



PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Adam Zack, Senior Planner
DATE: August 31, 2023
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update
Economic Development Element – Third Draft
DISCUSSION DATE: September 27, 2023
ATTACHMENTS: A. Economic Development Element – Third Draft
B. Economic Development Element Implementation Plan – Third Draft
C. Comments on the Economic Development Element (updated)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this review is to obtain the Planning Commission’s responses to comments on the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan and Implementation Plan (Attachments A and B). A matrix of all comments is provided in Attachment C.

BACKGROUND

The City of Mercer Island is updating its Comprehensive Plan as part of the periodic review required by the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA). The City Council added drafting a new Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan to the project scope of work with [Resolution No. 1621](#). This element will be a completely new addition to the Comprehensive Plan. The preparation of the draft Economic Development Element involved additional steps, including public participation, prior to Planning Commission review. Those additional steps and more background on the Economic Development Element drafting process are discussed in more detail in a [June 28 memo to the Planning Commission](#).

COMMENTS

Comments on the Economic Development Element are provided in Attachment C. This attachment includes a matrix that summarizes the comments and logs each by number. The proposed amendments shown in the third draft of the Economic Development Element (Attachment A) include the assigned number for easy reference.

Seven comments were submitted by five Planning Commissioners:

Commissioner	Date Received	Comment No.
Chris Goelz	July 11	1 - 32, 46 - 47
Adam Ragheb	July 12	33 - 45
Angie Battazzo	July 17	48 - 59
Carolyn Boatsman	July 19	60
Kate Akyuz	July 26	61 - 66
Carolyn Boatsman	August 23	67 - 84
Chris Goelz	August 25	85 - 86

Public comments on the Economic Development Element are also provided in Attachment C. Where needed, staff provided clarifying notes in the comment matrix. The comment from Commissioner Chris Goelz, dated August 25, proposes some changes to and withdrew several comments from his July 11 comment. The third draft of the Economic Development Element and comment matrix were updated to reflect the new comments.

REVIEW PROCESS

At its July 26 meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the Economic Development Element line-by-line. That review concluded at Policy 1.9, addressing the introductory text and 9 of the Element’s 51 policies. Unless the Planning Commission makes significant progress on completing its review of the remaining 42 policies at its September 27 meeting, it is anticipated that the Planning Commission will need to schedule special meetings to complete its review prior to the end of 2023.

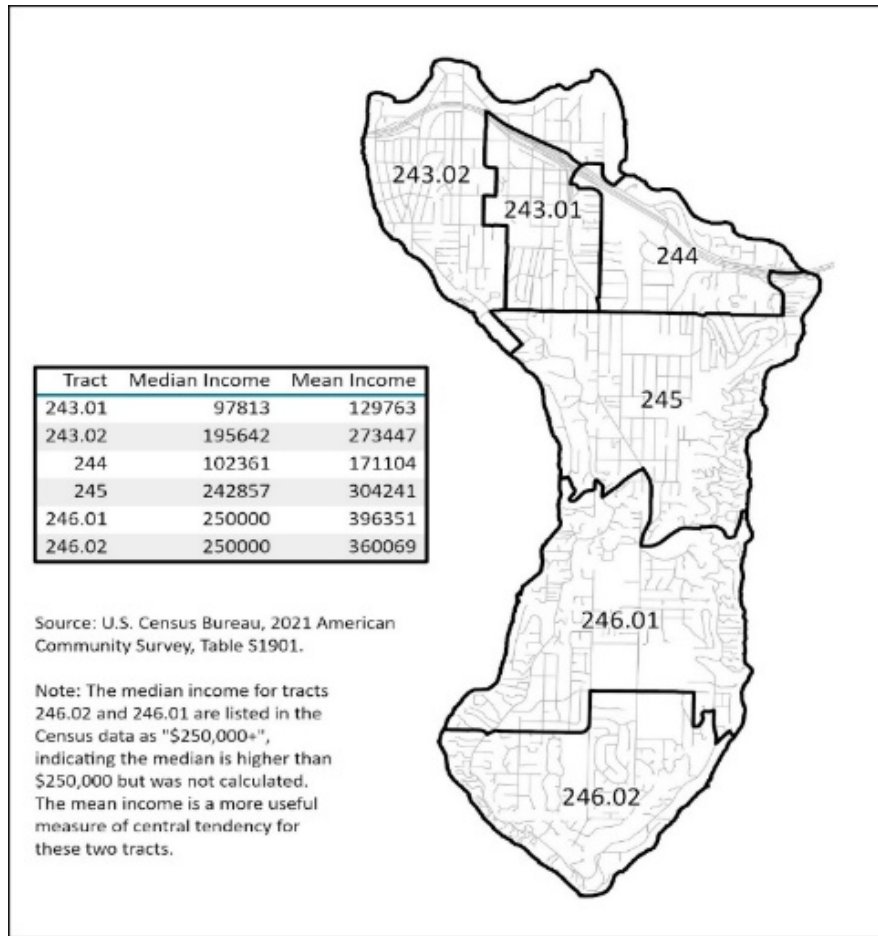
It is important to note that the November meeting is reserved for review of the 2024 Annual Docket; leaving the October and December meetings for the Planning Commission to finalize its review after September. Additionally, December meetings are historically difficult to schedule due to the holidays. Depending on the outcome of the September 27 review, staff recommends the following dates if additional meetings are needed:

- Wednesday, October 4
- Wednesday, November 1 or 8
- Wednesday, December 6 or 13

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Planning Commission asked for additional information about income by location. At the top of page 3, Figure 1 shows the U.S. Census Bureau Census Tracts and the median and mean income for each tract from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). Table 1 (see page 3) shows the detailed income data by census tract from the 2021 ACS, Table S1901.

Figure 1. Mercer Island Census Tracts and 2020 Average Income.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey, Table S1901.

Table 1. Mercer Island Estimated 2021 Income by Census Tract.

	Tract 243.01	Tract 243.02	Tract 244	Tract 245	Tract 246.01	Tract 246.02
Total	2,470	1,505	1,201	1,716	1,635	1,231
Less than \$10,000	6.1%	3.6%	5.0%	0.0%	2.1%	1.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.4%	0.3%	1.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	8.7%	1.1%	2.1%	1.0%	6.2%	1.4%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.6%	11.0%	6.7%	1.5%	0.4%	0.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3.4%	3.3%	9.1%	6.0%	3.1%	2.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11.7%	12.8%	10.3%	4.6%	2.9%	6.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.1%	5.3%	12.6%	2.4%	1.1%	0.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.8%	9.7%	18.2%	14.2%	12.7%	11.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12.0%	6.4%	8.2%	8.1%	6.8%	9.7%
\$200,000 or more	19.6%	46.8%	25.8%	61.7%	64.3%	65.5%
Median income (dollars)	97,813	195,642	102,361	242,857	250,000+	250,000+
Mean income (dollars)	129,763	273,447	171,104	304,241	396,351	360,069

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), Table S1901.

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW SCHEDULE

September 20 All comments and questions are due by September 20. This allows all Commissioners the opportunity to consider each comment in advance of the September 27 meeting.

Please email comments to Alison Van Gorp at alison.vangorp@mercerisland.gov.

September 27 The Planning Commission can consider the proposed amendments that require deliberation and any comments submitted during the comment period. If necessary, discussion of the proposed amendments can extend to another meeting. After resolving the comments, the Planning Commission can complete this round of review and the draft Economic Development Element and Implementation Plan will be considered the public hearing draft.

Additional meeting(s) will be scheduled following the September meeting depending on the progress made at the September meeting.

Remaining Review Once the Planning Commission arrives at a public hearing draft of the Economic Development Element and Implementation Plan, there will be more rounds of review:

- The City will hold an open house on the Comprehensive Plan update to gather public input.
- After the open house, the Planning Commission will hold a Comprehensive Plan update, “tune up” meeting to respond to public input gathered.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan update to gather additional public input.
- The Planning Commission can respond to input from the public hearing by amending the drafts prior to making a recommendation to the City Council.