



PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR VIDEO MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Zoom Virtual Platform
9611 SE 36th Street | Mercer Island, WA 98040
Phone: [206.275.7706](tel: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 [Administrative Coordinator](#) at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

The Planning Commission meeting will be held virtually using video conferencing technology provided by Zoom, and the public will have the opportunity to provide comment during Appearances by either calling in or logging onto the meeting as a Zoom attendee.

Registering to Speak: Individuals wishing to speak during live Appearances or the Public Hearing must register their request with the Sr. Planner by 4pm on the day of the Planning Commission meeting. Register at 206.275.7719 or email adam.zack@mercerisland.gov. Please reference "Appearances" or "Public Hearing". Each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes to speak.

Public Comment by Video: Notify the Sr. Planner in advance that you wish to speak on camera, and 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 881 5061 7419**.

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 **881 5061 7419**.

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.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearing for CPA22-001 – 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment

REGULAR BUSINESS

2. Approve the minutes of the July 27, 2022 Regular Meeting.
3. CPA22-001 – 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment
4. Comprehensive Plan Update: Transportation Element (Second Draft)
5. Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use Element (Second Draft)

OTHER BUSINESS

6. Deputy Director's Report
7. Planned Absences for Future Meetings
8. Announcements & Communications
9. Next Scheduled Meeting – October 26, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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PLANNING COMMISSION

To: Planning Commission
From: Jeff Thomas, Interim CPD Director
Date: September 28, 2022
RE: CPA22-001 Land Use Element Comprehensive Plan Amendment

SUMMARY

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on and deliberate proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments to remove *Figure TC-1. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages* from the Land Use Element as well as remove the reference to this figure in Goal 4.2. The proposed amendments will create consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and Mercer Island City Code (MICC) 19.11.020(B), which was amended by [Ordinance No. 22C-09](#), adopted on June 21, 2022. Ordinance No. 22C-09 will become effective on December 1, 2022, at which time the City Code will be updated.

BACKGROUND

Figure TC-1. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages was inserted into the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan in 2016 as part of the periodic update. The map identifies street frontages in the Town Center zone requiring certain commercial uses and resulted from the 2014-2016 update to the Town Center vision and development standards. An identical map was also included in MICC 19.11.020(B) as *Figure 2. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages*.

At Wednesday's Planning Commission meeting, the Commission will hold a public hearing to receive public comment on a proposed amendment to Section V. Land Use Policies, Town Center, of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Attachment 1). MICC 19.11.020(B) was amended by Ordinance No. 22C-09, which was adopted on June 21, 2022 and will take effect and update the City Code on December 1, 2022. This amendment included changes to Figure 2., the map that was previously identical to Figure TC-1. in the Comprehensive Plan. To create consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and MICC 19.11.020(B), Figure TC-1 needs to be removed and Goal 4.2 needs to be amended.

The Planning Commission should use the following decision criteria for evaluating the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

MICC 19.15.230 Comprehensive plan amendments and docketing procedures.

F. *Decision Criteria.* Decisions to amend the comprehensive plan shall be based on the criteria specified below. An applicant for a comprehensive plan amendment proposal shall have the burden of

demonstrating that the proposed amendment complies with the applicable regulations and decision criteria.

1. The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the countywide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies; and:
 - a. There exists obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan; or
 - b. The amendment addresses changing circumstances of the city as a whole.
2. If the amendment is directed at a specific property, the following additional findings shall be determined:
 - a. The amendment is compatible with the adjacent land use and development pattern;
 - b. The property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning; and
 - c. The amendment will benefit the community as a whole and will not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Based on criterion F (1)(b), staff recommend adopting the proposed amendments to remove Figure TC-1. from Land Use Element Section V., Land Use Policies, Town Center as well amending Goal 4.2, as described above.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to receive public comment and then deliberate the proposed amendments. After deliberating, it is requested the Commission make a recommendation to the City Council whether to adopt the amendments as presented or not. The City Council is scheduled to conduct the first reading of the proposed amendments on October 18, 2022.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

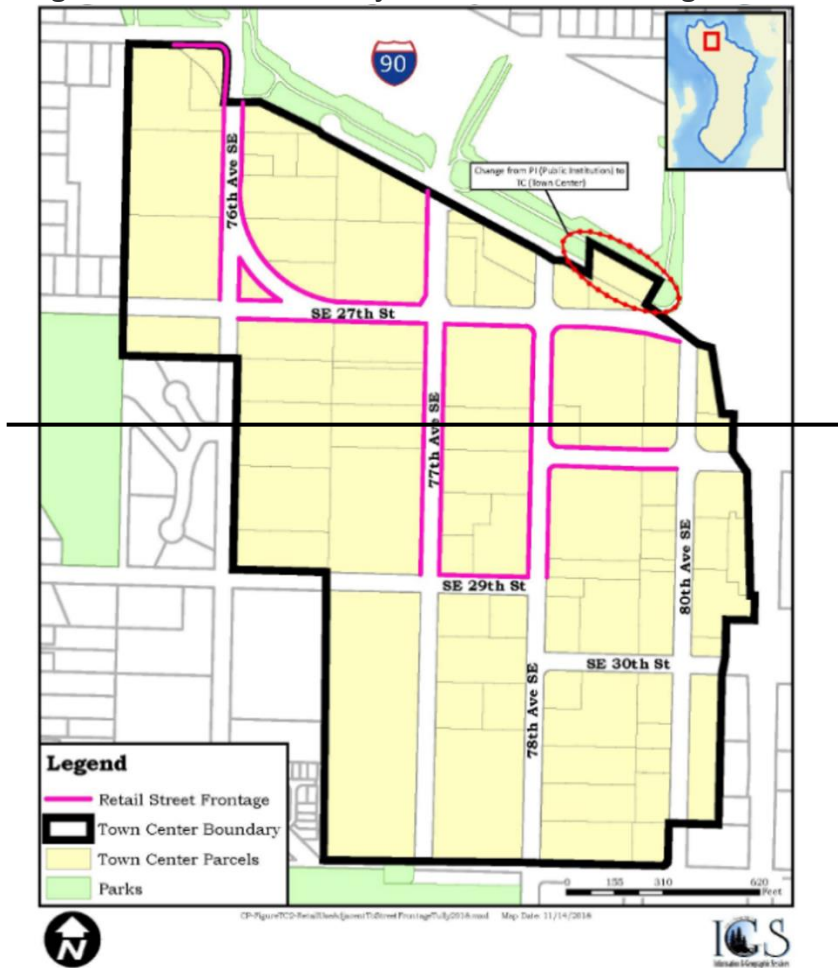
Land Use Element Section V., Land Use Policies, Town Center, is amended as follows:

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.

Figure TC 1. Retail Use Adjacent to Street Frontages





CITY OF MERCER ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR VIDEO MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

Item 2.

CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Hubbell at 6:05 pm from a remote location.

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

Commissioner Kate Akyuz was absent.

STAFF PRESENT

Alison Van Gorp, Deputy CPD Director and Adam Zack, Senior Planner, participated in the meeting remotely.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Amy Lavin, Mercer Island resident and CEO of the Stroum Jewish Community Center, commented on the Land Use Element and suggested a revision to policy 17.4

REGULAR BUSINESS

Agenda Item #1: Approval of the June 29, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

Approve the minutes of the June 29, 2022 meeting.

Approved 5-0-1

Agenda Item #2: Transportation Element

John Davies of KPG Consulting provided an overview of the proposed updates to the Transportation Element.

Agenda Item #3: Land Use Element

Adam Zack, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the proposed updates to the Land Use Element.

OTHER BUSINESS

Deputy Director's Report

Alison Van Gorp, Deputy Director, updated the Commission on recent and upcoming items on the City Council calendar. She also provided an overview of the September Joint Study Session and Planning Commission meeting agendas. Commissioners were reminded to submit their volunteer hours for the second quarter.

Planned Absences for Future Meetings

There were no planned absences.

Announcements & Communications

There were no announcements or communications

Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is September 28, 2022 at 6:00pm. A joint study session with the City Council and Planning Commission is also scheduled for September 6, 2022 at 5:00pm.

ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm

DRAFT

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PLANNING COMMISSION

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Date: September 28, 2022
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The Planning Commission should use the following decision criteria for evaluating the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

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demonstrating that the proposed amendment complies with the applicable regulations and decision criteria.

1. The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the countywide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies; and:
 - a. There exists obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan; or
 - b. The amendment addresses changing circumstances of the city as a whole.
2. If the amendment is directed at a specific property, the following additional findings shall be determined:
 - a. The amendment is compatible with the adjacent land use and development pattern;
 - b. The property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning; and
 - c. The amendment will benefit the community as a whole and will not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Based on criterion F (1)(b), staff recommend adopting the proposed amendments to remove Figure TC-1. from Land Use Element Section V., Land Use Policies, Town Center as well amending Goal 4.2, as described above.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to receive public comment and then deliberate the proposed amendments. After deliberating, it is requested the Commission make a recommendation to the City Council whether to adopt the amendments as presented or not. The City Council is scheduled to conduct the first reading of the proposed amendments on October 18, 2022.

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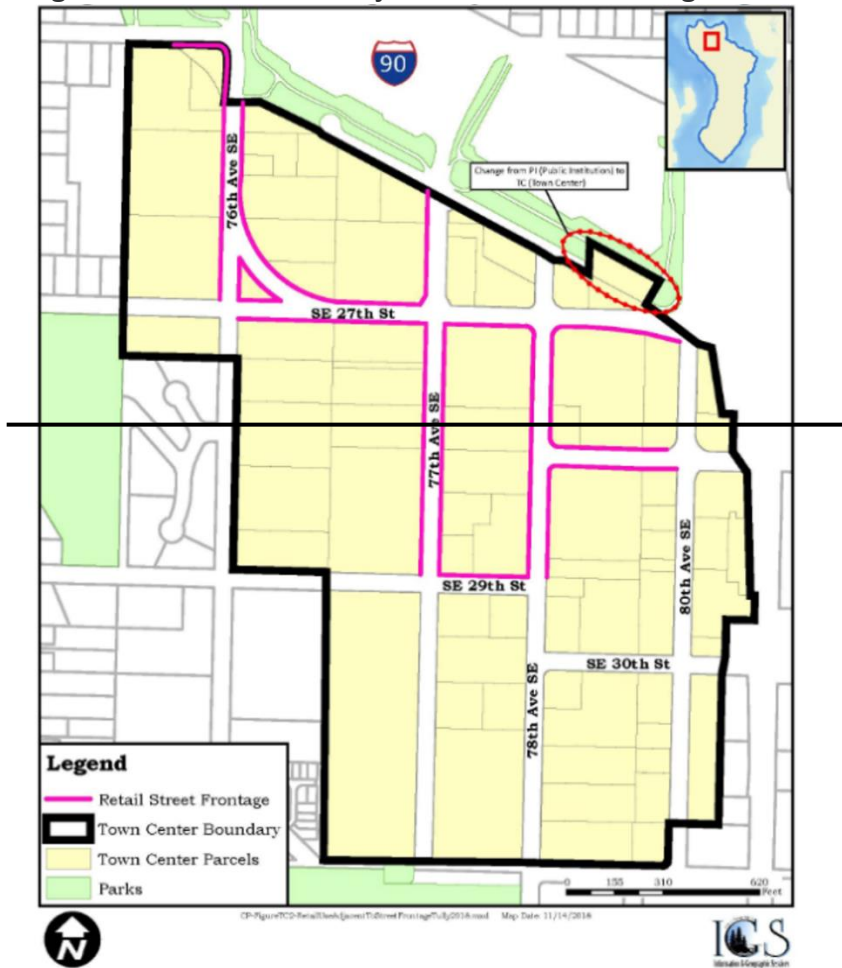
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PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

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

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

DATE: September 28, 2022

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update
Transportation Element – Second Draft

Attachments

- A. Second Draft - Transportation Element
- B. First Draft - Transportation Element Comment Matrix
- C. Planning Commission and Public Comments on the first draft Transportation Element

PURPOSE

To receive the Planning Commission’s response to comments on the first draft of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment A). The comments are summarized, and a staff response is provided in Attachment B. The full comments are provided in Attachment C.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND

The City of Mercer Island is updating its comprehensive plan as part of the periodic review required by the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA). The periodic review will be a targeted “surgical” update, focusing on those technical updates required to maintain compliance with the GMA. The existing Transportation Element already meets most of the GMA requirements and only requires limited technical amendments during this periodic review.

The Transportation Element provides policies and projects to guide the development of the Mercer Island transportation system and the City’s vision for the future. The document includes the goals and policies, description of the existing transportation system, analysis of future transportation conditions, a list of recommended transportation projects, and an assessment of the City’s funding capability to complete those projects.

Primary updates to the Transportation Element include incorporating changes to the transportation system since the 2018 update, adjusting the planning horizon year from 2035 to 2044, incorporating the King County 2021 Countywide Planning Policies, and updating the Recommended Improvements list with revised cost estimates. The Recommended Improvement list was based on a future transportation needs analysis and projects from the City's Six-Year 2023-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan (2010), and Transportation Impact Fee program (2022).

The Planning Commission was briefed on the first draft of the Transportation Element on July 27. It provided written comments on the first draft following the meeting. The Planning Commission and public comments and staff responses are summarized in Attachment B. The complete comments are provided in Attachment C.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The staff response to Planning Commission comments on the first draft of the Transportation Element is summarized in Attachment B. Specific text changes proposed in comments are shown as alternatives in the second draft (Attachment A). Text amendments proposed by the Planning Commission and a few alternatives proposed by staff are shown in the text of the second draft. Each alternative includes the corresponding comment number from Attachment B in brackets after the alternative text.

At the meeting on September 28, the Planning Commission will go through the amendments proposed by comments. It can decide whether make the proposed amendment, only accept part of the alternative, or keep the first draft version. Staff recommends agreeing to comment responses by consensus.

Once the Planning Commission has worked through the comments, staff requests the Commission decide whether it would like another touch on the draft at its October meeting. If the Planning Commission is satisfied with the draft element after working through the comments at the September meeting, the October meeting may not be necessary. If the Planning Commission decides an October review is unnecessary, it will still have an opportunity to review the element two more times before making a recommendation to the City Council, as described below.

NEXT STEPS

1. October 26 - Third review on the Transportation Element (if needed).
2. There may be additional changes to the Transportation Element for the Planning Commission to consider during the Comprehensive Plan update. The additional changes would be in response to the Climate Action Plan and the Housing Work Group's work on the Housing Element. Discussion of the possible amendments will take place when the Planning Commission takes up these topics later during the update process.
3. Summer 2023 - The next touch on the Transportation Element will be during a Comprehensive Plan update "tune up" meeting scheduled after the Comprehensive Plan update Open House in the summer 2023.
4. 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 Transportation Element before making a recommendation to the City Council.

4 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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 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 2,320,129 new housing units and 1,160,300 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, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system, where applicable. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)
- 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.
- 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. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)
- 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.
- 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;~~ [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)

- 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 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.

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.
- 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.
- 7.37.3 Reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by vehicle collisions on Mercer Island to zero by 2030.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.45 Monitor traffic collisions, citizen input/complaints, traffic violations, and traffic volumes to identify and prioritize locations for safety improvements.
- 7.56 Where a need is demonstrated, consider signage, traffic controls, or other strategies to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.
- 7.67 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.

7.78 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.

7.910 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.

- 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 for pedestrians crossing streets, including use of colored and textured pavements within the City.
- 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.

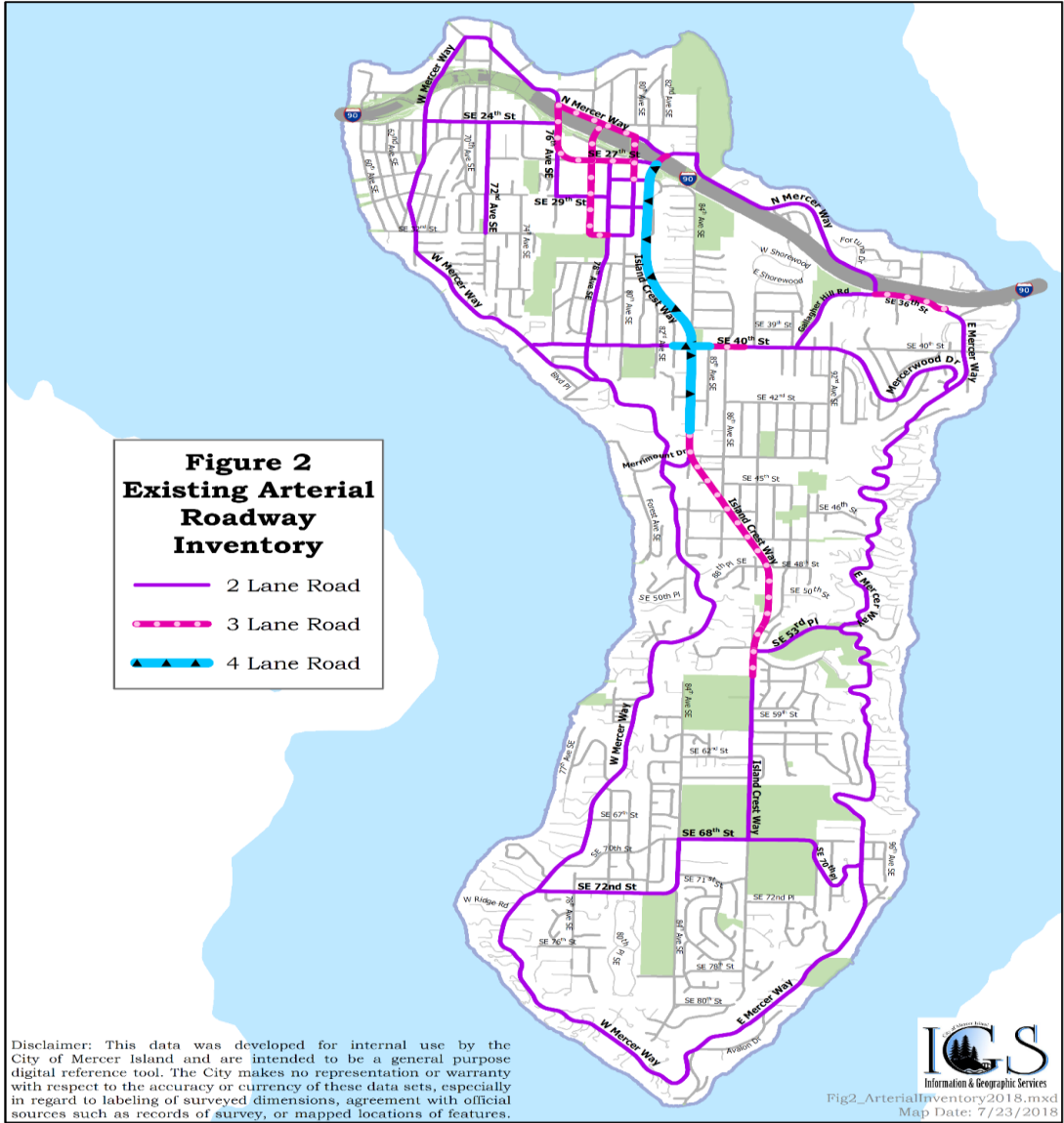
Roadways on the Island are classified into different categories according to their purpose and physical characteristics. The categories are:

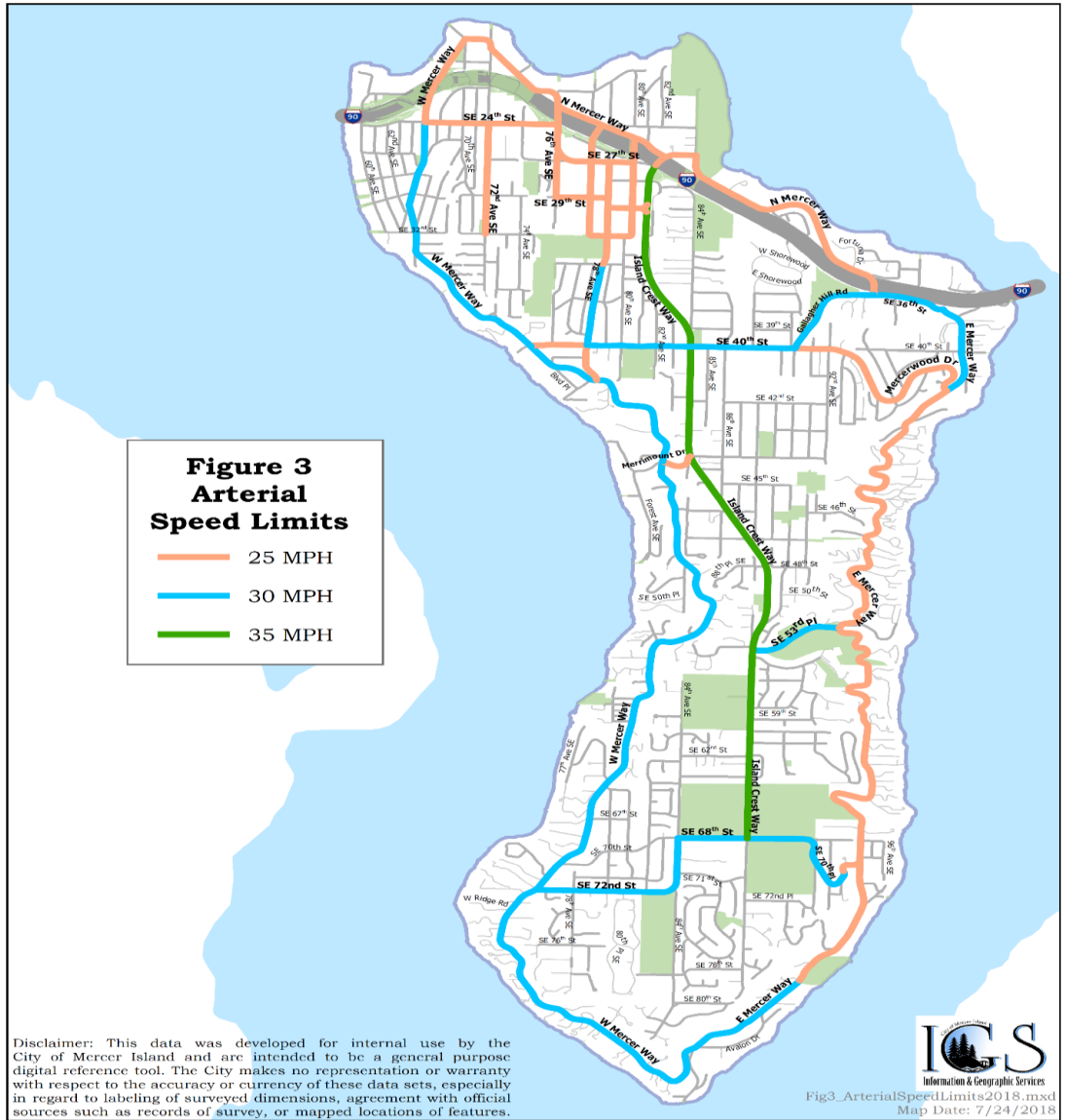
- **Principal arterials** carry the highest volumes of traffic and provide the best mobility in the roadway network. These roads generally have higher speed limits, higher traffic volumes, and limit access to adjacent land uses.
- **Secondary arterials** connect with and augment principal arterials and 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 and working a hybrid schedule. It was determined that the 2018 counts continue to be accurate for planning purposes. [Comment PC-1]

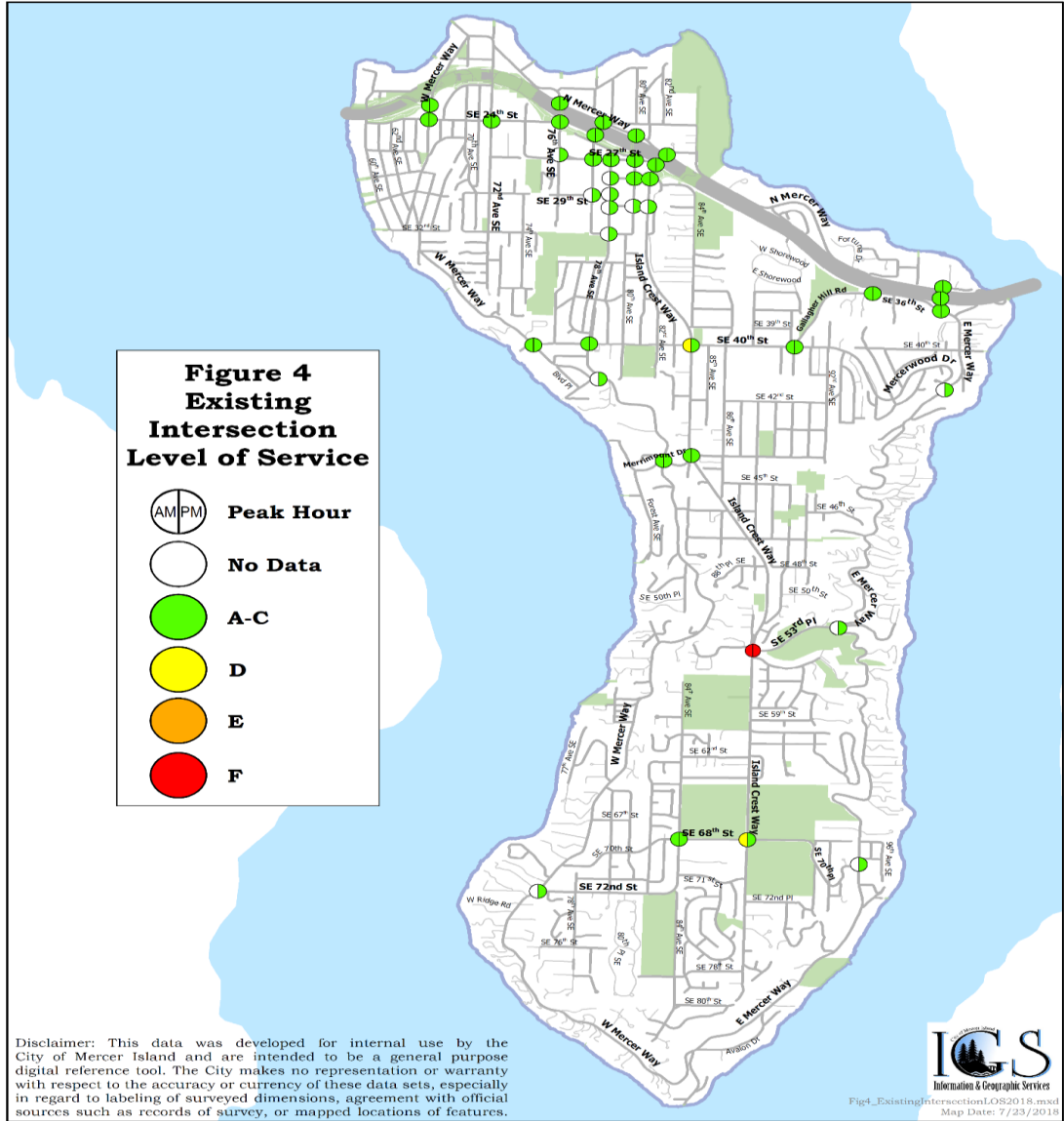
Table 1 and Figure 4 show the AM and PM peak hour operations for each of the study intersections. Outside of the Town Center, the analysis shows that during the AM and PM peak hour, all intersections operate at LOS D or better for existing conditions, except the intersection of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest 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. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)

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.

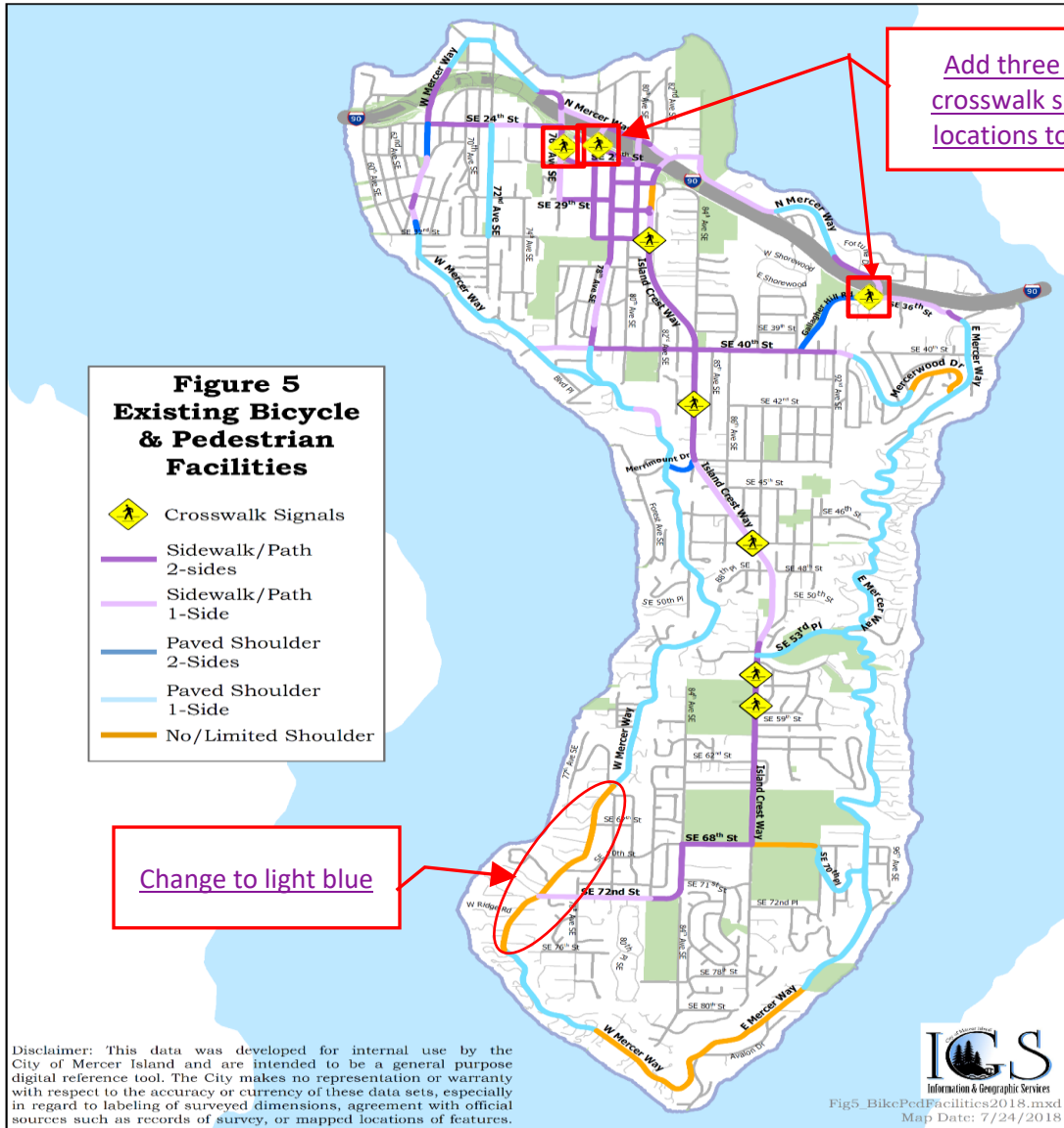
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

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. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)

[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. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)

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.

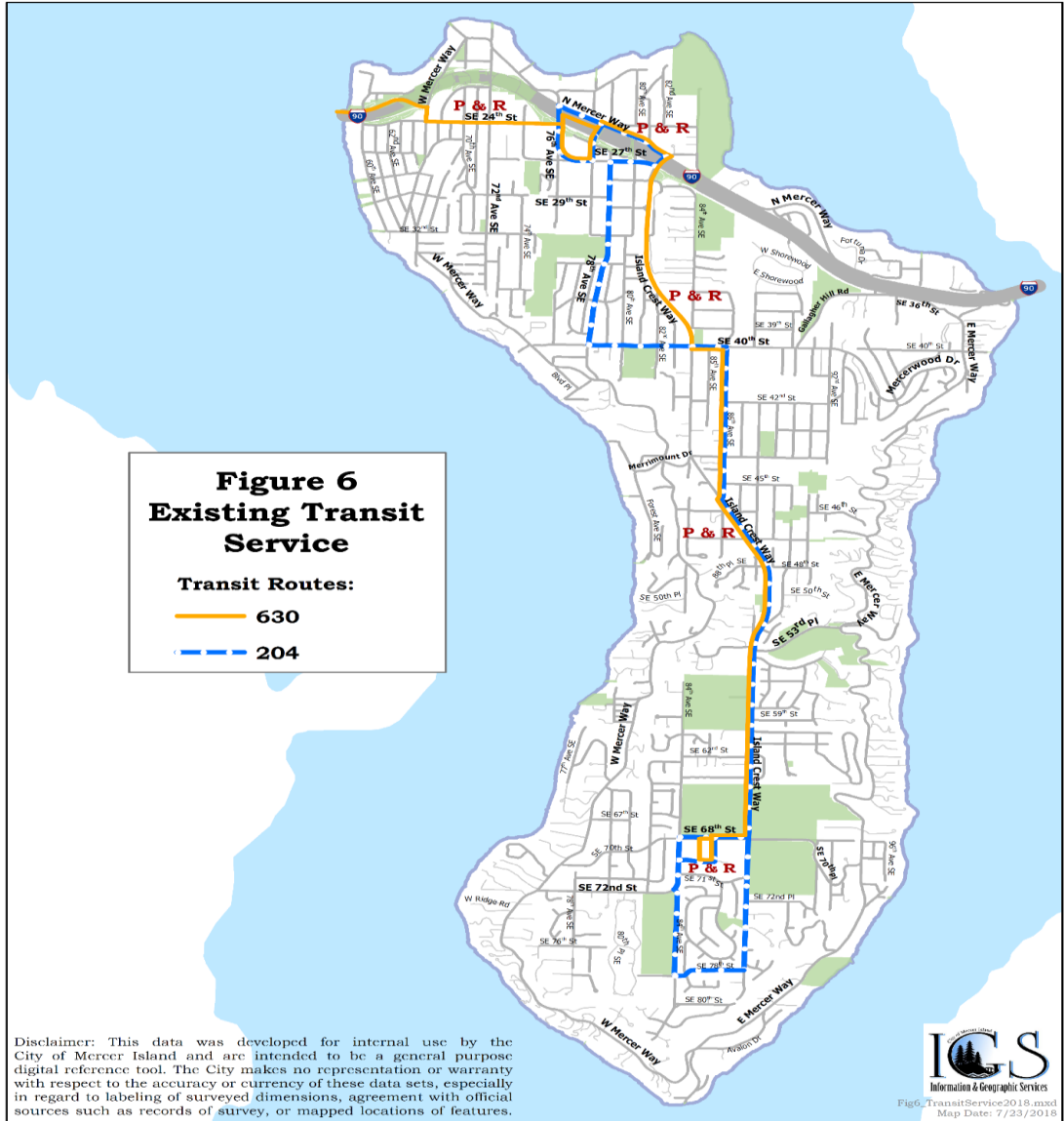
Custom bus service includes specially designed routes to serve specific travel markets, such as major employers, private schools, or other special destinations. These services are typically provided during peak commute hours, and operate on fixed routes with limited stops. Custom bus service is currently 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. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)

[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.

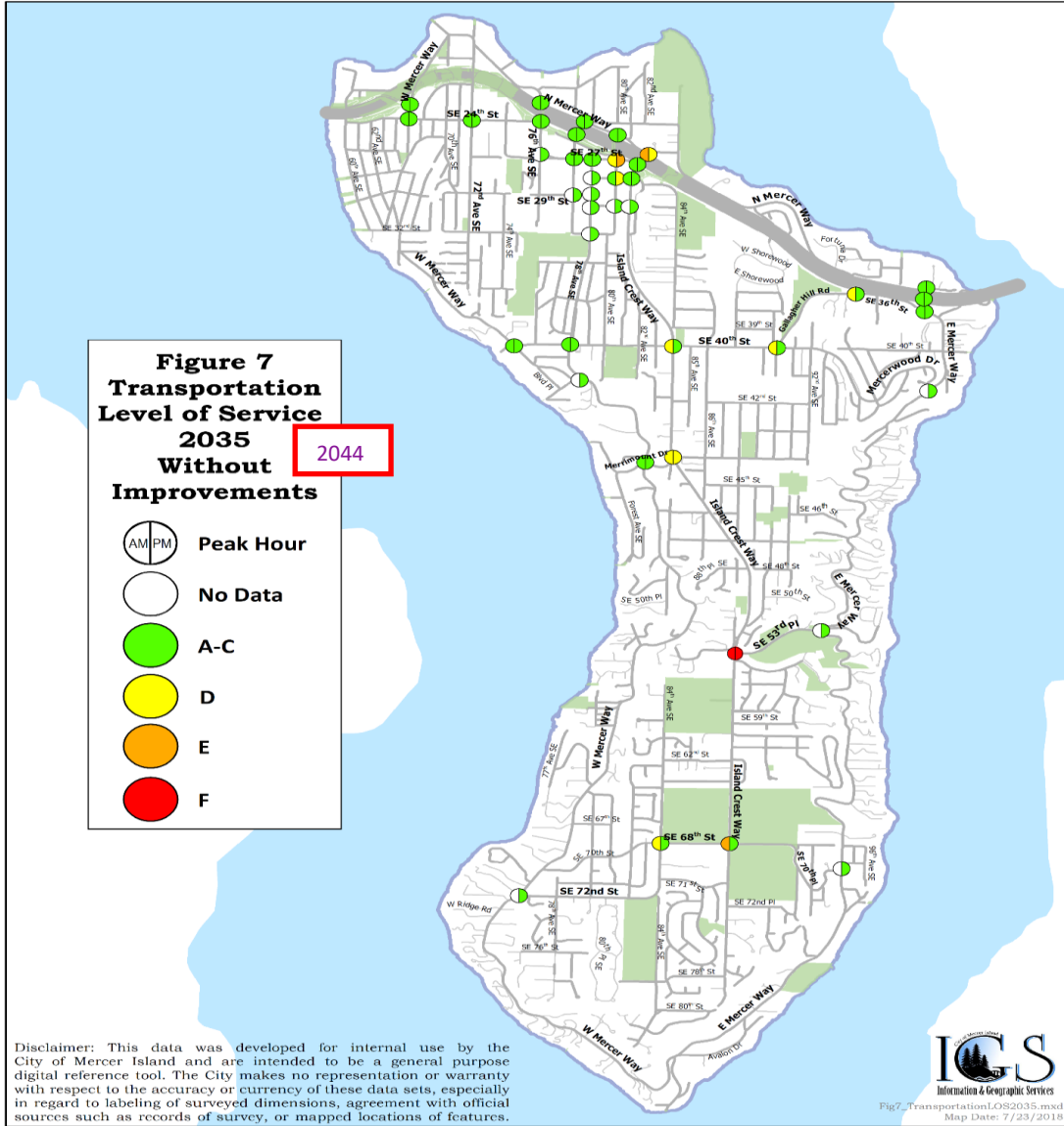
The ~~analysis assumes the~~ opening of the East Link light rail line ~~in 2023, which will result in~~ provides an additional travel option between the Town Center and regional destinations.

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 ~~21.37~~ 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.

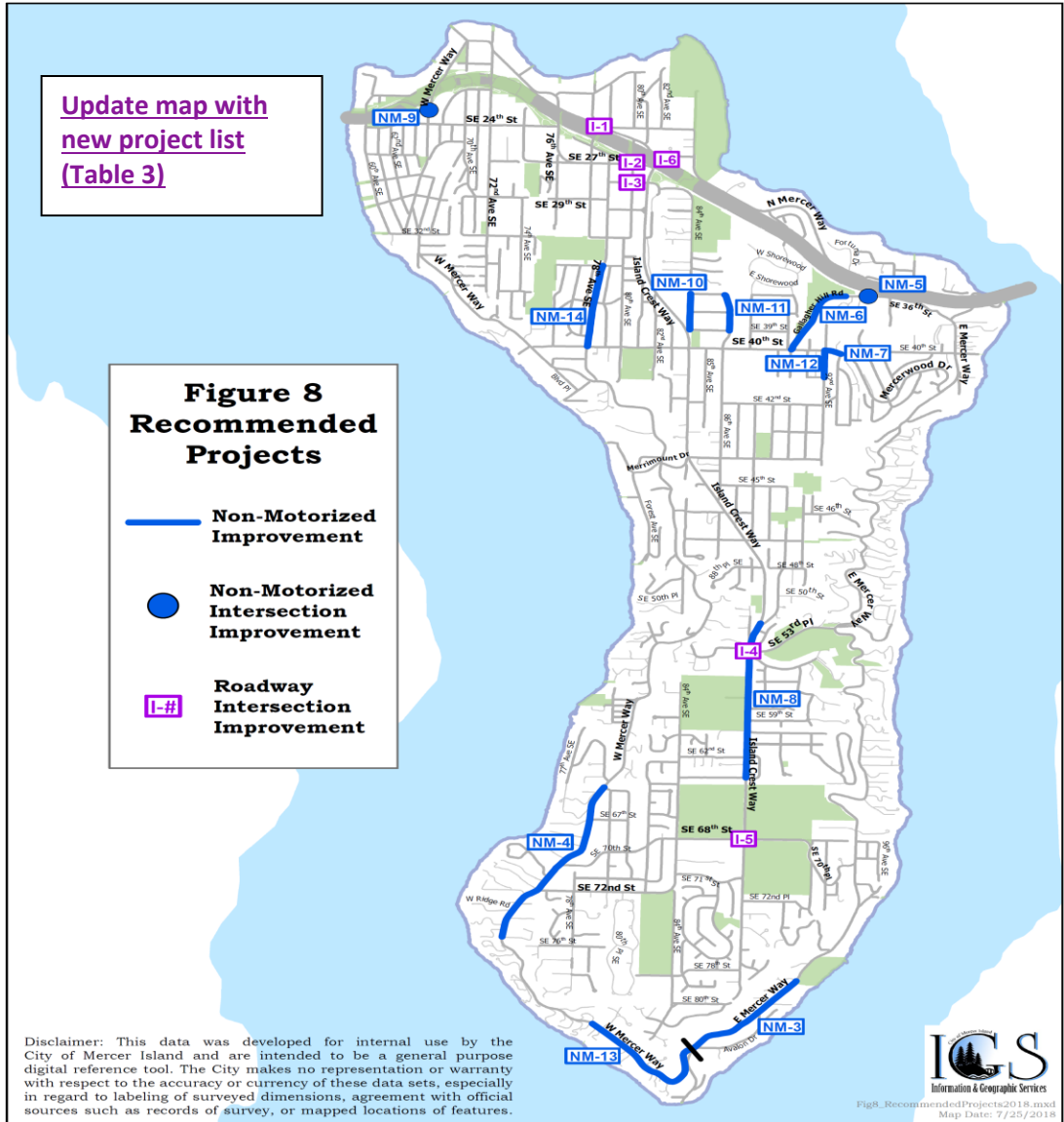


Table 3. Recommended Project List 2018—20352022—2044

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

¹ Cost estimate reflects higher cost option of alternative actions. ² Cost estimate represents a 10% City share; total cost is \$5,000,000.	Total 2018—2035 Projects	\$48,274,000	
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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 Mercedale Park due to tree damage.	2023-2028 TIP (SP147)	324,719

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 ~~and~~ explore alternative methods of providing service, such as developing a demand responsive service. [\[Comment PC-1\]](#)
- 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.

Table 1. First Draft Transportation Element Planning Commission Question / Comment Matrix.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
PC-1	Adam Ragheb	Page 2, comment 1: Suggest editing to "The new light rail station located north of the Town Center, on the I-90 corridor between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE, is planned to eventually provide access to destinations in Seattle, Bellevue and other cities that are part of the Sound Transit system." It is not providing access yet and I believe was recently delayed	It is expected that the light rail station will be open by the time the City adopts the Comprehensive Plan update in 2024. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.
		Page 2, comment 2: I think it is important to note the dates of the data. It carries a lot more weight that the local traffic counts were done very recently per my notes from the presentation. Would also be good to note the PSRC forecast date. Could a link to these data be made available to readers so that it is easier for the general public to access and understand the data upon which these forecasts were based?	<p>The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) forecasts were done for 2044, as listed in the paragraph.</p> <p>New traffic counts were only done at select locations in 2022, to determine if a full recount was needed or if the counts from 2018 were still accurate for planning purposes. The 2018 counts were determined to still be accurate and the traffic operations data in the transportation element is based on those 2018 counts. The data collected in 2022 was not used in the traffic analysis for the Transportation Element.</p> <p>This is the future land use section and it is focused on forecasts and growth assumptions. It is not the appropriate place to describe the details of the traffic counts. The details of the existing traffic counts are described in Section 3: Existing Conditions.</p>
		Page 2, comment 3: I only find on Page 14 that these data are from 2018 and 2022 (which is good...should make that clear early-on!)	<p>The Introduction section is intended to be an overview and summary of the overall transportation element. We believe the details of the existing traffic counts belong in the Existing Conditions section.</p> <p>The local traffic counts do not influence any of the numbers that follow this sentence (growth target, housing growth, jobs growth), and might distract readers from the larger picture that the Introduction is intended to provide.</p>
		Page 3, comment 1: From where does this revision originate? KC's CPPs only mentions nonprofits for responding to changes in mobility patterns. I read that this language is encouraging partnerships with nonprofits for maintenance of transportation infrastructure....that does not sound like a good idea. Is this not a government function?	The language originates in King County Countywide Planning Policy (KC CPP) T-22. The focus of this policy is to "encourage partnerships" with nonprofits and private sector, not to imply that they will be responsible for the transportation system. The CPP includes the phrase "where applicable" at the end. To clarify your comment, we added "where applicable" to the end of this policy in the second draft.
		Page 4, Policy 2.7: In the world of engineering, optimize is a word that carries a lot of weight and detail, especially for people involved in MDO. I would suggest changing it to "maximize"	Policy 2.7 and the word "optimize" are drawn from KC CPP T-33. The word "optimize" is referring to efficient use of existing infrastructure. Switching to "maximize" would imply increasing the use of existing infrastructure, which is not the intent of the policy. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.
		Page 4, Policy 3.1: Edit: strike "for all communities" That phrase does not add any specificity to the statement - what communities? It actually makes it more vague and subject to interpretation.	The phrase "all communities" is drawn from KC CPP T-30 and is specified in the CPP to be all communities, especially those "that have been disproportionately affected by transportation decisions". Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this goal as proposed, see second draft.
		Page 4, Policy 4.1, first bullet: suggest revising to "maintain public transit service on the Island in accordance with on-Island demand"	The first sentence of Policy 4.1 already states "ensure adequate transit services to meet the needs of the island". We recommend removing the first bullet point of Policy 4.1 because it is repetitive.
		Page 4, Policy 4.1, third bullet: Suggest stopping after "Mercer Island." as the existing Light Rail station and bus transfer area growth are already providing connection to regional transit - is there still a need to further "enhance" those connections, especially after COVID changes?	The results of the 2022 MI community survey indicate "access to public transportation" tied as the second most dissatisfied transportation category. Several comments cited a lack of bus services and connections between the Town Center/light rail area and the rest of the island, which compounds parking issues. Policy 4.1 is aligned with KC CPP T-1 and T-6, which emphasize that regional transit systems should be connected to "multimodal" linkages and networks. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		Page 4, Policy 4.1, fourth bullet: What are the current innovative transit services? Did these end / are they decreasing as a result of COVID?	Both King County Metro (KCM) services (204, 630) are DART (Dial-A-Ride Transit), which provide fixed-route, flexible-route, and reservation-based service depending on location. These services have both been cut significantly since COVID. There are also 2 custom bus services (981, 989) serving private schools from MI Park and Ride (P&R).
		Page 5, Policy 4.4: Is this still being done, or have these efforts been completed?	The City is still considering options to provide Park & Ride lots for Mercer Island residents only and evaluation of this topic is ongoing.
		Page 5, Policy 4.8, Comment 1: edit - remove "Black, Indigenous, and other People of color." I do not think we should be differentiating how the City provides services to persons based on race. We should, however, based on socioeconomic needs (which remains with the proposed edit). Revise: "people with low and no incomes" to "people with low or no income." A person cannot have both low and no income, so it must be an "or" statement	Policy 4.8 is copied directly from KC CPPs T-8 and T-9. The City's preference is that the comprehensive plan update aligns city policies with the current countywide policies. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.
		Page 5, Policy 4.8, comment 2: Is there any evidence of displacement here on Mercer Island? Perhaps we can remove the word mitigating, as that implies that it is happening - are there data that support this assertion?	See response for 4.8 above. Regarding the word "mitigate", excluding it would leave only "prevent displacement". This could be interpreted as obligating the City's projects and programs to cause zero displacement. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.
		Page 6, Policy 5.4: Suggested revision: Advocate for state policies, actions, and capital improvement programs that promote safety and that are consistent with relevant portions of the Regional Growth Strategy, VISION 2050, and the Countywide Planning Policies. Equity and sustainability are very subjective terms and edits to the document should be clear and concise.	Policy 5.4 is copied directly from KC CPP T-11, except for the word "safety". The City's preference is that the comprehensive plan update aligns city policies with the current countywide policies. Amending the text as proposed is not recommended.
		Page 14, comment 1: suggest editing to "This is primarily due to changes brought on by the COVID pandemic and advances in technology and a cultural shift that have increased the number of people working from home, working more-flexible hours, and working a hybrid schedule." I think it is important to note that even when pandemic is "over" these changes will stay, and WFH doesn't catch everyone - the more flexible hours and hybrid in-office/WFH schedules will also permanently affect traffic.	Added language from this comment to clarify "working a hybrid schedule" in the second draft.
		Page 14, Tale 1: Shouldn't this now articulate that it is 2022 Intersection Operations?	Table 1 LOS results are based on 2018 traffic analysis. The results were determined to be still accurate for planning purposes after comparing select 2022 counts with their 2018 counterparts. The word "existing" is preferred to "2018" for a Transportation Element adopted in 2024.
		Page 16, comment 1: Do these overflow conditions still occur? If not, it would be worth noting.	Yes, the park & ride is full and overflow parking would be expected to occur without the permit program. The text has been amended to remove reference to 2001.
		Page 20, comment 1: Do we have post onset of COVID data? If not, it still is worth mentioning as I think those data would be very valuable to have given the significant cultural shifts that occurred after March 2020.	No, the P&R Utilization report has not been published since 2017. The text has been amended to remove reference to the 2017 P&R Utilization Report.
		Page 21, comment 1, Table 2: same comment - do we have post 3/2020 data for usage? If not, I think we should mention it as an item for study even if King County does not want to do it.	No, the P&R Utilization report has not been published since 2017. We have contacted Metro to see if they can provide more recent P&R utilization data.
		Page 21, comment 2: Worth mentioning the future light rail? Didn't see any mention of it in the last few pages under public transport.	Yes, a section has been added to the second draft in the Existing Transportation Conditions for Light Rail since it is expected to be complete by 2024 when the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.
		Page 22, comment 1: Keep as future tense....it's not here yet!	It is expected that the light rail station will be open by the time the City adopts the Comprehensive Plan update in 2024.
		Page 22, comment 2: Finding the KCUGC data, dates, and assumptions wasn't very easy. We should clearly articulate any future projections' assumptions and dates - if data were modeled in 11/2019, those assumptions for population growth, travel demand, etc. would be invalid.	The future traffic volumes are primarily developed based on the City's 2044 land use projections, which are described in more detail in the Land Use Element. The text identifies the 2021 version the King County Urban Growth Capacity (KCUGC) report used. Regional growth plans such as PSRC's Vision 2050 are currently evaluating the impacts of COVID-19 and will potentially adjust growth models in the future.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		Page 22, comment 3: These projections' assumptions are clearer I think. These are based on the 2018 data that were double-checked to still be valid in 2022, right?	Yes, the traffic forecasts are based on the 2018 counts and were reconfirmed to be valid in 2022.
		Page 29: While I am sure there exists research on the merits of roundabouts and an illustration I saw alleviated my concerns about a roundabout taking out more trees than a signal (am I correct in that interpretation?), are there any data/research results that look at the potential for an increase in accidents when the first roundabout is installed in a locality? Could there perhaps be a spike in accidents for the first few years after the first roundabout is built as people get used to the new feature?	The signal and roundabout options have preliminary cost estimates, but not enough design work has been done to make determinations on the impacts for trees at this location. In general, roundabouts have been shown to decrease injury crashes, even in their initial operation year. The first roundabout on the island will be constructed at the N Mercer Way and 77th Avenue SE intersection.
		Page 33: What specific services are being reinstated or is this old verbiage?	Removed the word "reinstate" to make transit planning more forward-looking. This is old verbiage referring to previous transit service cuts.

4 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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 new light rail station located north of the Town Center, on the I-90 corridor between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE, provides access to destinations in Seattle, Bellevue and other cities that are part of the Sound Transit system.

Mercer Island has over 56 miles of trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel. ~~A~~The regional ~~trail~~Mountains-to-Sound 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 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.~~

~~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.~~

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~~ 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~~ 2,320–1,239 new housing units and ~~1,160–1,300~~ 1,160–1,300 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 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, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system.

- 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.~~
- 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.
- 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;
 - 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 no incomes, and people with special transportation needs, while preventing and reducing 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.

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, efficiency, and sustainability, and that are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, VISION 2050, and the Countywide Planning Policies.

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.

7.34 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.

7.45 Monitor traffic collisions, citizen input/complaints, traffic violations, and traffic volumes to identify and prioritize locations for safety improvements.

7.56 Where a need is demonstrated, consider signage, traffic controls, or other strategies to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.

7.67 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.

7.78 Coordinate with local and regional emergency services to develop priority transportation corridors and develop coordinated strategies to protect and recover from disaster.

7.89 ~~Emphasize Strive to create a complete, connected active~~ transportation connectivity and avoid closing streets to provide system allowing direct and safe access for active transportation modes and to minimize travel distances and emergency vehicle response times.

- 7.910 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.

- 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 for pedestrians crossing streets, including use of colored and textured pavements within the City.

- 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.

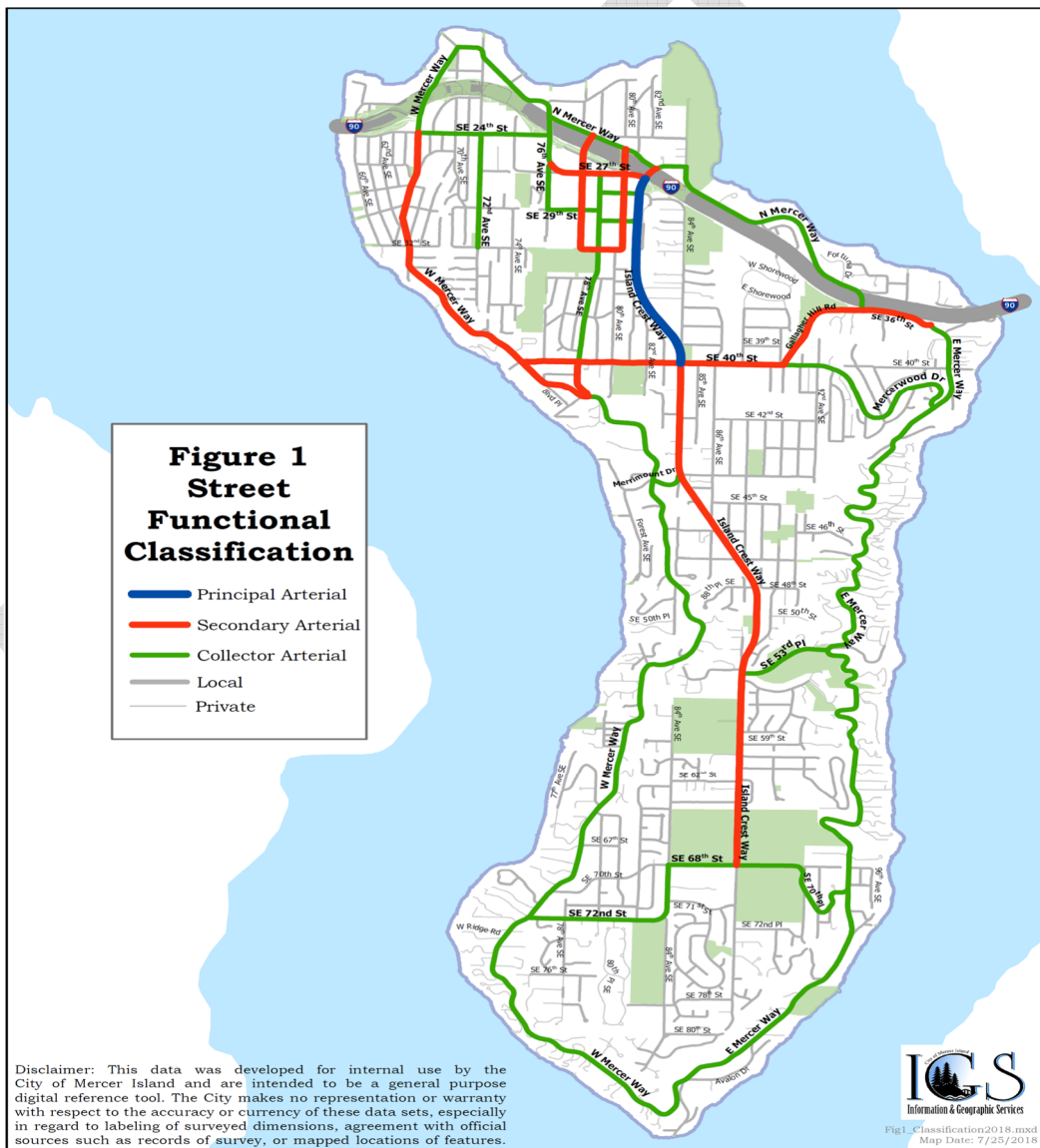
Roadways on the Island are classified into different categories according to their purpose and physical characteristics. The categories are:

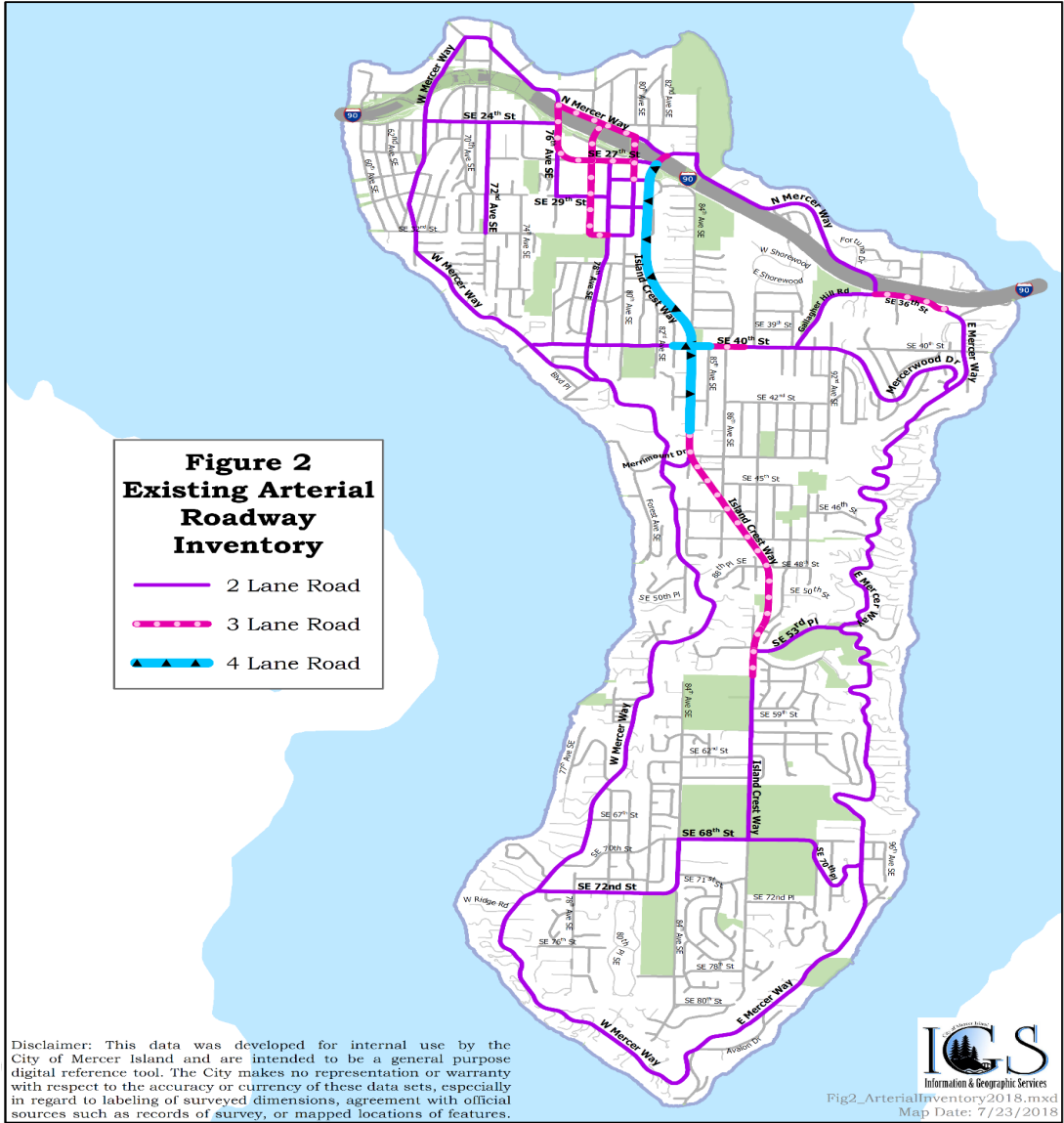
- **Principal arterials** carry the highest volumes of traffic and provide the best mobility in the roadway network. These roads generally have higher speed limits, higher traffic volumes, and limit access to adjacent land uses.
- **Secondary arterials** connect with and augment principal arterials and generally have a higher degree of access to adjacent land, lower traffic volumes and lower travel speeds.

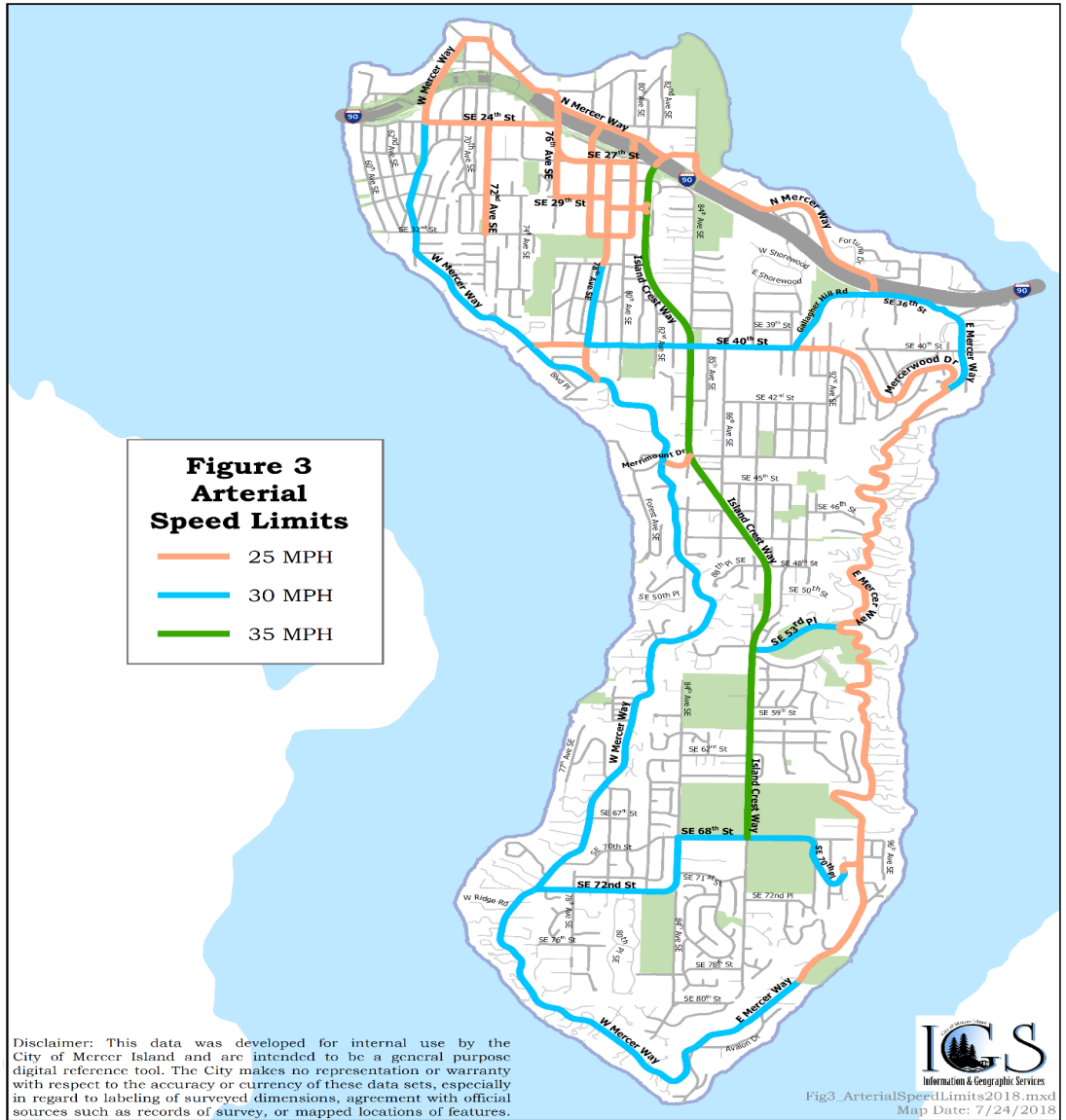
- **Collector arterials** provide for movement within neighborhoods, connecting to secondary and principal arterials; and typically have low traffic volumes and carry little through traffic.
- **Local streets** provide for direct access to abutting properties and carry low volumes of traffic at low travel 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.

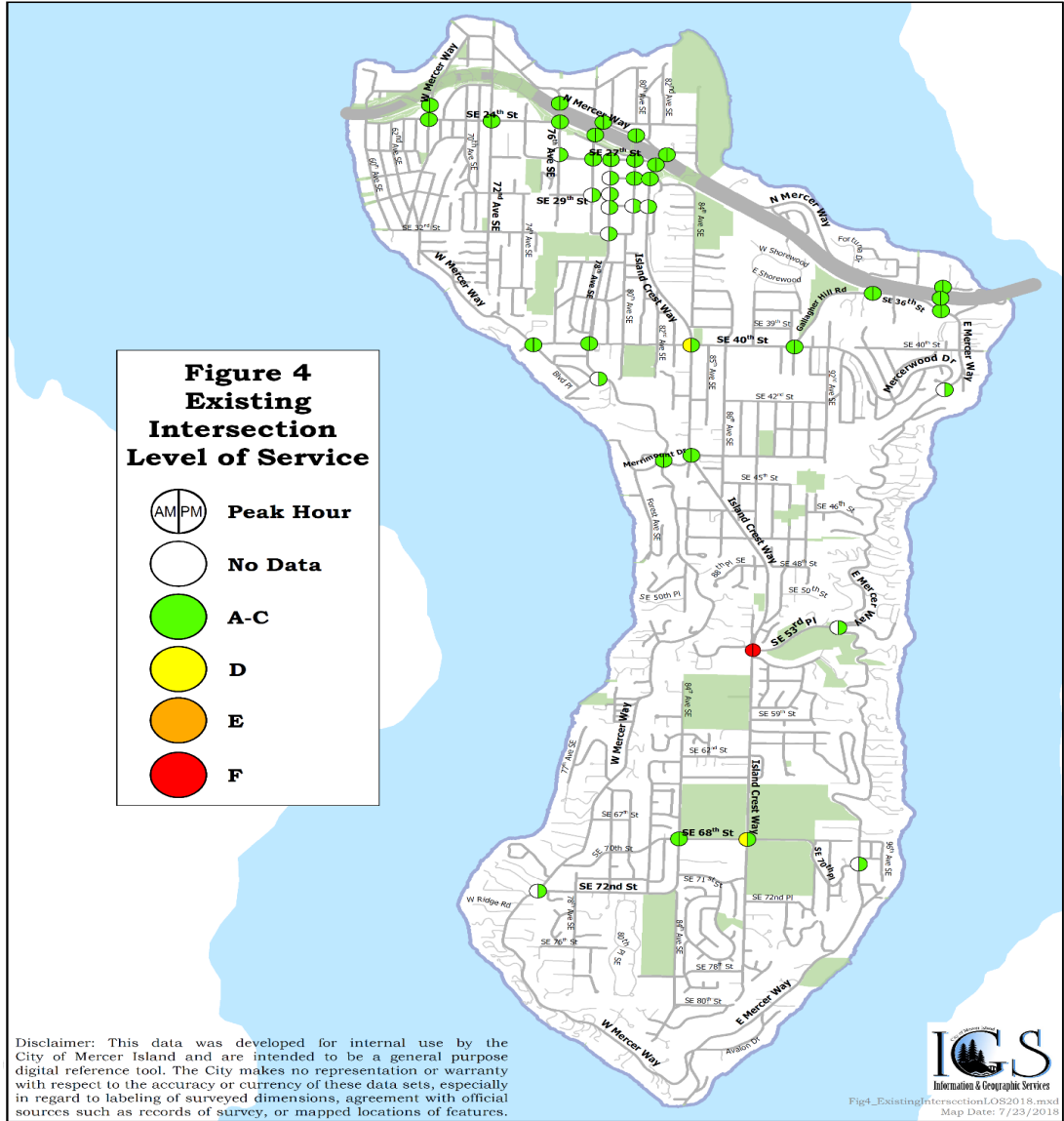
Table 1 and Figure 4 show the AM and PM peak hour operations for each of the study intersections. Outside of the Town Center, the analysis shows that during the AM and PM peak hour, all intersections operate at LOS D or better for existing conditions, except the intersection of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest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

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.

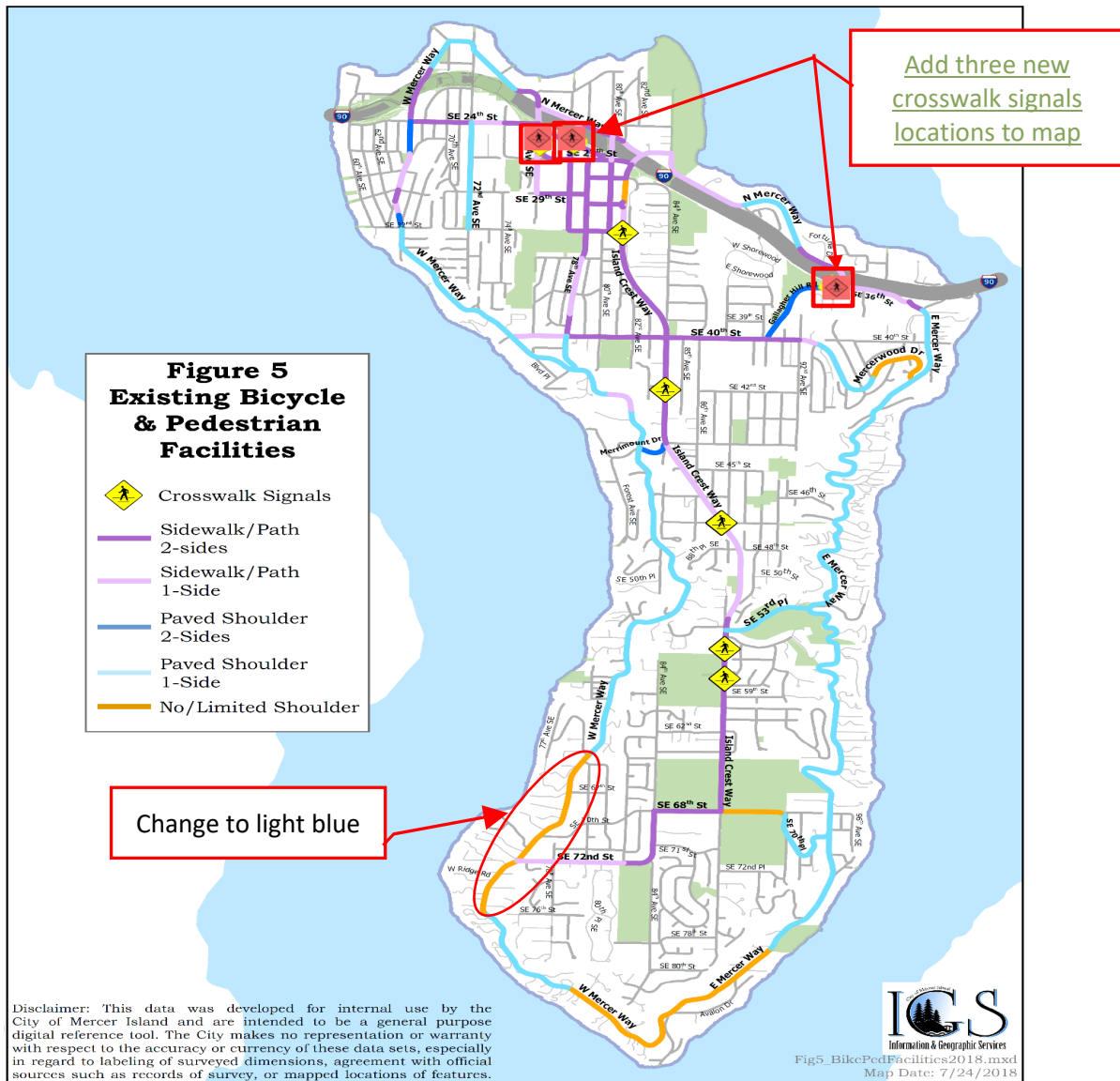
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

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 major types of service offered on the Island: local fixed route service, regional express service, custom bus service, and access service.

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.

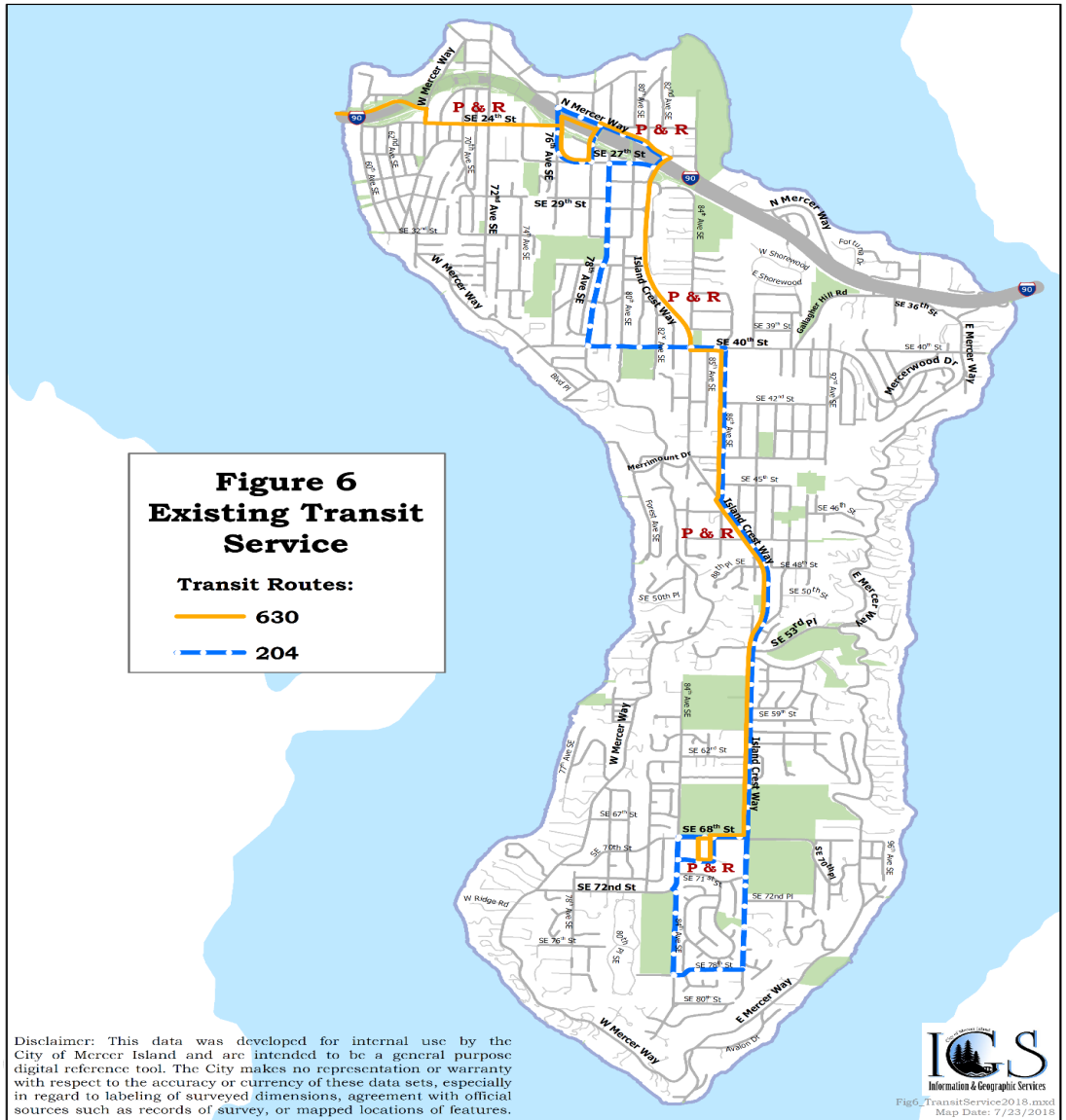
Access service provides door-to-door transportation to elderly and special needs populations who have limited ability to use public transit. Access covers trips within the King County Metro transit service area.

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.~~

DRAFT



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 Metro and Sound Transit buses.

According to the Fourth Quarter 2017 Park and Ride Utilization Report prepared by King County, 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 Urban Growth Capacity Buildable Lands (2014) report. More than 70 percent of new households and 76 percent of new jobs are forecasted to occur within the Town Center.

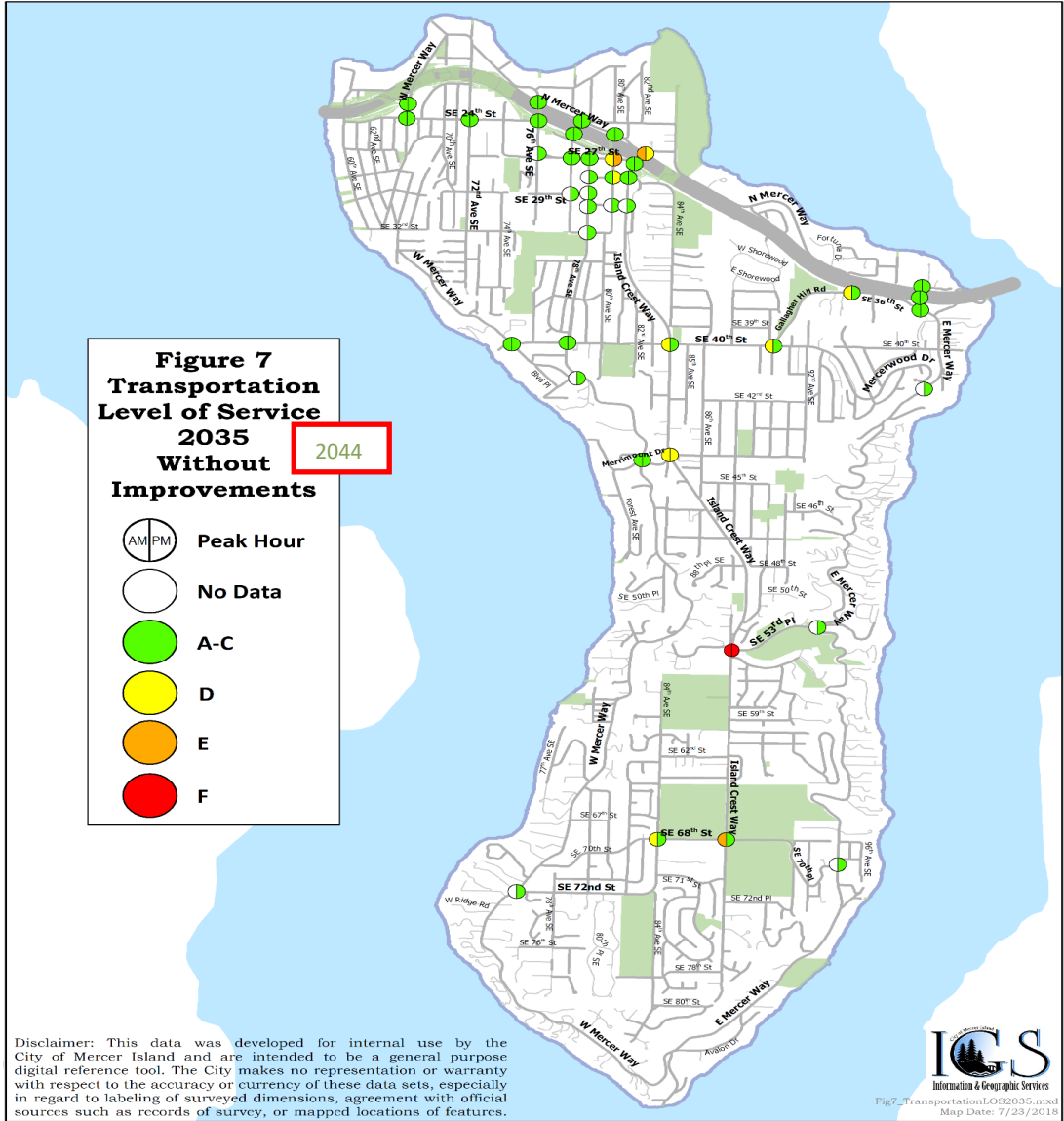
The ~~analysis assumes the opening of the East Link light rail line in 2023, which will result in projects~~ analysis assumes the opening of the East Link light rail line in 2023, which will result in projects is an additional travel option between the Town Center and regional destinations.

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)~~ planned changes to the regional transportation system. 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 approximately \$48.360 million of transportation improvements over the next 20 years. About 6250 percent (\$30-0 million) of the total is for street preservation and resurfacing projects to maintain the existing street system. Another 2437 percent (\$10.422 million) is for non-motorized system improvements. About 1113 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 20352044 intersection study locations without and with the recommended improvements for each of the AM and PM study locations.

DRAFT

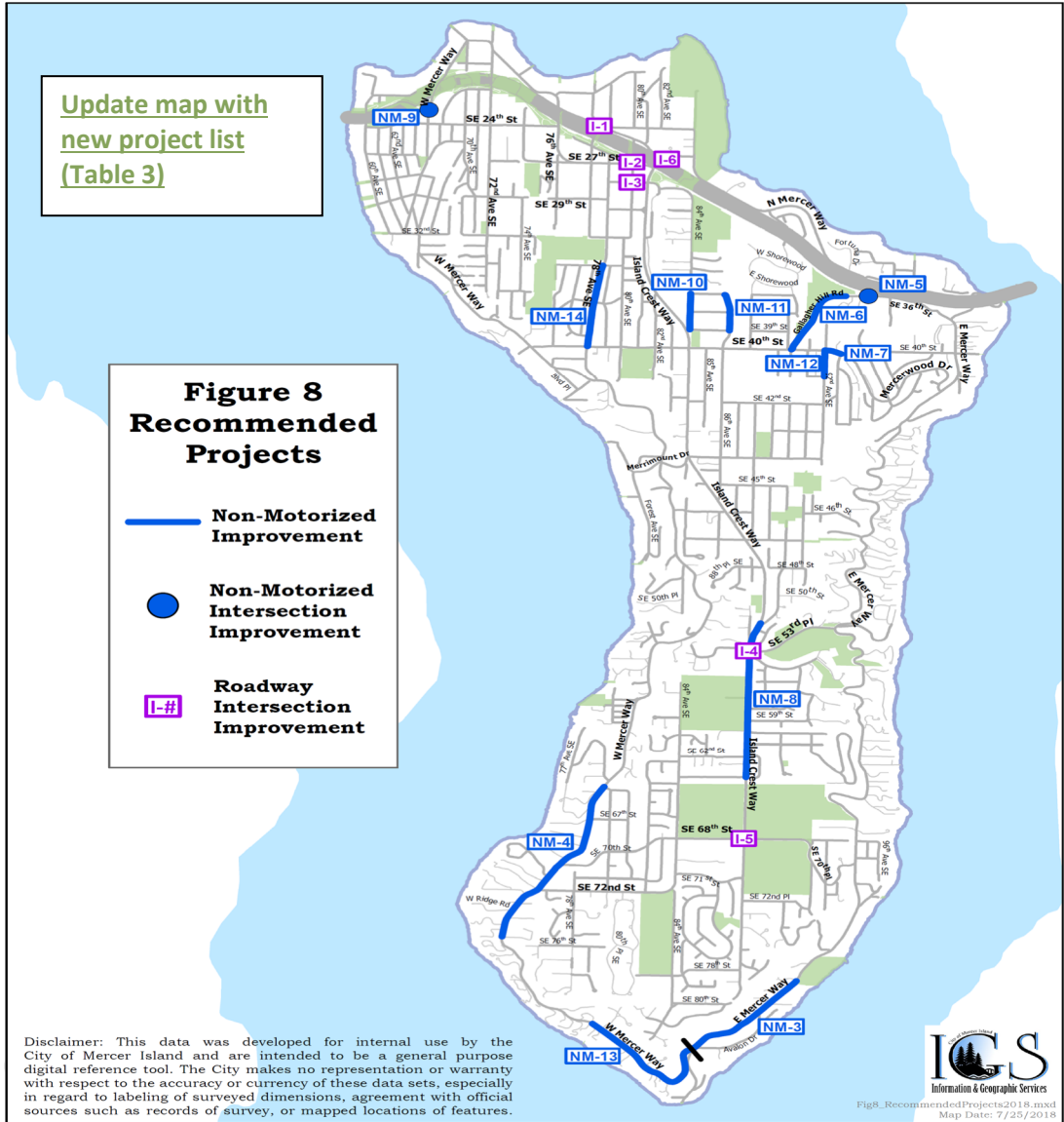


Table 3. Recommended Project List 2018—2035 2022—2044

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

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

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. 20352044 Intersection Operations — Without and With Recommended Improvements

Intersection	20352044 AM Peak Hour		20352044 PM Peak Hour	
	Without Improvements	With Recommended Improvements	Without Improvements	With Recommended Improvements
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 (~~\$510,000.00~~429,000), real estate excise tax (~~\$2,845,000.00~~2,253,000), Transportation Benefit District vehicle fees (~~\$370,000.00~~375,000) and transportation impact fees (~~\$237,000.00~~75,000). 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 ~~ite~~ and improve transit services. Explore alternative methods of providing service, such as developing a demand responsive service.
- 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 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.

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

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission

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

DATE: September 28, 2022

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update
Land Use Element – Second Draft

Attachments

- A. Second Draft Land Use Element
- B. First Draft Land Use Element Comment Matrix
- C. Planning Commission and Public Comments on the first draft Land Use Element

PURPOSE

To receive the Planning Commission’s response to comments on the first draft of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan (see Attachment A). The comments are summarized, and a staff response is provided in Attachment B. The full comments are provided in Attachment C.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

BACKGROUND

The City of Mercer Island is updating its comprehensive plan as part of the periodic review required by the WA Growth Management Act (GMA). The periodic review will be a targeted “surgical” update, focusing on those technical updates required to maintain compliance with the GMA. The existing Land Use Element already meets most of the GMA requirements and only requires limited technical amendments during this periodic review.

The Land Use Element is a component of the Comprehensive Plan that establishes goals and policies to guide City decision making regarding regulation of land uses. The Land Use Element is made up of goals, policies, and a Land Use Map. Goals state the objectives that the policies are intended to achieve. The Policies establish direction for how the City will work to achieve the goals. The Land Use Map identifies the locations for future land uses throughout the City.

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 Planning Commission, public comments, and staff responses are summarized in Attachment B. The complete comments are provided in Attachment C.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The staff response to Planning Commission and public comments on the first draft of the Land Use Element is summarized in Attachment B. Specific text changes proposed in comments are shown as alternatives in the second draft (Attachment A). Text amendments proposed by the Planning Commission are shown in **green text**. Text amendments proposed by the public are shown in **purple text**. Each alternative includes the corresponding comment number from Attachment B in brackets after the alternative text. Staff has proposed an alternative for one policy on page 24 of the second draft, shown in **blue text**.

At the meeting on September 28, the Planning Commission will go through the amendments proposed by the public. The Commission can decide whether to make the proposed amendment, accept part of the alternative, or keep the first draft version. Staff recommends agreeing to comment responses by consensus.

Once the Planning Commission works through the comments, staff requests the Commission decide whether another review is needed at the October meeting. If the Planning Commission is satisfied with the draft element after working through the comments at the September meeting, another touch on the draft in October may not be needed. If a third review is not needed, the Planning Commission will still have an opportunity to review the element two more times before making a recommendation to the City Council, as described below.

NEXT STEPS

1. October 26 - Third touch on the Land Use Element (if needed).
2. 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 and the Housing Work Group's work on the Housing Element. Discussion of these possible amendments will take place when the Planning Commission takes up these topics later during the update process.
3. Summer 2023 - The next touch on the Land Use Element will be during a Comprehensive Plan update "tune up" meeting planned for the meeting after the Comprehensive Plan update Open House.
4. Fall 2023 - After that "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.

Markup Key

Green Text: Planning Commissioner proposed alternative

Purple Text: Public proposed alternative

Blue Text: Staff proposed alternative

Green Highlighting: Notes to be removed before final draft

Strikeout: text to be deleted from adopted Land Use Element

Underline: text to be added to the adopted Land Use Element

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 policies and development and design guidelines for the Town Center. This effort involved several stakeholder groups, 15 joint meetings of the Planning and Design Commissions and hundreds of public comments.

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

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

SUSTAINABILITY

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

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

In 2012, the City convened a Sustainability Policy Taskforce, a City/community partnership, to recommend sustainability policies to the City. The City Council adopted its recommendations including dedicated staffing, incorporation of recommendations into City planning documents, development of a

Sustainability Plan, and legislative actions to foster sustainability. The City's Sustainability Manager was hired in 2013.

Numerous community groups have contributed to sustainability accomplishments in the ensuing years, and many are still active, such as IslandVision, a nonprofit organization that had encouraged and supported sustainable practices on Mercer Island and helped launch an annual Earth Day fair called Leap for Green. In 2017, Sustainable Mercer Island (SMI) emerged as an umbrella group to help coordinate various initiatives on Island and to advocate for county and state-level climate measures. It has also helped organize and publicize solarize campaigns, youth environmental education, public outreach, advocating for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and many other activities. Some are doing research, and many are volunteering with national and local organizations working to solve the climate crisis. One volunteer leads the very successful Green Schools program for the Mercer Island School District, supported by King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. SMI fosters waste reduction, recycling, and conservation by students and schools. IslandVision, a nonprofit organization, encourages and supports sustainable practices on Mercer Island. It provided to the City, in 2018, a technical analysis of GHG sources on Mercer Island and recommended strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AREAS OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

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

Table 2. Land Use Zones and Acreage (2014)

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

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

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

Single family residential zones designate a number of different lot sizes and densities including 8,400 square feet, 9,600 square feet, 12,000 square feet and 15,000 square feet. Of the 3,534 acres in these zones, approximately 145 remain unimproved. Most unimproved lots are small parcels and/or are platted building lots within previously developed neighborhoods. Some additional capacity exists in larger lots which can be subdivided. However, during the planning horizon, the City expects an average of roughly

six subdivisions a year, the majority of which will be short plats of four or fewer lots. Residential zones in the City are primarily zoned for single-family residential development. There are four minimum lot sizes in single-family zones, ranging from 15,000 square feet, 12,000 square feet, 9,600 square feet, and 8,400 square feet. Existing single-family development is mostly made up of established neighborhoods constructed in the latter-half of the 20th Century. Most lots in the single-family zones are already subdivided and few are undeveloped. New development in the single-family zones is typically demolition of an existing home and replacement with a newer home.

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

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

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

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

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

For land use and transportation planning purposes, Mercer Island ~~has not been~~ is 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 <u>Housing growth target (in dwelling units), 2006—2031</u> 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 <u>Employment growth target (in jobs), 2006—2031</u> 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 20 there are approximately ~~6,622~~ 7,325 jobs on Mercer Island. The City's development capacity is analyzed in the analysis completed to inform the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report. That report shows that Mercer Island has the capacity for a total of 2,373 new jobs; well in excess of the 1,160 sufficient development capacity to accommodate the 2044 employment and housing growth targets for which Mercer Island must have sufficient zoned land to accommodate.

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

Table 4. Employment Capacity 2018 – 2035.

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

Source: King County 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.

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

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

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

Housing Capacity.

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

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

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

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

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

Table 5. Residential Development Capacity.

<u>Assumed Density Level</u>	<u>Vacant / Redevelopable</u>	<u>Assumed Densities 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). 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). 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 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.
- ~~(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. [Comment PC-1]~~
- (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.
- ~~(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. [Comment PC-2]~~

- (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.

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 Mercedale 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.

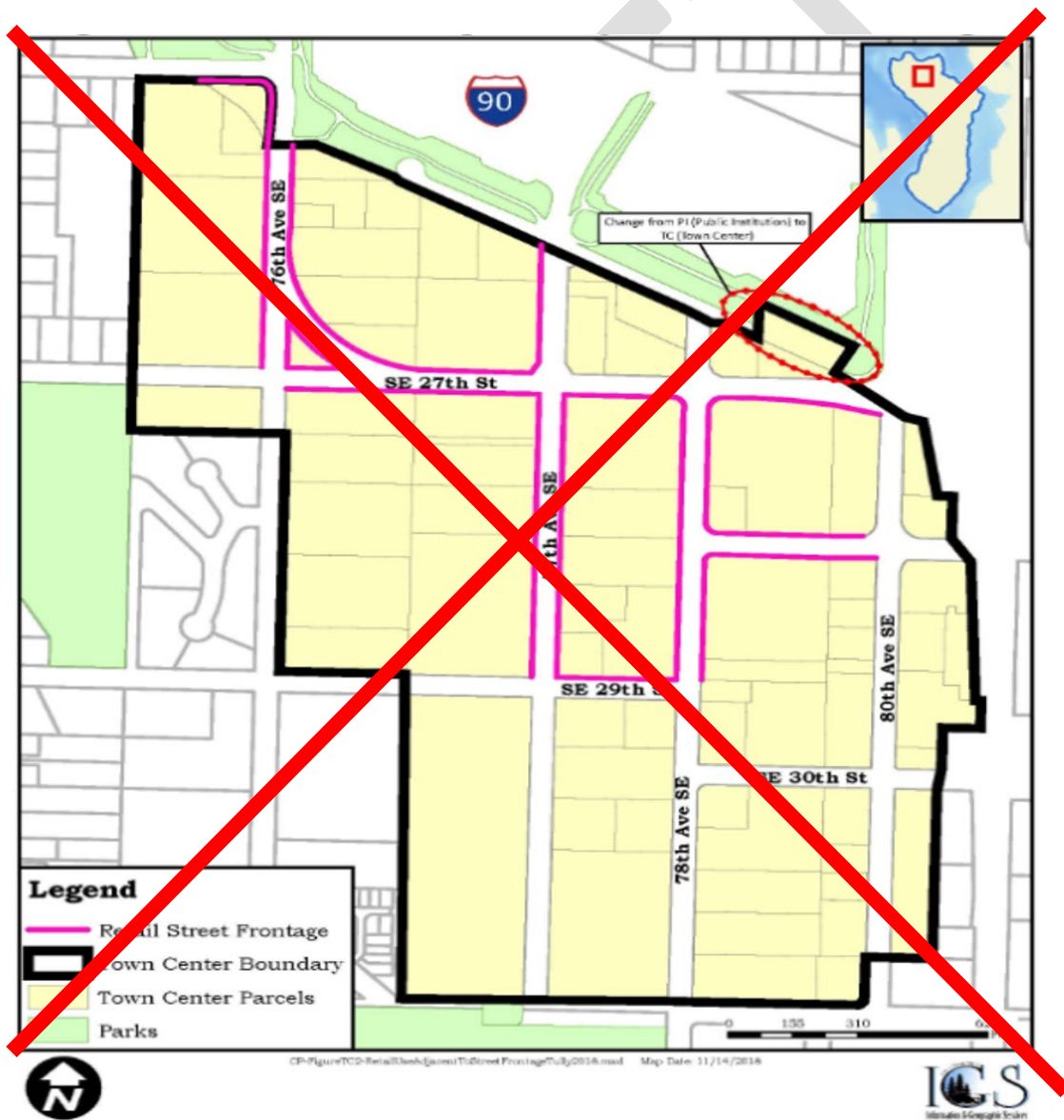
- 4.1 Street-level retail, office, and service uses should reinforce the pedestrian-oriented circulation system.
- 4.2 Retail street frontages (Figure TC-1) should be the area where the majority of retail activity is focused. Retail shops and restaurants should be the dominant use, with personal services 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.
- 7.1 ~~All Town Center streets should provide for safe and convenient multi-modal access to existing and future development in the Town Center.~~ [Comment PC-1]
- 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:**

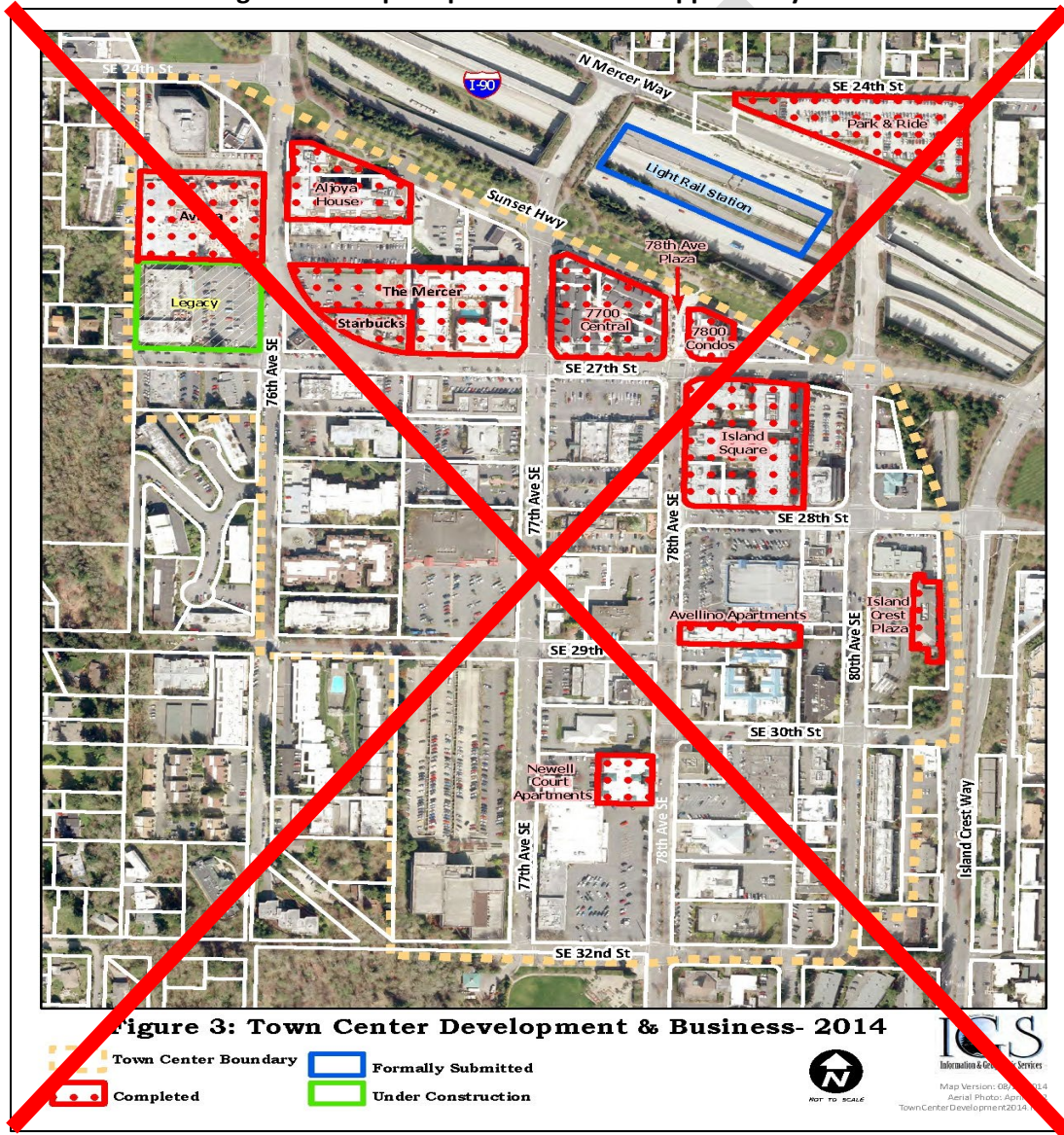
Have inviting, accessible outdoor spaces with seating, greenery, water features, and art that offer settings for outdoor entertainment and special events as well as for quiet contemplation.

- 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 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.
- 12.2 Encourage/incentivize the provision of on-site open space in private developments. This can include ~~but~~ allowing development agreements and payment of a calculated amount of money

as an optional alternative to dedication of land. In addition, encourage aggregation of smaller open spaces between parcels to create a more substantial open space. [Comment PC-1]

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.



Sustainability Green Building

GOAL 13:

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

Economic Development

GOAL 14:

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

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 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 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.
- 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 and Commercial Office zones. [Comment PC-2]
- 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 as multi-family and mixed-use zones. [Staff alternative proposed in response to Comment PC-2]~~
- 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 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 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 Eliminate unnecessary barriers and create exceptions and/or variance options to regulations that would otherwise prevent improvements to existing homes to allow owners to enjoy the full utility of existing lots, preserve value, and avoid the incentive to remove and replace existing homes. [Comment PC-1]

16.7 Ensure development regulations allow the improvement of existing homes and do not create incentives to remove or replace existing homes. [Staff proposed alternative in response to Comment PC-1]

GOAL 17:

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

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 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.

17.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the island. Development regulations ~~should reflect~~shall support the desire to modernize and retain viable and health social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations as community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island. [Comment PUB-1]

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.

18.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as natural 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. [Comment PC-1]

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.

18.4 The ecological functions of natural watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development. [Comment PC-1]

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.

18.5 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. [Comment PC-2, hard to see: the change is striking the 's' from "areas" on the second line]

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.
- ~~20.12 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.~~ [Comment PC-2]

20.13 Support the conservation of private property on Mercer Island through the use of conservation tools and programs including, but not limited to, the King County Public Benefit Rating System and Transfer of Development Right programs.

20.14 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.

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 27:

Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

- 27.1 ~~Establish and support annual data gathering, and reporting on,~~ Collect data and report on Mercer Island GHG emissions annually. Document progress toward emission reduction targets and progress consistent with King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).
- 27.2 Partner with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the community to mitigate climate change.
- 27.3 Provide public information and support to individual and community efforts to mitigate climate change.
- 27.4 Evaluate and prioritize actions to reduce GHG emissions.
- 27.5 Encourage the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles through the development of zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options and by reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips.
- 27.6 Promote an energy-efficient built environment by:
 - 27.6.1 Focusing development where utility and transportation investments have been made;
 - 27.6.2 Promoting the use of renewable and zero- and low-GHG emitting energy sources;
 - 27.6.3 Encouraging the use of carbon-efficient building materials and building design; 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

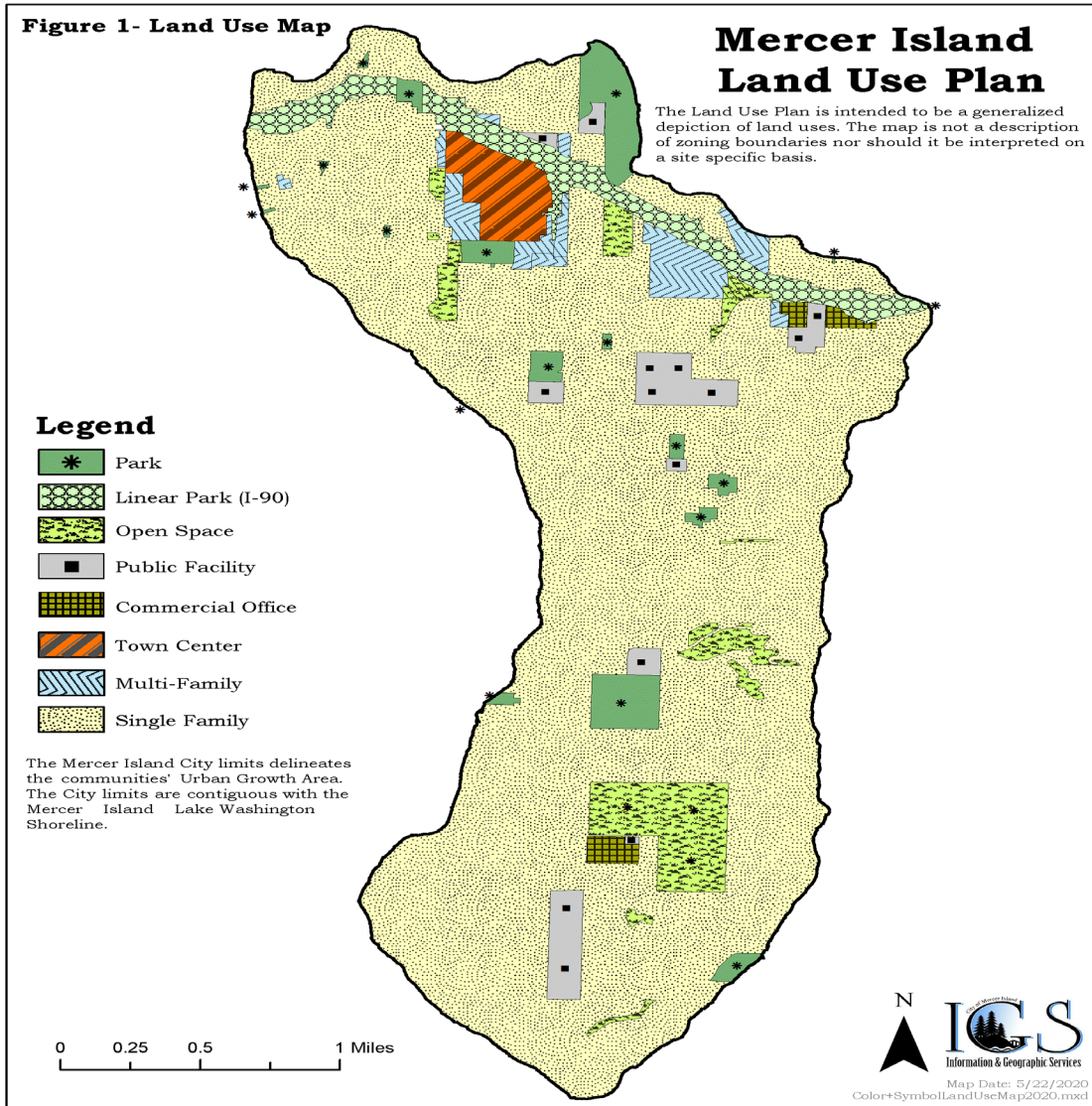
community vision, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations; environmental constraints; infrastructure and utility limitations; and its remaining supply of developable land.



VII. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land Use Designation	Implementing Zoning Designations	Description
Park	PI R-8.4 R-9.6	The park land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public use consistent with the adopted Parks and Recreation Plan.

	R-12 R-15	
Linear Park (I-90)	PI	The linear park (I-90) land use designation primarily contains the Interstate 90 right-of-way. The land use designation is also improved with parks and recreational facilities (e.g., Aubrey Davis park, I-90 Outdoor Sculpture Gallery, etc.) adjacent to and on the lid above the Interstate 90 freeway.
Open Space	PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-12 R-15	The open space use designation represents land within the City that should remain as predominantly unimproved open space consistent with the adopted Parks and Recreation Plan.
Commercial Office	C-O B	The commercial office land use designation represents commercial areas within Mercer Island, located outside of the Town Center, where the land use will be predominantly commercial office. Complementary land uses (e.g., healthcare uses, schools, places of worship, etc.) are also generally supported within this land use designation.
Neighborhood Business	PBZ	The neighborhood business land use designation represents commercial areas within Mercer Island, located outside of the Town Center, where the land uses will be predominantly a mix of small scale, neighborhood oriented business, office, service, public and residential uses.
Single Family Residential (R)	R-8.4 R-9.6 R-12 R-15	The single family residential land use designation (R) represents areas within Mercer Island where development will be predominantly single family residential neighborhoods. Complementary land uses (e.g., private recreation areas, schools, home businesses, public parks, etc.) are generally supported within this land use designation.
Multifamily Residential (MF)	MF-2 MF-2L MF-3	The multifamily residential land use (MF) represents areas within Mercer Island where the land use will be predominantly multifamily residential development. Complementary land uses (e.g., private recreation areas, schools, home businesses, public parks, etc.) are generally supported within this land use designation.
Town Center (TC)	TC	The Town Center land use designation represents the area where land uses consistent with the small town character and the heart of Mercer Island will be located. This land use designation supports a mix of uses including outdoor pedestrian spaces, residential, retail, commercial, mixed-use and office-oriented businesses.
Public Facility	C-O PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-15 TC	The public facility land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public uses, including but not limited to schools, community centers, City Hall, and municipal services.



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

Table 1. First Draft Land Use Element Planning Commission Question / Comment Matrix.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
PC-1	Michael Murphy	<p>There appears to be opposition to more residential density in the Town Center, yet there is also antipathy from a vocal minority to any increased density in the SF zones. Moreover, the refusal to even consider allowing minor density increases in the SF zones, such as townhomes, does nothing to contribute to the statewide housing shortage. The notion that a few high-end townhomes would destroy our SF neighborhoods is not credible. Allowing some townhome style developments in SF neighborhoods would give the City a greater ability to focus on commercial development in the Town Center, while still meeting or exceeding our housing growth goals under GMA. See Goals 15 & 16.</p>	
		<p>IV. Land Use Issues <i>“(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.”</i> This statement conflicts with the recent adoption of the Town Center code amendments. On the one hand, we are saying that preservation of existing patterns is not sustainable, then we adopt a code designed to achieve that result. See also Goal 2, 2.2 (page 14) and Goal 14, 14.10 (page 20).</p>	<p>This land use issue appears to be outdated. Striking this issue is appropriate.</p>
		<p>Goal 7, 7.1: <i>“7.1 All Town Center streets should provide for safe and convenient multi-modal access to existing and future development in the Town Center.”</i> Use of “all” here is unrealistic.</p>	<p>Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this goal as proposed, see second draft.</p>
		<p>Goal 12: “Encouraging” public spaces is inadequate. This needs to be stronger: we need to be strongly incentivizing the creation/dedication of such spaces and their acquisition.</p>	<p>Staff recommended amendment to Policy 12.2 is strengthen the public spaces language is included in the Second Draft of the element.</p>
		<p>Add a new paragraph to Goal 16 as follows: <i>“16.7 Eliminate unnecessary barriers and create exceptions and/or variance options to regulations that would otherwise prevent improvements to existing homes to allow owners to enjoy the full utility of existing lots, preserve value, and avoid the incentive to remove and replace existing homes.”</i></p>	<p>Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this policy as proposed in the comment or staff alternative, see second draft.</p>
		<p>Goal 1 . Modify 18.1 as follows: <i>“18.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as <u>natural</u> 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.”</i></p>	<p>Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this goal as proposed, see second draft.</p>
<p>Goal 1 . Modify 18.4 as follows: <i>“18.4 The ecological functions of <u>natural</u> watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development.”</i></p>	<p>Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this goal as proposed, see second draft.</p>		
PC-2	Adam Ragheb	<p>Text edits to introductory text on page 2.</p>	<p>Edits recommended for clarity were made to the second draft.</p>
		<p>Why are the data about pax car travel and building energy consumption removed? Do the car travel data include those transiting through MI along I-90, e.g. while on a trip from Bellevue to Seattle, or are the data only for O&D trips to/from MI? [page 5]</p>	<p>These paragraphs are proposed to be struck because the information on climate change planning will be out of date once the Climate Action Plan is adopted. The climate change section will be updated if needed after the Climate Action Plan is finished. Staff recommends waiting to make substantive edits to this text until the Climate Action Plan work is concluded.</p>
		<p>2024 periodic review....were amended? Did this already happen? If so, when was the 2024 periodic review (confusing since 2024 is in the future)? [page 5] update notes too when new data arrive from PSRC [Table 1, page 6]</p>	<p>The 2024 periodic review is referred to in the past tense because it will have occurred by the time the Land Use Element is adopted during that same periodic review. This comment will be addressed once the new data are provided from PSRC.</p>

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		Are these still current as of 2022? If so, I would say it is worth mentioning the date. [Table 2, page 7]	The date the data are current is implicit in the adoption date of the element. The area of each zone has not changed since 2014 and is not expected to change during the periodic review. As a result, the areas in Table 2 will be current as of adoption in 2024.
		maybe add a reference to the final figure in the document (the one that currently shows office space at south end QFC) [page 8, comment 1]	Figure 1. Land Use Map at the end of the Land Use Element designates areas for <i>future</i> land uses as opposed to describing existing land use. The text on page 8 is summarizing the <i>existing</i> land uses throughout the City. The text in this section does not need to match the future land use map because the map and text describe different things.
		Is this sentence still necessary? After COVID appeared, the importance of high-capacity transit systems I would argue declined as more people WFH or have hybrid work environments. [page 8, comment 2]	The sentence in question is explaining that the City is designated a “High-Capacity Transit” (HCT) jurisdiction in the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) <i>Vision 2050</i> planning document. The City is still categorized as an HCT jurisdiction in <i>Vision 2050</i> . No change is recommended.
		When did the amending process begin? Can we provide a reference to the report? If data through end of 2019 were used and analyzed over 2020 and released in 2021, that is a problem. If models were adjusted in late 2020 early 2021 to account for COVID trends, that is good. More details on their data assumptions needed or at least a link to them in my opinion. [page 8, comment 3]	<p>The text citation to the Urban Growth Capacity Report and King County Countywide Planning Policies in the Land Use Element should suffice. Adding links to reports in the Land Use Element is not recommended because these links can become out of date.</p> <p>The City is required to use the Countywide Planning Policies, including growth targets, and the analysis of development capacity from the Urban Growth Capacity Report for the purpose of determining whether there is sufficient development capacity to accommodate the projected growth through 2044. COVID was a major disruption to the economy, including development, but its lasting effects on development capacity are unclear and may not be as significant in the twenty-year planning period considered in the Comprehensive Plan. The 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report is a point in time projection of development capacity given the amount existing development, zoning regulations, environmental conditions, and development in the pipeline. The COVID pandemic may have slowed the completion of development in the pipeline but does not change the amount of units in the pipeline or decrease the supply of developable land, zoning capacity, or environmental conditions.</p>
		Should we note that this does not account for any limitations of our utility infrastructure such as water and/or electricity? Would accommodating these new units push more intersections into needing to be upgraded to meet minimum levels of service? [page 10, comment 1]	Utility capacity is considered in the Utilities Element. Capital facility capacity is considered in the Capital Facilities Element. Transportation capacity is considered in the Transportation Element. The capacity analyses included with these elements, including level of service analysis, must be based on the same land use assumptions in the Land Use Element. These topic-specific comprehensive plan elements are the best place to get into the granular detail of accommodating growth and address the capacity impacts. All three elements will be updated during the periodic review.
		Perhaps worth noting that there are ongoing discussions/concerns about current Town Center parking to support local commerce. [page 10, comment 2]	<p>The text on page 10 is describing the housing capacity in zones throughout the City, including Town Center. Discussion of parking in Town Center could be added elsewhere in the document, possibly the Town Center Land Use Issues list on page 13 of the Land Use Element. It may not be as important to include this in the Land Use Element for two reasons: (1) parking in Town Center as it relates to local businesses can be addressed in the Economic Development Element, and (2) the current discussions of Town Center parking are likely to be resolved by the time the 2024 periodic review is adopted.</p> <p>The upcoming Economic Development Element is expected to address parking as it relates to businesses in commercial zones like Town Center. The Economic Development Element will have specific policies for the City in regard to supporting local businesses.</p>

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		<p>May also be worth mentioning that existing or future statewide blanket laws may impact this number of units too (e.g. where our state representatives engaged in "not good public policy" on HB 1782 and SB 5670 per Mayor Nice's letter) despite City's best planning efforts. [page 11, comment 1]</p>	<p>It is possible that changes to the state law can affect City housing policies. If those changes amend our housing growth target before the 2024 periodic review, the target will need to be updated before the update is adopted. It is unlikely that the legislature will make changes to the state law that would affect the growth target during the 2024 periodic review, given that many cities and counties are already working on this update. Change would likely affect later periodic reviews.</p> <p>The City will be getting an affordable housing target in the coming months, as required by E2SHB 1220. This will probably be addressed primarily during the work on the Housing Element. The Planning Commission is expected to start working the Housing Element early next year, after the Housing Work Group has completed a draft of the Housing Element. More information on the affordable housing target will be provided at that time.</p>
		<p>Assumptions in projection? Date projections were made? [page 11, comment 2]</p>	<p>This comment is on the PSRC housing data section, which will be updated once the data are available from PSRC. This comment will be addressed at that time.</p>
		<p>is "typical suburban sprawl-like" a technical term? If not, it does not sound very objective to me (implies low density w/large parking lots is not desirable and we should build build build). [page 13, comment 1]</p>	<p>The text of Town Center Land Use Issue 1 can be amended. Michael Murphy's comment (PC-1) proposes striking this issue from the list. Given the changes in Town Center since the last time this list was update, it may be appropriate to strike this issue from the list.</p> <p>Sprawl is a nebulous term, but the Growth Management Act (GMA) has a stated goal of reducing sprawl. See Statewide Planning Goal 2 in RCW 36.70A.020(2):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“(2) Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.”</p> <p>The GMA does not establish a definition of sprawl in RCW 36.70A.030. Sprawl being poorly defined and is a poor descriptor of the relatively-dense Town Center, striking this land use issue seems prudent.</p>
		<p>suggest edit: "disrupting the character as much" renting out ADUs will still affect the residential character as there will likely be more vehicles parked on the roads and more churn of residents.</p>	<p>Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this policy as proposed, see second draft.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the development standards for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) established in Mercer Island City Code (MICC) 19.02.030 have parking standards to limit the likelihood of ADU residents using street parking and an owner-occupancy requirement. The impacts listed in this comment are addressed in the development code.</p>
		<p>Do these transit connections now exist? I personally haven't had any issues and have observed significant transit development recently. [page 13, Outside Town Center Land Use Issue 7]</p>	<p>Land Use Issue 7 is pointing to the lack of pedestrian and transit connections between areas outside of Town Center and Town Center. There are existing connections between these places, but it would be challenging to get from many places in the City to Town Center without taking a car. This issue seems to still be something the City ought to focus on, especially as we continue to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse-gas-producing single-occupant car trips.</p>
		<p>Isn't restaurant seating the subject of more detailed conversations? Suggest marking this for review to ensure it is consistent with any upcoming detailed discussions. [page 17, Goal 7]</p>	<p>Outdoor dining on sidewalks in Town Center is currently allowed by an interim ordinance. It is likely that outdoor dining will continue to be allowed on sidewalks in Town Center after the City adopts permanent regulations in the next year. Permanent outdoor dining regulations are expected to come before the Planning Commission early next year.</p>

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		Do we have a definition of CCHs? [page 21, Policy 15.2]	The question is where “compact courtyard homes” are defined. Compact courtyard homes are not currently defined in the plan or development code. Compact courtyard homes are typically a cluster of smaller scale homes (sometimes called cottages) centered around a landscaped communal space. These typically occur at a higher density than five dwellings per acre.
		reword to articulate that this C/O zone has already been added, right? I read this as last time document was updated the C/O zone was a new addition? [page 21, Policy 15.3]	Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this policy as proposed in the comment or the staff alternative, see second draft.
		Why accommodate the projected share as determined by the County? Why not respond to actual demand and MI residents' wishes/preferences? [page 21, Policy 16.2]	Coordination of comprehensive plans at both the regional and County level is a GMA requirement (RCW 36.70A.100). Through the Countywide Planning Policies, King County coordinates growth projections for cities and towns within the County. The City is involved with the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) growth target allocation process, allowing the City a seat at the table when the County allocates growth. The City must accommodate the projected growth as decided through the statewide, regional (PSRC), and Countywide (GMPC) processes, see RCW 36.70A.115 . The Mercer Island community, through its elected officials, can respond to the growth targets in deciding how to respond to the allocated growth.
		These [ADUs] have already been promoted by now, right? [page 21, Policy 16.4]	The City has adopted development regulations for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). A policy like 16.4 is useful for describing the policy direction for ADUs. If the City eventually amends the ADU development code, this policy will help provide direction for how that code might be amended.
		15.3 on page 21 above defines this as "C/O," not CO. Ensure consistency and defining the acronym only the first time between 15.3, 17.2, 17.3, and the graphic/diagram. [page 22, Policy 17.2]	The recommended approach is to remove the acronym from the policy language. It is unnecessary to include the acronym when naming the zone, and removing it will eliminate potential inconsistencies.
		area or areas'? [page 23, Policy 18.5]	Striking the ‘s’ from “areas” would be better grammar. Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this policy as proposed, see second draft.
		Is this still being pursued, has it been achieved, tabled, or abandoned? [page 26, Policy 20.12]	These leases have already been procured. This policy can be struck, see attached draft. Similar policies are already included in other park-specific plans. The City will continue to pursue lease agreements to develop trails consistent with those park plans. Including this policy is unnecessary.
		Consistent with Arts Council? [page 27, Goal 23]	This goal as written in the existing Land Use Element should be consistent with the Arts Council work. No change is needed.
		If we are collecting GHG data annually, then why were the data in transportation element removed? Makes sense to remove if a pointer to the annual GHG emissions data is added...maybe add the pointer since the data will be updated annually and the Transportation and Land Use documents are updated much less frequently? [page 29, Policy 26.1]	The data can be removed from the elements because it will be updated more frequently (annually) than either the Land Use or Transportation Elements. Adopting the Climate Action Plan by reference in the Land Use Element should create the linkage with other climate planning efforts the City is and will be undertaking. As noted in the first draft, the climate change policies will be reviewed once the City has completed the Climate Action Plan and before the 2024 Periodic Review is adopted.
		This is continue to partner with, right? I see a lot of K4C signs etc. [page 29, Policy 26.2]	Yes, in this policy “partner” implies a continuation of the existing partnership with King County Climate Change Collaboration (K4C).
		here, yes, we articulate growth may have infrastructure and utility limitations - can these words be copied to up above where growth targets are talked about to clarify that targets do not account for these limitations? [page 31, Policy 29.6]	See response to page 11, comment 1 above.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
		keep consistent with references in 15.3 and 2x in 17....CO or C/O [page 32, comment 1]	Here the acronym should be "C-O" to be consistent with the acronym used in the zoning code. This is a zoning district, not a land use designation (land use designations are shown on Figure 1 – Land Use Map) and should be consistent with the acronym used in the zoning code. Where applicable, staff proposes removing the abbreviation and just spelling out Commercial Office.
		is this the previously-mentioned C/O or CO...or is this different from Commercial Office? (am guessing it is the same...if so, make consistent w/earlier references) [page 32, comment 2]	See response to page 32, comment 1 above.
		Update diagram to reflect correction as discussed during briefing - south QFC/Starbucks area is not commercial office. [page 33, Figure – Land Use Map]	<p>The land use designations shown on Figure 1 – Land Use Map are descriptors of the future land use that area is designated for, rather than a description of the current land use.</p> <p>Figure 1 was last updated in 2022. Due to a scrivener's error, the Figure 1 in the first draft the Planning Commission received in July did not reflect the 2022 update. Figure 1 in the attached second draft has the updated version. The correct version of Figure 1 shows the land use designation for the south end shopping area is "Neighborhood Business."</p>

Table 2. First Draft Land Use Element Public Question / Comment Matrix.

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
PUB-1	Stroum Jewish Community Center C/O Amy Lavin	17.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulations should reflect <u>shall support</u> the desire to <u>modernize and</u> 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	Planning Commission can decide whether to amend this policy as proposed, see second draft. The proposed amendment would make this policy more proscriptive by replacing “should reflect” with “shall support.”

To: Adam Zack
 From: Mike Murphy
 Date: 8/30/22
 Re: Comments on Draft Land Use & Transp. Elements

Land Use Element:

- There appears to be opposition to more residential density in the Town Center, yet there is also antipathy from a vocal minority to *any* increased density in the SF zones. Moreover, the refusal to even consider allowing minor density increases in the SF zones, such as townhomes, does nothing to contribute to the statewide housing shortage. The notion that a few high-end townhomes would destroy our SF neighborhoods is not credible. Allowing some townhome style developments in SF neighborhoods would give the City a greater ability to focus on commercial development in the Town Center, while still meeting or exceeding our housing growth goals under GMA. See Goals 15 & 16.
- IV. Land Use Issues
“(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.”
 This statement conflicts with the recent adoption of the Town Center code amendments. On the one hand, we are saying that preservation of existing patterns is not sustainable, then we adopt a code designed to achieve that result. *See also* Goal 2, 2.2 (page 14) and Goal 14, 14.10 (page 20).
- Goal 7, 7.1: *“7.1 All Town Center streets should provide for safe and convenient multi-modal access to existing and future development in the Town Center.”* Use of “all” here is unrealistic.
- Goal 12: “Encouraging” public spaces is inadequate. This needs to be stronger: we need to be strongly incentivizing the creation/dedication of such spaces and their acquisition.
- Add a new paragraph to Goal 16 as follows:
“16.7 Eliminate unnecessary barriers and create exceptions and/or variance options to regulations that would otherwise prevent improvements to existing homes to allow owners to enjoy the full utility of existing lots, preserve value, and avoid the incentive to remove and replace existing homes.”
- Goal 18. Modify 18.1 as follows:
“18.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as natural 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.”
- Goal 18. Modify 18.4 as follows:
“18.4 The ecological functions of natural watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development.”

Transp. Element:

- The Westbound off-ramp from I-90 to ICW is extremely hazardous, with back-up onto I-90 at all hours of the day. This needs immediate attention.

Goals and policies:

Goal 4, 4.1: How do we “maintain existing and encourage new public transit service on the Island?”

How do we “provide convenient transit service for travel on Mercer Island and enhance connections to regional transit stations including the future Link light rail station?” and

How do we “continue to expand innovative transit services including demand responsive transit for the general public, subscription bus, or custom bus services?”

Goal 11, 11.1: What are “flexible parking requirements” and what do they accomplish?

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 2017, 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.

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 (Page 4)

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 2024 – 2044	2,000 1,239
Adjusted growth target, 2006—2035	2,320
Employment Growth Target (in jobs)	
Original Employment growth target (in jobs), 2006—2031 2024 – 2044	1,000 1,300
Adjusted growth target, 2006—2035	1,160

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL CAPACITY

According to the Puget Sound Regional Council, as of March 20120 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.

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

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 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.
- (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.
- (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.

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.

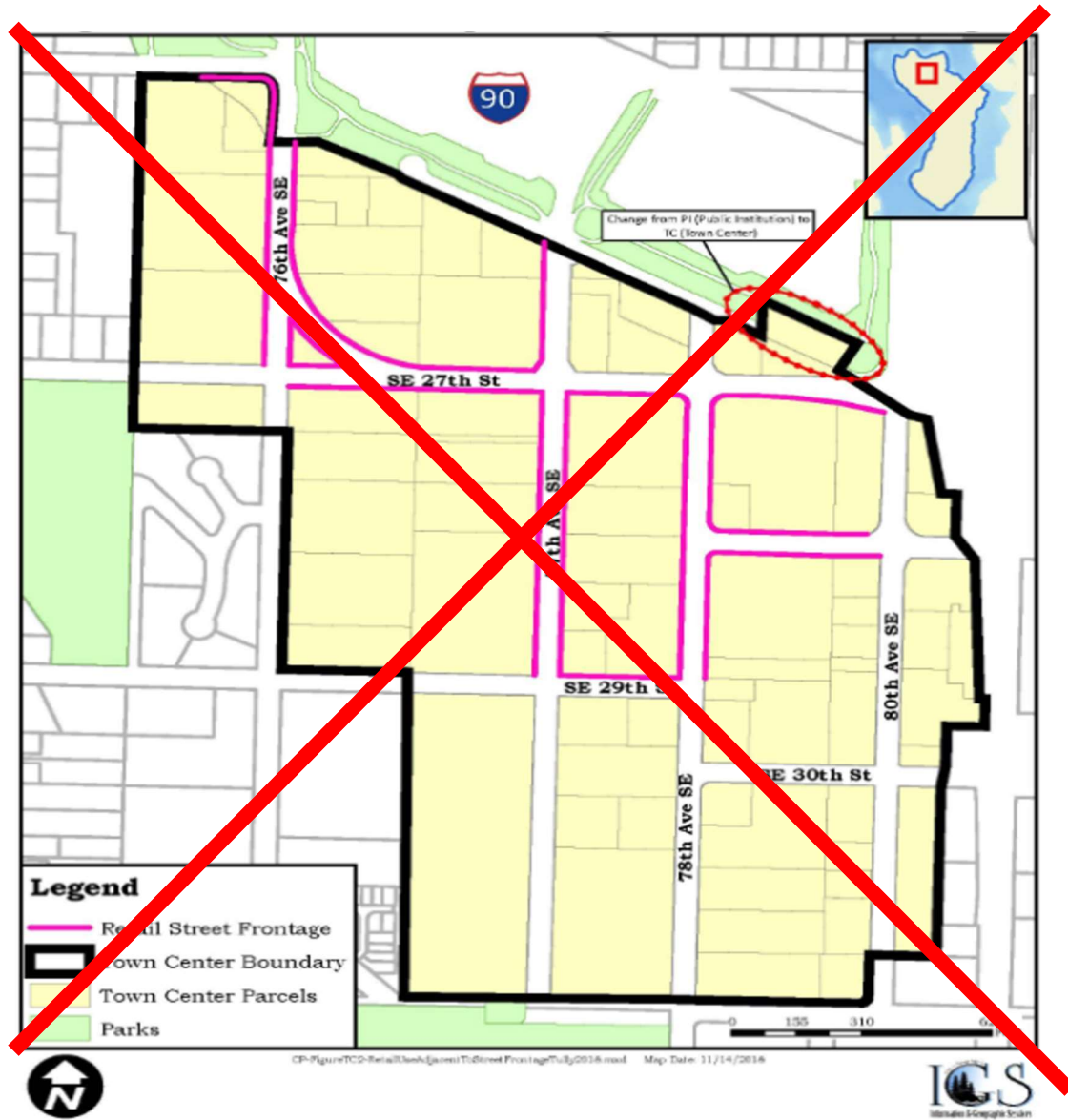
- 4.1 Street-level retail, office, and service uses should reinforce the pedestrian-oriented circulation system.
- 4.2 Retail street frontages (Figure TC-1) should be the area where the majority of retail activity is focused. Retail shops and restaurants should be the dominant use, with personal services 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.

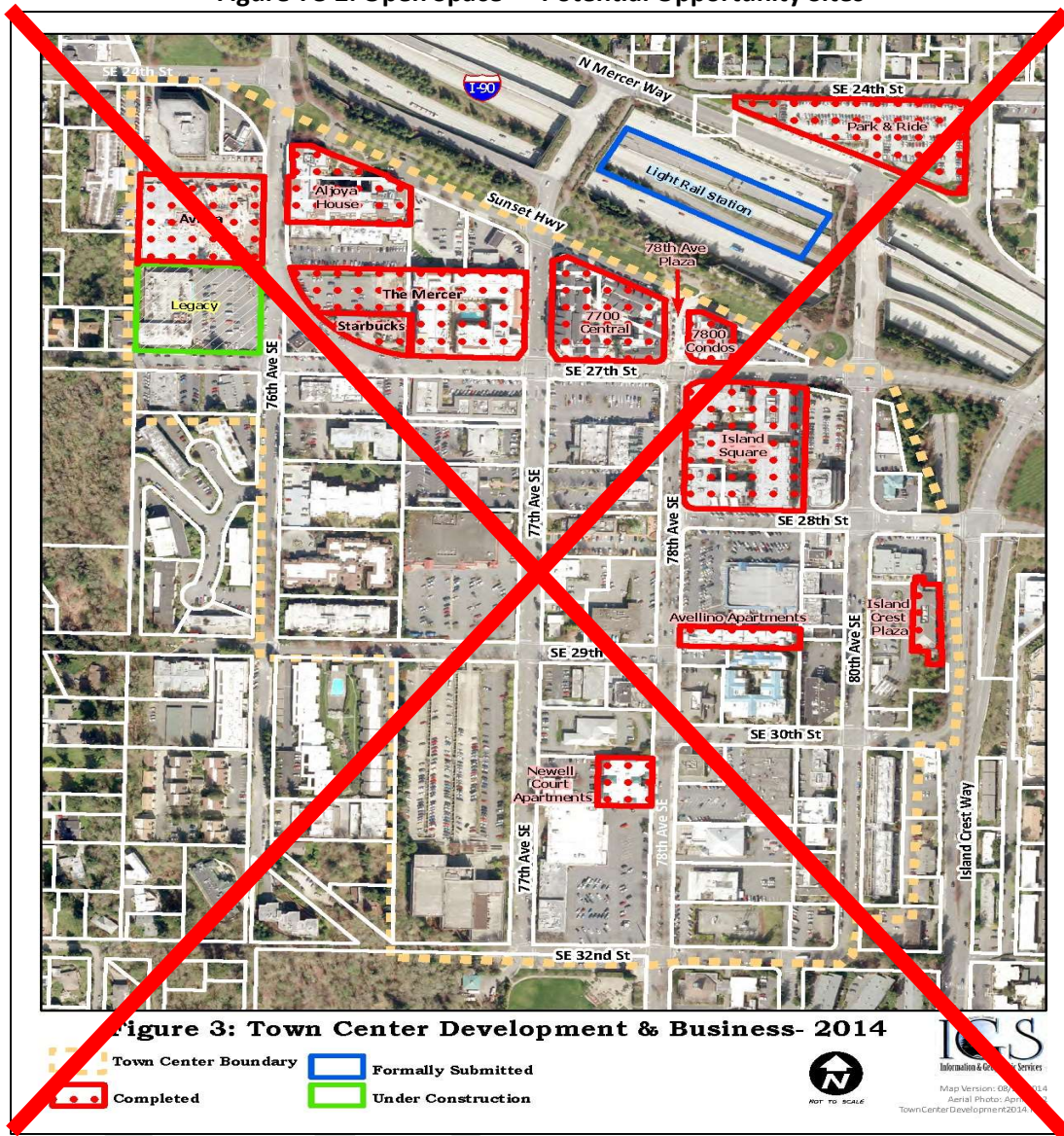
Public Realm

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 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.
- 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). The correct map will be inserted into the next draft.

Sustainability Green Building

GOAL 13:

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

Economic Development

GOAL 14:

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

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~~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 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 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.
- 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 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 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.

GOAL 17:

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

- 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 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 the desire to retain viable and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations as community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

GOAL 18:

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

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

- 18.5 The City shall utilize best available science during the development and implementation of critical area 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 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.
- 20.14 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.

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 27:

Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

- 27.1 Establish and support annual data gathering, and reporting on, Collect data and report on Mercer Island GHG emissions annually. Document progress toward emission reduction targets and progress consistent with King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C).
- 27.2 Partner with the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and the community to mitigate climate change.
- 27.3 Provide public information and support to individual and community efforts to mitigate climate change.
- 27.4 Evaluate and prioritize actions to reduce GHG emissions.
- 27.5 Encourage the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles through the development of zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options and by reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips.
- 27.6 Promote an energy-efficient built environment by:
 - 27.6.1 Focusing development where utility and transportation investments have been made;
 - 27.6.2 Promoting the use of renewable and zero- and low-GHG emitting energy sources;
 - 27.6.3 Encouraging the use of carbon-efficient building materials and building design; 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

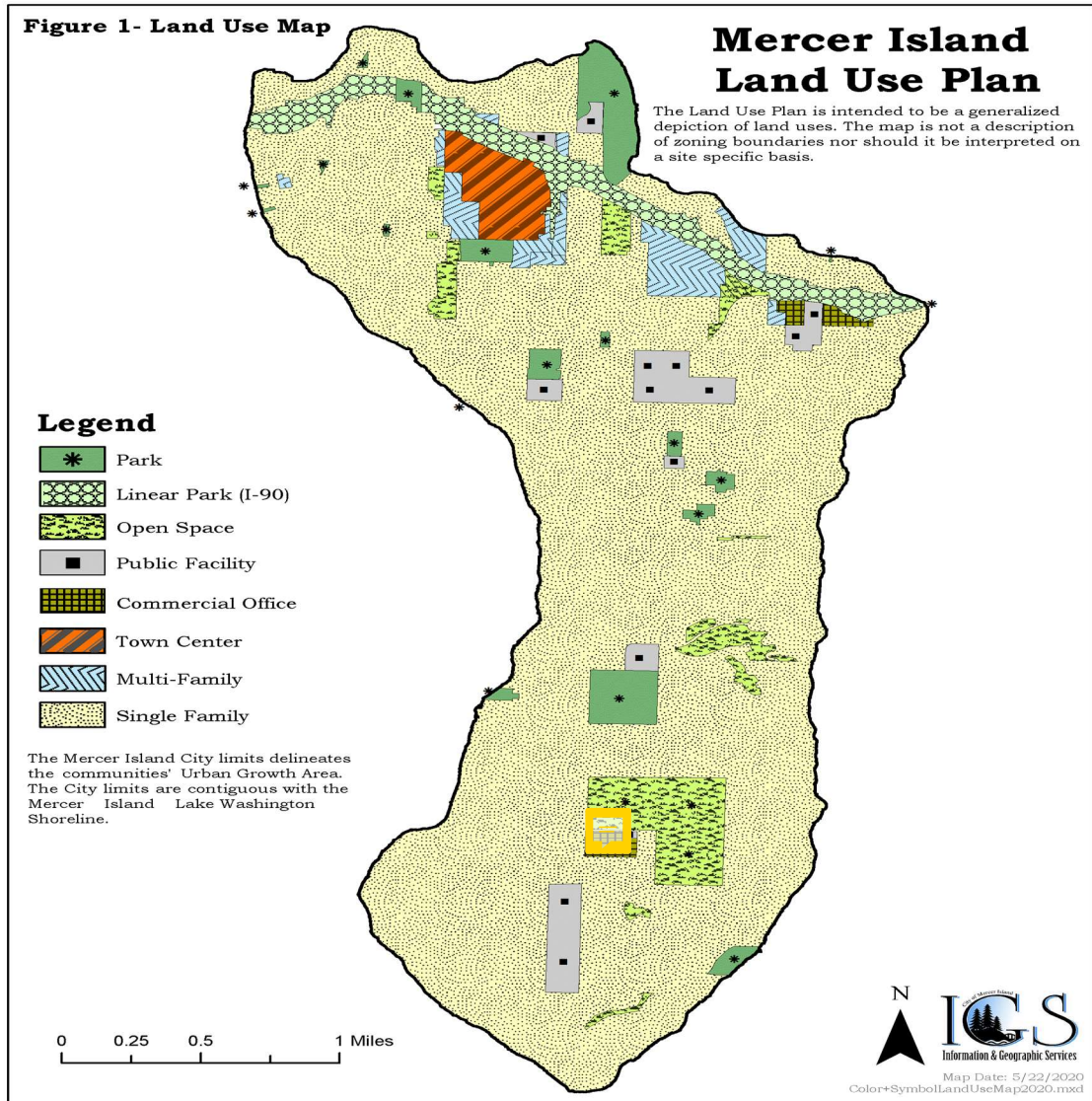
advocate for future growth allocations from the GMPC which will be consistent with its community vision, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations; environmental constraints; infrastructure and utility limitations; and its remaining supply of developable land.



VII. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Land Use Designation	Implementing Zoning Designations	Description
Park	PI R-8.4 R-9.6	The park land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public use consistent with the adopted Parks and Recreation Plan.

	R-12 R-15	
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	 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-C  PI R-8.4 R-9.6 R-15 TC	The public facility land use designation represents land within the City that is intended for public uses, including but not limited to schools, community centers, City Hall, and municipal services.



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