



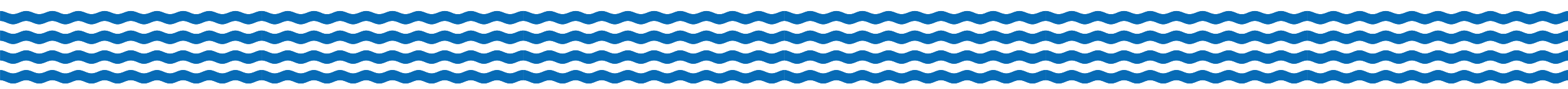
Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review
**Economic Development
Element**

Mercer Island Planning Commission
October 25, 2023
Adam Zack, Senior Planner
Department of Community Planning and
Development



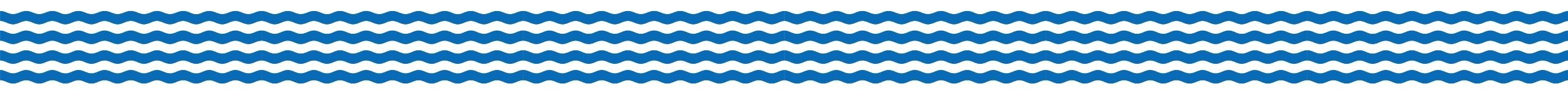
Purpose

To conclude the Planning Commission initial review of the Economic Development Element.

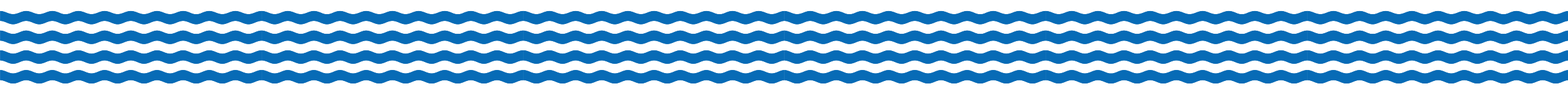


What is the Economic Development Element?

- New element of the Comprehensive Plan
- Sets goals, and policies to guide economic development decision-making.
- Details the projects and programs the City will undertake to support the local economy.



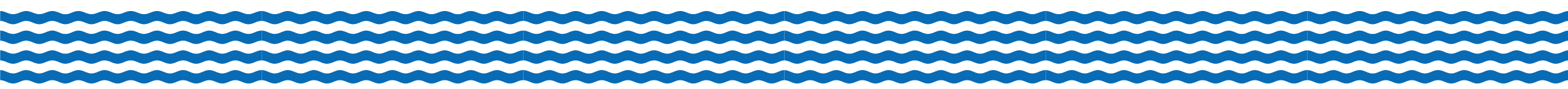
Process to Date

- **October to June** – Economic Development Work Group review
 - **June 28** – initial briefing and comment period
 - **July 26** – Second briefing and Planning Commission review of comments
 - **September 27** – Planning Commission continued review of comments
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Remaining Review

Three categories to resolve:

1. Simple Amendments
2. Amendments needing deliberations
3. Parking lot simplification



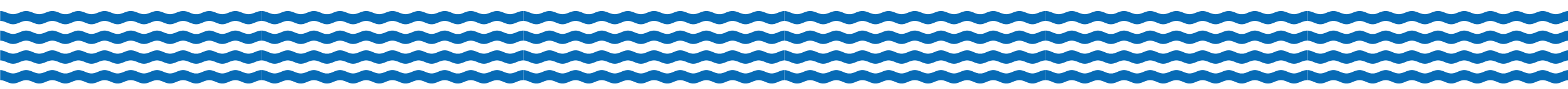
Simple Amendments

Minor amendments that would not significantly change policy direction.

Recommended motion:

Move to resolve the simple amendments as proposed and listed in Table 1 of the October 25, 2023 staff memo.

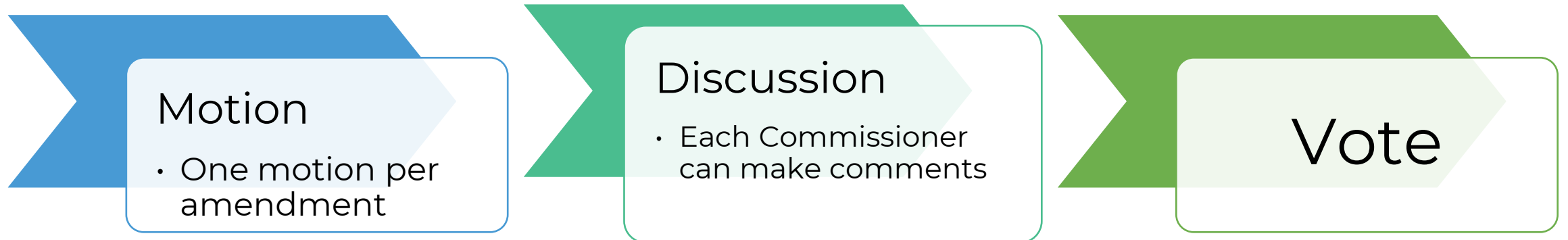
Policy #	Log #
2.4	69
3.4	11
Goal 7	20
7.4	24
7.6	76
10.2	28
10.4.A-F	44 & 77
12.4	31 & 45



Further Deliberations

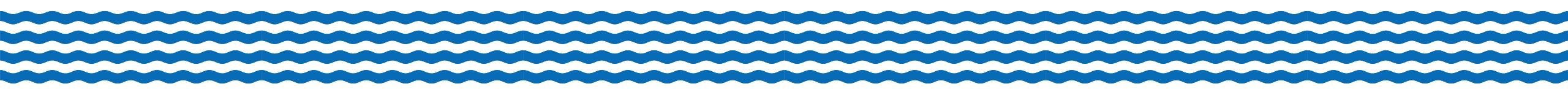
Seven remaining proposed amendments that would change policy direction.

Recommended Process:



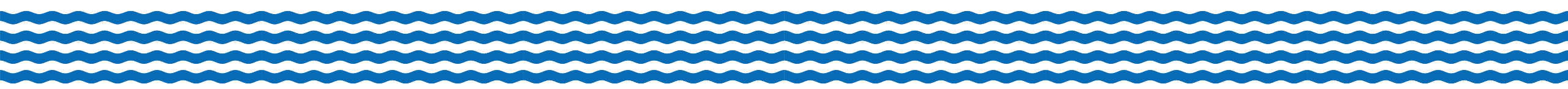
New Policy 7.1.F, Log #22 & 74

- 7.1 Audit the development code and permitting processes to identify code amendments to support businesses, improve effectiveness, and make efficient use of City resources. The following goals should be coequally considered when identifying code amendments:
 - 7.1.A Lowering compliance costs for business owners;
 - 7.1.B Minimizing delay and reduce uncertainty in the entitlement process;
 - 7.1.C Improving conflict resolution in the entitlement process;
 - 7.1.D Reducing the likelihood of business displacement as new development occurs;
and
 - 7.1.E Balancing parking requirements between reducing barriers to entry for new businesses and the need for adequate parking supply.
 - 7.1.F Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Amend Policy 7.3, Log #23 & 75

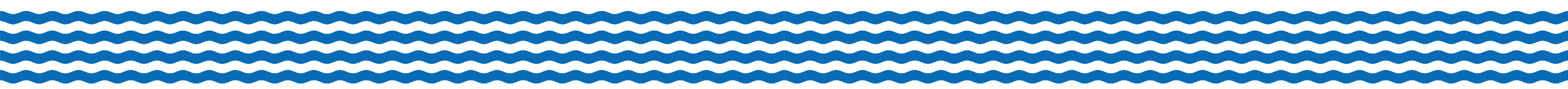
Evaluate additional process or code improvements on an annual basis with input from the ~~dedicated~~ economic development staff, Climate Action Plan project manager, and Council local business liaison. This evaluation should inform the development of annual docket recommendations as needed.



New Policy 7.7, Log #86

Study allowing small scale retail outside the existing commercial districts.

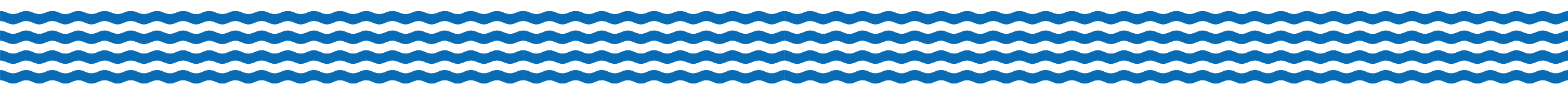
See also proposed new 10.5, Comment Log #65



New Policy 10.5, Log #65

Review residential development standards and consider addition of small neighborhood establishments such as cafes and small boutique grocery.

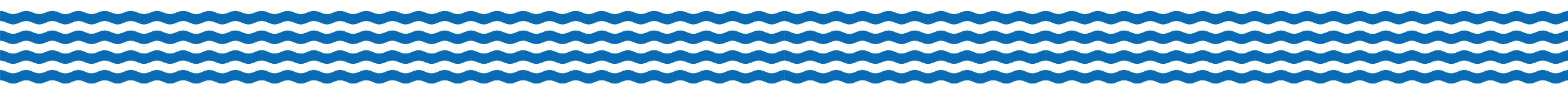
See also proposed new 7.7, Comment Log #86



Strike Policy 10.1, Log #27

Comment proposes striking Policy 10.1:

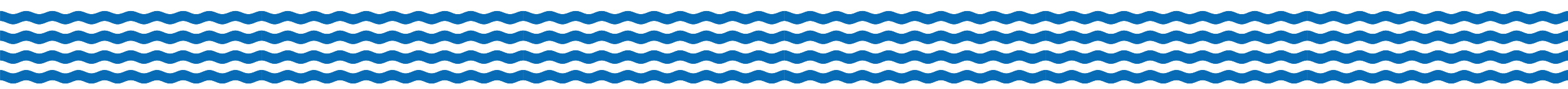
Emphasize quality of life as a cornerstone of the Mercer Island economy.



Amend Policy 12.4, Log #78

Ensure that sufficient parking is provided through a combination of regulations and incentives like parking credits as commercial areas redevelop. ~~Interpretation of the policies in this element should not lead to a reduction in parking.~~

Deliberation: strike the last sentence?



New Policy 12.5, Log #66

Proposed in Comment:

All new and improved public plaza development is aligned with the Pedestrian and [Bicycle] Facilities Plan so that safe walking and cycling routes are provided for residents, especially children, connecting neighborhoods with downtown public spaces.

Staff Proposed Alternative:

Align the development of public space with all City functional plans, including the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan, to create safe walking and cycling routes that connect residential areas with public spaces.

Parking Lot

The parking lot was created to hold policies until the Housing Element is drafted.

Three clarifications would improve the parking lot.

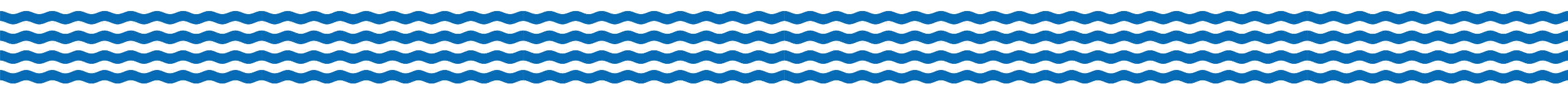


1: Decide whether to keep the proposed new Policy 4.2 in the draft, taking it out of the parking lot

Proposed Policy 4.2:

Balance economic growth with maintaining easy access to services and small town feel.

The Housing Element is unlikely to provide more information about this.



2: Drop proposed new Policy 6.3 and its alternate in favor of proposed new Policy 6.6

Proposed Policy 6.3 (two versions):

Take steps to increase the supply of affordable housing on the Island.

OR

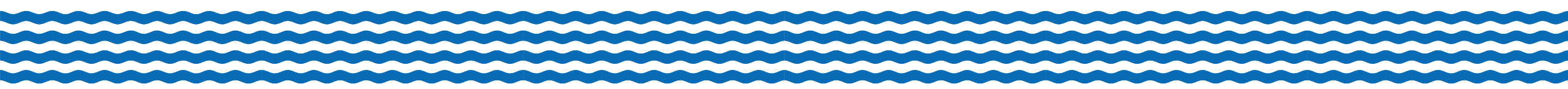
Take steps to increase the supply of affordable and housing priced in the middle range on the island.

Proposed Policy 6.6 (with staff alternative):

Coordinate with the Housing Element to ensure that the employees that work in our community have future opportunities for housing in our community.

Staff Alternative

Ensure that people who work in our community have access to housing in the City that is affordable given their income level.

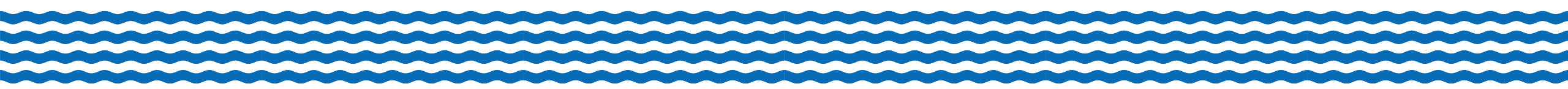


3: Clarify Why Policies 6.4 and 6.5 are in the Parking Lot

Proposed Policy 6.4: ~~Establish~~ Study a minimum wage on Mercer Island.

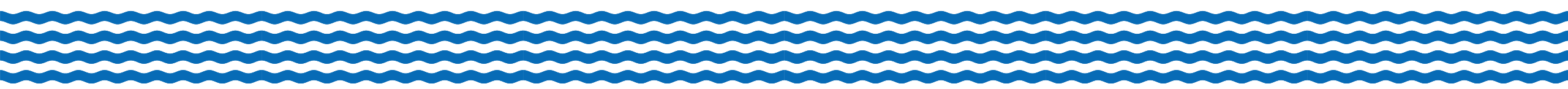
Proposed Policy 6.5: Provide tax incentives to retailers, landscapers, and home health care services that provide living wage jobs, paid time off, and health insurance to their employees.

- The Housing Element is unlikely to provide further information on worker wages or benefits
- Could keep these in the draft specifically to get public comments on the concept. Would need different direction than to hold until after the Housing Element.



Next Steps

- Public review draft will be cleaned up – strikeout/underline taken off, all edits made, etc. – and made available for public comments
- Community workshop will be held in winter/spring to gather input on the draft
- Tune up meeting to address input from the workshop
- Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation



Questions?

