



PLANNING COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PCB 24-10
May 15, 2024
Special Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PCB 24-10: Open Space Zone (Second Review)	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Approve the recommendation regarding the Open Space Zone development regulations, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map.	
STAFF:	Jessi Bon, City Manager Carson Hornsby, Management Analyst Alison Van Gorp, Deputy CPD Director Merrill Thomas-Schadt, Sr. Management Analyst	
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Zoning Map 2. Draft Open Space Development Regulations 3. Draft Land Use Map 4. Comment Matrix (to be added after comments are received on 5/13/24)	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities in King County to complete a periodic review of their comprehensive plans by December 31, 2024.
- Creation of a new zone for parks and open space was added to the Comprehensive Plan periodic review scope of work by the City Council.
- The Open Space Zone is a proposed new zone that will establish land use regulations for City-owned and managed Open Space Lands and ensure the land is managed in a manner appropriate for such properties, consistent with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, City code, master plans, forest management plans, and similar documents.
- Creation of a new zone requires amendments to [Title 19 Mercer Island City Code \(MICC\)](#), the [Zoning Map](#), and the [Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map](#);
- The Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) held several joint meetings throughout March and April to provide input and develop the proposed amendments to Title 19 MICC, the Zoning Map, and Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.
- Peter Struck, Chair of the PRC, and Geraldine Poor, Chair of the OSCT, attended the May 8, 2024, meeting to provide the PRC/OSCT recommendation to the Planning Commission.
- The Planning Commission will provide a final recommendation to the City Council in time for the Open Space Zone and amendments to the Zoning Map and Land Use Map to be included in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

BACKGROUND

The scope of work for the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2022, included creation of a new Parks Zone. A preliminary Parks Zone draft was presented to the PRC and Planning Commission in January 2024. After receiving feedback from the commissions and the community, the City Manager directed staff to pause the legislative review process and return to the PRC for further discussion and review.

The PRC revisited the Parks Zone in March 2024 and provided a recommendation to staff to separate the Parks Zone planning work into two phases: the first phase to develop a new zone for City-owned public Open Space Lands, and the second phase to develop a new zone for other City-owned public park properties. The PRC recommended prioritizing the development of the Open Space Zone this year in time for inclusion as part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The OSCT board was invited to hold joint meetings with the PRC to provide input on the proposed Open Space Zone and the associated development regulations.

On March 18, 2024, the PRC and OSCT each voted to approve a joint recommendation to the Planning Commission on the Open Space Zone and the associated development regulations, which would create a new section of City Code (MICC 19.05). The draft Zoning Map is shown in Exhibit 1. If approved, this map will be included with the recommended code amendment and would replace the existing Zoning Map in Appendix D of Title 19 MICC. The draft code amendments, including the proposed Open Space development regulations (new section MICC 19.05) and amendments to MICC 19.16.010 Definitions and MICC 19.01.040 Zone Establishment, are provided in Exhibit 2.

City staff also prepared a draft amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map to ensure it is consistent with the proposed changes shown on the draft Zoning Map. The proposed amendment moves several properties between the Open Space, Parks, and Residential land use designations to align with the classifications in the PROS Plan. A map depicting the proposed re-designations is provided in Exhibit 3. If approved, this map would replace the existing Land Use Map in the draft Land Use Element.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

At the May 8, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, City staff and the PRC and OSCT chairs presented the [PRC/OSCT recommendations](#) and the draft development regulations, Zoning map and Land Use Map to the Planning Commission ([PCB24-09](#)). The commission had an opportunity to ask questions at the meeting and was directed to submit further questions, comments or proposed amendments in writing by Monday, May 13, 2024. City staff will then prepare a matrix with the comments received and any staff responses (this Planning Commission Bill will be amended to add the comment matrix as Exhibit 4).

At the May 15, 2024 meeting the Planning Commission will review the items in the comment matrix, discuss any proposed amendments and approve a recommendation including the draft development regulations, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map. Once the Planning Commission recommendation is completed, staff will include these items with the public review draft of the Comprehensive Plan for consideration at the public hearing on June 26, 2024.

NEXT STEPS

At the May 15 meeting, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on amendments to the Zoning Map, Open Space Zone development regulations, and Land Use Map. Staff will include the recommended items with the public review draft of the Comprehensive Plan for consideration at the June 26, 2024 public hearing.

The PRC will begin discussions on the Parks Zone later this year with the goal of providing a recommendation to the Planning Commission in 2025. The City plans to propose an item for the 2025 Annual Docket related to the adoption of the Parks Zone and the associated development regulations. This docket item will include both a Comprehensive Plan amendment and a code amendment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Move to approve the recommendation regarding the Open Space Zone development regulations, Zoning Map, and Land Use Map.