

GMHB EXHIBIT 105



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6541
September 17, 2024
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6541: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Receive the City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendations and Complete Deliberations on the Proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan Amendments	☐ Discussion Only ☒ Action Needed: ☒ Motion ☐ Ordinance ☐ Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Complete deliberations on the proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan amendments and provide direction to the staff on next steps.	

DEPARTMENT:	Community Planning and Development
STAFF:	Jeff Thomas, Community Planning and Development Director Adam Zack, Senior Planner
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation – Transportation Element (CC-88) 2. City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation – Economic Development Element (CC-179) 3. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Parking Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development Element 4. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Sustainability and Environmental Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development Element 5. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Cultural Arts, Emergency Management, and ADA Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development, Land Use, Parks and Open Space, and Capital Facilities Elements 5a. Updated Land Use Element Track Changes (Reference Only) 5b. Updated Parks and Open Space Element Track Changes (Reference Only)
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to receive the recommendation from the Ad-Hoc City Council Committee, complete deliberations on City Council proposed amendments to the draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan, and direct staff to finalize the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan for public review and comment.

- On September 3, 2024, the City Council formed an Ad-Hoc Committee for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and referred seven proposed City Council amendments to this Committee for review and to prepare a recommendation for consideration by the full City Council.
- The Committee met on September 5 and 6, 2024 to complete its assigned work.
- On September 17, 2024, the City Council will receive, review, and approve the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations (**see Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2**).
- The City Manager performed a review of the Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendation to ensure consistency with other planning documents. The City Manager has prepared a summary of potential policy overlaps/conflicts for City Council review and consideration:
 - **Exhibit 3:** Reconciliation of proposed Transportation and Parking Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation on Economic Development Element).
 - **Exhibit 4:** Reconciliation of Sustainability and Environment Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation Economic Development)
 - Given the turn time between City Council meetings, this reconciliation is being presented to the full City Council as there was not an opportunity to hold another meeting with the Ad-Hoc Committee.
- The City Manager and staff also reviewed the Land Use Element and discovered that a section of goals and policies related to arts and culture and emergency management were omitted from the draft materials reviewed at the September 3, 2024 City Council meeting. These materials and recommended changes are presented as **Exhibit 5**.
- The staff are seeking final direction from the City Council on the recommendation from the Ad-Hoc Committee (**Exhibits 1 & 2**). In addition, the City Council may also wish to review and accept or reject the recommendations in **Exhibit 3, 4 & 5**.
- Taken together, the final direction from the City Council will inform the final development of the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan, which will be available for no less than 30 days for public review and comment.

BACKGROUND

The City began the 2024 periodic review of its Comprehensive Plan in March 2022, when the City Council approved the Scope of Work, Master Schedule, and Public Participation Plan (see [Resolution No. 1621](#)). Per the WA Growth Management Act (GMA), the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic review must be adopted by December 31, 2024.

The Planning Commission (PC) prepared public hearing drafts for each Comprehensive Plan Element, except for the Shoreline Master Program, over the course of 24 public meetings between March 2022 and May 2024. Drafts were posted to the [project website](#) for public review throughout the PC review process. The public had the opportunity to comment on the drafts throughout the process, including public comment opportunities during each PC meeting.

On May 29, 2024, the PC conducted a public hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan and began deliberating on its recommendation to the City Council. These deliberations continued at meetings on June 5 and June 12.

On June 12, 2024, the PC finalized its recommendation to the City Council and handed off their recommendation on July 16, 2024.

The following is a summary of key events and dates which have occurred during and since the last City Council meeting on July 16, 2024:

- **July 16, 2024:** The City Council received the Planning Commission draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan ([AB6510](#)) and established by motion a process and schedule for City Council proposed amendments to be submitted to staff during the August recess in preparation for deliberation on September 3, 2024.
- **July 25, 2024:** The WA Department of Commerce (Commerce) provided comments to the City on the draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan (Exhibit 2).
- **July 29, 2024 through August 12, 2024:** The City Council submitted proposed amendments to staff.
- **August 14, 2024:** Staff shared a preview of the City Council proposed amendment matrix with Each Councilmember for review of errors and omissions as well as an opportunity for Councilmembers to withdraw any proposed amendments.
- **August 21, 2024:** Staff shared with Councilmembers the preliminary drafts of exhibits for the September 3, 2024 meeting.
- **September 3, 2024:** The City Council completed deliberations on approximately 150 proposed City Council amendments in various categories with seven proposed amendments being referred to an appointed City Council Ad-Hoc Committee for further consideration and recommendation. The Ad-Hoc Committee members were Mayor Nice, council members Reynolds and Weinberg as well as Jen Dean, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce.
- **September 5 & 6, 2024:** The City Council Ad-Hoc Committee met to consider and formulate recommendations on the remaining seven proposed amendments.

Comprehensive Plan Elements

The Comprehensive Plan is composed of topic-specific elements that establish goals and policies. The goals detail what the City would like to accomplish in the next 20 years. The policies establish the high-level strategies the City will use to achieve its goals. The goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan elements are implemented through regulations, programs, and projects. The City Council will determine which actions the City will take to implement the updated goals and policies after the Comprehensive Plan elements are adopted.

Drafting New Elements

The City Council approved scope of work for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update included a substantial reworking of the Housing Element and development of two new Comprehensive Plan Elements: the Economic Development Element and the Parks and Open Space Element ([Res. No. 1621](#)).

In 2023, the approved scope of work was supplemented with additional tasks for the Housing Element in response to updated statewide requirements ([Res. No. 1645](#)). The Council-adopted scope of work included the formation of a Housing Work Group and Economic Development Work Group composed of Planning Commissioners and Councilmembers. These two work groups prepared the initial drafts of the Economic Development and Housing Elements, which the Planning Commission reviewed, refined with some amendments, and recommended for adoption to the City Council.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation (Exhibits 1 and 2)

There were two issues for the Ad-Hoc Committee to consider and formulate recommendations on – one City Council proposed amendment related to the Transportation Element and six City Council proposed amendments related to the Economic Development Element:

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation on Transportation Element (Exhibit 1)

The City Council proposed amendment referred to the Ad-Hoc Committee related to the Transportation Element stated:

Add a new Transportation Element Policy 11.4: “Explore the creation of policies to discourage residents of Town Center from using City streets and public parking facilities in place of building-provided parking facilities.”

City Council direction to the Ad-Hoc Committee was to consider replacing this proposed amendment with a proposed policy to reference the Town Center Parking Plan by reference. After consideration, the recommendation of the Ad-Hoc Committee included as **Exhibit 1** is to replace proposed amendment CC-88 with:

Add a new Transportation Element Policy 11.4: “Adopt the 2023 Town Center Parking Plan and its successors by reference.”

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation on Economic Development Element (Exhibit 2)

The six City Council proposed amendments referred to the Ad-Hoc Committee were related to the Economic Development Element. Two of these were substantial rewrites and the other four were surgical amendments. The Ad-Hoc Committee considered all these proposed amendments in its recommended draft, new log number CC-179 included as **Exhibit 2** as follows:

City Council Proposed Amendment Log #	Ad-Hoc Committee Result
CC-4 (Mayor Nice)	Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179
CC-166 (CM Reynolds)	Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179
CC-167 (CM Reynolds)	Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179
CC-168 (CM Reynolds)	Strike
CC-169 (CM Reynolds)	Strike
CC-172 (CM Weinberg)	Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179

City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Economic Development Element (Exhibits 3 and 4)

The City Manager performed a review of the Ad-Hoc Committee’s recommendation to ensure consistency with other plans. Through this work a number of potential policy overlaps/conflicts were identified for City Council review and consideration. These items are summarized in the following exhibits.

- **Exhibit 3:** Reconciliation of proposed Transportation and Parking Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation on Economic Development Element).
- **Exhibit 4:** Reconciliation of Sustainability and Environment Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation Economic Development)

Given the short turn time between City Council meetings, this reconciliation is being presented to the full City Council as there was not an opportunity to hold another meeting with the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Arts and Culture and Emergency Management (Exhibit 5)

The City Manager and staff also reviewed the Land Use Element and discovered that a section of goals and policies related to “arts and culture” and “emergency management” were omitted from the draft materials reviewed at the September 3, 2024 City Council meeting. Specifically, Land Use Element Goals 22, 23, 24 and 25 from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan were not copied into the Planning Commission recommendation. These goals and policies have now been brought forward, reviewed for consistency and proposed for amendment as appropriate in Exhibit 5.

In addition, the cultural arts policies proposed by the Ad-Hoc Committee to be included in the Economic Development Element were reviewed for consistency with other plans. Those policies that potentially overlap or conflict with existing plans were also summarized in Exhibit 5 for City Council review and consideration.

Updated track changes drafts of the Land Use Element as well as the Parks and Open Space Element (Exhibits 5A and 5B) are provided for reference.

NEXT STEPS

As directed by the City Council at its September 3, 2024 meeting, staff will be finalizing the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan after the September 17, 2024 meeting and making this draft available for public review and comment for a period of not less than (30) calendar days.

During this public review and comment period, the City Attorney will also be completing a final legal review for GMA compliance. Should any legal matters require amendments, they will be brought forward for City Council discussion at first ordinance reading.

Following these reviews ~~is public review and comment period~~, dates are reserved on the City Council Planning Schedule to ensure completion of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by the end of the year:

- **November 5, 2024:** Consider public comment received on the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan and complete first reading of an ordinance to adopt the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.
- **November 19, 2024:** Complete second reading of an ordinance and adopt the 2024 Comprehensive Plan effective December 31, 2024.

NOTE: There will be other dates this fall for the City Council to consider adopting amendments to the Mercer Island City Code (MICC) necessary to maintain consistency with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Necessary MICC amendments will relate to parks/open space zoning and Town Center development regulations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

To complete final deliberations allowing for the drafting and public review of the 2024 City Council Comprehensive Plan, the following motions are recommended in the order they appear below:

Approve the City Council Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations:

- 1. Recommended Motion – Approve Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation for item CC-88:**

“Move to approve the Ad-Hoc Committee recommended amendment for item CC-88 and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 1.”

2. Recommended Motion – Approve Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation for item CC-179:

“Move to approve Ad-Hoc Committee recommended amendment for item CC-179 as contained in Exhibit 2 to allow for further City Council deliberation. ~~and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 2.”~~

3. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of parking goals and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element related to parking and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 3.”

4. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of sustainability and environmental goal and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element related to sustainability and environment and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 4.”

5. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of cultural arts, emergency management and ADA goals and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element, Land Use Element, Parks and Open Space Element and Capital Facilities Element related to cultural arts, emergency management, and ADA and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 5.”

Alternative Motions:

Alternative motions will be prepared to address Exhibits 3, 4, and 5 and to address any other proposed amendments submitted by City Council members in response to these agenda materials.

AB 6541 – Exhibit 1 – City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation – Transportation Element (CC-88)

Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation on City Council Proposed Amendment CC-88

Add a new Transportation Element Policy 11.4:

~~Explore the creation of policies to discourage residents of Town Center from using City streets and public parking facilities in place of building-provided parking facilities.~~

Adopt the 2023 Town Center Parking Plan and its successors by reference.

Introduction, Existing Conditions, and Land Use Connection

This element of the Comprehensive Plan articulates how the City of Mercer Island will support and grow its economy through the year 2044. This element establishes policy direction for the City to build on its strengths, maximize opportunities, and build resilience in the local economy to overcome challenges. Mercer Island is poised to significantly grow its economy during the planning period. The resident work force tends to be employed in high-wage jobs and is highly educated. Because residents tend to be employed in high-earning jobs, there is a strong local customer base to support on-island businesses. The arrival of light rail service will increase access to Mercer Island for off-island visitors and workers. Mercer Island's position between Bellevue and Seattle makes it a prime location for businesses looking to draw workers and customers from larger surrounding cities. The Mercer Island economy is in a strong position to support new growth.

Mercer Island residents are employed in many high-earning industries. Over one quarter (26 percent) of the population is employed in the professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services industry, making it the largest employment sector. In 2021, the median annual earnings for this sector were \$134,265. The next three largest employment sectors are educational services, and health care and social assistance (16 percent), retail trade (13 percent), and finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing (12 percent). In 2021, the median earnings for these three sectors ranges from between \$71,467 and \$105,913 annually. Table 1 shows the full-time, year-round employed population 16 years old and over by industry.

Table 1. Mercer Island Employment by Industry Sector, 2021.

Industry Sector	Count	Share	Median Earnings*
Full-time, year-round civilian employed population 16 years and over	8,620	100.00%	102,348
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	0	0.00%	-
Construction	177	2.05%	76,103
Manufacturing	665	7.71%	149,219
Wholesale trade	229	2.66%	93,438
Retail trade	1,138	13.20%	88,000
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	212	2.46%	100,670
Transportation and warehousing	183	2.12%	91,042
Utilities	29	0.34%	152,031
Information	665	7.71%	195,729
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	1,110	12.88%	105,913
Finance and insurance	675	7.83%	109,286
Real estate and rental and leasing	435	5.05%	76,563
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	2,284	26.50%	134,265
Professional, scientific, and technical services	1,998	23.18%	147,576
Management of companies and enterprises	12	0.14%	-
Administrative and support and waste management services	274	3.18%	78,241
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	1,421	16.48%	71,467
Educational services	584	6.77%	55,724
Health care and social assistance	837	9.71%	89,688
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	305	3.54%	25,052
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	154	1.79%	11,678
Accommodation and food services	151	1.75%	28,370
Other services, except public administration	157	1.82%	33,750
Public administration	257	2.98%	67,745

*2021 median earnings are shown for the last 12 months in inflation adjusted dollars

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey, Tables S2404 and B24031.

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=industry&g=1600000US5345005&tid=ACST5Y2021.S2404>

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=earnings+by+industry&g=1600000US5345005&tid=ACSDT5Y2021.B2403>

1

The Mercer Island population is well-educated. A little more than 82 percent of residents over the age of 25 have completed a college degree, having earned an associate's degree or higher educational attainment. For comparison, about 64 percent of the population over 25 in King County have an associate's degree or higher educational attainment. Table 2 shows the educational attainment for the Mercer Island population aged 25 or older.

Table 2. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over, 2021.

Educational Attainment	Estimate	Share
Less than high school diploma	308	1.70%
Regular high school diploma	1,034	5.71%
GED or alternative credential	84	0.46%
Some college, less than 1 year	316	1.74%
Some college, 1 or more years, no degree	1,379	7.61%
Associate's degree	952	5.25%
Bachelor's degree	7,118	39.29%
Master's degree	3,781	20.87%
Professional school degree	1,791	9.89%
Doctorate degree	1,354	7.47%
Total	18,117	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey, Table B15003.

Mercer Island is located in King County between two major economic hubs in Seattle and Bellevue. Mercer Island is in the center of a high-income area that can support increased economic activity. The City's geography places it in a prime location to grow its economy by attracting off-island customers and capital from the surrounding area. King County's median household income is the highest in both the Puget Sound region and Washington overall. Table 3 shows the 2021 median household incomes for Washington State and selected Puget Sound counties.

Table 3. Estimated 2021 Median Household Income in the Last 12 Months, Washington State and Selected Puget Sound Counties.

Location	Median Income (Dollars)
Washington State	\$84,247
King	\$110,586
Kitsap	\$87,314
Pierce	\$85,866
Snohomish	\$100,042

Source: 2021 American Community Survey Table S1903.

Mercer Island Commercial Areas

The City of Mercer Island has three commercial areas. These areas have been zoned for commercial uses since the City incorporated in the 1960s. Each of these areas is home to different types of commercial development. Commercial developments in Town Center are predominantly older one-story strip mall development and newer mid-rise mixed-use buildings. There is a commercial area in the northeast of the island near City Hall that is primarily older one- and two-story buildings with office spaces and services such as childcare. The south end commercial area is a smaller shopping center and self-storage structure. These three distinct areas are the only places in Mercer Island zoned for commercial uses. Some limited commercial activities such as home-based businesses are allowed outside of these areas.

Town Center

Town Center is located south of Interstate 90, north of Mercerdale Park, west of Island Crest Way, and east of 74th Avenue Southeast. The Town Center has experienced the most development of all the commercial areas in the City in recent years. Most of the recent developments have been mixed-use development combining first floor commercial space and parking with residential uses on the upper floors. Older development in Town Center is lower-intensity, one-story, 'strip mall' development with surface parking in front of the commercial space.

Northeast Commercial Area

The northeast commercial area is south of Interstate 90, north of Stroum Jewish Community Center, west of East Mercer Way, and east of Gallagher Hill. This area is developed primarily for commercial and institutional uses. The majority of buildings in this area were constructed between 1957 and 1981. Commercial development is typically composed of one- and two-story buildings surrounded by surface parking lots. The commercial land uses in this area are offices for professional services and services such as daycares and private schools. City hall is located in this area. The intersection of E Mercer Way, SE 36th Street, and eastbound I-90 ramps is located in the eastern portion of this area. This intersection experiences significant traffic levels during peak travel hours.

South End Commercial Area

The south end commercial area is south of Southeast 68th Street, west of Island Crest Way, east of 84th Avenue Southeast, and north of Southeast 71st Street. This is the smallest commercial area on Mercer Island at roughly 14 acres. The majority of the commercial development dates to the early 1960's. The commercial land uses here are primarily restaurants and retail. There are some commercial offices, a gas station, and a storage facility. This area has low intensity commercial development surrounded by surface parking lots.

Land Use Connection

There is a fundamental tie between the policies of this element and the Land Use Element. The Land Use Element envisions a primarily residential city with three defined commercial areas. It and the resultant regulations largely confine commercial land uses to three distinct commercial districts. This focuses the future economic growth in the City to those districts.

Each of the three commercial areas is regulated differently, with the built environment reflecting those variations. The Town Center zones allow the highest intensity development and midrise mixed-use structures are the principal form of new commercial development in that area. The northeast commercial area is zoned for office and service uses as opposed to other commercial uses. It was largely developed forty years ago and has not seen the same degree of recent development as Town Center. The south end commercial area is zoned for a mix of small scale, neighborhood-oriented business, office, service, public and residential uses. The three commercial areas are mostly developed, so absent rezoning most new commercial development in the City will likely come through redevelopment of existing commercial buildings.

The supply of commercial development capacity is closely controlled by Land Use policies and regulations. Regulations that modulate the supply of an economic input such as the space in which commercial activity can take place also affect the location, size, scale, and cost associated with doing businesses in the City. Controlling the supply of commercial development capacity is the primary way the Comprehensive Plan has shaped the local economy prior to the adoption of this Economic Development Element. Because of this connection, some goals and policies of this element connect directly to land use policies and regulations.

Relationship to Other Comprehensive Plan Elements and Other Plans

The Housing, Transportation, Utilities, Capital Facilities, and Shoreline Master Program elements all interact with the local economy as follows:

Housing

Housing indirectly impacts the local economy because it has an effect on the local business customer base and labor force. Housing on Mercer Island is primarily detached single-family homes and contributes to the unique Island neighborhood character. Multifamily development is largely limited to the area in and around Town Center. Housing has several effects on the local economy. Higher cost housing can attract higher income residents and customers for local businesses. On the other hand, high housing costs may limit the ability for some workers to afford to live in the City, leading to increased commuting and potentially limiting a business's ability to hire. Higher cost housing can attract higher-income residents and customers for local businesses, though, higher cost housing may depress financial resources and reduce customer spending overall, including at Island businesses. Less expensive, multifamily housing may attract residents in and near the Town Center who are more likely to choose not to own a car and may be more likely to shop local than those in detached single-family housing. The quantity of multifamily housing available may correlate with the market for the basics of everyday living and experiences such as dining out.

Transportation Element

Transportation infrastructure is integral to the local economy. The Transportation Element establishes the goals and policies that guide how the City will maintain, improve, and expand the transportation network to account for growth throughout the planning period. The goals and policies of the Transportation Element aim to maintain adequate levels of service at high traffic intersections, reinvest in existing infrastructure, increase transportation choice in the City, and provide connectivity between the light rail station and the City's commercial areas. Transportation networks allow businesses to access markets in neighboring cities, making it easier for customers from outside the City to patronize local businesses, and enable local businesses to draw from the regional labor force.

Utilities

The provision of utilities is vital to local businesses, all of which need reliable sewer, water, power, and internet. The Utilities Element details how the City will coordinate with its utility service providers to ensure adequate provision of these vital services for residents and businesses alike.

Capital Facilities

Capital facilities such as parks and public buildings are critical to the provision of services to the local economy. In addition to planning for public assets, the Capital Facilities Element includes goals and policies to support a high quality of life, which can attract new businesses and workers to Mercer Island

Shoreline Master Program

The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Element establishes the policies for managing development in the shoreline. This element is designed to ensure that the shoreline environment is protected, and that the shoreline is available for water dependent uses. Those businesses located in the shoreline jurisdiction, within 200 feet of Lake Washington, are affected by the SMP. In situations where the policies in the SMP and Economic Development Element intersect, the Comprehensive Plan will need to balance shoreline environmental protection with fostering of appropriate water dependent commercial uses in the shoreline.

Other Plans

The Comprehensive Plan includes several other plans that address specific topics. As components of the Comprehensive Plan, those other plans relate to the Economic Development Element. Some of the other plans include:

- **The Arts and Cultural Plan** – Directs the provision of artistic and cultural infrastructure that draw both residents and shoppers to commercial areas. Artistic and cultural infrastructure and events in the community improve the quality of life. Well executed, they can attract local and off-island residents to commercial areas where they may be more likely to shop. Arts and culture infrastructure and events may also attract workers to the island, who in addition to contributing to the employment base, may shop here.
- **The Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan** – Establishes strategies for maintaining and improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to provide multimodal connections throughout the City.
- **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan** – Plans for the maintenance, improvement, and development of parks, open space, trails, and recreational facilities.
- **Climate Action Plan** – Establishes the strategies the City will use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impacts of climate change.
- **Capital Improvement Plan** – Lists the capital investments the City will make through 2044.
- **Transportation Improvement Program** – Lists the Transportation Element implementation projects the City will undertake throughout the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

Employment Growth Target

The King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) establish growth targets for all of the jurisdictions within King County. The CPPs were initially adopted in 1992 and have been amended several times since then. Elected officials from King County, the

cities of Seattle and Bellevue, and the Sound Cities Association meet as the Growth Management Planning Council. This Council makes recommendations to the County Council, which has the authority to adopt and amend the CPPs. King County amended the CPPs in 2021, updating the growth targets for cities and towns throughout the County. The updated growth targets extended the planning horizon through the year 2044. Mercer Island's current employment is approximately 7,700 jobs; the growth target is 1,300 new jobs by the year 2044.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The advantages and challenges the City plans to encounter in the next twenty years can be divided into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strengths are those things already existing in the local economy that the City can build on to grow the economy. Weaknesses are existing conditions in the local economy that could impede or otherwise challenge economic growth through the planning period. Opportunities are foreseeable changes that can give the City a stronger competitive advantage in the coming years. Threats are external events or factors that have the potential to negatively affect economic growth. The selected strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats discussed in this section were identified during public participation and data review conducted during the drafting of this element.

Strengths

Strengths are the cornerstones of the economy. These are the aspects of the local economy that are advantageous for economic growth. Strengths are factors that contribute to the prosperity, environment, and social cohesion of the City and as such represent topic areas the City can support or expand to overcome weaknesses and threats. Some of the principal strengths identified are listed and discussed below.

High Quality of Life

The high quality of life on Mercer Island is a considerable strength. The Island's parks, open space, high quality public schools, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and cultural amenities help attract new businesses and workers alike. Community input gathered during the drafting of this element often pointed to the high quality of life in Mercer Island as an asset the City can build upon to strengthen the local economy. Quality of life may also serve as a draw for off-island visitors to patronize local businesses. Since this high quality of life is a considerable strength, it must be protected.

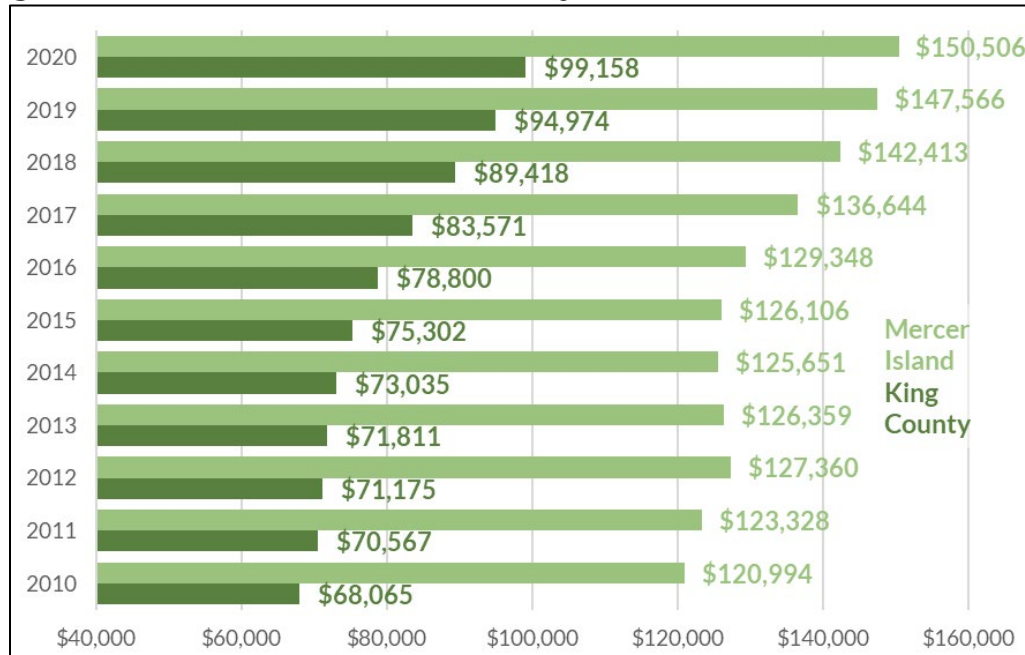
High-Income Residents

Another key strength is the relatively high income of Mercer Island residents. During public input, business owners pointed out that the spending power of the Mercer Island community helped with the initial success of businesses. In 2021, the median household income for Mercer Island was \$170,000. For reference, the 2021 median household income in King County was \$106,326. Table 4 shows the 2021 household income distribution in Mercer Island and King County. Figure 1 shows the median household income in King County and Mercer Island between 2010 and 2020. It is worth noting that over the last few years, the percent gap between King County and Mercer Island household income has been closing.

Table 4. Household Income and Benefits, 2021.

Income and Benefits in 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars		
	Mercer Island	King County
Total households	9,758	924,763
Less than \$10,000	3.3%	4.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.5%	2.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4.0%	4.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.1%	4.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4.3%	7.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8.3%	12.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6.1%	10.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	14.3%	18.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.8%	12.1%
\$200,000 or more	45.3%	24.4%
Median household income (dollars)	\$170,000	\$110,586
Mean household income (dollars)	\$261,417	\$154,122

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Table CP03.

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=employment+income&g=1600000US5345005&tid=ACSCP5Y2021.CP03>**Figure 1. Median Household Income by Year, Mercer Island, 2010 to 2020**

Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2020; CAI, 2022.

Having an existing high-income customer base is a considerable advantage for entrepreneurs and can draw firms from off-island to do business in the city. The financial resources of the community on Mercer Island can also help with business

1 formulation and business attraction. The key to building on this strength is focusing
2 on giving residents more opportunities to shop on-island and broadening prospects
3 for entrepreneurs and businesses to invest capital in the Mercer Island economy.
4

5 Location of the City

6 Mercer Island's location on Interstate 90 (I-90) and roughly equidistant from Seattle
7 and Bellevue is a strength. Seattle and Bellevue are large metropolitan centers with
8 many thriving businesses, potential customers for Mercer Island businesses, and
9 workers with diverse skills and expertise. I-90 provides potential customers and
10 employees with excellent access to the city and that access is complemented with
11 available parking near businesses. The city is also connected to its neighbors by transit,
12 allowing greater flow of people to and from its commercial centers. Ensuring good
13 access to commercial areas with roads and transit connections can build on this
14 strength.
15

16 Weaknesses

17 Weaknesses are aspects of the local economy that could impede growth in the local
18 economy. They represent topic areas the City can apply policy mechanisms to
19 minimize, reduce, or overcome impediments to a healthy local economy. Weaknesses
20 are listed and discussed below.
21

22 Permitting and Regulatory Environment

23 Permitting challenges, difficulty navigating the development code, and protracted
24 permitting processes can increase financial risk when starting a new business or
25 expanding an existing one. This increased financial risk can adversely impact business
26 formation and retention. Public input indicated that the City's development code and
27 permitting processes can be complicated and make starting a business more difficult.
28 Permit fees and the time spent on permit review are also challenging factors related
29 to starting a new business. As the City considers permit fees, impact fees, and other
30 regulatory requirements it can assess how those changes might add to or reduce the
31 cost of starting a new business. The City can address this weakness by auditing its
32 regulations and permit processes to ensure that they do not unnecessarily restrict or
33 complicate the process of starting or expanding a business. Another way for the City
34 to address this weakness is to engage the business community in the legislative
35 process.
36

37 Business Climate and Culture

38 Public input gathered during the drafting of this element indicated that the business
39 climate and culture on Mercer Island is underdeveloped. Some business owners cited
40 limited formal opportunities to connect with the larger business community on
41 Mercer Island. Commenters suggested that most business networking was through
42 informal networks rather than a concerted effort to help businesses cooperate and
43 share expertise. Other comments indicated that competition for limited on-island
44 customers, and a corresponding lack of off-island patrons fostered competition
45 amongst local businesses. The City can begin to address this weakness by working
46 with partners to facilitate formal communication and collaboration between business
47 owners.

Lack of Visitor Customer Base

Public input gathered during the drafting of this element highlighted low numbers of off-island customers as a weakness. Many comments suggested that Mercer Island businesses sometimes struggle to connect with customers outside of the city. Given the city's location near large metropolitan cities, there is a large off-island customer base to draw from and attract. To begin addressing this weakness, the City can explore opportunities to support the business community and community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to reach customers outside of Mercer Island.

Affordability and Availability of Commercial Space

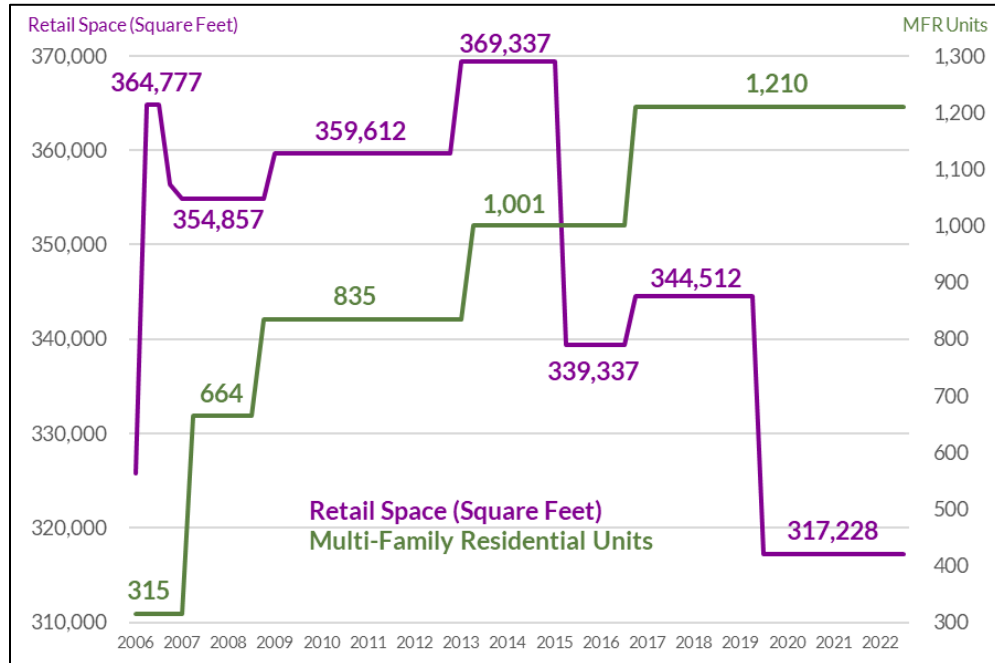
The lack of commercial space in the city and its cost can be a challenge for new business formulation and expansion of existing businesses. Under the current zoning, commercial activities are largely limited to three areas in the city. The largest of these areas, Town Center, is a mixed-use area where development is allowed to be a combination of commercial and residential space. Over the last two decades, redevelopment in this area has favored residential space, with minimal commercial space along certain street frontages. As a result, there has been a limited amount of new commercial space added to Town Center in recent years, a trend the City has begun working to reverse.

The City's future land use map in the Land Use Element and the zoning that implements that policy framework limits the areas where commercial uses are allowed to the Town Center, the planned business zone, and commercial-offices zone. The size of commercial zones can influence the cost and availability of commercial real estate. If the area available for commercial development is not large enough to accommodate the projected growth, prices can rise, and businesses can have trouble finding available spaces as supply reduces. The City must monitor the size of its commercial areas to ensure that the supply of developable commercial land is not so restricted that it limits opportunities for development. This is why the GMA includes a requirement to plan for projected growth in the form of adopting an employment growth target. The employment growth target is derived from the projected population increase through the planning period. By setting an employment growth target and ensuring the Comprehensive Plan can accommodate that target, the City can ensure that commercial areas are sized appropriately.

Figure 2 compares the change in commercial square footage and residential units in Town Center between 2006 and 2022. The retail space referred to in the figure is commercial store fronts that could be retail or restaurant space. From 2006 to 2022, the multi-family residential units increased by 895 units to a total of 1,210 (Figure 1). In that same period, the square footage of commercial space initially increased to a peak of about 369,000 square feet in 2013, before decreasing to about 317,000 square feet in the third quarter of 2019. This may be the result of a demolished building at 2431-2441 76th Ave SE. Although all development in Town Center is interconnected due to the mixed-use zoning in the area, this data does not mean that the amount of commercial space and number of residential units in Town Center are proportional or causal. From 2006 to 2022, the amount of commercial space has decreased by

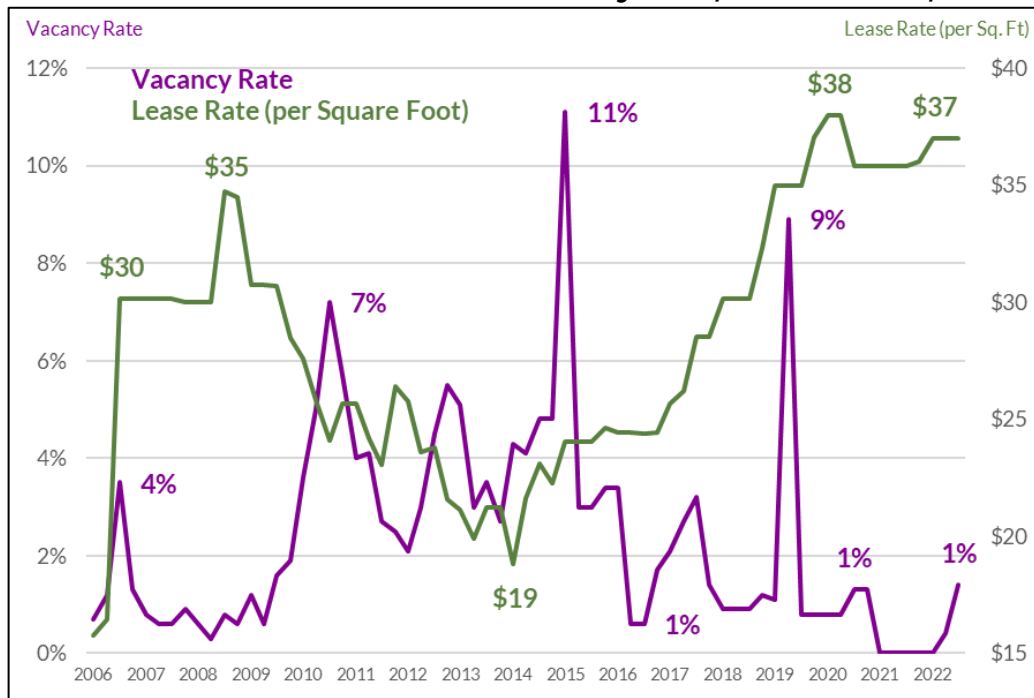
approximately 2.5% while the number of multi-family residential units has increased by nearly 75%.

Figure 2. Change in Retail Space and Multi-Family Residential Units, Town Center, 2006 to 2022



Source: CoStar, 2022; CAI, 2022.

In the years between 2006 and 2020, the yearly lease rate (shown per square foot of retail space in Figure 3) increased to 38 dollars per square foot in the first quarter of 2020 and was holding at 37 dollars per square foot in 2022. While there was a small spike in the lease rate around 2020 (at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and development moratorium), this rate has been on a fairly steady increase since a low of 19 dollars per square foot in 2014. In that period, lease rates nearly doubled. 2015 saw the highest spike in the vacancy rate in Town Center. Around that time, a retail space of about 30,000 square feet was demolished at 2615 76th Ave SE. The closure of the businesses at that location prior to demolition could contribute to the short-term spike in the vacancy rate. In addition, at the onset of the pandemic, Town Center saw a spike to nine percent in the retail vacancy rate. That spike was short-lived and held at about a one percent vacancy rate through 2022.

Figure 3. Retail Annual Lease Rate and Vacancy Rate, Town Center, 2006 to 2022.

Source: CoStar, 2022; CAI, 2022.

In 2022, the City Council enacted regulations in Town Center that expanded commercial frontage requirements along specific streets and added a new commercial floor area requirement in an attempt to prevent loss of commercial space. The effectiveness of these regulations will need to be evaluated over time. If new development in Town Center does not include enough commercial space to meet the demand from new businesses looking to locate in the city and the expansion of existing businesses, the affordability and availability of commercial space may constrain future economic growth, and those regulations may need to be revisited.

Opportunities

Opportunities are foreseeable changes that can give the city's economy a stronger competitive advantage in the coming years. Compared with strengths and weaknesses, which come from existing conditions, opportunities are anticipated future events or conditions. Similar to strengths, opportunities are topic areas the City can focus on to support economic growth and maximize probable positive developments in the local economy.

Additional Transportation Connections

The flow of goods and people is a major component of any city's economy. Transportation infrastructure can be even more impactful for an island community where moving people and goods is complicated by lack of an overland route. For this reason, the East Link Light Rail station has the potential to be one of the most transformative transportation developments on Mercer Island since the construction of the first bridge to the island. The potential to draw more off-island visitors to increase the customer base for local businesses is an opportunity to boost economic

1 growth in the city. Leveraging the arrival of light rail will require some active steps to
2 ensure that this opportunity is maximized, and impacts are adequately addressed.
3 The City can help connect transit riders with local businesses to take advantage of the
4 arrival of light rail.
5

6 Arrival of a Large Employer in Town Center

7 Riot Games acquired an office building in Town Center in 2022. Their use of this office
8 space is expected to eventually add a couple hundred jobs to Town Center. This
9 opportunity overlaps with the planned arrival of light rail. This influx of workers is
10 expected to increase demand for goods and services from neighboring businesses in
11 Town Center. The arrival of a large employer is also expected to generally spur
12 economic growth. The City should explore partnerships and programs to begin
13 encouraging commuters to spend more time in Town Center and shop locally.
14

15 More Islanders Working From Home

16 One of the changes prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic is the transition to more
17 work-from-home options for commuters. The extent to which commuting workers
18 will spend their workdays on-island instead of traveling to work off-island remains
19 unclear. What seems increasingly likely is that workers will commute less often than
20 they did before the pandemic. Changes in commuting could lead to new demand for
21 different services in the city's commercial areas or increased demand for existing
22 services.
23

24 More Middle Housing

25 Recent state legislation requires encouraging more middle housing, most of it in and
26 near the Town Center. Residents of this housing will be located near the commercial
27 area and will be more likely to shop locally. The arrival of more residents in these
28 locations will likely spur economic development.
29

30 Threats

31 Threats are external events or factors that have the potential to impede, slow, or
32 otherwise negatively affect economic growth. Whereas weaknesses are existing
33 conditions in the City that might challenge growth, threats are potential future
34 concerns. Threats are topic areas where the City can focus attention to prepare for
35 possible challenges and build resilience in the local economy.
36

37 Economic Uncertainty

38 There currently is a high degree of uncertainty about the future in the regional,
39 national, and global economy. The unknown future of market forces such as inflation,
40 supply chain difficulties, labor shortages, stock market volatility, and rising
41 transportation costs obfuscate the economic outlook for the coming years. Many of
42 these market forces are beyond the reach of City policies, however the City can
43 prepare for positive and negative swings in the regional, national, and global economy
44 by planning for economic resilience. Policy interventions that look to build on the local
45 economy's strengths, overcome its weaknesses, and capitalize on expected
46 opportunities can build resilience in the local economy. Policies that establish

contingency plans for economic downturns can also help position the City to be responsive to changing conditions in uncertain times.

The Changing Nature of Retail

Retail commerce is undergoing a transition as online retailers compete with brick-and-mortar stores. This change appears to have been accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic as more shoppers opted to order goods online. Comments indicate that this could mean that retail will need to focus more on location-specific or experiential retail to differentiate their goods and services from those more readily available in online marketplaces. Some comments proposed a shop local campaign and adaptive reuse regulations for commercial spaces as possible measures to help local businesses respond to changes in demand.

Affordability in the Region

The affordability of commercial spaces and housing has the potential to slow economic growth in the coming years. Rising commercial real estate costs negatively impact both business formation and retention by making it more expensive to locate a business in the city. Higher rents can price out existing businesses, make expanding cost-prohibitive, and increase startup costs for entrepreneurs. Higher rents in new development can displace existing businesses as commercial areas redevelop. The City can monitor commercial space availability and development capacity to ensure that zoning and other development regulations do not create scarcity of commercial spaces in the city's commercial zones.

Housing affordability can impact workforce availability. Labor is an important input for local businesses. As housing prices increase, filling middle and lower wage positions can potentially become more difficult as many workers commute from outside the city. In 2019, 87 percent of workers employed on Mercer Island live outside the city. Only about 13 percent of workers employed in the city also live on Mercer Island. On the other hand, 91 percent of workers living on Mercer Island commuted to jobs outside the City in 2019. Table 5 shows the inflow and outflow of Mercer Island workers as tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019.

Table 5. Worker Inflow and Outflow, 2019.

	Count	Share
Workers Employed in Mercer Island		
Employed in Mercer Island	7,071	100%
Employed in Mercer Island but living outside Mercer Island (inflow)	6,157	87.1%
Employed and living in Mercer Island	914	12.9%
Workers Living in Mercer Island		
Workers living in Mercer Island	10,123	100%
Living in Mercer Island but employed outside Mercer Island (outflow)	9,209	91%
Living and employed in Mercer Island	914	9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau On the Map, 2019.

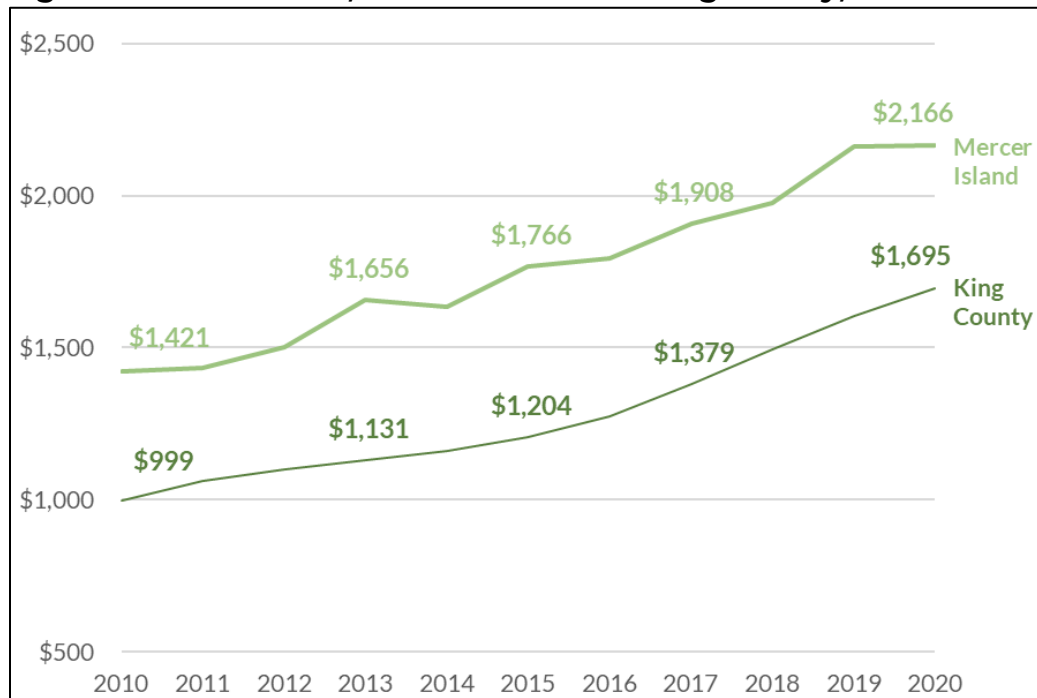
Many workers commute from off-island to fill middle and lower wage positions. In 2019, more than half of jobs in Mercer Island paid less than \$3,333 a month or about \$40,000 a year. The low earnings for on-island jobs can make it difficult for workers to afford to live near Mercer Island and could make finding workers difficult given that all of metro King County has a higher cost of living. Table 6 shows the earnings for on-island jobs as tracked in 2019 by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 6. Mercer Island Jobs by Earnings, 2019.

Earning Range	Mercer Island		King County	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less (\$15,000 annually)	1,738	24.6%	188,902	13.7%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month (\$15,012 to \$39,996 annually)	1,995	28.2%	299,798	21.7%
More than \$3,333 per month (more than \$39,996 annually)	3,338	47.2%	891,181	64.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau On the Map, 2019.

While many jobs on Mercer Island pay relatively lower wages, the cost of housing is rising. Figure 4 shows that in 2020, the median rent in Mercer Island was \$2,166 a month. Assuming housing costs should not exceed 30 percent of a household's income, this would require a monthly income of roughly \$7,220 or \$86,640 annually to be affordable. Expanding to the county level, the 2020 median rent in King County was \$1,695. The King County median rent would require a monthly income of about \$5,650 or \$67,800 annually to be affordable. As highlighted earlier, many jobs on Mercer Island pay \$40,000 a year or less. If rent outpaces wage growth, many workers may choose to live or work in more affordable cities or regions. Difficulty in attracting workers can hinder economic growth as greater competition for workers can drive up wages and costs to businesses.

Figure 4. Median Rent, Mercer Island and King County, 2010 to 2020.

Source: American Community Survey, 2020; CAI, 2022.

Displacement During Redevelopment

The City's commercial areas are largely developed. This causes most new commercial development on the Island to occur through redevelopment of existing commercial buildings, which can displace businesses in older developments. Displacement risk increases as sites redevelop because commercial spaces in redeveloped sites can have higher rents, construction can interrupt business, and new spaces might not fit existing business' needs. The City can monitor the supply of developable commercial land to determine whether the availability of commercial space is increasing the displacement risk for local businesses.

Climate Change

Climate change has the potential to have negative effects on the economy. Business establishment and success as well as customer spending patterns may be affected. Though many of the impacts of climate change may be out of the control of local government, Mercer Island should implement and market the success of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies included in the Climate Action plan to attract businesses and shoppers. Businesses may want to locate where they can minimize their impact upon the climate and where their employees may be more comfortable. Shoppers may seek to shop in ways and for products that reduce climate impact, which may include increased prioritization of shopping locally.

Goals and Policies

GOAL 1 - PARTNERSHIPS:

The City establishes and maintains a healthy ecosystem of partnerships with businesses, local organizations and other public agencies.

POLICIES

- 1.1 Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, local, regional, state, and federal economic development agencies and the Mercer Island School District (MISD) to provide abundant resources for business owners, entrepreneurs, and job seekers including:
 - 1.1.A A mentorship program pairing experienced business owners and retirees with people interested in starting a new business;
 - 1.1.B Shop and dine local marketing campaigns;
 - 1.1.C A wayfinding kiosk on the light rail station platform informing commuters of shops available on the island; and
 - 1.1.D Publicize employment opportunities on Mercer Island.
- 1.2 Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL), Mercer Island Farmer's Market, and other community non-profit organizations to develop and expand a year-round program of arts, cultural, and activation events which draw the community to our commercial areas.

GOAL 2 - MARKETING MERCER ISLAND:

The Town Center commercial area has a cohesive brand established by marketing efforts informed by public input and the policies of this element.

POLICIES

- 2.1 Develop and promote a theme and vision to create a unique and appealing identity for the Town Center directed at drawing more residents and visitors to Mercer Island.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a cohesive visual brand, including a logo, color scheme, and typography, that reflects the island's natural beauty and upscale yet welcoming character.

GOAL 3 – BUSINESS ATTRACTION:

Mercer Island's Town Center is a Vibrant Destination attracting new businesses and supporting growth of existing businesses.

POLICIES

- 3.1 Attract more commercial office employers to the City.
- 3.2 Develop strategies to increase the percentage of workers that both live and work on Mercer Island.
- 3.3 Establish more networking and social events to attract more young professionals to Town Center, activating the area.
- 3.4 Attract a diverse mix of businesses that complement existing offerings and fill market gaps, with a focus on unique, locally owned establishments.
- 3.5 Create a comprehensive "best practices" section on the City website detailing steps for business setup at city, state, and county levels.
- 3.6 Streamline and simplify the process for new business setup, making it more intuitive and user-friendly.

GOAL 4 – PRIORITIZED BUSINESS TYPES:

Prioritized business types are supported and encouraged by the City's economic development efforts.

- 4.1 Prioritize the following types of businesses:
 - 4.1.A Locally owned independent restaurants, tasting rooms, pubs, or cafes;
 - 4.1.B Specialty Retail;
 - 4.1.C Commercial office employers; and
 - 4.1.D High-wage employers.
- 4.2 Periodically review the list of prioritized business types.
- 4.3 Develop incentives that attract prioritized business types, such as:
 - 4.3.A Public and private partnerships to foster affordable commercial space solutions, and
 - 4.3.B Permit fee waiver or reduction.
- 4.4 Establish an expedited permit review process for prioritized business types.
- 4.5 Act as a liaison between commercial landlords and prioritized business types, mainly focusing on bringing wineries and complementary businesses.

4.6 Consider waiving or reducing permit fees for the first twenty (20) applications submitted by prioritized business types.

GOAL 5 – PREMIER WINE DESTINATION:

Establish Mercer Island as a Premier Wine Destination.

POLICIES

5.1 Explore capitalizing on Mercer Island's efforts, brand, and location as a premier wine destination by considering the following strategies:

5.1.A Expand and promote the "Art Uncorked" event as a flagship attraction, leveraging its popularity to draw visitors year-round.

5.1.B Actively recruit wineries to establish tasting rooms on Mercer Island, positioning the island as a premier, easily accessible wine destination. Emphasize Mercer Island's unique advantages, including its proximity to Seattle and Bellevue, excellent public transportation links, and picturesque island setting, to differentiate it from other regional wine experiences.

5.1.C Facilitate partnerships between commercial landlords and wineries to encourage the establishment of tasting rooms in strategic locations.

5.1.D Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to position Mercer Island as a unique wine destination, distinguishing it from Seattle and Bellevue.

5.1.E Encourage the development of complementary businesses such as artisanal food shops, wine-focused restaurants, and boutique hotels to support the wine destination concept.

5.1.F Emphasize farm-to-table and outdoor dining experiences where possible.

5.1.G Encourage the development of restaurants, cafes, and food-related businesses that align with the wine destination theme.

5.1.H Conduct regular reassessments of the economic development strategy, allowing for adjustments based on market response, community feedback, and the success of the wine destination concept.

5.1.I Plan for increased parking needs as the wine destination concept develops, including considerations for ride-sharing and public transportation options.

GOAL 6 – BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION:

Business Offerings are diversified and enhanced by the City's economic development efforts.

POLICIES

- 6.1 Seek out new restauranteurs who bring novel and diverse dining options to Mercer Island.
- 6.2 Support the growth of specialty retail shops catering to residents and visitors, emphasizing quality and uniqueness over specific business types.
- 6.3 Promote pop-up shops and rotating vendor markets to add variety and attract shoppers.
- 6.4 Explore the creation of a "Restaurant Row" designation with additional tax benefits.
- 6.5 Consider impacts to existing businesses when evaluating proposed zoning changes.
- 6.6 Encourage the development of public-private partnerships to foster affordable commercial space solutions.
- 6.7 Conduct comprehensive outreach to surrounding businesses before initiating capital projects in commercial zones.
- 6.8 Identify and adopt measures to reduce the displacement of existing businesses as new development occurs. Notify nearby businesses of any potential redevelopment.

GOAL 7A – PUBLIC SPACE AND COMMERCIAL AREAS:

Public Spaces and commercial areas are activated by City improvements and economic development efforts.

GOAL 7B – CUSTOMER ATTRACTION:

Commercial areas are attractive and inviting to the Mercer Island community and visitors.

POLICIES

- 7.1 Leverage the opening of Sound Transit's East Link Light Rail Line 2 to attract residents, commuters, and visitors to the Town Center.
- 7.2 Emphasize spaces that are human-scaled, safe, and comfortable for walkers and bikers.
- 7.3 Maintain the existing City program to beautify Town Center with landscaping, street trees, and flower baskets.

- 7.4 Create branded wayfinding signage, street furniture, and public art to reinforce the Town Center identity.
- 7.4.a Prioritize improvements in key locations such as the Mercer Island Farmers Market site.
- 7.4.B Dedicate permanent signage for established community events like the Mercer Island Farmers Market.
- 7.5 Activate Mercer Island’s commercial areas and public spaces by encouraging:
- 7.5.A Programming that enables residents and visitors to gather, socialize, and celebrate in the city safely;
- 7.5.B Flexible-use outdoor spaces for dining, markets, events, and temporary commercial uses; and
- 7.5.C Utilizing public art and furniture design in outdoor spaces.
- 7.6 Implement and promote a pilot seasonal parklet program allowing businesses to convert parking spaces to outdoor seating.

GOAL 8 – ARTS AND CULTURE:

Arts and Culture are integrated into the City’s economic development projects and programs.

POLICIES

- 8.1 Incorporate public art installations and performances that complement the theme and overall visitor experience.
- 8.2 Support cultural events and activities that enhance the appeal of Mercer Island to both residents and visitors.
- 8.3 Encourage the development of art spaces and events that attract visitors to Town Center.
- 8.4 Develop and expand "Arts on the Island Weekend" as a signature annual event each September, enhancing the arts and culture experience.
- 8.5 Support strategically placed infrastructure to facilitate nonprofit organizations, the City, and other partners' hosting of music and art events, such as a permanent stage, improved public bathroom facilities, hot water access, solar energy, accessible seating, and access to the Town Center.
- 8.6 Coordinate with established community organizations to develop a year-round program of arts, cultural, and activation events which draw the community to Mercer Island’s commercial areas, including:

- 8.6.A The First Friday Art Walks from May to September;
- 8.6.B The Sunday Farmers Markets from June to September;
- 8.6.C Summer Celebration each July;
- 8.6.D Mostly Music in the Park events throughout the summer;
- 8.6.E The Arts on the Island Weekend each fall, including the Art Uncorked event;
- 8.6.F The Holiday Makers Market each December; and
- 8.6.G Shakespeare in the Park.

GOAL 9 – SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT:

The City's economic development efforts are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

POLICIES

- 9.1 Consider Climate Action Plan strategies during economic development decision making.
- 9.2 Encourage energy efficiency improvements that realize long-term cost savings and economic benefits as well as environmental benefits.
- 9.3 Encourage the development of community solar arrays, enabling properties with significant sun exposure to reduce their energy costs, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and sell any excess power generated either back to the grid or to neighbors with less sun exposure.
- 9.4 Consider incentives for commercial development that includes innovative sustainability practices.
- 9.5 Align the implementation of the economic development element with the City's Climate Action Plan.
- 9.6 Encourage green building practices and energy-efficient retrofits in commercial spaces.
- 9.7 Enhance sustainability infrastructure in the Town Center.
 - 9.7.A Increase the presence of compost and recycling bins.
 - 9.7.B Work with providers for seamless collection-bin pick-up during events.

9.7.C Add solar-powered streetlights, carbon-reducing plantings, and other improvements consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP).

GOAL 10 – TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING:

Commercial areas have safe multimodal circulation and parking for residents, visitors, and employees.

POLICIES

- 10.1 Periodically review parking standards to address the need for parking and reduce potential barriers for new and expanding businesses.
- 10.2 Provide safe and welcoming access to Town Center from the light rail station.
- 10.3 Attract more hour-long and multi-store shoppers by developing a program to deploy a mix of high-speed EV chargers in on-street parking, off-street parking, and on utility poles. Target the electrification of 20% of parking spaces in Town Center by 2044.
- 10.4 Analyze the feasibility of establishing a Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA) or Local Improvement District (LID) in one or more commercial areas to fund improvements for economic development.
- 10.5 Ensure multimodal transportation options are available for workers and shoppers to access on-island employment centers and retail businesses.
- 10.6 Periodically update the Town Center parking plan to account for changes to public parking supply, demand, and management systems for both cars and bicycles.
- 10.7 Analyze historical parking space trends in Town Center and correlate them with retail business numbers.
- 10.8 Consider reducing or eliminating on-site parking requirements for a few net-new restaurants or retail businesses, leveraging right-of-way parking.
- 10.9 Consider eliminating traffic study requirements for small businesses outside of new development.
- 10.10 Ensure adequate public parking for community events like Music in the Park and the Farmers Market when planning new developments.
- 10.11 Improve pedestrian infrastructure to support walkability between restaurants and other businesses.
- 10.12 Work with transit agencies in the region to launch an electric shuttle service pilot program to provide on-demand transportation within Mercer Island,

connect light rail riders with the City's commercial areas, reduce short car trips, and support sustainable transportation.

10.12.A Collaborate with local businesses and stakeholders to identify key shuttle stops, ensuring convenient access to the Town Center, light rail stations, and popular destinations.

10.12.B Promote the service as a convenient, eco-friendly transportation option for residents and visitors, enhancing the Town Center's walkability and reducing traffic congestion.

10.12.C Monitor and report on the environmental and economic impacts of the shuttle service, using data to make adjustments and improvements.

GOAL 11 – REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING:

Permit review and inspections are delivered predictably, efficiently, and on time to support Mercer Island businesses as the start, grow, and thrive.

POLICIES

11.1 Continue the longstanding practice of providing next business-day construction inspections under ordinary circumstances.

11.2 Advocate for Mercer Island businesses to receive timely services from outside agencies.

11.3 Review the development code permitting processes to identify additional code amendments to support businesses, improve effectiveness, and make efficient use of City resources. The following goals should be considered when identifying code amendments:

11.3.A Minimizing delay and reduce uncertainty in the entitlement process;

11.3.B Improving conflict resolution in the entitlement process;

11.3.C Mitigating the risk of business displacement as new development occurs;

11.3.D Beneficial impacts to parking and greenhouse gas emissions; and

11.3.E Lowering compliance costs for business owners.

11.4 Evaluate City fees imposed on development to determine their effect on business startup costs and City finances. The impact on business startup costs must be balanced with the financial needs of the City.

11.5 Update home business regulations to support a mix of commercial uses while ensuring home businesses remain compatible with neighboring residential uses.

11.6 Establish a dedicated service [e.g. concierge] to guide businesses through permitting.

11.7 Prepare a guide to doing business on the island with particular emphasis on the permitting process and the pre-application process.

11.8 Periodically review the City's commercial sign code.

GOAL 12 – IMPLEMENTATION:

The City implements the Economic Development Element to support and grow the local economy.

POLICIES

12.1 Establish and periodically update a prioritized and time-based economic development implementation plan following adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
3-1	Policy 10.1 (proposed)	Economic Development	Periodically review parking standards to address the need for parking and reduce potential barriers for new and expanding businesses.	~~Periodically review parking standards to address the need for parking and reduce potential barriers for new and expanding businesses.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. The proposed policy overlaps with policy recommendations in the Town Center Parking Plan and parking references in the Transportation Element. Comment: • See page 29 of the Town Center Parking Plan. Strategy #3 says, “Expand Travel mode choices through programs and infrastructure investments.” ◦ Recommendation 3b: Study options to allow more flexibility related to parking requirements for new businesses. • Policy 11.1 (Transportation Element): Continue to implement flexible parking requirements for Town Center development based on the type and intensity of the proposed development; site characteristics; likelihood for parking impacts to adjacent uses; opportunities for transit, carpooling and shared parking; and potential for enhancements to the pedestrian environment. • Policy 11.3 (Transportation Element): Support business development in the downtown area by prioritizing on-street parking spaces in the Town Center for short-term parking, and encourage the development of off-street shared parking facilities for long-term parking in the Town Center.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
3-2	Policy 10.3 (proposed)	Economic Development	Attract more hour-long and multi-store shoppers by developing a program to deploy a mix of high-speed EV chargers in on-street parking, off-street parking, and on utility poles. Target the electrification of 20% of parking spaces in Town Center by 2044.	~~Attract more hour-long and multi-store shoppers by developing a program to deploy a mix of high-speed EV chargers in on-street parking, off-street parking, and on utility poles. Target the electrification of 20% of parking spaces in Town Center by 2044.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. EV Charging is addressed in the Climate Action Plan. Comment: - The City Council will consider a budget proposal in the fall of 2024 to fund a Citywide EV Charging Infrastructure Plan. If funded, the plan will establish goals and an implementation plan to expand EV opportunities Island-wide. The development of this plan was identified as an action item in the Climate Action Plan. - See Transportation Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 38 to 40). - CAP Action TR1.1 – EV Charging Infrastructure Plan (page 34): Develop and implement an EV Charging Infrastructure Plan, in collaboration with PSE, that guides expansion of EV charging capacity throughout the city. The plan will include analysis and recommendations on the facilities and infrastructure required for the City and the Mercer Island School District to meet 2030 and 2050 fleet electrification goals. The plan will also include a readiness and capacity study to evaluate increasing EV charging at commercial and residential properties citywide. The Plan will identify an implementation strategy including partnerships, funding, and future policy recommendations - CAP Action TR1.3 – State EV resource advocacy (page 34): Advocate for State resources to fund EV infrastructure planning. - CAP Action TR1.4 – EV charging incentives & rebates (page 34): Explore and develop incentives in partnership with the State and other partners to expand EV charging capacity at commercial and residential properties.
3-3	Policy 10.6 (proposed)	Economic Development	Periodically update the Town Center parking plan to account for changes to public parking supply, demand, and management systems for both cars and bicycles.	Periodically update the Town Center parking plan to <u>include analysis of parking use, to account for</u> <u>address</u> changes to public parking supply, and <u>to meet business demand,</u> ~~and management systems for both cars and bicycles.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Combine policy 10.6 and 10.7 – both refer to updating the Town Center Parking Plan – <u>and approve proposed text.</u>

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
3-4	Policy 10.7 (proposed)	Economic Development	Analyze historical parking space trends in Town Center and correlate them with retail business numbers.	~~Analyze historical parking space trends in Town Center and correlate them with retail business numbers.~~	[Revised 09-13-14] Recommendation: Strike ~~policy 10.7~~ and combine ~~policy~~ with proposed Policy 10.6 as noted in item ~~#3-3~~ .
3-5	Policy 10.8 (proposed)		Consider reducing or eliminating on-site parking requirements for a few net-new restaurants or retail businesses, leveraging right-of-way parking.	~~Consider reducing or eliminating on-site parking requirements for a few net-new restaurants or retail businesses, leveraging right-of-way parking.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. The proposed policy conflicts with policy recommendations in the Town Center Parking Plan and parking references in the Transportation Element. Comment: - See page 29 of the Town Center Parking Plan. Strategy #3 says, “Expand Travel mode choices through programs and infrastructure investments.” - Recommendation 3b: Study options to allow more flexibility related to parking requirements for new businesses. - Policy 11.1 (Transportation Element): Continue to implement flexible parking requirements for Town Center development based on the type and intensity of the proposed development; site characteristics; likelihood for parking impacts to adjacent uses; opportunities for transit, carpooling and shared parking; and potential for enhancements to the pedestrian environment. - Policy 11.3 (Transportation Element): Support business development in the downtown area by prioritizing on-street parking spaces in the Town Center for short-term parking, and encourage the development of off-street shared parking facilities for long-term parking in the Town Center.
3-6	Policy 10.9 (proposed)	Economic Development	~~Consider eliminating traffic study requirements for small businesses outside of new development.~~	N/A	Comment: ~~Seeking legal review on this proposal. Eliminating traffic studies may result in concurrency issues and create conflicts with the policies set forth in the Transportation Element.~~

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
3-7	Policy 10.10 (proposed)	Economic Development	Ensure adequate public parking for community events like Music in the Park and the Farmers Market when planning new developments.	~~Ensure adequate public parking for community events like Music in the Park and the Farmers Market when planning new developments.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. Comment: • Securing parking for events is an operational task. • Concern about tethering the need for special event parking with parking requirements for new developments. • If desire to maintain a reference to special event parking in the TC, consider this alternative: Ensure adequate public parking for community events <u>in the Town Center</u>, like Music in the Park and the Farmers Market when planning new developments.
3-8	Policy 10.12 (proposed)	Economic Development	Work with transit agencies in the region to launch an electric shuttle service pilot program to provide on-demand transportation within Mercer Island, connect light rail riders with the City's commercial areas, reduce short car trips, and support sustainable transportation.	Work with transit agencies in the region to ~~explore launch~~ an electric shuttle service pilot program to provide on-demand transportation within Mercer Island, connect light rail riders with the City's commercial areas, reduce short car trips, and support sustainable transportation.	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: <u>Approve proposed</u> ~~Revise~~ text to allow for exploration/study ahead of action. Alternative Recommendation: ~~Consider striking this text given the specificity of the program solution. The Transportation Element includes numerous references to multimodal solutions and first mile/last mile programs.~~ Comment: • Policy 2.6 (Transportation Element): Prioritize transportation investments in the Town Center that promote mixed-use and compact development and provide multimodal access to regional transit facilities. • Policy 4.1 (Transportation Element): Work with King County Metro, Sound Transit and other providers to ensure adequate transit services to meet the needs of the Island, including: ◦ Maintain convenient transit connections to regional activity centers, including the Seattle CBD, Bellevue, University of Washington and other centers; ◦ Provide convenient transit service for travel on Mercer Island and enhance connections to regional transit stations including the future Link light rail station; and ◦ Continue to expand innovative transit services including demand responsive transit for the general public, subscription bus, or custom bus services. • Policy 4.6 (Transportation Element): Study opportunities to provide innovate last-mile solutions serving the Town Center, light rail station, and park and ride.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
3-9	Policy 10.12A (proposed)	Economic Development	Collaborate with local businesses and stakeholders to identify key shuttle stops, ensuring convenient access to the Town Center, light rail stations, and popular destinations.	~~Collaborate with local businesses and stakeholders to identify key shuttle stops, ensuring convenient access to the Town Center, light rail stations, and popular destinations.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. Proposed ~~policy text~~ provides scope of work for project, which should be developed when/if study is pursued.
3-10	Policy 10.12B (proposed)	Economic Development	Promote the service as a convenient, eco-friendly transportation option for residents and visitors, enhancing the Town Center's walkability and reducing traffic congestion.	~~Promote the service as a convenient, eco-friendly transportation option for residents and visitors, enhancing the Town Center's walkability and reducing traffic congestion.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. Proposed ~~policy text~~ provides scope of work for project, which should be developed when/if study is pursued.
3-11	Policy 10.12C (proposed)	Economic Development	Monitor and report on the environmental and economic impacts of the shuttle service, using data to make adjustments and improvements.	~~Monitor and report on the environmental and economic impacts of the shuttle service, using data to make adjustments and improvements.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. Proposed ~~policy text~~ provides scope of work for project, which should be developed when/if study is pursued.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
4-1	Policy 9.2 (proposed)	Economic Development	Encourage energy efficiency improvements that realize long-term cost savings and economic benefits as well as environmental benefits.	~~Encourage energy efficiency improvements that realize long-term cost savings and economic benefits as well as environmental benefits.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. The Climate Action Plan was adopted by reference and includes an extensive list of targets, strategies, and actions related to energy efficiency and environmental benefits. Comment: • See Buildings and Energy Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 30 to 32). • CAP Goal (page 30): Reduce GHG emissions from buildings by reducing energy use, electrifying buildings, and transitioning to clean and reliable renewable energy sources. • CAP Strategy #1 (page 31): Transition to non-fossil building energy. (See associated action items). • CAP Strategy #2 (page 31): Reduce energy use in new and existing buildings. Reduce energy use in new and existing buildings. (See associated action items).

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
4-2	Policy 9.3 (proposed)	Economic Development	Encourage the development of community solar arrays, enabling properties with significant sun exposure to reduce their energy costs, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and sell any excess power generated either back to the grid or to neighbors with less sun exposure.	~~Encourage the development of community solar arrays, enabling properties with significant sun exposure to reduce their energy costs, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and sell any excess power generated either back to the grid or to neighbors with less sun exposure.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This proposed policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to solar energy. Comment: • CAP Action BE1.2 – Solar energy storage & grid resiliency (page 31): Accelerate improvements to the energy grid and storage to facilitate the transition to renewable energy sources. Improvements may include subsidy and grant programs to reduce the cost of battery storage in existing buildings and electric vehicle charging/storage system installations. • CAP Action BE1.6 – Solar panel expansion (page 31): Partner with PSE and other regional partners to promote state and federal renewable energy incentives to fund onsite residential and commercial solar power projects. • CAP Action BE1.7 – Green Power Program (page 31): Host education programs and conduct outreach events to encourage businesses and residents to enroll in the PSE Green Power Program. Partner with other neighboring communities served by the utility to advocate directly with PSE to expand renewable energy production that is local to Mercer Island. • CAP Action BE2.1 – Energy efficiency incentives and programs (page 32): Partner with PSE and other local jurisdictions and organizations to provide and promote energy efficiency incentives and rebate programs for residents and businesses. Partner to offer free home energy audits and upgrade programs for income-eligible residents. • CAP Action BE2.2 – Green Building Campaigns (page 32): Develop a program to promote green building for residential and commercial properties, including educational outreach.
4-3	Policy 9.4 (proposed)	Economic Development	Consider incentives for commercial development that includes innovative sustainability practices.	~~Consider incentives for commercial development that includes innovative sustainability practices.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This proposed policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to sustainability practices. Comment: • See Buildings and Energy Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 30 to 32).

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
4-4	Policy 9.5 (proposed)	Economic Development	Align the implementation of the economic development element with the City's Climate Action Plan.	~~Align the implementation of the economic development element with the City's Climate Action Plan.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. ~~or merge/combine with Policy 9.1.~~ Comment: This policy is similar to proposed Policy 9.1. Policy 9.1 currently reads: "Consider Climate Action Plan strategies during economic development decision making."
4-5	Policy 9.6 (proposed)	Economic Development	Encourage green building practices and energy-efficient retrofits in commercial spaces.	~~Encourage green building practices and energy-efficient retrofits in commercial spaces.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to buildings and energy. Comment: - See Buildings and Energy Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 30 to 32). - CAP Goal (page 30): Reduce GHG emissions from buildings by reducing energy use, electrifying buildings, and transitioning to clean and reliable renewable energy sources. - CAP Strategy #1 (page 31): Transition to non-fossil building energy. (See associated action items). - CAP Strategy #2 (page 31): Reduce energy use in new and existing buildings. Reduce energy use in new and existing buildings. (See associated action items).
4-6	Policy 9.7 (proposed)	Economic Development	Enhance sustainability infrastructure in the Town Center.	~~Enhance sustainability infrastructure in the Town Center.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. This policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to buildings and energy. Comment: See responses to item ~~#4-5 CP-5~~.
4-7	Policy 9.7A (proposed)	Economic Development	Increase the presence of compost and recycling bins.	~~Increase the presence of compost and recycling bins.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This proposed policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to consumption and disposal. Comment: See Consumption and Disposal Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 36 & 37) and associated strategies and actions.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
4-8	Policy 9.7B (proposed)	Economic Development	Work with providers for seamless collection-bin pick-up during events.	~~Work with providers for seamless collection-bin pick-up during events.~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This proposed policy is operational in nature and overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to consumption and disposal. Comment: See Consumption and Disposal Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 36 & 37) and associated strategies and actions.
4-9	Policy 9.7C	Economic Development	Add solar-powered streetlights, carbon-reducing plantings, and other improvements consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP).	~~Add solar-powered streetlights, carbon-reducing plantings, and other improvements consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP).~~	Recommendation: Strike text. This proposed policy overlaps with strategies and actions in the Climate Action Plan related to municipal buildings, commercial buildings, energy efficiency, and natural systems. - See responses to CP-2. - See Cross-Cutting &Municipal Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 27 to 29). - See Buildings and Energy Section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 30 to 32). - See Natural Systems section of the Climate Action Plan (pages 38 to 40).

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-1	Introduction to Land Use Element	Land Use	Arts are integral to Mercer Island's identity, vitality, heritage, and shared values. The City of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining rich and diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the community. In 2018, the City incorporated the Arts and Culture plan as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan incorporating the goals and policies in the Arts and Culture Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan.	~~Arts are integral to Mercer Island's identity, vitality, heritage, and shared values. The City of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining rich and diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the community. In 2018, the City incorporated the Arts and Culture plan as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan incorporating the goals and policies in the Arts and Culture Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. See next item for revised text to be introduced into Parks and <u>Open Space Recreation</u> Element.
5-2	[Revised 09-13-24] NEW text added to Introduction to Parks and <u>Open Space Recreation</u> Element	[Revised 09-13-24] Parks & ~~Recreation~~ <u>Open Space</u>	N/A	[New Text – inserted as paragraph 4] <u>Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan</u> <u>Arts are integral to Mercer Island's identity, vitality, heritage, and shared values. The City of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining rich and diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the community. In 2018, the City adopted the Comprehensive Arts and Culture plan, which sets forth policies and goals to advance the enrichment and unification of the whole community through the arts.</u>	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Add new proposed text.
5-3	Goal 23	Land Use	Support the arts on Mercer Island.	Support the arts on Mercer Island.	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike text. Comment: The Arts and Cultural goals and policies were added to the Comprehensive Plan in 2018, upon adoption of the new Comprehensive Arts & Culture (A&C) Plan. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates a new Parks and <u>Open Space Recreation</u> Element, and staff are recommending that the arts and culture goals and policies be moved to the new element.
5-4	NEW Goal 2	[Revised 09-13-24] Parks & ~~Recreation~~ <u>Open Space</u>	N/A	[New Text] Goal 2: <u>Support and nurture the arts on Mercer Island and preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.</u>	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Insert <u>the proposed a</u> new goal in the Parks and <u>Open Space Recreation</u> Element that consolidates the text in Goal 23, 24 & 25 of the Land Use Element. Comment: This new goal will be supported by new policy 2.1 that incorporates by reference the A&C Plan.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-5	NEW Policy 2.1	[Revised 09-13-24] Parks & Recreation Open Space	N/A	[New Text] Policy 2.1 The most recent version of the Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan is hereby adopted by reference, establishing the goals and policies that provide the framework for the delivery of diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the Mercer Island community.	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Add new proposed text. Comment: New text incorporates the Comprehensive A&C Plan (approved in 2018) by reference. This is consistent with the method by which other plans are incorporated into the 2024 Comp Plan Update.
5-6	Policy 23.1	Land Use	Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events.	Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.1 as it duplicates the text found on page 14 of the A&C Plan.
5-7	Policy 23.2	Land Use	Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum.	Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.2 as it duplicates the text found on page 14 of the A&C Plan.
5-8	Policy 23.3	Land Use	Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships.	Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.3 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-9	Policy 23.4	Land Use	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.	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.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.4 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-10	Policy 23.5	Land Use	Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education.	Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.5 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-11	Policy 23.6	Land Use	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.	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.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.6 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-12	Policy 23.7	Land Use	Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement.	Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement.	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.7 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-13	Policy 23.8	Land Use	Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall City economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy.	~~Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall City economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.8 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-14	Policy 23.9	Land Use	Support: 23.9.1 Efforts to secure space for art and cultural activities; 23.9.2 The establishment of a community maker space; 23.9.3 Opportunities for housing and/or live/work space for artists; and 23.9.4 A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility. 23.10 Maintain a parity of public space for art and cultural activities when existing public art and cultural activity space is modified or eliminated.	~~Support: 23.9.1 Efforts to secure space for art and cultural activities; 23.9.2 The establishment of a community maker space; 23.9.3 Opportunities for housing and/or live/work space for artists; and 23.9.4 A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility. 23.10 Maintain a parity of public space for art and cultural activities when existing public art and cultural activity space is modified or eliminated.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 23.9 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-15	Goal 24	Land Use	Nurture public art on Mercer Island.	~~Nurture public art on Mercer Island.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike Goal 24, will be replaced with new Goal 2 in the Parks and Open Space Recreation Element. See item# 5-4 CA-4 in the above list.
5-16	Policy 24.1	Land Use	Encourage diversity in public art.	~~Encourage diversity in public art.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.1 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-17	Policy 24.2	Land Use	Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement.	~~Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.2 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-18	Policy 24.3	Land Use	Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art.	~~Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.3 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-19	Policy 24.4	Land Use	Encourage the incorporation of public art in town center development design and site features.	~~Encourage the incorporation of public art in town center development design and site features.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.4 as it duplicates the text found on page 15 of the A&C Plan.
5-20	Policy 24.5	Land Use	Maintain requirement that at least one percent of qualifying capital improvement projects' costs are set aside for public art acquisition, repair, and maintenance.	~~Maintain requirement that at least one percent of qualifying capital improvement projects' costs are set aside for public art acquisition, repair, and maintenance.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.5 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-21	Policy 24.6	Land Use	Make an effort to include public art into and surrounding transportation projects.	~~Make an effort to include public art into and surrounding transportation projects.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.6 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-22	Policy 24.7	Land Use	Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes.	~~Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 24.7 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-23	Goal 25	Land Use	Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.	~~Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: Strike Goal 25, will be replaced with new Goal 2 in the Parks and Open Space Recreation . See item # 5-4 CA-4 in the above list.
5-24	Policy 25.1	Land Use	Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources.	~~Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 25.1 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-25	Policy 25.2	Land Use	Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials.	~~Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 25.2 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-26	Policy 25.3	Land Use	Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations.	~~Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 25.3 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-27	Policy 25.4	Land Use	Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community.	~~Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 25.4 as it duplicates the text found on page 16 of the A&C Plan.
5-28	Goal 8	Economic Development	Arts and Culture are integrated into the City's economic development projects and programs.	~~Arts and Culture are integrated into the City's economic development projects and programs.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed Goal 8 as it duplicates policies in the PROS Plan and the A&C Plan. Comment: The following policies on this topic are already included in other plans. • PROS Plan Objective 8.6: Collaborate with the Community Planning and Development Department on economic development initiatives related to parks, recreation, and cultural arts programs and services. Seek opportunities to buy-local when procuring products and services and identify other opportunities to partner with Mercer Island small businesses in the delivery of programs, events, and other services. • A&C Plan (page 15): Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall city economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy. • See also background section in A&C Plan titled “Arts Add Vitality to the Economy” (pages 13 to 14).

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-29	Policy 8.1 (proposed)	Economic Development	Incorporate public art installations and performances that complement the theme and overall visitor experience.	~~Incorporate public art installations and performances that complement the theme and overall visitor experience.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed Policy 8.1 as it duplicates policies in the A&C Plan. Comment: The following policies on this topic are already included in other plans. • A&C Plan (page 15): 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. • A&C Plan (page 15): 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. • A&C Plan (page 15): Incorporate public art in town center development design and site features. • A&C Plan (page 15): Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall city economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy. • PROS Plan Objective 6.3: Identify and implement opportunities for integrating arts and culture into parks and open space, including, where feasible and appropriate, through permanent and temporary public art installations, arts performance and events, interpretive strategies, and other dynamic expressions. Collaborate with diverse groups to ensure incorporation of art in public space occurs through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. • PROS Plan Objective 6.4: Partner with the community and local organizations to foster a variety of cultural events and support community cultural celebrations. • PROS Plan Objective 8.6: Collaborate with the Community Planning and Development Department on economic development initiatives related to parks, recreation, and cultural arts programs and services. Seek opportunities to buy-local when procuring products and services and identify other opportunities to partner with Mercer Island small businesses in the delivery of programs, events, and other services

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-30	Policy 8.2 (proposed)	Economic Development	Support cultural events and activities that enhance the appeal of Mercer Island to both residents and visitors.	~~Support cultural events and activities that enhance the appeal of Mercer Island to both residents and visitors.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed Policy 8.2 as it duplicates policies in other plans. Comment: The following policies on this topic are already included in other plans: • A&C Plan (page 14): Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events. • A&C Plan (page 15): Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education. • A&C Plan (page 15): 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. • PROS Plan Objective 6.3: Identify and implement opportunities for integrating arts and culture into parks and open space, including, where feasible and appropriate, through permanent and temporary public art installations, arts performance and events, interpretive strategies, and other dynamic expressions. Collaborate with diverse groups to ensure incorporation of art in public space occurs through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. • PROS Plan Objective 6.4: Partner with the community and local organizations to foster a variety of cultural events and support community cultural celebrations. • PROS Plan Objective 8.6: Collaborate with the Community Planning and Development Department on economic development initiatives related to parks, recreation, and cultural arts programs and services. Seek opportunities to buy-local when procuring products and services and identify other opportunities to partner with Mercer Island small businesses in the delivery of programs, events, and other services

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-31	Policy 8.3 (proposed)	Economic Development	Encourage the development of art spaces and events that attract visitors to Town Center.	~~Encourage the development of art spaces and events that attract visitors to Town Center.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed Policy 8.3 as it duplicates policies in other plans. [Revised 09-13-24] Comment: The following policies on this topic are already included in other plans: • See prior responses (item #5-30) ~~(CA-30)~~ related to events. • A&C Plan (page 15): 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; ◦ A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility. • A&C Plan (page 15): Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement. • A&C Plan (page 15): Incorporate public art in town center development design and site features. • PROS Plan Objective 1.16: Integrate public art and park design from the onset of facility planning to create compelling, engaging, and captivating public places. Prioritize experiences that are interactive and allow for dynamic sensory exploration. • PROS Plan Objective 6.5: Develop a long-range project plan for the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund that articulates the City’s vision for the public art program and includes integration with the Capital Improvement Program, strategies for engaging the community in public art acquisition, and updated policies for public art acquisition, siting, security, maintenance, and deaccession.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-32	Policy 8.4 (proposed)	Economic Development	Develop and expand "Arts on the Island Weekend" as a signature annual event each September, enhancing the arts and culture experience.	~~Develop and expand "Arts on the Island Weekend" as a signature annual event each September, enhancing the arts and culture experience.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed policy 8.4 as it is overly specific. Comment: Staff recommend maintaining broad policy guidance that provides more flexibility for the Parks and Recreation Commission and/or the Arts Council, in collaboration with the staff and the community, to develop (and sunset events when appropriate) that meet community needs. The following policies and objectives address cultural arts events: • A&C Plan (page 14): Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events • A&C Plan (page 15): Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships. • A&C Plan (page 15): 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. • PROS Plan Objective 5.8: Evaluate the City's role and function in community events and pursue sponsorships, partnerships, and outside funding to support existing or additional events and festivals. • PROS Plan Objective 5.10: Conduct periodic evaluations of program offerings. Utilize data to inform program and service planning decisions. • PROS Plan Objective 6.1: Foster the City's role as a convenor of artists, arts organizations, and community groups to facilitate collaboration and efficiently serve the community through arts and culture programs and experiences. • PROS Plan Objective 6.3: Identify and implement opportunities for integrating arts and culture into parks and open space, including, where feasible and appropriate, through permanent and temporary public art installations, arts performance and events, interpretive strategies, and other dynamic expressions. Collaborate with diverse groups to ensure incorporation of art in public space occurs through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion • PROS Plan Objective 6.4: Partner with the community and local organizations to foster a variety of cultural events and support community cultural celebrations.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-33	Policy 8.5 (proposed)	Economic Development	Support strategically placed infrastructure to facilitate nonprofit organizations, the City, and other partners' hosting of music and art events, such as a permanent stage, improved public bathroom facilities, hot water access, solar energy, accessible seating, and access to the Town Center.	~~Support strategically placed infrastructure to facilitate nonprofit organizations, the City, and other partners' hosting of music and art events, such as a permanent stage, improved public bathroom facilities, hot water access, solar energy, accessible seating, and access to the Town Center.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed policy 8.5 as it duplicates policies in other plans. Comment: Park design and development is addressed in the PROS Plan. Mercedale Park is in the queue for improvement work that is intended to be addressed in coordination with the sewer line replacement in the park. The following objectives are addressed in the PROS Plan: • PROS Plan Objective 1.4: Identify and prioritize the need for master plans to guide all significant park development projects, achieve cohesive designs, and ensure project phasing is efficient and in alignment with community needs and priorities. Utilize management plans or other adopted strategies to guide the stewardship and maintenance of parks, open space, and trails. • PROS Plan Objective 1.16: Integrate public art and park design from the onset of facility planning to create compelling, engaging, and captivating public places. Prioritize experiences that are interactive and allow for dynamic sensory exploration. • PROS Plan Objective 2.5: Provide amenities at parks, trails, open space, and facilities where appropriate and when feasible to improve the user experience and access. • PROS Plan Objective 6.3: Identify and implement opportunities for integrating arts and culture into parks and open space, including, where feasible and appropriate, through permanent and temporary public art installations, arts performance and events, interpretive strategies, and other dynamic expressions. Collaborate with diverse groups to ensure incorporation of art in public space occurs through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-34	Policy 8.6 (proposed)	Economic Development	Coordinate with established community organizations to develop a year-round program of arts, cultural, and activation events which draw the community to Mercer Island's commercial areas, including: 8.6.A The First Friday Art Walks from May to September; 8.6.B The Sunday Farmers Markets from June to September; 8.6.C Summer Celebration each July; 8.6.D Mostly Music in the Park events throughout the summer; 8.6.E The Arts on the Island Weekend each fall, including the Art Uncorked event; 8.6.F The Holiday Makers Market each December; and 8.6.G Shakespeare in the Park.	~~Coordinate with established community organizations to develop a year-round program of arts, cultural, and activation events which draw the community to Mercer Island's commercial areas, including:~~ ~~8.6.A The First Friday Art Walks from May to September;~~ ~~8.6.B The Sunday Farmers Markets from June to September;~~ ~~8.6.C Summer Celebration each July;~~ ~~8.6.D Mostly Music in the Park events throughout the summer;~~ ~~8.6.E The Arts on the Island Weekend each fall, including the Art Uncorked event;~~ ~~8.6.F The Holiday Makers Market each December; and~~ ~~8.6.G Shakespeare in the Park.~~	Recommendation: Strike proposed policy 8.6 as events are already addressed in the A&C Plan and the PROS Plan. Comment: Staff do not recommend listing specific events in the Comprehensive Plan as event offerings change and evolve over time as do the dates they are offered. Staff recommend maintaining broad objectives that provide more flexibility for the Parks and Recreation Commission and/or the Arts Council, in collaboration with the staff and the community, to develop (and sunset events when appropriate) that meet community needs. The following policies and objectives address economic development and cultural arts events: • A&C Plan (page 14): Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events • A&C Plan (page 15): 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. • PROS Plan Objective 5.8: Evaluate the City's role and function in community events and pursue sponsorships, partnerships, and outside funding to support existing or additional events and festivals. • PROS Plan Objective 5.10: Conduct periodic evaluations of program offerings. Utilize data to inform program and service planning decisions. • PROS Plan Objective 6.1: Foster the City's role as a convenor of artists, arts organizations, and community groups to facilitate collaboration and efficiently serve the community through arts and culture programs and experiences. • PROS Plan Objective 6.4: Partner with the community and local organizations to foster a variety of cultural events and support community cultural celebrations. • PROS Plan Objective 8.6: Collaborate with the Community Planning and Development Department on economic development initiatives related to parks, recreation, and cultural arts programs and services. Seek opportunities to buy-local when procuring products and services and identify other opportunities to partner with Mercer Island small businesses in the delivery of programs, events, and other services.

#	Item #	Element	Current Text:	Proposed Text:	City Manager Recommendation:
5-35	Policy 22.1	Land Use	Periodically review and update the City's emergency management plans.	~~Periodically review and update the City's emergency management plans. Adopt the following emergency management related plans and their successors by reference:~~ ~~Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan;~~ ~~Hazard Mitigation Plan;~~ ~~Continuity of Operations Plan~~ ~~Pandemic Plan;~~ ~~Terrorism Response Plan and Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment;~~ ~~Debris Management Plan;~~ ~~Volunteer Operations Plan; and~~ ~~Shelter Plan.~~	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: <u>Approve proposed text</u> ~~Revise language~~ to adopt emergency management plans by reference, consistent with other plan references.
5-36	Policy 22.2	Land Use	Identify, and implement, necessary enhancements to the City's emergency planning and preparedness program.	~~Identify, and implement, necessary enhancements to the City's emergency planning and preparedness program.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 22.2 as the goals related to emergency management are included in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
5-37	Policy 22.5	Land Use	Adopt regulations and programs to mitigate and control hazards that are created by a natural event. For example, the creation of a new landslide hazard area resulting from a naturally occurring slope failure.	~~Adopt regulations and programs to mitigate and control hazards that are created by a natural event. For example, the creation of a new landslide hazard area resulting from a naturally occurring slope failure.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 22.5 as the these topics are covered in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, proposed to be adopted by reference.
5-38	Policy 22.6	Land Use	Continue to develop an action plan to expedite development review following an emergency event.	~~Continue to develop an action plan to expedite development review following an emergency event.~~	Recommendation: Strike policy 22.6 as “after action” planning work is addressed in the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other emergency plans.
5-39	New Policy 1.28	Capital Facilities	N/A	<u>1.28 Adopt the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan and its successors by reference.</u>	[Revised 09-13-24] Recommendation: <u>Add a new policy to the Capital Facilities Element that adopts the ADA Transition Plan by reference.</u>

2 LAND USE ELEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Mercer Island prides itself on being a residential community. As such, most of the Island's approximately 6.2 square miles of land area is developed with single family homes. The Island is served by a small Town Center and two other commercial zones which focus on the needs of the local population. Mixed-use and multifamily developments are located within the Town Center. Multifamily development also rings the Town Center and the western fringe of the smaller Commercial Office Zone.

Parks, open spaces, educational and recreational opportunities are highly valued and consume a large amount of land. The Island has 472 acres of park and open space lands including small neighborhood parks and trails as well as several larger recreational areas, including Luther Burbank Park and Aubrey Davis Park above the Interstate 90 tunnel. One hundred fifteen acres of natural-forested land are set aside in Pioneer Park and an additional 150 acres of public open spaces are scattered across the community. There are four elementary schools, one middle school and a high school owned and operated by the Mercer Island School District. In addition, there are several private schools at the elementary and secondary education levels.

~~Arts are integral to Mercer Island's identity, vitality, heritage, and shared values. The City of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining rich and diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the community. In 2018, the City incorporated the Arts and Culture plan as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan incorporating the goals and policies in the Arts and Culture Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan.~~ [5-1]

The community strongly values environmental protection. As a result, local development regulations have sought to safeguard land, water and the natural environment, balanced with private property rights. To reflect community priorities, development regulations also attempt to balance views and tree conservation.

TOWN CENTER

For many years, Mercer Island citizens have been concerned about the future of the community's downtown. Past business district revitalization initiatives (e.g., Project Renaissance in 1990) strove to overcome the effects of "under-capitalization" in the Town Center. These efforts sought to support and revitalize downtown commercial/retail businesses and devised a number of recommendations for future Town Center redevelopment. Growing out of previous planning efforts, a renewed interest in Town Center revitalization emerged in 1992—one looking to turn the 33-year-old downtown into the vital economic and social center of the community.

In 1992 the City of Mercer Island undertook a major "citizen visioning" process that culminated in a broad new vision and direction for future Town Center development as presented in a document entitled "Town Center Plan for the City of Mercer Island," dated November 30, 1994. The City used an outside consultant to help lead a five-day citizen design charrette involving hundreds of Island residents and design professionals. This citizen vision became the foundation for new design and development standards within the Town Center and a major part of the new Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in the fall of 1994. At the same time, the City invested about \$5 million in street and streetscape improvements to

create a central pedestrian street, along 78th Avenue and route the majority of vehicular trips around the core downtown onto 77th and 80th Avenues. Specific new design and development standards to implement the Town Center vision were adopted in December of 1995. The Mercer Island Design Commission, City staff and citizens used these standards to review all Town Center projects until 2002.

In 2002, the City undertook a major planning effort to review and modify Town Center design and development guidelines, based on knowledge and experience gained from the previous seven years. Several changes were made in the existing development and design standards to promote public-private partnerships, strengthen parking standards, and develop public spaces as part of private development. Another goal of the revised standards was to unify the major focal points of the Town Center including the pedestrian streetscape of 78th Avenue, an expanded Park-and-Ride and Transit Facility, the public sculpture garden, and the Mercerdale Park facility. As a result, the following changes were made to the design standards:

- Expanding sidewalk widths along the pedestrian spine of 78th Avenue between Mercerdale Park on the south and the Sculpture Garden Park on the north;
- Identifying opportunity sites at the north end of 78th for increased public spaces;
- Requiring that new projects include additional public amenities in exchange for increased building height above the two-story ~~minimum~~ maximum [CC-56]; and
- Increasing the number of visual interest design features required at the street level to achieve pedestrian scale.

The changes to the design and development standards were formulated by a seven-member *Ad Hoc* Committee composed of citizen architects, engineers, planners and several elected officials. Working for three months, the *Ad Hoc* Committee forwarded its recommendations to the Planning Commission, Design Commission and City Council for review. The revised Town Center Development and Design Standards (Mercer Island City Code chapter 19.11) were adopted by City Council in July 2002 and amended in June 2016. They will continue to implement the Town Center vision.

The effects of the City's efforts to focus growth and revitalize the Town Center through targeted capital improvements, development incentives and design standards to foster high quality development are now materializing.

Between 2001 and 2007, 510 new housing units, and 115,922 square feet of commercial area were constructed in the Town Center. Between 2007 and August 2014, 360 new housing units, and 218,015 square feet of new commercial area were constructed.

~~In 2014, the City began a process to review the vision, Comprehensive Plan policies and development and design guidelines for the Town Center. This effort involved several stakeholder groups, 15 joint meetings of the Planning and Design Commissions and hundreds of public comments.~~

During 2004, the City engaged in a major effort to develop new design standards for all non-single family development in zoning districts outside the Town Center. This effort also used an ad-hoc process of elected officials, design commissioners, developers, and architects. The design standards for Zones Outside of Town Center were adopted in December 2004. These standards provide new direction for quality design of non-residential structures in residential zones and other multi-family, commercial, office and public zones outside the Town Center.

In 2014, the City began a process to review the vision, Comprehensive Plan policies and development and design guidelines for the Town Center. This effort involved several stakeholder groups, 15 joint meetings of the Planning and Design Commissions and hundreds of public comments.

Updates to this document were made in 2014 to comply with the Countywide Planning Policies, including updated housing and employment targets.

In June 2020, the City Council enacted a moratorium on major new construction generally in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center. This moratorium temporarily prevented submittal of development applications while the City considered potential updates and amendments to development regulations within the Town Center, including requirements for ground-floor commercial use and for preserving existing commercial square footage. The City Council adopted new Town Center regulations and resolved the moratorium in 2022. The new regulations established commercial use standards for street frontage, a minimum floor area ratio for commercial uses along specific street frontages, and a standard of no net loss of commercial square footage. The principal purpose of the new development regulations is to support commercial uses in Town Center.

SUSTAINABILITY

Mercer Island has a proud tradition of accomplishment toward sustainability. One of the earliest efforts was the formation of the Committee to Save the Earth by high school students in the early 1970s. Through the students' fundraising, the construction and opening of the Mercer Island Recycling Center (Center) was realized in 1975. The self-supported Center was well-patronized by Islanders and, during its many years of operation, it prevented millions of pounds of recyclable materials from ending up in the landfill while contributing to the development of a sustainability ethic on Mercer Island.

In 2006, a grassroots effort of Island citizens led the City to modify the vision statement in its Comprehensive Plan to include language embracing general sustainability, and in May 2007 the City Council committed to a sustainability work program as well as a specific climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80 percent from 2007 levels by 2050, which was consistent with King County and Washington State targets. Later in 2007, the City Council set an interim emissions reduction goal (often called a "milepost") for City operations of five percent by 2012.

In 2012, the City convened a Sustainability Policy Taskforce, a City/community partnership, to recommend sustainability policies to the City. The City Council adopted its recommendations including dedicated staffing, incorporation of recommendations into City planning documents, development of a Sustainability Plan, and legislative actions to foster sustainability. The City's Sustainability Manager was hired in 2013.

Numerous community groups have contributed to sustainability accomplishments in the ensuing years, and many are still active, such as IslandVision, a nonprofit organization that had encouraged and supported sustainable practices on Mercer Island and helped launch an annual Earth Day fair called Leap for Green. In 2017, Sustainable Mercer Island (SMI) emerged as an umbrella group to help coordinate various initiatives on Island and to advocate for county and state-level climate measures. It has also helped organize and publicize solarize campaigns, youth environmental education, public outreach, advocating for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and many other activities. Some are doing research, and many are volunteering with national and local organizations working to solve the climate crisis. One volunteer leads

the very successful Green Schools program for the Mercer Island School District, supported by King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. SMI fosters waste reduction, recycling, and conservation by students and schools. IslandVision, a nonprofit organization, encourages and supports sustainable practices on Mercer Island. It provided to the City, in 2018, a technical analysis of GHG sources on Mercer Island and recommended strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

From 2010 to 2019, with the entire community's sustainability in mind, the City has implemented a wide range of outreach programs, efficiency campaigns, alternative energy initiatives, land-use guidelines, and other natural resource management measures designed to minimize the overall impacts generated by Island residents, for the benefit of future generations. Due to the 20-year horizon envisioned by this Comprehensive Plan, it is especially appropriate to include measures that address the long-term actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, ideally in collaboration with other local governments. Actions that the City will take in the management of its own facilities and operations are addressed in the Capital Facilities Element of this Plan. In 2018, the City continued to promote and support sustainable development, through the development of green building goals and policies for all residential development.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has far-reaching and fundamental consequences for our economy, environment, public health, and safety. Cities have a vital role in mitigating and adapting to climate change both individually and by working collaboratively with other local governments. Current science indicates that to avoid the worst impacts of global warming we need to reduce global GHG emissions sharply.

In 2008, the City created a Climate Action Task Force which was charged with developing a climate action plan for the City and community. The resulting plan called for tracking emissions and the formation of a City/community partnership which was called the Green Ribbon Commission. It was tasked with identifying strategies to reduce GHG emissions. Notable outcomes were the successful promotion of Puget Sound Energy's Green Power Program, which generated funds to cover the cost of the solar array the City installed at the Mercer Island Community and Events Center, and the 22 Ways emissions reduction campaign.

Leap for Green Sustainability Fair spearheaded by IslandVision and co-developed with the City is a vital instrument to educate and encourage engagement in sustainability. In addition to food and entertainment, the fair offers activities for kids and adults, demonstrations and displays of environmentally friendly ways of living, sustainability vendors, and more. The fair was not held in 2019 due to budget constraints.

The City has been very active in addressing climate change and has received national recognition for its efforts. In 2013, the City was recognized by the EPA as a Green Power Community of the Year for its very successful Green Power sign-up campaign for residents and for its commitment to local solar power generation. It was awarded Sol Smart Gold Designation from the Department of Energy in January 2018 for meeting stringent and objective criteria targeting removal of obstacles to solar development including streamlined permitting. As of January 2018, there were 184 known solar installations in the City, higher per capita than any other Eastside City. The City offers same-day permitting for most solar installations and most require only an electrical permit. The City has also installed electric vehicle charging stations, banned plastic bags, successfully piloted bike share and ride hailing services, and contracted with PSE for energy from a new windfarm to power 100 percent of City facilities, among many other actions.

The Capital Facilities Element includes a summary of the City's actions to reduce its own carbon footprint.

In 2014, King County and cities formed the innovative King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) to coordinate and enhance local government climate efforts. Mercer Island was a founding member and remains a very active participant. The K4C has charted opportunities for joint action to reduce GHG emissions and accelerate progress toward a clean and sustainable future. Mercer Island, through K4C, seeks opportunities to partner on outreach to decision-makers and the public, adopt consistent standards and strategies, share solutions, implement pilot projects, and cooperate on seeking funding resources. In 2016, Mercer Island, along with King County and other partners in K4C, was recognized with a national Climate Leadership Award from EPA. In 2019, the City Council passed Resolution 1570, which adopted an updated version of the K4C Joint Climate Commitments.

~~Community GHG emissions have been inventoried and reported to K4C and the public when possible, though 2016 through 2019 data have yet to be entered. The major sources of GHG on Mercer Island have been found to be passenger car travel (estimated at 40 percent of total) and building energy consumption (48 percent residential plus commercial).~~

~~With many good efforts completed and underway, it is necessary to take further action in order to meet GHG reduction targets, both in our households and in our community.~~

~~Beginning in 2018, the City assessed the City's strengths and weaknesses in supporting sustainability using the STAR Communities framework. Information from this assessment, along with the measures discussed above, and others under consideration, will be identified in more detail in a rolling six-year Sustainability Plan, to be adopted in 2019, which will guide the City's internal and external actions while taking into account the interrelated issues of climate change, population change, land use, public infrastructure, transportation choices, natural resources management, equitable services and accessibility, arts and community, public health and safety, human services, and economic development.~~

In 2018 and 2019, the City added goals and policies to the Land Use Element that support climate change planning with Ordinances 18-13 and 19-23. These ordinances established Goals 26 through 29. This included a goal and policies that referenced the STAR Community Framework as a means for assessing the City's sustainability efforts. During the 2024 periodic review, goals and policies referring to the STAR Community Framework were amended to reflect that this framework was absorbed into the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Cities program.

In 2023, the City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan. [CC-57] The Climate Action Plan establishes strategies for the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled to address climate change. Those strategies are an important step to move the City forward in its response to the changing climate. Where needed, goals and policies were amended or added to this Land Use Element to support the strategies in the Climate Action Plan, including amendments to the policies under goals 26, 27, and 28.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

TOWN CENTER

The Town Center is a 76-acre bowl-shaped area that includes residential, retail, commercial, mixed-use and office-oriented businesses. Historically, convenience businesses — groceries, drugstores, service stations, dry cleaners, and banks — have dominated the commercial land uses; many of them belonging to larger regional or national chains. Retailers and other commercial services are scattered throughout the Town Center and are not concentrated in any particular area. With a diffused development pattern, the Town Center is not conducive to "browsing," making movement around the downtown difficult and inconvenient for pedestrians, physically disadvantaged persons and bicyclists.

Mercer Island's downtown is located only three miles from Seattle and one mile from Bellevue via I-90. I-90 currently provides critical vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access to the Town Center as well as the rest of the Island. Regional transportation plans anticipate future development of a high capacity transit system in the I-90 corridor. In light of recent and potential future public transportation investments in the I-90 corridor and in keeping with the region's emerging growth philosophy, redevelopment and moderate concentration of future growth into Mercer Island's Town Center represents the wisest and most efficient use of the transportation infrastructure.

As required by the Growth Management Act of 1990, the Land Use Element presents a practical and balanced set of policies that address current and future land use issues. An inventory of existing land uses (Table 1) and a forecast of future development and population trends (Section III.) provide a backdrop for issues and policies. Subsequent sections IV and V address major land use issues and policies for the Town Center and non-Town Center areas.

Note: Table 1 requires additional information from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Staff expect to get this information from PSRC before the updated Land Use Element is adopted. This table will be updated with that information once it is provided.

Table 1. Town Center Land Uses & Facts Snapshot (May 2015)

Total Land Area	76.5 acres
Total Net Land Area (excludes public right-of-way)	61.1 acres
Total Floor Area (includes all uses)	2,385,723 square feet (20% office, 15% retail, and 65% residential)
Total Floor Area - Ratio	0.90
Total Housing Units	1,532
Total Net Residential Density	25 units/acre (Approx. 75 units/acre on sites with residential uses)
Total Employment	3,993 ¹

Notes: This table includes one mixed-use project currently under construction as of May 2015 (i.e., Hadley).

¹This information is provided by the PSRC and is derived from Census data.

AREAS OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

Single family residential zoning accounts for 88 percent of the Island's land use. There are 3,534 acres zoned for single family residential development. This compares to 77 acres in the Town Center zones, 19 acres for Commercial Office zone, and 103 acres in multi-family zones (Table 2). City Hall is located in a Commercial Office zone, while other key civic buildings such as the Post Office and the Main Fire Station are located in the Town Center and City Hall. Many of the remaining public buildings, schools, recreational facilities and places of religious worship are located in residential or public zones.

Table 2. Land Use Zones and Acreage (2014)

Zone	Acreage
Business - B	2.85
Commercial Office - CO	19.45
Multifamily - MF-2	42.03
Multifamily - MF-2L	7.73
Multifamily - MF-3	53.73
Public Institution - P	284.31
Planned Business - PBZ	13.89
Single Family - R-12	77.44
Single Family - R-15	1277.04
Single Family - R-8.4	779.36
Single Family - R-9.6	1399.98
Town Center - TC	77.16

Note: Figures above include adjacent right-of-way.

Approximately 95 percent of all residential land on Mercer Island is currently developed. Over the last 30 years, most public facilities have been re-constructed, or have planned additions, in sufficient quantities to serve current and projected populations. This category includes schools, parks and recreation facilities, streets and arterials, and fire stations. In 2015, the City constructed a new fire station on Southeast 68th Street to increase service capacity for the south end of the island. Northwood Elementary School was constructed in 2016, adding to the Mercer Island School District's capacity. Future re-investments in these facilities will primarily improve the reliability and function of the community's "infrastructure" rather than adding significant new capacity. [Refer to the Capital Facilities Element for a more in-depth discussion of public facilities.]

Single family residential zones designate a number of different lot sizes and densities including 8,400 square feet, 9,600 square feet, 12,000 square feet and 15,000 square feet. Of the 3,534 acres in these zones, approximately 145 remain unimproved. Most unimproved lots are small parcels and/or are platted building lots within previously developed neighborhoods. Some additional capacity exists in larger lots which can be subdivided. However, during the planning horizon, the City expects an average of roughly six subdivisions a year, the majority of which will be short plats of four or fewer lots. Residential zones in the City are primarily zoned for single-family residential development. There are four minimum lot sizes in single-family zones, ranging from 15,000 square feet, 12,000 square feet, 9,600 square feet, and 8,400 square feet. Existing single-family development is mostly made up of established neighborhoods constructed in the latter-half of the 20th Century. Most lots in the single-family zones are already

subdivided and few are undeveloped. New development in the single-family zones is typically demolition of an existing home and replacement with a newer home.

The most densely developed neighborhoods are found on the Island's north end. This includes East Seattle and First Hill as well as neighborhoods immediately north and south of the I-90 corridor and areas along the entire length of Island Crest Way.

The least densely populated neighborhoods are ones with the largest minimum lot size and are designated as Zone R-15 (15,000-square-foot minimum lot size). These neighborhoods, generally located along East and West Mercer Way, contain the greatest amount of undeveloped residential land and often contain extremely steep slopes, deep and narrow ravines and small watercourses. Because environmentally sensitive areas often require careful development and engineering techniques, many of these undeveloped lands are difficult and expensive to develop.

Generally, Mercer Island's oldest neighborhoods are situated on a fairly regular street grid with homes built on comparatively small lots 40 to 60 years ago. Interspersed among the older homes are renovated homes and new homes that are often noticeably larger. Newer developments tend to consist of large homes on steeply pitched, irregular lots, with winding narrow private roads and driveways. Many residential areas of Mercer Island are characterized by large mature tree cover. Preservation of this greenery is an important community value.

Most Mercer Island multi-family housing is located in or on the borders of the Town Center. However, two very large complexes straddle I-90 and are adjacent to single family areas. Shorewood Apartments is an older, stable development of 646 apartment units. It was extensively remodeled in 2000. North of Shorewood and across I-90 is the retirement community of Covenant Shores. This development has a total of 237 living units, ranging from independent living to fully assisted living.

There is one Commercial/Office (CO) zone outside the Town Center. It is located along the south side of the I-90 corridor at East Mercer Way and contains several office buildings, including the Mercer Island City Hall. In the summer of 2004, the regulations in the CO zone were amended to add retirement homes as a permitted use with conditions.

For land use and ~~transportation~~ planning purposes, Mercer Island ~~has not been~~ is now designated as an ~~Urban Center~~ High Capacity Transit Community (HCTC) in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2020~~50~~ plan. The new destination recognizes Mercer Island's importance as a locality with high-capacity transit service, making it an ideal place to focus new development within walking distance of the high-capacity transit, walkable jobs, and in adherence with HB 1220 affordability and density guidelines. This is due to the excellent access it provides to employment centers, educational institutions, and other opportunities. [CC-42] ~~As such, Mercer Island will not share in the major growth of the region, but will~~ continue to see new employment and residential development, most of which will be concentrated in the Town Center. Employment will continue to grow slowly and will be significantly oriented towards serving the local residential community. Transit service will focus on connecting ~~the~~ Mercer Island to other metropolitan and sub-regional centers via Interstate 90 and the region's high capacity transit system, including Sound Transit's East Link Light Rail.

III. GROWTH FORECAST

RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT 20-YEAR GROWTH TARGETS

The King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) establish growth targets for all of the jurisdictions within King County. The CPPs were initially adopted in 1992, and have been amended several times since then. Elected officials from King County, the cities of Seattle and Bellevue, and the Sound Cities Association meet as the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). This Council makes recommendations to the County Council, which has the authority to adopt and amend the CPPs. During 2012, the GMPC worked with an inter-jurisdictional team of King County Planning Directors to determine an equitable distribution of the growth targets throughout the County. It was agreed that the City of Mercer Island would plan to accommodate 2,000 new housing units and 1,000 new jobs between 2006 and 2031. GMA requires jurisdictions to plan for 20 years of forecasted growth, so the growth target time horizon was extended out to 2035 (see Table 3). King County amended the CPPs in 2021, updating the growth targets for cities and towns throughout the County. The updated growth targets extended the planning horizon through the year 2044. Table 3 shows the City of Mercer Island's housing and employment growth targets for 2024 through 2044.

Table 3. Growth Targets

Housing Growth Target (in units)	
~~Original~~ Housing growth target (in dwelling units), 2006— ~~2031~~ <u>2024 – 2044</u>	~~2,000~~ <u>1,239</u>
Adjusted growth target, 2006—2035	2,320
Employment Growth Target (in jobs)	
~~Original~~ Employment growth target (in jobs), 2006—2031 <u>2024 – 2044</u>	~~1,000~~ <u>1,300</u>
Adjusted growth target, 2006—2035	1,160

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL CAPACITY

According to the Puget Sound Regional Council, as of March 2012~~20~~ there are approximately ~~6,622~~ 7,325 jobs on Mercer Island. The City's development capacity is analyzed in the analysis completed to inform the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report. That report shows that Mercer Island has the capacity for a total of 2,373 new jobs; well in excess of the 1,160 sufficient development capacity to accommodate the 2044 employment and housing growth targets for which Mercer Island must have sufficient zoned land to accommodate.

Table 4 summarizes employment capacity findings from the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report. The 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report provides capacity for zones grouped by the type of land use. These categories are commercial and mixed-use. Mixed-use zones are those that allow both commercial and residential development. The City of Mercer Island does not have any zoned industrial lands. [CC-57]

Table 4. Employment Capacity 2018 – 2035.

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Vacant / Redevelopable</u>	<u>Floor Area Capacity</u>	<u>Square Feet per Job</u>	<u>Job Capacity</u>
<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>52</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>242</u>
<u>Mixed Use</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>20,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>119</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>100,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>479</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>171</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>150,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>721</u>
	<u>Jobs in Pipeline</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>70</u>
	<u>Totals</u>	<u>180,000</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>962</u>

Source: King County 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.

Note: The 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report evaluates employment capacity for 2018 through 2035. If the study period were extended through 2044, there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the 1,300-job growth target.

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

The Comprehensive Plan contains three types of housing figures: a capacity estimate, a growth target, and a housing and population forecast. Each of these housing numbers serves a different purpose.

Housing Capacity.

As required in a 1997 amendment to the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.215), recent growth and land capacity in King County and associated cities have been reported in the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.

The capacity estimate identifies the number of new units that could be accommodated on vacant and redevelopable land given existing development and under current zoning. The capacity estimate is not a prediction of what will happen, merely an estimate of how many new units the Island could accommodate based on our current zoning code, the number and size of vacant properties, and some standard assumptions about the redevelopment potential of other properties that could accommodate additional development.

~~According to the 2014 Buildable Lands Report, the City of Mercer Island has the capacity for 2,004 additional housing units on properties designated for residential uses through new development on vacant lands and/or through redevelopment of underutilized lands. Based on zoning and redevelopment assumptions done in 2012 for the Buildable Lands Report, about 614 new housing units could be accommodated in single family zones, 143 new housing units could be accommodated in multifamily zones and 1,247 units could be accommodated in the Town Center.~~

~~Redevelopable land in the Town Center was determined based on an analysis of those parcels which currently have an improvement to land value ratio of .5 or less and are not in public or utility ownership. Additionally, townhomes and condominium properties were not considered redevelopable, and only those properties allowing two and one half residential units or more are included in the analysis. Future assumed densities for this preliminary figure were based on the density of recently permitted projects (⅔ mixed-use, ⅓ commercial only). This methodology used in the 2014 Buildable Land Analysis is a similar methodology used in the 2007 Buildable Lands Report.~~

According to the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report, the City of Mercer Island has development capacity to accommodate 1,429 new housing units. Most of the housing development capacity is in medium-high- and high-density residential zones, including Town Center. Table 5 summarizes residential capacity findings from the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report. The 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report provides residential capacity in five categories based on assumed density: very low density (2.6 – 3.3 dwellings per acre), low density (4.6 – 6.1 dwellings per acre), medium-low density (2.6 – 3.3 dwellings per acre), medium-high density (22.7 dwellings per acre), and high density (100.6 – 167 dwellings per acre). The assumed densities are based on the achieved density in each zone.

Table 5. Residential Development Capacity.

<u>Assumed Density Level</u>	<u>Vacant / Redevelopable</u>	<u>Assumed Densities (low/high units per acre) [CC-59]</u>	<u>Net Developable Acres</u>	<u>Capacity in housing units</u>
<u>Very Low Density</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>2.6/3.3</u>	<u>32.05</u>	<u>85</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>2.6/3.3</u>	<u>85.97</u>	<u>35</u>
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>118.02</u>	<u>120</u>
<u>Low Density</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>4.6/6.1</u>	<u>21.12</u>	<u>98</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>4.6/6.1</u>	<u>107.54</u>	<u>138</u>
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>128.65</u>	<u>235</u>
<u>Medium Low Density</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>22.7</u>	<u>0.45</u>	<u>10</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>22.7</u>	<u>1.13</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>1.58</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Medium High Density</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>43.7</u>	<u>535</u>
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>43.7</u>	<u>535</u>
<u>High Density</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>100.6/167</u>	<u>0.54</u>	<u>91</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>100.6/167</u>	<u>23.47</u>	<u>437</u>
	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>24.01</u>	<u>528</u>
<u>All Zones</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>54.16</u>	<u>284</u>
	<u>Redevelopable</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>261.81</u>	<u>1,145</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>315.97</u>	<u>1,429</u>

Source: King County 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.

Housing Targets.

As mentioned above, the City has a King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) 203544 housing target of 2,3201,239 new housing units. The housing target represents the number of units that the City is required to plan for under the Growth Management Act. The housing target is not necessarily the number of units that will be built on Mercer Island over the next two decades. Market forces, including regional job growth, interest rates, land costs, and other factors will have a major influence on the number of actual units created.

Housing and Population Forecast.

Note: The housing and population forecast section requires additional information from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Staff expect to get this information from PSRC before the updated Land Use Element is adopted. This section will be updated with that information once it is provided.

The third type of housing figure contained in the Comprehensive Plan is a local housing forecast. Table 4 contains a housing unit and population forecast for 2010 through 2030 conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), using a parcel-based land use model called UrbanSim, based on existing zoning and land use designations.

PSRC anticipates an increase in housing units at an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.25 percent between 2010 and 2040. This represents an increase of approximately 453 housing units and 1,495 people over 30 years.

The Housing Unit and Population forecasts are informed estimates based on several factors such as growth trends for new single family and accessory dwelling units over the last several years, Puget Sound Regional Council forecasts of future household size, transportation systems and demand modeling, and real estate market fluctuations.

~~Given the uncertainty of future market forces, periodic reviews of housing and population forecasts should be made to evaluate the future growth assumptions. Adjustments to this forecast will also be necessary if the projections on household size and population growth vary significantly from those forecasted. Planning staff predict that PSRC's multifamily unit growth estimates for the period through 2030 are likely to be surpassed as early as 2020. This prediction is based on the established pattern of larger, mixed use developments adding 100—200 units at a time to the City's multifamily housing supply and projects that are now in the development pipeline. The City will continue to monitor housing unit, population growth and market trends, and adjust land use, transportation, and capital facilities planning as necessary prior to the next major Comprehensive Plan update in 2023.~~

Housing Density.

Note: The housing density section requires additional information from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Staff expect to get this information from PSRC before the updated Land Use Element is adopted. This section will be updated with that information once it is provided.

The average allowed density in the City of Mercer Island is more than 6.2 dwelling units per acre. This figure is based on the proportional acreage of each land use designation (or zones) that allows residential development, the densities permitted under the regulations in place today for that zone, and an assumption that the average practical allowed density for the Town Center is 99.16 units per acre. Since there is no maximum density in the Town Center and density is controlled instead by height limits and other requirements, the figure of 99.16 units per acre represents the overall achieved net density of the mixed-use projects in the Town Center constructed since 2006.

Table 4. 2010-2030 Housing Unit and Population Forecast

Year	Overall Household Size	SFR Units	Multi-family Units	Total Increase in units per decade	Total Housing Units	Population
2010 (Census)	2.48	6,873	2,236	N/A	9,109	22,699
2020 (Forecast)	2.54	7,201	2,257	349	9,458	24,991
2030 (Forecast)	2.53	7,349	2,266	157	9,615	25,243

2010 household size data obtained from the 2010 Census. All other data is from PSRC, using their 2013 Forecast parcel-based land use model using Urban Sim.

IV. LAND USE ISSUES

TOWN CENTER

- (1) Town Center is an area in the City where most new development will be focused in the coming years. The Town Center area includes land designated-zoned for commercial retail, service, mixed, and office uses is much larger than the local population can support. This has contributed to a historical pattern of relatively low private investment in downtown properties. The Town Center is the largest mixed-use zone in the City and an important economic hub. Consequently, Older commercial development in the Town Center consists of many one story strip centers, surrounded by vast parking lots (FAR of only 0.23); a typical suburban sprawl-like development. The Town Center subarea plan adopted in 1993 establishes the planning framework for Town Center to redevelop with a mix of residential and commercial development. Mixed-use development is replacing existing commercial development as the Town Center redevelops. This has led to an increase in the number of residential dwellings in this area concurrent with changes to the type of commercial development in the zone. There is concern that redevelopment will displace existing businesses or reduce the total commercial square footage available for new and expanding businesses in Town Center. In 2022 the City adopted new regulations to limit the loss of commercial space as the area redevelops. As these regulations influence the built environment in Town Center, the City will need to monitor their influence on the availability and affordability of commercial space.
- (2) In 1994, the City made significant street improvements in the Town Center, which have resulted in a more pedestrian-friendly environment. However, more needs to be done on the private development side to design buildings with attractive streetscapes so that people will have more incentive to park their car and walk between shopping areas.
- (3) The Town Center is poorly identified. The major entrance points to the downtown are not treated in any special way that invites people into the business district.

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

- (1) The community needs to accommodate two important planning values — maintaining the existing single family residential character of the Island, while at the same time planning for population and housing growth.
- (2) Accessory ~~housing~~dwelling units are allowed by City zoning regulations, and offer a way to add housing capacity to single family residential zones without disrupting the character as much as other types of higher-density residential development.
- (3) Commercial Office and PBZ zones must serve the needs of the local population while remaining compatible with the overall residential character of the community.
- (4) Ongoing protection of environmentally sensitive areas including steep slopes, ravines, watercourses, and shorelines is an integral element of the community's residential character.
- (5) View protection is important and must be balanced with the desire to protect the mature tree growth.
- (6) Within the bounds of limited public resources, open space and park land must be preserved to enhance the community's extraordinary quality of life and recreation opportunities.
- (7) There is a lack of pedestrian and transit connections between the Town Center, the Park and Ride, and Luther Burbank Park.

V. LAND USE POLICIES

TOWN CENTER

Town Center Vision	
Mercer Island Town Center Should Be ...	
1.	THE HEART of Mercer Island and embody a small town character, where residents want to shop, eat, play and relax together.
2.	ACCESSIBLE to people of all ages and abilities.
3.	CONVENIENT to enter, explore and leave with a variety of transportation modes.
4.	WELL DESIGNED with public spaces that offer attractive settings for entertainment, relaxation and recreation.
5.	DIVERSE with a range of uses, building types and styles that acknowledge both the history and future of the Island.
6.	LOCAL providing businesses and services that meet every day needs on the Island.
7.	HOME to a variety of housing options for families, singles and seniors.

GOAL 1:

Create a mixed-use Town Center with pedestrian scale and connections.

- 1.1 A walkable mixed-use core should be located adjacent to a regional transit facility and be of sufficient size and intensity to create a focus for Mercer Island.

Land Use and Development

GOAL 2:

Create a policy and regulatory structure that will result in a diversity of uses that meets Islanders' daily needs and helps create a vibrant, healthy Town Center serving as the City's business, social, cultural and entertainment center.

- 2.1 Use a variety of creative approaches to organize various land uses, building types and heights in different portions of the Town Center.
- ~~2.2 Establish a minimum commercial square footage standard in Town Center to preserve the existing quantity of commercial space in recent developments as new development occurs.~~
- 2.2 Establish a minimum commercial square footage in Town Center to preserve the quantity of commercial space in recent developments as new development occurs, with a specific focus on maintaining the current number of large grocery stores to ensure adequate access to food for residents. [Substantive CC-43]

GOAL 3:

Have a mixture of building types, styles and ages that reflects the evolution of the Town Center over time, with human-scaled buildings, varied height, setbacks and step-backs and attractive facades.

- 3.1 Buildings taller than two stories may be permitted if appropriate public amenities and enhanced design features are provided.
- 3.2 Locate taller buildings on the north end of the Town Center and step down building height through the center to lower heights on the south end, bordering Mercerdale Park.
- 3.3 Calculate building height on sloping sites by measuring height on the lowest side of the building.
- 3.4 Mitigate the "canyon" effect of straight building facades along streets through use of upper floor step-backs, façade articulation, and similar techniques.
- 3.5 Buildings on larger parcels or with longer frontage should provide more variation of the building face, to allow for more light and create the appearance of a smaller scale, more organic, village-like development pattern. Building mass and long frontages resulting from a single user should be broken up by techniques such as creating a series of smaller buildings (like Island Square), providing public pedestrian connections within and through a parcel, and use of different but consistent architectural styles to create smaller building patterns.

- 3.6 Building facades should provide visual interest to pedestrians. Street level windows, ~~minimum~~ reasonable [CC-65] building set-backs, on-street entrances, landscaping, and articulated walls should be encouraged.

GOAL 4:

Create an active, pedestrian-friendly, bicycle-friendly, [CC-66] and accessible retail core.

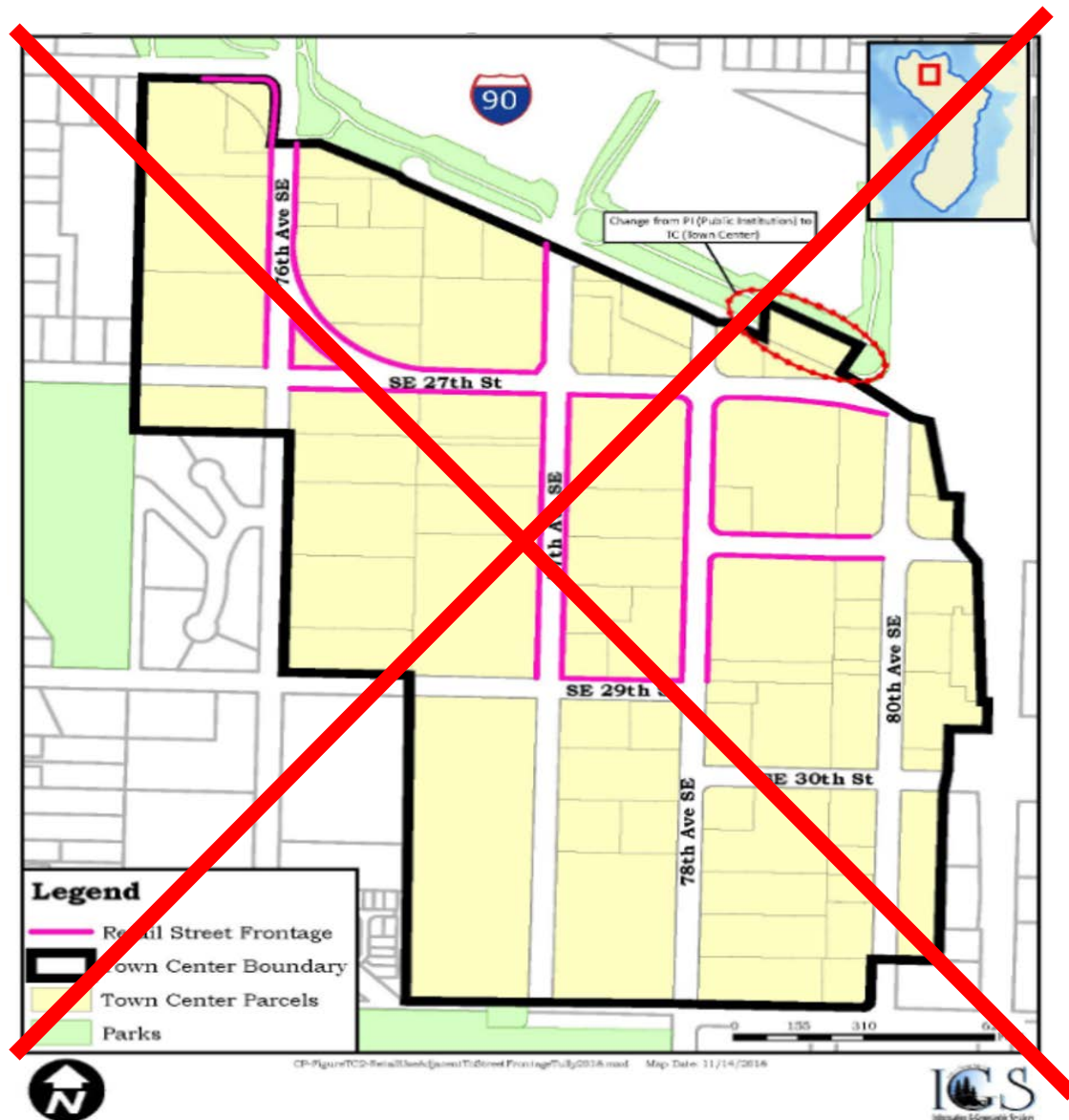
- 4.1 Street-level retail, office, and service uses should reinforce the pedestrian-oriented circulation system.
- 4.2 Retail street frontages (~~Figure TC-1~~) [CC-9] should be the area where the majority of retail activity is focused. Retail shops and restaurants should be the dominant use, with personal services also encouraged to a more limited extent.

GOAL 5:

~~Encourage~~ Allow a variety of housing forms for all life stages, including townhomes, apartments and live-work units attractive to families, singles, and seniors at a range of price points.

- 5.1 Land uses and architectural standards should provide for the development of a variety of housing types, sizes and styles.
- 5.2 ~~Encourage~~ Allow development of low-rise multi-family housing in the TCMF subareas of the Town Center.
- 5.3 ~~Encourage~~ Allow the development of affordable housing within the Town Center.
- 5.4 ~~Encourage~~ Allow the development of accessible and visitable housing within the Town Center.
- 5.5 ~~Encourage~~ Allow options for ownership housing within the Town Center. [CC-44]

Figure TC 1. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages



Circulation and Parking

GOAL 6:

Be convenient and accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists.

GOAL 7:

Town Center streets should be viewed as multiple-use facilities, providing for the following needs:

- Access to local businesses and residences.
- Access for emergency vehicles.

- Routes for through traffic.
 - Transit routes and stops.
 - On-street parking.
 - Pedestrian and bicycle travel.
 - Sidewalk activities, including limited advertising and merchandising and restaurant seating.
 - Occasional special events and outdoor entertainment.
- 7.1 ~~All~~ Town Center streets should provide for safe and convenient multi-modal access to existing and future development in the Town Center.
- 7.2 Design streets using universal design principles to allow older adults and individuals with disabilities to "stroll or roll," and cross streets safely.
- 7.3 78th Avenue SE and SE 27th Street should be the primary pedestrian corridors in the Town Center, with ample sidewalks, landscaping and amenities. [Substantive CC-60]
- 7.4 77th Avenue SE should serve as the primary bicycle corridor connecting the regional bicycle network along I-90 and the planned light rail station with Mercerdale Park and the rest of the Island south of the Town Center.

GOAL 8:

Be pedestrian-friendly, with amenities, tree-lined streetscapes, wide sidewalks, storefronts with canopies, and cross-block connections that make it easy to walk around.

- 8.1 Provide convenient opportunities to walk throughout Town Center.
- 8.2 Create safe pedestrian routes that break-up larger City blocks.

GOAL 9:

Have ample parking, both on-street and off, and the ability to park once and walk to a variety of retail shops.

- 9.1 Reduce the land area devoted to parking by encouraging structured and underground parking. ~~If open-air, parking lots should be behind buildings. Parking should be convenient and safe.~~ [Substantive CC-67]
- 9.2 Encourage improved access to transit, bicycle, pedestrian and shared parking facilities to reduce trip generation and provide transportation alternatives, particularly for secondary trips once users reach the Town Center.
- 9.3 Consider a range of regulatory and incentive approaches that can increase the supply of public parking in conjunction with development proposals.
- 9.4 On and off-street parking should be well-lit, convenient and well-signed so that drivers can easily find and use parking.

9.5 Develop long-range plans ~~for the development of additional~~ to meet the commuter parking to serve needs of Mercer Island residents. [CC-68]

9.6 Prioritize parking for Mercer Island residents and business customers within the Town Center. [CC-69]

GOAL 10:

Prioritize ~~Town Center~~ transportation investments that promote multi-modal access to regional transit facilities. [Substantive CC-70]

GOAL 11:

Promote the development of pedestrian linkages between public and private development and transit in and adjacent to the Town Center.

Public Realm

GOAL 12:

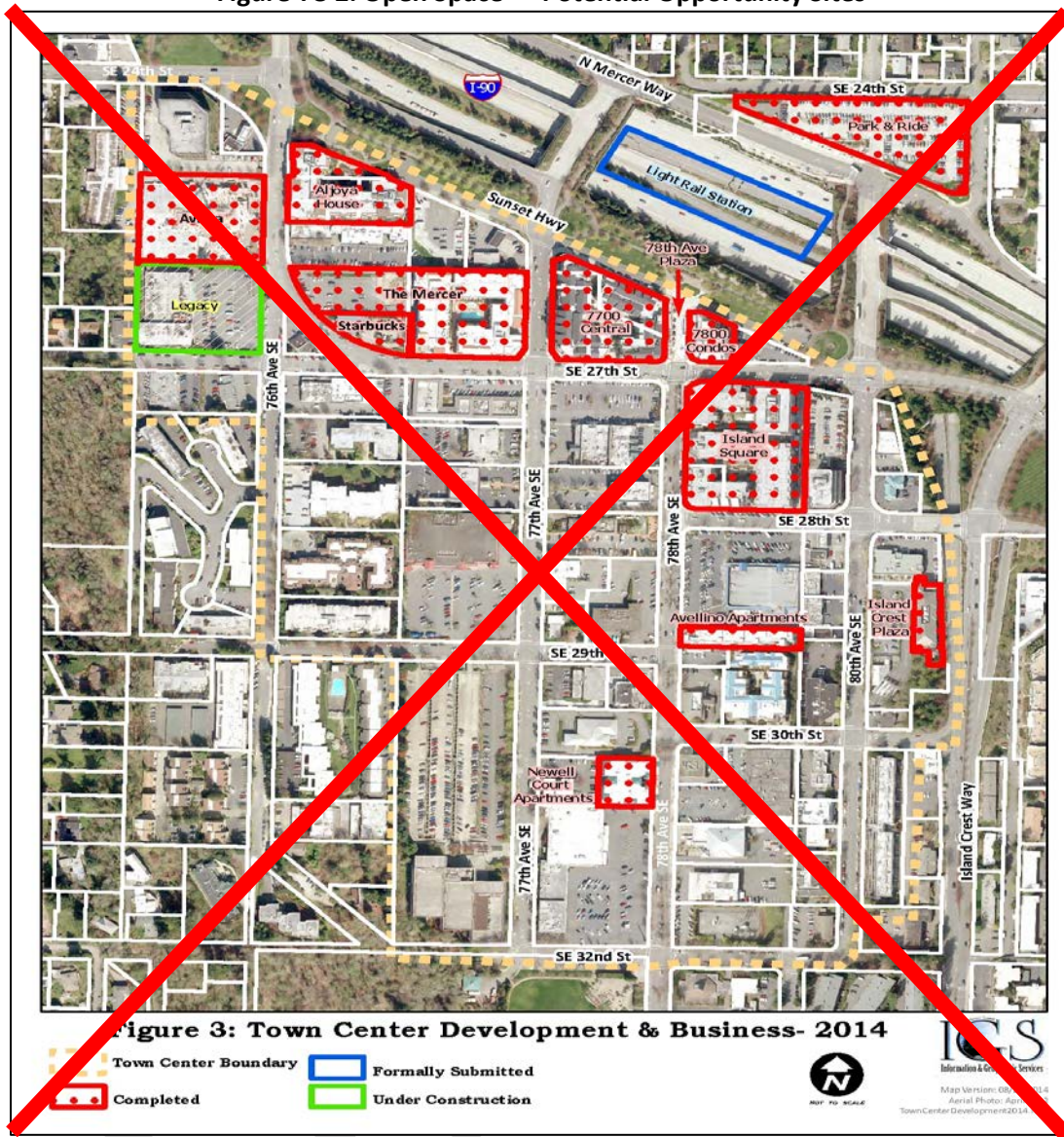
Have inviting, accessible outdoor spaces with seating, greenery, water features, and art that offer settings for outdoor entertainment and special events as well as for quiet contemplation.

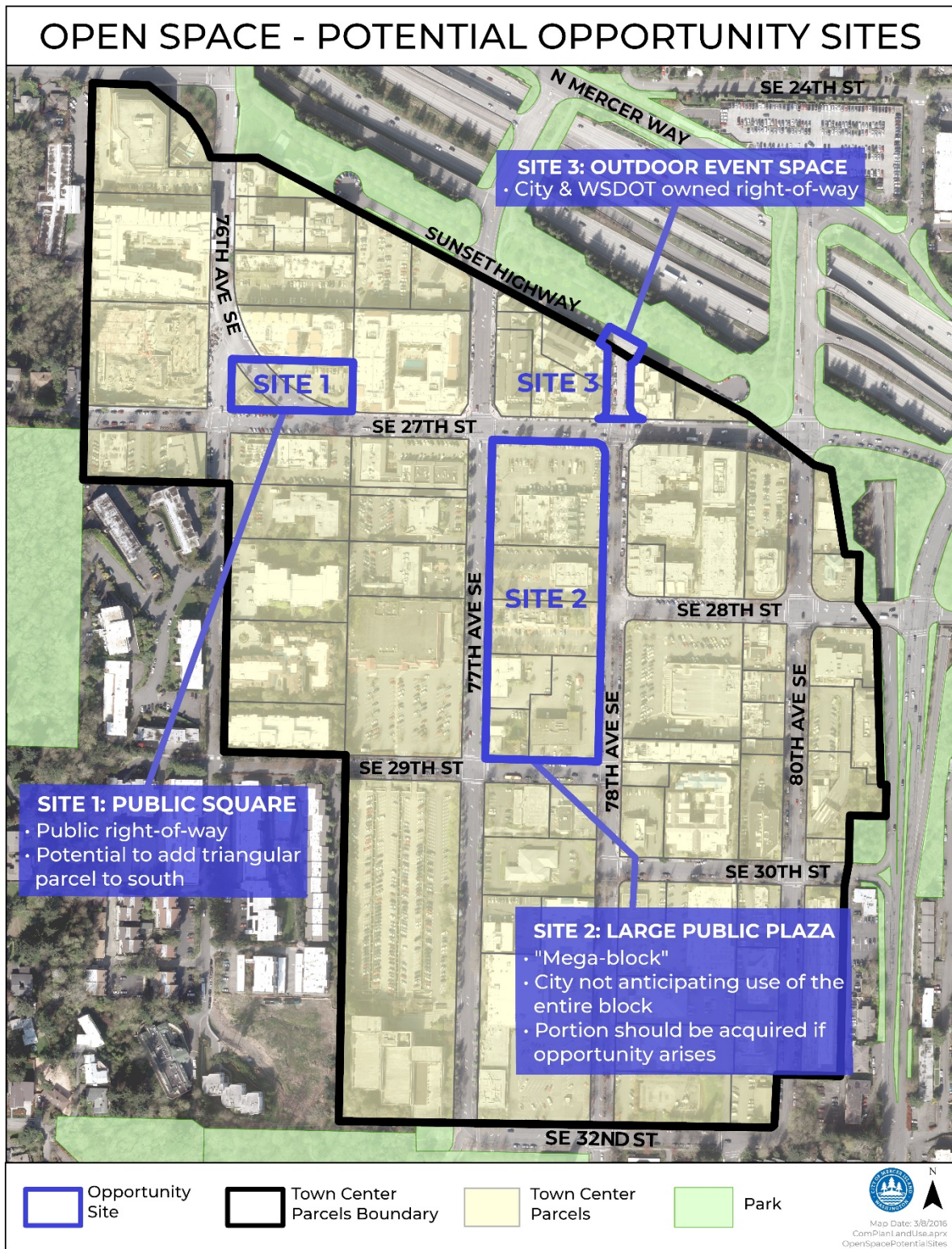
12.1 Outdoor public spaces of various sizes in Town Center are important and should be encouraged.

12.2 Encourage the provision of on-site public open space in private developments. ~~But This can include incentives, allowing development agreements, and payment of a calculated amount of money fee in lieu~~ [CC-45] as an option alternative to dedication of land. In addition, encourage aggregation of smaller open spaces between parcels to create a more substantial open space.

12.3 Investigate potential locations and funding sources for the development (and acquisition if needed) of one or more significant public open space(s) that can function as an anchor for the Town Center's character and redevelopment. Identified "opportunity sites" are shown in Figure TC-2 and described below. These opportunity sites should not preclude the identification of other sites, should new opportunities or circumstances arise.

Figure TC-2. Open Space — Potential Opportunity Sites





~~Sustainability~~Green Building

GOAL 13:

Town Center buildings should meet a high standard of energy efficiency and sustainable construction practices as well as exhibiting other innovative green features, above and beyond what is required by the existing Construction Code.

Economic Development

GOAL 14:

Support the further economic development of Mercer Island, particularly in the Town Center.

- ~~14.1 Develop~~ Establish economic development policies in an Economic Development Plan Element, engaging internal and external resources as appropriate.
- ~~14.2 Establish the Town Center as an active and attractive commercial node, including the use of gateways, wayfinding and signage, and links to transit.~~
- ~~14.3 Maintain a diversity of downtown land uses.~~
- ~~14.43~~ Support economic growth that accommodates Mercer Island's share of the regional employment growth target of 1,2281,300 new jobs from 200624—203540, by maintaining adequate zoning capacity, infrastructure, and supportive economic development policies.
- ~~14.5 Investigate formation of a business improvement area (BIA), or other mechanism authorized by state law, to help promote Island businesses, to support Town Center activities, and to finance improvements and amenities.~~
- ~~14.6 Identify a staff person who will help coordinate economic development activities.~~
- ~~14.7 Support public and private investment in existing properties, infrastructure, and marketing to help maintain longstanding businesses and attract new ones.~~
- ~~14.84~~ Create a healthy and safe economic environment where Town Center businesses can serve the needs of Mercer Island residents as well as draw upon broader retail and commercial market areas.
- ~~14.9 Proactively and persistently engage residents, community organizations, and businesses in a collaborative effort to establish a strategy for Mercer Island economic development.~~

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

GOAL 15:

Mercer Island should remain principally a low ~~to moderate~~ density, single family residential community. [Substantive CC-12]

- 15.1 ~~Existing land use policies, which strongly support the preservation of~~ Preserve the neighborhood character-existing conditions-in the single family residential zones, will continue to apply. Changes to the zoning code or development standards will be accomplished through code amendments. For the purpose of implementing this element neighborhood character only refers to the form, bulk, scale, and intensity of the built environment. [AC-9]
- 15.2 ~~Residential densities in single family areas will generally continue to occur at three to five units per acre, commensurate with current zoning. However, some adjustments may be made to allow the development of innovative~~ Provide for housing types in residential zones, such as accessory dwelling units and compact courtyard homes additional middle housing types at slightly higher densities as outlined in the Housing Element.
- 15.3 ~~Multi-family areas will continue to be low rise apartments and condos and duplex/triplex designs, and with the addition of the Commercial/Office (CO) zone, will be confined to those areas already designated to allow multi-family. Encourage multifamily and mixed-use housing within the existing boundaries of the Town Center, and multifamily, and Commercial Office zones to accommodate moderate- to extremely low-income households.~~ [Substantive CC-14]
- 15.4 ~~Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should reflect~~ recognize the desire-need and support the ability to retain viable-maintain, update, and renovate-and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations-facilities as allowed by the land use code. Such facilities are-as community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island. Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of these facilities.
- 15.45 ~~As a primarily single family residential community with a high percentage of developed land, the community cannot provide for all types of land uses. Certain activities will be considered incompatible with present uses. Incompatible uses include~~ Discourage incompatible land uses including but not limited to [CC-15] landfills, correctional facilities, zoos and airports in existing zones. Encourage ~~Ccompatible permitted-uses such as education, recreation, open spaces, government social services and religious activities will be encouraged.~~
- 15.56 ~~Manage impacts that could result from new development in residential zones by establishing standards to:~~
- 15.56.A Regulate on- and off-street parking;
- 15.56.B Encourage the retention of landscaped areas and the retention and planting of trees;
- 15.56.C Establish incentives and anti-displacement measures consistent with the Housing Element; and

15.56.D Control new development to be compatible in scale, form, and character with existing surrounding neighborhoods.

GOAL 16:

Achieve additional residential capacity in ~~single family~~ residential zones through flexible land use techniques and land use entitlement regulations.

- 16.1 ~~Use existing housing stock to address changing population needs and aging in place. Accessory housing units and shared housing opportunities should be considered in order to provide accessible and affordable housing, relieve tax burdens, and maintain existing, stable neighborhoods. Encourage using existing homes to meet changing population needs and help people age in place. Consider allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and share housing. These options can provide affordable and accessible housing, reduce tax burdens, and keep neighborhoods stable.~~ [CC-48]
- 16.2 Through zoning and land use regulations provide adequate development capacity to accommodate Mercer Island's projected share of the King County population growth over the next 20 years.
- 16.3 Promote a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of people who work and desire to live in Mercer Island.
- 16.4 Promote accessory dwelling units in all single family districts zones where single-family homes are allowed subject to specific development and owner occupancy standards. [AC-4]
- 16.5 ~~Infill~~ Encourage development of middle housing where mandated by state law, ~~on vacant or under-utilized sites should occur outside of critical areas and ensure that the infill it is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, with preference given to areas near high capacity transit.~~
- 16.6 ~~Explore flexible residential development regulations and entitlement processes that support, and create incentives for, subdivisions that incorporate public amenities through the use of a pilot program. The use of flexible residential development standards should be used to and encourage public amenities such as wildlife habitat, accessible homes, affordable housing, and sustainable development. Explore flexible residential development regulations and incentives to the countywide 4:1 program, homes meeting Universal Design standards for accessibility, and sustainable development achieving passive house efficiency standards.~~ [Substantive CC-49]
- 16.7 ~~Ensure development regulations allow the improvement of existing homes and do not create incentives to remove or replace existing homes.~~
- 16.8 ~~Evaluate locally adopted building and fire code regulations within existing discretion to encourage the preservation of existing homes.~~
- 16.7 Encourage the preservation and maintenance of naturally occurring affordable housing. [Substantive CC-50]

GOAL 17:

~~With the exception of allowing residential development, commercial designations and permitted uses under current zoning will not change. The allowed uses in commercial and mixed-use zones balance the City's economic development and housing needs.~~

- 17.1 The Planned Business Zone uses on the south end of Mercer Island are compatible with the surrounding single family zone needs. All activities in the PBZ are subject to design review. Supplemental design guidelines have been adopted.
- 17.2 Commercial uses and densities near the I-90/East Mercer Way exit and SE 36th Street are appropriate for that area. All activities in the ~~CO~~Commercial Office zone are subject to design review and supplemental design guidelines may be adopted.
- ~~17.3 Inclusion of a range of Add multifamily residential and other commercial densities should be allowed when compatible uses to in the Commercial Office (CO) zones. This should be accomplished tThrough rezones or changes in zoning district regulations, multi-family residences should be allowed in all commercial zones where that minimize consider adverse impacts to surrounding areas, especially residential zones can be minimized. Housing should be used to create new, vibrant neighborhoods. [Substantive CC-51]~~
- ~~17.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should reflect the desire to retain viable and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations as community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island.~~

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

GOAL 18:

The protection of the natural environment will continue to be a priority in all Island development. Protection of the environment and private property rights will be consistent with all state and federal laws.

- 18.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as watercourses, geologic hazard areas, steep slopes, shorelines, wildlife habitat conservation areas, and wetlands. Such protection should continue through the implementation and enforcement of critical areas and shoreline regulations.
- 18.2 Land use actions, storm water regulations and basin planning should reflect intent to maintain and improve the ecological health of watercourses and Lake Washington water quality.
- 18.3 New development should be designed to avoid increasing risks to people and property associated with natural hazards.

- 18.4 The ecological functions of watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development.
- 18.5 The City shall utilize best available science during the development and implementation of critical areas regulations. Regulations will be updated periodically to incorporate new information and, ~~at a minimum, every eight years~~ as required by the Growth Management Act.
- 18.6 Encourage low impact development approaches for managing stormwater and protecting water quality and habitat.
- 18.7 Services and programs provided by the City with regards to land use should encourage residents to minimize their own personal carbon footprint, especially with respect to energy consumption and waste reduction.
- 18.8 The City's development regulations should encourage long term sustainable stewardship of the natural environment. Examples include preservation and enhancement of native vegetation, tree retention, and rain gardens.
- 18.9 Outreach campaigns and educational initiatives should inform residents of the collective impact of their actions on local, county, and state greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.
- 18.10 The Stormwater Management Program Plan is hereby adopted by reference.
- 18.11 Ensure all residents of Mercer Island have a clean and healthy environment, regardless of race, social, or economic status. [CC-16]
- ~~18.12 — Reduce impacts to Mercer Island residents and areas that have been disproportionately affected by noise, air, pollution, or other environmental impacts. [Substantive Alt. strike Policy 18.12, CC-52]~~
- 18.13 Establish development standards to reduce the risk to life and property posed by wildfires through community wildfire preparedness and fire adaptation measures. This should include measures to separate human development from wildfire prone landscapes and protect existing residential development and infrastructure. [AC-5]

GOAL 19:

Protect and enhance habitat for native plants and animals for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of human health and aesthetics. Regulatory, educational, incentive-based, programmatic, and other methods should be used to achieve this goal, as appropriate.

- 19.1 Designate bald eagles as a Species of Local Concern for protection under the Growth Management Act. Identify additional Species and Priority Habitats of Local Concern referencing best available science and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species List. Determine how best to protect these species and habitats.

- 19.2 Encourage the inventorying of native plants and animals on Mercer Island and the habitats that support them. As part of this effort, identify pollinators and the native plants they depend upon.
- 19.3 Evaluate and enhance the quality of habitat to support the sustenance of native plants and animals with the appropriate balance of ground, mid-level, and tree canopy that provides cover, forage, nectar, nest sites, and other essential needs. In addition to parks and open spaces, preserve and enhance habitat in conjunction with residential, institutional, and commercial development and in road rights-of-way.
- 19.4 Critical areas and associated buffers should consist of mostly native vegetation.
- 19.5 Plants listed on the King County Noxious Weed and Weeds of Concern lists should be removed as part of new development and should not be planted during the landscaping of new development. Efforts should be made to reduce or eliminate, over time, the use of these plants in existing public and private landscapes and in road rights-of-way. New plantings in road rights-of-way should be native plants selected to benefit wildlife and community environmental values.
- 19.6 Important wildlife habitats including forest, watercourses, wetlands, and shorelines should be connected via natural areas including walking paths along forested road rights-of-way.
- 19.7 View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community's natural vegetation and tree cover. [Relocated Policy 20.3]
- ~~19.78~~ Community tree canopy goals should be adopted and implemented to protect human health and the natural environment and to promote aesthetics. Encourage the conversion of grass to forest and native vegetation. Promote the preservation of snags (dead trees) for forage and nesting by wildlife.
- ~~19.89~~ Consider a community effort to establish new wetlands in recognition of the historical loss of wetlands.
- ~~19.910~~ When considering the purchase of land to add to community open space, prioritize the purchase and preservation of wetlands and stream headwaters, and areas which will enhance open space networks.
- ~~19.11~~ Support the conservation of on private property on Mercer Island through the use of conservation tools and programs including, but not limited to, the King County Public Benefit Rating System and Transfer of Development Rights programs.
- ~~19.102~~ Promote the use of soft shoreline techniques and limitations on night lighting to provide shallow-water rearing and refuge habitat for out-migrating and lake-rearing endangered Chinook salmon. Encourage the removal of bulkheads and otherwise hardened shorelines, overwater structures, and night lighting, especially south of I-90 where juvenile Chinook are known to congregate.

- 19.113 Promote the reduction of nonpoint pollution that contributes to the mortality of salmon, other wildlife, and vegetation. This pollution consists of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, herbicides, heavy metals, bacteria, motor oils, and other pollutants and is primarily conveyed to surface water features by stormwater runoff.
- 19.124 Promote the preservation of organic matter in planting beds and landscapes including leaves, grass clippings, and small woody debris. Encourage the import of organic material to landscapes including wood chips and finished compost to reduce water and fertilizer use and to promote food production for wildlife.
- 19.135 Promote awareness and implementation of the American Bird Conservancy's bird-friendly building design guidelines which prevent bird mortality caused by collisions with structures.
- 19.146 Promote awareness and implementation of the International Dark-Sky Association's methods to reduce the excess lighting of the night sky that negatively affects wildlife, particularly birds. Consider seeking certification as an International Dark-Sky Community.
- 19.157 Consider participation in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat Program. Encourage community members to seek certification of their homes as Certified Wildlife Habitat and consider seeking certification of Mercer Island as a Wildlife-Friendly Community.
- 19.168 Promote the establishment of bird nest boxes in parks and on private property for species that would benefit. Remind pet owners of the very significant bird mortality related to cats and to keep them indoors.
- 19.179 Promote wildlife watering.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

[NOTE: Parks and Open Space Policies from the Land Use Element are proposed to be moved to other goals or struck because the topics are address in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan]

GOAL 20:-

~~Continue to maintain the Island's unique quality of life through open space preservation, park and trail development and well designed public facilities.~~

- ~~20.1 More specific policy direction for parks and open space shall be identified in the Parks and Recreation Plan and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Plan. These plans shall be updated periodically to reflect changing needs in the community.~~
- ~~20.2 Acquisition, maintenance and access to public areas, preserved as natural open spaces or developed for recreational purposes, will continue to be an essential element for maintaining the community's character.~~
- ~~20.3 View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community's natural vegetation and tree cover.~~

- ~~20.4 Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of private club recreational facilities as important community assets.~~
- ~~20.5 Provide recreation and leisure time programs and facilities that afford equal opportunities for use by all Mercer Island residents while considering the needs of non-Mercer Island residents.~~
- ~~20.6 Provide a system of attractive, safe, and functional parks, and park facilities.~~
- ~~20.7 Preserve natural and developed open space environments and trails for the benefit of all existing and future generations.~~
- ~~20.8 Provide a broad representation of public art through cooperation with the Mercer Island Arts Council.~~
- ~~20.9 Funding for existing facilities should be a top priority and should be provided at a level necessary to sustain and enhance parks, trails and open space consistent with the Parks and Recreation Plan, the Trails Plan and the Capital Facilities Element.~~
- ~~20.10 Promptly investigate open space acquisition opportunities as they become available.~~
- ~~20.11 Pursue state and federal grant funding for parks and open space improvements.~~
- ~~20.12 Pursue a trail lease agreement from the Washington State Department of Transportation to allow for the development of an I-90 Connector Trail to establish a pedestrian connection between Luther Burbank and Town Center.~~
- ~~20.13 Support the conservation of private property on Mercer Island through the use of conservation tools and programs including, but not limited to, the King County Public Benefit Rating System and Transfer of Development Right programs.~~

GREEN BUILDING

GOAL 21:

Promote the use of green building methods, design standards, and materials, for residential development, to reduce impacts on the built and natural environment and to improve the quality of life. Green building should result in demonstrable benefits, through the use of programs such as, but not limited to, Built Green, LEED, the Living Building Challenge, Passive House, Salmon Safe, or similar regional and recognized green building programs.

- 21.1 Eliminate regulatory and administrative barriers, where feasible, to residential green building.
- 21.2 Develop a green building program that creates incentives for residential development and construction to incorporate green building techniques.

- 21.3 ~~Evaluate requiring the use of~~ Consider expanding requirements for green building techniques for new construction and certification to additional zones and/or development of subdivisions as a component of a green building program.
- 21.4 Educate and provide technical resources to the citizens and building community on Mercer Island regarding green building as a component of sustainable development.
- 21.5 ~~Conduct annual tracking of new, or significantly remodeled, structures verified under various green building programs on Mercer Island and incorporate statistics into the City's sustainability tracking system and performance measures.~~

DISASTER PLANNING AND RECOVERY

GOAL 22:

Maintain and enhance current community emergency preparedness and planning efforts, and provide for long-term recovery and renewal.

- 22.1 Periodically review and update the City's emergency management plans. Adopt the following emergency management related plans and their successors by reference:
- Comprehensive Emergency; Management Plan;
 - Hazard Mitigation Plan;
 - Continuity of Operations Plan
 - Pandemic Plan;
 - Terrorism Response Plan and Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment;
 - Debris Management Plan;
 - Volunteer Operations Plan; and
 - Shelter Plan. [5-35]
- 22.2 ~~Identify, and implement, necessary enhancements to the City's emergency planning and preparedness program. [5-36]~~
- 22.3 Coordinate with, incorporate, and support, the emergency management preparedness and planning efforts of local, regional, state, and national agencies and organizations, with attention to impacts on vulnerable populations.
- 22.43 Maintain current local community emergency preparedness programs, including volunteer coordination, City staff drills, and community outreach and education programs, with attention to impacts on vulnerable populations.
- 22.5 ~~Adopt regulations and programs to mitigate and control hazards that are created by a natural event. For example, the creation of a new landslide hazard area resulting from a naturally occurring slope failure. [5-37]~~
- 22.6 Continue to develop an action plan to expedite development review following an emergency event.

ARTS AND CULTURE

GOAL 23:

Support the arts on Mercer Island. [5-3]

~~23.1 Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events. [5-6]~~

~~23.2 Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum. [5-7]~~

~~23.3 Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships. [5-8]~~

~~23.4 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. [5-9]~~

~~23.5 Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education. [5-10]~~

~~23.6 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. [5-11]~~

~~23.7 Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement. [5-12]~~

~~23.8 Implement a creative district and accountability strategy to complement and enhance overall City economic development strategy and to foster a thriving creative economy. [5-13]~~

~~23.9 Support:~~

~~23.9.1 — Efforts to secure space for art and cultural activities;~~

~~23.9.2 — The establishment of a community maker space;~~

~~23.9.3 — Opportunities for housing and/or live/work space for artists; and~~

~~23.9.4 — A multidiscipline-oriented community arts facility.~~

~~23.10 — Maintain a parity of public space for art and cultural activities when existing public art and cultural activity space is modified or eliminated. [5-14]~~

GOAL 24:

Nurture public art on Mercer Island. [5-15]

~~24.1 Encourage diversity in public art. [5-16]~~

~~24.2 Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement. [5-17]~~

~~24.3 Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art. [5-18]~~

~~24.4 Encourage the incorporation of public art in town center development design and site features. [5-19]~~

~~24.5 Maintain requirement that at least one percent of qualifying capital improvement projects' costs are set aside for public art acquisition, repair, and maintenance. [5-20]~~

~~24.6 Make an effort to include public art into and surrounding transportation projects. [5-21]~~

~~24.7 Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes. [5-22]~~

Historic Preservation

GOAL 25:-

~~Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage. [5-23]~~

~~25.1 Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources. [5-24]~~

~~25.2 Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials. [5-25]~~

~~25.3 Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations. [5-26]~~

~~25.4 Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community. [5-27 Note: Goals 26 – 28 will need to be renumbered if Goals 23 – 25 are struck as proposed]~~

STAR Climate Change

GOAL 26:

~~Use the STAR Community framework, or a similar assessment framework, to help develop the City's sustainability practices and to determine the effectiveness of such practices. Continue to develop and refine City policies and implementation strategies to address climate change.~~

~~26.1 Assess the effect of proposed Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendments on sustainability. Adopt a Climate Element or equivalent components in this plan, as directed by state law, to plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled and to improve community resilience by planning for climate preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.~~

~~26.2 Assess the effect of proposed City programs on sustainability. The most recent version of the Climate Action Plan is hereby adopted by reference. This plan provides more specific policy direction and implementation guidance for climate action. This plan shall be updated periodically to reflect changing needs in the community.~~

~~26.3 Assess the City's existing strengths and weaknesses in supporting sustainability, using the STAR Communities framework or similar assessment framework, and identify desired programs or policies supporting sustainability.~~

GOAL 27:

Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

~~27.1 Establish and support annual data gathering, and reporting on, Collect data and report on Mercer Island GHG emissions annually. Document progress toward emission reduction targets and progress consistent with King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).~~

27.2 Partner with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the community to mitigate climate change.

27.3 Provide public information and support to individual and community efforts to mitigate climate change.

27.4 Evaluate and prioritize actions to reduce GHG emissions.

27.5 Encourage the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles through the development of zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options, the development of vehicle charging infrastructure, and by reducing the reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips. [CC 62]

27.6 Promote an energy-efficient built environment by:

27.6.1 Focusing development where utility and transportation investments have been made;

27.6.2 Promoting the use of renewable and zero- and low-GHG emitting energy sources;

27.6.3 Encouraging the use of carbon-efficient building materials and building design;

27.6.4 ~~Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the construction, heating, and cooling of residential structures by encouraging smaller single family residential housing units, moderate density housing (including duplexes and triplexes), and the use of green building materials and techniques; and~~ [Substantive CC-53]

27.6.45 Mitigating urban heat island effects by expanding tree canopy and vegetation cover.

27.7 Promote renewable power generation in the community.

GOAL 28:

~~Develop and implement a Climate Action Plan.~~

~~28.1 The Climate Action Plan is hereby adopted by reference.~~

GOAL 298:

Adapt to and mitigate local climate change impacts.

- 298.1 Prioritize the ~~prevention~~ reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to ~~of~~ climate change.
- 298.2 Develop an adaptive response to expected climate change impacts on the community.
- 298.3 Increase carbon sequestration through expanding tree canopy and vegetation cover.

VI. ACTION PLAN

GOAL 3029:

To implement land use development and capital improvement projects consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan.

- ~~3029.1 To focus implementation of the Comprehensive Plan on those issues of highest priority to the City Council and community: Town Center development, storm drainage, critical lands protection, and a diversity of housing needs including affordable housing.~~
- ~~30.2 To create opportunities for housing, multi-modal transportation, and development consistent with the City's share of regional needs.~~
- ~~30.3 To make effective land use and capital facilities decisions by improving public notice and citizen involvement process.~~
- ~~30.4 To continue to improve the development review process through partnership relationships with project proponents, early public involvement, reduction in processing time, and more efficient use of staff resources.~~
- ~~30.5 To continue to improve the usability of the "Development Code" by simplifying information and Code format; eliminating repetitious, overlapping and conflicting provisions; and consolidating various regulatory provisions into one document.~~
- ~~30.6 Mercer Island has consistently accepted and planned for its fair share of regional growth, as determined by the GMPC and the King County CPPs. However, build out of the City is approaching, and could occur before 2035 or shortly thereafter. In the future, the City will advocate for future growth allocations from the GMPC which will be consistent with its community vision, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations;~~

~~environmental constraints; infrastructure and utility limitations; and its remaining supply of developable land.~~ [Substantive Alt. retain/renumber Policy 30.6 CC-21]

29.2 Establish a Land Use Element implementation strategy and schedule in conjunction with each biennial budget cycle. This implementation strategy can be periodically updated and amended by City Council at any time thereafter and should detail the following:

29.2.A Actions from this element to be added to department work plans for the next biennial budget cycle;

29.2.B Any funding including grants allocated to support the completion of these actions;

29.2.C Any staff resources allocated to support the completion of these actions;

29.2.D A schedule detailing the key actions and/or milestones for the completion of each action; and

29.2.E A list of near-term future actions expected to be proposed to be added to department work plans in the next three to five years.

29.3 Prepare a biennial report tracking implementation of the Land Use Element. The report will be provided to the City Council prior to adoption of the budget.

29.4 Provide resources for actions to implement this element and respond to limited resources by using strategies such as:

29.4.A Alternate funding sources;

29.4.B Public-private partnerships;

29.4.C Reducing project or program scope to align with current biennial budget constraints; and

29.4.D Amending the policies of the Land Use Element to reflect the City's capacity to implement the element.

29.5 Prioritize services and access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities to ensure all people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve quality of life and address past inequities.

29.6 Coordinate with tribes to identify and mitigate potential impacts when implementing this element.

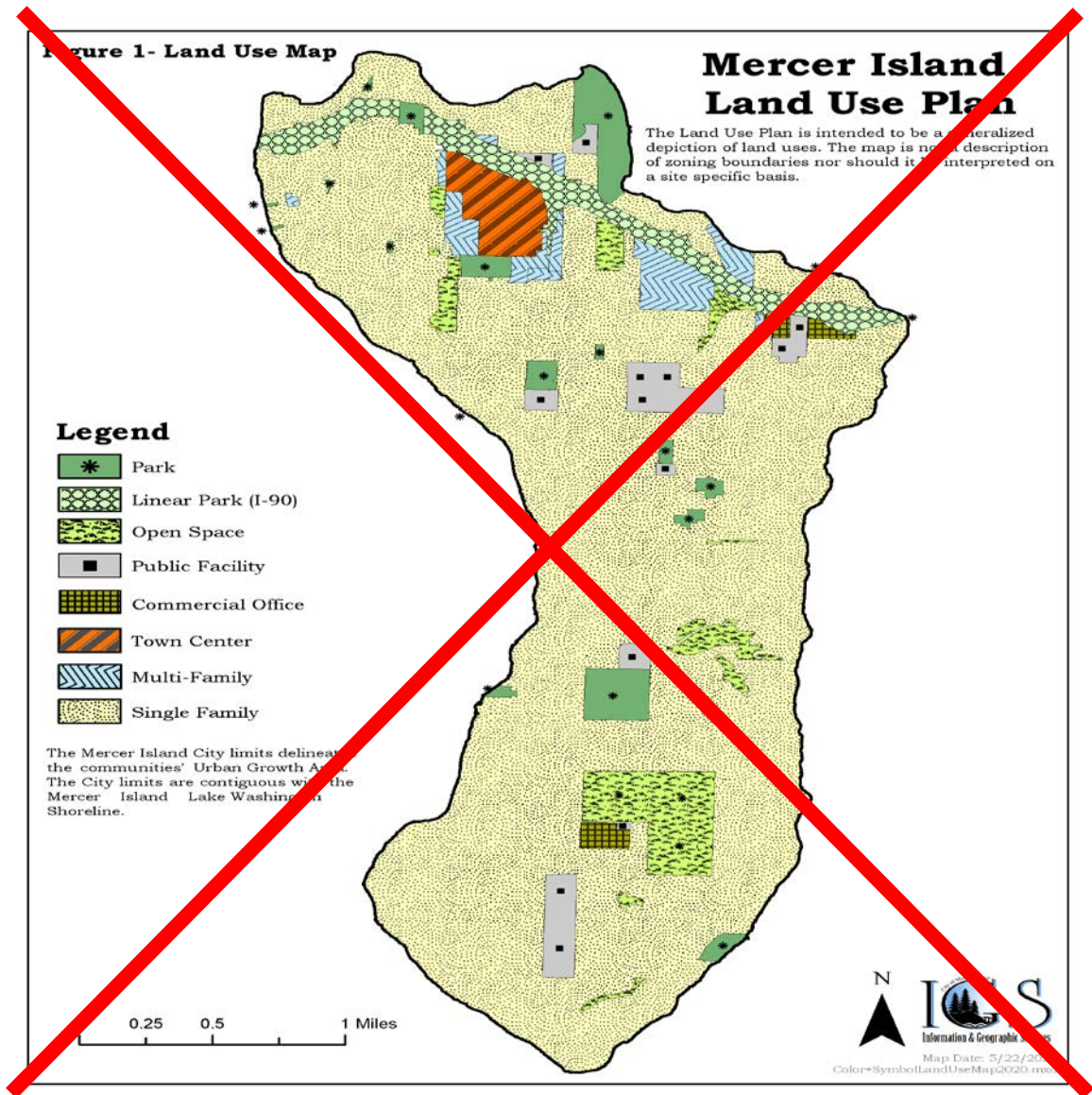
29.7 Create opportunities for multi-modal transportation. [CC-63]



VII. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land Use Designation	Implementing Zoning Designations	Description
Park	PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-12 R-15	The park land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public use consistent with the adopted Parks and Recreation Plan.
Linear Park (I-90)	PI	The linear park (I-90) land use designation primarily contains the Interstate 90 right-of-way. The land use designation is also improved with parks and recreational facilities (e.g., Aubrey Davis park, I-90 Outdoor Sculpture Gallery, etc.) adjacent to and on the lid above the Interstate 90 freeway.
Open Space	PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-12 R-15	The open space use designation represents land within the City that should remain as predominantly unimproved open space consistent with the adopted Parks and Recreation Plan.
Commercial Office	C_O B	The commercial office land use designation represents commercial areas within Mercer Island, located outside of the Town Center, where the land use will be predominantly commercial office. Complementary land uses (e.g., healthcare uses, schools, places of worship, etc.) are also generally supported within this land use designation.
Neighborhood Business	PBZ	The neighborhood business land use designation represents commercial areas within Mercer Island, located outside of the Town Center, where the land uses will be predominantly a mix of small scale, neighborhood oriented business, office, service, public and residential uses.
Single Family Residential (R)	R-8.4 R-9.6 R-12 R-15	The single family residential land use designation (R) represents areas within Mercer Island where development will be predominantly single family residential neighborhoods. Complementary land uses (e.g., private recreation areas, schools, home businesses, public parks, etc.) are generally supported within this land use designation.
Multifamily Residential (MF)	MF-2 MF-2L MF-3	The multifamily residential land use (MF) represents areas within Mercer Island where the land use will be predominantly multifamily residential development. Complementary land uses (e.g., private recreation areas, schools, home businesses, public parks, etc.) are generally supported within this land use designation.
Town Center (TC)	TC	The Town Center land use designation represents the area where land uses consistent with the small town character and the heart of Mercer Island will be located. This land use designation supports a mix of uses including outdoor pedestrian spaces, residential, retail, commercial, mixed-use and office-oriented businesses.

Public Facility	C-O PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-15 TC	The public facility land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public uses, including but not limited to schools, community centers, City Hall, and municipal services.
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Introduction

The City of Mercer Island parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation facilities are a pillar of the high quality of life enjoyed by Mercer Islanders. Preserving these public lands as the City manages growth in the coming decades is an important way the City can maintain the quality of life for future generations. To that end, this element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the goals and policies to manage parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation facilities through the year 2044.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) is a long-range planning document that serves as a blueprint for the growth, enhancement, and management of the City of Mercer Island parks and recreation system and assists in guiding decisions related to planning, acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks, open space, trails, and recreational facilities. The PROS Plan also includes priorities for recreation programs, special events, and arts and cultural activities.

The PROS Plan, updated every six to ten years, identifies parks and recreation goals and objectives and establishes a long-range capital plan for the Mercer Island parks and recreation system, including action items and strategies to inform future work plan items. The recommendations in the PROS Plan are based on community input, evaluations of the existing park system, operating conditions, and fiscal considerations.

Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan

Arts are integral to Mercer Island's identity, vitality, heritage, and shared values. The City of Mercer Island is committed to supporting and sustaining rich and diverse cultural and arts experiences and opportunities for the community. In 2018, the City adopted the Comprehensive Arts and Culture plan, which sets forth policies and goals to advance the enrichment and unification of the whole community through the arts.

[5-2]

Goals and Policies

Goal 1

Continue to maintain the Island's unique quality of life through the stewardship, preservation, and maintenance of parks, open spaces, trails, and recreational facilities.

Policies

- 1.1 The most recent version of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan is hereby adopted by reference, establishing the goals and objectives that serve as the policy framework for the operation of the City of Mercer Island parks and recreation system.
- 1.2 Establish an Open Space zone and a Park zone, as well as the related development regulations to preserve and enhance public open space

1 and park lands for the enjoyment of Mercer Island residents, visitors, and
2 future generations.

- 3
4 1.3 Prioritize access to and conservation of parks and open spaces in areas
5 of the City with higher racial and social inequities.
6

7 **Goal 2**

8
9 Support and nurture the arts on Mercer Island and preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.

10 **[5-4]**
11

12 **Policies**

- 13
14 2.1 The most recent version of the Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan is
15 hereby adopted by reference, establishing the goals and policies that
16 provide the framework for the delivery of diverse cultural and arts
17 experiences and opportunities for the Mercer Island community. **[5-5]**