Reservation: Scheduled, short-term, exclusive use of a court (e.g., for play or instruction), limited to designated courts and specific timeframes.
5. Programs: Scheduled use or exclusive access that recurs for two or more days, lasting less than four hours per day (e.g., leagues, ongoing formal classes/lessons, recurring clinics).
6. Sport Court: Tennis or pickleball court.
7. Special Event: Scheduled use or exclusive access for a duration of 1-3 consecutive days and which exceed 4 hours in duration per day. (e.g., which may include tournaments or clinics)

Policy Principles

Sport Court facility use will be guided by the following principles:

- Support community benefit by:
 - Actively encouraging participation in activities related to health, wellness, and social connectivity.
 - Protecting equitable public access, especially during high-demand times.
 - Permitting limited reservation-based use to serve the broader Mercer Island community (e.g., non-profit tournaments, community leagues, public clinics, and individual play).
- Support diverse use by:
 - Preserving Drop-in Use as the primary usage of courts.

Exhibit 1- Draft Sport Court Allocation and Use Policy (Updated 1/5/2026)

- Enabling opportunities for varying skill levels and age demographics.
- Providing opportunities for varied types of play.
- Ensure responsible use and stewardship by:
 - Managing facility access in a manner which considers quality, safety, and the need for maintenance and renovation.
 - Minimizing impacts to patrons, parks, and adjacent facilities.
 - Maintaining high standards for facility care.

1. Facility Allocation

- a) The Director will make the final decision on Sport Court allocation and use for Private Reservations, Special Events, and Programs. The process may allow users to request preferences such as dates, locations, times, etc.
- b) Prior use does not guarantee any aspect of future allocation or use.
- c) The City encourages respectful court sharing and adherence to posted rules and guidelines.

2. Policy:

- a) Drop-in Use will be the predominant usage type for all City of Mercer Island managed Sport Courts.
- b) Sport Court scheduling and availability is determined by the Director.
- c) Sport Courts may only be reserved and used for their designated activity type (e.g., tennis courts for tennis, pickleball courts for pickleball). Reservation of a court for a non-designated activity is prohibited.
- d) Private Reservations, Special Events, and Programs are not permitted at Island Crest Park and Roanoke Park Sport Courts.
- e) Private Reservations, Special Events, and Programs require a facility use permit and must comply with all City of Mercer Island guidelines and conditions of use.
- f) Repeating or standing Private Reservations, Special Events, and Programs may be limited to ensure fair and equitable access.
- g) Requests by the Mercer Island School District (MISD) for use by sports recognized by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) are exempt from this policy and reviewed separately by the Director. Other MISD requests for use will be evaluated in accordance with this policy.
- h) City coordinated uses are exempt from this policy and are permitted as directed by the Director.

Private Reservations:

- i) May be permitted for individual and group play, private lessons, or informal gatherings.
- j) Are limited to a maximum of 2 hours per group/instructor per day.
- k) Instructors are not permitted to exceed 2 hours of instruction per day- regardless of changing clientele/players.

Exhibit 1- Draft Sport Court Allocation and Use Policy (Updated 1/5/2026)

Programs:

- l) Are not permitted July 1 through August 31 at the Jake Jacobson Pickleball Courts (Luther Burbank Park).
- m) Must demonstrate clear community benefit and alignment with parks and recreation goals.
- n) Must be open for registration and/or participation by the general public. Exclusive or private programming of courts for closed-group events is not permitted. (e.g., private clubs, members-only activities, company functions, reunions, or similar gatherings)
- o) Are limited to:
 - 1 provider per week
 - 2 or less days per week
 - A maximum of 16 weeks per calendar year
- p) Requests must be submitted at least 45 days in advance.

Special Events:

- q) Are not permitted July 1 through August 31 at the Jake Jacobson Pickleball Courts (Luther Burbank Park).
- r) Must demonstrate clear community benefit and alignment with parks and recreation goals.
- s) Must be open for registration and/or participation by the general public. Exclusive or private closed-group events is not permitted. (e.g., private clubs, members-only activities, company functions, reunions, or similar gatherings)
- t) Are limited to:
 - 2 or less per calendar year
 - 1 per four-week period
 - A maximum of 3 consecutive days per event.
- u) Requests must be submitted at least 45 days in advance.

3. Disqualifying Criteria

Requests or reservations may be declined or canceled if:

- a) The request is not compatible with the facility requested.
- b) Facilities are unavailable, not in suitable condition, or if adjacent facilities have incompatible uses.
- c) Request impacts access or operation of the park, other scheduled activities, or adjacent facilities or residences.
- d) Permit holder fails to follow payment deadlines or permit terms.
- e) The requestor previously failed to comply with permit terms, regulations, park rules, and/or applicable policies.