



Mercer Island Climate Action Plan

Online Survey Summary

Survey Details:

- **Date:** December 9, 2021 through March 9, 2022
- **Responses:** 82 community members
- **Survey Location:** https://letstalk.mercergov.org/climate-action-plan?tool=survey_tool#tool_tab

Survey Background:

The City of Mercer Island held its first community-wide workshop about the Climate Action Plan on December 8, 2021. After the meeting, attendees were invited to submit additional feedback, or clarifying comments, via an online survey. About 20 attendees took advantage of this opportunity.

The questions in the survey were the same as those posed during the kickoff meeting, with one additional question about how the City should prioritize the actions in the CAP, and another asking what climate-related changes people have made in their own lives.

The survey remained open for another 3 months, and was widely publicized via all City outreach channels, in the local newspaper, and within various public meetings. These efforts led to an additional 60 (+/-) responses.

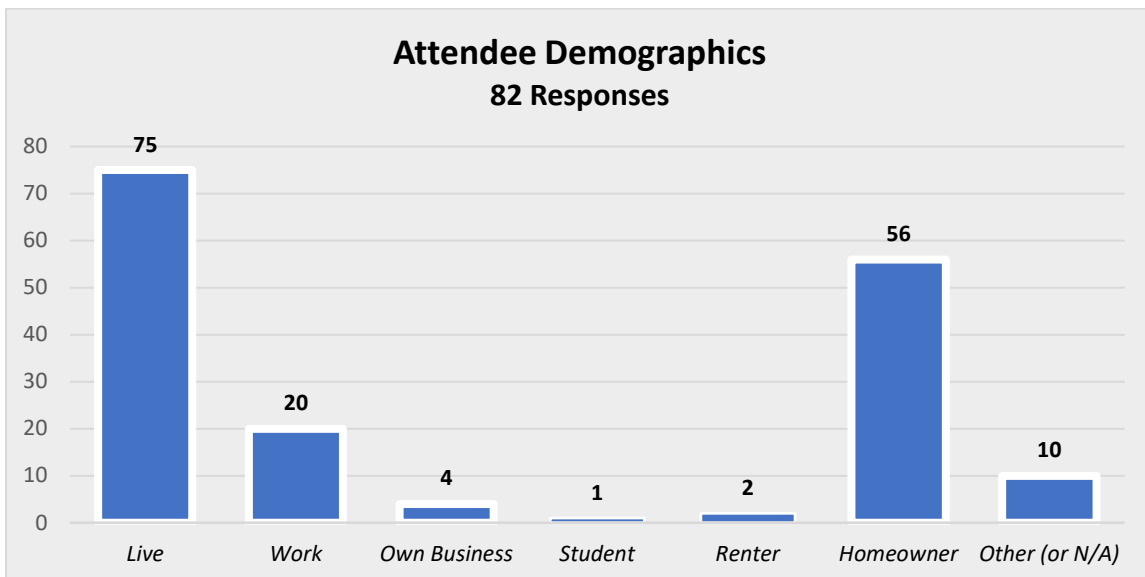
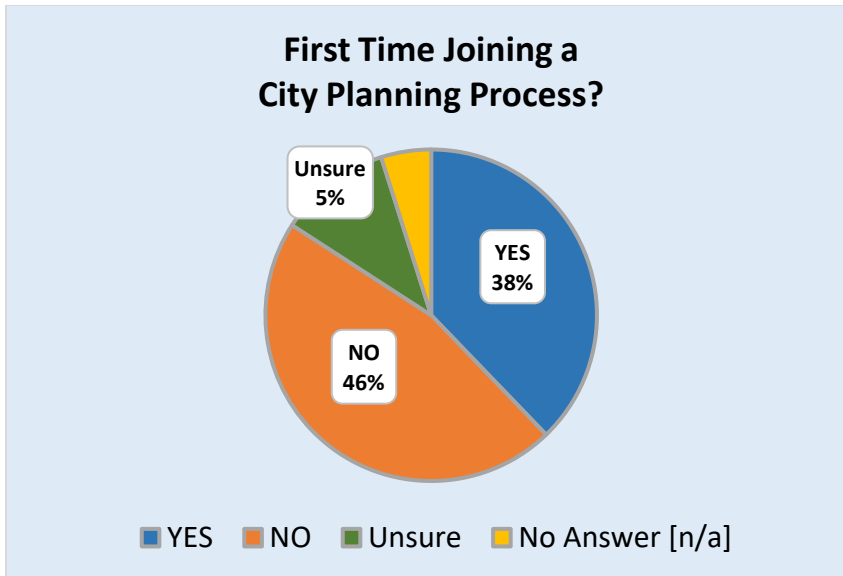
Survey Objectives:

- Understand more about survey participants
- Gather input on community's CAP Vision
- Collect ideas for potential CAP Actions and Strategies to include
- Solicit feedback on best factors for use in ranking of CAP priority actions

Key Findings:

ATTENDEES

- Information was gathered about attendees via two demographic questions:
 - The first yes/no question asked if each attendee had ever participated in a City planning process before (see pie chart below).
 - The other question asked attendees to self-report by selecting all the categories that applied to them (see graph below). Available categories were: Live on MI; Work on MI, Own a MI Business; Student; Renter on MI; Homeowner on MI; Other (or N/A). See graph below.
- The City was pleased that the online survey attracted a large number of first-time participants, similar to the December Kickoff Meeting, but business owners and students were far less represented than was observed at the Kickoff Meeting.



VISION

Responses to the Vision question – “What do you want MI to look like in 2050?”

64 (verbatim) responses.

- A park
- A safe, green, neighborly place to live where it is safe for everyone to walk, ride bikes, or scooter to shop or go to school. Our carbon-based power will be a small fraction of our current usage.
- A leader on climate action
- Retain the general residential character, but accommodate growth through thoughtful redevelopment of Town Center and planning for the huge growth in E-Bike transit as a last mile solution.

- A community that makes being green the easiest choice to make
- A model community for climate-change awareness and action: low carbon footprint, low-consumption values, no pesticides, active 'partnership with nature' outlook, pride in helping lead the way nationally! City reg's that make it possible for lower incomes.
- A green 100% renewable energy community with the same amount, or more, of trees and parks than it has now, with the same or more beaches. I would like more bike lanes, more frequent around-island public transport. Only renewable transport.
- Continue to have parks and wooded areas; safe parks for walks and children
- A verdant, beautiful, safe, and coveted community where people of diverse backgrounds come to raise thriving families
- I miss the trees and wild(ish?) flowers on the ICW median
- Healthy and thriving community
- Green: literally and figuratively
- Not that much different than now. More density including low-income and for Seniors in Town Center (renamed village center). A safe and separated bike and pedestrian trail goes along the island's spine. Some park space has been added and none removed.
- Walkable
- 100% powered by clean energy sources
- It's a leader in making our community look and be environmentally friendly
- An inclusive community full of trees with multi-modal transportation connections throughout the Island, and resilient green spaces
- Full-service community, not reliant on other communities for residents' every need
- A vibrant and diverse multicultural community emphasizing connectivity & sustainable development with convenient and accessible on-Island businesses and community organizations. I would like to see more investment in green infrastructure and low-impact development.
- Houses -if they have construction- must cover the roof in solar or pay for another building to go solar if solar does not work in their location. All electric cars, good walking and biking trails, people have electric heating, dryers, etc.
- A community invested in the future with education for all ages embraced. With green spaces and connecting paths. With opportunities for work, family and play. With a lively, nourishing community energy. With a vision for what makes our world better.
- Similar number of trees. Majority of roofs have solar on roofs. Majority of cars be electric or hybrid.
- Still heavily wooded (preserve our parks), only electric vehicles on roads, EV shuttle circulating EMW/WMW/ICW/CBD to connect to light rail, all energy is rooftop solar (+battery storage) or a solar/wind Utility, NO FOSSIL FUELS, no gas lawnmowers or leaf blowers.
- A place where we are happy to not use our cars so much, because there are other climate-friendly modes of travel to choose from, and we are willing to give up our personal efficiency and convenience goals for the greater good.
- A city that is completely transformed to sustainable (green) sources of power, with abundant green transportation choices and stringent green building standards. Also with more affordable housing options.
- Similar to today
- Sooner than 2050, population of MI and the world-at-large should be decreased substantially, as that would decrease the burden of humans over-populating planet Earth.

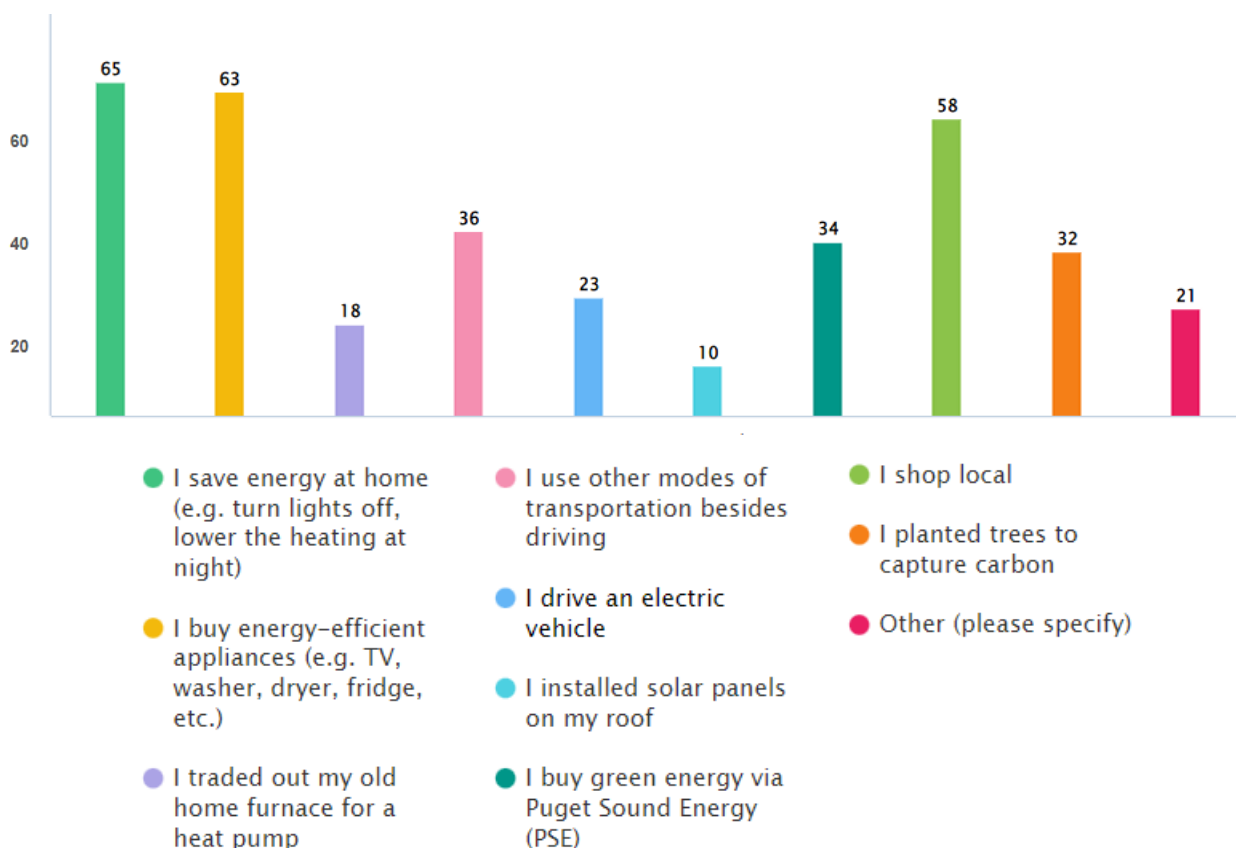
- A safe, climate-respectful place
- Green canopy, parks, access to park and ride, low-carbon footprints, safe, walkable village
- Plenty of trees, parks, and a walkable Town Center
- [Same as] the Mercer Island of 2020. There should be an abundance of parks and open spaces. Parks should retain a rustic or cohesive look that partners with Mercer Island's appeal.
- City center with more shops, but everywhere else no increase in building density
- The previous generation cared about our city and our planet
- Pretty much like it does now
- [Same as] it does now
- Much like today, but with more housing options for a range of incomes
- A community of green neighborhoods with a lively city center, and walking and biking paths to connect people to parks, activities, shopping and transit
- A pleasant, suburban community with an urban core near the light rail station (walking distance!)
- A more diverse community
- [Same as] 2020: no more 4-lane roads, good shoulders for walking etc. No more tall, huge buildings in Town Center.
- A pleasant community for all
- Same number of trees/natural areas
- As green as it can be, given the inevitable temperature rise
- A quiet, single-family home community with basic resources for shopping, walking, dining
- More green
- About the same as today!
- [Same as] it does now: single-family homes and quiet residential neighborhoods; no additional density
- Home
- An urban park
- A responsible, productive community in the Puget Sound area
- Highly sustainable in its energy consumption, and generating solar energy
- Green
- A carbon-neutral community: smaller houses, more green space, fewer cars on the roads
- A place that is respectful of nature
- A verdant small city that is a model for sustainability practices. We have excellent local shopping/dining options, reliably available parking at the light rail station, and other first/last-mile solutions. Walk and bike friendly.
- Carbon neutral
- Carbon neutral, all-electric, exceptional bike network, autonomous EV shuttle system, more multi-family, mixed use housing, increased density, affordable "workforce" housing, micro home community clusters.
- (Same as] it does now
- Fully sustainable community that can support its residents without a need for them to go off island to supply their needs

- Copenhagen? Bike paths, frequent electric buses (or shuttle vans) to train station, neighborhood solar all over, EKCPUD in full sway and PSE no longer in existence. Organic gardens in the schools. Universal (functional) broadband.
- Same as now or greener
- Rural except for the city center. The prominent feature being PNW-forest-feel with mature, native evergreen trees: Douglas fir, western hemlock and western red cedar. Town Center should serve residents.
- Single-family residential community with robust Town Center retail. Cost-conscious and careful financial governance.
- Park space with areas to use for all recreation

PERSONAL CLIMATE ACTION

Responses to the Multiple-Choice Question – “*What changes have you made in your own life with climate change in mind?*”

78 Responses, 4 skips



Actions submitted in “Other” category:

1. I don't eat meat or dairy and try to reduce my consumption of goods
2. I quit using pesticides outdoors (or in!); consume as little of any materials as feasible; cultivate a personal growing awareness of the natural forces of which we are (merely) a part, in the cosmic community of life.
3. I drive a hybrid car

4. I advocate for strong policies that make significant progress towards 50% GHG reduction by 2030
5. I compost and recycle
6. I'm trying to make the house more energy efficient (insulation, heat pump will happen)
7. Buy less plastic packaging
8. Drive a hybrid vehicle
9. Whole house LED bulbs
10. Composting, recycling, reusing
11. I vote for politicians who prioritize sustainability and climate action
12. Besides composting – nothing, as this is just another boondoggle
13. I am careful and conscious regarding recycling and composting foods
14. 1 - Support research and progressive political action on (a) climate change, and (b) energy production/consumption. 2 - improve insulation in home and business: windows and walls.
15. More diligent recycling; subscribe to Ridwell
16. Foregone air travel (before pandemic!); buy carbon offsets when I do travel by air (tree planting); changed what I buy and eat to reduce carbon impact; changed to LED bulbs; donate time and money to climate causes; totally reframed my decision-making to think about climate impact of just about any decision.
17. Our family is vegan
18. We retained several MATURE trees (which absorb more carbon). The climate action plan should recognize the premium value of preserving mature, native evergreen trees.

DISCUSSION THEMES

Listed below are the summary themes submitted in response to four questions about the Scope and Focus of the Climate Action Plan:

- **Question 1: *What do you love most about living in MI? What are the challenges? What would you like to see more of or see this Plan achieve?* (67 responses)**
 - **Likes:** Parks, natural areas, beaches, public spaces; quiet; slower pace; walkability; convenient to Seattle & Bellevue; future access to light rail; good government; intelligent/passionate/friendly/engaged public; family safety; good schools.
 - **Challenges:** Be a leader in regional transportation (light rail) not an obstacle; too much divisiveness in discourse; too many giant SUV's; don't mix Single-Family & Multi-Family zoning; too much wealth; too many people who don't take any climate action; lack of compassion.
 - **CAP should deliver:**
 - Ensure: A climate lens for all City Departments actions/programs; common vision for future
 - More: Climate education, community gardens, tree retention rules & promotion of native plants, events in public spaces, local dining and diverse retail offerings, GHG and performance data, community leadership on climate, parking for local light rail users, rules on idling, bike lanes; bus service; energy efficiency upgrades for all older homes, outreach/webinars/workshops on environmental choices and technologies, EV charging, EV school busses.

- Less: Draconian or overly restrictive regulations; actions that don't have a rigorous cost-benefit analysis.
- **Question 2: *What near-term climate impacts are you most concerned about?* (66 responses)**
 - Stronger storms; increased flooding; landslides; heat events; smoke & air quality; shrinking snowpack; unpredictable weather; summer drought; sea-levels
 - Salmon and insect extinctions
 - Invasive species
 - Lake WA water temperature
 - Water supply
 - Infrastructure resilience
 - Overloaded power grid
 - Future reliance on air-conditioning
 - Increasing need for disaster relief
 - Impacts to food production & food chain
 - Over-reliance on diesel buses
 - Inequitable impacts of extreme weather and access to mitigation
 - "Climate refugees" from outside the Pacific Northwest
 - City spending too much money on mitigation measures
- **Question 3: *What suggestions do you have for specific actions, programs, policies to address climate change?* (60 responses)**
 - **Expanded Green Building Programs**
 - ✓ Phase out natural gas use in all construction types
 - ✓ More LEED-certified (or other) green buildings
 - ✓ City code mandating solar power and heat pumps on new construction & remodels
 - ✓ EV chargers in all new construction and substantial remodels
 - ✓ More city incentives to retrofit solar panels on existing buildings
 - ✓ Stricter tree protection code
 - ✓ Heat pump installation campaign
 - **Enhanced Bike & Pedestrian Facilities**
 - ✓ More dedicated bike lanes and a North-South bike route
 - ✓ Plan thoroughly for expansion of commuter E-Bikes
 - **Support for Cleaner Transit and Transportation**
 - ✓ More Electric Vehicles (EV)
 - ✓ More public EV chargers
 - ✓ Promote car-sharing of private vehicles
 - ✓ Don't restrict store parking lots only to customers at that store
 - ✓ Last-mile connections to light rail station
 - ✓ Install more roundabouts to avoid idling at 4-way stops and signaled junctions
 - ✓ Operate EV circulator shuttle to connect riders to Light Rail and Park&Ride

- **Cleaner Power**
 - ✓ Advocate for more local power generation and microgrids
 - ✓ More community solar options
 - ✓ City incentives for using renewable energy
 - ✓ Push PSE to decarbonize faster
 - ✓ More education on the Eastside PUD citizens campaign
 - ✓ Solar power on all City facilities
 - ✓ Enhance power grid reliability
 - ✓ Encourage sign-ups for PSE green power and carbon offsets
- **Improved Air Quality**
 - ✓ Ban gas-powered leaf blowers and lawnmowers
- **Community**
 - ✓ Buy more park land
 - ✓ More support for local retail
 - ✓ Education on plant-based diets
 - ✓ Stronger tie-in with MISD curriculum
 - ✓ City-wide book groups
 - ✓ Make all streetlights LED
 - ✓ Incentivize more low-to-moderate income workforce housing in Town Center
 - ✓ Encourage more local food production
 - ✓ Water conservation programs
 - ✓ Tree planting programs
 - ✓ Actions and programs with a positive ROI
- **Question 4: What does successful public engagement look like? (57 responses)**
 - Open-minded City Council following the public lead
 - Efforts to reduce divisiveness
 - People understand how they can be involved
 - Hearing from all voices, including those not in support of CAP
 - People understand why decisions were made
 - Goals, strategies and measurable performance metrics
 - Plenty of public meetings or different options to weigh in
 - Pop-up discussion groups
 - Over 50% of Island is aware of process
 - Make good use of trained volunteers
 - Possible rewards for participation?
 - People say: *"I own the process because I was part of it."*
 - Easy ways to get involved like online Zoom meetings
 - Reaching the underrepresented voices
 - Hearing from parents, faith leaders, business community
 - More online surveys like this!

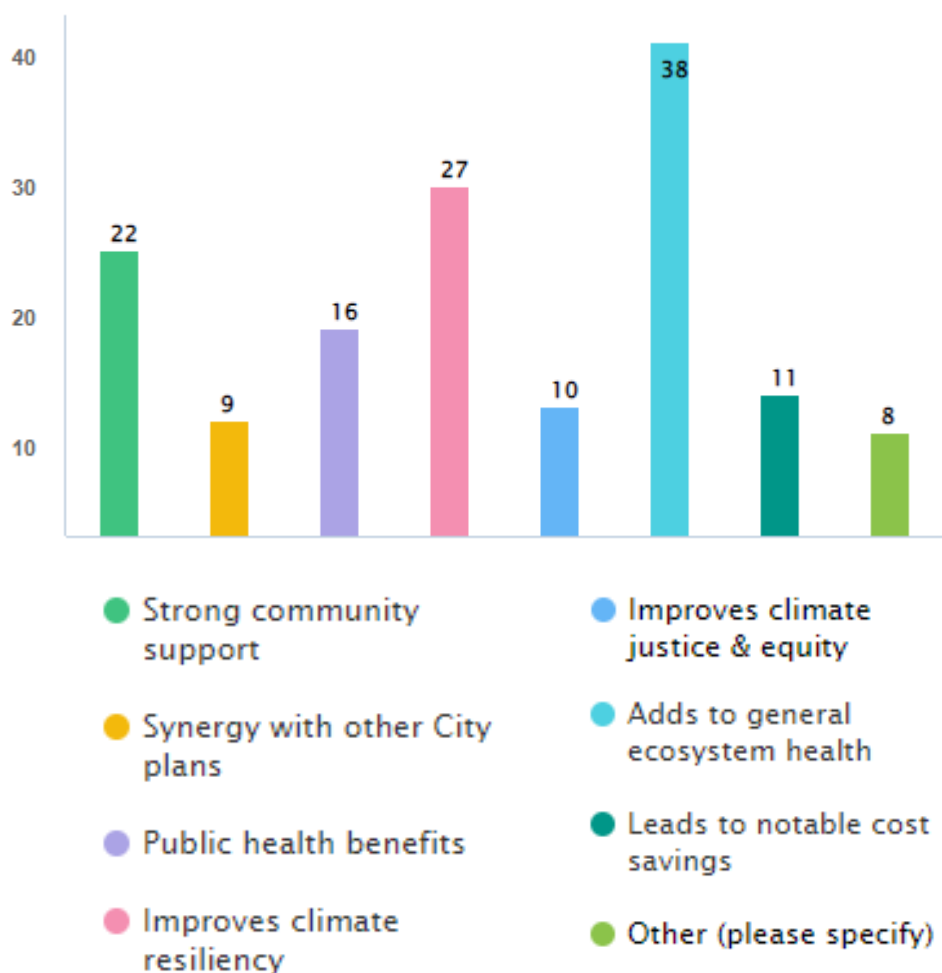
PRIORITIES

The final question in the survey covered Priorities... The City won't be able to implement all the CAP actions at once, so it will use various criteria to decide what's most important to the community and rank items. All actions and policies will have to at least meet three fundamental criteria: 1) reduce emissions; 2) be cost effective; 3) be feasible.

Respondents were then asked to:

"Choose their top two additional criteria from the list, or fill in their own (i.e. other)"

57 Responses, 25 skips



Responses submitted in "Other" category:

1. Leverages external resources partnering with residential and commercial property owners
2. Supports compassionate planetary stewardship
3. Measures things that people have direct control over (and provides feedback to create individual accountability, tracking progress with a dashboard).
4. Reduces energy use

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