

Question & Answer Matrix
March 3, 2026 - City Council Meeting

Log #	AB No.	Received From		Staff Response	Staff Assigned	JB Review
1	6893	Reynolds	What would the process be like if we decided to enact the 0.1% sales tax? How much money would this raise per year?	<p>House Bill 1590: In 2020, the legislature passed House Bill 1590, which amended RCW 82.14.530, related to sales and use tax for housing and related services. Previously, this housing sales tax was required to go to the ballot for authorization from voters before enactment, but House Bill 1590 provided the option for the tax to be councilmanic.</p> <p>HB 1590 gave counties until September 30, 2020 to impose the tax countywide. After that date, cities could also impose the tax. However, cities and counties have a combined taxing authority of 0.1 percent. Thus, if the County imposes the full tax amount first, cities are precluded from implementing the tax. If a county imposes the tax after one or more cities have already done so, the county must provide a credit to those cities for the full amount collected within each jurisdiction.</p> <p>Before King County passage of the housing sales tax legislation, 8 cities had imposed the sales tax: Covington, Issaquah, Kent, Renton, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Maple Valley and Bellevue. Since Mercer Island did not impose the tax prior to King County imposing the tax countywide, Mercer Island is no longer eligible to impose this tax. Funds raised at the County level are currently going towards King County's Health Through Housing Initiative.</p> <p>In 2020, when the City made the decision not to implement this tax it was felt that directing funds to a regional effort was preferred. There was some controversy over this decision, however, as many in the community felt that the funds should have been held and managed by the City directly and not defaulted to the County. At the time we had no way of knowing that HB 1220 would be implemented and that in 2026 we would be addressing a \$300+ million unfunded</p>	Jeff/Alison	COMPLETE

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			<p>mandate to provide affordable housing at the scale we are facing today.</p> <p>Tax Levies: Counties and cities may also impose additional regular property tax levies up to \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation (AV) each year for up to ten years to finance affordable housing for very low-income households (defined as 50% or less of the county's median income) when specifically authorized to do so by a majority of voters of the taxing district (RCW 84.52.105).</p> <p>This article from MRSC provides additional information on this topic: Affordable Housing Funding Sources</p>			
2	6879	Reynolds	<p>What does it mean that Brian Gaspar's seat was "vacated"? Did he resign? Was he fired?</p>	<p>Per the OSCT Bylaws Sections 2.4 and 4.1.G.2, it was deemed that Brain Gaspar forfeited his position on the OSCT by missing two consecutive meetings with no communication to staff or the chair after multiple attempts to reach him.</p>	Ali/Sam/Lizzy	COMPLETE
3	6880	Reynolds	<p>Was this not handled by the omnibus bill? [STEP Housing]</p>	<p>These interim regulations were originally included in the draft "Omnibus Ordinance" when these regulations were presented to the Planning Commission in September and October 2025. They were eventually taken out of the Omnibus Ordinance to provide additional time for consideration of the appropriate approach for complying with GMA requirements. The staff will send a follow-up email on this later today so that the Council is reminded of the history of this work.</p> <p>The Planning Commission and City Council are currently focused on compliance with the Growth Management Hearings Board Final Decision and Order. Once this work is complete, the PC and CC will have the capacity to develop permanent regulations for HB 1220.</p>	Jeff/Molly	COMPLETE
4	6880	Reynolds	<p>What other land use or housing interim regulations exist and what is the plan to address them?</p>	<p>There are three remaining interim regulations on the books that were not addressed with the Omnibus Ordinance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HB 1220 (STEP Housing) 	Jeff/Molly	COMPLETE

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			<p>2. HB 1110/1337 (Middle Housing and ADUs) - must be renewed in June 2026</p> <p>3. SB 5258 (Unit Lot Subdivisions) - must be renewed in June 2026</p> <p>Permanent regulations for these will be developed when compliance with the Growth Management Hearings Board Final Decision and Order is achieved.</p>		
5	6881	Reynolds	Please provide key demographic breakdowns of respondents as compared to actual Island demographics.	Jessi/Robbie	COMPLETE
6	6881	Reynolds	How do the answers shown on slide 8 compare to prior MI surveys and to other cities?	Jessi/Robbie	COMPLETE
7	6872	Reynolds	What is the difference between “in progress” and “ongoing”?	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
8	6872	Reynolds	Re “ <i>staff are continuing to work to identify last-mile transportation solutions for both residents and commuters to the Island.</i> ”, what options are being considered and what progress has been made?	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE

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10	6872	Becker	Our 2024 Government Operations Emissions decreased by 14%, “primarily driven by the... transition to Eastside Fire and Rescue.” This isn’t a real decrease in emissions, we’re just not reporting them anymore, is that correct? How does this get counted towards our reduction goals for 2030 and 2050?	Correct. While some of the change between 2023 and 2024 is representative of a true decrease in government operations emissions, the removal of the fire stations and fleet from the reporting makes this decrease appear more significant. As the CAP target for municipal emission reduction is to achieve carbon neutral operations, this change does bring the City slightly closer to achieving this goal, however it has no impact on the 2030/2050 community targets, as the EFR buildings and fleet are still counted at the community level.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
11	6872	Becker	Besides EF&R impacts, a significant portion of the reductions in Government Operations Emissions are driven by “Employee Commute”, since staff are working from home. Do we expect to lose most of these reductions once the 9655 building (or other City operations building) is up and running?	Yes. Employee Commute emissions will likely increase as more staff return to in-person work.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
12	6872	Becker	For the 59 Actions identified in the CAP, is there any evaluation done of the estimated emissions reduction per Action? Yes 76% of Actions have some kind of progress, but not all Actions are equal. Alternately, are there any Actions among the 59 that have had a notable impact on emissions reductions so far?	Consultants conducted a GHG wedge analysis as part of the development of the CAP to try to determine the emissions reduction impact of the Actions and the reductions in specific sectors that the City would need to achieve in order to reach the broader goals. Calculations indicated that federal, state, and regional climate policies that existed at the time would reduce emission by 34% by 2030 and that the remaining 16% gap needed to be achieved at the local level. Ultimately, the largest sources of emissions on Mercer Island are passenger vehicles and residential homes. Electrification of vehicles and reduction of vehicle miles traveled will result in significant emission reductions, as well as decarbonizing home energy use for air and water heating.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
13	6872	Weinberg	The Energy Smart Eastside 2025 Annual Report indicates that ESE had only spent \$36,000, or about 1/3 of the \$113,000 it received from Mercer Island. While it’s good to be under budget, what suggestions might you have on what	In 2025, the program focused on spending down time-sensitive grant funding first, then shifting to City funds. The program anticipates using 100% of the provided City-funds towards heat pump installations this year.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE

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			actions we, as Council or as City staff, might be able to take to help ESE turn more of this annual funding into heat pump installations for islanders. For example, if we assume that there are 400-500 heat pump installations or replacements each year on the island, ESE's 26 heat pump installation assists in 2025 constitutes about 6% of the annual heat pump installs. As the ESE program focuses on the income-qualified portion of that market, do we feel that we've saturated that market? If so, should we consider adjusting upwards the income threshold			
14	6872	Weinberg	<p>Re: Green Power Program. You mentioned that PSE has contributed \$12,500 "toward a new community solar panel project on the island." You then indicated that staff are finalizing plans to use the funding. Before plans are finalized, would you please share the details surrounding the \$12,500 award and what parameters and definitions PSE set for a community solar panel project?</p>	<p>As a shared program among 6 cities, the program aims to allocate grant funding and shared-staff time equitably amongst the cities, based on the number of households. Mercer Island is around 5% of the overall number of households served by the program, which is why the City represents about 6% of installs.</p> <p>With the focus on income qualification, there is the possibility that we may hit a point where we no longer have applicants that are below 80% of the area median income, however, it is not something we have encountered yet. In the meantime, the program offers rebates to residents who are at or below 150% of Area Median Income, as well as an equipment discount to all residents, regardless of income qualification.</p> <p>PSE requires that the funds are used to install solar panels that are connected to the grid and a public facility. It does not need to be at a City-owned site, but it should be at a site that provides community benefit. Project costs for equipment and installation up to \$12,500 will be reimbursed.</p> <p>Staff will return to the City Council once a project has been identified.</p>	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
15	6872	Weinberg	<p>Please share more details about the 4-week/12-day EV Shuttle Pilot program from 12 months ago. I'm very curious to learn how this might shape our future efforts towards a last-mile solution.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How many stops did it have and where were they? Was it only open to CMI and Riot employees? Was the School District invited to participate? Were the shuttle trips on a regular schedule or was it an on-call service? What was the program's overall cost? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Initially, the shuttle only stopped at the Riot Games at (3003 77th Ave SE) and the City Hall/Public Works campus (9611 SE 36th St) due to those being the only Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)-impacted sites, however, on the second Thursday of the pilot, the route was expanded to include 2 additional City facilities (Mercer Island Community & Event Center at 8236 SE 24th St and Mercer Island Thrift Shop at 7710 SE 34th St) in order to encourage more staff to utilize the service. The pilot was only available to CMI and Riot Games employees as those are the only two employers on the 	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Did the City cover 100% of the cost, or was it split with Riot? f. Was the driver a City employee, a Riot employee, or a contractor? g. What was the program’s ridership goal and what level of ridership did it attain? h. Are there any follow-up actions planned? Is another pilot being considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Island impacted by the state CTR requirements and this was part of the grant funding requirements. c. Shuttles operated between 6:30-9:30 am and 3-6pm. There was an app for users to reserve a spot on the shuttle d. The shuttle service, not including staff time, was \$14,280 for the 4-week pilot. e. The pilot was funded using a combination of City and grant resources. The driver was a contractor f. There was no established ridership goal for the pilot. The goal of this pilot was to gather ridership data for exploring future long-term transit solutions on the Island. The shuttle saw less than 5% utilization throughout the pilot duration. g. Though this pilot was not successful in attracting riders, staff are actively pursuing grants to re-launch an expanded shuttle pilot project for the Island that would be available to all residents and commuters on the Island. 		
16	6872	Weinberg	Page 6 of AB 6872 mentions that the city is pursuing funding from the state to support the MICEC HVAC replacement. Is this funding being requested in the form of a grant from Commerce or in the form of a budget proviso from our legislators?	As of March 2, 2026, the Draft State Senate Capital Budget Proposal includes \$309,000 in funding for the MICEC HVAC replacement project. The budget proposal directs this funding to the Department of Commerce Local and Community Projects program. In other words, the legislature is directing the Department of Commerce to provide the City a grant at this amount for this project. Noting that the Department of Commerce will charge an administrative fee of \$9,000, meaning the City will net \$300,000 under this proposed budget, should the Capital Budget be signed as is by the Governor.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
17	6872	Weinberg	Re: “CC2.3 Develop green building guidelines to inform future municipal building designs.” This was listed in the CAP plan, published in April 2023, as something to implement in “NT” or “near term,” which was defined as “in the next 1-3 years.” As we are crossing the 3-year milestone	This action was not specifically included in the 2025-2026 Work Plan; however staff have been collecting data to inform the development of guidelines in the future. Additionally, staff have been working to incorporate	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE

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			this year, is it our intent to complete the implementation of this action this year?	sustainability and climate considerations into all recent City facility work (maintenance, repairs, etc.)		
18	6872	Weinberg	<p>The same “NT action crossing the 3-year horizon” condition and question (see above) applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CC3.2 “Applying a climate-lens” b. CC2.5 “Complete energy efficiency retrofits” c. BE1.2 “Improvements to energy grid and storage” d. BE1.5 “Burn-out program for replacing fossil fuel furnaces” e. TR1.4 “Explore and develop incentives to expand EV charging capacity at commercial and residential properties.” f. CR2.3 “Encourage the state to implement requirements to improve the resiliency of the electric network” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This Action is ongoing. It is not marked as “completed” as it will continue. b. Energy efficiency retrofits are being completed on an as-needed basis as equipment fails or reaches end of life. This work is ongoing. c. This Action is in progress. The City participated in the 2025 Solarize campaign, and staff are actively working on developing educational materials to promote the use of battery backup storage. Energy Smart Eastside considered this as a future program offering, however given the uncertainties and lack of control of battery usage and the upfront cost of storage systems the recommendation is to re-assess once progress is made with other measures. d. The Energy Smart Eastside heat pump program is part of this Action. Heat pump water heaters are being considered as a likely future program expansion. Contractor education has been identified as the first action for the program to focus on, to build a foundation for future deployment. e. There are numerous state and utility incentives for commercial/multifamily properties. A plan for how to promote these programs on MI is being incorporated into the development of the EV Charging Infrastructure plan. f. Staff are actively monitoring legislation on this topic. We anticipate the 2027 Legislative Session (a long session) will likely bring opportunities to support this work. 	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
19	6872	Weinberg	If additional staffing is required to complete the aforementioned “NT” items, would the City staff please share with Council what that staffing need is so that we can consider it in our budget discussion this year?	While additional staff capacity would be helpful for continued progress on CAP implementation, the primary impediment to creating new programs/incentives is the lack of funding for the projects themselves.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE

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				Should the City Council wish to evaluate additional funding for CAP work items, the City Manager recommends holding this discussion as part of the biennial budget process this fall so that the full suite of opportunities and challenges can be considered. As a reminder, the projected deficit in the Operating Funds (YFS and General Fund) in 2027 is \$2M+.		
20	6872	Weinberg	Re: "CC2.5 Complete energy efficiency retrofits on existing municipal equipment and buildings." Is the 9655 building slated to receive an energy efficiency retrofit?	The Property Condition Assessment for the 9655 Building noted that the roof top HVAC unit and the roof both require replacement/repair. Both retrofits are being evaluated as part of the larger suite of building improvements needed for the City to occupy the building. Given that a remodel will be needed for occupancy, other opportunities to address building efficiency will also be considered (e.g. light fixture upgrades, etc.)	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
21	6872	Weinberg	Re: "CR1.2 Support and advocate for rebates for low-emission space cooling devices". To what extent might Senate Bill 6200 in this year's legislative session help address this climate action?	SB6200 does not appear to contain language related to incentives/rebates, however staff will continue to monitor.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
9	6836	Reynolds	Re " <i>due to PSE's current policy, which prohibits connections that feed power back into the grid.</i> "..... <i>Don't some solar arrays feed back into the grid?</i>	Grid-tied solar arrays do feed power back to the grid, so PSE requires that interconnections undergo assessments and studies to ensure that they don't cause any damage to PSE's system before they are allowed to connect. PSE doesn't currently offer vehicle to building programs, but there is a chance they will in the future as they are currently evaluating the capabilities. This line in the report specifically referred to vehicle to grid/building/home systems that are grid-tied, and not those that are solely tied to separate battery storage.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE
22	6836	Becker	Does "slow chargers"=L1 and "fast chargers"=L2/L3?	"Slow chargers" includes Levels 1 and 2 and "Fast chargers" is Level 3.	Jason Kellye Alanna	COMPLETE