
PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Agenda

Council Chambers- Mercer Island City Hall
9611 SE 36TH STREET | MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040
PHONE: 206.275.7605 | www.mercergov.org



Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Planning Commissioners

Carolyn Boatsman

Tiffin Goodman, Chair

Daniel Hubbell

Jennifer Mechem

Lucia Pirzio-Biroli

Craig Reynolds, Vice Chair

Ted Weinberg

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

6:00 PM

MINUTES

6:05 PM

August 5, 2019

APPEARANCES

6:10 PM

REGULAR BUSINESS

6:20 PM

Agenda Item #1: 2019 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Review draft Comprehensive Plan amendments on the 2019 docket

Staff Person: Robin Proebsting

OTHER BUSINESS

Directors Report

Planned Absences for Future Meetings

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: September 4, 2019

ADJOURN

8:00 PM

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES



Wednesday, August 7, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

The Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Goodman at 6:05 pm in the City Hall Council Chambers at 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

ROLL CALL

Chair Tiffin Goodman, Vice Chair Craig Reynolds, Commissioners, Carolyn Boatsman, Daniel Hubbell, Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, and Ted Weinberg were present. Commissioner Jennifer Mechem was absent

STAFF PRESENT

Evan Maxim, CPD Director, Andrea Larson, Senior Administrative Assistant, Mona Davis, Planning Manager, and Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner.

MINUTES

It was moved by Reynolds, seconded by Boatsman to:

Approve the July 31, 2019 minutes.

Passed as amended 5-0-1

APPEARANCES

There were no appearances

REGULAR BUSINESS

Agenda Item #1: 2019 Minor Code Amendments

Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner, provided a presentation on the 2019 Minor Code Amendments.

The Planning Commission reviewed the code amendments and provided feedback to staff.

The Commission requested for staff to use consistency in terminology for setbacks regarding depth and width.

The Commission stated that for height limits for multifamily that MF-2L should be like single family height limits of 30 feet on the downhill side and that MF-2 and MF-3 should be similar to how Town Center height limits are measured.

The Commission indicated that on review cycles an intent sentence should be modified to include "in the absences of a good faith effort to address concerns..."

The Commission took a break until 7:25pm.

Evan Maxim, CPD Director, gave a presentation on Code Amendment Docket Procedures element of the minor code amendments.

The Commission discussed the code amendment and provided feedback to staff.

The Commission indicated that they would like to see notice added to the paper and that the title reflects code and comprehensive plan amendments.

OTHER BUSINESS

Evan Maxim, CPD Director, gave an update on the Planning Commission Schedule

PLANNED ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Commissioner Pirzio-Biroli will be absent August 20 & 21.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The next Planning Commission meeting is on August 21, 2019 at 6:00PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50PM.

CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

9611 SE 36TH STREET | MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040

PHONE: 206.275.7605 | www.mercergov.org



PLANNING COMMISSION

To: Planning Commission

From: Robin Proebsting, Senior Planner

Date: August 15, 2019

RE: Comprehensive Plan Amendments 2019

SUMMARY

This memo introduces revised draft comprehensive plan policies, building from the Planning Commission's review and input at its July 31, 2019 meeting. The Planning Commission has a public hearing scheduled on October 2, 2019 and the goal of your upcoming meeting is to provide staff with the guidance needed to create a public hearing draft.

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission last discussed the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Amendments on July 31, 2019 and provided input to staff on policy direction. A revised set of policies, developed with Planning Commission input, can be found in Attachment 1. Note that draft changes are presented in strikethrough/underline format, to show the proposed changes in the context of the existing plan.

The changes made in the current draft are summarized below:

- Item 1 has been updated to show (rather than simply describe) all proposed changes.
- Item 2 contains revised policies developed by Commissioner Boatsman that integrate the staff-developed July 31, 2019 draft with Commissioner Boatsman's July 31, 2019 draft.
- Item 4 has been updated to incorporate the Planning Commission's input from the July 31, 2019 meeting.

Attachment 2 contains draft policies on Item 3, regarding economic development, proposed by Vice Chair Reynolds with suggested edits from staff. These edits have not yet been reviewed by the Vice Chair. Staff have concerns about advancing this scope of economic development policies at this stage of review, and have identified three options for the Planning Commission's consideration:

1. Move Item 3 to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Amendment docket (recommended);
2. Consolidate and narrow the scope of the draft amendments; or
3. Proceed with the review of the draft policies.

Staff will prompt a discussion on these options at the meeting on August 21st.

NEXT STEPS

Please review the attached materials and come prepared to provide direction to staff at the August 21, 2019 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Comprehensive Plan Policies for 2019 Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Docket
2. Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan regarding Draft Economic Development Goals

Draft comprehensive plan goals and policies

August 21, 2019

Item No. 1: Remove Specific Town Center subarea designations from the Land Use Element

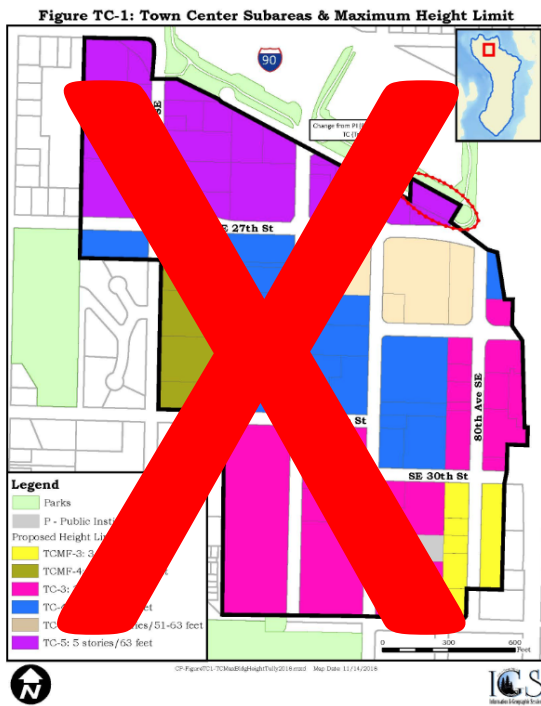
Suggested Amendments:

Land Use Goal 3:

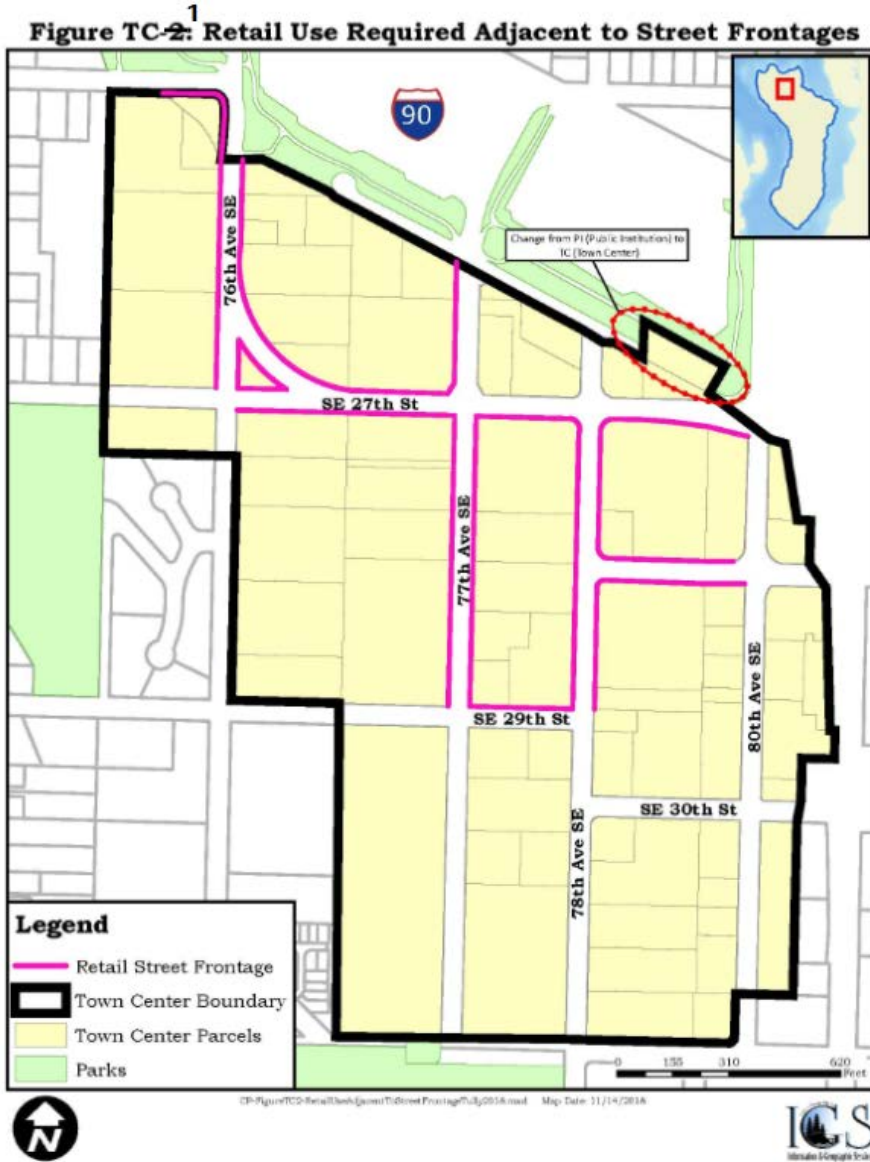
Have a mixture of building types, styles and ages that reflects the evolution of the Town Center over time, with human-scaled buildings, varied height, set-backs and step-backs and attractive facades.

3.1 Buildings taller than two stories may be permitted if appropriate public amenities and enhanced design features are provided.

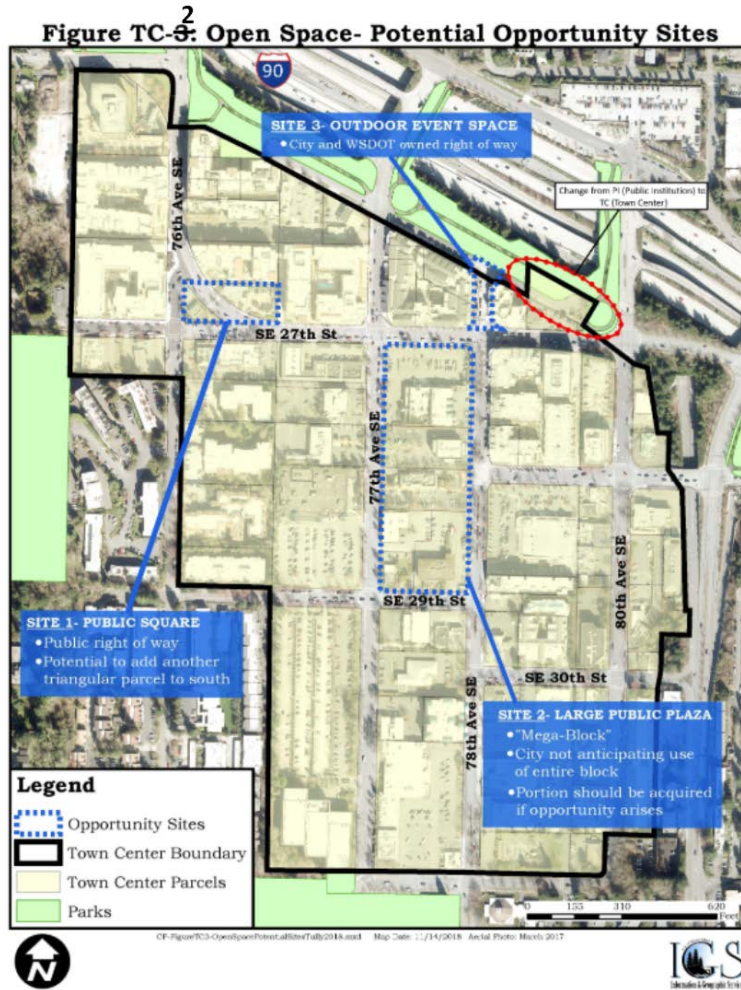
3.2 Locate taller buildings on the north end of the Town Center and step down building height through the center to lower heights on the south end, bordering Merceddale Park. [See Figure TC-1.](#)



4.2 Retail street frontages (Figure TC-2¹) 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. [...]



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-3-2 and described below. These opportunity sites should not preclude the identification of other sites, should new opportunities or circumstances arise.



Attachment 1

Item No. 2: Establish goals and policies to prevent and/or mitigate the impacts of climate change

Land Use Element

I. Introduction [...]

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 Council committed to a sustainability work program as well as a specific climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2050, which was consistent with King County and Washington State targets. Later in 2007, the Council set an interim emissions reduction goal (often called a “milepost”) for City operations of 5% by 2012.

From 2010 to 2014, 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.

Specific aActions 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.

~~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 6-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.~~

Climate change is a paramount challenge of this generation and 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 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions sharply.

King County and cities formed the innovative King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) in 2014 to coordinate and enhance local government climate efforts. They have charted opportunities for joint action to reduce GHG emissions and accelerate progress toward a clean and sustainable future. Mercer Island is a member of K4C and seeks opportunities to partner on outreach to decision-makers and the public, adopt consistent standards and strategies, share solutions, and cooperate on seeking funding

Attachment 1

[resources. In 2016, Mercer Island, along with King County and other partners in K4C was recognized with a national Climate Leadership Award from EPA.](#)

[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, 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.](#)

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[The City has been active in reducing its own carbon footprint by reducing fleet emissions and energy use in facilities and lighting, and by minimizing and managing waste more sustainably. The City has installed electric vehicle charging stations, banned plastic bags, and successfully piloted bike share and ride hailing services among many other actions. In 2017, the City confirmed a major commitment to clean power by announcing its contract with Puget Sound Energy for 2019 through 2039, in which it will buy 20 years of clean wind power to replace its current mix of electricity, covering its annual municipal usage of three million kilowatt-hours.](#)

[Community GHG emissions have been inventoried and reported to K4C and the public though, from 2016 through 2018, staff was not able to compile and report data due to heavy work load. The major sources of GHG on Mercer Island have been found to be passenger car travel \(estimated at 40% of total\) and building energy consumption \(48% residential plus commercial\).](#)

[Community partners, IslandVision, a non-profit 501\(c\)3 organization that encourages and supports sustainable practices on Mercer Island, contracted with a GHG consultant, Lightstone Consulting, LLC, to prepare and share with the City a technical analysis to promote government efforts in climate action planning. This effort aligns with IslandVision's mission and suggests fundamental approaches for progress in reducing GHG emissions from the community. Other community groups, such a Sustainable Mercer Island, have provided input and have asked what they can do right now.](#)

[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.](#)

[Goal 28: Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions](#)

[28.1 Collaborate actively with King County and cities as a member of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration \(K4C\) to increase the efficiency of efforts to reduce GHG emissions.](#)

[28.2 Dedicate staff to represent the City in K4C and to coordinate City programs and actions to mitigate climate change.](#)

[28.3 Update and adopt Mercer Island GHG reduction targets consistent with K4C, as amended.](#)

Attachment 1

28.4 Prioritize for implementation those K4C-recommended strategies that are relevant and feasible for Mercer Island.

28.5 Calculate annual Mercer Island GHG emissions from vehicle travel, building uses, and other sources using a standardized method and report findings to K4C and the public.

28.6 Engage individuals, community organizations, and businesses in a collaborative effort to mitigate climate change.

28.7 Ensure that GHG reductions are worth the investment of resources. A standard system of vetting and scoring the effectiveness of GHG reduction strategies should be developed and used to set a priority for all actions. Such factors as potential GHG reduction, cost, technical barriers, community acceptance, and legal requirements should be considered.

28.8 Prioritize for early action the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles.

- a) Work with the community to develop options with wide acceptance for getting from home to the park and ride (last mile solutions). These options should be popular enough in use to substantially reduce aggregate GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. The program should be in place by 2023 when light rail arrives.
- b) Promote electric vehicles.
- c) Promote transportation alternatives that do not emit GHG.

28.9 Prioritize for early action the reduction of energy use in in buildings.

- a) Determine the best methods to ensure a transition from natural gas to electricity for the energy needs of new buildings and retrofit of existing buildings as the regional source of power moves entirely away from fossil fuels. Seek changes in building codes, as necessary, to accommodate this transition.
- b) Encourage and provide incentives for energy-saving retrofits of existing homes and buildings, in partnership with Puget Sound Energy and other organizations.
- c) Determine the best methods to foster the use of construction materials that embody the least carbon feasible in manufacture and use. Seek building code changes, as necessary, to accommodate this transition.
- d) Consider adopting a local building energy-benchmarking and disclosure ordinance.
- e) Support green power community challenges and other programs to reduce building energy use.

28.10 Promote renewable power generation in the community.

- a) Support campaigns to install solar energy and other power generation methods.
- b) Continue to offer streamlined renewable energy installation permitting, when possible, incentives, and other means to encourage power generation.
- c) Seek building code changes, as necessary, to accommodate community renewable power generation.

Attachment 1

[28.11 Focus future land development where utility and transportation investments have been made and encourage land use patterns to be carbon efficient.](#)

[28.12 Evaluate the potential for the community to increase sequestration of carbon and provide shade by expanding its tree canopy and vegetation cover. Evaluate methods to increase community participation in promoting tree health. Consider the development of an Urban Forest Management Plan to update City canopy assessment, set community goals, and adopt best strategies for implementation.](#)

[Goal 29: Develop a Climate Action Plan.](#)

[A more comprehensive examination of actions to reduce GHG should be completed. A Climate Action Plan Appendix should be added to the Comprehensive Plan. It should summarize City actions, to date, and catalog explicit climate goals and policies from the Comprehensive Plan. It should incorporate additional goals, policies, and actions, as adopted. Progress of implementation should be monitored and the Climate Action Plan updated in response to changing conditions and new opportunities.](#)

[Goal 30: Adapt to climate change.](#)

[Place the highest priority on mitigating climate change but respond to indications of impacts in the community that may require an adaptive response.](#)

[...]

Utility Element

Solid Waste Policies

5.1 All new construction, with the exception of single-family homes, shall be required to provide adequate space for on-site storage and collection of recyclables pursuant to Ordinance A-99.

5.2 The City shall actively promote and support recycling, composting and waste reduction techniques among the single-family, multi-family and commercial sectors.

5.3 The City shall, whenever practical, provide convenient opportunities for residents to recycle appliances, tires, bulky yard debris and other hard-to-recycle materials.

5.4 The City shall actively promote and support the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste produced by households and businesses. The use of alternate products that are less hazardous or produce less waste shall be encouraged.

5.5 City departments and facilities shall actively participate in waste reduction and recycling programs.

5.6 All hazardous waste generated by City departments and facilities shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable county, state, regional and federal regulations.

5.7 The City shall actively enforce the Solid Waste Code and other ordinances and regulations that prohibit the illegal dumping of yard debris and other types of waste.

Attachment 1

5.8 The City shall play an active role in regional solid waste planning, with the goal of promoting uniform regional approaches to solid waste management.

5.9 The City shall actively promote and support the recycling, re-use or composting of construction, demolition and land-clearing debris wherever feasible.

[5.10 Strive to eliminate solid waste disposed of via landfill or incinerator in favor of recycling, reuse, and organics composting, and see to meet or exceed King County diversion goals.](#)

[...]

Capital Facilities Element

I. Introduction [...]

Sustainability

Sustainability is a Mercer Island value. It is a process of ensuring the wise use and management of all resources within a framework in which environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being are integrated and balanced. It means meeting the needs of today without adversely impacting the needs of future generations.

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 Council committed to a sustainability work program as well as a specific climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2050, which was consistent with King County and Washington State targets. Later in 2007, the Council set an interim emissions reduction goal (often called a "milepost") for City operations of 5% by 2012.

In recent years, the City has pursued a wide range of actions focusing on the sustainability of its internal operations. These measures began with relatively humble recycling and waste reduction campaigns, and then expanded into much larger initiatives such as energy-efficiency retrofits and cleaner-burning fleet vehicles. More recently, the City has installed its own on-site solar PV project at the Community and Event Center, and has now purchased several commercial-grade electric utility vehicles for Water Department and Parks Maintenance purposes. Approximately 35% of the City's internal electricity use is offset through the purchase of green power REC's from Puget Sound Energy. [In April 2017 the City confirmed that, in its contract with Puget Sound Energy for 2019 through 2039, it will buy 20 years of clean wind power to replace its current mix of electricity, covering its annual municipal usage of three million kilowatt-hours.](#) The City tracks several metrics in its annual "Dashboard Report" that evaluate progress made in energy consumption, fuel use, green power purchasing, solid waste diversion, and overall carbon footprint of City operations. [City actions are further described in the Introduction to the Land Use Element.](#)

In 2012, activities were expanded further with the hiring of the City's first dedicated Sustainability Manager, who designs, implements, and then oversees much of the internal sustainability project work. In addition, the Mayor and Council have increasingly addressed or supported specific regional and state-level climate commitments or legislation.

Attachment 1

Due to the 20-year horizon envisioned by this comprehensive plan, it is especially appropriate to include internal 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 implement with the entire community's sustainability in mind are addressed in the Land Use Element of this plan. Various City Departments, such as Parks and Recreation and Maintenance, prepare functional plans that directly implement some sustainability programs.

~~These Capital Facilities measures, and others under consideration, are identified in more detail in a rolling 6-year Sustainability Plan, to be adopted in 2016, 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, natural resources management, quality of life, public health, and economic development.~~

V. Capital Facilities Goals and Policies [...]

1.20 City operations should be optimized to minimize carbon footprint impacts, especially with respect to energy consumption and waste reduction. New Capital Facilities should incorporate and encourage the sustainable stewardship of the natural environment, ~~and~~ consider the benefit of creating cutting-edge, demonstration projects, and favor options that have the lowest feasible carbon footprint and greatest carbon sequestration potential. The adoption of greenhouse gas emission reduction targets recommended by King County-Cities Climate Collaboration should be considered.

1.21 City procurement should include consideration of total lifecycle costs, recycled content, and other common measures of product sustainability.

1.22 Current City facilities are operated in an energy-efficient manner, and opportunities for improvement are implemented when feasible. New City facilities should explore meeting public and private-sector sustainable building certification standards, such as the 'BuiltGreen' system and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system.

1.23 Parks & Open Space Capital Facilities – Identify measures to reduce carbon footprint and GHG emissions when planning projects, choosing options with the lowest feasible carbon footprint and greatest carbon sequestration potential. Implement sustainability measures identified within the City's Parks and Recreation Management Plan, including special attention to direct sustainability measures, such as tree retention, preference for native vegetation and habitat creation, minimized use of chemicals, and reductions in energy and fuel use.

Item No. 4: Goals and policies supporting the review and possible establishment of multi-modal transportation level of service

Transportation Element

II. Transportation Goals and Policies

Goal 7: Provide a safe, convenient and reliable transportation system for Mercer Island.

7.1 Include 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.

Attachment 1

- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 Monitor traffic collisions, citizen input/complaints, traffic violations, and traffic volumes to identify and prioritize locations for safety improvements.
- 7.5 Where a need is demonstrated, consider signage, traffic controls, or other strategies to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.
- 7.6 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.
- 7.7 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 transportation system allowing direct and safe access for active transportation modes.](#)

[...]

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. Goals and policies contained in this element should provide the guidance for setting levels of service.](#)

[...]

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 non-motorized 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 Areas near schools and commercial areas should have higher levels of service for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and automobiles.](#)

Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Goals-DRAFT

Prepared by Craig Reynolds

Background

Our May 29 and July 31, the planning commission discussed four broad categories of possible changes to the comprehensive plan. Item 3, related to economic development, was a placeholder for recommendations that might be inspired by a pending report from students at the UW's Evans School of Public Policy & Governance. The July 31 meeting packet, distributed after the release of that report, included this statement:

*Item No. 3: Placeholder for the development of goals and policies supporting economic development
No amendments proposed at this time.*

As I feel economic development is under-represented in the comprehensive plan, I volunteered to attempt to prepare a draft set of proposed amendments. This memorandum documents my efforts. The thoughts presented here reflect my reading of the Evans School report as well as discussions I have had with Island residents and business owners.

Current State

The comprehensive plan includes only one goal and related action items specifically related to economic development. This goal is contained within the land use element. As a primarily residential community, Mercer Island is not required to adopt an economic development element. However, this does not logically imply that it would not be a good idea to do so.

I believe the Mercer Island comprehensive plan should include a separate economic development element, but this is a sufficiently material change that perhaps it should be reserved for the next full update of the plan. Thus, for now, my proposed changes will focus on changing and expanding upon the extant land use element goal.

Note, the comprehensive plan includes a number of goals about town center that are relevant and related. I am proposing no changes to these—as I generally think they are very good. The appendix includes some that I view to be particularly relevant.

Current Text

Below please find the current text. Note that all except the last two action items are included (somewhat revised and reordered) in my revised text. I left out the last two as they strike me as too vague to be actionable, as is the goal itself.

GOAL 14: *Continue to encourage vitality through the support of economic development activities in the Town Center.*

14.1 Establish the Town Center as an active and attractive commercial node, including the use of gateways, wayfinding and signage, and links to transit.

14.2 *Maintain a diversity of downtown land uses.*

14.3 *Support economic growth that accommodates Mercer Island's share of the regional employment growth target of 1,228 new jobs from 2006-2035, by maintaining adequate zoning capacity, infrastructure, and supportive economic development policies.*

14.4 *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. Identify a staff person who will help coordinate economic development activities.*

14.5 *Support public and private investment in existing properties, infrastructure, and marketing to help maintain longstanding businesses and attract new ones.*

14.6 *Create a healthy 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.*

Proposed Revised Text

Below is my proposed possible replacement for the above text, reflecting four goals rather than one, and associated action items in support of each goal. The ideas presented here definitely need work to polish and refine and organize, but I wanted to get some ideas on the table to start the conversation.

Goal 14a: Attract, retain, and grow diverse, niche, retail, dining, and service businesses to Mercer Island Town Center at a rate of growth at least consistent with Island employment growth targets.

14a.1 Maintain a diversity of ~~downtown land uses~~building shapes and sizes, ranging from single-story strip malls to five story mixed use developments.

~~14a.2 Establish code and design commission practices that provide significant flexibility to meet the needs of diverse businesses.~~

14a.2 ~~Adopt policies to give preferential treatment to development~~Support of local, unique, ~~or and~~ small businesses ~~rather than chains or franchises~~.

14a.3 Maintain a business tax structure that is equitable and generally consistent with peer cities.

14a.4 To the extent practical, maintain a stable business tax and regulatory structure.

14a.5 Work with the Chamber of Commerce, ~~or perhaps local University students using the same model as the recent Evans School report~~, to develop a marketing plan to market Town Center as a good place to do business.

14a.6 ~~Develop business licensing and regulatory structures that will be s~~Supportive of shared workspace facilities or pop-up dining options that can be incubators for small businesses.

14a.7 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.

14a.8 Explore the establishment of a satellite city hall office in Town Center to support the needs of Island businesses.

Goal 14b: Cultivate destination businesses and create a Town Center environment that give Islanders and non-Islanders a reason to visit Town Center.

14b.1 Provide wayfinding systems to make Town Center navigation [and location of off-street parking](#) easy.

14b.2: Maintain or improve the accessibility of Town Center for bikes, pedestrians, and the differently abled.

14b.3 Support Town Center design policies that promote public gathering places, allow natural light, and provide architectural diversity [while providing flexibility in design standards](#).

~~14b.4 Develop parking policies that provide an appropriate mix of free short and medium-term street parking consistent with the needs of local businesses.~~

~~14b.5 Encourage businesses to provide long-term parking options for exclusive use of business employees.~~

~~14b.6 Rigorously enforce parking limits to discourage commuter parking in Town Center.~~

~~14b.7 Provide signage to clearly identify and light off-street public parking.~~

14b.8 Encourage seasonal dining or retail options on sidewalks and ROWs to the extent that this can be done without materially hampering mobility.

14b.9 Maintain city-provided flower displays and other beautification programs

Goal 14c: Capitalize upon light rail to attract off-island visitors to help support Island businesses.

14c.1 Encourage development of light rail-facing retail and dining options in the area immediately south of the light rail station that will attract visitors or provide commuter services.

14c.2 Continue to support the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce via rent subsidies to allow them to operate a visitor center near the light rail station.

14c.3 ~~Use Sound Transit settlement money to~~ create attractive and inviting walking paths connecting the light rail station to the core of Town Center.

~~**Goal 14d:** Establish policies and practices that reduce logistical barriers to doing business on Mercer Island. Strive to make Mercer Island a place where it is easy to start and conduct a business.~~

14d.1 Identify a staff person whose primary responsibility will be to promote economic development and to act as an ombudsman to support business navigation of the regulatory structure.

~~14d.2 Establish goals for response time on business licenses and business remodels, and monitor related performance, taking corrective action where necessary.~~ Review City procedures to ensure regulatory requirements are appropriately balanced with desired efficiency in reviews.

~~14d.3 Create a business home page on the city web page that will act as a gateway to all city services that support local businesses. Similarly establish a single phone number / email address for business services trouble-shooting.~~

14d.4 Conduct fact-finding visits with peer cities to identify best practices in administrative procedures for CPD.

Appendix 1: Selected Town Center Goals in Extant Comprehensive Plan

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.

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.

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, set-backs and step-backs and attractive facades.

GOAL 4:

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

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.

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...

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.

GOAL 9:

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

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.