



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 6722
July 1, 2025
Consent Agenda

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6722: Ratification of the Mercer Island Annex to the 2025-2030 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Adopt Resolution No. 1679 ratifying the Mercer Island Annex to the 2025-2030 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.	

DEPARTMENT:	Police
STAFF:	Michelle Bennett, Acting Police Chief Jeff Magnan, Services Commander Amanda Keverkamp, Emergency Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Resolution No. 1679 with Exhibit A – Mercer Island Annex to the King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to present the Mercer Island Annex to the 2025-2030 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Exhibit 1) to the City Council for ratification.

- Jurisdictions across the country are required by law to prepare and regularly update hazard mitigation plans.
- The purpose of a hazard mitigation plan is twofold: (1) help communities identify potential hazards and vulnerabilities and (2) develop strategies to mitigate those hazards.
- Hazard mitigation plans are:
 - Required for jurisdictions to remain eligible for grants or aid through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),
 - Used to identify and track projects and plans to help safeguard both the community and key assets, and
 - Updated every five years according to requirements defined by FEMA.
- Throughout 2024, staff updated the plan and submitted it to FEMA earlier this year via the King County Office of Emergency Management.

- The City's Plan was reviewed and approved by FEMA this spring and must now be ratified by City Council.

BACKGROUND

Federal law ([Stafford Act](#), [Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000](#)) requires government at all levels – local, county, and state – to assess hazards and vulnerabilities that may affect their community and develop strategies to reduce risk from those hazards.

The City of Mercer Island's first hazard mitigation plan was created in 2004, and subsequent updates to that plan were adopted in 2011, 2015, and 2020. Beginning in 2013, local cities and special purpose districts partnered with the King County Office of Emergency Management (KCOEM) to combine hazard mitigation planning efforts. This has helped the region better prepare for hazards and minimized the burden and cost of preparing individual plans.

Through the partnership, resources were combined and expertise shared, helping create a county-wide, uniform hazard mitigation strategy that could be consistently applied within the defined planning area. The joint plan, also known as the King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP), also helped ensure eligibility for project grants and potential reimbursement from federal and state governments for disaster-related expenses. The City's 2015 and 2020 plans were adopted as Annexes in the RHMP.

Staff from KCOEM lead the effort in updating the RHMP, including developing the plan, sharing updated FEMA requirements, managing the process, coordinating jurisdictional participation, overseeing the final Plan submission to FEMA, and facilitating adoption and promulgation. Cities, special districts, and other participating agencies develop individual plans and strategies specific to their community – referred to as an "Annex." The result is a FEMA and Washington State Emergency Management Division (WAEMD) approved multi-jurisdictional, multi-hazard mitigation plan.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Natural and human-caused hazards can happen anytime and anywhere. In 2024 alone, the United States experienced 90 federally declared major disasters, ranging from hurricanes and severe winter storms to wildfires, floods, landslides, and tornadoes. Of these, 27 events caused over [\\$1 billion](#) in damages each. Between 2020 and 2024, Washington State faced 12 federally declared disasters. Locally, Mercer Island experienced two significant emergencies in 2024: a prolonged water transmission line leak and water supply reduction, and a bomb cyclone windstorm. Both events led to proclamations of local emergencies that together spanned six months.

Hazard Mitigation

Disasters have always been a part of life but approaches to mitigating and responding to hazards have evolved. To minimize or prevent losses, communities assess local hazards and develop tailored strategies and plans to reduce their impact. This process helps ensure that resources are organized and ready before an event occurs.

Hazard mitigation, a core function within emergency management, is the process of determining how to reduce or eliminate loss of life and property damage caused by both natural and human-caused hazards. The goal of hazard mitigation planning is to strengthen the resilience of essential community assets and improve their ability to respond to and recover from disasters. Strategies can range from actions such as removing

hazardous trees, reinforcing infrastructure, or investing in critical areas. These mitigation strategies enhance a community's long-term resilience and reduce the severity and impact of future events.

Identifying Hazards and Developing Strategies

Each Hazard Mitigation Plan Annex is divided into two sections: (1) hazard summary and (2) strategies, projects, and plans to help mitigate those hazards. The RHMP identifies fourteen regional hazards:

- Avalanche
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Landslide
- Extreme weather
- Tsunami
- Volcano
- Wildfire
- Civil Disturbance
- Cyber Attack
- Dam Failure
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Public Health Emergency
- Terrorism

As part of the federal government's requirements for this round of hazard mitigation plan updates, each partner jurisdiction needed to summarize each hazard named in the plan. Additionally, FEMA required a brief assessment of the impact of climate change on each identified hazard.

While developing strategies, projects, and plans to help mitigate named hazards, the City focused mitigation strategies on protecting or enhancing essential City assets and infrastructure that would have the greatest impact on minimizing and reducing loss of life, property, and impact on the environment. These strategies are in line with the City Council's goal of "[Making] once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks." Those strategies and projects are:

- Design and construct a new water supply line
- Replace backup City communications equipment
- Public Works Building seismic retrofit
- Watercourse rehabilitation and stabilization
- Updating and upgrading MICEC Generator
- Public Safety and Maintenance Facility (including Emergency Operations Center)
- Develop second emergency well in the South End
- Replace Station 91 fire doors

Eligibility for Project Funding and Disaster Reimbursement

With an approved plan, the City may apply for both mitigation project funding (grants) as well as reimbursement for response, repair, and recovery costs following a declared disaster. Upon a federal disaster declaration, FEMA and the state may reimburse the City up to 87% of the cost of damages incurred, as long as the City is compliant with state and federal guidelines. An approved Hazard Mitigation Plan is one of the requirements.

Mercer Island has applied for and received federal funding in recent years. The most notable examples are the COVID-19 Pandemic and a 2017 landslide, which caused over \$500,000 in damage. In both cases, Mercer Island received funding to cover some of the related response, repair, and recovery costs.

As part of this county-led planning effort, KCOEM has committed to sharing federal and other mitigation project funding opportunities with its partners. It must be noted, however, that the future of the Hazard

Mitigation Assistance Grant Program and other federal funding is uncertain due to changes to FEMA structure and funding. In addition, budget constraints at the state level, may affect the availability or percentage eligible for reimbursement by FEMA or the state. Staff remain committed to maintaining eligibility, and KCOEM remains committed to assisting partner jurisdictions with the disaster reimbursement process as well as tracking grants and other funding opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

With FEMA's approval and the King County Office of Emergency Management's review and acceptance of Mercer Island's Annex to the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, the final step is for the City Council to adopt Resolution No. 1679, ratifying the City's approved annex.

Over the next five-year cycle, staff will track documented mitigation projects. When possible, staff will seek federal grants to supplement project funding. In four years, the City will begin this process again.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Resolution No. 1679 ratifying the Mercer Island Annex to the 2025-2030 King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.