

Background

The City of Mercer Island (“City”) needs tailored plans to help it emerge from a global pandemic that occurred while the municipality was already reducing programs and services. The reset plan gives the City an opportunity to apply a “zero-based” approach¹ to its programming and budget for recreation, the Mercer Island Community & Event Center (“MICEC”), and arts. The reset will allow the City to align the organizational and programmatic design to its strategic priorities and available resources.

As the emergency continues to evolve, the reset plans need to include ample flexibility. The plans also need to be reviewed periodically and adjusted as conditions and guidance change. The response to this emergency is not sequential. From time to time, the City - like all entities - may need to repeat or take backward steps. Iterative attempts may be required to find the right solution. The City will continue to move on this initial, interim path toward its future state of sustainable services, all while trying to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

City staff and the reset planning consultant are working with the Mercer Island Arts Council (“Arts Council”) to develop the arts element of the reset plan. Over four working sessions, the Arts Council identified areas where it would like to focus efforts through the end of 2021, both to provide arts-based programs to the community in the near-term and to plan for the long-term reset of the Arts Council work plan and resource needs. This document outlines the program offerings and long-term planning needs the Arts Council plans to mount in the second half of 2021 as well estimated operating budget needs to accomplish this work.

Notably, this document outlines the potential staffing resources required to assist in executing the outlined programs and projects but does not specify from where those resources will come. Prior to the pandemic, the Arts Council was supported by a full-time Arts & Culture Coordinator, but that position was eliminated due to budget constraints caused by the pandemic. Currently, the City’s Economic Development Coordinator temporarily supports the Arts Council and will continue to do so through 2021. However, a more sustainable staff resource must be identified to support the Arts Council in the long-term. The reset planning team is assisting the Arts Council with quantifying the staff resource need(s), with the goal of securing sustainable staff support by the end of 2021.

¹ In a “zero-based” budgeting approach, income equals expenses, meaning program costs are recovered by program revenue.

2021 Program Offerings

As the Arts Council continues to plan for the long-term reset of City arts programs and services, the board will focus on providing limited offerings of its two most well-known and well-supported programs: Mostly Music in the Park and the Mercer Island Gallery. Additionally, the board aims to engage residents in a community arts project suitable for all ages.

MOSTLY MUSIC IN THE PARK (LATE SUMMER 2021)

Mostly Music in the Park (“MMIP”) was the Arts Council’s longest-running program prior to the pandemic, attracting 300-400 participants each week to enjoy music in Town Center’s Mercerdale Park. As an outdoor event, MMIP provides the opportunity to reconnect community members with the arts while adhering to State restrictions on activities during the pandemic.

In 2021, the Arts Council requests resources to produce a limited series of no more than three (3) concerts in August or September. The Arts Council will form a committee to plan the series in partnership with staff and/or a contracted event coordinator. Additionally, staff support will be needed for marketing assistance and day-of concert operations, including being on-site for sound and band setup, setting up/taking down necessary COVID-19 safety measures, emptying trash receptacles, etc.

Operating Budget Proposal

Performer Fees	\$3,600.00
Sound Engineering	\$3,000.00
Marketing & Promotion	\$4,000.00
COVID-19 Protocols	\$2,000.00
Contract Event Coordinator	\$2,400.00
Total Operating Budget	\$15,000.00

Staff Assistance Required

- Event planning and contracting
- Marketing and promotion
- Concert operations

Arts Council Working Group Volunteers (as of 05.10.21)

- Erik Gordon

2021 ARTS RESET PLAN

MERCER ISLAND GALLERY (PENDING REOPENING OF MICEC)

Prior to the pandemic, the Arts Council mounted seven exhibits at the Mercer Island Gallery (indoor gallery) and generated \$10k-\$12k in sales annually. Reopening the gallery during the phased reopening of MICEC not only provides a bright and creative atmosphere to welcome visitors back to MICEC but also will restore a valuable space for local artists to exhibit their artwork. Managing the indoor gallery previously took considerable staff and volunteer time, so the Arts Council suggests contracting with the Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) to curate, install/deinstall, promote, and coordinate other needs for a maximum of three (3) exhibits in 2021. Additionally, staff support will be needed to facilitate installation days, conduct gallery sales, etc.

Operating Budget Proposal

Contract Curator	\$3,000.00
Marketing & Promotion	\$1,500.00
Operating Supplies	\$500.00
Total Operating Budget	\$5,000.00

Staff Assistance Required

- Install and deinstall operations
- Marketing and promotion
- Gallery sales

Arts Council Working Group Volunteers (as of 05.10.21)

- Amy Barnes
- Erik Gordon

2021 ARTS RESET PLAN

COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT (THROUGH END OF 2021)

Arts and artmaking have long been used as tools for creating connection, inspiring optimism, and promoting healing during dark and difficult times. As the community continues to navigate the pandemic, the Arts Council hopes to document residents' individual experiences through a community arts project. This project will be suitable for all ages, open to the entire community, and coordinated in partnership with other community organizations (e.g. MIVAL, YTN, SJCC). It could also culminate in a future major public art project that tells the Mercer Island COVID-19 story and provides space for community members and visitors to remember and reflect. (Note: Any ideas for a future public art project would be explored in the long-term reset planning and would not be intended to be completed in 2021.)

The Arts Council will form a committee to partner with community organizations and staff to coordinate this community project. Additional staff and volunteer support is needed to solicit participants, distribute supplies, etc.

Operating Budget Proposal

Operating Supplies	\$8,000.00
Marketing & Promotion	\$2,580.00
Total Operating Budget	\$10,580.00

Staff Assistance Required

- Project coordination and execution

Arts Council Working Group Volunteers (as of 05.10.21)

- Suzanne Skone
- Erin Vivion

2021 ARTS RESET PLAN

Long-Term Reset: Programs, Policies, Public Art

The Arts Council will continue to develop a reset strategy for the long-term horizon (2022-2024) with the goal of recommending a flexible work plan to City Council in Q4 of 2021. This plan should address the following:

- Outline of programs/projects the Arts Council proposes to offer in 2022 and respective operating budget request
- Prioritized list of policies the Arts Council plans to update and/or develop to guide future arts-related work (e.g. 1% for Art guidelines, art in private development process, etc.)
- Prioritized list of public art needs (e.g. maintenance and collection safety updates, 1% for Art Fund 6-year spending plan, signage/interpretation plan, etc.)
- Staff resources required to execute the plan

The Arts Council will use regular meeting time and/or assign a sub-committee to develop this flexible work plan as well as engage the local arts community and general residents in creating it.

Staff Assistance Required

- Arts Council meeting preparation and facilitation
- Policy development
- Program evaluation and budget preparation
- Staff transition planning

Arts Council Working Group Volunteers (as of 05.10.21)

- Anumeha
- Suzanne Skone
- Erin Vivion