

Housing Production and Permit Streamlining Omnibus Ordinance

Legislative Review

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will encompass the legislative review of an omnibus ordinance to replace nearly all interim ordinances currently amending Title 19 of the Mercer Island City Code (MICC). The interim ordinances pertaining to middle housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and unit lot subdivision (ULS) will not be replaced with permanent amendments during this project.

PROJECT QUICK FACTS	
Approximate Start Date:	July 23, 2025
Approximate End Date:	December 31, 2025
Project Manager:	Adam Zack, Principal Planner
Consultants:	N/A
Related Budget Codes:	N/A
Estimated Number of Planning Commission Meetings:	5
Estimated Number of Council Touches:	2

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2020, the WA State Legislature enacted a series of bills focused on housing production and permit streamlining that required local jurisdictions to amend their development codes to comply. During this period the City was also required to update its Comprehensive Plan. To comply with new legislation, meet its comprehensive plan update deadline, and maintain consistency with state law, the City enacted a series of interim ordinances that temporarily amended the MICC. The interim ordinances must be either renewed every 6-12 months or replaced by permanent regulations to maintain compliance with state law.

Approach: Omnibus Ordinance

Rather than prepare a series of several individual ordinances to adopt permanent regulations to replace each interim ordinance, the City can adopt one omnibus ordinance to replace them all at once. An omnibus ordinance is the most efficient way to adopt permanent regulations because many of the interim ordinances overlap, with more than one ordinance amending the same development code section. Table 1 lists the statewide legislation compliance that will be addressed by the omnibus ordinance.

Table 1. Compliance Topics to be Addressed by the Omnibus Ordinance.

Topic	Description	MICC Chapters Affected	RCW Reference	Interim Ordinance #
HB 1220	Affordable and emergency housing.	19.02, 19.11	36.70A.070	25C-05
HB 6015	Residential parking requirements	19.02, 19.03, 19.11, 19.12	36.70A.622	25C-08
HB 1293	Clear and objective design standards	19.03, 19.06, 19.11, 19.12, 19.15, 19.16	36.70A.630	25C-11
SB 5290	Permit review timelines	19.15	36.70B.080	24C-17
HB 1998	Co-Living Housing	19.06, 19.11, 19.16	36.70A.535	N/A
Design Commission (DC)	Remove references to Design Commission review ¹	19.01, 19.02, 19.03, 19.04, 19.05, 19.06, 19.10, 19.11, 19.12, 19.15, 19.16, App. C	N/A	25C-14 ²
Comprehensive Plan Implementation	In 2024, the City Council updated the Comprehensive Plan and made implementing amendments to the Town Center development code.	19.11	36.70A.130	24C-18

Notes:

1. In 2025, the City Council dissolved the Design Commission and reassigned design review to the Hearing Examiner. Though no further code amendments are required to implement that action, minor code amendments to remove reference to the DC will ensure the code remains consistent as the design standards are amended to address HB 1293.
2. Ordinance 25C-14 was a permanent amendment to reassign design review to the Hearing Examiner and dissolve the Design Commission concurrent with the adoption of Ordinance No. 25C-11. While additional amendments to assign design review to the Hearing Examiner are not required, there are references to the design commission throughout Title 19 of the MICC that can be removed. Amending or removing these references will clarify for applicants and other code users who the official responsible for review is.

The omnibus ordinance will not include regulations for middle housing, ADUs, and unit lot subdivision. Given the expected public interest in these amendments and that they largely affect single-family zones, staff will prepare a separate scope of work, schedule, and public participation plan for these amendments. This will allow for additional public outreach without delaying the adoption of an omnibus ordinance addressing all other interim ordinances.

The omnibus ordinance will not include amendments to comply with state legislation adopted in 2025. Staff have not yet had the capacity to conduct a full analysis of the new requirements, and deadlines for compliance with these new requirements range from 2026 to 2029 or beyond. Since there is still ample time for compliance with these requirements they will be addressed through separate amendments in the future.

Summary of Amendments Expected

Table 2 lists the chapters of Title 19 MICC that are expected to be amended during this project and the topic that amendment is expected to address.

Table 2. MICC Chapters Expected to be Amended by This Project.

Chapter	Topic Addressed
19.01	DC
19.02	DC, House Bill (HB) 1220, HB 6015
19.03	HB 6015, DC
19.04	DC
19.05	DC
19.06	HB 1293, DC, HB 1220, HB 1998
19.10	DC
19.11	DC, HB 1293, HB 1220, Comp Plan Implementation, HB 6015, HB 1998
19.12	DC, HB 1293, HB 6015
19.15	SB 5290, DC, HB 1293, consistency with other changes
19.16	Consistency with other changes
Appendix C	DC

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The project will utilize the standard public participation required for every code amendment as established in Title 19 MICC. The standard public participation process includes the following public participation steps

- SEPA Comment Period
- Public access at six Planning Commission meetings
- Public hearing notice and public comment period at least 30 days prior to the Planning Commission public hearing.
- Public hearing on September 24, 2025, Planning Commission meeting
- Public access on November 7, 2025, Council first reading
- Public access on November 14, 2025, Council first reading

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The project is expected to be completed by December 31, 2025. The Planning Commission review will begin in July 2025 and conclude with its recommendation in October. The City Council is expected to hold its first and second readings in November. The omnibus ordinance will have a December 31, 2025, effective date. The project master schedule is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Project Master Schedule.

Task #	Description	2025					
		J	A	S	O	N	D
1	July 15 – City Council direction on scope of work	J	A	S	O	N	D
2	July 23 – Planning Commission work session going over Council directed scope and summarizing the seven issues: (1) HB 6015, (2) HB 1293, (3) HB 1220, (4) SB 5290, (5) HB 1998, (6) Comprehensive Plan implementation, and (7) DC (see Table 2).	J	A	S	O	N	D
3	August 11 – Public release of code amendment package with 30-day comment period	J	A	S	O	N	D
4	September 10 – Planning Commission briefing on code amendments	J	A	S	O	N	D
5	September 24 – Planning Commission public hearing on code amendments	J	A	S	O	N	D
6	October 8 – Planning Commission work Session and recommendation	J	A	S	O	N	D
7	October 22 – Planning Commission work session and recommendation	J	A	S	O	N	D
8	November 4 – City Council first reading of omnibus ordinance	J	A	S	O	N	D
9	November 18 – City Council second reading and adoption of omnibus Ordinance	J	A	S	O	N	D
10	December 31 – Omnibus Ordinance Effective Date	J	A	S	O	N	D