



Parks Zone Development Process

PRC24-03 | March 7, 2024





Agenda

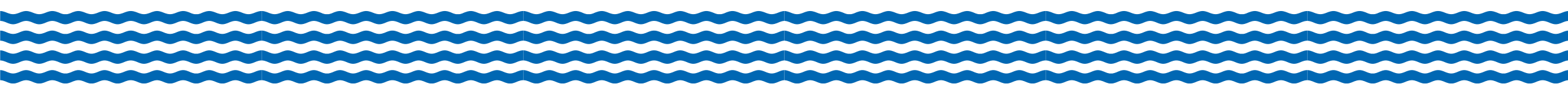
- The Deliverable: A New Parks Zone
- 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Overview of 2022 PROS Plan
- Park Properties
- Zoning Code Components
- PRC Review Timeline/Next Steps
- Discussion



The Deliverable: A New Parks Zone



New Parks Zone: Code and Comp Plan Amendments

- The City Council has directed staff to develop a new Parks Zone as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process.
 - Development of a new Parks Zone requires amendments to the **Mercer Island City Code (MICC)** and the **Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan**:
 - **Development Regulations** – MICC 19.01.040 amended to establish the new zone and MICC 19.16.010 amended to establish new definitions.
 - **Zoning Map** – amends the zoning map in MICC to show where the new Parks Zone applies. (Exhibit 2)
 - **Land Use Map** – amends the Land Use Map, which is part of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan provides the basis for zoning.
- 

Zoning Code Components

Examples: [MICC Title 19 – Unified Land Development Code](#).

1. Purpose Statement

- What is the intention or goal of the zoning code?

2. Conditions required for land to be included within the zone

- What qualifies for a property to be included in the parks zone?

3. Regulations that detail which uses are allowed within the zone

- What are the permitted uses in the zone?

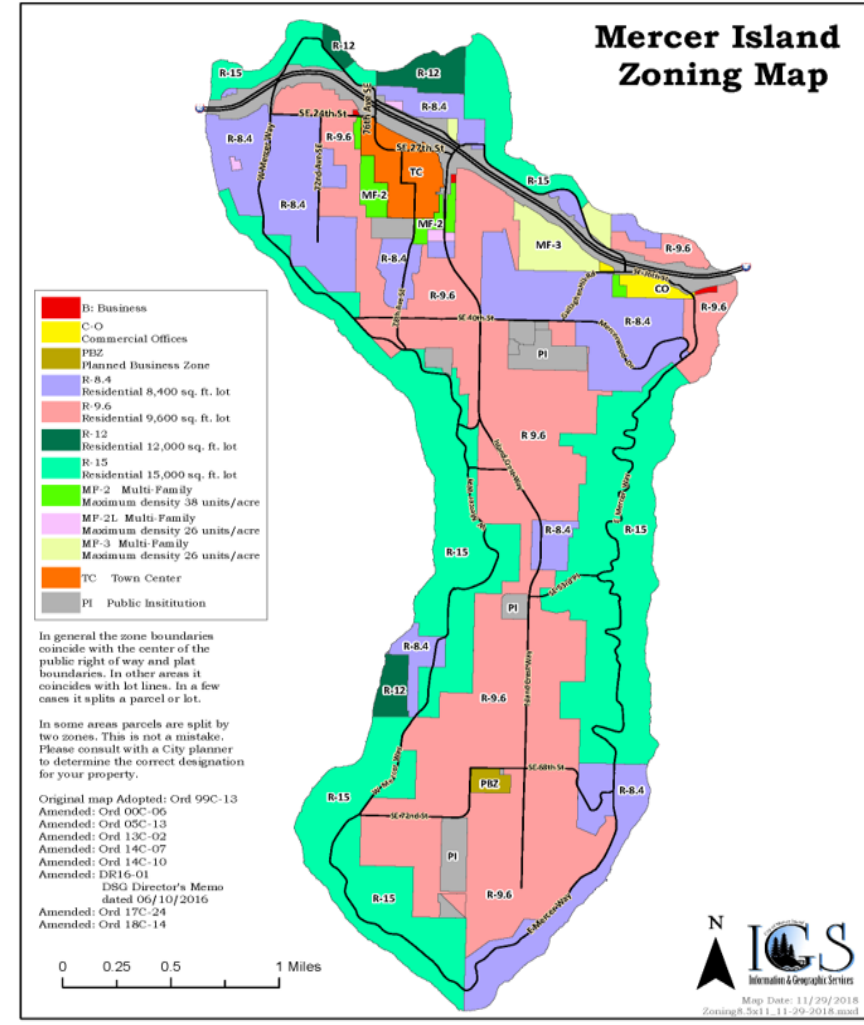
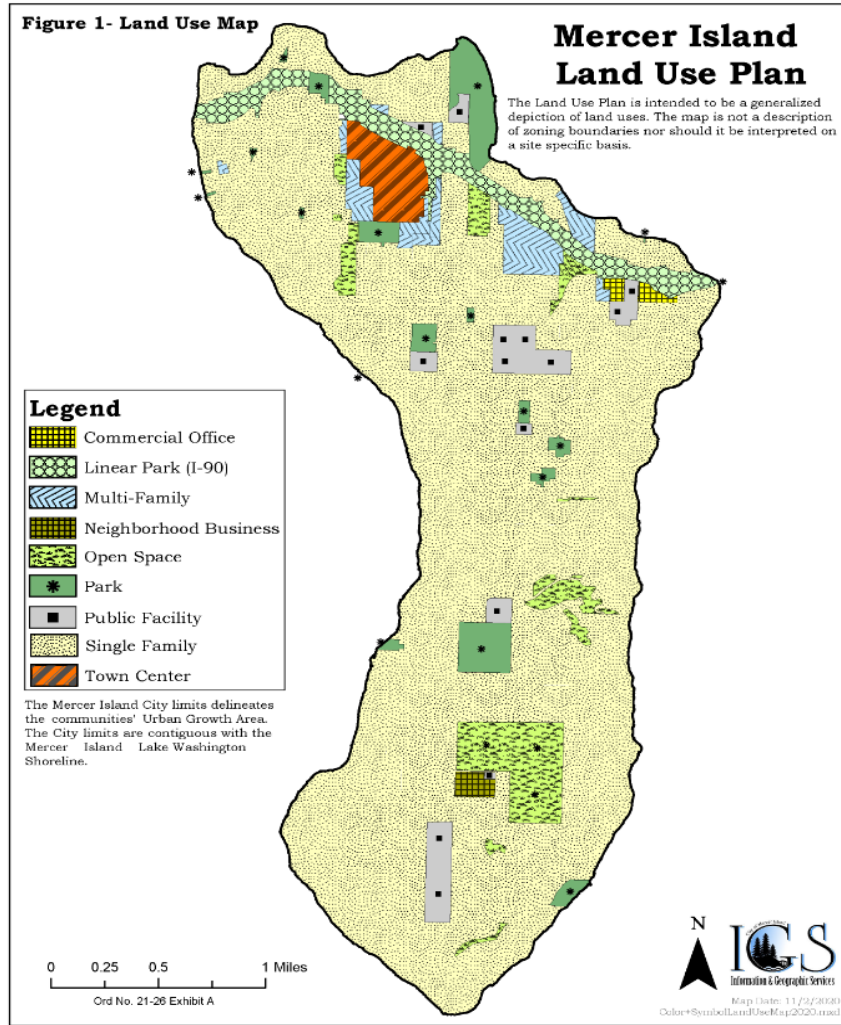
4. Development standards to guide development within the zone

- What are the regulations for physical modification and structures?

5. Definitions for key terms used in the zoning regulations

- What is the exact meaning of the key terms in the zoning code?
- 

Land Use Map vs. Zoning Map

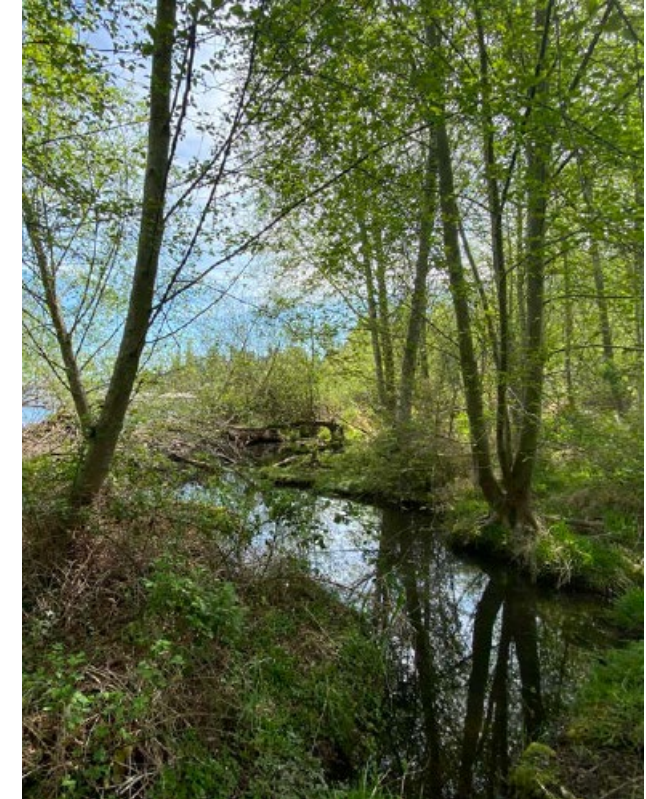


Other Tools to Protect Parks

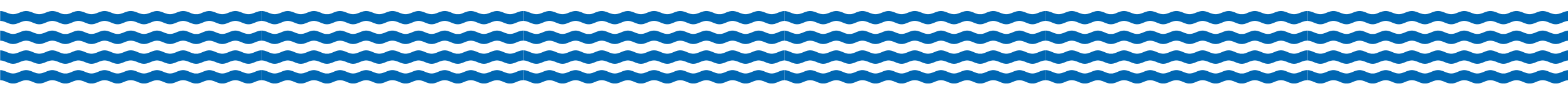
- Although not in the scope of this assignment, there are other tools available to “protect” parks properties.
- PROS Plan Objective 1.1 (see Chapter 4, page 20) includes the following:

Retain publicly owned parks and open spaces in perpetuity. Actively pursue options to permanently protect parks and open space through conservation easements, zoning changes, or other strategies. Evaluate the transfer of some or all open space to the Open Space Conservancy Trust.

- The Parks and Recreation Commission/OSCT may wish to recommend to the City Council the pursuit of these other tools as part of a future work plan.



Parks Zone Legislative Review Paused

- A preliminary draft of the new Parks Zone was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on January 4 and to the Planning Commission on January 24.
 - After receiving extensive feedback from both commissions and the community, the City Manager directed staff to **pause the legislative review process** and return the draft Parks Zone to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review, comment, and revision.
 - Upon completion of their work, the Parks and Recreation Commission will hand off their recommendation to the Planning Commission on May 8 **and the legislative review process will resume.**
- 

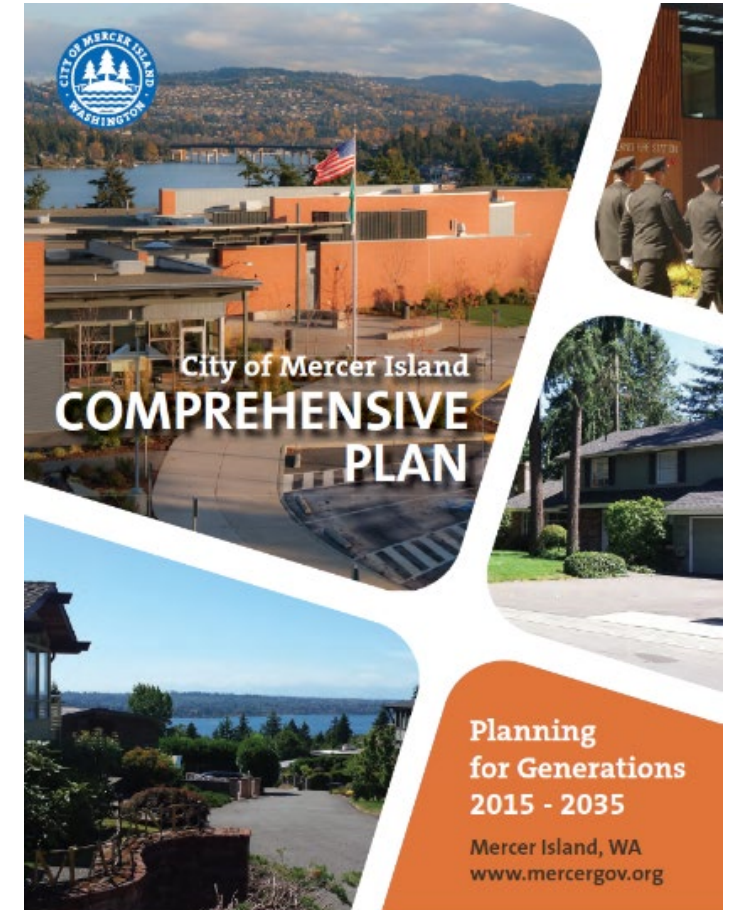


2024 Comprehensive Plan Update



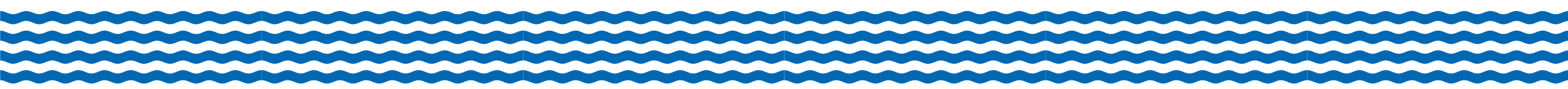
Comprehensive Plan/Parks Zone - Background

- The Growth Management Act requires cities in King County to complete the comprehensive plan periodic review (aka as the “update”) by December 31, 2024.
- City's statement of vision, goals, and policies for managing growth in a twenty-year timeframe (2024-2044).



Comp Plan Updates related to Parks and Recreation

- The scope of work for the Comp Plan was set by the City Council in 2022 and supplemented in 2023 ([Resolution No. 1621](#) and [Resolution No. 1646](#)).
- The scope of work for the Comp Plan Update includes development of a **new Parks and Recreation Element** and a **new Parks Zone**.
- “Elements” are chapters or sections of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Parks and Recreation Element will incorporate the 2022 PROS Plan, substantially by reference, into the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Parks Zone will be adopted in Title 19 Mercer Island City Code (MICC), which requires a specific legislative review process.
- New parks zone requires amendments to the comp plan and City code.



DATA ANALYSES

REGIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS

INVENTORIES



HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

PUBLIC FACILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

TECHNICAL REPORTS

**Comprehensive Plan
Technical Reports:
Inform Goal and Policy
Decisions**

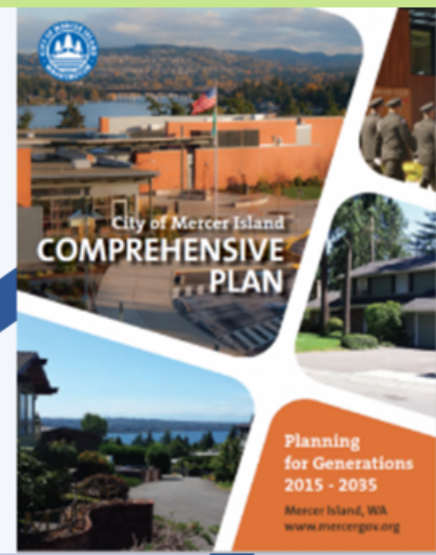


Comprehensive Plan
Elements
Vision
Goals
Policies

IMPLEMENTATION

TECHNICAL REPORTS

**Comprehensive Plan
Implementation:
Making Goals and
Policies Real**



Comprehensive Plan
Elements
Vision
Goals
Policies

IMPLEMENTATION

OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES

REGULATIONS

CAPITAL BUDGET DECISIONS



PLANS & PROGRAMS

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

CAPITAL PROJECTS



2022 PROS Plan



Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

- The prior PROS Plan expired in 2019 and the decision was made to undertake a wholesale rewrite of the plan. Work on the new plan began in 2019.
- The PROS Plan work was paused in early 2020 due to the Pandemic and then resumed later that year.
- Extensive community engagement process, spanning two+ years – two surveys, open houses, and meetings the Arts Council and the Open Space Conservancy Trust.
- **The PROS Plan was adopted in March 2022.**



Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

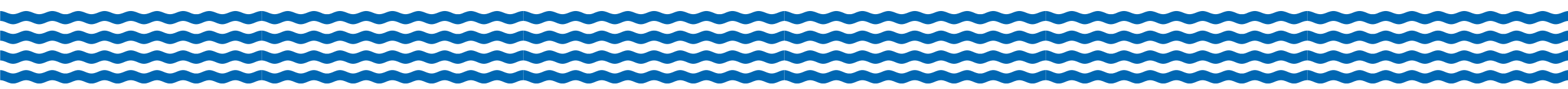
- The PROS Plan established goals and objectives (Chapter 4), which serve as the policy framework for the provision of parks and recreation services on Mercer Island.
- PROS Plan Objective 1.1 (see Chapter 4, page 20) includes the following:

*Retain publicly owned parks and open spaces in perpetuity. Actively pursue options to permanently protect parks and open space through conservation easements, **zoning changes**, or other strategies. Evaluate the transfer of some or all open space to the Open Space Conservancy Trust.*



PROS Plan – Goals (Chapter 4)

- 1. Planning, Acquisition & Access:** Provide a high quality, welcoming, and inclusive parks and recreation system that meets community needs now and in the future.
- 2. Maintenance & Operations:** Provide the Mercer Island community with safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.
- 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.
- 4. Trails:** Develop and promote an interconnected community through safe, accessible, and attractive trails and pathways easily accessed by a variety of trail users.
- 5. Recreation Facilities & Programming:** Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and abilities.
- 6. Arts & Culture:** Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences.
- 7. Community Engagement & Partnerships:** Encourage and support community engagement and pursue collaborative partnerships to strengthen and grow parks and recreation programs and services.
- 8. Administration & Fiscal Sustainability:** Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.



PROS Plan – Future Initiatives

- Many of the PROS Plan chapters include a section called “Future Initiatives.” Example to the right is from the Open Space Chapter (Chapter 9).
- These are work items that align with the goals and objectives in Chapter 4.

Determine the most effective strategy for protecting open space lands in perpetuity. Explore various mechanisms for such protection, **including zoning changes**, conservation easements, deed restrictions, and transfer of these lands to the Open Space Conservancy Trust’s governance.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

A number of future initiatives were identified and recommended for incorporation into the City’s work plan over the next six to ten years and are summarized below.

Land Conservation

- Develop a Land Acquisition Strategy to proactively acquire high-quality natural areas and parklands, to expand the existing network of parks, trails, and open space systems.
- Determine the most effective strategy for protecting open space lands in perpetuity. Explore various mechanisms for such protection, including zoning changes, conservation easements, deed restrictions, and transfer of these lands to the Open Space Conservancy Trust’s governance.

Open Space Studies and Management Plans

- Continue studies of open space health, collecting vegetation data that can be used to illustrate restoration progress and guide adjustments to management plans.
- Develop a citywide urban forest management plan to define goals for local forested ecosystems and outline the best management tactics to sustain forest canopy. This plan could include a citywide tree inventory, tree preservation and protection code amendments, and considerations for climate resiliency. A more broadly defined urban forestry plan can also be a means to engage the community in tree-related activities and facilitate community conversations about the overall health and diversity of Mercer Island’s urban forest.

Habitat Restoration

- Continue restoration work in open space to ensure that progress to date is not lost and ecosystems remain healthy, diverse, and functional.
- Practice adaptive management by regularly evaluating the successes and failures of restoration activities and modify practices accordingly.
- Stay current with evolving best management practices in the field of restoration ecology.
- Collaborate with regional partners to share resources and knowledge. Participate in regional research opportunities.
- Pursue opportunities to contract grow or purchase plants from southern seed zones.

Community Partnerships & Volunteers

- Foster new partnerships that support the conservation and restoration of Mercer Island’s open space properties.

Sustainable Stewardship Practices

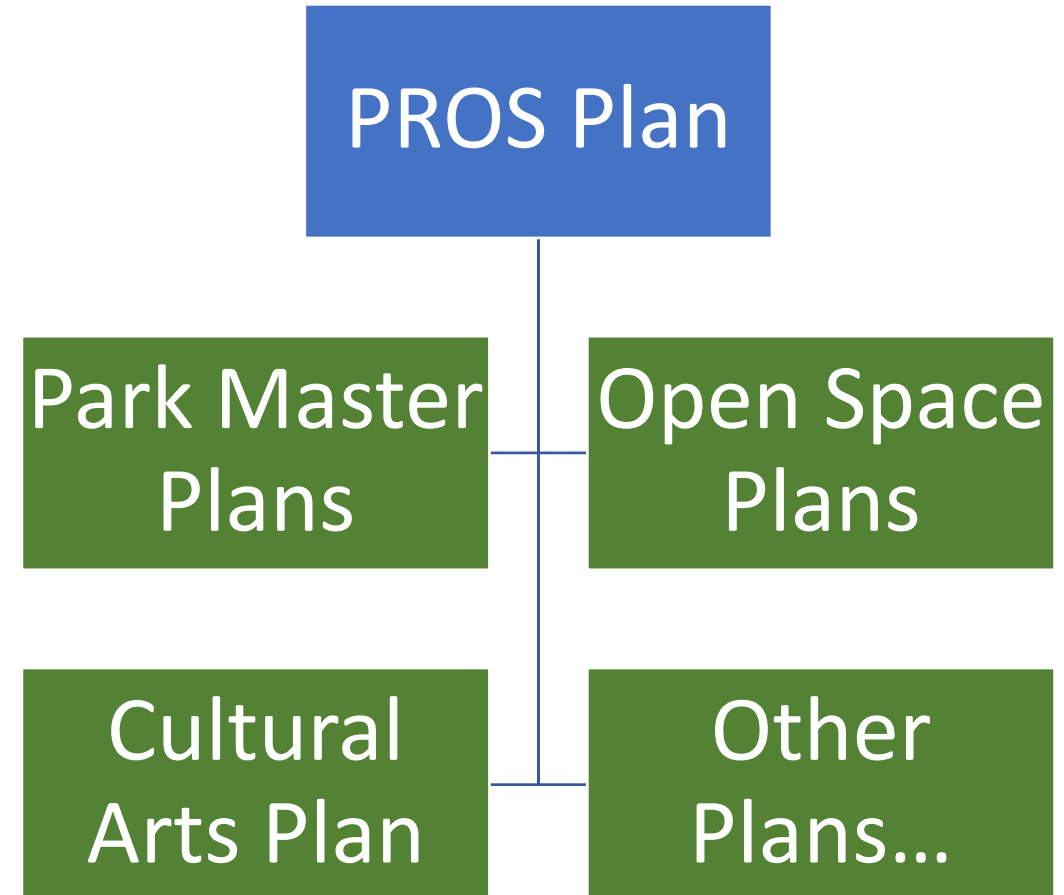
- Explore the use of non-gas-powered landscape equipment to reduce emissions.
- Continue to adjust landscape maintenance practices in favor of techniques that contribute to the health of the land and lake environments.



Flowering red currant

Other Parks and Recreation Plans

- The 2022 PROS Plan is intended to align with and incorporate all other parks and recreation related plans.
- Example: Pioneer Park
 - 2022 PROS Plan
 - Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan
 - Forest Health Survey
 - Urban Tree Canopy Assessment
 - Open Space Vegetation Management Plan
 - Pioneer Park Master Plan



Is the PROS Plan policy or operational?

- Both.
- The PROS Plan provides a foundation to guide decisions related to planning, acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks, open space, trails, and recreation facilities.
- It also identifies priorities for recreation programs, special events, arts and cultural activities.
- **Development of master plans, policies, codes, and other work products should align with this policy framework.**





Park Properties

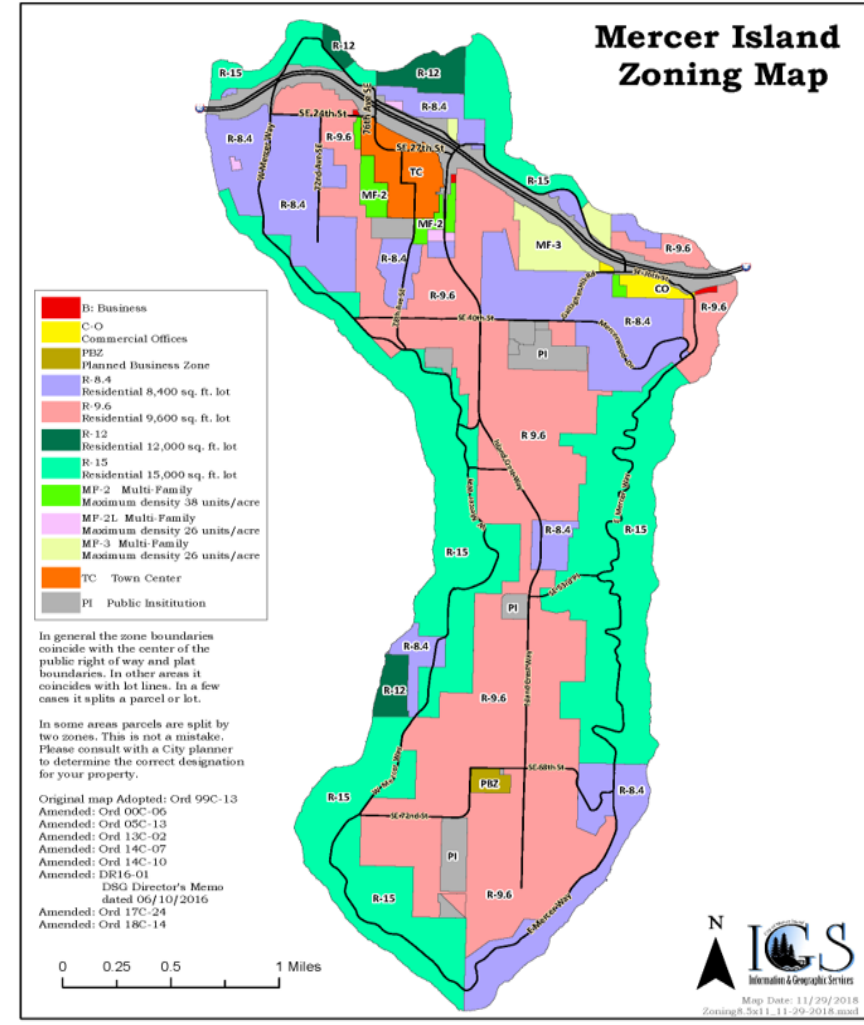
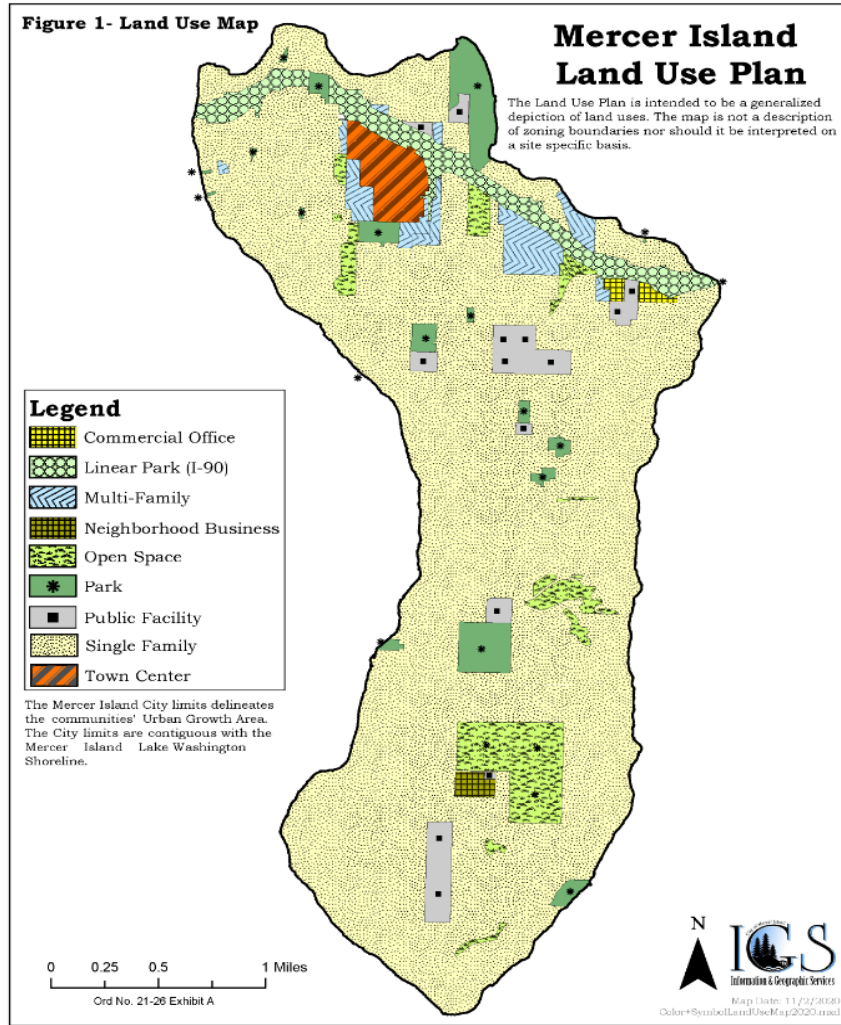


Inventory of Park Properties (Exhibit 1)

- Initial discussion on the Parks Property Inventory (Exhibit 1) to help focus the discussion for the March 21 PRC meeting.
- **What properties do we agree should be included in a new Parks Zone?**
- **What properties require further discussion and analysis to inform the development of the Parks Zone recommendation?**

Inventory of City Parks							02/22/2024
Park Property Name	Address	PROS Plan Classification	Ownership	Current Zoning	Primary Purpose	Notes	
Aubrey Davis Park	72 nd Ave SE & SE 22 nd	Regional	WSDOT	PI	Recreation, regional trail, freeway infrastructure, boat launch	WSDOT owned, maint. agreement with City	
Bicentennial Park	77 th Ave SE & SE 32 nd St	Mini Park	City	PI	Recreation		
Clarke Beach Park	EMW & SE 77 th PI	Community Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (swimming, picnicking, walking trails)		
Deane's Children Park	5500 Island Crest Way	Neighborhood Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (playground, Bike Skills Area)		
First Hill Park	SE 32 nd & 72 nd SE	Neighborhood Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (playground)		
Groveland Beach Park	SE 58 th & 80 th Ave SE	Community Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (swimming, picnicking, walking trails)		
Homestead Park	SE 40 th & 82 nd	Community Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (sports fields, playground, sport courts)		
Island Crest Park	5500 Island Crest Way	Community Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (sports fields, tennis courts, forest trails)		
Luther Burbank Park	72 nd SE & SE 22 nd	Regional Park	City	R-15	Recreation (walking trails, swimming, docks, sport courts, playground), Administrative Facility		
Mercerdale Park	SE 32 nd St & 78 th Ave SE	Community Park	City	PI	Recreation (walking trails, playground, skate park, plaza)		
Roanoke Park	70 th Ave SE & WMW	Neighborhood Park	City	R-15	Recreation (playground, tennis court)		
Rotary Park	88 th SE & SE 44 th	Neighborhood Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (passive), infrastructure (reservoirs and emergency well)		

Land Use Map vs. Zoning Map



Properties that Require Additional Consideration

- **Street Ends/Landings**
- **Aubrey Davis Park**
- **Luther Burbank Park**
- **Mercer Island Community and Event Center**
- **Note:** This is an initial discussion, a follow-up discussion is planned for the March 21 PRC Meeting.

Park Property Name	Address	PROS Plan Classification	Ownership	Current Zoning	Primary Purpose	Notes
Aubrey Davis Park	72 nd Ave SE & SE 22 nd	Regional	WSDOT	PI	Recreation, regional trail, freeway infrastructure, boat launch	WSDOT owned, maint. agreement with City
Bicentennial Park	77 th Ave SE & SE 32 nd St	Mini Park	City	PI	Recreation	
Clarke Beach Park	EMW & SE 77 th PI	Community Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (swimming, picnicking, walking trails)	
Deane's Children Park	5500 Island Crest Way	Neighborhood Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (playground, Bike Skills Area)	
First Hill Park	SE 32 nd & 72 nd SE	Neighborhood Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (playground)	
Groveland Beach Park	SE 58 th & 80 th Ave SE	Community Park	City	R-8.4	Recreation (swimming, picnicking, walking trails)	
Homestead Park	SE 40 th & 82 nd	Community Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (sports fields, playground, sport courts)	
Island Crest Park	5500 Island Crest Way	Community Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (sports fields, tennis courts, forest trails)	
Luther Burbank Park	72 nd SE & SE 22 nd	Regional Park	City	R-15	Recreation (walking trails, swimming, docks, sport courts, playground), Administrative Facility	
Mercerdale Park	SE 32 nd St & 78 th Ave SE	Community Park	City	PI	Recreation (walking trails, playground, skate park, plaza)	
Roanoke Park	70 th Ave SE & WMW	Neighborhood Park	City	R-15	Recreation (playground, tennis court)	
Rotary Park	88 th SE & SE 44 th	Neighborhood Park	City	R-9.6	Recreation (passive), infrastructure (reservoirs and emergency well)	

Street Ends and Landings

- Although many street ends and landings are classified as parks in the PROS Plan, their primary purpose/use is utilities.
- The secondary and complementary use is a mini-park with lake access.

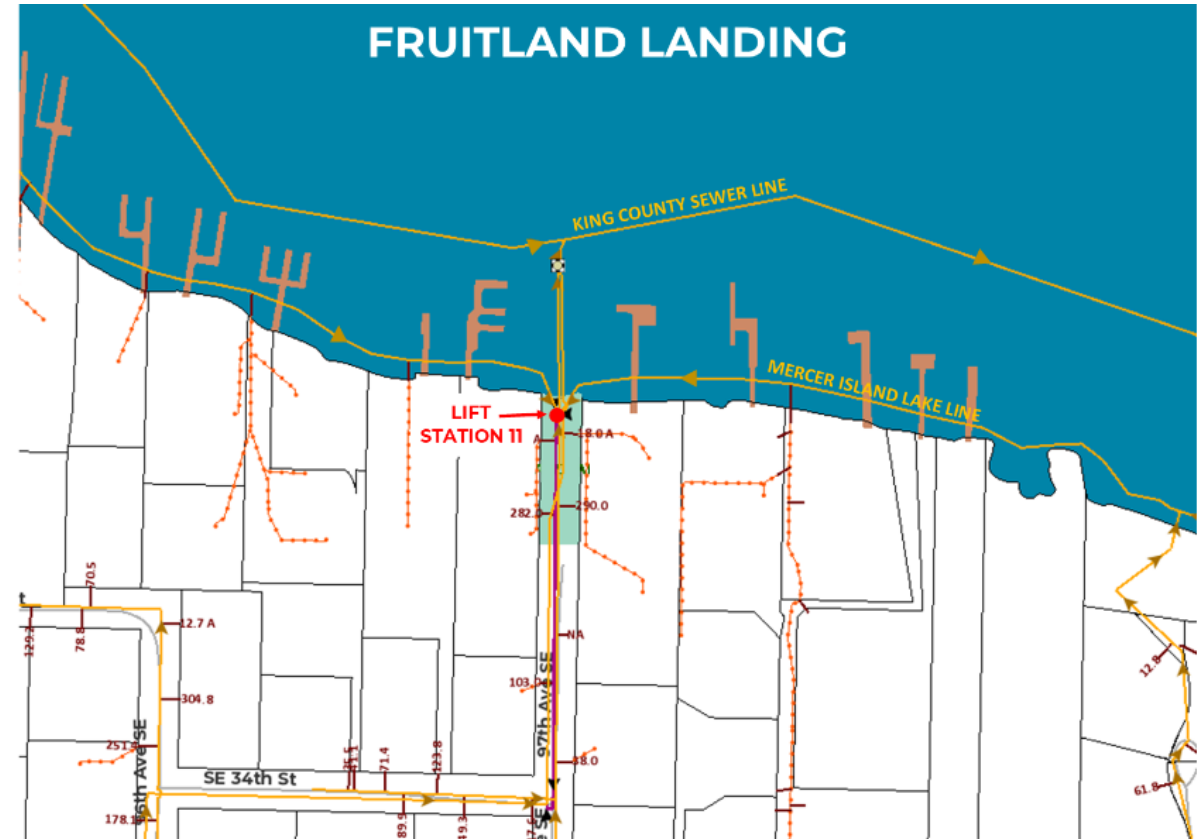
Example: Fruitland Landing

- Major sewer facility where City and King County sewer infrastructure connects.
- City pump station
- Generator which ensures facilities continue to operate when we have a power outage.
- Pressurized lines, sewer mains, storm main, storm lateral, sewer stubs, catch basins



Street Ends and Landings

- As properties are evaluated for inclusion in the parks zone, we want to ensure that the zoning aligns with the primary purpose.
- **Staff do not recommend including critical utility infrastructure in the parks zone.**
- There are other tools, however, such as the PROS Plan that guide use, planning, and operations of the parks component of this property.



Luther Burbank Park

- Classified as a regional park, nearly 55-acres.
- Buildings
- Shoreline and Docks
- Swimming Beach
- Playgrounds
- Trails
- Open Space
- Park
- (Future) Pickleball Courts
- And more!



Luther Burbank Park

Luther Burbank Park Master Plan

- Adopted Master Plan in 2006 that guides planning and operations.
- Identifies proposed improvements and capital projects.
- Guides maintenance, vegetation management, and informs other operational needs.
- **What is the appropriate interaction between the parks zone and master plans?**

Luther Burbank Park Master Plan



City of Mercer Island, Washington

Prepared by:

The Berger Partnership PS
Landscape Architecture

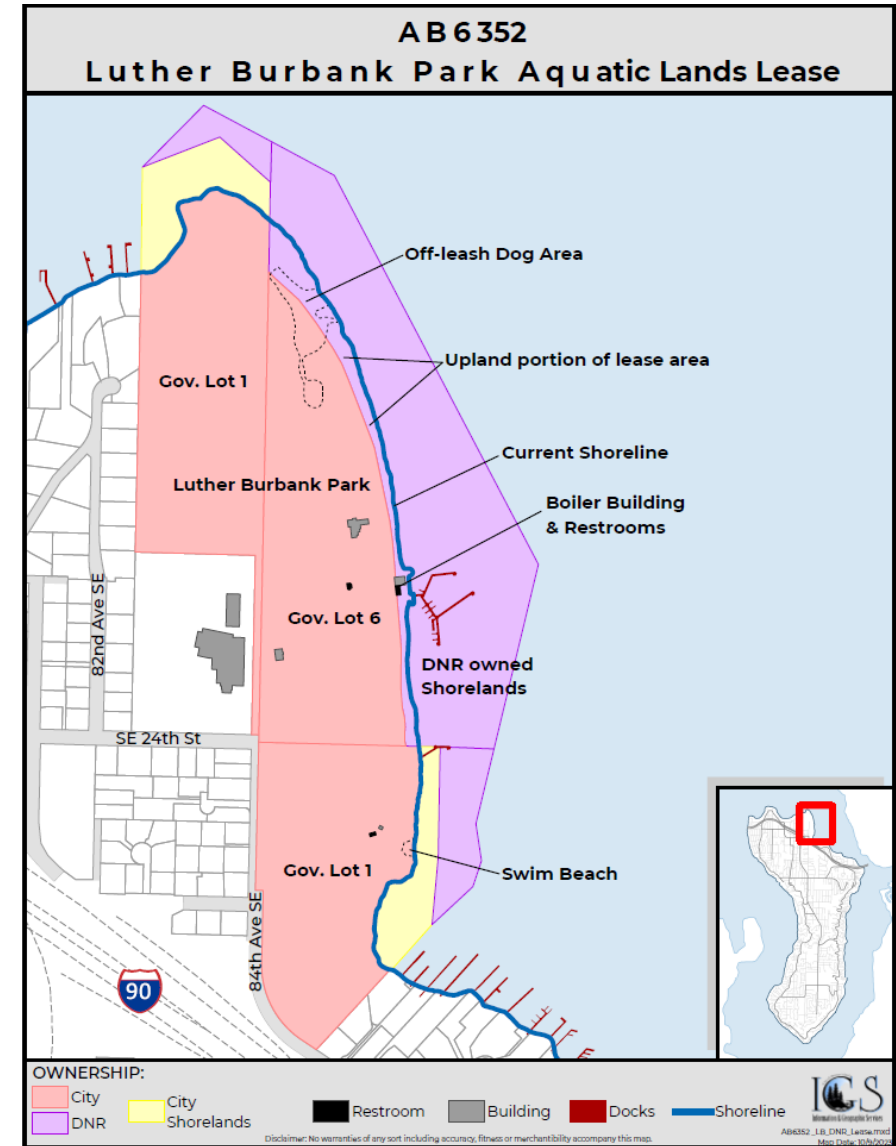


April, 2006

1721 Eighth Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109
206.325.6877 v
206.323.6867 f
www.bergerpartnership.com

Luther Burbank Park

- A majority of Luther Burbank Park shoreline is owned by the WA State Department of Natural Resources.
- Luther Burbank Park was transferred to the City from King County effective January 1, 2003.
 - Purchased by King County with Forward Thrust Funding
 - Developed with State RCO Funding in the 1970s.
 - Both funding sources include numerous restrictions reflected in the deed and other documents.
- Infrastructure is unique compared to other parks.
- It is important to consider the policy documents governing the use of Luther Burbank Park and its unique amenities to avoid conflicted or duplicated regulations.



Aubrey Davis Park

- Built in 1992 to mitigate impacts from reconstruction of Interstate 90.
- 2.8-mile-long transportation and recreation corridor including the Park on the Lid, Mountains to Sound Trail, Boat Launch, and the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery.
- Located within airspace of I-90 right of way owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).



Aubrey Davis Park

- WSDOT turnback and Landscape Maintenance Agreements (late 1980's)
 - Determines maintenance, landscaping, and site improvement responsibilities.
- WSDOT Airspace Leases (early 1990's)
 - Regulates permitted uses of leased recreational areas within I-90 right of way.
- Currently zoned as “Public Institution” ([MICC 19.05.010](#))
 - Permitted Land Uses: government services, public schools, public parks, transit facilities, hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities, and wireless communications facilities
- Staff do not recommend including Aubrey Davis Park in the parks zone.
 - The primary purpose of I-90 right of way is interstate travel.
 - I-90 airspace is owned by WSDOT.
 - The City must comply with prior agreements with WSDOT.



Mercer Island Community & Event Center

- Full Gymnasium
- Game Room
- Dance Room
- Fitness Room
- Meeting Rooms
- Catering Kitchen
- Terrace
- Landing
- Lawn
- 222 Parking Spaces
- Emergency Generator
- Additional Annex Facility



Mercer Island Community & Event Center

- Provides facility space for both recreational and non-recreational programs, activities, and events.
- Serves as the City's Emergency Operations Center shelter, warming and cooling center.
- Hosts City Council, Board and Commission Meetings.
- Provides leased facility space for childcare business.
- Provides City-wide departmental meeting and office space.





New Parks Zone Components



Zoning Code Components

Examples: [MICC Title 19 – Unified Land Development Code](#).

1. Purpose Statement

- What is the intention or goal of the zoning code?

2. Conditions required for land to be included within the zone

- What qualifies for a property to be included in the parks zone?

3. Regulations that detail which uses are allowed within the zone

- What are the permitted uses in the zone?

4. Development standards to guide development within the zone

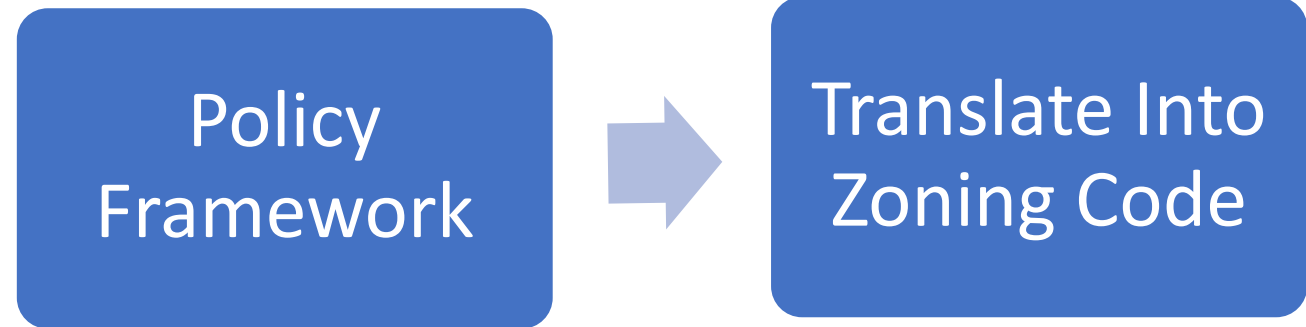
- What are the regulations for physical modification and structures?

5. Definitions for key terms used in the zoning regulations

- What is the exact meaning of the key terms in the zoning code?
- 

1. Purpose Statement

- What is the intention or goal of the zoning code?
- **The 2022 PROS Plan is the guiding policy document for development of the parks zone.**
- The purpose statement is the foundation of the zoning code and should be consistent with the PROS Plan.
- Planned for discussion tonight and we'll come back to this after we walk through the other slides.

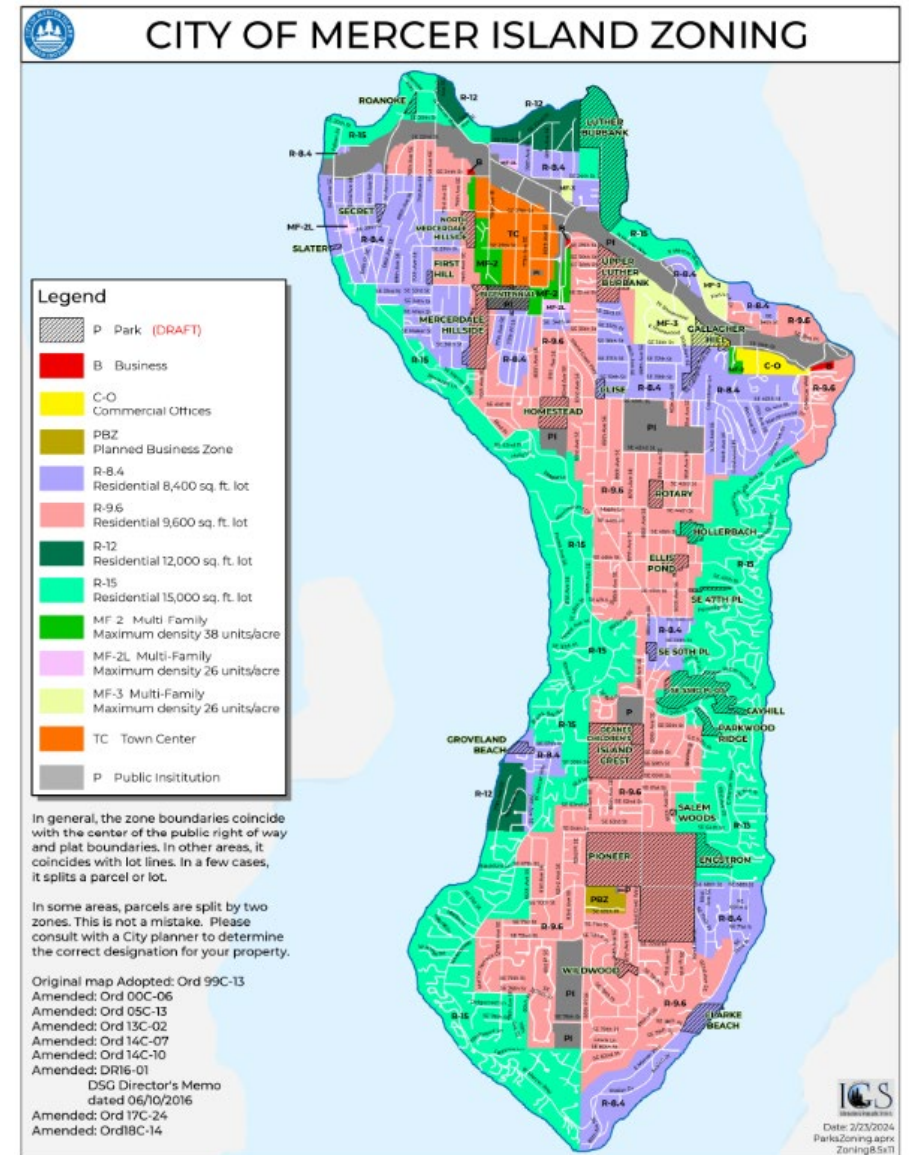


Zoning is a method in which land is divided into “zones,” each of which has a set of regulations describing allowable uses and development standards.



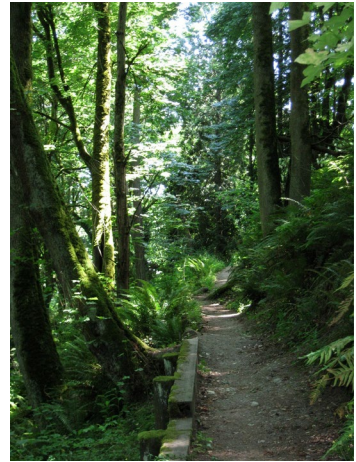
2. Required Land Conditions

- What qualifies for a property to be included in the parks zone?
- Identifies the rules and guidelines for when lands should/must be included in the Parks Zone.



3. Zone Regulations

- What are the permitted uses in the zone?
 - Recreation facilities
 - Trails
 - Playgrounds
 - Swimming areas
 - Open space



4. Development Standards

- What are the regulations for physical modification and structures?
 - Buildings
 - Utilities
 - Public art
 - Wireless communication facilities



5. Definitions for Key Terms Used in Regulations

- What is the exact meaning of the key terms in the zoning code?
- Well-written code is clear and objective.
- The goal is for the code to be easily interpreted by everyone.

Example:

Permitted uses:

- Recreational Facilities

Definition

- Recreational Facility: a publicly owned or operated park, campground, marina, dock, golf course, playground, athletic field, gymnasium, swimming pool, trail system, or other facility used for recreational purposes.





Other Items



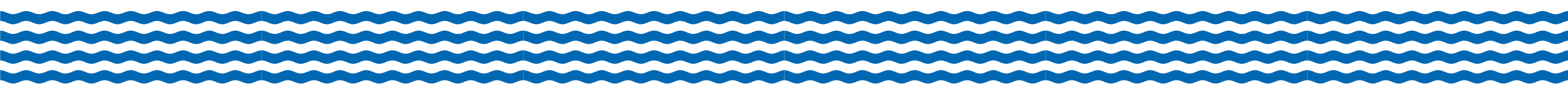
Telecommunications Code and Infrastructure

- Concerns were raised in previous meetings regarding limiting the use of parks from housing wireless communication facilities.
- Regulation of such facilities is addressed Citywide within [MICC 19.06.040](#) and [MICC 19.06.070](#).
- Federal law and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) significantly limit local zoning regulation of wireless communication facilities.
- Changes to City regulation of wireless communications facilities must be addressed as a separate and holistic City-wide project.



Other Codes and Regulations

- There are several City-wide codes and regulations which must be considered as they relate to the development of a new Parks Zone.
 - Stormwater Management Program ([MICC 15.09](#))
 - Tree Code ([MICC 19.10](#))
 - Shoreline Master Program ([MICC 19.13](#))
 - Critical Areas Code ([MICC 19.07](#))
 - Construction Code ([MICC 17.01](#))
- Park development often falls under the jurisdiction of other regulatory agencies:
 - Army Corp of Engineers
 - Department of Fish & Wildlife
 - Department of Ecology
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - Department of Transportation

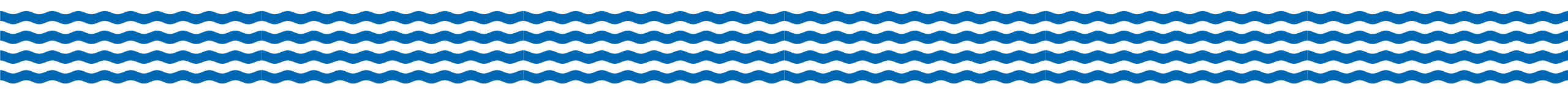




Community Engagement



Community Engagement

- [Let's Talk - Parks Zone Project](#):
 - The page is live.
 - There is a “comments” tab so that the community may provide comments throughout the process.
 - Updates will be published as the work progresses.
 - Continue to accept public comment at Parks and Recreation Commission meetings as our work progresses.
 - **April 18:** Anticipate extensive outreach process seeking feedback from the community on the draft Parks Zone ahead of the April 18 PRC Meeting adopting a final recommendation. (Public hearing?)
 - The formal legislative process conducted by the Planning Commission includes community engagement and a public hearing.
- 

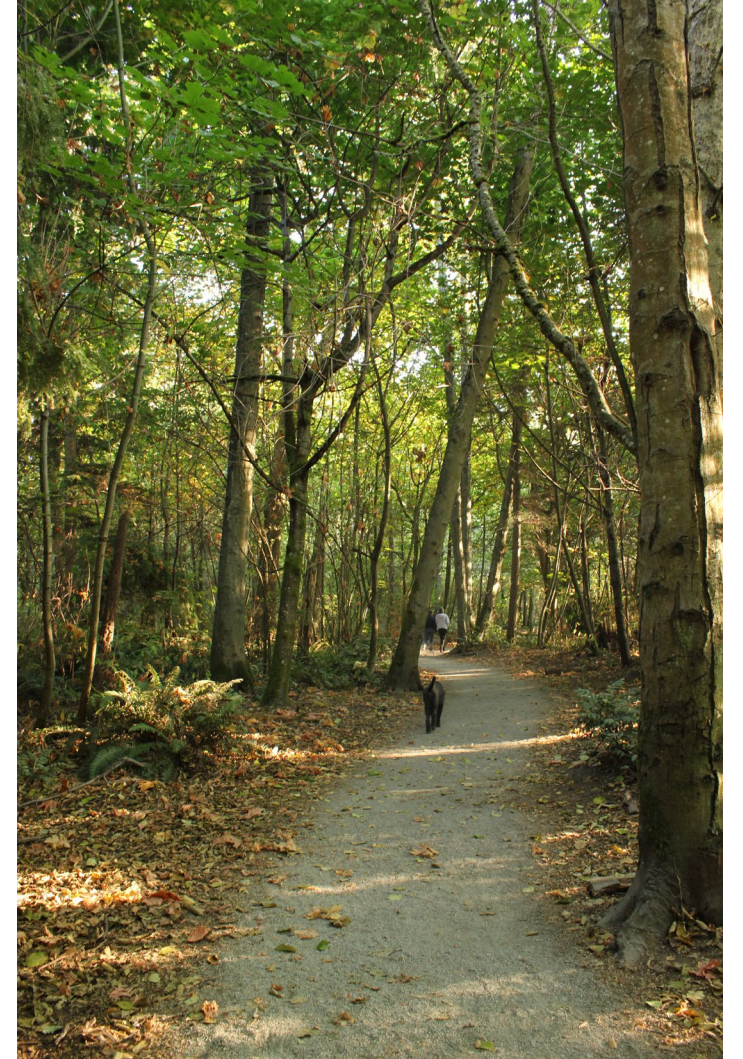


Next Steps



PRC Parks Zone Development Timeline

- **March 21 – PRC Meeting:**
 - Finalize purpose statement and begin work on other components of the Parks Zone.
 - Identify areas of consensus and items needing further discussion.
- **April 4 – PRC Meeting:**
 - Continue review and discussion of Parks Zone, seek consensus on a recommendation.
- **April 18 – PRC Meeting:** Finalize recommendation and memo to the Planning Commission.
- **May 2 – PRC Meeting:** Meeting reserved for follow-up work if necessary.
- **May 8 – PRC/PC Joint Meeting:** PRC will present their recommended new Parks Zone to the Planning Commission.



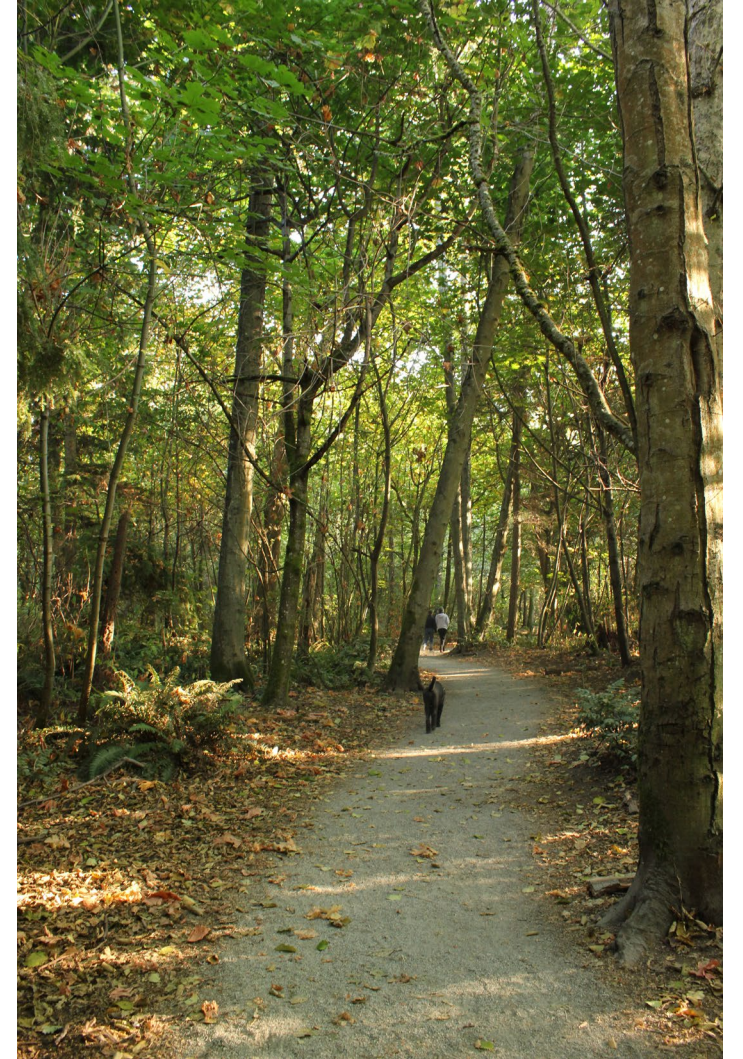


Discussion



Questions to Guide Discussion

- What questions do you have on the materials presented?
- Do you have initial thoughts on the best way to approach this work? Where do we have common ground?
- What type of community engagement process does the PRC envision? What can we reasonably accomplish in the timeframe we have?
- What areas do we want to focus on for the March 21 meeting?
- Would you like to provide initial feedback on the purpose statement?

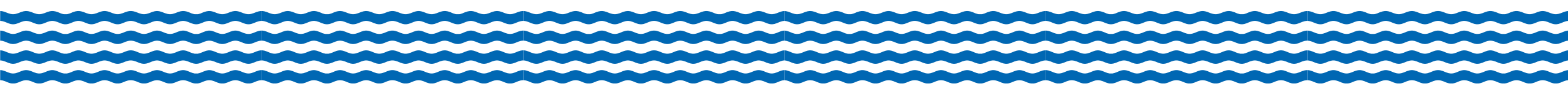


Purpose Statement – Initial Feedback

- Draft Purpose Statement from the initial draft of the Parks Zone:

Purpose: The purpose of the Parks Zone (P) is to accomplish the following:

- 1. Implement the Comprehensive Plan and other applicable plans by designating areas that conserve and preserve a variety of park and open space lands in the City;*
 - 2. Regulated the land uses permitted within publicly owned parks in the City; and*
 - 3. Preserve urban forests, critical habitat, environmental resources, and maintain access to recreational opportunities.*
- Seeking initial reactions, suggestions, and feedback so that staff may prepare for the follow-up discussion at the PRC meeting on March 21.





Thank you.





Extra Slides



Parks Zone Resources (PRC24-03)

- **Inventory of City Parks (Exhibit 1):** information about each park including name, address, PROS Plan classification, ownership, current zoning, primary purpose, and notes.
- **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map (Exhibit 2):** boundaries and zoning of all parks.
- **Commissioner Comment Matrix (Exhibit 3):** record of commissioner comments.
- **Commissioner Q/A Matrix (Exhibit 4):** staff responses to commissioner questions.

