

OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTER

GOAL 15:

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

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

15.2 Residential densities in single family areas will generally continue to occur at three to five units per acre, commensurate with current zoning. However, some adjustments may be made to allow the development of innovative Provide for housing types in residential zones, such as accessory dwelling units and compact courtyard homes additional middle housing types at slightly higher densities as outlined in the Housing Element.

15.3 ~~Multi family areas will continue to be low rise apartments and condos and duplex/triplex designs, and with the addition of the Commercial/Office (CO) zone, will be confined to those areas already designated to allow multi family.~~ Encourage multifamily and mixed-use housing within the existing boundaries of the Town Center, multifamily, and Commercial Office zones to accommodate moder- to extremely low-income households.

15.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the Island. Development regulation should ~~reflect~~ recognize the desire need and support the ability to retain viable maintain, update, and renovate and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations facilities as allowed by the land use code. Such facilities are ~~as~~ community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island. Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of these facilities. [Note: relocated and combined policies 17.4 and 20.4]

15.45 ~~As a primarily single family residential community with a high percentage of developed land, the community cannot provide for all types of land uses. Certain activities will be considered incompatible with present uses. Incompatible uses include~~ Discourage incompatible land uses such as landfills, correctional facilities, zoos and airports in existing zones. Encourage Ccompatible permitted uses such as education, recreation, open spaces, government social services and religious activities ~~will be encouraged.~~

15.56 Manage impacts that could result from new development in residential zones by establishing standards to:

- 15.56.A Regulate on- and off-street parking;
- 15.56.B Encourage the retention of landscaped areas and the retention and planting of trees;
- 15.56.C Establish incentives and anti-displacement measures consistent with the Housing Element; and
- 15.56.D Control new development to be compatible in scale, form, and character with existing surrounding neighborhoods.

**GOAL 16:**

Achieve additional residential capacity in ~~single family~~ residential zones through flexible land use techniques and land use entitlement regulations.

16.1 ~~Encourage the use of the~~ Use of the existing housing stock to address changing population needs and aging in place. Accessory ~~housing-dwelling~~ units and shared housing opportunities should be considered in order to provide accessible and affordable housing, relieve tax burdens, and maintain existing, stable neighborhoods.

16.2 Through zoning and land use regulations provide adequate development capacity to accommodate Mercer Island's projected share of the King County population growth over the next 20 years.

16.3 Promote a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of people who work and desire to live in Mercer Island.

16.4 Promote accessory dwelling units in single-family ~~districts-zones~~ subject to specific development and owner occupancy standards.

16.5 ~~Infill~~ Encourage development of middle housing where mandated by state law, on vacant or under-utilized sites should occur outside of critical areas and ensure that the infill it is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, with preference given to areas near high capacity transit.

16.6 Explore flexible residential development regulations and entitlement processes that support, ~~and create incentives for, subdivisions that incorporate public amenities through the use of a pilot program. The use of flexible residential development standards should be used to~~ and encourage public amenities such as wildlife habitat, accessible homes, affordable housing, and sustainable development.

16.7 Ensure development regulations allow the improvement of existing homes and do not create incentives to remove or replace existing homes.

16.8 Evaluate locally adopted building and fire code regulations within existing discretion to encourage the preservation of existing homes.

**GOAL 17:**

~~With the exception of allowing residential development, commercial designations and permitted uses under current zoning will not change. The allowed uses in commercial and mixed-use zones balance the City's economic development and housing needs.~~

17.1 The Planned Business Zone uses on the south end of Mercer Island are compatible with the surrounding single family zone needs. All activities in the PBZ are subject to design review. Supplemental design guidelines have been adopted.

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

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

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

19 *NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES*

20 **GOAL 18:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 **GOAL 19:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3  
4 19.78 Community tree canopy goals should be adopted and implemented to protect human  
5 health and the natural environment and to promote aesthetics. Encourage the conversion of  
6 grass to forest and native vegetation. Promote the preservation of snags (dead trees) for forage  
7 and nesting by wildlife.  
8

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4  
5 19.179 Promote wildlife watering.  
6

7 **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES**

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

10 **GOAL 20:-**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 *GREEN BUILDING*

11 **GOAL 21:**

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

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

19  
20 21.2 Develop a green building program that creates incentives for residential development and  
21 construction to incorporate green building techniques.

22  
23 21.3 ~~Evaluate requiring the use of~~ Consider expanding requirements for green building techniques  
24 for new construction and certification to additional zones and/or development of subdivisions  
25 as a component of a green building program.

26  
27 21.4 Educate and provide technical resources to the citizens and building community on Mercer  
28 Island regarding green building as a component of sustainable development.

29  
30 21.5 ~~Conduct annual tracking of new, or significantly remodeled, structures verified under various~~  
31 ~~green building programs on Mercer Island and incorporate statistics into the City's~~  
32 ~~sustainability tracking system and performance measures.~~  
33

34 *STAR Climate Change*

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

36 **GOAL 26:**

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

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



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

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

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

13 **GOAL 27:**

14 Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

41  
42 27.7 Promote renewable power generation in the community.

43 **GOAL 28:**

44 Develop and implement a Climate Action Plan.

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~~28.1 The Climate Action Plan is hereby adopted by reference.~~

**GOAL 298:**

Adapt to and mitigate local climate change impacts.

- 298.1 Prioritize the ~~prevention~~ reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other contributors to climate change.
- 298.2 Develop an adaptive response to expected climate change impacts on the community.
- 298.3 Increase carbon sequestration through expanding tree canopy and vegetation cover.

