

GMHB EXHIBIT 226



PLANNING COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

PCB 24-07
April 17, 2024
Special Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	PCB 24-07: Comprehensive Plan Update: Parks and Climate Change Amendments	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Review proposed amendments and come to consensus on recommended public review drafts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommendation

STAFF:	Alison Van Gorp, CPD Deputy Director
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft Land Use Element Goals and Policies 2. Draft Parks and Open Space Element 3. Comparative Analysis of Comprehensive Plan and PROS Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Planning Commission (PC) will review draft Comprehensive Plan amendments related to two topics: (1) Climate Action Plan (CAP) Land Use Element consistency amendments, and (2) Draft Parks and Open Space Element. Both groups of amendments are primarily reorganization to maintain consistency between the Comprehensive Plan, CAP, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan.

- Under the WA State Growth Management Act (GMA), the City of Mercer Island is required to periodically review and update its Comprehensive Plan no later than December 31, 2024;
- On March 1, 2022, the City of Mercer Island adopted the current version of the PROS Plan with [Resolution 1618](#);
- On March 15, 2022, the City Council set the scope of work, master schedule, and public participation plan for the Comprehensive Plan periodic review with [Resolution 1621](#);
- The Comprehensive Plan periodic review scope of work included the following tasks
 - Update policies throughout the plan to ensure consistency with the PROS Plan and CAP;
 - Establish a new Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element that adopts the PROS Plan by reference;
- By November 2022, the PC had reviewed the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan and arrived at a public review draft ([PCB 22-19](#));
- On April 4, 2023, the City Council adopted the CAP as presented in [Agenda Bill 6246](#);
- On February 28, 2024, the PC was briefed on possible CAP consistency amendments to the Land Use Element ([PCB24-03](#));
- Staff prepared the attached draft Land Use Element Goals and Policies (Exhibit 1) and Draft Parks and Open Space Element (Exhibit 2) to ensure the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the CAP and PROS Plan as directed by the adopted scope of work; and
- The PC will review and is asked to reach consensus on both the Draft Land Use Element Goals and Policies (Exhibit 1) and the Draft Parks and Open Space Element (Exhibit 2) in advance of the Comprehensive Plan open house planned for May 1.

BACKGROUND

The PC initially reviewed and revised the Land Use Element between summer and fall 2022, finalizing a public review draft in November 2022 ([PCB 22-19](#)). At the time the draft was finalized, it was noted in the draft that

additional changes would likely be needed to align with the CAP, which was eventually adopted in 2023 ([Agenda Bill 6246](#)). Further amendments to the Land Use Element were made in March 2024 by the PC related to consistency with the Housing Element ([PCB 24-06](#)). Finally, the adopted scope of work for the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan includes the creation of a new Parks and Open Space Element. This will also require amendments to the Land Use Element, which currently houses goals and policies related to parks and open space.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Climate Goals and Policies

The PC had an initial discussion of potential options to align the Comprehensive Plan with the CAP on February 28, 2023 ([PCB 24-03](#)). At that time, the commission discussed potentially creating a new Climate Element and/or dispersing climate related goals/policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan Elements. The Growth Management Act (GMA) now requires Mercer Island to adopt a Climate Element (or add the required components within existing elements) by 2029 ([House Bill 1181](#)).

Since the February 28 meeting, City staff have reviewed this matter further, along with other remaining work items related to the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan and determined that the City should retain the existing climate goals and policies in the Land Use Element for now, along with adopting two new policies. These new policies will: 1) adopt the CAP by dynamic reference, and 2) provide policy direction for the City to comply with GMA requirements for a Climate Element.

Staff have also reviewed the existing climate goals and policies for consistency with the CAP. No conflicts or inconsistencies were identified. Thus, no further amendments are required. However, two minor amendments are proposed to Policies 21.3 and 28.1 to update the policy direction to align with current objectives. Policy 21.3 has been updated to reflect that green building requirements were adopted in the Town Center development regulations in 2016. Policy 28.1 has been amended to acknowledge that it is likely no longer possible to fully prevent the impacts of climate change. Exhibit 1 includes the proposed amendments to the climate goals and policies in the Land Use Element.

Parks and Open Space Element

The City Council included a new Parks and Open Space Element in the scope of work for the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan. This new element is intended to adopt the PROS Plan, [adopted in 2022](#), by dynamic reference. The PROS Plan's 8 goals and 80 objectives provide strategic policy direction for parks operations, maintenance, enhancements, and guide capital improvement decisions. Because the PROS plan already provides detailed policy direction, staff have taken a high-level approach to drafting the Parks and Open Space Element. The draft Element includes a brief introduction, one goal that was adapted from an existing goal in the Land Use Element, and two new policies, adopting the PROS plan by dynamic reference and providing policy direction for the future adoption of the Open Space and Parks zones. Exhibit 2 is the draft Parks and Open Space Element.

Other Land Use Element Amendments

A few additional minor amendments are proposed to the goals and policies of the Land Use Element to maintain consistency with the above-described amendments; these amendments are included in Exhibit 1. The Land Use Element includes one goal and thirteen policies related to parks and open space (Goal 20 and policies 20-1-20.13). Staff analysis of this goal and policies has resulted in several proposed amendments. Goal 20 has been revised and moved to the Parks and Open Space Element as Goal 1. Three policies (20.3, 20.4 and 20.12) are recommended to be relocated to other areas of the Land Use Element. These policy relocation amendments are proposed because these policies do not pertain to parks or open space. Thus, they are proposed to be moved to other, more appropriate, goals in the Land Use Element, as follows:

- Policy 20.3 related to balancing view preservation with tree/vegetation cover has been moved to Goal 19;
- Policy 20.4 related to private club recreational facilities has been moved to Goal 15 and combined with a similar/related policy moved from Goal 17 (Policy 17.4);
- Policy 20.12 related to conservation of private property has been moved to Goal 19.

The remaining policies are no longer necessary because PROS Plan policies already cover the subject matter; these policies are proposed for omission. Exhibit 3 provides a comparison of the Land Use Element policies proposed for omission and the corresponding goals and objectives that are already part of the PROS Plan.

Recommended Review Process

Staff has categorized the proposed amendments to the Land Use Element (Exhibit 1) based on whether they pertain to climate or parks, and further sorted them into major and minor amendments in Tables 1 (Page 4) and 2 (Page 5). Major amendments are substantial new policy direction. Minor amendments would not substantially change the policy direction from the original.

Staff recommends the PC review the proposed amendments as follows:

1. **Parks and Open Space amendments to the Land Use Element:** consider the minor amendments listed in Table 2 as a block. The amendments categorized as major in Table 1 can be discussed in more detail if needed.
2. **Climate amendments to the Land Use Element:** consider the amendments listed in Table 2 as a block. The amendments categorized as major in Table 1 can be discussed in more detail if needed.

Staff will provide an overview of the draft Parks and Open Space Element (Exhibit 2). Following the overview, the PC can discuss sections of the draft element, as needed. Please note, as discussed above, this element is intended to be brief and high level, because the PROS Plan already includes detailed and specific policy guidance.

Table 1. Parks Land Use Element Policy Amendments

Major or Minor ¹	Policy #	CAP or Parks ²	Amendment	Staff Comment
Minor	15.4	Parks	Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should reflect <u>recognize the desire-need and support the ability to retain-viable-maintain, update, and renovate-and</u> 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. <u>Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of these facilities.</u>	This minor amendment combines policies 17.4 and 20.4. Policy 20.4 was originally listed as a parks and open space policy but is recommended to remain in the Land Use Element rather than move to the Parks and Open Space Element.
Minor	19.7	Parks	View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community’s natural vegetation and tree cover.	Policy 19.7 was originally Policy 20.3, relocated to keep policy in Land Use rather than move to the Parks and Open Space Element.
Minor	19.10	Parks	<u>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 Rights programs.</u>	Policy 19.10 was originally Policy 20.13, relocated to keep policy in Land Use rather than move to the Parks and Open Space Element.
Major	20.1-13	Parks	Policies 20.1-20.13 were omitted, except as noted above.	Policies were either moved to other sections of the Land Use Element or are struck in the draft because they are redundant with PROS Plan goals (Exhibit 3).

Notes:

1. Major changes are proposing changes that are substantially different from the originally adopted goal or policy. Minor changes do not substantially alter the policy direction.
2. Proposed amendments labeled “Parks” are amendments for consistency with the Parks and Open Space Element.

Table 2. Climate Action Plan Land Use Element Policy Amendments

Major or Minor ¹	Policy #	CAP or Parks ²	Amendment	Staff Comment
Minor	21.3	CAP	Evaluate requiring the use of <u>Consider expanding requirements for green building techniques for new construction and certification to additional zones and/or</u> development of subdivisions as a component of a green building program.	Clarification that the City already has green building requirements in some zones, rather than needing to evaluate an entirely new program.
Major	New Goal 26	CAP	<u>Continue to develop and refine City policies and implementation strategies to address climate change.</u>	The original Goal 26 would be replaced with the proposed amendment. In the previous public review draft, the PC had agreed to strike the original Goal 26 and its corresponding policies because they referred to an outdated certification program (STAR Community Framework)
Major	New 26.1	CAP	<u>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.</u>	The original Policy 26.1 would be replaced with the proposed amendment. This new policy would establish the direction to establish a Climate Change Element as required under the GMA (House Bill 1181).
Major	New 26.2	CAP	<u>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.</u>	The original Policy 26.2 would be replaced with the proposed amendment. This amendment would adopt the CAP by reference, as directed by the adopted Scope of Work for the Comprehensive Plan periodic review.
Minor	Goal 28	CAP	Develop and implement a Climate Action Plan.	Goal 28 is proposed to be struck because it's now covered under Goal 26.
Minor	28.1	CAP	Prioritize the prevention <u>reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to</u> of climate change.	Minor change to be more consistent with CAP verbiage.

Notes:

3. Major changes are proposing changes that are substantially different from the originally adopted goal or policy. Minor changes do not substantially alter the policy direction.
4. Proposed amendments labeled "Parks" are amendments for consistency with the Parks and Open Space Element.

NEXT STEPS

The amendments recommended by the PC on April 17 will be incorporated into the Public Review drafts of the Land Use Element and Parks and Open Space Element. These elements will be included in the content under consideration at the May 1 Comprehensive Plan Open House.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Review proposed amendments and come to consensus on recommended public review drafts.

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

GOAL 15:

Mercer Island should remain principally a low to moderate density, single family residential community.

15.1 Existing land use policies, which strongly support the preservation of Preserve the neighborhood character existing conditions in the single family all residential zones, will continue to apply. Changes to the zoning code or development standards will be accomplished through code amendments.

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, multifamily, and Commercial Office zones to accommodate moder- to extremely low-income households.

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. [Note: relocated and combined policies 17.4 and 20.4]

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 such as landfills, correctional facilities, zoos and airports in existing zones. Encourage C-compatible 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 ~~Encourage the use of the~~ Use of the existing housing stock to address changing population needs and aging in place. Accessory ~~housing-dwelling~~ units and shared housing opportunities should be considered in order to provide accessible and affordable housing, relieve tax burdens, and maintain existing, stable neighborhoods.

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 single-family ~~districts-zones~~ subject to specific development and owner occupancy standards.

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.

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.

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.

1 17.2 Commercial uses and densities near the I-90/East Mercer Way exit and SE 36th Street are
2 appropriate for that area. All activities in the ~~CO~~Commercial Office zone are subject to design
3 review and supplemental design guidelines may be adopted.
4

5 ~~17.3 Inclusion of a range of~~ Add multifamily residential and other commercial densities should be
6 ~~allowed when compatible uses to in~~ the Commercial Office (~~CO~~) zones. This should be
7 accomplished through rezones or changes in zoning district regulations, multi-family
8 residences should be allowed in all commercial zones where that minimize adverse impacts to
9 surrounding areas, especially residential zones can be minimized. ~~Housing should be used to~~
10 ~~create new, vibrant neighborhoods.~~
11

12 ~~17.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in~~
13 ~~single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should reflect the desire~~
14 ~~to retain viable and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations as~~
15 ~~community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer~~
16 ~~Island. [NOTE: Relocated policy, with edits, to 15.4]~~
17
18

19 *NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES*

20 **GOAL 18:**

21 The protection of the natural environment will continue to be a priority in all Island development.
22 Protection of the environment and private property rights will be consistent with all state and federal
23 laws.
24

25 18.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as watercourses,
26 geologic hazard areas, steep slopes, shorelines, wildlife habitat conservation areas, and
27 wetlands. Such protection should continue through the implementation and enforcement of
28 critical areas and shoreline regulations.
29

30 18.2 Land use actions, storm water regulations and basin planning should reflect intent to maintain
31 and improve the ecological health of watercourses and Lake Washington water quality.
32

33 18.3 New development should be designed to avoid increasing risks to people and property
34 associated with natural hazards.
35

36 18.4 The ecological functions of watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be
37 maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development.
38

39 18.5 The City shall utilize best available science during the development and implementation of
40 critical areas regulations. Regulations will be updated periodically to incorporate new
41 information and, ~~at a minimum, every eight years~~ as required by the Growth Management Act.
42

43 18.6 Encourage low impact development approaches for managing stormwater and protecting
44 water quality and habitat.
45

1 18.7 Services and programs provided by the City with regards to land use should encourage
2 residents to minimize their own personal carbon footprint, especially with respect to energy
3 consumption and waste reduction.
4

5 18.8 The City's development regulations should encourage long term sustainable stewardship of the
6 natural environment. Examples include preservation and enhancement of native vegetation,
7 tree retention, and rain gardens.
8

9 18.9 Outreach campaigns and educational initiatives should inform residents of the collective
10 impact of their actions on local, county, and state greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.
11

12 18.10 The Stormwater Management Program Plan is hereby adopted by reference.
13

14 **GOAL 19:**

15 Protect and enhance habitat for native plants and animals for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of
16 human health and aesthetics. Regulatory, educational, incentive-based, programmatic, and other
17 methods should be used to achieve this goal, as appropriate.
18

19 19.1 Designate bald eagles as a Species of Local Concern for protection under the Growth
20 Management Act. Identify additional Species and Priority Habitats of Local Concern referencing
21 best available science and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats
22 and Species List. Determine how best to protect these species and habitats.
23

24 19.2 Encourage the inventorying of native plants and animals on Mercer Island and the habitats that
25 support them. As part of this effort, identify pollinators and the native plants they depend
26 upon.
27

28 19.3 Evaluate and enhance the quality of habitat to support the sustenance of native plants and
29 animals with the appropriate balance of ground, mid-level, and tree canopy that provides
30 cover, forage, nectar, nest sites, and other essential needs. In addition to parks and open
31 spaces, preserve and enhance habitat in conjunction with residential, institutional, and
32 commercial development and in road rights-of-way.
33

34 19.4 Critical areas and associated buffers should consist of mostly native vegetation.
35

36 19.5 Plants listed on the King County Noxious Weed and Weeds of Concern lists should be removed
37 as part of new development and should not be planted during the landscaping of new
38 development. Efforts should be made to reduce or eliminate, over time, the use of these plants
39 in existing public and private landscapes and in road rights-of-way. New plantings in road rights-
40 of-way should be native plants selected to benefit wildlife and community environmental
41 values.
42

43 19.6 Important wildlife habitats including forest, watercourses, wetlands, and shorelines should be
44 connected via natural areas including walking paths along forested road rights-of-way.
45

1 19.7 View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community's
2 natural vegetation and tree cover. [Relocated Policy 20.3]
3

4 19.78 Community tree canopy goals should be adopted and implemented to protect human
5 health and the natural environment and to promote aesthetics. Encourage the conversion of
6 grass to forest and native vegetation. Promote the preservation of snags (dead trees) for forage
7 and nesting by wildlife.
8

9 19.89 Consider a community effort to establish new wetlands in recognition of the historical
10 loss of wetlands.
11

12 19.910 When considering the purchase of land to add to community open space, prioritize the
13 purchase and preservation of wetlands and stream headwaters.
14

15 19.11 Support the conservation of private property on Mercer Island through the use of
16 conservation tools and programs including, but not limited to, the King County Public Benefit
17 Rating System and Transfer of Development Rights programs. [NOTE: This policy was previously
18 Policy 20.13]
19

20 19.102 Promote the use of soft shoreline techniques and limitations on night lighting to provide
21 shallow-water rearing and refuge habitat for out-migrating and lake-rearing endangered
22 Chinook salmon. Encourage the removal of bulkheads and otherwise hardened shorelines,
23 overwater structures, and night lighting, especially south of I-90 where juvenile Chinook are
24 known to congregate.
25

26 19.113 Promote the reduction of nonpoint pollution that contributes to the mortality of salmon,
27 other wildlife, and vegetation. This pollution consists of pesticides, chemical fertilizers,
28 herbicides, heavy metals, bacteria, motor oils, and other pollutants and is primarily conveyed
29 to surface water features by stormwater runoff.
30

31 19.124 Promote the preservation of organic matter in planting beds and landscapes including
32 leaves, grass clippings, and small woody debris. Encourage the import of organic material to
33 landscapes including wood chips and finished compost to reduce water and fertilizer use and
34 to promote food production for wildlife.
35

36 19.135 Promote awareness and implementation of the American Bird Conservancy's bird-friendly
37 building design guidelines which prevent bird mortality caused by collisions with structures.
38

39 19.146 Promote awareness and implementation of the International Dark-Sky Association's
40 methods to reduce the excess lighting of the night sky that negatively affects wildlife,
41 particularly birds. Consider seeking certification as an International Dark-Sky Community.
42

43 19.157 Consider participation in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat
44 Program. Encourage community members to seek certification of their homes as Certified
45 Wildlife Habitat and consider seeking certification of Mercer Island as a Wildlife-Friendly
46 Community.
47

1 19.168 Promote the establishment of bird nest boxes in parks and on private property for species
2 that would benefit. Remind pet owners of the very significant bird mortality related to cats and
3 to keep them indoors.

4
5 19.179 Promote wildlife watering.
6

7 **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES**

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

10 **GOAL 20:-**

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

13
14 ~~20.1 More specific policy direction for parks and open space shall be identified in the Parks and~~
15 ~~Recreation Plan and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Plan. These plans shall be updated~~
16 ~~periodically to reflect changing needs in the community.~~

17
18 ~~20.2 Acquisition, maintenance and access to public areas, preserved as natural open spaces or~~
19 ~~developed for recreational purposes, will continue to be an essential element for maintaining~~
20 ~~the community's character.~~

21
22 ~~20.3 View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community's~~
23 ~~natural vegetation and tree cover. [NOTE: moved to Policy 19.7]~~

24
25 ~~20.4 Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of private club recreational facilities~~
26 ~~as important community assets. [NOTE: moved to Policy 15.4]~~

27
28 ~~20.5 Provide recreation and leisure time programs and facilities that afford equal opportunities for~~
29 ~~use by all Mercer Island residents while considering the needs of non-Mercer Island residents.~~

30
31 ~~20.6 Provide a system of attractive, safe, and functional parks, and park facilities.~~

32
33 ~~20.7 Preserve natural and developed open space environments and trails for the benefit of all~~
34 ~~existing and future generations.~~

35
36 ~~20.8 Provide a broad representation of public art through cooperation with the Mercer Island Arts~~
37 ~~Council.~~

38
39 ~~20.9 Funding for existing facilities should be a top priority and should be provided at a level~~
40 ~~necessary to sustain and enhance parks, trails and open space consistent with the Parks and~~
41 ~~Recreation Plan, the Trails Plan and the Capital Facilities Element.~~

42
43 ~~20.10 Promptly investigate open space acquisition opportunities as they become available.~~

44
45 ~~20.11 Pursue state and federal grant funding for parks and open space improvements.~~

1
2 ~~20.12 Pursue a trail lease agreement from the Washington State Department of Transportation~~
3 ~~to allow for the development of an I-90 Connector Trail to establish a pedestrian connection~~
4 ~~between Luther Burbank and Town Center.~~

5
6 ~~20.13 Support the conservation of private property on Mercer Island through the use of~~
7 ~~conservation tools and programs including, but not limited to, the King County Public Benefit~~
8 ~~Rating System and Transfer of Development Right programs. [NOTE: Moved to Policy 19.10]~~
9

10 *GREEN BUILDING*

11 **GOAL 21:**

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

17
18 21.1 Eliminate regulatory and administrative barriers, where feasible, to residential green building.
19

20 21.2 Develop a green building program that creates incentives for residential development and
21 construction to incorporate green building techniques.
22

23 ~~21.3 Evaluate requiring the use of~~ Consider expanding requirements for green building techniques
24 ~~for new construction and certification to additional zones and/or~~ development of subdivisions
25 as a component of a green building program.
26

27 21.4 Educate and provide technical resources to the citizens and building community on Mercer
28 Island regarding green building as a component of sustainable development.
29

30 ~~21.5 Conduct annual tracking of new, or significantly remodeled, structures verified under various~~
31 ~~green building programs on Mercer Island and incorporate statistics into the City's~~
32 ~~sustainability tracking system and performance measures.~~
33

34 *STAR Climate Change*

35 **Note: This section has been updated to align with the Climate Action Plan.**

36 **GOAL 26:**

37 ~~Use the STAR Community framework, or a similar assessment framework, to help develop the City's~~
38 ~~sustainability practices and to determine the effectiveness of such practices.~~ Continue to develop and
39 refine City policies and implementation strategies to address climate change.
40

41 26.1 ~~Assess the effect of proposed Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendments on~~
42 ~~sustainability.~~ Adopt a Climate Element or equivalent components in this plan, as directed by

1 state law, to plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled and to
2 improve community resilience by planning for climate preparedness, response, and recovery
3 efforts.

4
5 ~~26.2 Assess the effect of proposed City programs on sustainability. The most recent version of the~~
6 ~~Climate Action Plan is hereby adopted by reference. This plan provides more specific policy~~
7 ~~direction and implementation guidance for climate action. This plan shall be updated~~
8 ~~periodically to reflect changing needs in the community.~~

9
10 ~~26.3 Assess the City's existing strengths and weaknesses in supporting sustainability, using the STAR~~
11 ~~Communities framework or similar assessment framework, and identify desired programs or~~
12 ~~policies supporting sustainability.~~

13 **GOAL 27:**

14 Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

15
16 ~~27.1 Establish and support annual data gathering, and reporting on, Collect data and report on~~
17 ~~Mercer Island GHG emissions annually. Document progress toward emission reduction targets~~
18 ~~and progress consistent with King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).~~

19
20 27.2 Partner with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the community to mitigate
21 climate change.

22
23 27.3 Provide public information and support to individual and community efforts to mitigate climate
24 change.

25
26 27.4 Evaluate and prioritize actions to reduce GHG emissions.

27
28 27.5 Encourage the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles through the development of
29 zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options and by reducing single-occupancy
30 vehicle trips.

31
32 27.6 Promote an energy-efficient built environment by:

33
34 27.6.1 Focusing development where utility and transportation investments have been made;

35
36 27.6.2 Promoting the use of renewable and zero- and low-GHG emitting energy sources;

37
38 27.6.3 Encouraging the use of carbon-efficient building materials and building design; and

39
40 27.6.4 Mitigating urban heat island effects by expanding tree canopy and vegetation cover.

41
42 27.7 Promote renewable power generation in the community.

43 **GOAL 28:**

44 Develop and implement a Climate Action Plan.

45

~~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 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.

DRAFT

1 **Introduction**

2 The City of Mercer Island parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation facilities are a pillar
3 of the high quality of life enjoyed by Mercer Islanders. Preserving these public lands
4 as the City manages growth in the coming decades is an important way the City can
5 maintain the quality of life for future generations. To that end, this element of the
6 Comprehensive Plan establishes the goals and policies to manage parks, open spaces,
7 trails, and recreation facilities through the year 2044.
8

9 **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan**

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

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

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25 **Goal 1**

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

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- 32 1.1 The most recent version of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS)
33 Plan is hereby adopted by reference, establishing the goals and
34 objectives that serve as the policy framework for the operation of the City
35 of Mercer Island parks and recreation system.
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 - 37 1.2 Establish an Open Space zone and a Park zone, as well as the related
38 development regulations to preserve and enhance public open space
39 and park lands for the enjoyment of Mercer Island residents, visitors, and
40 future generations.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Land Use Element Parks and Open Space Policies and PROS Plan Goals.

Policy #	Current Comprehensive Plan Goal	2022 PROS Plan Reference ^{1,2}
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.	N/A – Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Plan adopted by reference elsewhere.
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.	<p>Goal 1: Provide a high quality, welcoming, and inclusive parks and recreation system that meets community needs now and in the future.</p> <p>Goal 2: Provide the Mercer Island community with safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Goal 3: Provide a high quality, diversified open space system that preserves and enhances urban forests, critical habitat, and other environmental resources. Incorporate sustainability practices into operations, maintenance, and planning.</p> <p>Goal 4: Develop and promote an interconnected community through safe, accessible, and attractive trails and pathways easily accessed by a variety of trail users.</p> <p>Goal 5: Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Goal 8: Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.</p>
20.3	View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community's natural vegetation and tree cover.	Moved to Land Use Element Policy 19.7

Policy #	Current Comprehensive Plan Goal	2022 PROS Plan Reference ^{1,2}
20.4	Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of private club recreational facilities as important community assets.	Moved to Land Use Element Policy 15.4
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.	<p>Goal 5: Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Objective 5.2: Enhance the diversity of recreation programs offered, focusing on programs that are in high demand or serve a wide range of users and adhere to the guidelines established in the Recreation Reset Strategy.</p> <p>Objective 5.5: Identify and address recreation and service accessibility barriers (socio-economic, language, physical, mental health, geographic, transportation). Seek to reduce access barriers and expand inclusive opportunities. Implement diversity, equity and inclusion policies and a priority matrix to guide the allocation of resources to address known service gaps over time.</p> <p>Objective 1.6: Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels, and ages as appropriate and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Seek opportunities to eliminate barriers at existing facilities and address goals identified in the Citywide ADA Transition Plan.</p>
20.6	Provide a system of attractive, safe, and functional parks, and park facilities.	Goal 2: Provide the Mercer Island community with safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.

Policy #	Current Comprehensive Plan Goal	2022 PROS Plan Reference ^{1,2}
20.7	Preserve natural and developed open space environments and trails for the benefit of all existing and future generations.	<p>Goal 3: Provide a high quality, diversified open space system that preserves and enhances urban forests, critical habitat, and other environmental resources. Incorporate sustainability practices into operations, maintenance, and planning.</p> <p>Goal 4: Develop and promote an interconnected community through safe, accessible, and attractive trails and pathways easily accessed by a variety of trail users.</p>
20.8	Provide a broad representation of public art through cooperation with the Mercer Island Arts Council.	<p>Goal 6: Facilitate and promote comprehensive and engaging arts and culture experiences.</p> <p>Also see all objectives under Goal 6 in the PROS Plan.</p>
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 PROS Plan, and the Capital Facilities Element.	<p>Goal 7: Encourage and support community engagement and pursue collaborative partnerships to strengthen and grow parks and recreation programs and services.</p> <p>Goal 8: Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.</p> <p>Objective 1.8: Pursue and implement strategies to maximize use of existing park and recreation assets.</p> <p>Objective 8.2: Pursue sufficient financial resources to ensure a vibrant and well-maintained parks and recreation system.</p>

Policy #	Current Comprehensive Plan Goal	2022 PROS Plan Reference ^{1,2}
20.10	Promptly investigate open space acquisition opportunities as they become available.	<p>Objective 1.9: Prepare a Land Acquisition Strategy to prioritize property acquisition to meet the future parks, trails, open space, and facility needs of the Mercer Island community.</p> <p>Objective 1.11: Partner with public, private, and non-profit organizations and donors to acquire land for park and recreation needs.</p> <p>Objective 1.12: When evaluating the vacation of any right-of-way, consider its appropriateness for use as public park or open space.</p> <p>Objective 2.4: Estimate the maintenance costs and staffing levels associated with land acquisition, development, or renovation of facilities, parks, open space, or trails, and ensure adequate ongoing funding is available prior to action.</p>
20.11	When considering the purchase of land to add to community open space, prioritize the purchase and preservation of wetlands and stream headwaters.	<p>Objective 3.8: Encourage conservation opportunities to buffer and enhance the built environment. Pursue low-cost and non-purchase options to preserve open space and park land, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants. Promote and encourage private property owners to enroll in the King County Current Use taxation programs, emphasizing properties contiguous to existing open space.</p>

Policy #	Current Comprehensive Plan Goal	2022 PROS Plan Reference ^{1,2}
20.12	Pursue state and federal grant funding for parks and open space improvements.	<p>Goal 8: Provide leadership and sufficient resources to maintain and operate a welcoming, efficient, safe, and sustainable parks and recreation system.</p> <p>Objective 8.2: Pursue sufficient financial resources to ensure a vibrant and well-maintained parks and recreation system.</p> <p>Objective 8.3: Pursue alternative funding options and dedicated revenues for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities.</p>
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.	Moved to Land Use Element Policy 19.10

Notes:

1. This review of the PROS Plan for comparison is not exhaustive. There may be additional objectives in the PROS Plan that address topics in existing Comprehensive Plan policies.
2. Where PROS Plan goals address Land Use Element policies, staff recommend striking the Land Use Element policy because the PROS Plan is more specific. Policies that cover a topic not addressed by PROS Plan goals are proposed to be relocated within the Land Use Element as noted.