



# ARTS COUNCIL SPECIAL VIDEO MEETING

Thursday, January 28, 2021 | 6:30pm

## BOARD MEMBERS:

Chair Erin Vivion  
Vice Chair Amy Barnes  
Board Members: Anumeha, Erik Gordon,  
Xixi Shakes, Suzanne Skone, Gaylene Vaden  
City Council Liaison: Salim Nice

## LOCATION & CONTACT

Mercer Island City Hall – Zoom Meeting  
9611 SE 36<sup>th</sup> Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040  
Phone: 206.275.7706 | [www.mercerisland.gov](http://www.mercerisland.gov)

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the Staff Liaison at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 206.275.7706.*

## Virtual Meeting Notice

The virtual meeting will be broadcast live on Zoom and recorded and saved on the City's [YouTube Channel](#)

**Registering to Speak:** Individuals wishing to speak live during Appearances will need to register their request with the City Clerk at **206.275.7864** or email the [staff liaison](#) and leave a message before 4 PM on the day of the Council meeting. Please reference "Appearances" on your correspondence. Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

**Join by Telephone at 6:30 PM:** To listen to the meeting via telephone, please call **253.215.8782** and enter Webinar ID **828 8461 4140** and Password **063628** when prompted.

**Join by Internet at 6:30 PM:** To watch the meeting over the internet via your computer, follow these steps:

- 1) Click [this link](#)
- 2) If the Zoom app is not installed on your computer, you will be prompted to download it.
- 3) If prompted for Webinar ID, enter **828 8461 4140**; Enter Password **063628**

**For the safety and wellbeing of the public and staff,** the City strongly recommends that community members attend the meeting by viewing the live feed on Zoom or watching the recording of the video conference on the City's [YouTube Channel](#), which will be available approximately 24 hours after the meeting.

## CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL, 6:30 PM

## APPEARANCES

## SPECIAL BUSINESS

1. Arts Reset Planning – Arts Council Roles/Responsibilities, Essential Functions, and Immediate Action Plan

## OTHER BUSINESS

2. Discuss Arts Council 2021 Meeting Schedule

## ADJOURNMENT

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## Arts Council January 28, 2021 Arts Reset - January Workshop

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**To:** Arts Council

**From:** Emily Moon, Consultant

**Date:** January 28, 2021

This memo provides a brief overview of what Arts Councilmembers can expect during the January 28<sup>th</sup> arts reset workshop. A recording of the presentation introducing the reset planning project is available [here](#):

As was discussed in the January 13, 2021 memo to the Arts Council (see Exhibit 1), staff (the Reset Team) will work with the Arts Council to develop an Immediate Action Plan and a Long-term Reset Action Plan. The Immediate Action Plan should be responsive to the City's COVID framework (see Exhibit 2), consider resource constraints, be able to be implemented in the near future and possibly represent the complete list of action steps for the duration of 2021. While financial sustainability is a driving principle for the future of recreation/MICEC, the Reset Team suggests that the long-term reset plan for arts be crafted to reflect a refined focus on the essential services of the Arts Council. This will require that the Arts Council take an exacting look at its goals, role, available resources, and capability to sustain essential services as it provides input on the longer-term reset plan for arts.

### **Purpose of Workshop**

- Discuss current and near-term conditions:
  - Budgeted resources
  - City and/or arts community needs
  - Pandemic status
- Review Arts Council mission and goals
- Share Arts Councilmembers' areas of interest

- Clarify essential tasks/responsibilities of the Arts Council; discuss and categorize core and essential services of the Arts Council
- Identify possible Immediate Action Plan steps, timetable, and resource requirements

If time allows (or during a future workshop):

- Identify required resources for all core services/essential functions of the Arts Council
- Consider the Arts Council's priorities, criteria, and thresholds for expanding services and programs beyond the essential services; discuss the Arts Council's ability to deliver expanded services in the future

### **Background Information**

In advance of the workshop, Arts Councilmembers are encouraged to review the Arts Council Ordinance, Bylaws Statement of Purpose, and a summary of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan (provided below and as Exhibits 3-5).

#### *Arts Council Ordinance:*

- A. The purpose of the Mercer Island arts council is to advise and make recommendations to the city council and any other board or commission of the city on matters including, but not limited to those set forth herein.
- B. In fulfillment of its purpose, the duties and responsibilities of the Mercer Island arts council shall be to:
  1. Develop the arts and culture 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.
  2. Provide a forum for the community to express their views on arts and culture and serve as a central body to promote, develop, stimulate, and encourage arts organizations, artists and arts participation in the city.
  3. Establish guidelines for the commissioning, selection and placement of permanent or temporary works of art in the city.
  4. Review the suitability and advise on the acceptance of art works intended as gifts to the city.
  5. Participate in the selection of artists and performers for programs and events sponsored by the Mercer Island arts council.

6. Support and foster an arts community that embraces the cultural diversity of its citizens and recognizes their contributions to the cultural landscape, including honoring and featuring local artists.
7. Explore opportunities to obtain private, local, state and/or federal funds to promote arts and cultural opportunities in the city.
8. Facilitate communication and cooperation with existing organizations including schools, businesses, non-profits, art organizations, foundations and other community groups to bring artists and audiences together.
9. Advise on other matters as directed by the city council.

#### *Arts Council Bylaws' Statement of Purpose for the Arts Council*

The Arts Council's mission is to nurture, promote and support quality cultural arts activities for the community of Mercer Island.

#### *Mercer Island Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan*

Vision: To assimilate positive art experiences into everyday life for all community members.

#### **Goal 1: Support the arts on Mercer Island:**

- Policy: Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events.
- Policy: Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum
- Policy: Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships.
- Policy: Promote cooperation and local partnerships between the City of Mercer Island and artists, arts providers, nonprofit organizations, urban designers, architects, developers, and others to help improve the quality of the built environment.
- Policy: Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education.
- Policy: Coordinate and collaborate with local, regional, and national arts organizations, and through public and private partners to integrate art into the community via permanent installations and special events.

- Policy: Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement.
- Policy: Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall city economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy.
- Policy: Support:
  - Efforts to secure space for art and cultural activities;
  - The establishment of a community maker space;
  - Opportunities for housing and/or live/work space for artists; and,
  - A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility.
- Policy: Maintain a parity of public space for art and cultural activities when existing public art and cultural activity space is modified or eliminated.

### **Goal 2: Nurture public art on Mercer Island:**

- Policy: Encourage diversity in public art.
- Policy: Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement.
- Policy: Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art.
- Policy: Incorporate public art in town center development design and site features.
- Policy: Maintain requirement that at least 1% of qualifying capital improvement projects' costs are set aside for public art acquisition, repair, and maintenance.
- Policy: Make an effort to incorporate public art into and surrounding transportation projects.
- Policy: Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes.

### **Goal 3: Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage:**

- Policy: Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources.
- Policy: Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials.
- Policy: Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations.
- Policy: Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community.

### **A Note on Core Services or Essential Functions**

Discussing what we deem to be essential functions or core services can be challenging. Often, people have differing opinions based on their experiences, values, or definitions. For the Arts Council workshop discussion, the Reset Team encourages the Arts Council to utilize a definition that is commonly used in municipal services delivery:

*Core services or essential functions are those that the municipality is required (or compelled) to deliver. Sometimes these are services that are expected because no other provider exists.*

Looking at governing documents such as ordinances, bylaws, or strategic plans can help us identify core services.

In addition, we can group core services into two categories: those that are the “public good/social core services” and those that are the “business sustainability essential functions.” The latter are functions that make the former possible. A third category of programs and services is labeled the “non-essential desirable” category. These are often the programs and services that may go beyond the basic elements of the mission, are discretionary, or are simply desired by the community.

During the workshop, the Arts Council will be asked to help the Reset Team sort the Arts Council’s core services or essential function into those three categories.

The Reset Team is working to develop a comprehensive list of Arts Council services and functions for the sorting exercise. To help you start thinking through this task, here is a draft list:

- Policies & Procedures – Advise on policy development and maintenance, including:
  - 1% for Art in Public Places guidelines
  - Gallery exhibit policies
  - Park master plans, comprehensive plan, and other Citywide strategic planning efforts
  - Community Arts Support guidelines
- Programs & Events – Assist with planning, promoting, and evaluating arts & culture programs and special events, including:
  - Mostly Music in the Park
  - Shakespeare in the Park
  - Friday Night Films
  - Mercer Island Gallery exhibits
  - Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery installations
  - Other special community events (e.g. Art on the Water, Community Dance, etc.)
  - Partner programs
    - Mercer Island Sister City Association
    - Mercer Island Historical Society
    - Mercer Island Library
    - Stroum Jewish Community Center

- Youth Theatre Northwest Policy development and maintenance
  - Program evaluation
- Public Art Stewardship – Advise on maintaining, promoting, and adding to the public art collection, including:
  - 1% for Art in Public Places policies and acquisition guidelines
  - Community engagement (e.g. digital platforms like STQRY and Public Art Story Map, public art programs, etc.)
- Community Outreach & Advocacy – Build awareness of and partnership for the Arts Council and Arts Council programs, including:
  - Attending Arts Council and community programs/events
  - Participating in local, regional, and national professional networks to learn best practices, advocate for arts & culture, and promote Arts Council programs
  - Advising on and promoting outreach strategies & channels (e.g. Arts Council website, e-news list, etc.)
- Other projects, services, and responsibilities/functions, including:
  - Creative District exploration
  - Seeking grants and other funding support
  - Arts Council governance (e.g. chairing committees, reporting volunteer hours, etc.)

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## Arts Council January 13, 2021

### Introduction to Recreation, Mercer Island Community and Event Center, and Arts Reset Plan

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To: Arts Council

From: Emily Moon, consultant

Date: January 13, 2021

This memo prepares the Arts Council for discussion at its regular meeting on January 13 and a more in-depth workshop to be scheduled for late January. The memo is designed to give the Arts Council a brief update on the City's progress on developing a "reset" plan for programs in recreation and arts and the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC), and to highlight next steps in the Arts Council's involvement in those plans. A staff team of individuals who were previously involved with programming and operations for recreation, the MICEC, and arts, facilitated by consultant Emily Moon, has been working since late October on the reset.

#### Background

The 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" approach to its programming and budget for recreation, the 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. In fact, the State of Washington and King County have had to do this, too, as the virus has alternated between subsiding and surging. 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.

### **Planning Progress**

The team approached developing the reset plan by breaking it into two major steps:

- Shaping an Immediate Action Plan, under which some limited services and programs will be provided prior to wide distribution of a vaccine and/or King County returning to Phase 4 (business as usual) of the Safe Start plan. The Immediate Action Plan for recreation and the MICEC requires rapid implementation to successfully launch intended programs by Summer 2021. The Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council will be apprised this month that this Immediate Action Plan involves preparing to deliver summer camp programs and, possibly, facility rentals in late summer/early fall. The Arts Council will provide input during its January 2021 workshop on what the Immediate Action Plan for Arts might include.
- Constructing a longer-term action plan to design and implement future services and programs. This plan will be developed concurrent to the roll-out of the Immediate Action Plan. It will include developing a cost recovery and resource allocation philosophy, a pricing strategy, and a multi-year road map to assist the City in identifying its future recreation, MICEC, and arts services and programs. The Arts Council will play an important role in reviewing and contributing to the longer-term reset plan for arts.

The City currently has only 2.75 LTE/FTE assigned to Recreation; in addition, Sarah Bluvas continues in her role as liaison to the Arts Council but in a reduced capacity while she predominantly works as the Small Business Liaison as part of the City's Emergency Operations Center function (EOC). Most of the staff are currently performing EOC functions, or some portion of their roles are unrelated to recreation or arts. Implementation of the Immediate Action Plans and the long-term reset plan will require that these staff members allocate more time on recreation/MICEC/arts services and less time on their temporary assignments. The ability for each staff member to reallocate time is highly correlated to whether his/her temporary assignment is still needed by the community.

### **Immediate Action Plan**

The team used the following guiding principles as it assessed what facilities, programs, and services the City might be able to offer via the Immediate Action Plan. These guiding principles

were developed based on state and county guidance, a review of best practices established by other municipalities, and an understanding of the City's particular approach to the pandemic:

1. Our decisions will be guided by the health and safety of our community; we will adhere to public health advice from the State of Washington and King County, and any service sector guidance from the Governor's Office.
2. We are committed to taking whatever measures are necessary to slow down the spread of COVID-19. We must all do our part to ensure our individual and collective health and safety.
3. In utilizing City resources, we will prioritize assisting the City and its partners in providing life safety/basic needs services to residents.
4. We will ensure caretaking of City assets such that they are available and in good working order for the future.
5. We will use available data and situational knowledge to make recommendations and decisions but will be mindful that alternatives, flexibility, and small or iterative steps will be necessary.
6. We pledge to communicate with the City Council and the community as we develop plans and make decisions.
7. We will recognize and respond to this situation as an opportunity to examine doing things differently, innovate, work smarter, and reset to a new current and future reality.

#### Longer-term Reset Plan

##### Recreation/MICEC:

The team's goal is to finalize the longer-term reset plan by April 2021 and, assuming Safe Start Phase 4 and a vaccine are in place, be able to offer some initial, future recreation/MICEC services and programs by September 2021. In developing a reset plan for recreation and MICEC, the team is giving careful attention to not only community values and needs but also financial sustainability. To that end, the team is creating new frameworks and tools to guide future services. Those tools include a cost recovery and resource allocation philosophy and a pricing strategy.

##### Arts:

The implementation timetable for the longer-term reset for arts has not yet been established and is, in part, dependent on upcoming collaboration with the Arts Council. While financial sustainability is a driving principle for the future of recreation/MICEC, the team suggests that the long-term reset plan for arts be crafted to reflect a refined focus on the essential services of the Arts Council. This will require that the Arts Council take an exacting look at its goals, role,

available resources, and capability to sustain essential services as it provides input on the longer-term reset plan for arts.

## **Next Steps**

Going forward with reset planning, staff requests that the Arts Council participates in the following ways:

- Understand the City's work on the Recreation/MICEC/Arts Immediate Action Plans and longer-term reset plan, and provide comments.
- Review and provide input on the reset plans for arts, which staff will develop this winter and spring.
- Provide City Council with advice regarding those plans.
- Continue to serve in an advisory role to the City Council in the development of future policies related to the implementation of the reset plan.

Anticipated meetings and public comment opportunities:

- Arts Council special meeting workshop, January 2021 (date TBC during January 13 regular meeting)

Agenda will focus on the following topics:

- Current and near-term conditions, including budgeted resources; what is needed now by the City and/or arts community
- Arts Council mission and goals; members' areas of interest
- Essential tasks/responsibilities of the Arts Council
- Future ability and thresholds that need to be met to expand beyond essential tasks; priorities and criteria for expansion
- Timetable and resource requirements for Immediate Action Plan
- Arts Council special meeting workshop, mid- to late-February 2021 (date TBC during January 13 regular meeting)
- Arts Council regular meeting, March 10, 2021
- City Council action anticipated in April 2021

- Our decisions will be guided by the **health and safety of our community**; we will adhere to public health advice from the State of Washington and King County, and any service sector guidance from the Governor's Office.
- We are committed to taking whatever measures are necessary to **slow down the spread of COVID-19**. We must all do our part to ensure our individual and collective health and safety.
- In utilizing City resources, we will **prioritize assisting** the City and its partners in providing life safety/basic needs services to residents.
- We will **ensure caretaking of City assets** such that they are available and in good working order for the future.
- We will use available data and situational knowledge to make recommendations and decisions, but will be mindful that alternatives, **flexibility, and small or iterative steps will be necessary**.
- We pledge to **communicate** with the City Council and the community as we develop plans and make decisions.
- We will recognize and respond to this situation as an **opportunity to examine doing things differently, innovate, work smarter and reset** to a new current and future reality.

# COVID Framework

Guiding principles used to weigh which facilities, programs and services the City might be able to offer now and over the next several months.



**Chapter 3.55**  
**MERCER ISLAND ARTS COUNCIL**

Sections:

- 3.55.010 Established.
- 3.55.020 Purpose – Function and jurisdiction.
- 3.55.030 Membership.
- 3.55.040 Meetings – Organization.
- 3.55.040 1% for art in public places fund.

**3.55.010 Established.**

There is established a municipal arts council for the city of Mercer Island which shall be known as the “Mercer Island arts council.”

**3.55.020 Purpose - Function and jurisdiction.**

A. The purpose of the Mercer Island arts council is to advise and make recommendations to the city council and any other board or commission of the city on matters including, but not limited to those set forth herein.

B. In fulfillment of its purpose, the duties and responsibilities of the Mercer Island arts council shall be to:

1. Develop the arts and culture 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.
2. Provide a forum for the community to express their views on arts and culture and serve as a central body to promote, develop, stimulate, and encourage arts organizations, artists and arts participation in the city.
3. Establish guidelines for the commissioning, selection and placement of permanent or temporary works of art in the city.
4. Review the suitability and advise on the acceptance of art works intended as gifts to the city.
5. Participate in the selection of artists and performers for programs and events sponsored by the Mercer Island arts council.
6. Support and foster an arts community that embraces the cultural diversity of its citizens and recognizes their contributions to the cultural landscape, including honoring and featuring local artists.
7. Explore opportunities to obtain private, local, state and/or federal funds to promote arts and cultural opportunities in the city.

8. Facilitate communication and cooperation with existing organizations including schools, businesses, non-profits, art organizations, foundations and other community groups to bring artists and audiences together.

9. Advise on other matters as directed by the city council.

### **3.55.030 Membership.**

#### **A. Qualifications.**

1. Applicants who have an interest in the performing, visual, literary and other arts, culture, and heritage programs, projects, and/or events as evidenced by training, experience or actions will be given preference for appointment; however, a broad mix of occupational backgrounds and experiences is desired.

2. An intent of the appointment process shall be to evenly represent the areas of interest as stated above, as well as provide a geographic balance among the members. Appointed members shall represent the public interest and not specific interest groups and reflect the city's diverse community.

#### **B. Members**

1. Number. The Mercer Island arts council shall consist of nine members.

2. Residency. City residency is required.

3. Terms. The term of each member is four years and expires on May 31 of the last year of the term or until the member's successor is appointed and qualified. The year of expiration of the terms of the positions shall be staggered with the following groups of positions expiring in successive years: Positions 1, 2 and 3; Positions 4 and 5; Positions 6 and 7; Positions 8 and 9.

4. Term Limits. No member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. If a member is appointed to a vacancy with two or more years remaining on the term, that term will be deemed a full term. If a member is appointed to a vacancy with less than two years remaining in the term, that term will not count toward the two-consecutive term limit.

5. Staff Liaison. The city manager shall appoint a staff liaison to assist with support services for the Mercer Island arts council. Such staff support shall include, but not be limited to, the development of work plans and schedules, guidelines and procedures, correspondence, and agenda preparation and distribution.

6. Council Liaison. The mayor and deputy mayor shall annually designate one councilmember to serve as a liaison between the city council and the Mercer Island arts

council.

C. Appointment. Members shall be appointed by the mayor and deputy mayor subject to confirmation by the city council. Members shall be appointed and confirmed without respect to political affiliations and shall serve without compensation.

D. Removal. Members may be removed by the mayor and deputy mayor, with the concurrence of the city council, for neglect of duty, conflict of interest, malfeasance in office, or other just cause, or for unexcused absence from more than three (3) consecutive regular meetings. The decision of the city council shall be final and there shall be no appeal therefrom. Members finding themselves unable to regularly attend meetings are expected to resign and notify the chair and staff liaison.

E. Vacancies. Vacancies occurring other than through the expiration of terms shall be filled for the unexpired terms in the same manner as described previously herein.

**3.55.040 Meetings – Organization.**

The Mercer Island arts council shall determine the time and place of its meetings and other rules and regulations, which shall be on file with the city clerk.

**3.55.040 1% for art in public places fund.**

The Mercer Island arts council shall recommend projects to the city council, using appropriations from qualifying capital improvements projects that are pooled into the 1% for art in public places fund, in accordance with MICC 4.40.200(F) and (H).

# **CITY OF MERCER ISLAND MERCER ISLAND ARTS COUNCIL**

## **BYLAWS**

The Mercer Island Arts Council (“Arts Council”) is an advisory board to the Mercer Island City Council (“City Council”) as established by Ordinances No. A-40 and A-41, passed by the City Council August 12, 1985, and codified as MICC 3.55. These bylaws constitute a supplement to said documents, providing further statements of the organization, procedures, activities, and objectives of the Arts Council. In any instance in which these bylaws might be interpreted to be contrary to said documents, the latter shall govern.

### **ARTICLE I – MISSION STATEMENT**

The Arts Council's mission is to nurture, promote, and support quality arts and culture activities for the community of Mercer Island.

### **ARTICLE II – DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Arts Council’s purpose is to advise and make recommendations to the City Council and other boards and commissions on matters related to arts and culture on Mercer Island.

#### **The Arts Council goals are to:**

- Advocate the arts, artists, and arts organizations of Mercer Island.
- Stimulate and promote community awareness, education, and enjoyment of the fine arts.
- Support performing, visual, and literary arts programs, projects, and events.

As an advisory board, the Arts Council recommends policies related to arts and culture, allocates funding from the Arts Council operating budget, and proposes arts and culture projects and initiatives. All recommendations are subject to City Council approval and staff capacity.

#### **The Arts Council’s duties and responsibilities are to:**

- Develop the arts and culture plan as a component of the city of Mercer Island’s comprehensive plan and provide recommendations on periodic updates to the plan as directed by City Council.
- Provide a forum for the community to express their views on arts and culture and serve as a central body to promote, develop, stimulate, and encourage arts organizations, artists, and arts participation in Mercer Island.
- Establish guidelines for and advise other boards and commissions on the commissioning, selection, and placement of permanent or temporary works of art in Mercer Island. Develop recommendations to City Council for use of the 1% for Art in Public Places fund (MICC 4.40.200).



- Review the suitability and advise on the acceptance of art works intended as gifts to the city of Mercer Island.
- Participate in the selection of artists and performers for programs and events sponsored by the Arts Council.
- Support and foster an inclusive arts community that embraces the cultural diversity of its citizens and recognizes their contributions to the cultural landscape, including honoring and featuring local artists.
- Explore opportunities to obtain private, local, state, and/or federal funds to promote arts and cultural opportunities in Mercer Island.
- Facilitate communication and cooperation with existing organizations including schools, businesses, nonprofits, art organizations, foundations, and other community groups to bring artists and audiences together.
- Advise on other matters as directed by City Council.

### **ARTICLE III – ORGANIZATION**

#### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

The Arts Council consists of nine persons recommended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and subject to appointment by the City Council. Members serve a term of four years and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Each member's term shall expire on the last day of May.

#### **2. OFFICERS**

The elected officers of the Arts Council shall consist of a Chair and Vice Chair. The term of office for Chair and Vice Chair is one year. Each officer may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Officer terms take effect beginning with the regular January meeting and the election cycle is repeated annually.

If the Chair or Vice Chair vacates the position, the Arts Council will nominate and vote for a current member to fill the position at the Arts Council's next regular meeting.

#### **Election Process**

At the Arts Council's December meeting, the following process is conducted to elect new officer positions:

- Place motion to elect Chair and Vice Chair on the agenda.
- Take nominations for the position of Chair from the floor.
- Nominations do not require a second vote.
- If no further nominations, the Chair declares nominations closed.
- Voting takes place in the order nominations are made.
- If there is only one nomination, board members will vote on that nomination by a voice vote.

- If there is more than one nomination, each will be voted on separately by a roll-call vote of the members present.
- Once a nominee receives a simple majority vote, the nominee is declared elected to the position.
- If none of the nominees receive a majority vote, nominations are requested again, and the process is repeated until a candidate receives a majority vote.
- The process is repeated for Vice Chair.

### **Officer Duties**

- Facilitate Arts Council meetings in a fair, efficient, productive, and informative manner.
- Act as the primary Arts Council representatives to City Council.
- Serve as the primary line of communication to City staff.
- Work with City staff to schedule meetings and develop meeting agendas.
- Appoint committee chairs.
- The Vice Chair attends meetings with staff and the Chair and fulfills duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.

## **3. COMMITTEES**

The Arts Council includes six standing committees, and special or ad-hoc committees may be created as-needed. Committees are chaired by board members appointed by the officers, and committee members may be Arts Council members or other appropriate volunteers. Due to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 42.30 RCW), a committee shall contain fewer members than a quorum of the whole Arts Council.

### **Standing Committees**

The following are the standing committees of the Arts Council.

- Community Relations: Assists with coordinating efforts related to public relations and community outreach on behalf of the Arts Council and its programs.
- Gallery: Assists with programming the Mercer Island Gallery at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center and the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery.
- Literary: Assists with fostering appreciation of literature in the community by coordinating literary programs and collaborating with literary groups.
- Performing Arts: Assists with coordinating music, theater, and other performing arts programs.
- Public Art: Assists with stewarding Mercer Island's public art collection.
- Special Projects: Assists with coordinating special programs and projects as they arise.

Detailed descriptions for standing committees are provided in the Arts Council Organization Manual.

### **Selection of Committee Chairs and Members**

At the December meeting, staff will distribute Committee Interest Forms to board members. Members will return the forms to the Chair-elect. The Chair-elect, Vice Chair-elect, and staff liaisons will determine committee chair and member appointments and announce them at the January meeting. Committee chairs and members assume duties for one year beginning with the regular January meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV - OPERATIONS**

### **1. MEETINGS**

#### **Regular & Special Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Arts Council convene at 6:30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center. Special meetings may be called by the Arts Council Chair, the Vice Chair, staff, or the mayor by giving at least 24 hours advance notice to members and the City's paper of record in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. The notice must specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted at the special meeting.

#### **Officer Meetings**

The Chair, Vice Chair, and staff liaisons may meet at least one week in advance of the regular Arts Council meeting to determine the meeting agenda.

### **2. ATTENDANCE**

Each board member should strive to attend all Arts Council meetings, to read materials beforehand, and to participate fully. Except in instances of sudden illness or other unforeseen hardship, members should advise the staff and the Chair/Vice Chair of their intended absence before 4:30 p.m. on the day prior to the regular meeting.

A board member shall forfeit his/her position by failing to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Arts Council without notifying the Chair and Vice Chair and otherwise participating in board work.

### **3. QUORUM**

A quorum consists of a simple majority of the appointed members of the Arts Council. No formal action of the Arts Council may be taken at any meeting where a quorum is not present. If a quorum is not reached at the start of a meeting, the Chair may choose to excuse the meeting.

### **4. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair may adjust or amend the order of business as needed. The Arts Council's regular meetings normally use the following format:

- Call to Order

- Appearances
- Approval of Minutes
- Budget Report
- Agenda Items
- Other Business
- Adjourn

The Chair shall conduct meetings in an open, fair, and transparent manner. In the event of a procedural question, the Chair will refer to Robert's Rules of Order for guidance.

## 5. STAFF SUPPORT

The Mercer Island city manager shall appoint a staff liaison to provide support services for the Arts Council. Staff support shall include assistance with development of work plans and schedules, guidelines and procedures, correspondence, and agenda preparation and distribution.

Staff is also responsible for distributing all meeting notices and cancellations to the public as well as generating and updating the website calendar for upcoming Arts Council meetings.

## **ARTICLE V – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

If an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists that affects the work of the Arts Council, it is each board member's responsibility to openly describe the issue and refrain from any subsequent board participation, deliberation, or voting on the subject.

## **ARTICLE VI – PUBLIC REPRESENTATION AND STATEMENTS FROM THE BOARD**

Any member of the board has the right to express personal views and opinions. However, statements representing the views or recommendations of the Arts Council must be authorized by a majority or consensus of the board. Consultation with staff on messaging is required.

## **ARTICLE VII – RESIGNATIONS**

In an event that an Arts Council member wishes to vacate his/her term early, resignation should be tendered in writing to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Existing Arts Council members, staff liaisons, and the City Clerk will then recruit for a new member to fill the vacancy through Mercer Island's established board/commission vacancy process.

## **ARTICLE VIII – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD**

The goal of the Arts Council is to provide recommendations to the City Council. When a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote is taken. Minority positions may be conveyed as well. To document the actions taken by the Arts Council, staff will prepare a written statement or memorandum, including the facts, findings, and rationale for the final recommendations.

The Chair in cooperation with the staff liaisons will present the recommendations to the City Council on behalf of the Arts Council.

#### **ARTICLE IX – REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

The Arts Council shall review bylaws annually at the Arts Council meeting in July. Proposed bylaw amendments must be approved by a majority of the Arts Council.

#### **ARTICLE X: CODE OF CONDUCT**

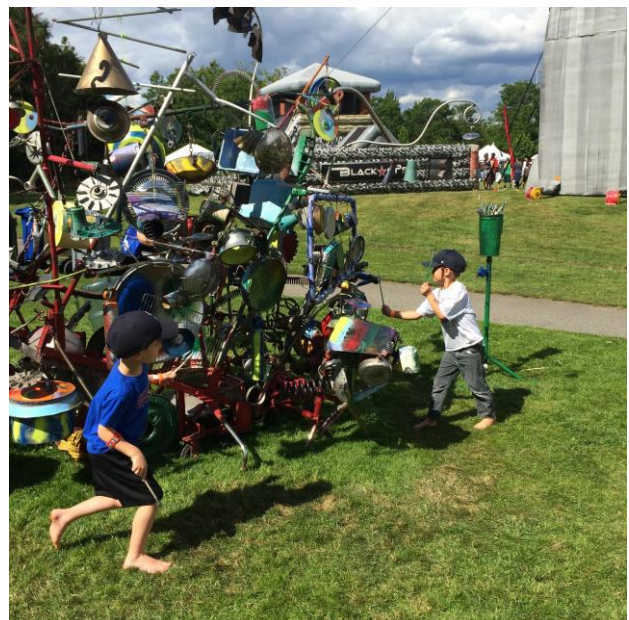
The Arts Council developed the following “group norms” to define the expectations for conduct by board members and the interaction among members. These are intended to be simple, self-explanatory, and self-enforced. The Chair is empowered to remind members as the need arises to employ these norms.

- Everyone contributes.
- Foster a collaborative environment.
- Hold each other accountable.
- Get to know each other and the community.
- Be transparent and accessible.

**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND  
COMPREHENSIVE ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN**



*\* Photo courtesy of Sandy Glass*



*\* Photo courtesy of Mercer Island Reporter*





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## **PREFACE**

The Mercer Island Arts Council recognizes the importance of art as an enhancing event, occasion, and activity on Mercer Island. Including a culture component in the city comprehensive plan reflects this community value. The council is committed to assimilating positive art experiences into everyday life for all community members and removing two basic barriers to advancement: (1) a lack of coordinated cooperation and (2) a lack of space. Our community has a historic tradition of public support for art, a value engendered in this cultural plan. Our objectives - aligned with those of the city council - are to embrace cultural vitality, identify and create adequate arts spaces, and collaborate with our unique and diverse community partners on Mercer Island.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The city of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining its rich and diverse cultural and arts identity. The arts play an integral role in the vitality and connectedness of a community. Indeed, the arts, culture, and heritage of a community are its heart.

Mercer Island is a town unique in its geographical character: it is a small town with distinct borders etched of lake water. Yet it is the most populated island situated in a lake in the country, comprised of a diverse population with rich cultural variety that nurtures and incubates creativity and invention from within its tight boundaries. Its identity was forged of ancient myth – of a lake that sank into the water at night and resurfaced each dawn. Not unlike a more famous mythical island that is shrouded in mist and magic. But unlike Avalon, Mercer Island’s magic is real. It is home to innovators, intellects, and artists all deeply committed to shaping an enchanted quality of living for its community.

It is this drive, and a commitment to lacing the arts into a shared ethos, that led a sizeable effort in the early 1990s to build art into public life on the Island. It was a vision born then that remains: ***to assimilate positive art experiences into everyday life for all community members.***

Yet more recently, division and process have weighted cultural and artistic progress on Mercer Island. Public input reveals ***two basic barriers to advancement: (1) a lack of coordinated cooperation and (2) a lack of space.*** The city now aspires to resurface its cultural code, to bridge the gaps serving as barriers to progress, and to recommit to the preservation and cultivation of its heritage and arts identity.

By establishing this arts and culture comprehensive plan, the city formalizes its dedication to advancing the enrichment and unification of the whole community



through the arts. By delineating Mercer Island’s vision, challenges, and goals, this plan serves as a city blueprint to build upon existing arts capital and ensure arts are an essential support for Mercer Island’s present and future.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Mercer Island has a Historic Tradition of Public Support for Art.**

Mercer Island is a community deeply committed to enriching its quality of life through the arts. In 1985, the Mercer Island City Council passed ordinances establishing the Mercer Island Arts Council (MIAC) and the Municipal Art Fund. MIAC consists of 11 “working” board members who strive to nurture, promote, and support quality cultural art activities for the community. In 1985, MIAC won the National Parks and Recreation Association Dorothy Mullen Arts and Humanities award for its region. Its programs have won the award four additional times, and the national award in 1987.

In the early 1990s, Mercer Island experienced a dramatic reconfiguration of its landscape due to the widening of Interstate 90 and construction of Aubrey Davis Park (formerly “The Lid” park). In this change, the city saw opportunity. It envisioned enhancing the open space created by the corridor and complementing this unique landscape by providing positive public art experiences for a broad audience. To accomplish this, the city aimed to cover the entire two-and-a-half mile strip of I90 running through the city with sculptures, water parks, and trees. In this process, Mercer Island became the first community in the state to adopt a comprehensive plan that included the incorporation of artwork into parkland, natural open spaces, trails, and public life.<sup>1</sup>

Building on this innovative foundation and a vision to bring art to all, Mercer Island has continued to support arts and culture through its own programming and in associations with local arts organizations.

### **A small snapshot of recent arts activity includes the following:**

In 2009, the City approved a one-time emergency grant (funds moved from the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund for this purpose) to support Youth Theater Northwest.<sup>2</sup> In 2013, the city commissioned and installed a replacement play sculpture titled *Kenton’s Dragon* in Deane’s Children Park.<sup>3</sup> The city has partnered for twenty-five consecutive years with Wooden O/Seattle Shakespeare Company to present annual

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<sup>1</sup> Mercer Island 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

<sup>2</sup> Mercer Island City Council Meeting Minutes, June 15, 2009, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?AMID=1647>.

<sup>3</sup> See Mercer Island Arts Council Archive of Minutes, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?SectionID=-1&CCBID=2>.

Shakespeare in the Park performances at Luther Burbank Park. Each year, the productions draw more than five thousand local attendees.<sup>4</sup> Either by acquisition or donation, the city has added at least eight works to its public art collection in the past five years, including two murals at Luther Burbank park and a sculpture installation at Fire Station 92 on the south end commemorating 9/11.<sup>5</sup> The city maintains its indoor and outdoor galleries, which produce thousands of dollars of revenue for the city yearly.<sup>6</sup> The city supports local and regional musicians through its Mostly Music in the Park program, which produces live music performances for thousands of attendees yearly.<sup>7</sup>

### **Mercer Island Supports a Diverse Series of Arts Programming.**

The city provides art experiences that complement and celebrate its unique history, culture, and landscape. Mercer Island encourages positive art engagement for the broadest possible audience by offering regular music concerts, film series, outdoor Shakespeare performances, and community dances. It houses a rotating indoor art gallery, maintains an outdoor sculpture gallery, and sustains a large public art collection comprised of indoor and outdoor pieces, including paintings, sculpture, murals, and a town center streetscape project that embeds symbolic historical artwork into city infrastructure.

### **Highlights:**

**Mostly Music in the Park:** Mercer Island Arts Council's annual summer concert series. Concerts feature various bands and artists from around the region, performing a wide variety of music.



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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, (In 2016, artists Sandy Glass and Jose Orantes completed a mosaic mural located in the Luther Burbank park playground incorporating student artwork. Fire Station 92 artwork "Gateway of Service" installed in 2015.).

<sup>6</sup> See Mercer Island Arts Council Archive of Minutes, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?SectionID=-1&CCBID=2>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

**Mercer Island Gallery:** Artwork by regional artists on display and for sale at this public gallery. Exhibits are updated approximately every two months.



**The Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery:** Located along the I-90 Corridor on Sunset Highway between 77th Ave SE and 80th Ave SE, the gallery displays sculptures for at least one year, on a rotating basis. The gallery was the first of its kind in the state. In 1997, in recognition of the gallery, the Arts Council received the Pacific Northwest Regional Arts and Humanities Award, given by the National Recreation & Park Association.



**Public Art Collection:** In addition to public outdoor sculpture, the city has a collection of small sculpture, paintings, murals, and other two-dimensional work in various public buildings, including the library, city hall, and the Mercer Island Community & Event Center.





**Sponsoring Community Building Art Events:** A community dance event is offered once a year incorporating live music, a dance lesson, and social dance time. Rock painting activities are sponsored at events to promote the community building “MI Rocks” movement. Interactive art installations are sponsored for the annual Summer Celebration event. MIAC hosted Washington State Poet Laureate, Todd Marshall, in 2015 for readings, writing events, and workshops.



*\* Photo courtesy of Ari Levitt*



## **Mercer Island is Home to an Array of Arts Organizations and Activities.**

A sizable number of organizations support and house arts-focused programs on Mercer Island. The Island is home to hundreds of artists. It is the decades long home of an acclaimed youth theater group. It supports a world-renowned dance program for individuals with Parkinson's disease as well as several quality youth dance programs. It is home to a visual arts league as well as many art galleries. The arts play a central role in Mercer Island life and culture.

### **Highlights:**

**Carrucio's:** Culinary arts event space.

**Children's Youth Conservatory/Island Youth Ballet:** Youth ballet instruction and performances.

**Clarke and Clarke Art + Artifacts:** Art and objects of art gallery.

**Dance for PD®:** World acclaimed Dance for Parkinson's program is offered in conjunction with Seattle Theater Group, Mercer Island Parks and Recreation, and the Mercer Island Arts Council. The program provides adapted dance classes for people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers.

**Fine Arts Advisory Council:** Nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting K-12 fine arts education in the Mercer Island School District.

**Island Books:** Bookseller hosting author events, book clubs, and children's programs.

**Island Choral Experience:** Community-based youth choral and performing arts company.

**Mercer Island Art Uncorked:** Annual music, art, food, and wine tasting festival held in the Greta Hackett Outdoor Sculpture Gallery.

**Mercer Island Center for the Arts:** Organization founded in 2013 with the goal of building a community arts facility on Mercer Island.

**Mercer Island Historic Society:** Established in 1954, the Mercer Island Historical Society collects, preserves, researches, records, and makes available the heritage of Mercer Island.

**Mercer Island School District:** Provides diverse art instruction and opportunity for students and includes the arts in its "Vision 2020" mission.

**Mercer Island Sister City Association:** Nonprofit community organization that promotes educational, cultural, and other exchanges between the citizens of Thonon-les-Bains, France, and Mercer Island.

**Mercer Island Visual Arts League:** Founded in 1961, MIVAL supports the visual arts of its members and the community. Members show their work throughout the year in local businesses and at MIVAL Gallery in the Town Center.

**Musical Mind Studio:** Youth musical education featuring conventional and adaptive training techniques.

**Nancy Stewart:** In conjunction with her pilot project, Sing with Our Kids, Nancy provides music resources and events in the community.

**Russian Chamber Music Foundation:** Organization providing Russian music performances, programs, and education.

**Stroum Jewish Community Center:** Community center hosting a wide array of arts events, including a film festival, films, music, speaker events, comedy, theater, and culinary arts events.

**SZ Gallery:** Art gallery offering monthly art walks and events.

**Youth Theatre Northwest:** Educational arts organization founded in 1984, providing drama education, performing opportunities, and live theater experiences for children and young adults.

## **CULTURAL VITALITY AND THE ISLAND’S ARTS GAPS**

Despite Mercer Island’s rich tapestry of art and cultural offerings, there are gaps to be bridged. ***Mercer Island needs community art and heritage space and coordinated cooperation directing its art and culture activities.***

Numerous comments expressing the need for art space and cooperation amongst arts groups were collected at the Mercer Island Arts Council public engagement meeting on March 14, 2018.<sup>8</sup> It is not the first time the public has conveyed these challenges – they are long-standing issues that have been voiced in a variety of forums and engagement processes.

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<sup>8</sup> Mercer Island Arts Council Meeting, March 14, 2018, *Public Comment to the Draft Comprehensive Art Plan*, <http://www.mercergov.org/files/PublicEngagementDraftResponses.pdf>.

### **Mercer Island Embraces Cultural Vitality.**

A sparkling feature of input received through these public engagement processes is the confirmation that Mercer Islanders embrace the integration of arts and culture into the concept of quality of life. A belief that arts are integral to the sustenance of a good community is prevalent.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, cultural vitality is “the evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities.”<sup>10</sup> It is comprised of three chief domains: presence of opportunity for participation, cultural participation, and support.<sup>11</sup> Island community input demonstrates the need for further growth in the first domain: opportunity for participation, which flows from space availability and cooperation. Addressing these two unique Island needs will provide better opportunity for the fusion of art into the daily life of Islanders.

### **The Island Lacks Adequate Arts Space.**

Island children’s theater group, Youth Theatre Northwest (YTN), lost its permanent home when the school district reclaimed its district-owned theater for construction of a new elementary school in 2011. Between 2011 and 2013, the city began addressing the impending need for a new home for YTN. This process revealed a larger community need for art space.<sup>12</sup> Demand for art activity space has only compounded since this time.

In 2014, a “for-profit business” displaced the community center art room.<sup>13</sup> Schedules at the two available performing art venues on the island, Mercer Island High School Performing Arts Center and the Stroum Jewish Community Center auditorium, are consistently full. Rents and fees for these spaces are rising. Churches on the island have historically provided space for art activities; however, changes in tax implications for these arrangements are leading to constraints on availability. The Historical Society has run out of space for storage of important historical documentation.

A multidisciplinary-oriented, centralized arts facility will serve not only to improve availability for arts on the Island but also act as a magnet for collaborative force.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/50676/311392-Cultural-Vitality-in-Communities-Interpretation-and-Indicators.PDF>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> City of Mercer Island City Council Meeting and Study Session Agenda and Packet, February 6, 2018, <https://sirepub.mercergov.org/meetings/cache/108/1xvxwb55umwiz145ykh02k55/45220504102018113531804.PDF>.

<sup>13</sup> Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, February June 11, 2014, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2266> (describing need for art space and better collaboration).



### **Coordinated Arts Cooperation Will Benefit the Island.**

A lack of coordination among arts groups on the island is a long-standing issue and a distinct barrier to opportunity and rich cultural development. Island art groups have made regular appearances at Mercer Island Arts Council meetings expressing the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of arts collaboration resources in the community.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, there is a long-standing perception in the community that the arts operate insularly on Mercer Island. Community art organizations have called for increased cooperation through resource development and focus on collaboration.<sup>15</sup>

Leadership at the Mercer Island Fine Arts Advisory Council has recently recognized this deficit and is working to improve island arts organizations' relationships by forming the "All for Arts" initiative.<sup>16</sup> Mercer Island is a small, robust, and tight-knit community. Communication among the arts organizations on the island should reflect this same sense of solidarity. Enhancing alliances of the local arts community will improve availability of resources and encourage healthier flow of information.

Building vision and goals into the city comprehensive plan that address the Island's arts and cultural needs operates as a first step in forging a thriving future for Mercer Island. By adopting this plan, the city welcomes the opportunity to address its gaps and to commit to enhancing the vitality and economic vibrancy of Mercer Island life.

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<sup>14</sup> Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, February 14, 2018, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2656> (describing need for collaboration); Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, April 13, 2016, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2472> (documenting local organization request for collaboration); Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, September 9, 2015, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2391> (documenting need for space update); Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, June 11, 2014, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2266> (describing need for art space and better collaboration).

<sup>15</sup> Shirley Qiu, *Mercer Island Gets in Touch with its Artsy Side*, March 13, 2016 Crosscut, <https://crosscut.com/2016/03/merc-island-gets-in-touch-with-its-artsy-side>, (The need for better cooperation is historic and could be addressed through a community arts facility. Community arts advocates believe that arts organizations have "operated in different silos" and a central facility could act as a focal point for local organizations, improving cooperation challenges on the island.).

<sup>16</sup> Mercer Island Arts Council Minutes, February 14, 2018, <http://www.mercergov.org/Agendas.asp?Display=Minutes&AMID=2656> (documenting "All for Arts" presentation on the need for collaboration.)

## **VISION AND GOALS**

***Vision:*** *To assimilate positive art experiences into everyday life for all community members.*

### **Mercer Island Aims for Deliberate, Focused Support for the Arts.**

To realize its vision Mercer Island will build on its foundational support for the arts to help foster economic and cultural sustainability in the years ahead. Through creative placemaking and innovative approaches to town center planning and community development, Mercer Island looks to leverage the power of arts and culture to advance livability, sustainability, and equity. Using strategies that honor Mercer Island's unique arts traditions and integrate innovative approaches to economic and cultural stimulation, Mercer Island will centralize and celebrate the role of art in our community as it crafts a vibrant future.

Broadly defined goals uphold the vision through targeted policies to guide the city in its planning processes. Mercer Island's arts and culture comprehensive plan goals are: (1) to support the arts on Mercer Island; (2) to nurture public art on Mercer Island; and (3) to preserve Mercer Island's heritage.

These goals aim not only to foster community connection and improved quality of life but also to promote economic development. Direct and indirect economic impacts of investment in the arts are real and measurable. Using an input-output economic analysis model, Americans for the Arts' Economic Impact Study documents the cultural and economic benefits of the arts.<sup>17</sup> On a national level in 2015, the nation's nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$166.3 billion in commerce represented by \$63.8 billion in spending by arts organizations. This activity leveraged an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related spending by audiences. This economic activity supported 4.6 million jobs and generated \$27.5 billion in government revenue. The impact of this market is significant. Promoting increased arts investment and activity at a local level in the Mercer Island community would likewise drive substantial economic stimulus and revenue.

### **Arts Add Vitality to the Economy.**

The city's commitment to prioritizing the arts in its forecasting and visioning occurs simultaneous to a greater Washington state concept to build a network of arts driven communities that intentionally foster economic growth through the arts and creative industries.

In May 2017, governor Inslee signed into law HB 1183 which, "[a]uthoriz[es] specified local governments, including municipalities . . . to designate a portion of

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<sup>17</sup> American for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: Summary Report*, 2015, [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF\\_Files/ARTS\\_AEPsummary\\_loRes.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/ARTS_AEPsummary_loRes.pdf)

their territory as a creative district subject to certification by the Washington state arts commission.”<sup>18</sup> As a result of this legislation, the state arts commission, ArtsWA, launched an implementation program to develop certified creative districts in the state. Certified creative districts are community defined geographic areas that are devoted to developing and promoting arts, culture, and creativity for the purpose of building and supporting a robust creative economy.

Indeed, the impact arts and culture have on economic vitality are well-documented. In the United States, the arts and artists are drivers of innovation, help shape and direct economic achievement, and give the United States relevance in the global economy. Nationally, the arts have a remarkable presence. More than 670,000 or 4.01% of all businesses are involved in the creation or distribution of the arts, and they employ 3.48 million people (2.04% of all U.S. employees).<sup>19</sup> The vitality of Washington State’s creative economy reflects national statistics. In 2014, creative industries in Washington State represented \$19.2 billion in total industry earnings and employed more than 147,000 people.<sup>20</sup> Mercer Island’s Creative Vitality Index surpasses the state value of .97. With a Creative Vitality Index value of 1.31 and a population of more than 23,000 people in 2016, more than 1,100 were employed in creative jobs.<sup>21</sup> Supporting the arts is not just good press or simply for the kids; it’s business best practice.

Through implementation of this arts and culture plan and leveraging its existing and potential arts and culture assets, the city seeks to expand opportunities to unite the community and address financial challenges.

### **Approach.**

#### **Goal 1:** Support the arts on Mercer Island.

- Policy: Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events.
- Policy: Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum.

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<sup>18</sup> HB 1183 – 2017-18,  
<http://apps2.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?Year=2017&BillNumber=1183&Year=2017&BillNumber=1183>.

<sup>19</sup> Americans for the Arts, *The Creative Industries in the United States*, 2017,  
[https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2017/by\\_program/reports\\_and\\_data/creative/2017\\_UnitedStates\\_NationalOnePager\\_Color.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2017/by_program/reports_and_data/creative/2017_UnitedStates_NationalOnePager_Color.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Creative Vitality Suite, *Snapshot of the Arts in Washington State*, 2014,  
[https://www.arts.wa.gov/media/dynamic/docs/Washington\\_Page\\_1.jpg](https://www.arts.wa.gov/media/dynamic/docs/Washington_Page_1.jpg).

<sup>21</sup> Creative Vitality Suite, *Snapshot of the Arts in 98040*, 2016, [See Attachment A].

- Policy: Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships.
- Policy: Promote cooperation and local partnerships between the City of Mercer Island and artists, arts providers, nonprofit organizations, urban designers, architects, developers, and others to help improve the quality of the built environment.
- Policy: Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education.
- Policy: Coordinate and collaborate with local, regional, and national arts organizations, and through public and private partners to integrate art into the community via permanent installations and special events.
- Policy: Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement.
- Policy: Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall city economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy.
- Policy: Support:
  - Efforts to secure space for art and cultural activities;
  - The establishment of a community maker space;
  - Opportunities for housing and/or live/work space for artists; and,
  - A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility.
- Policy: Maintain a parity of public space for art and cultural activities when existing public art and cultural activity space is modified or eliminated.

**Goal 2:** Nurture public art on Mercer Island.

- Policy: Encourage diversity in public art.
- Policy: Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement.
- Policy: Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art.
- Policy: Incorporate public art in town center development design and site features.

- Policy: Maintain requirement that at least 1% of qualifying capital improvement projects' costs are set aside for public art acquisition, repair, and maintenance.
- Policy: Make an effort to incorporate public art into and surrounding transportation projects.
- Policy: Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes.

**Goal 3:** Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.

- Policy: Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources.
- Policy: Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials.
- Policy: Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations.
- Policy: Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community.

## **ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENT**

Adoption of this arts and culture comprehensive plan is the first step in supporting and directing action to sustain and implement the policies to achieve Mercer Island's stated vision and goals. The city and public are eager to move forward together, as a unified body, to further enrich and enhance the community via arts and culture investment.

Art brings people together; it builds community. Mercer Island is a community accessed only via bridges. It is fortunate to have bridges linking to world-class art opportunities and facilities. However, bridges are needed not only to access art across a lake; bridges must be built within Mercer Island's community, to facilitate cooperation, solidify vision, and embolden a future flourishing with art opportunities of its own right.

### The Bridge Builder

An old man going a lone highway,  
Came at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm, vast, and deep and wide,  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned, when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim, near,  
"You are wasting strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day;  
You never again will pass this way;  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide-  
Why build you this bridge at the evening tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head:  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followeth after me today,  
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm, that has been naught to me,  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

- Will Allen Dromgoole

# ATTACHMENT A

