

Question & Answer Matrix
November 18, 2025 - City Council Meeting

Log #	AB No.	Received From	Question	Staff Response
1	6777	Reynolds	Remind me what SIFA means?	SIFA means Self-Initiated Field Activity. These are incidents where the officer initiates the call without being dispatched. Some examples are directed patrols, traffic stops, business checks, warrant service, etc.
2	6777	Reynolds	I note that traffic infractions and parking tickets are notably down in 2024. What is driving this?	The reduction in tickets can be attributed to a combination of factors, including changes in department leadership, the process of establishing and communicating expectations, the impact of retirements, and the integration and training of new employees. Since the summer of 2025, the number of tickets issued has increased significantly, which will be reflected in the next Department Report.
3	6777	Reynolds	Do we have any data on (a) cases referred to prosecutors as a share of arrests, (b) Cases prosecutor decides to pursue as a share of those, (c) Cases that result in a conviction or please bargain as a share of those, (d) Cases that result in jail time as a share of those. (Other comparable data would be fine if more readily available)	This is a significant research request and not something that can be undertaken by staff right now given that it is not related to a policy matter in front of the City Council.
4	6777	Reynolds	Re the table starting on page 24, What are the cases that are “completed” but not cleared?	<p>A <i>completed</i> crime occurs when all elements of the offense have been fully carried out as defined by statute.</p> <p>An <i>attempted</i> crime occurs when a person, with the required intent, takes a substantial step toward committing the offense but the crime is not fully completed.</p> <p>In crime statistics, a case is considered <i>cleared</i> when law enforcement has identified the offender, has enough evidence to charge the offender, and has taken the offender into custody OR when circumstances prevent arrest, but the offender is clearly identified.</p> <p>Cases that are listed as <i>completed</i>, but not <i>cleared</i>, would be when no suspect or suspects are identified or there is not enough evidence to arrest or charge.</p>

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5	6808	Weinberg	In Exhibit C of this agenda bill, MICC 19.15.030.F.2.c still refers to the Design Commission. Should this reference be removed, or is that section considered out of scope for this agenda bill?	Changes to this reference are included in Ordinance No 25C-27, “The Omnibus”.
6	6808	Weinberg	In Exhibit 2 of this agenda bill, the first sentence of section MICC 19.06.130.C mentions a “temporary structure deviation permit.” I know what a temporary use permit is, but what is a temporary <i>structure deviation</i> permit? What would be the most common or most likely example of one? What is the reasoning behind making it Type III, allowing the Code Official’s discretion?	<p>A “temporary structure deviation permit” is a new permit type proposed by the Planning Commission to allow a structure like the Mercer Island Country Club’s tennis bubble a path forward following the removal of a provision from the original interim regulations that excluded temporary uses and structures from compliance with the underlying development standards.</p> <p>The Planning Commission proposed separate criteria for the approval of a temporary structure deviation which allows those structures to exceed the underlying development standards by a certain amount depending on the standard. Type III permit reviews require more extensive noticing, and the decision is usually accompanied by a staff report, findings of fact, and conditions of approval.</p> <p>Other Type III reviews include Shoreline Substantial Development Permits, SEPA Threshold Determinations, Preliminary Short Plats, and Critical Area Review 2s.</p> <p>The City Council should be aware that the amount of time and cost of processing a Type III permit is <u>substantially more</u> than that for a Type I permit, which is the current process for temporary uses and structures.</p>
7	6808	Nice	Please provide the voting log for each substantive TUP amendment made by the Planning Commission.	<p>Voting logs are not maintained for the City’s advisory boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission (PC). The record of the votes can be found in the PC minutes. Here are links to the PC meetings when discussion was held on the temporary use amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 26, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes • June 10, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes • July 23, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes • September 10, 2025 PC Meeting Minutes

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8	6809	Reynolds	I do not see a definition for “co-living housing”. What is it and do we need a definition?	The definition of co-living housing was added to the existing definition of “rooming house.” The amendments to add co-living housing to the rooming house definition can be found in Ordinance No. 25C-27, Exhibit K (Ordinance page 115).
9	6809	Reynolds	How is a “major construction project” defined?	<p>“Major new construction” is defined in MICC 19.16.010 as follows:</p> <p>“Major new construction: Construction from bare ground or an enlargement or alteration that changes the exterior of an existing structure that costs in excess of 50 percent of the structure's assessed value. Single-family development is excluded from this definition.”</p> <p>This is how major construction would be determined when reviewing a development application for compliance with MICC 19.11.140(B)(10).</p>
10	6809	Reynolds	Why do we prohibit phone numbers on signs? Would the same argument apply to email addresses or web addresses?	<p>The prohibition of phone numbers on signs (MICC 19.11.140(B)(7)(e)) is an existing provision in the Town Center sign code, which was last amended in 2016 by Ordinance No. 16C-06. Staff do not have a record of why this specific provision was added.</p> <p>MICC 19.11.140(B)(7)(e) would only apply to phone numbers on proposed new signs in Town Center. A similar provision would be needed to prohibit email and web addresses. Amendments to add new requirements were considered substantive and outside of the scope of the project. The scope of the project is to make amendments necessary to comply with state laws related to housing and permit review.</p>
11	6809	Reynolds	I may be missing something. But I think I see one spot (19.12.080) where joint tenant directory signs are limited to “forty square feet” and one (19.11.140) that says the limit is “fifty square feet”. What am I missing?	MICC 19.11.140 applies to development in the Town Center whereas MICC 19.12.080 applies to regulated improvements made outside of Town Center. In Town Center signs are allowed to be 50 square feet and outside Town Center signs are allowed to be 40 square feet.

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12	6811	Reynolds	Does the city have a documented policy to guide decisions on easement relinquishment? Would such a policy allow decisions like the Covenant Shores request to be handled by staff? Does this sort of request come up often?	<p>These requests require City Council approval because easements are considered real property rights, and authority to take action on property rights in code cities rests with the legislative body under RCW 35A.11.010. These requests come up only occasionally, once every couple of years.</p> <p>When reviewing these matters, staff ensures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is no need for the easement, or it is being replaced as part of the relinquishment; 2) There is a quantifiable benefit to the City; and 3) The change is supported by PW engineering and operation, etc.
13	6813	Reynolds	Is there any cash cost to us in this “sale”	No. Although the term for the transfer of improvements is called a Bill of Sale, the City is not paying anything to acquire the improvements.
14	6813	Reynolds	I am out of town, so I cannot see it, but the Council received at least one email suggesting that there was some flooding in (I think) this round about. How serious is this flooding? Are we buying something that will need to be repaired or re-engineered at our expense?	<p>Staff reviewed this and found minor ponding due to a temporary sediment filter fabric in the roadside drain which slightly impedes the flow of stormwater from the pavement into the drain. The filter fabric is intended to prevent construction related sediment from getting into the drainage system. This is a temporary construction sediment control measure for work that is not part of the transfer of the roundabout.</p> <p>Please note that this is unrelated to the water seepage issue under the curb in the same general area that the City and Sound Transit have actively worked to resolve. Sound Transit’s resolution of the seepage issue is tied to another permit with work expected to start in the next few months.</p>
15	6813	Reynolds	If we do NOT execute this “purchase”, what are the consequences to the city? Would Sound Transit be responsible for maintenance?	The roundabout is located in the City’s right of way and operates as part of the City’s transportation system. Formal acceptance simply gives the City full control over the operation and maintenance of the roundabout. It is in the City’s best interest to manage, operate, and maintain the road network and staff recommends the City Council approve this item.

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16	6814	Reynolds	<p>I see that B&O tax is 158.7% of budget. Given the prevalence of annual payments, a ratio close to 100% would not be surprising. But why is it so much more than that?</p>	<p>B&O tax is a gross revenue tax that is volatile and difficult to predict. Gross revenue tax is impacted by inflationary pressure on prices, the total number of businesses reporting the tax, and the change in business activities year to year. Further, the data available to the City on the B&O Tax Collection is limited, making it difficult for staff to analyze specific reasons for a change in revenues.</p> <p>The 2025 budget estimate for B&O tax revenues is informed by revenue actuals for the prior five years. As noted, revenue actuals through the third quarter far exceed budget estimates for the fiscal year. Revenues in 2025 mark the highest B&O tax revenues paid to the City in the past seven years.</p> <p>The latest information will help inform updated revenue projections as part of the 2027-2028 biennial budget process.</p>
17	6814	Reynolds	<p>I am missing something basic in the budget analysis. Frequent reference is made to the 2024 conversion to cash basis accounting as an explanatory factor. I think I understand how that impacts a comparison of 2025 to 2024, since 2024 includes some adjustments to prevent double recognition. But this does nothing to explain comparisons of actual 2025 to budget 2025 does it? I would think not since presumably the budget reflected cash basis accounting just like the actual does. Given this, how does this explanation make sense?</p> <p><i>“Shared Revenues are 74.9 percent of the budget through the end of third quarter. This revenue category is impacted by the change to cash basis reporting. State shared revenues received in January 2024 were accrued and reported as revenue in December 2023 and are excluded from FY 2024. In 2025, this revenue category is performing with historical trends.”</i></p>	<p>Correct. The City’s transition to cash basis accounting in January 2024 has no bearing whatsoever when comparing 2025 budget versus 2025 actuals through the third quarter of the year.</p> <p>The additional explanation regarding the “shared revenues” category meant to caution the reader in comparing 2024 actuals to 2025 actuals given this revenue was impacted by the change to cash basis accounting.</p>

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18	6814	Weinberg	I noticed in the financial update numbers that the water operating expenditures are down a bit. The agenda bill points out that weather and seasonality are significant factors. I wonder whether the new AMI water meters are having an impact as well. Do the new meters actually reduce the number of leaks in the system, or do they just measure residents' actual use more accurately?	The reduction in expenditures you see is primarily due to the seasonality of water use, as noted. However, the AMI meters are also having an effect on closing the gap between the amount of water the City purchases from SPU and the amount of water that is billed to customers for use, which is referred to as 'unaccounted water loss'. This is because new meters are more accurate in tracking actual water use, since old meters tend to slow down and undercount water use. The City will also save money in water expenditures because customers are alerted to leaks almost immediately, allowing them to fix them quickly. Therefore, the City is issuing smaller leak adjustments to customers, reducing the cost of the water loss that the City must absorb.
19	6814	Becker	<p>If EMS Ambulance Fees are credited against EF&R, causing revenue to be lower vs budget?</p> <p>Are expenses also lower vs budget?</p> <p>I can't tell with the one-time payment situation impacting the expense line-item.</p>	<p>Yes. Ambulance transport fees are credited against the cost for fire and emergency medical services EF&R provides for the prior year. As a result, EMS revenue actuals will be notably lower than budget in 2025 and 2026.</p> <p>The City and EF&R entered into a revenue sharing agreement January 2025, a year after both the interlocal agreement (ILA) was established and the 2025-2026 biennial budget was adopted.</p> <p>Per the revenue sharing agreement, the City is charged 1/12th the annual cost for fire and emergency medical services each month. In the first quarter of the following year, EF&R reconciles Mercer Island's year-end revenues from the prior year as a credit against current year services.</p> <p>The revenues and expenses related to fire and emergency medical services will be updated to reflect this revenue sharing agreement and reconciliation process in the 2027-2028 biennial budget.</p>
20	6814	Reynolds	<p>Reference is made to residency requirements for YFS support. How is residency defined/determined/verified?</p> <p>Are undocumented people equally able to receive benefits?</p>	For YFS food card support, YFS asks for a current government issued ID (example: driver's license) AND a recent PSE utility bills or documentation from a formal government program (dated within the past 30 days) to establish residency. Documentation status is not a variable in determining eligibility.

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21	6814	Weinberg	<p>Was the \$31,300 Commute Trip Reduction grant we received from WSDOT a one-time grant, or is it something that we expect to renew in future years? Is its scope currently limited to reducing the commutes of City employees?</p>	<p>WSDOT issues biennial grants for the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program contingent on the program being funded. Staff anticipates receiving this grant in future years due to continued participation in the program.</p> <p>Grant funds are used to administer and implement the 2025-2029 City of Mercer Island CTR Plan, which includes providing incentives and subsidies for CTR - affected sites to reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel. The two CTR-affected sites on the Island are the City and Riot Games.</p>
22	6814	Weinberg	<p>I noticed in the quarterly financial update that building permit activity is up significantly this year.</p> <p>Out of curiosity, if the incoming rate of new permit applications has increased and the outgoing rate from the queue of new permits has remained about the same (i.e. same number of staff), does that mean the queue of projects awaiting review has gotten longer – or was the “rush hour” several months ago and the queue is already back to normal length?</p> <p>Does CPD have sufficient reserves to fund additional staff on a temporary basis to reverse that trend and get the queue back to normal length? If not, should Council consider providing such funding in a future budget adjustment?</p> <p>My apologies if I’ve asked you this years ago and forgotten the response.</p>	<p>Revenue in the Development Services Fund in 2025 relative to 2024 is higher in part due to the \$1.7 million one-time transfer of permit fee reserve dollars transferred from the General Fund in the first part of the year (Ordinance No. 25-10).</p> <p>As for permit volumes, through yesterday 11/17, both permitting activity and permitting revenue are up slightly over 2024. For example, total permits issued to date in 2025 are currently at 99% of the total permits issued for all of 2024. Increases in permitting revenues can be primarily attributed to this as well as the fact that a number of higher cost land use permits (ie. Shoreline CUP / Variance, Rezone) have been received in 2025 that are relatively infrequent – some years no such permits are received by the City.</p> <p>Permit review times were amended to be shorter at the beginning of 2025 and overall are being adhered to with current CPD staff. There have been no necessary changes identified for CPD staffing levels and none are proposed for 2026.</p> <p>Permit volumes and permit turn times are something staff monitors regularly. If staff observes a need for a staffing change, this is usually first addressed through short-term measures (limited term positions, contracts etc.) before approaching the City Council about a new FTE.</p>

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23	6814	Weinberg	Does the City charge the same for facilities rentals (MICEC and sports fields) by MI residents as it does for non-residents? If so, do you know if we have considered creating a two-tiered fee structure effectively giving a discount to residents and a counter-balancing premium for non-residents?	<p>The City currently charges the same rental fee rates for both residents and non-residents for sports fields and the MICEC rentals. Instead of differential pricing, the MICEC and sports fields follow facility allocation and use policies that prioritize resident access—allowing residents to reserve facilities ahead of non-residents or, when competing for the same date/time, receive priority.</p> <p>Prior to 2021, both the MICEC and sports fields used a pricing structure with different rates for residents and non-residents, as well as separate rates for non-profits and for-profits. During development of the Recreation Reset Strategy, the Parks and Recreation Commission helped shape a cost-recovery strategy that categorized services into five different tiers based on levels of community-benefit. It was determined that private rentals would no longer use resident/non-resident pricing. Instead, the rental fees would be based on the adopted cost-recovery targets and aligned with prevailing market rates.</p> <p>The staff prefers the current practice of administering one fee and instead giving residents early access to booking. This makes marketing and promotion of these facilities/fees much more clear for the consumers as well.</p> <p>The Recreation Division’s 2025–2026 Workplan includes development of a policy/revised fee schedule that would support reduced-cost rental access for third-party coordinated community events at the MICEC (like how the City supports third-party community events in park spaces). A draft of this policy is anticipated to go before the City Council in Q3 or Q4 of 2026.</p>
24	6817	Reynolds	What is the thinking on referencing “solar power USAGE” rather than power GENERATION?	<p>Staff’s intention was a broad interpretation of the word “usage” that could include “generation” as well.</p>

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25	6817	Reynolds	<p>Last year we referenced “clean energy”, and this year we mention the more restrictive “solar energy”. Why?</p>	<p>Staff reviewed and realized an error was made in copying text from an earlier version of the 2025 legislative priorities to create the 2026 legislative priorities sustainability section. Staff’s intent was to use the same final version of language from last year, copied below:</p> <p><i>The City supports legislation, partnerships, and funding opportunities that advance the implementation of the City’s adopted Climate Action Plan. This includes initiatives for clean energy, emissions reduction, electrification of public assets, and innovative practices that promote resilience and protect natural resources.</i></p> <p>The language has been provided to you should you desire to make a motion to amend the language.</p>
26	6818	Weinberg	<p>What’s the total out-of-pocket cost to a resident to get an impounded e-motorcycle or e-dirtbike back? Do the economics work here?</p> <p>I get the part about the city’s administrative fee – it's cost recovery only and it’s \$100 adjusted annually for inflation. But what about the rest of it? How much are the for-profit towing companies allowed to charge for towing and storage? Is that defined in their contract with the city, or can they charge whatever they want? Does our contract limit their fees to a percentage of the vehicle’s fair market value? These vehicles are worth far less than your average car or truck. Will towing companies be willing to impound these low-value vehicles if they can’t count on being able to cover their costs and make a reasonable profit?</p>	<p>The City needs to charge an impound fee for the economics of this new ordinance to “work.” Meaning that we’ve added new regulations to address e-motorcycle impounds, but there is a staff cost of doing this. The impound fee recovers the City’s administrative costs of processing impounded vehicles, including e-motorcycles.</p> <p>The City uses a rotational list of towing companies and thus is not in contract with a single tow operator. The rates these towing companies can charge for Police-initiated towing/impounds are set by the Washington State Patrol. The maximum rate a company can charge for towing is \$297 per hour. The maximum rate a company can charge for storage is \$75 per day. Our partner towing companies have communicated that they will work with the City/PD to impound e-motorcycles. Impounded e-motorcycles would be treated as any other motor vehicle, meaning they would be subject to the same towing and storage fees.</p> <p>The total fee paid will include the City’s \$100 administrative fee, the rate for police initiated impounds, and the rate for storage charged by the towing company.</p>

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27	6818	Becker	Doesn't the city have a small impound lot near the public works facility? Under what circumstances do vehicles end up there vs a private towing company?	The impound lot is used for storage of abandoned or lost property, as well as property recovered from criminal investigations. The City does not use this lot to store impounded vehicles.
28	6818	Becker	I'm looking back on AB 6772 to understand the full scope around impounding. 10.53.020 references "MICC 10.04.180", I can't figure out where 10.04.180 is, was this supposed to be 170 or I am missing it?	Staff intended to reference MICC 10.04.170 in MICC 10.53.020. This error will be addressed as a scrivener's error as MICC 10.53.020 and 10.04.170 were adopted in the same ordinance. It is clear from the substantive content of 10.53.020 that the reference was to 10.04.170, not .180; and .180 does not exist, hence the reason we are treating this as a Scrivener's error.
29	6819	Reynolds	<p>Please explain "semi-custom"? What is customized relative to a "standard" model, if there is such a thing? What customization did we lose by not getting a fully custom model?</p> <p>I would have thought our needs were very similar to these of hundreds or thousands of communities around the country, so the need for customization is not obvious.</p>	<p>In this case, "semi-custom" means the specifications of the apparatus were developed within the manufacturer's "Build My Pierce" (BMP) Program.</p> <p>The BMP Program provides customers with a list of standardized customization options to choose from in building their apparatus, offering lower prices and shorter delivery times compared to a fully custom apparatus.</p> <p>Eastside Fire & Rescue staff will be present at the City Council meeting and will be ready to respond to questions related to the type 1 apparatus and the level of customization with this upcoming purchase.</p>

30	6819	Reynolds	<p>Please tell me more about the financing options. The dollar amount here is not ridiculously different than the amount for the 9655 building. Why are we using a bank loan here and an LTGO bond there?</p> <p>How do the rates (true interest cost after considering all expenses) on these two debt instruments compare and how much of that difference can be explained by general shifts in market interest rates since that time?</p>	<p>Staff recommends a lease purchase agreement to acquire the fire apparatus. A lease purchase agreement costs less up front than a bond sale and takes less time to secure.</p> <p>For additional background, a lease purchase agreement is a popular method for fire truck and essential major equipment acquisition. It is not typically used to acquire property. It acts like an installment loan but is structured as a legally binding contract to buy the fire truck. Ownership accrues over time as annual debt service payments are made, which in this case would be over nine years. Debt service payments are to be paid out of the City’s Equipment Rental Fund, where resources have been set aside since the previous apparatus purchase for its eventual replacement.</p> <p>In October, the City sold limited tax general obligations bonds to pay for a portion of the 9655 building acquisition. Given the small amount (\$1.54 million), staff contacted a limited number of regional banks who typically compete for this level of investment (via a private placement), rather than selling the bonds on the open market. The sale took two and a half months and cost the City \$37,270 in fees and outside support.</p> <p>Table 1 illustrates the differences between the two debt instruments.</p> <table><tr><th>Table 1 Final Numbers</th><th>LTGO bond sale 9655 Building</th><th>Lease Purchase Fire Apparatus</th></tr><tr><td>Principal</td><td>\$1,540,000</td><td>\$1,267,470</td></tr><tr><td>True Interest Cost</td><td>4.44%</td><td>4.76%</td></tr><tr><td>Cost of Issuance</td><td>\$37,270</td><td>\$0</td></tr><tr><td>Time to secure (weeks)</td><td>10</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Term (years)</td><td>15</td><td>9</td></tr></table> <p>Even though lease purchase agreements typically result in a higher interest rate than a General Obligation Bond sale, staff elected to pursue lease purchase financing given the total amount of the fire apparatus, the swift turnaround time, and the lower upfront cost of issuance.</p> <p>For example, paying back a \$1.27 million principal amount over a nine-year term, the City would likely spend \$25,000 more with a 4.76% interest rate versus 4.44%.</p>	Table 1 Final Numbers	LTGO bond sale 9655 Building	Lease Purchase Fire Apparatus	Principal	\$1,540,000	\$1,267,470	True Interest Cost	4.44%	4.76%	Cost of Issuance	\$37,270	\$0	Time to secure (weeks)	10	4	Term (years)	15	9
Table 1 Final Numbers	LTGO bond sale 9655 Building	Lease Purchase Fire Apparatus																				
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