



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6872
March 3, 2026
Study Session**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6872: Sustainability Work Program Annual Update	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive report. No action necessary.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Kelye Hilde, Deputy Director of Public Works Alanna DeRogatis, Sustainability Program Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	1. Q1 2026 Climate Action Plan Implementation Status 2. 2024 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	4. Focus efforts and actions to be an environmentally and fiscally sustainable, connected, and diverse community.

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an update on the status of the Sustainability Program Work Plan, highlighting key actions that were included in the work plan for the 2025-2026 biennium.

- The Mercer Island Climate Action Plan (CAP) was adopted by City Council in April 2023 ([AB 6246](#)).
- Staff have implemented programs which support the plan’s six Focus Areas and move municipal operations and the community toward reaching CAP targets (Exhibit 1).
- The City continues to participate in partnerships and programs that enhance and supplement its sustainability efforts.
- Results of the 2024 Greenhouse Gas Emissions report (Exhibit 2) indicate that both community and municipal operations emissions must continue to decrease in order to achieve 2030 reduction goals.

BACKGROUND

In 2007, the City adopted greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets of 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050 (compared to a 2007 baseline). In 2011, Mercer Island became a founding member of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C). In June 2021, King County’s Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC)

updated the County 2050 emissions target to a 95% reduction, which the Mercer Island City Council ratified in [Resolution No. 1620](#) in March 2022.

The City of Mercer Island is a founding member of the [Eastside Climate Partnership](#) (ECP), a collaborative initiative formed in 2023 and comprised of the Cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, Mercer Island, Redmond, and Sammamish - “Eastside cities” located on the eastern side of Lake Washington. This partnership implements actions to reduce local sources of climate pollution and advance collective sustainability initiatives through shared outreach, coordination, program management, and securing funding. By working together, the participating cities leverage their collective resources and implement impactful solutions that would be more difficult to achieve independently. This collaboration builds on existing partnerships between the Eastside cities that address other community priorities, such as human services, affordable housing, economic development, tourism, and regional planning. Mercer Island signed the [Interlocal Agreement](#) in 2022 when work began on a pilot program to help support low- and moderate-income qualified households in transitioning from natural gas furnaces to heat pumps ([AB 6060](#)).

The work toward establishing City sustainability goals and actions culminated in April 2023 with the adoption of the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), which outlines a roadmap for the City to meet its GHG reduction commitments and other climate resiliency goals. The CAP identifies 59 actions, grouped into six Focus Areas, to guide the City in achieving its emissions reduction targets. The 2025-2026 Workplan includes direction to implement the CAP and specifically identifies several key actions for this biennium, including annual GHG tracking and reporting (CC1.3), development and implementation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan (TR1.1), and development and implementation of an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (CC2.6), among others.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Of the 59 Actions identified in the CAP, 76% are currently either in progress or ongoing. An overview of the status of all CAP actions is included in Exhibit 1. Detailed updates on the CAP actions that were included in the 2025-2026 Workplan and other related sustainability initiatives are described below. CAP actions are identifiable by their Action ID in parentheses, denoting the Focus Area and Action Number.

GHG Tracking and Reporting (CC1.3)

As with prior years, the 2024 GHG emissions report was completed as a joint project with the Eastside Climate Partnership. Staff worked with Cascadia Consulting Group to develop a 2024 GHG emissions report (Exhibit 2) and updated the interactive dashboard on the [City website](#) (CC3.1). This work occurred in 2025 and took 9 months to complete. Staff have already begun collecting data for the 2025 GHG emissions report and that information will be presented to the City Council early next year.

The 2024 report showed that Mercer Island’s communitywide emissions decreased 0.7% compared to 2023. Key drivers of this change include shifts in community activity—such as decreases in energy consumption and vehicle travel—as well as external factors including the 2024 bomb cyclone and reductions in the carbon intensity of electricity provided by Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Mercer Island’s 2024 government operations emissions decreased by 14% compared to the last GHG inventory in 2023. These decreases were primarily driven by the removal of the fire stations and fleet from the City’s portfolio following the 2024 transition to Eastside Fire and Rescue.

The 2024 results represent an 8% decrease in community-wide emissions compared to 2007, while per capita emissions decreased by 21%. The City’s lowest reported year of emissions remains 2020, with 2024 results

being 2% higher. Community-wide emissions will need to decrease an additional 42% by the end of the decade in order to achieve the City's 2030 reduction targets.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Plan (TR1.1)

In October 2024, the City was awarded \$100,000 in funding from the 2023-2025 Climate Planning Grant through the Washington State Department of Commerce to begin developing an EV Charging Infrastructure Plan with a focus on the transition of the municipal fleet and the required charging infrastructure. In January 2025, the City engaged EXP U.S. Services, Inc. (EXP) and their partner, ElectroTempo, to begin development of the first phase of the EV Charging Infrastructure Plan, focused on developing a fleet electrification strategy for the City. The Fleet Electrification Strategy, completed in June 2025, is a comprehensive municipal fleet electrification plan that includes multiple replacement schedule scenarios to help the City manage and plan for electrifying fleet vehicles over the next 5-25 years. Electrification of the municipal fleet is also a CAP Action, CC2.4, and in 2025, the City acquired 4 battery electric/plug-in hybrids as part of the scheduled fleet replacement cycle.

Work is now underway on the development of the next phase of the Plan which focuses on community charging infrastructure. Details on this project are provided in a separate Agenda Bill for this meeting, AB 6836: Electric Vehicle Charging Plan Development Update.

Heat Pump Rebates and Education (BE1.1)

The flagship program of the Eastside Climate Partnership is the [Energy Smart Eastside program](#) (ESE), which grew out of the initial pilot program from 2022. The ESE program educates residents on the benefits of heat pumps, and provides incentives for residential households, affordable housing, and adult family homes. Heat pumps are 2-3 times the cost of a natural gas furnace, putting this upgrade out of reach for many lower-income households.

Through the "Boost" program, ESE covers 100% of the cost of a heat pump upgrade for homes with a household income under 80% of the area median income. Overall, about two thirds of the program's funding comes solely from grants that ESE has received, including funding from the state Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) Program and grants from PSE.

The ESE heat pump campaign aims to support a local market transformation of residential HVAC installations with the outcome that 99% of permitted heating projects are heat pumps by 2032. With an average furnace lifespan of 15-30 years, this target puts the Eastside cities on track to phase out most residential gas furnaces by 2050; a necessary milestone to reach 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

In 2025, the program saw notable growth, both in heat pumps installed, and in programming and outreach efforts. ESE launched a volunteer program, where peer advisors donated 70+ hours at community events speaking with their neighbors about heat pumps. Through generous support from ESE's manufacturer and distributor partners, the community discount for participating heat pump brands increased from \$500 to \$1,000 at no cost to the program.

In 2025, Mercer Island saw 26 installations through the program, up from 20 in 2024. Fourteen of these were market-rate installations, six used the moderate-income rebate, and six were fully-funded installations through the Boost program.

Green Power Program (BE1.7)

In January 2025, the City and PSE launched a Green Power Challenge to encourage residents and businesses to enroll in PSE's Green Power Program, which matches participants' electricity use with renewable energy made from wind and solar. This program helps to reduce our region's dependence on fossil fuel generated electricity and increases the overall amount of renewable energy that is available to the entire system. The goal of the challenge was to achieve 100 new signups to the program over the course of the year. As an incentive, PSE pledged to provide the City with \$10,000 toward a new community solar panel project on the Island.

At the start of 2025, 13% of Mercer Island customers were already participating in this program - higher than PSE's overall program participation rate of 10%. By August, the City had already surpassed the goal by achieving 108 new enrollments and ultimately exceeded the sign-up goal by 42% by year-end. As a result of this impressive community participation, PSE added \$2,500 to the award amount, bringing the total to \$12,500. Staff are currently finalizing plans to use the funding.

WA Clean Buildings Performance Standard (BE2.3)

The Washington State Clean Buildings Performance Standard (CBPS) which was signed into law in 2019, expanded in 2022, and augmented in 2023, aims to lower costs and pollution from fossil fuel consumption in the state's existing commercial and multifamily buildings larger than 20,000 square feet. Under the law, buildings are divided into two groups: buildings over 50,000 square feet are known as Tier 1 buildings, while those between 20,000-49,999 square feet are Tier 2. The compliance deadlines for Tier 1 buildings fall between June 2026 and June 2028, while Tier 2 buildings must comply by July 2027.

CBPS requires all covered buildings to benchmark their energy usage, which requires 12 months of energy use data, and develop and implement an Energy Management Plan (EMP), and an Operations & Maintenance (O&M) plan. Both plans need to be in place 12 months prior to compliance. In addition to these requirements, Tier 1 buildings are also required to meet an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) target.

Mercer Island City Hall, the Mercer Island Community and Event Center (MICEC) and the recently acquired building at 9655 SE 36th Street are all covered under CBPS as Tier 2 buildings. Staff developed and implemented an EMP and O&M for the MICEC in early 2025.

As City Hall is closed and unoccupied, staff intend to submit an exemption for the building, as a building can apply for exemption from CBPS compliance if more than 50% of the building's square footage does not have a certificate of occupancy or temporary certificate of occupancy for all 12 months of the calendar year prior to the compliance deadline. While plans are still being developed to renovate and occupy the 9655 building, staff are also considering the CBPS compliance impacts of moving staff into the building.

Additional Items

In addition to making significant progress on 2025-2026 Workplan CAP Action Items, staff also undertook the following projects in 2025:

- Commuter Trip Reduction (CTR) Initiatives (CC2.1): As part of the implementation of the 2025-2029 CTR Plan, adopted by the City Council on March 4, 2025 ([AB 6630](#)), the City launched a four-week/12 day EV Shuttle Pilot program for City staff and Riot Games employees, the City's two CTR-affected employers. The pilot program occurred in April 2025 with the intention of offering a first/last mile

transportation option to promote public transit use during Earth Month. The pilot program was aligned with several other actions in the CAP, including Action CC2.1 Alternative commuting incentives, and TR2.2 Last-mile light rail connection. While the staff pilot program was well-received, ultimately, the shuttle was under-utilized, likely due to the reported low use of public transit by both City and Riot Games staff at the time of the pilot.

In October, the City participated in the statewide Switch Your Trip WA 2025 campaign. Switch Your Trips WA challenges people to replace drive-alone trips with sustainable travel options such as walking, biking, rideshare, and transit for the month of October. This year recorded 2,759 participants from across the state, a slight increase from last year, and a Mercer Island resident who participated in the challenge won a third-place prize.

- **Solar Streetlights:** To address community concerns around inadequate illumination along the pathway between the MICEC parking lot and the Annex building, in late 2025, solar-powered LED light poles were installed by Public Works staff alongside the sidewalk. This project is also being used as an opportunity to evaluate the reliability of solar lights for future projects on Mercer Island. In addition to the sustainability and resilience benefits of using renewable power and reducing grid demand, solar-powered outdoor lighting offers lower installation costs as it removes the requirement to trench and connect to the grid, as well as lower ongoing operational costs.
- **Bike Lockers:** In Fall 2025, eight smart bike lockers were installed at the new Town Center Parking Facility to encourage the use of alternative forms of first/last mile transit to public transportation (TR2.2). The lockers offer bicyclists a secure, weather-resistant place to park their bikes, and are similar to those at the Park and Ride lot and at other Sound Transit and King County Metro facilities throughout the region, maintaining consistency for users.
- **LEED for Cities Certification Cohort:** In April 2025, Mercer Island was accepted into the [2025 LEED for Cities Certification Cohort](#) from the U.S. Green Building Council and Bank of America. Through participation in the cohort, the City received waived membership and certification fees, and staff had access to technical assistance and educational resources to help reduce time spent on the certification process. The certification process offers an opportunity to evaluate the City's performance against LEED's rating system in sustainability and quality of life metrics and recognize the City's achievements in implementing proven sustainable practices.

NEXT STEPS

Through 2026, staff will continue to implement projects identified in the 2025-2026 Work Plan and begin working with the City Manager to draft the work items for the 2027-2028 biennium.

The development of the EV Charging Infrastructure Plan (TR1.1) is expected to be completed in June 2026, after which, work will begin on the implementation of the plan. A plan for outreach to identified sites is currently being developed.

Staff will also begin work to develop a municipal Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy (CC2.6) that prioritizes products with the lowest environmental impact. Once developed, the policy will guide purchasing decisions within each department, including vehicle and fuel purchases, and construction materials. This policy will incorporate findings from the municipal fleet electrification roadmap and will help influence how the City applies a "climate-lens" to decision making (CC3.2).

In addition to working towards completing compliance requirements of the WA Clean Buildings Performance Standard (BE2.3) for City buildings, staff will continue reaching out to owners of covered buildings on Mercer Island to ensure they are aware of the requirements and prepared to submit for compliance.

The MICEC HVAC Replacement project in the 2025-2026 Capital Improvement Program represents an opportunity to implement CAP Action CC2.5 - Complete energy efficiency retrofits on existing municipal equipment and buildings. Following a 2025 HVAC system assessment, a proposed system replacement option offers the possibility of electrifying the building and eliminating the need for natural gas. Though the MICEC is only considered a Tier 2 building under the Washington State Clean Buildings Performance Standard, and as such, is not required to hit an Energy Use Intensity target, the proposed HVAC system replacement would directly support the intent of the law by significantly improving building energy performance, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and modernizing the building systems that contribute most to overall energy use. As one of the City's largest and most used facilities, electrifying the HVAC system will also result in a significant reduction in municipal greenhouse gas emissions. In 2024, the natural gas usage for the MICEC alone accounted for 5% of the City's municipal GHG emissions. The City is also pursuing funding from the State to support this HVAC replacement.

Staff are working on completing the credit requirements for LEED for Cities certification, and plan to submit for a first evaluation in late March 2026.

Additionally, with the opening of the Mercer Island Light Rail Station, staff are continuing to work to identify last-mile transportation solutions for both residents and commuters to the Island.

Staff will continue to report to the City Council annually on the Sustainability Work Program, including the status of the Climate Action Plan and the City's progress toward achieving Climate Action Plan targets.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report. No action necessary.