



# PCB 24-09 Open Space Zone

Planning Commission Special Meeting  
May 8, 2024



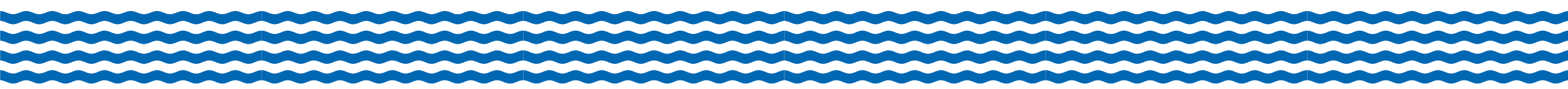


# Agenda

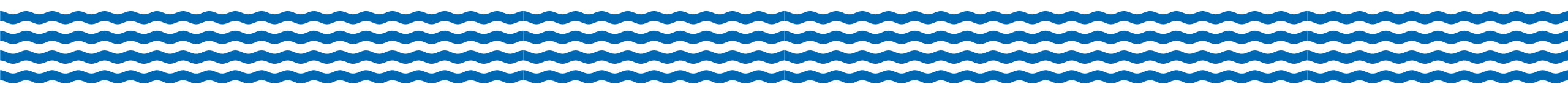
- Background
- Overview of the proposed Open Space Zone
- Next Steps
- Discussion

# 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 Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the Planning Commission (PC) 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.

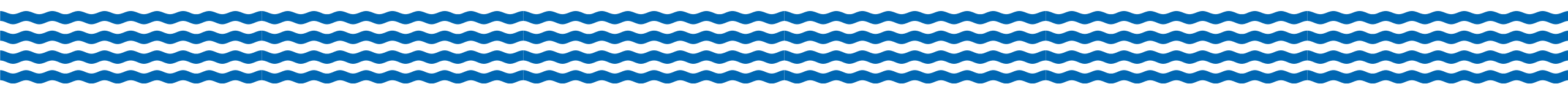


# Background

- 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 final recommendation anticipated in 2025.
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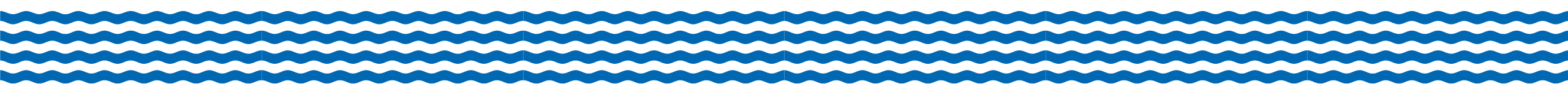
# Background

- The Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) was invited to hold joint meetings with the PRC to provide input on the proposed Open Space Zone and the associated development regulations.
- The PRC and OSCT held four meetings in March and April to develop the new zone.



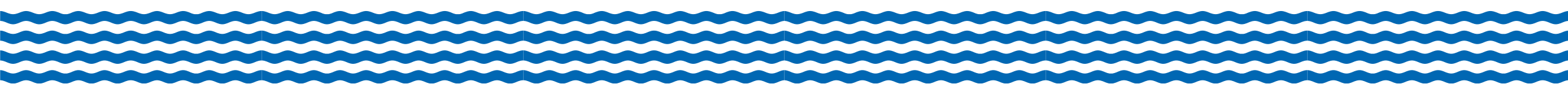
# Background

- The PRC and OSCT each voted to approve the joint recommendation on the new Open Space Zone. Your packet includes the following:
  - Exhibit 1: Inventory of Open Space Land
  - Exhibit 2: PRC and OSCT Recommendation
  - Exhibit 3: Draft Zoning Map Amendment
  - Exhibit 4: Draft Open Space Development Regulations
  - Exhibit 5: Draft Land Use Map Amendment



# Tonight's Meeting

- Staff will run through a few more slides introducing the proposed Open Space Zone.
- At the conclusion, **Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Peter Struck** and **Open Space Conservancy Trust Chair Geraldine Poor** are here to discuss the recommendation and answer any questions you have.
- Thank you to the PRC and the OSCT for the thorough and thoughtful work.



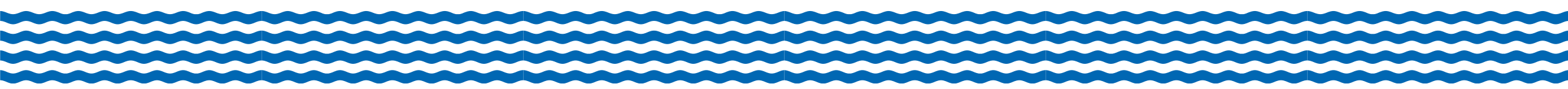


# Open Space Zone



# Overview of Proposed Open Space Zone

- 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.



# Inventory of Open Space Land

| Name                                    | Address  | PROS Plan Classification | Ownership | Current Zoning | Acres  | Primary Purpose                  | Notes   |
|---|--|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Cayhill Open Space</b>               | 5400 East Mercer Way                             | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 1.08   | Green space                      | No amenities.   |
| <b>Clise Park</b>                       | SE 40 <sup>th</sup> & ICW                        | Open Space               | City      | R-8.4          | 1.47   | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Ellis Pond</b>                       | 90 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE                          | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 4.13   | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Engstrom Open Space</b>              | E Mercer Way                                     | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 8.51   | Recreation (trails), green space | Owned by Open Space Conservancy Trust, managed by City.     |
| <b>Gallagher Hill</b>                   | 3701 SE Gallagher Hill Rd                        | Open Space               | City      | MF-3           | 11.29  | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Hollerbach Open Space</b>            | SE 45 <sup>th</sup> St & 91 <sup>st</sup> Ave SE | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 5.23   | Green space                      | Easement at SE 45 <sup>th</sup> St. entrance. No amenities. |
| <b>Mercerdale Hillside</b>              | 7415 SE 27 <sup>th</sup> St                      | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 18.14  | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>N Mercerdale Hillside</b>            | 7415 SE 27 <sup>th</sup> St                      | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 5.11   | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Parkwood Ridge Open Space</b>        | 9165 Parkwood Ridge Rd                           | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 3.79   | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Pioneer Park</b>                     | Island Crest Way & 68 <sup>th</sup> St           | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 113.67 | Recreation (trails), green space | Owned by Open Space Conservancy Trust, managed by City.     |
| <b>Salem Woods</b>                      | 6300 90 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE                     | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 0.32   | Green space                      | No amenities.   |
| <b>SE 47<sup>th</sup> St Open Space</b> | 4701 E Mercer Way                                | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 1.27   | Green space                      | No amenities.   |
| <b>SE 50<sup>th</sup> St Open Space</b> | SE 50 <sup>th</sup> St & ICW                     | Open Space               | City      | R-8.4          | 1.78   | Green space                      | No amenities.   |
| <b>SE 53<sup>rd</sup> Pl Open Space</b> | 9100 SE 53 <sup>rd</sup> Pl                      | Open Space               | City      | R-15           | 24.01  | Recreation (trails), green space |   |
| <b>Upper Luther Burbank Park</b>        | 84 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE & SE 33 <sup>rd</sup> St | Open Space               | City      | R-9.6          | 18.05  | Recreation (trails), green space |   |

# Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Open Space Zone is to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance Open Space Lands, which provide habitat for native plants and animals and ecological services including stormwater management and carbon sequestration. Open Space Lands provide access to nature for passive recreation and relaxation and educational and stewardship opportunities.



# Designation Requirements

Open Space Lands must be owned, leased, or managed by the City of Mercer Island and fulfill the purpose statement to qualify for classification as Open Space Zone.



# Uses Permitted

1. Trails.
2. Passive recreational uses.
3. Passive recreational amenities.
4. Habitat restoration and enhancement.
5. Temporary uses compatible with the purpose of the Open Space Zone, as authorized by the City Manager or designee.
6. Wireless communications facilities. (Only if otherwise permitted by [MICC 19.06.040](#) and/or [MICC 19.06.070](#) and as subject to design and concealment standards as otherwise provided in the MICC).
7. Utilities, only where necessary for public safety or protection of the natural environment and no reasonable alternative location exists. Utilities should be underground, if feasible.

# Development Standards

## Setbacks

- Zero (0) feet if adjacent property is zoned PI, TC, PBZ, CO, or B.
- Twenty (20) feet if adjacent property is zoned R-8.4, R-9.6, R-12, R-15, MF-2L, MF-2, or MF-3.
- Exemptions: fences, gates, culverts, trails, landscaping, and furnishings.

## Restrooms

- Restrooms are only permitted on properties larger than 100 acres and are limited to 300 square feet.



# Development Standards

## Signs and Kiosks

- Signs are governed by MICC 19.12.080, except as follows:
  - Interior signs are limited to three square feet and entrance signs are limited to ten square feet of surface area.
  - Exterior lighted signs are prohibited.
  - Natural colors are required unless necessary for public health, safety, or maintenance.
- Kiosks are limited to 15 square feet of surface area and ten feet in height.
- On Open Space Land larger than 100 acres, kiosks are limited to 22 square feet of surface area and ten feet in height.

## Trail Standards

- Trails are limited to eight feet in width.



# Definitions

- ***Kiosk.*** A small structure in a public area used for providing information.
- ***Natural Colors.*** Muted colors that are consistent with the natural landscape of Open Space lands.
- ***Open Space Land(s).*** A parcel of land that is largely undeveloped and is suitable as a natural habitat.
- ***Passive Recreational Amenities.*** Structures, furnishings, or developments that are specifically provided for passive recreational uses, such as signs, trails, restrooms, kiosks, benches, bike racks, etc.
- ***Passive Recreational Uses.*** Passive recreational uses have a low impact on the facilities used, and include activities such as hiking, wildlife viewing, walking, jogging, or picnicking. Passive recreational uses place minimal stress on a site's resources; as a result, passive recreational uses are highly compatible with natural resource protection.
- ***Temporary Structures, Uses, and Activities.*** A land use, structure, or activity that will only be in place for a limited period of time not to exceed 180 days in duration.
- ***Trail.*** An off-street path for passive recreational uses.



# Next Steps



# Next Steps

- Send written comments to [carson.hornsby@mercerisland.gov](mailto:carson.hornsby@mercerisland.gov) by 9:00 am on Monday, May 13, 2024.
- Comments will be compiled into a matrix for review at the May 15 meeting.
- The Commission should plan to make a recommendation on amendments to the Zoning Map, development regulations, and Land Use Map at the May 15 meeting.

## **Parks Zone**

- 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.



# Discussion

