



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6408
February 20, 2024
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6408: Briefing on the ARCH Strategic Planning Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive briefing and provide input on the ARCH Strategic Plan.	

DEPARTMENT:	Community Planning and Development
STAFF:	Jeff Thomas, Community Planning and Development Director Alison Van Gorp, Deputy Director Lindsay Masters, ARCH Executive Director
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. ARCH Letter to Member City Councils and Draft Strategic Plan Summary
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 bill is to gather City Council input on ARCH’s draft strategic plan.

- Mercer Island is a member of ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) and like the other local government members, Mercer Island sits on the Executive Board and helps to drive the strategic direction of the organization, set annual budgets and work plans, and provide guidance and oversight of the organization’s work.
- ARCH commenced a strategic planning process in mid-2023 and has now produced a summary of the draft strategic plan for review.
- City Council feedback on the draft strategies included in Exhibit 1 will be shared with the ARCH Executive Board to inform further refinement of the strategic plan.

BACKGROUND

ARCH was established in 1993 by an [Interlocal Agreement](#) to create and preserve affordable housing throughout the greater East King County community. Member jurisdictions include Beaux Arts Village, Bellevue, Bothell, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Issaquah, Kenmore, King County, Kirkland, Medina, Mercer Island, Newcastle, Redmond, Sammamish, Woodinville, and Yarrow Point. By participating in ARCH, member cities are part of a joint and cooperative undertaking to collectively plan for and provide affordable housing in East

King County communities. ARCH staff serve as additional housing staff to each member city and coordinate with member city staff in various housing-related projects, plans, and services.

Like other local government members, Mercer Island contributes annually to ARCH to provide administrative support for the organization's housing activities and capital support for the creation and preservation of affordable housing. The coordinated approach used by ARCH provides for an efficient use of resources in fulfilling each member city's obligations under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) to make adequate provisions for the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community (RCW 36.70A.070(2)), as well as sharing resources with regional partners in the provision and administration of affordable housing.

The 2023 ARCH administrative budget and work plan, approved by the City Council in September 2022 ([AB 6155](#)), included an objective of conducting a strategic planning process under the guidance of the ARCH Executive Board. That strategic planning process was initiated in mid-2023. A consultant was hired, and a Strategic Planning Committee was formed from members of the Executive Board to help guide the process.

The full Executive Board participated in two half-day planning workshops in August 2023 and November 2023. Deputy CPD Director Alison Van Gorp represented the City at these workshops. In addition, a survey was circulated in late October 2023 to member elected officials, planning commissions, and staff as well as housing developers, operators and service providers, advocacy organizations and others. With all this input, the Committee and the consultant team outlined a draft strategic plan.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Exhibit 1 includes a cover letter from Kurt Triplett, Strategic Planning Committee Chair and Kirkland City Manager, and a summary of the draft strategic plan. This document represents the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee and was shared with the Executive Board, as well as the member jurisdictions more broadly, for feedback. The Executive Board has not yet taken any action on the draft, and further review and discussion at the Board level is planned for the February and March Executive Board meetings, with action likely to be taken in March.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to guide the ARCH Executive Board in achieving the goal of building more affordable housing faster. The draft plan sets out high-level strategies aimed at achieving this objective in the coming years.

The strategies were developed considering ARCH's mission and identity, the decision criteria included in Exhibit 1, input from stakeholders and an assessment of the key barriers to increasing ARCH's impact as a coalition. These strategies are intended to be implemented through the ongoing work of the ARCH Executive Board, member councils, and other key partners. Specific action steps and success measures will be developed by the Board, in tandem with the development of ARCH's annual work program and budget.

Draft Strategies

The draft Strategic Plan includes strategies in the following four areas. Please see Exhibit 1, pages 6-7, for more details on the draft strategies.

- 1. Governance and Administration:** Organizational and governance strategies to streamline decision-making, empower the coalition to tackle major policy challenges, and increase education and engagement by members' elected officials.

2. **Affordable Housing Policy, Legislation and Funding:** Strategies to advance targeted state and regional policy efforts that increase funding and reduce barriers that contribute to the cost of affordable housing development.
3. **Local Policy and Planning:** Maintaining support for individual planning efforts at the local level while increasing support for high impact special projects and strategies to help advance more affordable housing faster.
4. **Program Implementation: Housing Investments and Incentives, Preservation and Stewardship:** Continuing to provide a cost-effective vehicle for implementing local funding and incentive programs and stewarding the affordable housing assets created through those programs, while relying on partners to meet the broader set of needs of low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners.

During the planning process, City staff advocated strongly for the inclusion of an advocacy role for ARCH at the state and regional levels, helping to guide conversations in Olympia, at the Puget Sound Regional Council, and King County related to affordable housing policy and funding. The City also strongly supported continued investment in assisting member jurisdictions with local implementation of affordable housing policies and programs. ARCH will be instrumental in assisting local planning staff with the implementation of recent housing legislation, including HB 1220 and HB 1110. City staff are pleased to see these strategies included in the draft plan, along with other important opportunities to improve on and make more efficient ARCH's existing operations.

City Council Feedback

Lindsay Masters, Executive Director of ARCH, will be attending the Council meeting to make a brief presentation on the draft strategies and will be available for questions and to receive input from the City Council. This input will be brought forward to the ARCH Executive Board and staff at the March board meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Input provided at the February 20 City Council meeting will be used to provide feedback to the ARCH Executive Board, staff, and consultant team on the draft Strategic Plan. ARCH expects to further refine and finalize the Strategic Plan in the spring, after receiving member jurisdiction feedback. Once the Strategic Plan is finalized, the ARCH Executive Board will be charged with stewarding the goals and strategies that are identified. This will be reflected in future annual budgets and work plans that member jurisdictions will be asked to approve.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive briefing and provide input on the ARCH draft Strategic Plan.