



# PLANNING COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PCB 24-09  
May 8, 2024  
Special Business

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	PCB 24-09: Open Space Zone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Receive Report. No action necessary.	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Jessi Bon, City Manager Carson Hornsby, Management Analyst Ryan Daly, Recreation Manager Alison Van Gorp, Deputy CPD Director
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Inventory of Open Space Land 2. PRC and OSCT Recommendations 3. Draft Zoning Map 4. Draft Open Space Development Regulations 5. Draft Land Use Map

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities in King County to complete a periodic review of the comprehensive plans by December 31, 2024;
- Creating 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.
- Creating a new zone requires amendments to [Title 19 Mercer Island City Code \(MICC\)](#), the [Zoning Map](#), and [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, will attend the May 8, 2024 meeting to provide the PRC/OSCT recommendation to the Planning Commission.
- The Planning Commission will begin legislative review of the proposed Open Space Zone and provide a final recommendation to the City Council in time for the new zone 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.

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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 PRC will then undertake development of a proposed Parks Zone beginning later in 2024, with a recommendation to the Planning Commission targeted for 2025. The OSCT board was invited to hold joint meetings with the PRC to provide input on the proposed Open Space Zone code and the associated development regulations. Links to the materials for the meetings of the PRC and OSCT are provided below:

- [March 7 PRC meeting](#)
- [March 21 PRC/OSCT joint meeting](#)
- [April 4 PRC/OSCT joint meeting](#)
- [April 18 PRC/OSCT joint meeting](#)
- [Staff presentations](#)

The PROS Plan includes a classification of city-owned Parks and Open space lands. The PROS Plan classifications were used to determine which properties will be included in the Open Space Zone and which will be included in the Parks Zone. An inventory of City-owned Open Space Land is provided in Exhibit 1. City staff also identified that the existing land use designations included in the Land Use Map in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan do not completely align with the PROS Plan classifications. Thus, minor amendments to the Land Use Map will also be required to maintain consistency with the PROS Plan and the new Open Space Zone.

#### PRC and OSCT

The PRC was created by the City Council in 2019 by [Ordinance 19C-01](#). The PRC purpose, function, and jurisdiction are established in [MICC 3.53.010](#) and include:

- Developing the parks, recreation and open space (PROS) plan as a component of the city's comprehensive plan and provide recommendations on periodic updates to the plan as directed by the city council;
- Provide a forum for the community to express their views on parks and recreation programs, services, and facilities; and
- Advise and prepare recommendations on master plans for parks, trails, open space areas, and other recreation facilities and advise on the acquisition of park property.

The OSCT was established by [Ordinance B-93](#) on February 10, 1992. Ordinance B-93 was amended by [Ordinance 96-002](#) on May 6, 1996. The OSCT purpose when it was established was threefold:

- Receiving and holding all open space properties transferred to the OSCT by the City Council or other landowners;
- Protecting, maintaining, and preserving open space properties; and
- Ensuring the development and use of its held open space properties are consistent with the intent and purposes of the trust.

## **ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

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 PRC and OSCT recommendations to the Planning Commission are provided in Exhibit 2. The draft Zoning Map is shown in Exhibit 3. 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

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section MICC 19.05) and amendments to MICC 19.16.010 Definitions and MICC 19.01.040 Zone Establishment, are provided in Exhibit 4.

City staff have 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. The following properties are proposed for new designations, as described below:

- Hollerbach Open Space will be changed from Park to Open Space.
- SE 50th Street Open Space and Salem Woods will be changed from Residential to Open Space.
- Wildwood Park will be changed from Open Space to Park.
- A private/community tract listed as Open Space on the south end of the Island will be changed to Residential.

A map depicting the proposed re-designations is provided in Exhibit 5. If approved, this map would replace the existing Land Use Map in the draft Land Use Element.

## **NEXT STEPS**

At the May 8 meeting, the Planning Commission will receive a presentation of the PRC and OSCT recommendations and have the opportunity to ask questions of Parks and Recreation staff as well as the PRC and OSCT chairs. Following the meeting, commissioners can provide written comments to staff by 9:00 am on Monday, May 13, 2024. Please address comments to Carson Hornsby at [carson.hornsby@mercerisland.gov](mailto:carson.hornsby@mercerisland.gov). The comments received will be compiled into a matrix for review and consideration at the May 15, 2024 meeting. The Commission should plan to make a recommendation on amendments to the Zoning Map, development regulations and the Land Use Map at the May 15 meeting.

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**

Receive Report. No action necessary.