



# Mercer Island Climate Action Plan

## Online Community Kickoff Summary

### Event Details:

- **Date:** December 8, 2021, 6:30-8:00pm (Zoom mtg)
- **Attendees:** 63 community members, and 7 hosts/speakers/volunteers
- **Additional Registrations** (not in attendance): 40+
- **Public Engagement Website:** <https://letstalk.mercergov.org/climate-action-plan>

### Event Overview:

The City of Mercer Island is writing its first **Climate Action Plan** to guide the government, business, and resident actions needed to reduce the community's [greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emissions](#) and protect our environment. Widespread citizen participation is critical to ensure that planning is a success: the City will engage the community with a variety of workshops, surveys, webpages, and other means. Development of the Plan started in fall 2021 and is expected to be adopted by the City Council in December 2022.

This document outlines the findings of the first community-wide workshop that served to kickoff the 12-month CAP process. Attendees heard a short update on the proposed plan timeline and an overview of recent City actions and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions status. Staff gathered feedback from attendees via live chat, Q&A, and several polling questions. A 30-minute facilitated breakout session split the audience into five equal groups and provided an opportunity for attendees to begin outlining their climate priorities and personal vision for the CAP. Feedback in the breakout sessions was gathered by volunteer notetakers and reported back to the entire audience afterwards. NOTE: All discussion questions posed during the meeting remain available via [an online survey](#) to allow feedback from all interested community members:

### Event Objectives:

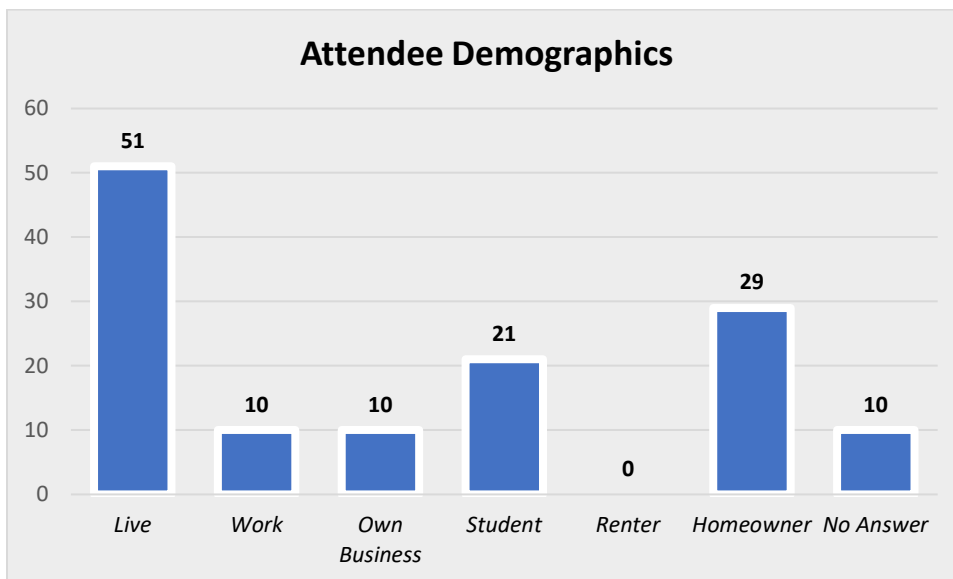
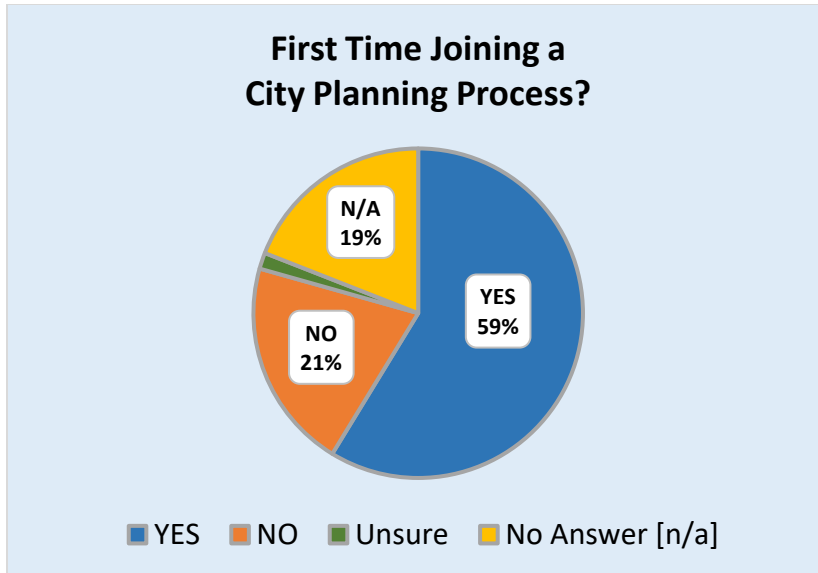
- Understand more about the CAP process
- Learn how we got here
- City & community actions so far
- Gather input on community priorities
- Learn how to stay involved and hear what's coming next

### Key Findings:

#### **ATTENDEES**

- Information was gathered about attendees via live polling. The first yes/no question asked if each attendee had ever participated in a City planning process before (see pie chart below).
- The second 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.

- The City was pleased to attract a large number of first-time participants, as well as business owners and students, but must work harder to reach out to renters.



## VISION

Chat comments (verbatim) gathered about a 2050 Vision – “What do you want MI to look like in 2050?”

- I want MI to \*look\* like it does today, but with a more vibrant downtown core
- Copenhagen!
- Fossil Fuel Free!
- Lots of trees
- Green and leafy
- More public and park space

- As beautiful, and no more dense, and yes a more vibrant downtown
- Easy access to light rail
- I appreciate light rail coming and want the last mile solution!
- I want the City to be a carbon neutral community!
- Trees, particularly keeping old trees
- Walkable everywhere
- Clean Lake WA
- Easy way to get from light rail train to south end
- 100% clean energy, autonomous EV circulating vans bringing people to light rail
- Fully solarized
- Better bike paths
- Clean air
- Better public transport; better walkability
- I would like to walk on nice paths and get easily to public transport, and not feel it's mandatory to own a car.
- Better use of retail space
- In 2050 fewer cars on our roads; more cycling and walking.
- Bike path around Island
- More electric cars, smaller cars
- Socialist?
- Common sense solutions
- 100% clean electricity in buildings; Last-mile solution; Protection from heat island effect in neighborhoods, with trees in neighborhoods.
- Affordable housing for service providers and teachers
- I want to retain our parks, our trees and beaches; fewer cars, replaced by more buses and bike lanes. Fossil fuel free. More solar panels for all, where they are viable. No more boats than we have at the moment.
- Buy-in from retail/restaurants, etc to reduce GHG's
- Less coyotes?!
- School curriculum fully aligned with CAP
- Would love to see our community rise up and become a leader for other communities: less provincial & more generous.

## DISCUSSION THEMES

Listed below are the summary themes observed during the 30-minute breakout session (5 separate groups, all discussing the same 4 questions; notes taken by volunteers)

- **Question 1: *What do you love most about living in MI?***
  - People taking action; friendly; walkable community; extensive green space; quiet neighborhoods; bike paths; safe community; good leadership; great for kids; informed community; great schools; good City services.
- **Question 2: *What near-term climate impacts are you most concerned about?***
  - Stronger storms; increased flooding; landslides; heat events; smoke; invasive species/disease; shrinking snowpack
  - Emissions from excessive vehicle use
  - Wasteful water use

- Low-density development & very large houses
  - Perception that greener choices are inconvenient
  - Perception that we can “pay our way out of the problem”
  - Inequitable impacts of extreme weather
  - Future reliance on air-conditioning
  - How to lead by example and help others
- **Question 3: *What suggestions do you have for specific actions, programs, policies to address climate change?***
    - **Expanded Green Building Programs**
      - ✓ Stronger MI Green Building Code
      - ✓ Policies encouraging denser housing
      - ✓ More rainwater harvesting
      - ✓ Heat pump installation campaign
      - ✓ Subsidized energy retrofits
      - ✓ Phase out natural gas in commercial buildings
      - ✓ Onsite wind and solar installation
      - ✓ Incentives for using renewable materials
      - ✓ Lobby for stricter State Building Codes in Olympia
      - ✓ Lobby for a “reach code” option allowing stronger local residential energy codes
    - **Enhanced Bike & Pedestrian Facilities**
      - ✓ A complete North-South bike route
      - ✓ More dedicated bike lanes
      - ✓ An updated Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities (PBF) Plan
    - **Support for Cleaner Transit and Transportation**
      - ✓ North-South transit shuttle (to/from Park & Ride)
      - ✓ More public EV Chargers
      - ✓ Last-mile connection to light rail station
      - ✓ Education campaigns marketing transit, especially at high school level
    - **Cleaner Power**
      - ✓ Advocacy for PSE to reduce coal-powered electricity
      - ✓ More education on the Eastside PUD citizens campaign
      - ✓ More community solar options
    - **Improved Air Quality**
      - ✓ Consider exploring whether Island trees can be enrolled in carbon banking
      - ✓ Ban gas-powered leaf blowers
    - **Community**
      - ✓ Consider a new Climate Action Commission (like existing Planning Commission)
      - ✓ Assess resiliency of infrastructure to climate impacts
      - ✓ Offer easy-to-access online GHG tracking info
      - ✓ Support more local food production
      - ✓ Collaborate with other communities

- **Question 4: *What does successful public engagement look like?***

- Continue these interactive public meetings (maybe with smaller breakout rooms)
- Conduct high school seminars
- Ensure City website has good materials and recent GHG data
- Ensure consultant reaches out to all possible groups
- Lots of community education, including on NextDoor.com
- Develop leaflets and flyers to handout at busy areas, Farmers Market, etc.
- Mass-mailers
- Keep using the MI-Weekly E-newsletter
- Develop neighborhood block captains to enhance local engagement
- Use an online climate survey
- Keep in mind people who don't speak English as a first language
- Conduct targeted outreach w/standardized slidedeck at various service clubs, churches, senior homes, youth groups, business groups, Farmers Market, etc.

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