



Planning Commission Restructure Discussion

AB 7018 | October 20, 2026



Purpose of This Discussion

- City Council has asked to review the Planning Commission's structure after two years in its current format.
- Some members of the City Council have asked to consider alternatives, including restoring the previous structure.
- Any change requires action by the full City Council and an amendment to the City Code (MICC Chapter 3.46).
- City Council direction to the City Manager is needed on next steps.

How We Got Here

Mar 1, 2024

At its Planning Session, Council directed the City Manager to propose reconstituting the Commission.

Apr 2, 2024

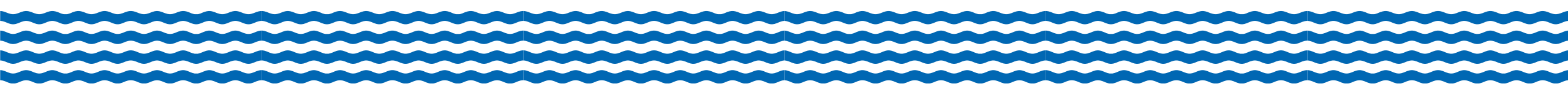
The City Manager presented options (AB 6441), and Council selected its preferred structure.

Apr 16 & May 7, 2024

Council held two readings and then adopted Ordinance 24C-06.

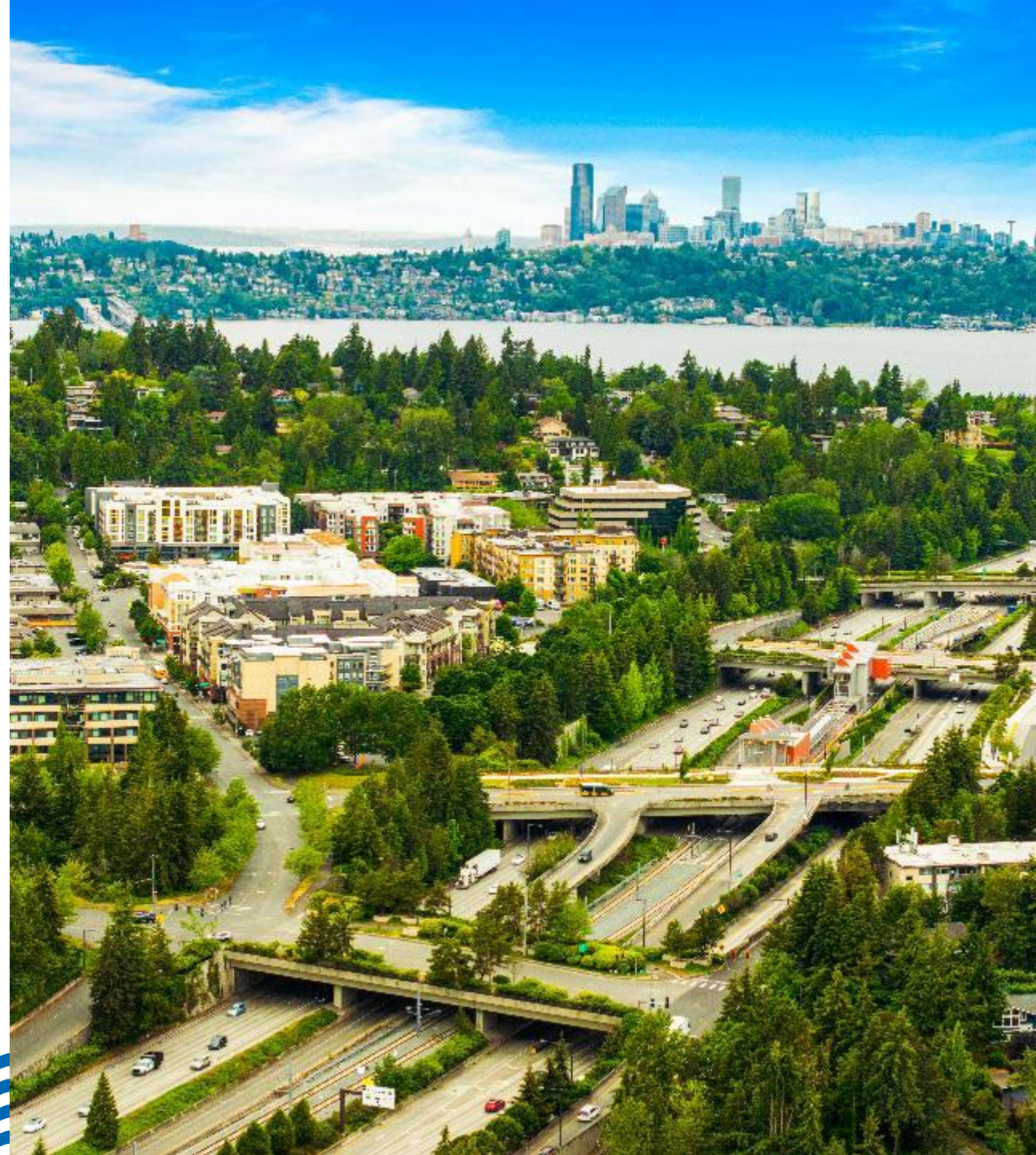
Jan 15, 2025

The current structure took effect.



Current Structure

- The Commission has five seats: two non-resident paid practitioners, two resident lay persons, and one resident paid practitioner.
- Paid practitioners receive \$500 per meeting, up to \$10,500 a year.
- The Commission may meet up to 21 times a year, with 11 regular and up to 10 special meetings.
- Only the City Council can terminate a paid practitioner.



Since January 2025...

~20

The Commission has met about 20 times.

~\$45,000

The City has paid this amount in compensation at \$500 per meeting.

Vacancy and Recruitment

- Commissioner Akyuz resigned in June 2026, which created a mid-term vacancy.
- Council's Rules of Procedure call for filling a vacancy within 60 days, or as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Recruitment opened September 3 and closes Friday, October 9, and the City has received five applications so far.
- If the City Council restructures the Commission, staff recommends suspending the recruitment and retaining the applications.

Previous Structure

- The Commission had seven members who served without compensation in staggered four-year terms, limited to two consecutive terms.
- Applicants with experience in environmental affairs, planning, land use, property development, or economic development were preferred, with a broad mix of backgrounds desired.
- Meeting times are set by the Planning Commission; usually twice per month
- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor recommended members for Council appointment.



Direction Needed

1. Number of seats

Council should decide how many members will serve on the Commission.

2. Compensation

Council should decide whether members will be paid and, if so, how much.

3. Residency

Council should decide whether members must be Mercer Island residents.

4. Position types

Council should decide how many seats are specialty positions versus lay positions.

Next Steps

If Council restructures

The ordinance would return to Council on Oct. 20 or Nov. 3.

The current recruitment would be suspended.

Applicants would be notified, and their applications would be retained.

If Council keeps current structure

The recruitment would close on Friday, Oct. 9.

Council would consider an appointment on Oct. 20, 2026.

Recommended Action

1. Direct the City Manager

Direct the City Manager to prepare and return to the City Council, at the earliest practicable meeting, an ordinance to restructure the Planning Commission to include the following [insert items discussed during meeting].

2. Suspend the Rules of Procedure

Suspend the City Council Rules of Procedure requiring filling vacant planning commission positions within 60 days or as soon as reasonably practicable to allow time for the City Council to consider options to restructure the Planning Commission. (Approval by 2/3 of the City Council needed to pass.)