



PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

Mercer Island City Hall and via Zoom
9611 SE 36th Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040
Phone: 206.275.7706 | www.mercerisland.gov

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS:

Chair: Daniel Hubbell

Vice Chair: Michael Murphy

Commissioners: Kate Akyuz, Carolyn Boatsman, Michael Curry, Victor Raisys, and Adam Ragheb

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for meetings should notify the [Deputy City Clerk](#) at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The Planning Commission meeting will be held in person and virtually using Zoom.

Registering to Speak: Individuals wishing to speak during live Appearances, must register with the Deputy City Clerk by 4pm on the day of the Planning Commission meeting. Register at 206.275.7791 or email deborah.estrada@mercerisland.gov. Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

Please reference "Appearances" on your correspondence and state if you would like to speak in person at City Hall or remotely using Zoom. If providing your comments using Zoom, staff will be prepared to permit temporary video access when you enter the live Planning Commission meeting. Please remember to activate the video option on your phone or computer, ensure your room is well lit, and kindly ensure that your background is appropriate for all audience ages. Screen sharing will not be permitted, but documents may be emailed to the Planning Commission.

Join by Telephone at 6:00 pm: To listen to the hearing via telephone, please call **253.215.8782** and enter **Webinar ID 847 8356 5485**.

Join by Internet at 6:00 pm: To watch the meeting over the internet via your computer microphone/ speakers, follow these steps:

- 1) Click this [Link](#)
- 2) If the Zoom app is not installed on your computer, you will be prompted to download it.
- 3) If prompted for Meeting ID, enter **847 8356 5485**.

Join in person at Mercer Island City Hall at 6:00 PM: – Council Chambers - 9611 SE 36th Street

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL, 6 PM

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

This is the time set aside for members of the public to speak to the Commission about issues of concern. If you wish to speak, please consider the following points:

- Speak audibly microphone.
- State your name and city of residence for the record.
- Limit your comments to 3 minutes.

The Commission may limit the number of speakers and modify the time allotted for public appearances. Total time for appearances: 15 minutes.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approve the minutes of the October 26, 2022 Regular Meeting.

2. Comprehensive Plan Update – Third Draft Transportation Element
Recommended Action: Provide comments on the third draft of the Transportation Element
3. Comprehensive Plan Update – Third Draft Land Use Element
Recommended Action: Provide comments on the third draft of the Land Use Element
4. Consideration of accessory recommendation to accompany the docket recommendation.
5. Review Planning Commission Bylaws
Recommended Action: Approve the amended bylaws to align the ethics and conflict of interest provisions with the city code.

OTHER BUSINESS

6. Deputy Director's Report
7. Planned Absences for Future Meetings
8. Next Scheduled Meeting – December 14, 2022

ADJOURNMENT



CITY OF MERCER ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR VIDEO MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Item 1.

CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hubbell at 6:01 pm from a remote location.

PRESENT

Chair Daniel Hubbell, Vice Chair Michael Murphy, Commissioners Kate Akyuz, Carolyn Boatsman, Victor Raisys, Michael Curry, and Adam Ragheb were present. All Commissioners participated in the meeting remotely using Zoom.

STAFF PRESENT

Staff participated remotely:

Jeff Thomas, Interim CPD Director
Alison Van Gorp, Deputy CPD Director

Deborah Estrada, Admin. Coordinator/Deputy City Clerk

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Katie Boissoneault and Debbie Hanson addressed the Commission and shared comments regarding the Code Amendment Docket.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approve the September 28, 2022, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Murphy to:
Approve the minutes of the September 28, 2022, meeting.
Approved 7-0

2. 2023 Comprehensive Plan and Code Amendment Docket

Deputy Director Van Gorp briefly introduced the docket process. Commissioner Boatsman expressed concerns regarding the docket process.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Akyuz to:
Postpone discussion regarding the City's docketing process until later in the meeting.
Approved 7-0

The following individuals addressed the Commission regarding the proposed amendments:

- Gardner Morelli
- Mike Murphy
- Carolyn Boatsman
- Dan Thompson

Prior to reviewing the proposed Comprehensive Plan and development code amendments, Commissioner read a disclosure statement into the record. There were no objections to his participation.

Deputy Director Van Gorp outlined the amendments and the Commission deliberated.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Ragheb to:

Move Amendment No. 1 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 7-0

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Boatsman to:

Move Amendment No. 2 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 6-1, with Commissioner Murphy voting no.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Curry to:

Move Amendment No. 3 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 5-2, with Commissioners Akyuz and Murphy voting no.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Boatsman to:

Move Amendment No. 4 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Failed 4-3, with Commissioners Akyuz, Hubbel, Murphy and Ragheb voting no.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Ragheb to:

Move Amendment No. 5 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 6-1, with Commissioner Akyuz voting no.

A motion was made by Ragheb; seconded by Boatsman to:

Move Amendment No. 6 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 5-2, with Commissioners Akyuz and Hubbel voting no.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Curry to:

Move Amendment No. 7 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 7-0

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Boatsman to:

Move Amendment No. 8 forward to the proposed final docket for City Council consideration.

Approved 4-3, with Commissioners Akyuz, Hubbell, and Murphy voting no.

A motion was made by Boatsman; seconded by Akyuz that:

A review of MICC 19.15.230 and 19.15.250 be conducted with the goal of determining if any amendments are needed to reconcile inconsistencies,

Failed 5-2, with Commissioners Akyuz and Boatsman voting yes.

A motion was made by Raisys; seconded by Curry to:

Approving a proposed final docket including items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 to the City Council

Approved 7-0

In response to an earlier discussion regarding the City's docketing process, Commissioner Boatsman agreed to submit a proposal to staff for inclusion in the November 9 Agenda Packet.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Director's Report

Deputy Director Van Gorp briefly reviewed the November 9 and December 14 agenda lineup.

Planned Absences for Future Meetings

There were no planned absences.

Announcements & Communications

There was discussion about adding the Planning Commission bylaws to the November 9 agenda.

Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is a special meeting on November 9, 2022, at 6:00pm.

ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 pm

DRAFT

CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

9611 SE 36TH STREET | MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040
PHONE: 206.275.7605 | www.mercerisland.gov



PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Alison Van Gorp, CPD Deputy Director
Adam Zack, Senior Planner

CC: Michael Lapham, KPG-Psomas
Sean Dolan, KPG-Psomas

DATE: November 2, 2022

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update
Transportation Element – Third Draft

Attachments A. Third Draft - Transportation Element

PURPOSE

To receive the Planning Commission’s response to comments on the third draft of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment A). Once the Planning Commission has provided input on the third draft, this round of review of the element will conclude. The Planning Commission will have a few more touches on the Transportation Element, as spelled out in the next steps below.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public may submit written comments on the Transportation Element to comp.plan@mercerisland.gov. Public comments will be provided to the Planning Commission at its November meeting. Please visit the [Comprehensive Plan update project website](#) for more information about the update process.

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission was briefed on the first draft of the Transportation Element on July 27. The Commission provided written comments on the first draft following the meeting. The comments on the first draft and staff responses were provided to the Planning Commission with a second draft of the Transportation Element at their September 28, 2022, meeting. The Planning Commission provided comments on the second draft resulting in the attached third draft.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The Planning Commission requested staff draft several alternatives for consideration at the next meeting. Staff will walk the Planning Commission through those alternatives at the November meeting. The Planning Commission can make comments on each alternative while going through the alternatives. Please review the alternatives listed below in advance to be prepared to provide comments at the meeting.

Transportation Policy 2.3, pg. 4

Staff was asked to revise Transportation Policy 3.1 to remove the phrase “for all communities”. In response, staff has prepared three alternatives for the Planning Commission to consider. The difference between the three alternatives is highlighted in yellow below. The Planning Commission also asked staff to draft a policy to address equity in transportation planning, which will be addressed in the next section (policies 4.8 & 4.9).

Staff Proposed Alternative:

Encourage partnerships with nonprofit providers and the private sector in the provision and operation of the transportation system.

Existing Policy 2.3:

Pursue opportunities for private sector participation in the provision, operation and maintenance of the transportation system.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Transportation Element.

Transportation Policy 3.1, pg. 4

Staff was asked to revise Transportation Policy 3.1 to remove the phrase “for all communities”. The Planning Commission also asked staff to draft a policy to address equity in transportation planning. In response, staff has prepared three alternatives for the Planning Commission to consider. The difference between the three alternatives is highlighted in yellow below.

Staff Proposed Alternative:

Alt 1: Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and pollution.

Alt 2: Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and pollution **for all communities.**

Alt 3: Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and pollution **for all communities, especially those that have been disproportionately affected by transportation decisions.**

Existing Policy 3.1:

Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative impacts related to water quality, noise, and neighborhood impacts.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative 1, 2, or 3; (2) propose changes to the wording of a staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Transportation Element.

Transportation Policy 4.8 and 4.9, pg. 5

When discussing Policy 3.1, the Planning Commission asked for a draft policy addressing equity in transportation planning. Staff drafted policies 4.8 and 4.9 that address equity for the Planning Commission to consider. The Planning Commission can also consider moving goal 4 and its associated policies to the beginning of the Goals and Policies section (Goal 1).

Proposed Policies 4.8 and 4.9:

- 4.8 Implement transportation programs and projects that address the needs of and promote access to opportunity for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, people with low or no incomes, and people with special transportation needs, while preventing and mitigating displacement of these groups.
- 4.9 Address the needs of people who do not drive, either by choice or circumstances (e.g., elderly, teens, low-income, and persons with disabilities), in the development of transportation programs and projects.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve policies 4.8 and 4.9 as drafted; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. The no change option is a decision to not add a new policy to the Transportation Element. The Planning Commission can also decide whether they would prefer moving goal 4 and its associated policies to the beginning of the goal and policy section to add emphasis to the topics covered there. Please note, the goals and policies are numbered for organization only, the numbering and order of goals and policies does not imply importance.

Transportation Policy 3.3, pg. 4

Goal 3 addresses environmental impacts from transportation infrastructure. At the September meeting, Commissioner Boatsman proposed an addition to transportation policy 3.3 to add direction to encourage tree planting in the unused portion of rights of way. The alternative below was prepared to address that proposal.

Alternative:

Construct transportation improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation.
Encourage programs that plant trees in unused portions of public rights-of-way.

Existing Policy 3.3:

Construct transportation improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation.

Staff Commentary: The proposed addition to Policy 3.3 is not recommended. The proposed amendment is beyond the scope of work for updating the Transportation Element. The scope of work is specifically targeted at addressing the amendments required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) and recent amendments of the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The proposed additional policy language is directed at creating new policy direction that is not required by GMA, addressing recent changes to the CPPs, or otherwise included in the Comprehensive Plan update scope of work approved by the City Council with [Resolution 1621](#).

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Transportation Element.

Transportation Policy 7.4, pg. 7

Staff was asked to revise Transportation Policy 7.9 to clarify the meaning of the policy. Policy 7.9 is numbered 7.8 in the existing Transportation Element. This policy is directed at creating a transportation system with direct and safe connections. The staff proposed alternative would revert Policy 7.9 to the original text and create a new Policy 7.4.

Staff Proposed Alternative, New Policy 7.4:

Emphasize transportation network connectivity to minimize travel distances and emergency response times by avoiding street closures.

Existing Policy 7.8:

Strive to create a complete, connected active transportation system allowing direct and safe access for active transportation modes.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Transportation Element.

New Transportation Policy 12.X, pg. 10

Staff was asked to draft a new transportation policy under Goal 12 to add policy direction to study opportunities to increase “last mile” solutions near transit. A Planning Commissioner comment also suggested that this could include electric bike infrastructure.

Proposed New Policy to Address Comment:

Alt 1: Study opportunities to expand electric bicycle facilities that serve the Town Center, light rail station, and park and ride.

Alt 2: Study opportunities to provide innovative last-mile solutions serving the Town Center, light rail station, and park and ride. [note: this would be an additional policy that would be added under Goal 4]

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve alternative 1 or 2 as drafted; (2) propose changes to the wording of the preferred policy; or (3) make no change. The no change option is a decision to not add a new policy to the Transportation Element.

Transportation Implementation Policy

Staff was asked to draft a Transportation policy to detail the implementation process for the Transportation Element. Unlike most comprehensive plan elements, the implementation process for transportation elements is established in the Growth Management Act (GMA) and other state law. Cities are required to establish a project list in the transportation element (see Table 3 in Attachment A). The project list includes both road improvement projects, maintenance of infrastructure, planning projects, and other implementation actions for the Transportation Element. Projects from that list are added to the 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (6-year TIP). Each year, the City is required by state law to update the 6-year TIP. This includes considering available funds and projected costs.

Staff Recommendation: Adopting policies in the Transportation Element that articulate implementation steps for the element is not recommended. The state law already establishes a clear process the City must follow for implementing the Transportation Element. At best, implementation policies would simply duplicate the

process already established in the state law. The problem with duplicating state law requirements in the Comprehensive Plan is that any amendment the State Legislature makes will trigger a comprehensive plan amendment. Furthermore, because the law is already established at the state level, reiterating the implementation process in the Comprehensive Plan would not add any value.

Wrapping Up Review

Once the Planning Commission has given feedback on all the alternatives this round of review of the element will conclude. Please note that the Planning Commission will have several additional rounds of review of the element later in the update process, as outlined under the next steps below.

NEXT STEPS

1. There might be additional changes to the Transportation Element for the Planning Commission to consider during the Comprehensive Plan update. These additional changes would be in response to the Climate Action Plan and other planning efforts. Discussion of these possible amendments will take place when the Planning Commission takes up these topics later during the update process.
2. Summer 2023 – A Community Open House will be held to gather public input on the overall comprehensive plan update. Following the Open House, the Planning Commission will have the opportunity for another “touch” on the Land Use Element during a comprehensive plan update “tune up” meeting .
3. Fall 2023 - After the “tune up” meeting, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the overall comprehensive plan update. This will include a review of the Land Use Element before making a recommendation to the City Council.

4 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

3rd Draft
 Green Text: Initial Updates
 Purple Text: Planning Commission Edits

I. INTRODUCTION

The ~~intent of the~~ Transportation Element ~~is to provide~~provides policies and projects to guide the development of the Mercer Island transportation system in support of the City's vision for the future. The policies guide the actions of the City, as well as the decisions related to individual developments.

The Transportation Element provides an inventory of ~~all of~~ Mercer Island's existing transportation system and includes auto, truck, bicycle, ~~bus~~transit, and pedestrian. ~~This update to the Transportation Element reflects the changes to circulation and operations related to the closure of the I-90 reversible lanes and related ramps.~~

OBJECTIVES OF THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The City of Mercer Island has three main objectives within its Transportation Element:

- Develop ~~multi-modal~~multimodal goals, policies, programs, and projects which support implementation of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan,
- Define policies and projects that encourage the safe and efficient development of the transportation system, and
- Comply with legislative requirements for ~~multi-modal~~multimodal transportation planning.

Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA) outlines specific requirements for the Transportation Element of ~~the city's comprehensive plan~~Comprehensive Plan. It calls for a balanced approach to land use and transportation planning to ensure that a city's transportation system can support expected growth and development. In addition, it mandates that capital facilities funds be adequate to pay for any necessary improvements to the transportation system. Finally, a city must adopt specific standards for the acceptable levels of congestion on its streets; these standards are called level of service (LOS) standards.

At the federal level, transportation funds have been focused on the preservation and improvement of transportation facilities and creating a ~~multi-modal~~multimodal approach to transportation planning. For Mercer Island, transportation projects that combine improvements for auto, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians have a much greater chance of receiving state and federal grant funds than those that focus solely on widening the road to carry more single-occupant vehicles.

Other legislative requirements addressed by the Transportation Element include the King County ~~2012~~2021 Countywide Planning Policies, the 1991 Commute Trip Reduction Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 1990 federal Clean Air Act Amendments. Each of these laws emphasizes closer coordination between a jurisdiction's land use planning and its approach to transportation planning.

TRANSPORTATION TODAY

Most of Mercer Island's streets are two lane residential streets with low to moderate volumes of traffic. Island Crest Way, a north-south arterial which runs the length of the Island, is an exception because it is a principal feeder route to I-90 and the Town Center. East and West Mercer Way ring the Island and provide

two more connections with I-90. SE 40th Street and Gallagher Hill Road also carry high traffic volumes in the north-central portion of the Island. In addition to arterial streets, the local street network provides access to private residences and properties. Public transit serves the Mercer Island Park and Ride and other locations on the Island.

~~The Mercer Island has over 56 miles of trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel. A regional trail runs across the north end of the Island along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.~~

UPCOMING CHANGES

~~The Sound Transit East Link light rail line, scheduled for completion in 2023, will change how Mercer Island residents travel and live. A new light rail station located north of the Town Center, on the I-90 corridor between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE, will provide provides access to destinations in Seattle, Bellevue and other cities that are part of the Sound Transit system. As part of this change, many of the buses from the east side of Lake Washington will terminate at Mercer Island and bus riders will transfer to light rail. The existing park and ride at North Mercer Way is frequently at or near capacity, and parking demand will increase with light rail. As part of the mitigation agreement with Sound Transit, additional parking for the light rail station will be added in the Town Center.~~

~~Mercer Island has over 56 miles of trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel. In sum, these regional changes will likely affect travel and land use development patterns, particularly for the north end of the Island. The changes will also provide new opportunities for the Island and will support the vision and development of the Town Center. The regional Mountains-to-Sound Trail runs along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.~~

LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS — THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mercer Island's Comprehensive Plan, of which the Transportation Element is a part, must be internally consistent. This means that the various requirements in each element must not contradict one another. Of particular importance is the relationship between the Transportation Element and the Land Use Element.

The transportation forecasts used in this element are based on Mercer Island growth targets for housing and employment, regional traffic forecasts by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and local traffic counts. Within the 20-year planning period, the City's growth target is ~~2,320~~1,239 new housing units and ~~1,460~~300 new jobs to be generated on the Island by ~~2035~~2044.

The Land Use Element defines Mercer Island's strategy for managing future growth and physical land development for the 20-year planning period. Proposed transportation improvements, policies and programs are consistent with the vision of the Land Use Element. The Land Use vision emphasizes continued reinvestment and redevelopment of the Town Center to create a mixed-use pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented environment. Most of the forecasted housing units and jobs will be located in and around the downtown core. Outside of the Town Center, the lower density residential nature of the remainder of the Island will be maintained with low forecasted changes in household growth.

TOWN CENTER PLAN

The 1994 Town Center Plan for Mercer Island was updated in 2016 through a cooperative effort of City staff, consultants and many citizens over a two-year long process. Specific goals and policies related to transportation and mobility are in the Land Use element.

The ~~plan for a~~ Sound Transit Link Light Rail station located on the I-90 corridor between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE will continue to focus multimodal development and population growth within the Town Center area.

II. TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

The following transportation goals and policies have been developed to guide transportation decisions for Mercer Island. They have been crafted to be consistent with all other Comprehensive Plan elements, including ~~most importantly,~~ the Land Use Element. They also serve to further articulate and implement the City's vision for the future.

GOAL 1:

Encourage the most efficient use of the transportation system through effective management of transportation demand and the transportation system.

- 1.1 Encourage measures to reduce vehicular trips using Transportation Demand Management strategies such as preferential parking for carpools/vanpools, alternative work hours, bicycle parking, and distribution of information and promotion of non-motorized travel, transit and ridesharing options.
- 1.2 Encourage businesses and residential areas to explore opportunities for shared parking and other parking management strategies.
- 1.3 Employ transportation system management (TSM) techniques to improve the efficient operation of the transportation system including, but not limited to: traffic through and turn lanes, management of street parking, signals and other traffic control measures.

GOAL 2:

Receive the maximum value and utility from the City's investments in the transportation system.

- 2.1 Place a high priority on maintaining the existing transportation facilities and the public rights-of-way.
- 2.2 ~~Continue to prioritize~~ Prioritize expenditures in the transportation system recognizing the need to maintain existing transportation assets, meet adopted service level goals, and emphasize continued investments in non-motorized transportation facilities. Make transportation investments that improve economic and living conditions so that businesses and workers are retained and attracted to Mercer Island.

- 2.3 ~~Pursue opportunities for~~ Encourage partnerships with nonprofit providers and the private sector participation in the provision, and operation, ~~and maintenance~~ of the transportation system. [Planning Commission]
- 2.4 Coordinate street improvement projects with utilities, developers, neighborhoods, and other parties in order to minimize roadway disruptions and maintain pavement integrity.
- 2.5 Explore all available sources for transportation funding, including grants, impact fees, and other local options as authorized by the state legislature.
- 2.6 Prioritize transportation investments in the Town Center that promote mixed-use and compact development and provide ~~multi-modal~~ multimodal access to regional transit facilities.
- 2.7 Apply technologies, programs, and other strategies to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and reduce congestion, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions.

GOAL 3:

Minimize negative transportation impacts on the environment.

- 3.1 Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and ~~neighborhood impacts.~~ pollution for all communities. [Alternative 1]
- 3.1 Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and pollution. [Alternative 2]
- 3.1 Use design, construction and maintenance methods, and low impact development strategies to minimize negative health and environmental impacts related to water quality, noise, and pollution for all communities, especially those that have been disproportionately affected by transportation decisions. [Alternative 3]
- 3.2 Work with WSDOT and other agencies to minimize impacts on Island facilities and neighborhoods from traffic congestion on regional facilities, implementation of ramp metering, and provision of transit services and facilities.
- 3.3 Construct transportation improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation. Encourage programs that plant trees in unused portions of public rights-of-way. [Planning Commission]
- 3.4 Promote the expanded use of alternative fuel and zero emission vehicles by the general public with measures such as converting public and private fleets, applying incentive programs, and providing for electric vehicle charging stations.

GOAL 4:

Provide transportation choices for travelers through the provision of a complete range of transportation facilities, and services.

- 4.1 Work with King County Metro, Sound Transit and other providers to ensure adequate transit services to meet the needs of the Island, including:
- ~~maintain existing and encourage new public transit service on the Island; [Planning Commission]~~
 - 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.
- 4.2 Provide for and encourage non-motorized travel modes consistent with the Parks and Recreation Plan and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan.
- 4.3 Support opportunities to facilitate transfers between different travel modes through strategies such as:
- providing small park and ride facilities throughout the Island; and
 - improving pedestrian access to transit with on and off-road pedestrian improvements.
- 4.4 Investigate opportunities for operating, constructing and/or financing park and ride lots for Mercer Island residents only.
- 4.5 Encourage site and building design that promotes pedestrian activity, ridesharing opportunities, and the use of transit.
- 4.6 Promote the development of ~~pedestrian multimodal~~ linkages ~~between public and private development and to~~ transit in the Town Center District.
- 4.7 Promote the mobility of people and goods through a ~~multi-modal~~ multimodal transportation system consistent with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan.
- 4.8 Implement transportation programs and projects that address the needs of and promote access to opportunity for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, people with low and/or no incomes, and people with special transportation needs, while preventing and mitigating displacement of these groups.
- 4.9 Address the needs of people who do not drive, either by choice or circumstances (e.g., elderly, teens, low-income, and persons with disabilities), in the development of transportation programs and projects.
- [Alternative 1: leave 4.8 & 4.9 (King Countywide equity policies) in existing location]
- [Alternative 2: Move all of Goal 4 to be Goal 1]

GOAL 5:

Comply with local, regional, state and federal requirements related to transportation.

- 5.1 Comply with the requirements of the federal and state Clean Air Acts, and work with other jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region to achieve conformance with the State Implementation Plan.
- 5.2 Meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and apply these standards to development of the transportation system.
- 5.3 Comply with the Commute Trip Reduction requirements through the continued implementation of a CTR plan.
- ~~5.4 Assist regional agencies in the revisions and implementation of the Transportation 2040 (PSRC), WSDOT Highway System Plan, and the Washington Transportation Plan 2030 and subsequent versions of these documents.~~
- 5.4 Advocate for state policies, actions, and capital improvement programs that promote safety, equity, and sustainability, and that are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, VISION 2050, and the Countywide Planning Policies, and this comprehensive plan. [Planning Commission]
- 5.5 Work with the participants of the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) to coordinate transportation planning for the Eastside subarea.
- 5.6 Comply with state initiatives and directives related to climate change and greenhouse gas reduction. Identify implementable actions that improve air quality, reduce air pollutants and promote clean transportation technologies.

GOAL 6:

Ensure coordination between transportation and land use decisions and development.

- 6.1 Ensure compatibility between transportation facilities and services and adjacent land uses, evaluating aspects such as:
 - potential impacts of transportation on adjacent land use;
 - potential impacts of land development and activities on transportation facilities and services; and
 - need for buffering and/or landscaping alongside transportation facilities.
- 6.2 Develop strategies to manage property access along arterial streets in order to preserve their function.
- 6.3 In the project development review process, evaluate transportation implications including:
 - congestion and level of service;
 - connectivity of transportation facilities and services from a system perspective;
 - transit needs for travelers and for transit operators; and
 - non-motorized facilities and needs.

- 6.4 Ensure that transportation improvements, strategies and actions needed to serve new developments shall be in place at the time new development occurs or be financially committed and scheduled for completion within six years.
- 6.5 As part of a project's SEPA review, review the project's impact on transportation and require mitigation of on-site and off-site transportation impacts. The City shall mitigate cumulative impacts of SEPA-exempt projects through implementation of the Transportation Improvement Program.
- 6.6 ~~Develop~~Maintain standards and procedures for measuring the transportation impact of a proposed development and for mitigating impacts.
- 6.7 Participate in the review of development and transportation plans outside the City boundaries that may have an impact on the Island and its transportation system, and consider the effect of the City's transportation plans on other jurisdictions.
- 6.8 Encourage transit, bicycle and pedestrian principles in the design of projects including:
- locating structures on the site in order to facilitate transit and non-motorized travel modes;
 - placing and managing on-site parking to encourage travel by modes other than single occupant vehicles;
 - provision of convenient and attractive facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
 - provision of public easements for access and linkages to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.
- 6.9 Require adequate parking and other automobile facilities to meet anticipated demand generated by new development.

GOAL 7:

Provide a safe, convenient and reliable transportation system for Mercer Island.

- 7.1 Include requirements in the City's roadway design standards, ~~requirements~~ for facilities to safely accommodate travel by all travel modes.
- 7.2 Provide a safe transportation system through maintenance and upkeep of transportation facilities.
- 7.3 Reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by vehicle collisions on Mercer Island to zero by 2030.
- 7.4 Emphasize transportation network connectivity to minimize travel distances and emergency response times by avoiding street closures.

- 7.5 Monitor the condition and performance of the transportation system to compare growth projections with actual conditions, assess the adequacy of transportation facilities and services, and to identify locations where improvements may become necessary.
- 7.46 Monitor traffic collisions, citizen input/complaints, traffic violations, and traffic volumes to identify and prioritize locations for safety improvements.
- 7.57 Where a need is demonstrated, consider signage, traffic controls, or other strategies to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.
- 7.68 Verify the policies, criteria and a process to determine when, and under what conditions, private roads and privately maintained roads in the public right-of-way should be accepted for public maintenance and improvement.
- 7.79 Coordinate with local and regional emergency services to develop priority transportation corridors and develop coordinated strategies to protect and recover from disaster.
- ~~7.8 Strive to create a complete, connected active~~ 7.9 Emphasize transportation system ~~allowing connectivity and avoid closing streets to provide~~ direct and safe access for active transportation modes ~~and to minimize travel distances and emergency vehicle response times.~~ [Remove KPG edits to this policy as shown in 7.10 below]
- 7.10 Strive to create a complete, connected active transportation system allowing direct and safe access for active transportation modes. [Recommend maintaining existing policy and adding new Policy 7.4]
- 7.911 New or remodeled public ~~institution~~ institutions, commercial mixed use and multifamily facilities should have sufficient storage for bicycles and other active transportation modes.

GOAL 8:

Preserve adequate levels of accessibility between Mercer Island and the rest of the region.

- 8.1 Continue to recognize I-90 as a highway of statewide significance.
- 8.2 Work with King County Metro and Sound Transit to ensure mobility and adequate levels of transit service linking Mercer Island to the rest of the region.
- 8.3 Work with WSDOT, King County Metro, and Sound Transit to ensure the provision of adequate Park and Ride capacity for Island residents.
- 8.4 Maintain an effective role in regional transportation planning, decision-making and implementation of transportation system improvements.

GOAL 9:

Balance the maintenance of quality Island neighborhoods with the needs of the Island's transportation system.

Mercer Island, Washington, Comprehensive Plan, Element 4 - Transportation –

- 9.1 Strive to minimize traffic impacts to neighborhoods and foster a "pedestrian-friendly" environment.
- 9.2 Address parking overflow impacts on neighborhoods caused by major traffic generators such as schools, businesses, parks, and multifamily developments.
- 9.3 Provide facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists designed in keeping with individual neighborhood characteristics.
- 9.4 Work with King County Metro to provide public transit vehicles and services that are more in scale with the City's neighborhoods and its local road network.
- 9.5 Maintain comprehensive street design guidelines and standards that determine the appropriate function, capacity, and improvement needs for each street/roadway, while minimizing construction and neighborhood impacts.

GOAL 10:

Maintain acceptable levels of service for transportation facilities and services on Mercer Island.

- 10.1 The City of Mercer Island Level of Service (LOS) at arterial street intersections shall be a minimum of "C" within and adjacent to the Town Center and "D" for all other intersections.
- 10.2 Use the level of service standard to evaluate the performance of the transportation system and guide future system improvements and funding. Emphasize projects and programs that focus on the movement of people and provide alternatives to driving alone.
- 10.3 Implement the following strategy when vehicle capacity or funding is insufficient to maintain the LOS standard: (1) seek additional funding for capacity improvements, (2) explore alternative, lower-cost methods to meet level-of-service standards (e.g., transportation demand management program, bicycle corridor development or other strategies), (3) reduce the types or size of development, (4) restrict development approval, and (5) reevaluate the level of service standard to determine how it might be adjusted to meet land use objectives.
- 10.4 Ensure that the City's level of service policies are linked to the land use vision and comply with concurrency requirements.
- 10.5 Revise the Transportation Element if the Land Use and/or Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan are changed to maintain a balanced and consistent plan.
- 10.6 Levels of service for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit transportation modes should be established.

GOAL 11:

Ensure parking standards support the land use policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

- 11.1 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.

- 11.2 Maintain the current minimum parking requirements of three off-street spaces for single family residences, but may consider future code amendments that allow for the reduction of one of the spaces provided that the quality of the environment and the single family neighborhood is maintained.
- 11.3 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.

GOAL 12:

Promote bicycle and pedestrian networks that safely access and link commercial areas, residential areas, schools, and parks within the City.

- 12.1 Maximize the safety and functionality of the bicycle system by enhancing road shoulders which are to be distinguished from designated bicycle lanes.
- 12.2 Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan to meet existing and anticipated needs for nonmotorized transportation. This Plan should be coordinated with other transportation planning efforts and periodically updated.
- 12.3 Study opportunities for use of innovative methods-treatments for pedestrians crossing streets, including use of colored and textured pavements within the City. [Recommended change]
- 12.X Study opportunities to expand electric bicycle facilities that serve the Town Center, light rail station, and park and ride. [Alternative 1]
- 4.X Study opportunities to provide innovative last-mile solutions serving the Town Center, light rail station, and park and ride. [Alternative 2 – move to Goal 4]
- 12.4 Strive to build community through the in-person interactions facilitated by active transportation at community connection points (schools, library, community centers, bikeshare hubs, etc.).
- 12.5 Prioritize areas near schools and commercial areas for a higher level of service for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.

III. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM—EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes and inventories the current ~~travel patterns and~~ transportation system serving Mercer Island, ~~including land, water and air transportation~~. Major transportation modes serving Mercer Island include automobiles, non-motorized modes such as walking and biking, and public and school transit.

~~TRAVEL PATTERNS HOW MERCER ISLANDERS MOVE ABOUT~~

~~Mercer Island has relatively high levels of vehicle ownership and personal mobility. Approximately 70 percent of the households on Mercer Island have two or more vehicles, while less than five percent of households have no vehicle at all. Comparing the 2016 American Community Survey (US Census) data with the 2000 US Census data, a number of changes are observed.~~

~~The percent of Mercer Island residents who commute to work by driving alone has dropped from 76 percent to 72 percent, those who take a bus or carpool to work decreased from 17 percent to 14 percent, and those who work at home increased from seven percent to ten percent. The average travel time to work for Mercer Island residents is 25 minutes, which is below the regional average of 32 minutes.~~

~~A November 2013 WSDOT Mercer Island Travel Survey found that 55 percent of commute trips originating on the Island traveled west towards Seattle and 45 percent traveled east towards Bellevue.~~

ROADWAY NETWORK

Mercer Island has over 75 miles of public roads. Interstate 90 (I-90) runs east-west across the northern end of Mercer Island, providing the only road and transit connection to the rest of the Puget Sound region. Access to the I-90 on-ramps and off-ramps is provided at West Mercer Way, 76th Avenue SE, 77th Avenue SE, 80th Avenue SE, Island Crest Way, and East Mercer Way.

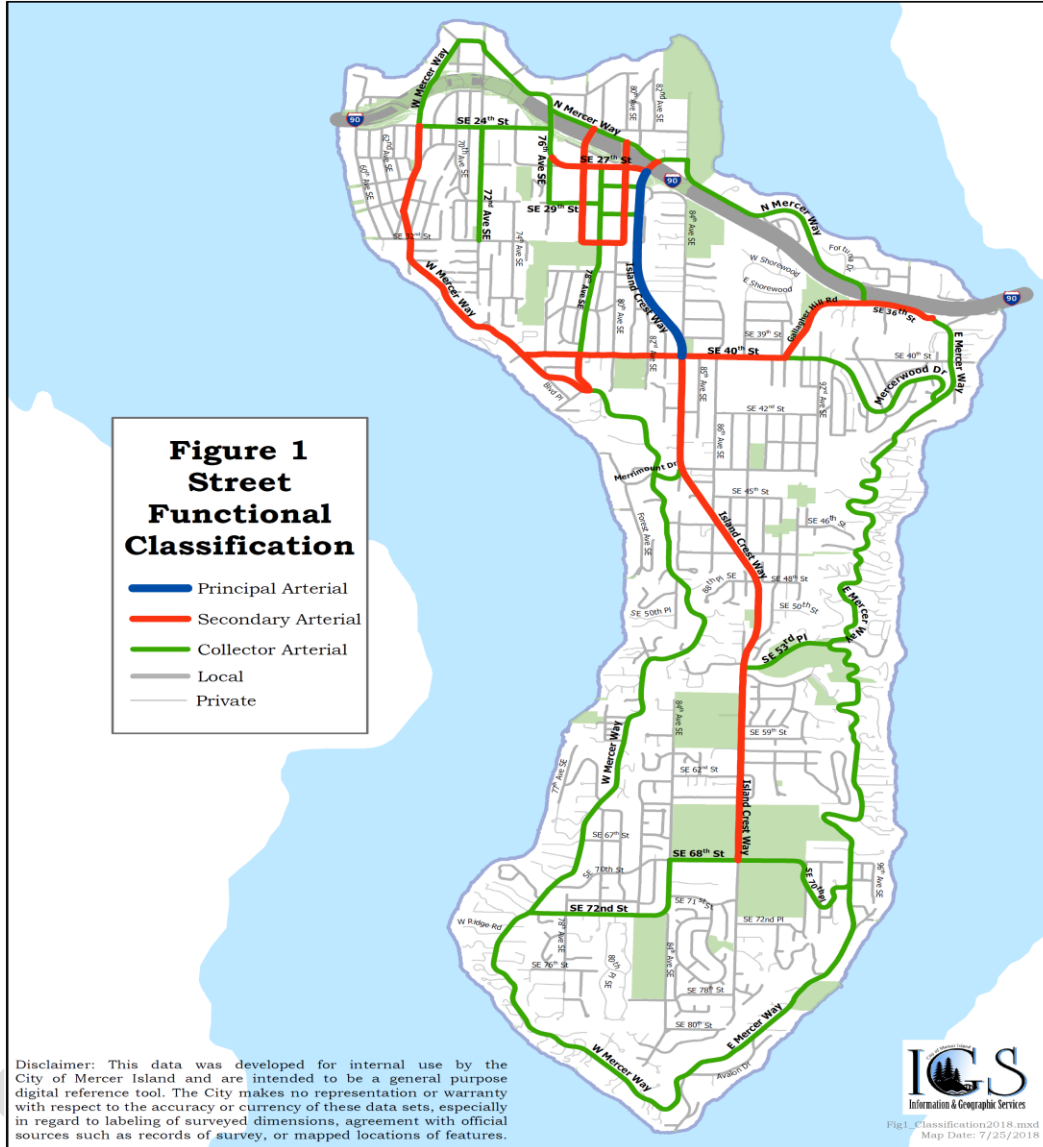
Most of the road network is comprised of two-lane local streets serving the Island's residential areas. Arterial roadways comprise approximately 25 miles, or one-third, of the system. In addition to public roads, there are numerous private roads serving individual neighborhoods and developments on the Island.

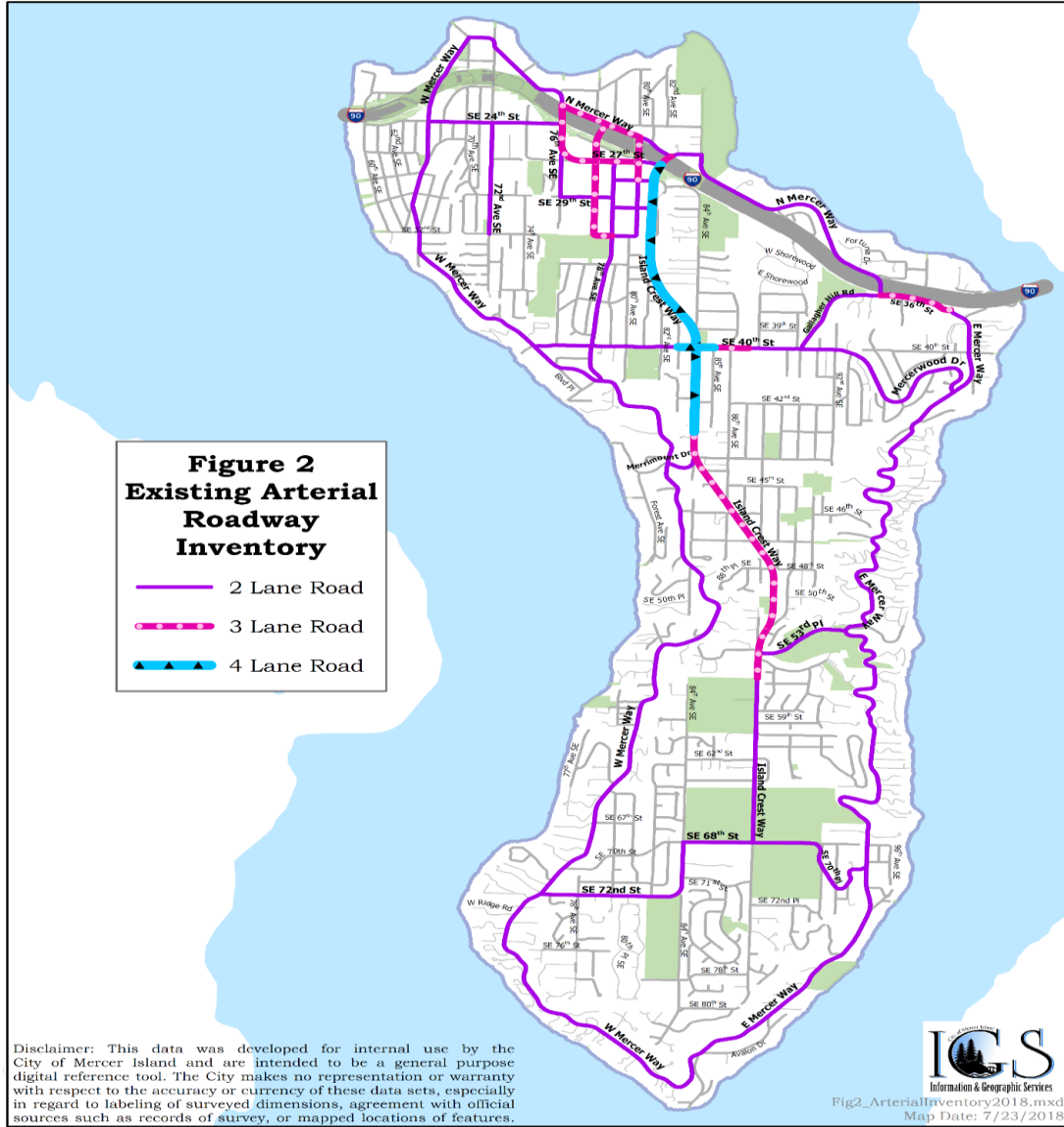
Roadways on the Island are classified into different categories according to their purpose and physical characteristics. The categories are:

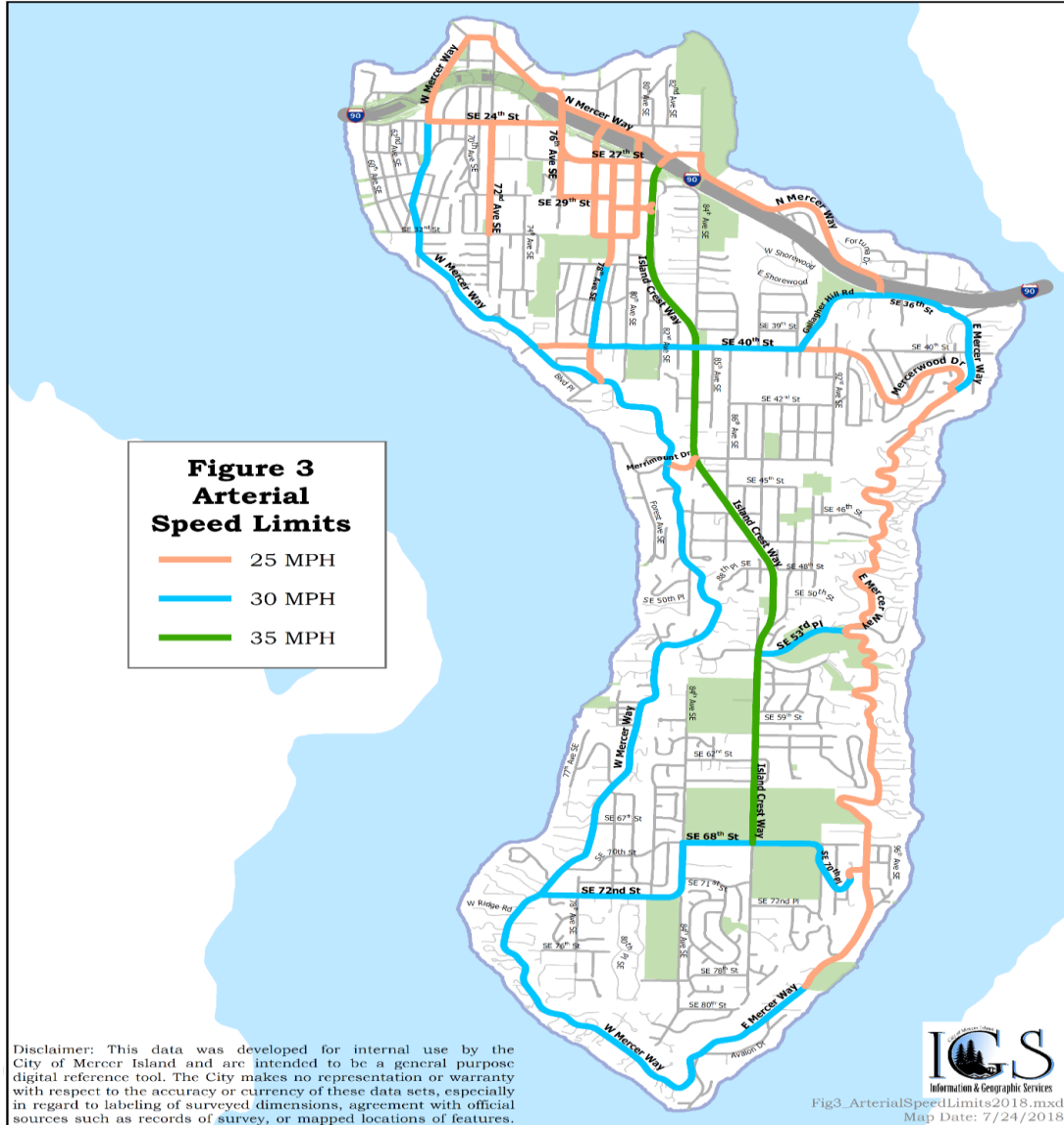
- **Principal arterials** carry the highest volumes of traffic and provide the best mobility in the roadway network. These roads generally have higher speed limits, higher traffic volumes, and limit access to adjacent land uses.
- **Secondary arterials** connect with and augment principal arterials and generally have a higher degree of access to adjacent land, lower traffic volumes and lower travel speeds.
- **Collector arterials** provide for movement within neighborhoods, connecting to secondary and principal arterials; and typically have low traffic volumes and carry little through traffic.
- **Local streets** provide for direct access to abutting properties and carry low volumes of traffic at low travel speeds. Local streets are usually not intended for through traffic.

Individual streets are assigned classifications based on several criteria, including the type of travel to be served, the role of the street in the overall street network and transportation system, physical characteristics, traffic characteristics, and adjacent land uses. Based on City staff recommendations, the City Council periodically reviews and updates the street classification system, its criteria and specific street classification designations.

Figure 1 shows the street functional classifications. Figure 2 shows the number of travel lanes and Figure 3 shows the posted speed limits of arterial roadways.







LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of the quality of traffic flow and congestion at intersections and roadways. LOS is defined by the amount of delay experienced by vehicles traveling through an intersection or on a roadway. LOS is based on an A-F scale with LOS A representing little or no delay and LOS F representing very long delays.

Under the Growth Management Act, each local jurisdiction is required to establish a minimum threshold of performance for its arterial roadways. Cities use this standard to identify specific actions to maintain the adopted LOS standard. The City of Mercer Island has established its Level of Service standard at intersections of two arterial streets as LOS C within and adjacent to the Town Center and LOS D elsewhere. This standard applies to the operation during either the AM or PM peak periods. The intersection of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way does not have sufficient volumes on SE 53rd Street to warrant a signal, and is exempt from the LOS D standard until traffic volumes increase and signal warrants are met.

To be consistent with the WSDOT standard for I-90 and its ramp intersections, the City will accept LOS D at those intersections. I-90 is designated as a Highway of Statewide Significance under RCW 47.06.140.

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

For transportation planning purposes, traffic operations are typically analyzed during the busiest hour of the street system, when traffic volumes are at peak levels. On Mercer Island, the peak hour of traffic operations typically corresponds with the afternoon commute, which falls between 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM in the afternoon (PM peak hour). Traffic counts were collected and analyzed at 39 intersections throughout the Island.

Select intersections for the AM peak hour were counted and analyzed to provide an understanding of the transportation system during the morning commute, which typically peaks between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM.

For this update, select traffic counts were conducted in 2022 to compare 2022 and 2018 AM and PM peak hour volumes. Results of the analysis found no growth in the last four years. This is primarily due to the COVID pandemic and advances in technology which have increased the number of people working from home. It was determined that the 2018 counts continue to be accurate for planning purposes.

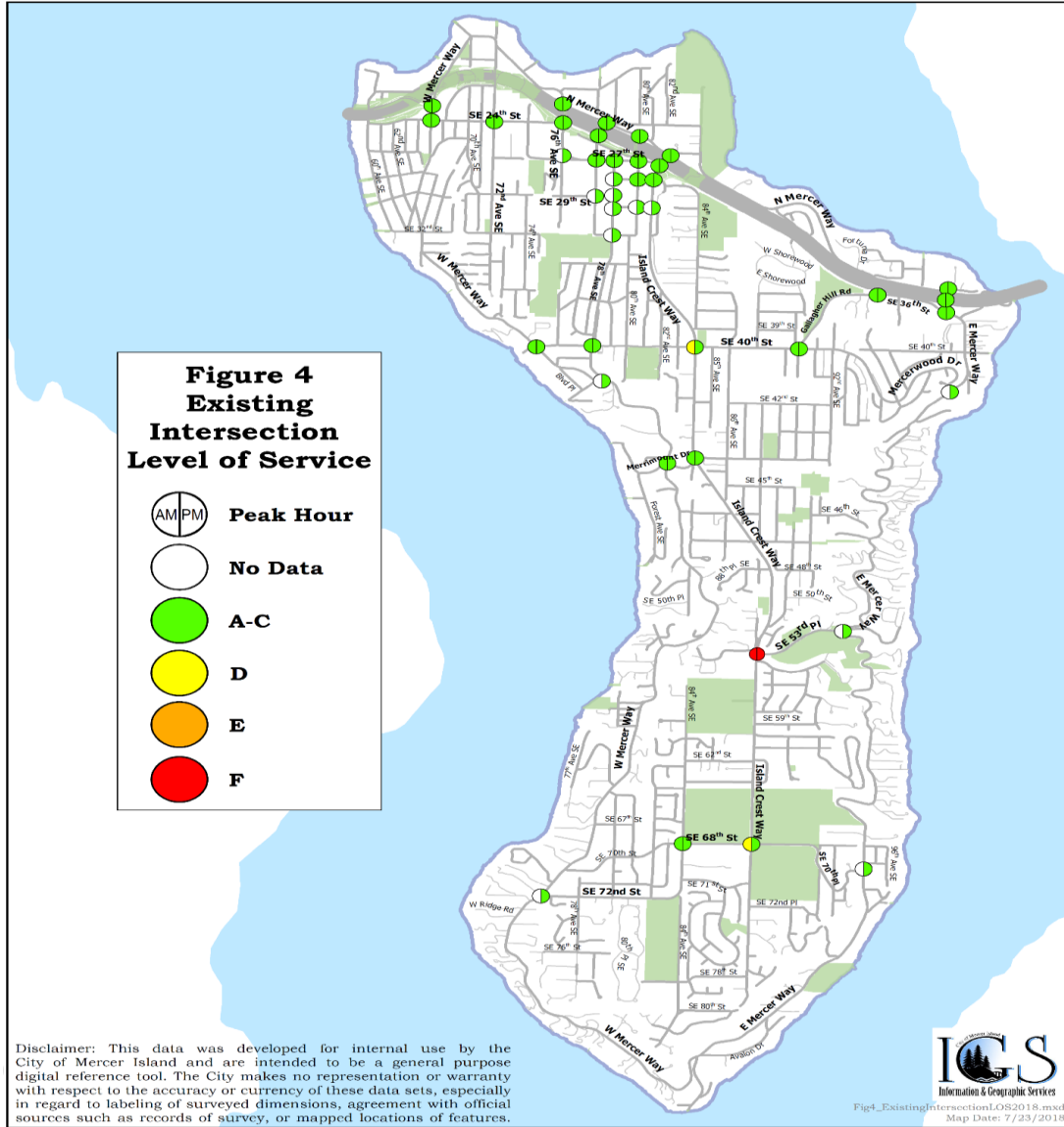
Table 1 and Figure 4 show the AM and PM peak hour operations for each of the study intersections. Outside of the Town Center, the analysis shows that during the AM and PM peak hour, all intersections operate at LOS D or better for existing conditions, except the intersection of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way operates at LOS F during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Within the Town Center, where the LOS C standard applies, all intersections operate within this standard during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Table 1. 2018 Existing Intersection Operations

Intersection	AM Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
Town Center Intersections (LOS C Standard)		
SE 24th St/76th Ave SE	B	B
N Mercer Way/77th Ave SE	A	A
N Mercer Way/Park & Ride/80th Ave SE	C	C
SE 27th St/76th Ave SE	—	A
SE 27th St/77th Ave SE	B	B
SE 27th St/78th Ave SE	A	B
SE 27th St/80th Ave SE	B	C
SE 28th St/78th Ave SE	—	A
SE 28th St/80th Ave SE	B	B
SE 28th St/Island Crest Way	B	B
SE 29th St/77th Ave SE	—	B
SE 29th St/78th Ave SE	—	B
SE 30th St/78th Ave SE	—	B
SE 30th St/80th Ave SE	—	A
SE 30th St/Island Crest Way	—	B
SE 32nd St/78th Ave SE	—	B

WSDOT Intersections (LOS D Standard)		
I-90 EB off-ramp/I-90 WB on-ramp/W Mercer Way	B	B
I-90 WB on-ramp/N Mercer Way/76th Ave SE	A	A
I-90 EB off-ramp/77th Ave SE	B	B
I-90 WB off-ramp/N Mercer Way/Island Crest Way	D	C
I-90 EB on-ramp/SE 27th St/Island Crest Way	B	B
I-90 WB ramps/100th Ave SE	B	A
I-90 EB off-ramp/100th Ave SE/E Mercer Way	B	B
I-90 EB on-ramp/SE 36th St/E Mercer Way	B	B
Outside of Town Center Intersections (LOS D Standard)		
SE 24th St/W Mercer Way	B	B
SE 24th St/72nd Ave SE	A	B
SE 36th St/N Mercer Way	C	C
SE 40th St/W Mercer Way	B	A
SE 40th St/78th Ave SE	A	B
SE 40th St/Island Crest Way	D	C
SE 40th St/SE Gallagher Hill Rd	C	B
Mercerwood Dr/E Mercer Way	—	A
W Mercer Way/78th Ave SE	—	B
Merrimount Dr/W Mercer Way	B	B
Merrimount Dr/Island Crest Way	C	C
SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way	F	F
SE 53rd Place/E Mercer Way	—	A
SE 68th St/84th Ave SE	C	B
SE 68th St/Island Crest Way	D	C
SE 70th Place/E Mercer Way	—	A
SE 72nd St/W Mercer Way	—	A



PARKING

Most parking in the City is provided by off-street parking lots, along residential access streets, or by on-street spaces in select areas of the Town Center.

In 2001, the City ~~implemented~~ manages a permit parking program for on-street parking in the Town Center in response to overflow conditions at the Mercer Island Park and Ride lot. This program preserves selected public on-street parking spaces for Mercer Island resident use, between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM, Monday through Friday. All Mercer Island residents are eligible for a Town Center District permit which will allow them to park on Town Center streets during the specified hours. [\[Planning Commission\]](#)

An additional permit parking program was developed for residential streets north of the park and ride lot on North Mercer Way. This program only allows residents of the area to park on City streets between 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM, weekdays.

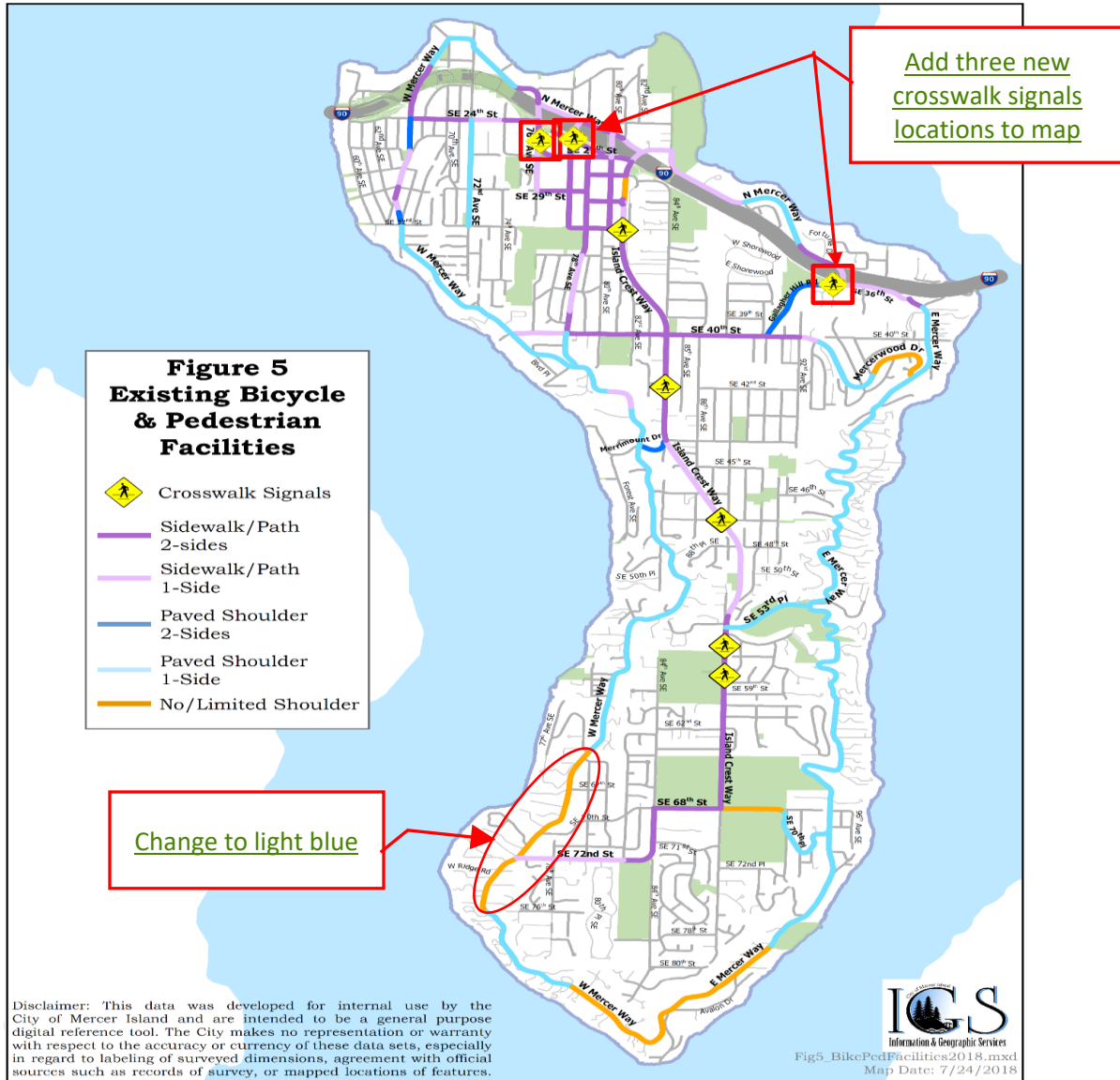
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are a valuable asset for the residents of Mercer Island. These facilities are used for basic transportation, recreation, going to and from schools, and the facilities contribute to our community's quality of life. In 1996, the City developed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan to provide a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The plan focused on encouraging non-motorized travel and improving the safety of routes near the Island's elementary schools. Of the 47 projects identified in the plan, 38 of the projects were either fully or partially completed during the first 12 years of the plan.

A 2010 update to the plan included vision and guiding principles, goals and policies, an existing and future network, a list of completed projects, revised facility design standards, and a prioritized list of projects. The plan emphasizes further development of safe routes to schools, completion of missing connections, and application of design guidelines.

A regional trail runs across the north end of the Island along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists. The majority of streets in the Town Center include sidewalks. In addition, there are sidewalks near schools and select streets. Throughout the Island there are paved and unpaved shoulders and multiuse trails that provide for pedestrian mobility.

The bicycle network is made up of designated bicycle facilities including bicycle lanes and sharrows, and shared non-motorized facilities including shared use pathways, off-road trails, and paved shoulder areas. Figure 5 shows the pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Island's arterial network.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The King County [Metro Transit](#) Department of Metropolitan Services (Metro) and the regional transit agency, Sound Transit, provide public transportation services for Mercer Island and throughout King County. There are ~~four~~ five major types of service offered on the Island: [Link light rail](#), local fixed route service, regional express service, custom bus service, and access service.

[Link light rail runs through Mercer Island along the median of I-90 with a station located north of the Town Center, between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE. The light rail provides frequent connections to Seattle, Bellevue, and other regional destinations. \[Planning Commission\]](#)

Local fixed route service operates on the arterial roadway system, and provides public transit service connecting residential and activity areas.

Regional express service, which also operates on fixed routes, is oriented toward peak hour commuter trips between the Mercer Island Park and Ride and major employment and activity centers off the Island. Sound Transit and Metro provide express service west and east along I-90 into Seattle and Bellevue.

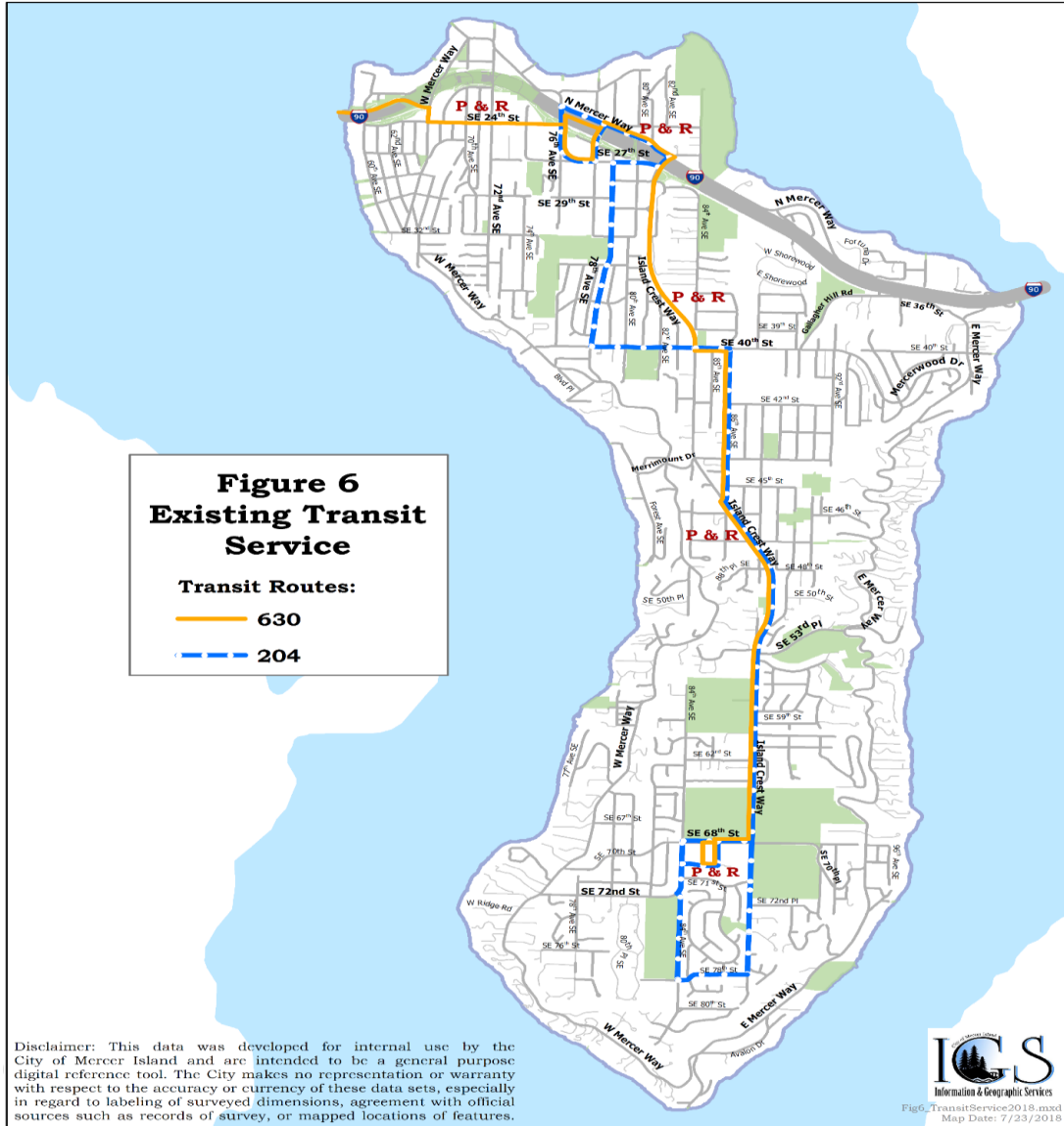
Custom bus service includes specially designed routes to serve specific travel markets, such as major employers, private schools, or other special destinations. These services are typically provided during peak commute hours, and operate on fixed routes with limited stops. Custom bus service is currently provided between the Mercer Island Park and Ride and Lakeside School and University Prep in Seattle.

Access service provides door-to-door transportation to elderly and special needs populations who have limited ability to use public transit. Access covers trips within the King County Metro transit service area.

Figure 6 shows the current transit routes serving the Island. On Mercer Island, there are two routes that circulate throughout the City (Metro routes 204 and 630). At the Mercer Island Park and Ride, Sound Transit routes 550 and 554 connect Mercer Island to Seattle, Bellevue, and Issaquah; and Metro route 216 provides service to Redmond and Seattle.

Route 204 provides service between the Mercer Island Park and Ride lot and the Mercer Village Center. This route travels on 78th Avenue SE, SE 40th Street, 86th Avenue SE, Island Crest Way, and SE 68th Street to the Mercer Village Center. ~~The route operates every 30–60 minutes from approximately 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekdays. Metro plans to increase this route's service frequency in 2019, including additional service on Saturdays.~~

Route 630 is a community shuttle which provides service between downtown Seattle and the Mercer Village Center. ~~It provides five trips toward downtown Seattle in the morning and five trips toward Mercer Village in the evening.~~



PARK AND RIDE

The Mercer Island Park and Ride is located north of I-90 on N Mercer Way near Mercer Island's Town Center. The Park and Ride has 447 spaces and is served by Link light rail and both Metro and Sound Transit buses. [\[Planning Commission\]](#)

~~According to the Fourth Quarter 2017 Park and Ride Utilization Report prepared by King County, t~~The Mercer Island lot is typically fully occupied during weekdays. A number of the users of this lot do not reside on the Island.

To supplement park and ride capacity on the Island, Metro has leased four private parking lots for use as park and ride lots, located at the Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, Mercer Island United Methodist Church, Congregational Church of Mercer Island and at the Mercer Village Center. These lots are described in Table 2. Together, they provide an additional 81 parking spaces for use by Island residents.

Table 2: Mercer Island Park and Ride Locations and Capacities

Lot	Location	Capacity	Cars Parked	% Spaces Occupied
Mercer Island Park and Ride	8000 N Mercer Way	447	447	100%
Mercer Island Presbyterian Church	3605 84th Ave SE	14	13	93%
United Methodist Church	70th Ave SE & SE 24th St	18	17	96%
Mercer Village Center	84th Ave SE & SE 68th St	21	7	32%
Congregational Church of Mercer Island	4545 Island Crest Way	28	3	11%

Source: Metro Transit P&R Utilization Report Fourth Quarter 2017.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The Mercer Island School District (MISD) provides bus transportation for public kindergarten through 12th grade students on Mercer Island. The MISD operates approximately 40 scheduled bus routes during the morning and afternoon. In addition, the District provides free Orca cards to high school students who live more than one mile from Mercer Island High School and who neither have a parking pass nor are assigned to a district bus.

RAIL SERVICES & FACILITIES

There are no railroad lines or facilities on Mercer Island. In the region, the Burlington Northern Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad companies provide freight rail service between Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and other areas of Puget Sound, connecting with intrastate, interstate and international rail lines. Amtrak provides scheduled interstate passenger rail service from Seattle to California and Chicago. Major centers in Washington served by these interstate passenger rail routes include Tacoma, Olympia, Vancouver, Everett, Wenatchee, and Spokane.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mercer Island does not have any air transportation facilities or services. Scheduled and chartered passenger and freight air services are provided at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in SeaTac, and at the King County International Airport in south Seattle.

WATER TRANSPORTATION

Mercer Island does not have any public water transportation services. The City's public boat launch is on the east side of the Island, off of East Mercer Way, under the East Channel Bridge.

IV. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM—FUTURE NEEDS

This section describes the future transportation conditions and analysis used to identify future transportation needs and improvements.

FUTURE TRAVEL DEMAND

The future traffic volumes were forecast for the year ~~2035~~2044 based on the City's land use and zoning, as well as the housing and employment growth targets, as identified in the ~~2021~~ King County ~~Buildable Lands (2014)~~Urban Growth Capacity (report. More than 70 percent of new households and 76 percent of new jobs are forecasted to occur within the Town Center.

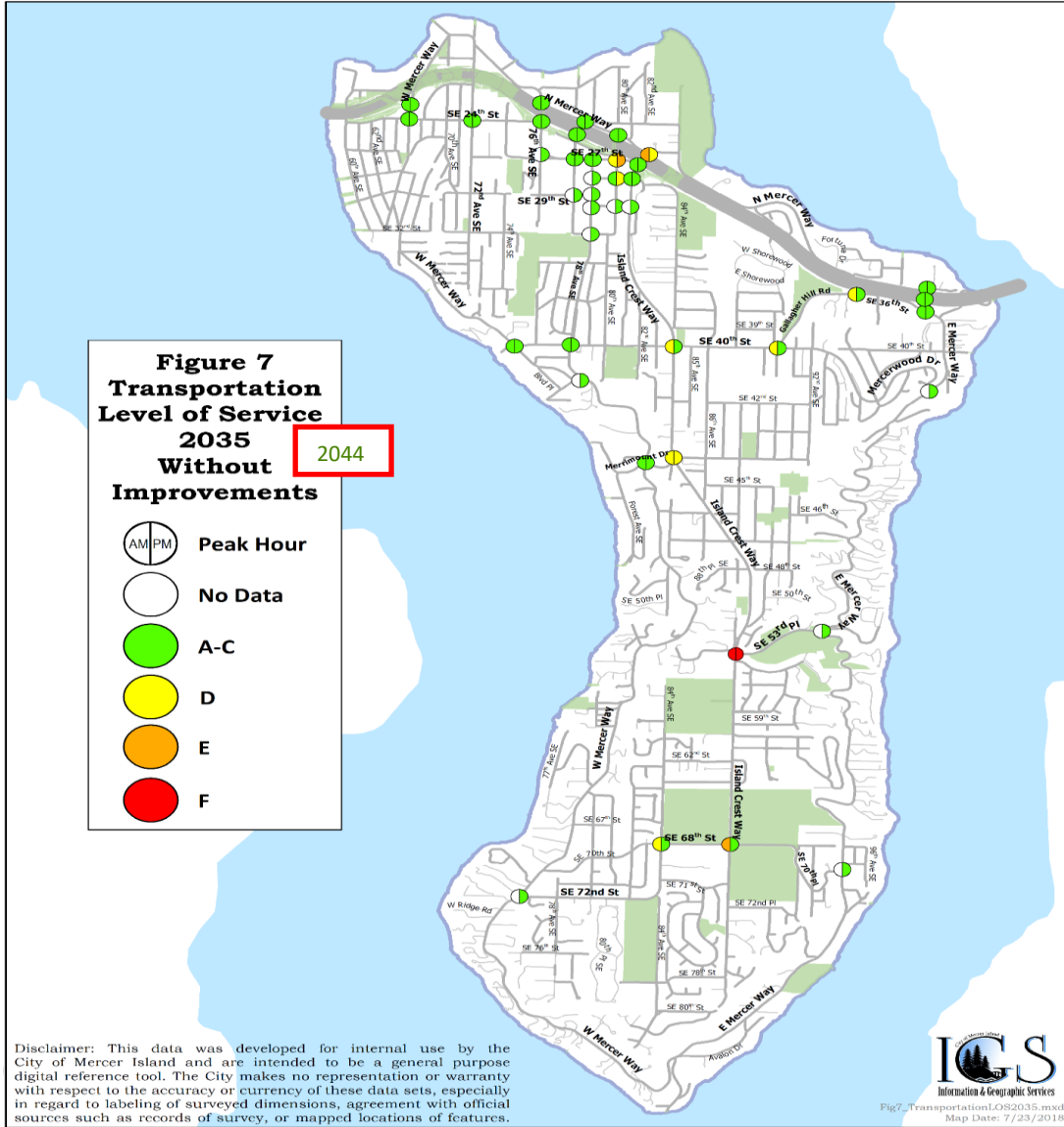
The ~~analysis assumes the~~ opening of the East Link light rail line ~~in 2023, which will result in~~provides an additional travel option between the Town Center and regional destinations.

Town Center traffic growth reflects the higher potential for pedestrian and transit trips. Overall, the traffic growth in the Town Center is forecast to increase by ~~an average of~~28 percent between ~~2018—2035~~2024 and 2044, an annual growth rate of 1.54 percent. For areas outside the Town Center, traffic growth is expected to be lower with approximately ten percent growth between ~~2018—2035~~2024 and 2044, an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent. The resulting forecasted traffic volumes directly reflect the anticipated land use, housing, and employment growth assumptions for the Island.

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS WITHOUT IMPROVEMENTS

The ~~2035~~2044 traffic analysis uses the forecasted growth in traffic and planned changes to the regional transportation system ~~(light rail station and associated I-90 projects)~~. Figure 7 shows the future traffic operations at the study intersections without any changes to roadway capacity on Mercer Island.

Results of the ~~2035~~2044 traffic operations analysis show that five intersections would operate below the LOS standards by ~~2035~~2044 if improvements are not made to the intersections. In the Town Center, the two intersections of SE 27th Street/80th Avenue SE and SE 28th Street/80th Avenue SE, would operate at LOS D or worse during either the AM or PM peak hours, without improvements. Outside of the Town Center, the intersections of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street/Island Crest Way would operate below the LOS D standard during either the AM or PM peak hours. The WSDOT-controlled intersection at the I-90 westbound off-ramp/N Mercer Way/Island Crest Way intersection would operate at LOS E during ~~2035~~2044 AM peak hour. The City will work with the WSDOT to explore improvements at this intersection.



RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the projects identified in the City's [2019—2024 Six-Year 2023 – 2028 Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP₇\)](#), a future transportation needs analysis recommended additional projects based on the long-range mobility and safety needs through [2035-2044](#). These include [projects from the City's Transportation Impact Fee program](#) and select projects from the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan. Figure 8 shows the locations of the recommended improvement projects. Table 3 provides a map identification, describes the location and details for each of the projects, and estimates a project cost. The table is divided into two main categories of project types:

Non-Motorized Projects — The listed projects include new crosswalk improvements and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These include projects from the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan that connect residential areas to schools, parks, regional transit and other destinations.

Intersection/Road Projects — These projects increase the capacity and safety of an intersection or roadway segment. The projects include the maintenance of existing roadway segments to ensure that the City's current street system is maintained.

The recommended improvements identify a total of ~~\$48.3~~ approximately \$60 million of transportation improvements over the next 20 years. About ~~62.50~~ percent (\$30.0 million) of the total is for street preservation and resurfacing projects to maintain the existing street system. Another ~~24.37~~ percent (~~\$10.422~~ million) is for non-motorized system improvements. About ~~11.13~~ percent (~~\$5.48~~ million) is for ~~traffic operational intersection and roadway improvements at intersections that maintain LOS.~~ Approximately five percent (\$2.5 million) is for vehicle and non-motorized improvements that enhance access to the future light rail station and address issues related to the closure of the I-90 center roadway.

TRAFFIC OPERATIONS WITH RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

With the recommended improvements, the intersection operations will meet the City's LOS standard for intersection operation and the transportation system will provide a better network for pedestrian and bicycle travel, allowing greater mobility for Island residents. In addition, improvements to regional transportation facilities will accommodate growth in housing and employment, which will be focused in the Town Center, where residents can be easily served by high-capacity transit. Table 4 compares the ~~2035~~ 2044 intersection study locations without and with the recommended improvements for each of the AM and PM study locations.

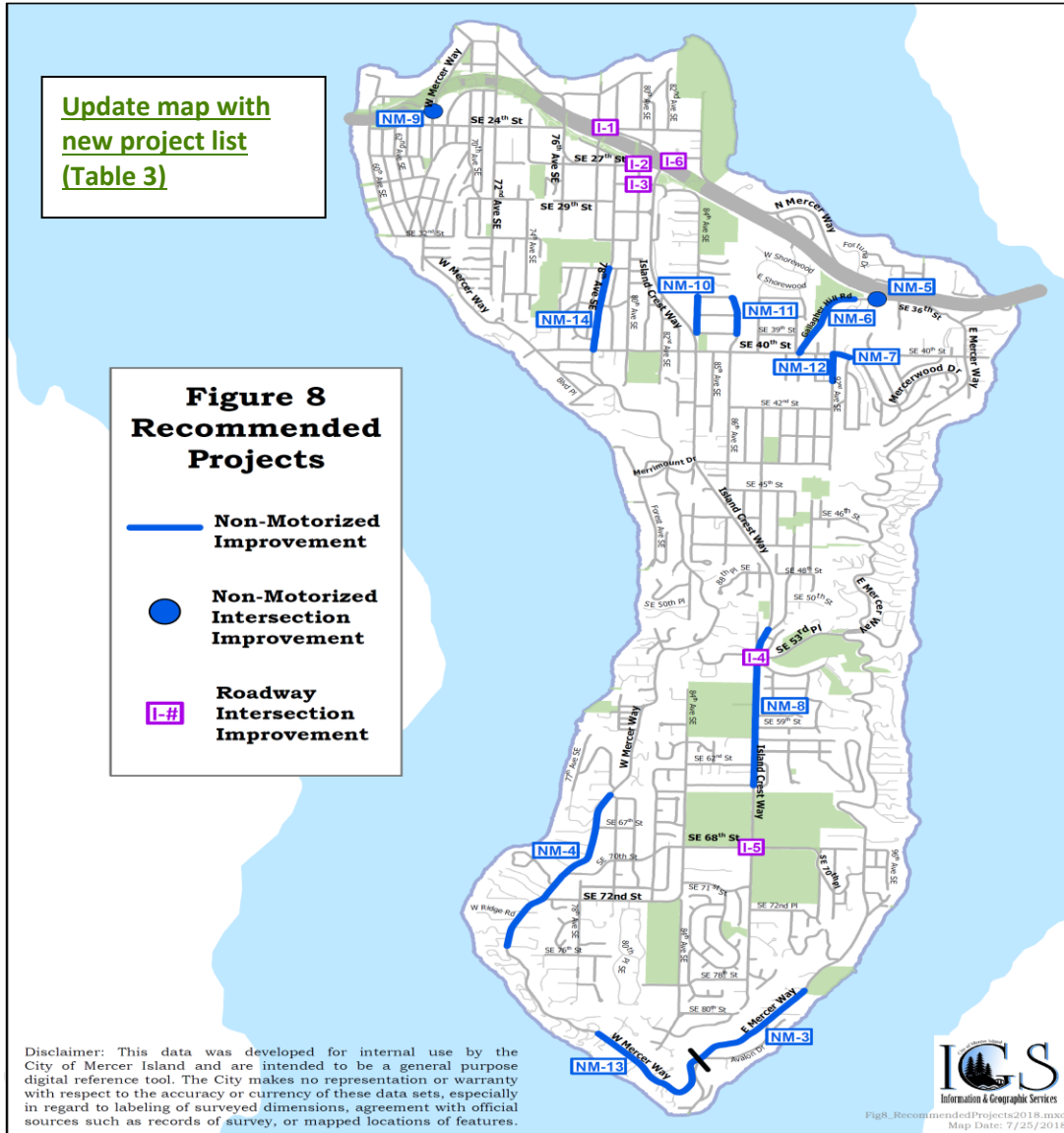


Table 3. Recommended Project List ~~2018—2025~~ **2022—2044**

ID	Location	Description	Justification	Cost (\$)
Non-Motorized Projects (NM)				
NM-1	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan Implementation	Annual funding for non-motorized improvements.	2019—2024 TIP: Project D1	810,000 (\$45,000 per year)
NM-2	ADA Compliance Plan Implementation — Biennial	Design and construct improvements to meet ADA	2019—2024 TIP: Project D2	675,000 (\$75,000 every other year)

		compliance standards.		
NM-3	East Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (Clarke Beach to Avalon Drive)	Add paved shoulders for non-motorized users.	2019—2024 TIP: Project D3	483,000
NM-4	West Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders Phase 2 (SE 70th Street to 7400 Block) and Phase 3 (SE 65th Street to SE 70th Street)	Add a shoulder on the east side of West Mercer Way for non-motorized users.	2019—2024 TIP: Project D4	796,000
NM-5	Crosswalk Improvement at SE 36th Street and North Mercer Way Intersection	Add pedestrian crossing with refuge island, ADA improvements, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs)	2019—2024 TIP: Project D5	100,000
NM-6	Gallagher Hill Road Sidewalk Improvement	Construct concrete curb, gutter, and sidewalk along east side of street.	2019—2024 TIP: Project D6	540,000
NM-7	Mercerwood Drive between 92nd Avenue SE and 93rd Avenue SE	Safe routes to school pedestrian facility along south side of street.	2019—2024 TIP: Project D7	200,000
NM-8	Island Crest Way Bike Route between 90th Avenue SE and SE 63rd Street	Complete missing gap in north-south bike route.	East Link mitigation/2019—2024 TIP: Project E1 (design only \$300,000)	2,000,000
NM-9	I-90 Trail Crossing at West Mercer Way	Construct enhanced trail crossing.	East Link mitigation/2019—2024 TIP: Project E2	300,000
NM-10	84th Avenue SE Sidewalk between SE 33rd Street and SE 36th Street	Construct sidewalk.	Safe routes to school	350,000
NM-11	86th Avenue SE Sidewalk Phase 2	Add sidewalk along east side of street.	Safe routes to school	340,000

	between SE 36th Street and SE 39th Street			
NM-12	92nd Avenue SE Sidewalk between SE 40th Street to SE 41st Street	Construct sidewalk along west side of street.	Safe routes to school	200,000
NM-13	West Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (8100 block to Avalon Drive)	Add a paved shoulder (east side) for non-motorized users.	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan: Project WMW8	2,000,000
NM-14	78th Avenue SE between SE 34th Street and SE 40th Street	Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect with Town Center.	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan: Project N15 and N16	1,560,000
Intersection Projects (I)/Road Projects (R)				
I-1	77th Avenue SE/N Mercer Way	Roundabout or traffic signal.	East Link bus-rail integration/fails to meet LOS standard	Sound Transit Mitigation
I-2	SE 27th Street/80th Avenue SE	Traffic signal.	East Link mitigation/fails to meet LOS standard	Sound Transit Mitigation
I-3	SE 28th Street/80th Avenue SE	Traffic signal.	Fails to meet LOS standard	1,810,000
I-4	SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way	Traffic signal.	Fails to meet LOS standard	1,450,000
I-5	SE 68th Street/Island Crest Way	Traffic signal or roundabout.	Fails to meet LOS standard	1,660,000 ¹
I-6	N Mercer Way/I-90 Westbound Off-Ramp/Island Crest Way	Add exclusive westbound left turn lane at I-90 off-ramp.	Fails to meet WSDOT LOS Standard	500,000 ²
I-7	Light Rail Station Access Improvements and Mitigation for I-90 Center Roadway Closure	Vehicle and non-motorized improvements that enhance access to station and address issues related to I-90 center roadway closure.	Light rail station scheduled to open in 2023	2,500,000
R-1	Street Preservation/Maintenance	Resurfacing arterial and residential streets based on PCI rating.	2019—2024 TIP: Projects A1, B3, C1—C10	30,000,000

Mercer Island, Washington, Comprehensive Plan, Element 4 - Transportation –

¹ Cost estimate reflects higher cost option of alternative actions.	Total 2018—2035 Projects	\$48,274,000	
² Cost estimate represents a 10% City share; total cost is \$5,000,000.			

ID	Location	Description	Justification	Cost (\$)
Non-Motorized Projects (NM)				
NM-1	80th Ave SE Sidewalk (SE 27th St - SE 32nd St)	Replace existing curb, sidewalk, ADA ramps, trees, and lighting.	2023-2028 TIP (SP136)	1,376,000
NM-2	78th Ave SE Sidewalk (SE 32nd St - SE 34th St)	Replace existing curb, sidewalk, ADA ramps, trees, and lighting.	2023-2028 TIP (SP137)	779,488
NM-3	West Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (8100 WMW - 8400 EMW)	Add shoulder along the east side of West Mercer Way for nonmotorized users.	2023-2028 TIP (SP138)	690,979
NM-4	Gallagher Hill Road Sidewalk Improvement	Construct sidewalk.	2023-2028 TIP (SP139)	508,455
NM-5	SE 40th St Sidewalk Improvement (Gallagher Hill Road - 93rd Ave SE)	Replace/improve existing sidewalks and construct bike lanes.	2023-2028 TIP (SP140)	997,639
NM-6	ADA Transition Plan Implementation	Construct pedestrian facility improvements to comply with the City's ADA Transition Plan.	2023-2028 TIP (SP141)	5,000,000
NM-7	Island Crest Way Corridor Improvements (90th Ave SE - SE 68th St)	Implementation of recommendations from Island Crest Way Corridor Safety Analysis.	2023-2028 TIP (SP142)	1,526,375
NM-8	North Mercer Way - MI Park and Ride Frontage Improvements	Remove bus bay on north side of NMW, widen trail, and construct safety improvements.	2023-2028 TIP (SP144)	1,203,081
NM-9	Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan Implementation	Annual program to identify, prioritize, design, and construct spot improvements and gap completion projects.	2023-2028 TIP (SP145)	1,340,000
NM-10	SE 32nd St Sidewalk Replacement (77th Ave SE - 78th Ave SE)	Replace sidewalk and trees adjacent to Mercerdale Park due to tree damage.	2023-2028 TIP (SP147)	324,719

Mercer Island, Washington, Comprehensive Plan, Element 4 - Transportation –

NM-11	East Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (SE 79th St - 8400 block)	Add shoulder along the west side of East Mercer Way for nonmotorized users.	2023-2028 TIP (SP148)	531,105
NM-12	78th Ave SE Nonmotorized Improvements (SE 34th St - SE 40th St)	Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect with Town Center.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#3)	1,697,000
NM-13	84th Ave SE Sidewalk (SE 33rd St - SE 36th St)	Construct sidewalk.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#4)	597,000
NM-14	86th Ave SE Sidewalk Phase 2 (SE 36th St - SE 39th St)	Construct sidewalk along east side of street.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#5)	1,141,000
NM-15	92nd Ave SE Sidewalk (SE 40th St - SE 41st St)	Construct sidewalk along west side of street.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#6)	803,000
NM-16	Merrimount Dr Sidewalk (ICW - Mercer Way)	Construct sidewalk along both sides of street.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#8)	632,000
NM-17	78th Ave SE Sidewalk (SE 40th St - SE 41st St)	Construct sidewalk along west side of street.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#9)	250,000
NM-18	86th Ave SE Nonmotorized Improvements (SE 42nd St - ICW)	Construct bike facilities and sidewalk along west side of street.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#10)	2,666,000
Intersection Projects (I)/Road Projects (R)				
I-1	Minor Capital - Traffic Operations Improvements	Minor improvements to address traffic operation and safety issues.	2023-2028 TIP (SP143)	313,295
I-2	SE 28th St/80th Ave SE	Install traffic signal.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#1)	1,464,000
I-3	80th Ave SE/North Mercer Way	Add turn lane to improve traffic operations at the intersection.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#14)	754,000
I-4	North Mercer Way/I-90 Westbound Off-Ramp/Island Crest Way	Add exclusive westbound left turn lane at I-90 off-ramp.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#15)	650,000
I-5	SE 53rd Pl/Island Crest Way	Install traffic signal.	Fails to meet LOS standard	1,907,130
I-6	SE 68th St/Island Crest Way	Install traffic signal or roundabout.	Fails to meet LOS standard in the future	2,151,590

R-1	77th Ave SE Channelization (SE 32nd - North Mercer Way)	Rechannelization of the roadway to comply with street design standards.	2023-2028 TIP (SP146)	53,324
R-2	Signal Coordination Along Island Crest Way (North Mercer Way – SE 28th St) and at the North Mercer Way/80th Ave SE intersection.	Coordinate four existing traffic signals along Island Crest Way and North Mercer Way.	2022 Transportation Impact Fee (#11)	690,000
R-3	Street Preservation/Maintenance	Resurfacing arterial and residential streets based on pavement conditions.	2023-2028 TIP	30,000,000
Total 2022—2044 Projects				60,047,180

Table 4. 2044 Intersection Operations — Without and With Recommended Improvements

<u>Intersection</u>	<u>2044 AM Peak Hour</u>		<u>2044 PM Peak Hour</u>	
	<u>Without Improvements</u>	<u>With Recommended Improvements</u>	<u>Without Improvements</u>	<u>With Recommended Improvements</u>
Town Center Intersections (LOS C Standard)				
SE 24th St/76th Ave SE	B	B	B	B
N Mercer Way/77th Ave SE	A	B	A	A
N Mercer Way/Park & Ride/80th Ave SE	C	C	C	C
SE 27th St/76th Ave SE	—	—	B	B
SE 27th St/77th Ave SE	B	B	C	C
SE 27th St/78th Ave SE	B	B	B	B
SE 27th St/80th Ave SE	D	B	E	B
SE 28th St/78th Ave SE	—	—	B	B
SE 28th St/80th Ave SE	B	B	D	B
SE 28th St/Island Crest Way	B	B	C	C
SE 29th St/77th Ave SE	—	—	B	B
SE 29th St/78th Ave SE	—	—	C	C
SE 30th St/78th Ave SE	—	—	C	C
SE 30th St/80th Ave SE	—	—	B	B
SE 30th St/Island Crest Way	—	—	B	B

SE 32nd St/78th Ave SE	—	—	C	C
WSDOT Intersections (LOS D Standard)				
I-90 EB off-ramp/I-90 WB on-ramp/W Mercer Way	B	B	B	B
I-90 WB on-ramp/N Mercer Way/76th Ave SE	B	B	A	A
I-90 EB off-ramp/77th Ave SE	B	B	B	B
I-90 WB off-ramp/N Mercer Way/Island Crest Way	E	C	D	C
I-90 EB on-ramp/SE 27th St/Island Crest Way	C	C	C	C
I-90 WB ramps/100th Ave SE	C	C	B	B
I-90 EB off-ramp/100th Ave SE/E Mercer Way	B	B	B	B
I-90 EB on-ramp/SE 36th St/E Mercer Way	B	B	B	B
Outside of Town Center Intersections (LOS D Standard)				
SE 24th St/W Mercer Way	B	B	C	C
SE 24th St/72nd Ave SE	B	B	B	B
SE 36th St/N Mercer Way	D	D	C	C
SE 40th St/W Mercer Way	B	B	B	B
SE 40th St/78th Ave SE	B	B	B	B
SE 40th St/Island Crest Way	D	D	C	C
SE 40th St/SE Gallagher Hill Rd	D	D	C	C
Mercerwood Dr/E Mercer Way	—	—	B	B
W Mercer Way/78th Ave SE	—	—	B	B
Merrimount Dr/W Mercer Way	C	C	C	C
Merrimount Dr/Island Crest Way	D	D	D	D

SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way	F	B	F	B
SE 53rd Place/E Mercer Way	—	—	A	A
SE 68th St/84th Ave SE	D	D	B	B
SE 68th St/Island Crest Way	E	A	C	A
SE 70th Place/E Mercer Way	—	—	B	B
SE 72nd St/W Mercer Way	—	—	B	B

V. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Since incorporation in 1960, the City has consistently made (or required through private development) transportation investments that have preceded and accommodated population and employment growth and its associated traffic growth. This strategy has enabled the City to make significant improvements in the community's neighborhood streets, arterial roads, pavement markings, streets signs, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

In ~~2017~~2022, the City's primary funding sources for local transportation projects included: gas tax revenues (~~\$510429,000.00~~), real estate excise tax (~~\$2,845253,000.00~~), Transportation Benefit District vehicle fees (~~\$370375,000.00~~) and transportation impact fees (~~\$23775,000.00~~). In total, the City received approximately ~~\$2.73.1 million (2016)~~ and ~~\$4.0 million (2017)~~ in annual transportation revenues.

In addition, Sound Transit mitigation for the closure of the I-90 center roadway is providing up to \$5.1 million in funds for operational and safety improvements.

Combined with supplemental federal and state grant funding, Mercer Island has sufficient resources to maintain and improve its transportation system over the next 20 years and will be able to accomplish the following:

- Maintain the City's arterial street system on a 25-year (average) life cycle~~;~~.
- Maintain the City's residential system on a 35-year (average) life cycle.
- Maintain, improve, and expand the City's pedestrian and bicycle system over the next 20 years.
- Maintain and improve the transportation system to meet the forecasted housing and employment growth targets.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following actions by the City of Mercer Island and other jurisdictions will be necessary to effectively implement the programs and policies of this transportation element:

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM STREETS, TRANSIT, NON-MOTORIZED

- Implement local neighborhood traffic control strategies as necessary to address specific issues.

- Implement Transportation System Management techniques to control traffic impacts.

PLANNING STANDARDS, POLICIES, PROGRAMS

- Periodically update the City's inventory of transportation conditions, existing level of service and projected level of service.
- Complete the plan for non-motorized transportation improvements consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, including a review of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan and its design standards.
- Develop a neighborhood parking program to address parking overflow impacts from schools, businesses, parks and multi-family housing.
- Revise design standards as necessary to comply with ADA requirements.
- Continue to involve the public in transportation planning and decisions.
- Create "transit friendly" design guidelines for new development projects in the Town Center.
- Develop policies, criteria and a process to determine when, and under what conditions, private roads and privately-maintained roads in public rights-of-way should be accepted for public maintenance and improvement.
- Implement the City's adopted Commute Trip Reduction program.

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

- Secure funding to implement the adopted ~~six-year~~Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.
- Actively pursue outside funding sources to pay for adopted transportation improvements and programs.

TRANSIT PLANNING

- Work with Metro to ~~reinstate and~~ improve transit services. ~~E and~~ explore alternative methods of providing service, such as developing a demand responsive service. [\[Planning Commission\]](#)
- Work with Sound Transit to ~~site,~~ design and construct high--capacity transit and parking facilities consistent with Land Use and Transportation Policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan that will be available for use by Mercer Island residents.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS & REQUIREMENTS

The Growth Management Act of 1990 requires that local comprehensive plans be consistent with plans of adjacent jurisdictions and regional, state and federal plans. Further, there are several other major statutory requirements with which Mercer Island transportation plans must comply. This section briefly discusses the relationship between this Transportation Element and other plans and requirements.

OTHER PLANS

The Transportation Element of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan is fully consistent with the following plans:

Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan — The Transportation Element is based on the needs of, and is ~~fully~~ consistent with the Land Use Element.

King County and Multicounty Planning Policies — Mercer Island's proposed transportation policies are fully consistent with PSRC's multi-county and King County's countywide planning policies.

Vision 2040-2050 — Vision 2040-2050 is the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and builds upon Vision 2020 and Destination 2030, and Vision 2040 to articulate a coordinated long-range land use and transportation growth strategy for the Puget Sound region. Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan's Land Use and Transportation Elements supports support this strategy by accommodating new growth in the Town Center, which is near existing and proposed future transportation improvements along the I-90 corridor. The Transportation Element is consistent with these plans.

~~**Metropolitan Transportation Plan** — The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has updated its long-term vision of the future transportation system through the Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040 plans. The Transportation Element is consistent with these plans.~~

Regional Transit System Plan — Sound Transit's Regional Transit System Plan (RTP) lays out the Puget Sound region's plans for constructing and operating a regional high-capacity transit system. Both the Land Use and Transportation Elements directly support regional transit service and facilities, and are consistent with the RTP.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The Transportation Element of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan meets the following regulations and requirements:

Growth Management Act — The Growth Management Act, enacted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 and amended in 1991, requires urbanized counties and cities in Washington to plan for orderly growth for 20 years into the future. Mercer Island's Transportation Element conforms to all of the components of a Comprehensive Transportation Element as defined by GMA.

Commute Trip Reduction — In 1991, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Commute Trip Reduction Law which requires implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) programs to reduce work trips. In response to these requirements, Mercer Island has developed its own CTR program to reduce work trips by City employees. There are two other CTR-affected employers on the Island; both have developed CTR programs.

Air Quality Conformity — Amendments to the federal Clean Air Act made in 1990 require Washington and other states to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) which will reduce ozone and carbon monoxide air pollutants so that national standards may be attained. The Central Puget Sound area, including King County and Mercer Island, currently meets the federal standards for ozone and carbon monoxide. The area is designated as a carbon monoxide maintenance area, meaning the area has met federal standards, but is required to develop a maintenance plan to reduce mobile sources of pollution.

CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

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PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Alison Van Gorp, CPD Deputy Director
Adam Zack, Senior Planner

DATE: November 2, 2022

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update
Land Use Element – Third Draft

Attachments A. Third Draft Land Use Element

PURPOSE

To receive the Planning Commission’s input on the third draft of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment A). Once the Planning Commission has provided input on the third draft, this round of review of the element will conclude. The Planning Commission will have a few more touches on the Land Use Element later in the update process, as spelled out in the ‘Next Steps’ section of this memo.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the public may submit written comments or questions on the Land Use Element to comp.plan@mercerisland.gov. Public comments will be provided to the Planning Commission at their November meeting. Please visit the [Comprehensive Plan update project website](#) for more information about the update process.

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission was briefed on the first draft of the Land Use Element on July 27. The Commission provided written comments on the first draft following the meeting. The comments on the first draft and staff responses were provided to the Planning Commission with a second draft of the Land Use Element at their September 28, 2022, meeting. The Planning Commission provided comments on the second draft resulting in the attached third draft. There are six remaining issues the Planning Commission will need to resolve at the November meeting. Those issues and the feedback requested are detailed below.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The Planning Commission requested staff draft alternatives for consideration at the next meeting. Staff will walk the Planning Commission through those alternatives at the November meeting. The Planning Commission can make comments on each alternative during the walkthrough. Please review the alternatives listed below in advance to be prepared to provide comments at the meeting.

Town Center Land Use Issue #1, pg. 13

Staff was asked to revise Town Center Land Use Issue #1 to better reflect current conditions.

Staff Proposed Alternative Town Center Land Use Issue #1:

The Town Center area includes land zoned for commercial retail, service, mixed, and office uses. The Town Center is the largest mixed-use zone in the City and an important economic hub. Older commercial development in the Town Center consists of many one-story strip centers, surrounded by parking lots. Mixed-use development is replacing the 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.

Existing Town Center Land Use Issue #1:

The Town Center land designated for commercial retail, service 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. Consequently, 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.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the land use issue as established in the currently adopted Land Use Element.

Policy 12.2, pg. 19

At the September meeting, the Planning Commission discussed two points for this policy: (1) whether 'incentivize' was the proper direction for this open space policy, and (2) whether the City should encourage/incentivize open space generally, or public open space in particular. The Planning Commission asked staff to prepare an alternative specifying that this policy is directed at public open space. Staff recommends the verb 'encourage' for this policy. By using the verb 'encourage', City actions to increase the amount of public open space can take many different forms while also leaving room to establish incentives.

Staff Proposed Alternative Policy 12.2:

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

Existing Policy 12.2:

Encourage the provision of on-site open space in private developments but allow development agreements and payment of a calculated amount of money as an option to dedication of land. In addition, encourage aggregation of smaller open spaces between parcels to create a more substantial open space.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Land Use Element.

Policy 15.3, pg. 23

Staff was asked to prepare an alternative clarifying this policy. The apparent intent of this policy is to specify that certain housing types should be limited to those zones where they are already allowed and that these land uses should not extend into other zones. The staff proposed alternative more clearly articulates this direction with a more streamlined sentence structure.

Staff Proposed Alternative Policy 15.3:

Confine low rise apartments, condos, and duplex/triplex designs to those areas already zoned to allow multi-family housing.

Existing Policy 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 as multi-family zones.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Land Use Element.

Note: Policy 15.3 is partially related to moderate density housing. This policy and others like it are likely to be revisited when the Planning Commission takes up the Housing Element in 2023. In 2021, the State Legislature adopted House Bill 1220, which updated requirements for Comprehensive Plan housing policies in general and moderate density housing in particular. In response to that bill, the state is preparing guidance for meeting the new requirements. That guidance is expected by the end of the year. Policies like 15.3 might need to be updated after the State issues its guidance. The guidance is expected to necessitate amendments of the adopted scope and schedule for the Comprehensive Plan periodic update. Staff will update the Planning Commission on changes to the scope and schedule early in 2023, after the state issues its guidance. For more information about House Bill 1220 and changes to housing requirements, please see [Agenda Bill 5156](#) and the [staff presentation](#) to the City Council on November 1, 2022.

Policy 16.7, pg. 24

The discussion of Policy 16.7 focused on removing regulatory barriers for preserving older homes. There was some additional concern that regulations may inadvertently create incentives for demolition and replacement of existing homes. After reviewing the policy and listening back to the September Planning Commission discussion, staff recommends an alternative to Policy 16.7 and a new Policy 16.8.

Staff Proposed Alternative:

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 to ensure they encourage the preservation of existing homes.

Previous Draft Policy 16.7: Policy 16.7 was a new policy proposed by a previous Planning Commission comment on the Land Use Element.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. If the no change alternative is selected policies 16.7 and 16.8 would not be added to the draft.

Policy 17.4, pg. 24

Staff was asked to rework Policy 17.4 to incorporate the public input while also clarifying the language of the policy. Under further review, Policy 17.4 was unclear in the original draft because it was directed at maintaining social organizations, which is not really related to land use. Staff updated the policy to be directed at facilities rather than organizations because facilities are related to land use. That clarification combined with the other Planning Commission direction were incorporated into the following alternative.

Staff Proposed Alternative:

Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should support the need to maintain, modernize, and renovate social, recreational, educational, and religious facilities. Such facilities are community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island.

Existing Policy 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.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the policy as established in the currently adopted Land Use Element.

Goal 17, pg. 24

Staff was asked to revise Goal 17 to restructure the sentence for clarity.

Staff Proposed Alternative:

Commercial designations and permitted uses under current zoning will not change with the exception of allowing residential development in mixed-use zones.

Previous Draft Goal 17:

With the exception of allowing residential development, commercial designations and permitted uses under current zoning will not change.

Decision Point: The Planning Commission can (1) approve the staff alternative; (2) propose changes to the wording of the staff proposed alternative; or (3) make no change. No change would keep the goal as established in the currently adopted Land Use Element.

Wrapping Up Review

Once the Planning Commission has given feedback on all the alternatives this round of review of the element will conclude. Please note that the Planning Commission will have several additional rounds of review of the element later in the update process, as outlined under the next steps below.

NEXT STEPS

1. There might be additional changes to the Land Use Element for the Planning Commission to consider during the comprehensive plan update. These additional changes would be in response to the Climate Action Plan, the updated Housing Element, and the new Economic Development Element. Discussion of these possible amendments will take place when the Planning Commission takes up these topics later during the update process.
2. Summer 2023 – A Community Open House will be held to gather public input on the overall comprehensive plan update. Following the Open House, the Planning Commission will have the opportunity for another “touch” on the Land Use Element during a comprehensive plan update “tune up” meeting .
3. Fall 2023 - After the “tune up” meeting, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the overall comprehensive plan update. This will include a review of the Land Use Element before making a recommendation to the City Council.

2 LAND USE ELEMENT

I. 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.

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; 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 polices 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.

Beginning in 2022, the City began composing a Climate Action Plan. 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 **Note: A list of amendments made in response to the Climate Action Plan will be inserted here**

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 expects to get this information from PSRC before the next Planning Commission touch on the Land Use Element. 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~~ designated as an ~~Urban Center~~ High Capacity Transit community in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 202050. This designation recognizes the importance of the localities with high-capacity transit service as a place to focus new development due to the excellent access to employment centers, educational institutions and other opportunities. 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	<u>2,320</u>
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	<u>1,160</u>

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL CAPACITY

According to the Puget Sound Regional Council, as of March 2012 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 does not have any zoned industrial lands.

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 (2/3 mixed-use, 1/3 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 Assumed Densities (low/high units per acre)</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 expects to get this information from PSRC before the next Planning Commission touch on the Land Use Element. 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 expects to get this information from PSRC before the next Planning Commission touch on the Land Use Element. 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) 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. 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 Preserve existing quantity of commercial square footage in Town Center as new development occurs.
- 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.

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 building set-backs, on-street entrances, landscaping, and articulated walls should be encouraged.

GOAL 4:

Create an active, pedestrian-friendly, and accessible retail core.

- 4.1 Street-level retail, office, and service uses should reinforce the pedestrian-oriented circulation system.

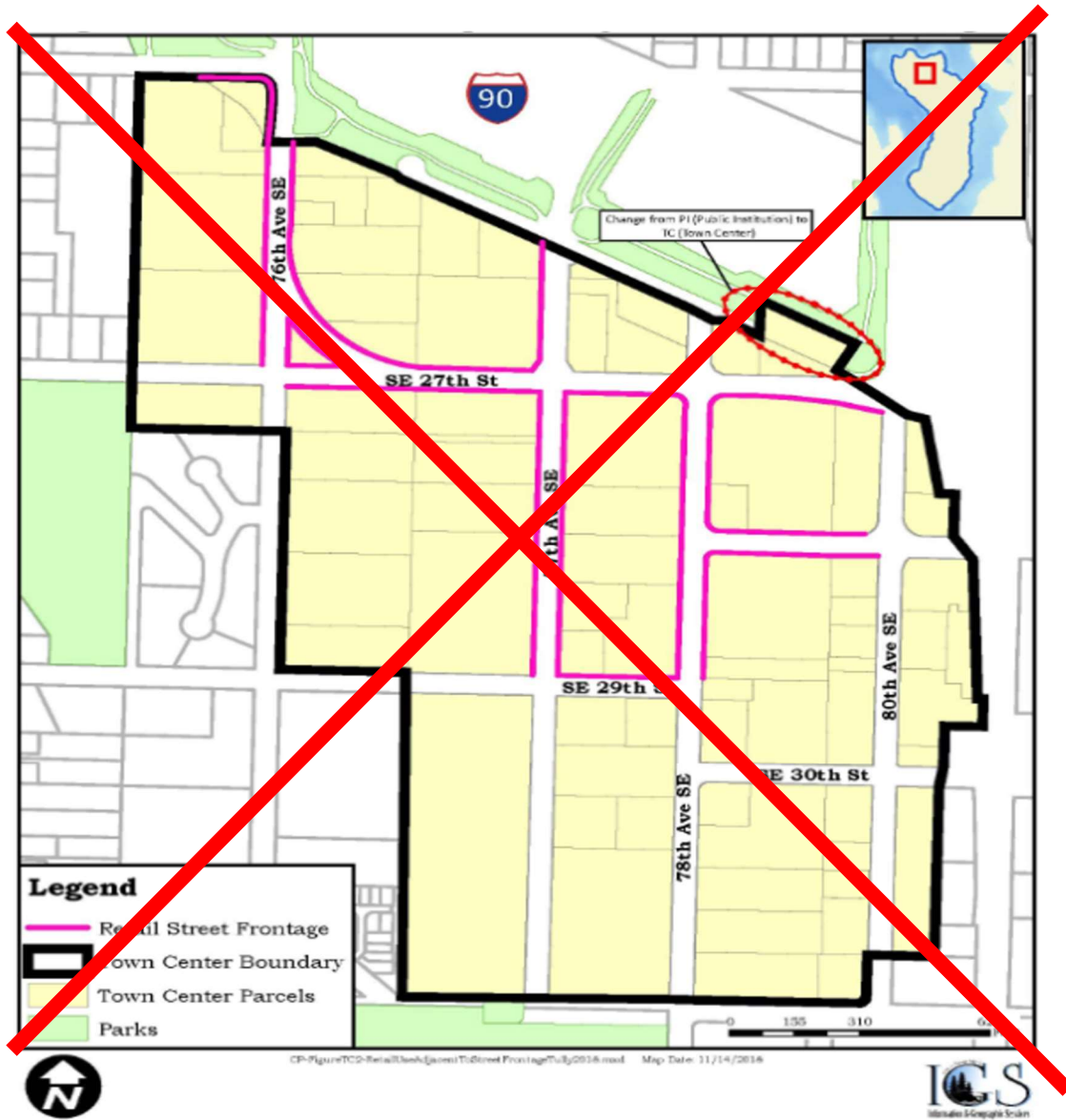
- 4.2 Retail street frontages (Figure TC-1) should be the area where the majority of retail activity is focused. Retail shops and restaurants should be the dominant use, with personal services also encouraged to a more limited extent.

GOAL 5:

Encourage 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 development of low-rise multi-family housing in the TCMF subareas of the Town Center.
- 5.3 Encourage the development of affordable housing within the Town Center.
- 5.4 Encourage the development of accessible and visitable housing within the Town Center.
- 5.5 Encourage options for ownership housing within the Town Center.

Figure TC 1. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages



NOTE: Figure TC-1 "Pink Lines Map" should be struck from the Land Use Element. It will be adopted in development code and is not needed in the Comprehensive Plan itself.

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 should be the primary pedestrian corridor in the Town Center, with ample sidewalks, landscaping and amenities.
 - 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.
- 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 commuter parking to serve Mercer Island residents.
- 9.6 Prioritize parking for Mercer Island residents within the Town Center.

GOAL 10:

Prioritize Town Center transportation investments that promote multi-modal access to regional transit facilities.

GOAL 11:

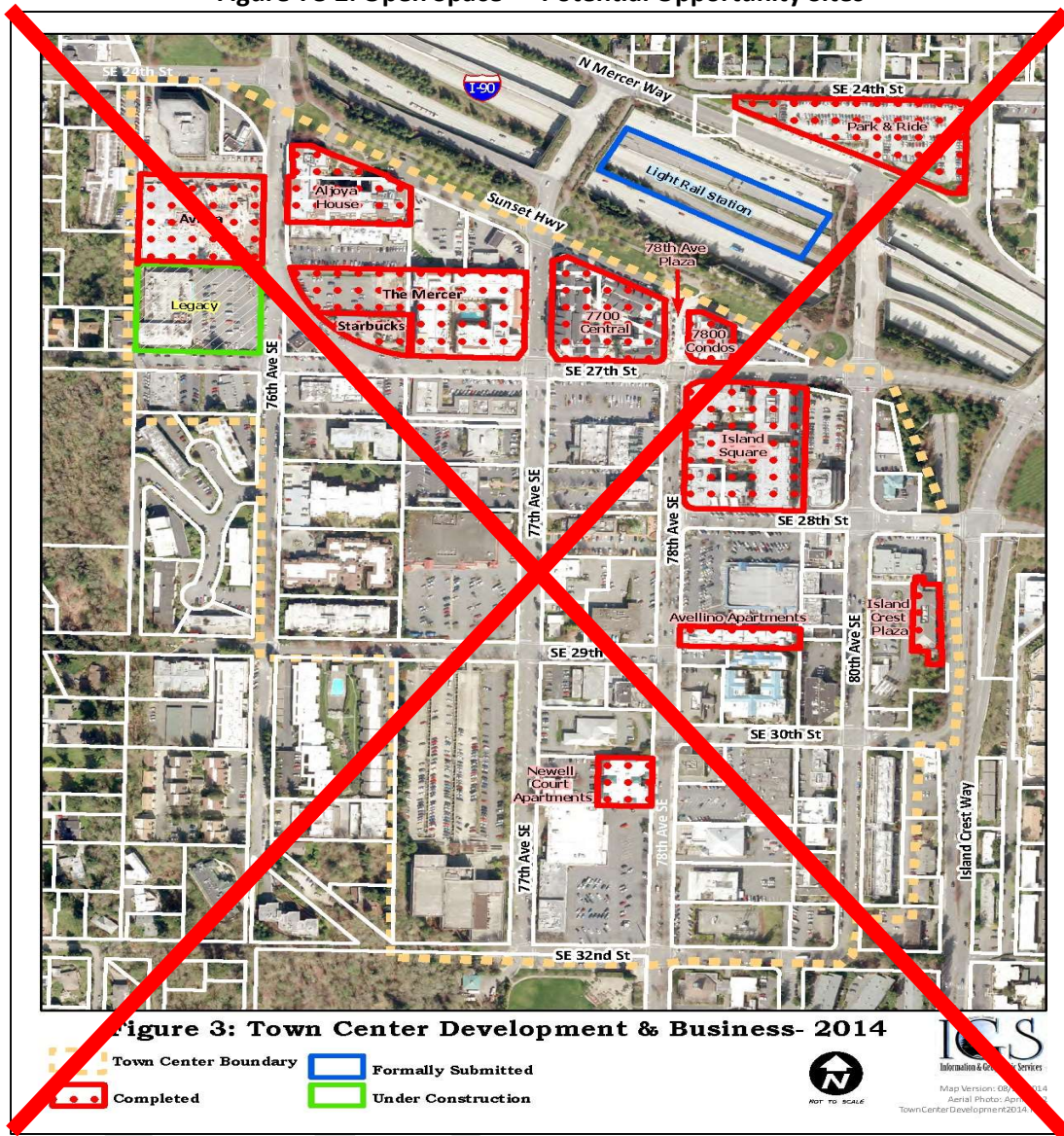
Promote the development of pedestrian linkages between public and private development and transit in and adjacent to the Town Center.

Public Realm**GOAL 12:**

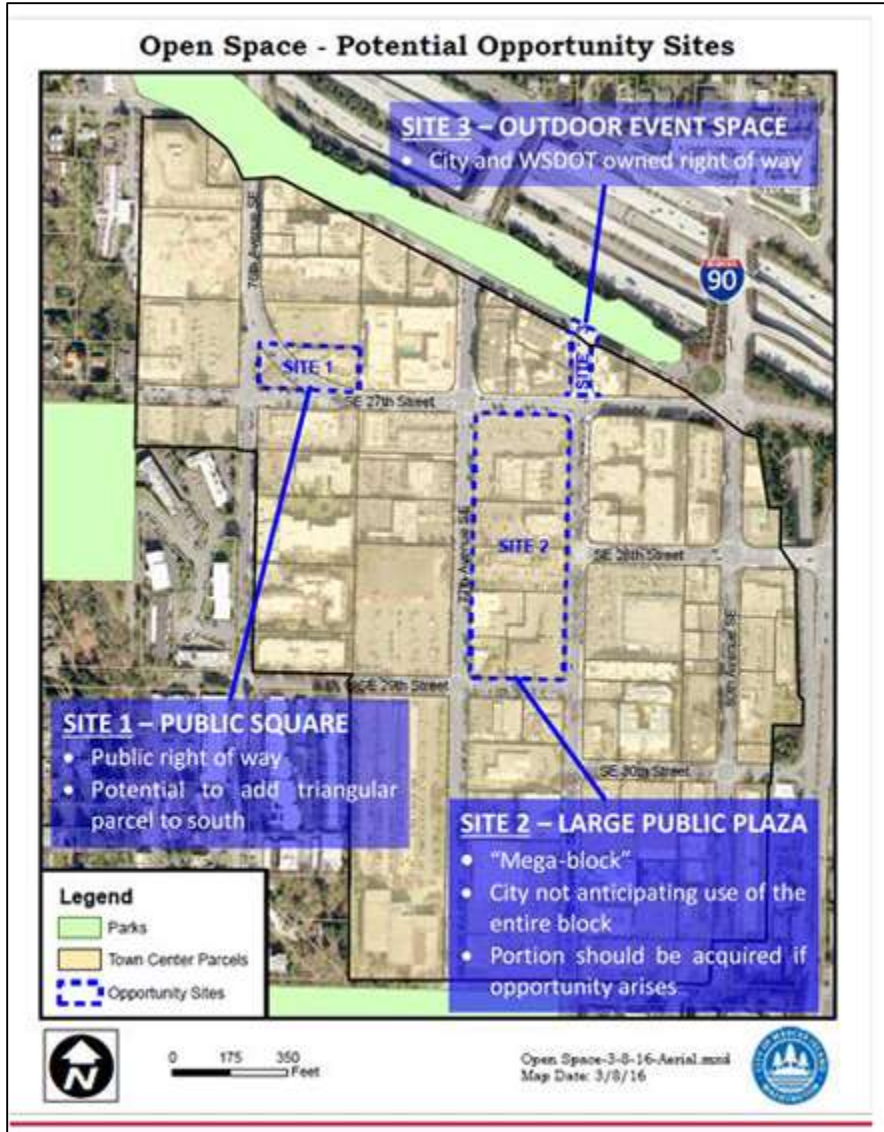
Have inviting, accessible outdoor spaces with seating, greenery, water features, and art that offer settings for outdoor entertainment and special events as well as for quiet contemplation.

- 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 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



Note: The existing Figure TC-2 adopted by Ord 16-07 was codified with the wrong map (scrivener's error). A screenshot of the correct map from Ord 16-07 is on the next page. The correct map will be inserted into the next draft.



SustainabilityGreen 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.

NOTE: Policies under Goal 14 will be reviewed for consistency with the Economic Development Element once a draft of that element is prepared.

- 14.1 Develop an Economic Development Plan, 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.
- 14.4 Support economic growth that accommodates Mercer Island's share of the regional employment growth target of ~~1,228~~^{1,300} new jobs from 2006~~24~~^{—2035}~~40~~, 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.
- 14.8 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.
- ~~14.10 Ensure that new development in Town Center maintains existing commercial square footage as new development occurs.~~

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

GOAL 15:

Mercer Island should remain principally a low 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 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 housing types, such as accessory dwelling units and compact courtyard homes at slightly higher densities as outlined in the Housing Element.
- 15.3 ~~Multi-family areas will continue to be~~ Confine 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 zoned to allow multi-family housing.
- 15.4 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 landfills, correctional facilities, zoos and airports. Compatible permitted uses such as education, recreation, open spaces, government social services and religious activities will be encouraged.

GOAL 16:

Achieve additional residential capacity in single family 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-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 development on vacant or under-utilized sites should occur outside of critical areas and ensure that the infill is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- 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 encourage public amenities such as wildlife habitat, accessible homes, 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 to ensure they 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 with the exception of allowing residential development in mixed-use zones.

- 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 residential densities should be allowed when compatible in the Commercial Office (~~CO~~) zones. Through rezones or changes in zoning district regulations, multi-family residences should be allowed in all commercial zones where adverse impacts to surrounding areas can be minimized. Housing should be used to create new, vibrant neighborhoods.
- 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 support the desire need to retain viable maintain, modernize, and renovate and healthy~~ reflect support the desire need to retain viable maintain, modernize, and renovate and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations facilities. ~~Such facilities are 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.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

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 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.
- 19.8 Consider a community effort to establish new wetlands in recognition of the historical loss of wetlands.
- 19.9 When considering the purchase of land to add to community open space, prioritize the purchase and preservation of wetlands and stream headwaters.
- 19.10 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.
- 19.11 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.
- 19.12 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.
- 19.13 Promote awareness and implementation of the American Bird Conservancy's bird-friendly building design guidelines which prevent bird mortality caused by collisions with structures.
- 19.14 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.
- 19.15 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.

- 19.16 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.
- 19.17 Promote wildlife watering.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES

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~~2~~ 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.
- 20.13 Establish a Park zone and development regulations to preserve and enhance public park land for the enjoyment of all Mercer Island residents, visitors, and future generations.

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 green building techniques for new construction and 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.

- 22.2 Identify, and implement, necessary enhancements to the City's emergency planning and preparedness program.
- 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.
- 22.4 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.
- 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.

- 23.1 Support implementation of and encourage community involvement in accessible, high quality performing, visual and literary arts programs, projects, and events.
- 23.2 Provide educational art opportunities through Parks & Recreation curriculum.
- 23.3 Maintain a citizen Arts Council, which is advisory to the City Council and that spearheads arts programming and partnerships.
- 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.
- 23.5 Coordinate and collaborate with the local school district to broaden accessibility and awareness of local art opportunities and to further art education.
- 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.
- 23.7 Assess community art needs through community engagement and public involvement.
- 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.

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.
- 23.11 The Comprehensive Arts and Culture Plan is hereby adopted by reference.

GOAL 24:

Nurture public art on Mercer Island.

- 24.1 Encourage diversity in public art.
- 24.2 Maintain current and encourage new spaces for public art placement.
- 24.3 Maintain and preserve the current collection and encourage the acquisition of additional public art.
- 24.4 Encourage the incorporation of public art in town center development design and site features.
- 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.
- 24.6 Make an effort to include public art into and surrounding transportation projects.
- 24.7 Welcome and support community involvement in public art processes.

Historic Preservation**GOAL 25:**

Preserve Mercer Island's Heritage.

- 25.1 Promote awareness and appreciation of Mercer Island's history and historic resources.
- 25.2 Support efforts to secure space for the preservation of Mercer Island's historical and cultural heritage and related archival materials.
- 25.3 Promote public engagement with culture and heritage organizations.

25.4 Support the curation of historical exhibits in the community.

STAR Climate Change

Note: This section will likely need more significant restructuring and amendments to align with the Climate Action Plan. After getting initial feedback from the Planning Commission, staff will work with Ross Freeman to draft additional revisions. Those amendments will be provided for review and discussion at a future commission meeting.

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.

- ~~26.1 Assess the effect of proposed Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendments on sustainability.~~
- ~~26.2 Assess the effect of proposed City programs on sustainability.~~
- ~~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 276:

Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

- ~~276.1 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).~~
- ~~276.2 Partner with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the community to mitigate climate change.~~
- ~~276.3 Provide public information and support to individual and community efforts to mitigate climate change.~~
- ~~276.4 Evaluate and prioritize actions to reduce GHG emissions.~~
- ~~276.5 Encourage the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles through the development of zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options and by reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips.~~
- ~~276.6 Promote an energy-efficient built environment by:

 - ~~276.6.1 Focusing development where utility and transportation investments have been made;~~
 - ~~276.6.2 Promoting the use of renewable and zero- and low-GHG emitting energy sources;~~~~

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

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

276.7 Promote renewable power generation in the community.

GOAL 287:

Develop and implement a Climate Action Plan.

287.1 The Climate Action Plan is hereby adopted by reference.

GOAL 298:

Adapt to and mitigate local climate change impacts.

298.1 Prioritize the prevention 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.

3029.2 To create opportunities for housing, multi-modal transportation, and development consistent with the City's share of regional needs.

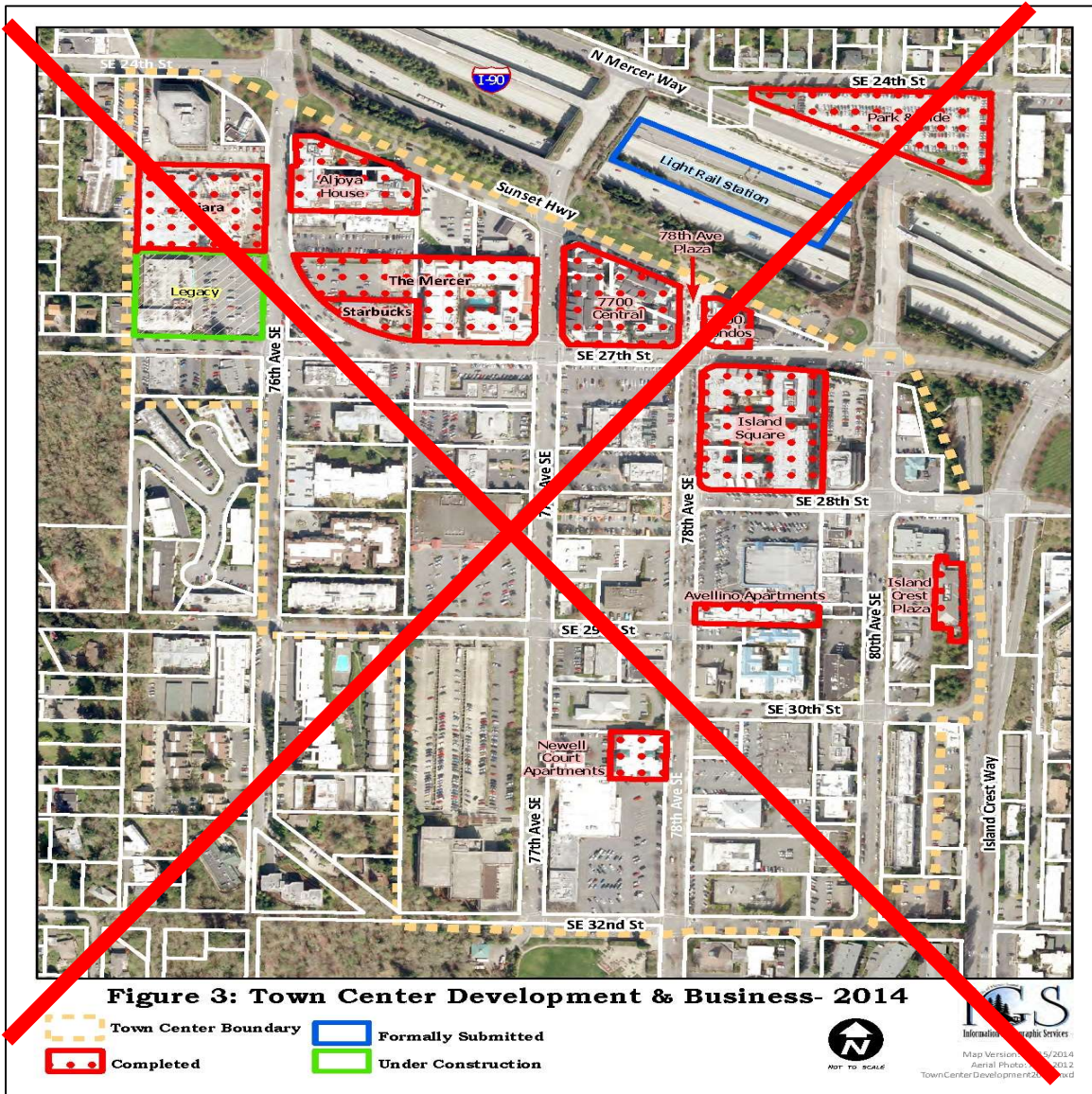
3029.3 To make effective land use and capital facilities decisions by improving public notice and citizen involvement process.

3029.4 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.

3029.5 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.

3029.6 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.

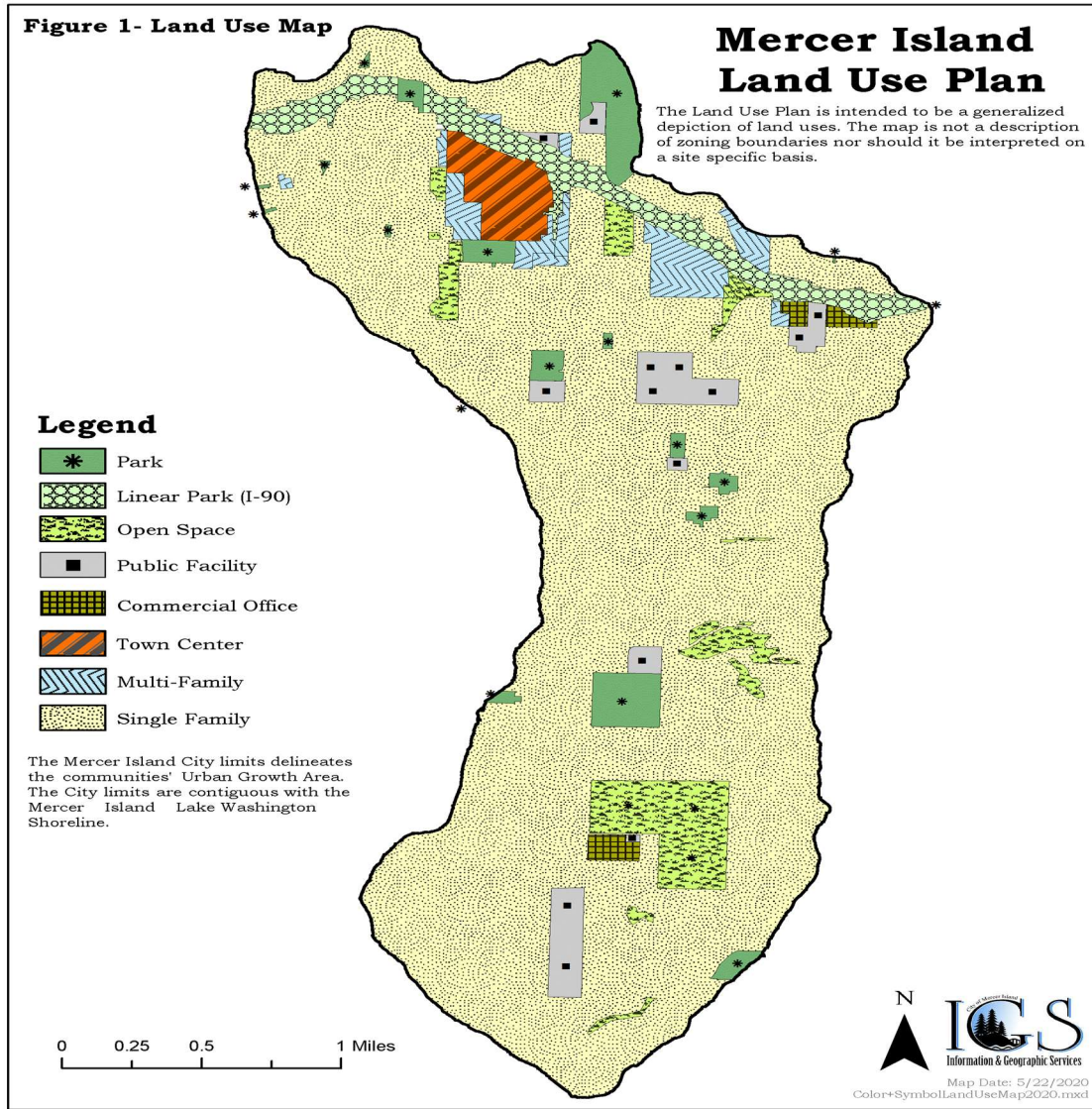


VII. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land Use Designation	Implementing Zoning Designations	Description
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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	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.

	R-15 TC	
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Note: Figure 1 will be updated to optimize the map symbology for web viewing. No changes to land use designations will be made.

(Date)

(Notes for accessory transmittal to City Council regarding the docket process)

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council seek clarity and address possible inconsistencies in the process to docket proposed comprehensive plan and code amendments. The following will summarize our concerns.

Criteria for making recommendations to the Council:

MICC 29.15.230 does not specify criteria that the Planning Commission should use in forming its recommendations from the preliminary docket to the Council. We have used the criteria in section E. for guidance, criteria which are specified in 230.D.1.d for Council use in approving the final docket. The Commission is not in a position to use some of the criteria, since they turn on such considerations as whether the City can provide resources, staff, and budget or whether the proposed amendment can be addressed in an existing work program item. Attempting to apply these criteria could cause the Commission to discourage the Council to approve proposed amendments for the final docket when we may not have the background to make such a recommendation. This could contribute to a negative reception to a proposed amendment, which is unfair for the proponent.

Code confusion:

MICC 19.15.230, 240, 250, and 260 all address comprehensive plan and code amendments. While it may be possible to reconcile these code sections, it seems pretty difficult.

Areas of difficulty or confusion:

- 1) It seems unclear when comp plan amendments or code amendments or both are being treated by the code;
- 2) Section 230 is titled "Comprehensive plan amendments and docketing procedures", but halfway through it begins to include code amendments in the docketing requirements and criteria, yet by the time the decision criteria are presented, the code again addresses only comp plan amendments;
- 3) Criteria for making decisions may be unclear as to whether:
 - a) they are for comp plan amendments or code amendments or both;
 - b) they are for use of the Planning Commission or the City Council or both;
 - c) they are for use in evaluating the preliminary docket, the final docket, or for making a final decision on the proposal, or some combination of the preceding.

Comments:

The comprehensive plan and the code are related but different tools to implement city government. Only the comp plan amendments are governed by the GMA and countywide planning policies, to our understanding. Amendments to each might best be governed by different code sections, with processes and criteria suitable to each.

Criteria for evaluating proposals should be different for the Planning Commission and the Council. The Commission's specialty is the comprehensive plan and the code. We can meet proposals at the gate and try to consider their potential to further the goals of the comp plan and code or change these tools in a way that might be beneficial, and share our findings with the Council.

The Council sets priorities, budget, and the work plan, matters that should not affect the Commission's recommendation since we do not know the Council's positions on these considerations.

Criteria should welcome new ideas and approaches as much as possible consistent with the comp plan's goal of public involvement in all aspects of decision making. Some of the existing criteria in section 230.E. may be somewhat needlessly discouraging. For example, it may not be necessary to exclude ideas that pertain to an ongoing work program. If the idea is good, folding it into the ongoing work program should be considered. If that's not feasible, it could be docketed for a subsequent year. Also, it may not be necessary to exclude a docket item that has been considered in the last three years. A new approach to the proposal may be important and change receptivity. It's a high bar to required changed circumstances in the City in order to take another crack at an issue. Valuable time may be lost to address an issue of some urgency.

We hope that these comments inspire some improvement in the important annual docketing process. Thank you for your consideration.

**Mercer Island Planning Commission Bylaws
(Rules of Procedure)
Adopted: June 16, 2021**

ARTICLE I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1.1 Relationship to Other Regulations. These bylaws are supplementary to chapter 3.46 Mercer Island City Code ("MICC") and chapter 35A.63 Revised Code of Washington ("RCW").

Section 1.2 Purpose and Responsibilities of Commission. The Planning Commission's role is to advise the City Council on growth management issues, land use policies, and development regulations. The Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") is also responsible for making recommendations to the City Council on proposed street vacations and rezones. The members of the Commission accept the responsibility of the office and declare their intention to execute the duties defined under state law and city code to the best of their ability and to respect and observe the requirements established by the City Council.

ARTICLE II POWERS OF COMMISSION, MEMBERS, AND OFFICERS

Section 2.1 Powers of Commission. The Commission shall undertake the duties and responsibilities defined in chapters 3.46 and 19.15 MICC, including acting as a research agency, and serving in an advisory capacity to the City Council.

Section 2.2 Members. The Commission shall consist of 7 members appointed by the City Council. Membership on the Commission shall be limited to residents of Mercer Island. The term of each member is 4 years, unless removed earlier by the process set forth in Section 2.5 of these bylaws. No member may serve longer than two consecutive terms. Vacancies occurring other than through the expiration of terms shall be filled by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor confirmed by the City Council for the unexpired term.

Section 2.3 Officers and Duties. The officers of the Commission shall consist of a Chair and a Vice-Chair. Chair / Vice-Chair duties are to:

1. Run / Facilitate Commission meetings in a fair, efficient, productive, and informative manner;
2. Act as a spokesperson to City Council and, when necessary, to the public and/or media; and
3. Work with Community Planning and Development staff on schedule / calendar and meeting agendas.

Section 2.4 Officer Election and Vacancies. Officers shall be elected for a term of 1 calendar year at the first regular meeting on or after June 1 and annually thereafter. To elect a new Chair, Commissioners shall nominate members of the Commission for a given office. Nominations do not require a second. When it appears that no one else wishes to make any further nomination, the current Chair will ask again for further nominations and if there are none, the Chair will declare the nominations closed. A motion to close the nominations is not necessary.

After nominations have been closed, voting for the Chair takes place in the order nominations were made. A tie vote results in a failed nomination, and the Chair will call for a vote on the next nominee. As soon as one of the nominees receives a majority vote of the Commissioners present, the Chair will declare him/her elected. No votes may be taken on any remaining nominees. Upon election, the newly-appointed Chair conducts the election for Vice Chair following the same process.

In the event of an officer vacancy, a replacement Chair and/or Vice-Chair shall be elected following the same process as above to serve the unexpired term of the vacant office(s). In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, members shall elect a Chair *pro tem* following the same process as above to serve only for the meeting at which he/she is elected.

Section 2.5 Removal. Members may be removed by the Mayor, after public hearing and with the approval of City Council, for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.

ARTICLE III MEETINGS

Section 3.1 Regular Meetings. Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 P.M., or such other day and time as determined by the Commission, in the Mercer Island City Hall or such other place as the Commission may determine. Any regular meeting may be canceled or re-scheduled by the Chair, or in his/her absence, by the Vice Chair. If a regular meeting falls on a legal holiday, the Commission shall have the discretion to hold the meeting on the next business day which is not a holiday.

Section 3.2 Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Commission may be called by any of the following: the Chair, or in his/her absence, by the Vice Chair, the City Manager, Community Planning and Development Director, or the Mayor.

- Section 3.3 Quorum. A majority of the Commission membership shall constitute a quorum. For the conduct of business, a majority vote of the members in attendance at a meeting, provided a quorum is present, shall be sufficient to act.
- Section 3.4 Open to the Public. All regular and special meetings of the Commission are open to the public. The scheduling and holding of all Commission meetings is to be done in accordance with these bylaws and Washington state law.
- Section 3.5 Legislative Public Hearings. The Commission is responsible for conducting public hearings. The Commission recognizes that public hearings are intended to obtain public input on legislative recommendations on matters of policy. Public hearings are required when the city addresses such matters as comprehensive land use plans, street vacations, or development regulations.

ARTICLE IV CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- Section 4.1 Conduct. All meetings of the Commission shall be conducted in accordance with these bylaws and Washington state law. Where these bylaws fail to provide otherwise, the meetings shall be conducted in accordance with parliamentary rules and procedures in the most current edition of the Robert's Rules of Order.
- Section 4.2 Chair. The Chair shall preside at all Commission meetings and has the powers generally assigned such office in conducting the meetings. It shall be the Chair's duty to see that the transaction of Commission business is in accord with these bylaws and Washington state law. The Chair of the meeting shall be a full voting member but shall not initiate or second a motion.
- Section 4.3 Agenda Setting. An agenda for every regular meeting shall be prepared and distributed by the Community Planning and Development department to each member not less than 5 calendar days prior to the date of the meeting at which such agenda is to be considered. The agenda shall be accompanied with a complete copy of the unapproved minutes of the previous meeting, staff reports, and other materials as may pertain to the agenda.
- Section 4.4 Agenda Modification. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the agenda. To the extent it does not violate public notice requirements, the printed agenda of a regular meeting may be modified, supplemented, or revised at the beginning of the meeting by the affirmative vote of the majority of Commission members present.
- Section 4.5 Minutes. A staff liaison shall be provided by the Community Planning and Development department to prepare minutes of meetings and keep such record, attend to correspondence of the Commission, and perform such other duties as

may be deemed necessary. Minutes of all regular meetings shall be kept and made part of a permanent public record. All actions of the Commission shall be considered conclusive as to general import as of the date of such action. Details of phraseology, conditions, etc., shall be subject to correction at the time of consideration and approval of the meeting minutes.

ARTICLE V PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Section 5.1. Purpose. High quality public input is desired by the Commission and is needed to help inform the Commission's analysis, recommendations, and decisions. The Commission goals for public involvement are to:

- 1. Undertake a fair, meaningful, and effective outreach to affected parties for each work item, with opportunities for all interested parties to participate in a comfortable setting.
- 2. Use a consistent and adaptable process that allocates limited time efficiently and encourages input that is relevant, clear, and specific.

Section 5.2 Time Limits. Time limits on public input should be established to allow for the efficient use of the Commission’s time. Generally, the Commission will establish time limits as follows:

- 1. For public comment related to legislative matters such as the adoption of amendments to development regulations or the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan, each speaker is limited to 3 minutes speaking time.
- 2. The Commission shall have the discretion to increase speaking times if necessary.

Section 5.3 Conduct. The public may address the Commission only after being recognized by the Chair of the meeting. All speakers must give their names and address. If audience dialogue becomes disruptive, the Chair may recess the meeting or request that the meeting be adjourned.

Section 5.4 Alternative Communication. To communicate with the Commission on a matter not scheduled for public hearing, the public may communicate with the Commission in writing and/or speak during an optional portion of each meeting entitled "Appearances" near the beginning of the agenda. The Commission shall have the discretion to omit “Appearances” from the agenda. The Chair of the meeting shall endeavor to minimize the amount of cumulative redundant testimony by the public.

ARTICLE VI CONFLICT OF INTEREST, EX-PARTE CONTACT, AND APPEARANCE OF FAIRNESS DOCTRINE

Section 6.1 Conflict of Interest.

[Chapter 42.23 RCW and MICC Chap. 2.60 prohibit commissioners from using their positions to secure special privileges or special exemptions for themselves or others. The provisions of MICC Chap. 2.60 shall govern the handling of conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of conflicts of interest of commissioners.](#)

~~Chapter 42.23 RCW prohibits commissioners from using their positions to secure special privileges or special exemptions for themselves or others. If an actual or perceived conflict of interest exists that affects the work of the Commission, it is each commissioner's responsibility to refrain from any prior discussion of such matter with other members of the Commission, to openly describe the issue, and then recuse him/herself from the meeting during the period of discussion and action thereon.~~

ARTICLE VII DECISION-MAKING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 7.1 Recommendations on Legislative Matters. The Commission's goal is to provide a consensus recommendation to the City Council on legislative matters; in all cases, however, a majority vote is taken. To document the recommendations of the Commission, the Community Planning and Development department staff shall prepare a written statement or memorandum, including the facts and rationale for the final recommendations. This statement is then approved by the Chair whose responsibility it is to present the recommendations to the City Council on behalf of the Commission when requested by either the City Council or City staff.

ARTICLE VIII ATTENDANCE

Section 8.1 Regular and Special Meetings. Attendance at regular and special meetings is expected of all Commission members.

Section 8.2 Absence. Any member anticipating absence from a meeting should notify the Chair and staff liaison from the Community Planning and Development department.

Section 8.3 Chronic Absences. Chronic absences of any member may be referred by the Commission to the Mayor for a public hearing pursuant to Section 2.5 of these bylaws. "Chronic," for the purposes of this section, means 6 or more absences in a 12-month period.

ARTICLE IX AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote (4 votes) of the entire membership of the Commission.

Date Approved: January 26, 2022

Mercer Island Planning Commission Bylaws (adopted: June 16, 2021)

Planning Commission Chair: _____