



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

**AB 6059
May 3, 2022
Study Session**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6059: Climate Action Plan 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 and provide staff direction on the Climate Action Plan community engagement process.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works		
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Ross Freeman, Sustainability Analyst		
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Craig Reynolds	Jake Jacobson	Ted Weinberg
EXHIBITS:	1. Draft MI CAP Engagement Plan 2. CAP Online Community Kickoff Summary 3. CAP Online Survey Summary 4. Audit of Existing City Policies and Plans 5. Summary of Outreach and Promotion		
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	1. Prepare for the impacts of growth and change with a continued consideration on environmental sustainability.		

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to provide an update on Mercer Island’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) schedule and activities to date, to present an overview of the proposed public engagement process, and to seek Council feedback.

- At its November 1, 2021 meeting, the City Council approved the development of Mercer Island’s first CAP (view presentation and discussion [here, AB 5965](#)), and staff began developing a scope for the 12-month project in coordination with the Council Sustainability Committee.
- Staff seek to determine whether the Draft Engagement Plan (see Exhibit 1) meets Council’s expectations, with the understanding that Council has asked for the CAP to be completed by December 2022.
- The City’s Let’s Talk website has a page dedicated to Climate Action Plan meeting notes, schedule, supporting materials, and more, at: <https://letstalk.mercergov.org/climate-action-plan>

BACKGROUND

In 2007, the City adopted a GHG reduction target of 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050 (compared to 2007), and in 2011, Mercer Island was a founding member of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C). This alliance of 20 local governments helps support climate solutions, share success stories, and coordinate multi-city initiatives to achieve shared climate goals and targets.

In June 2021, King County's Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) updated countywide planning policies that tightened the 2050 emissions target to a 95% reduction. The Mercer Island City Council ratified this, and other new policies, with [Resolution No. 1620](#) on March 1, 2022, and it took effect on April 6, 2022.

While Mercer Island has a long history of stewardship and protection of the environment, and adopted GHG emission targets almost 15 years ago, there is not currently a long-term cohesive planning document that organizes actions and programs in a strategic manner, ranks implementation priority, and measures progress on a regular schedule. At its November 1, 2021 meeting, the City Council approved the development of Mercer Island's first CAP (view presentation and discussion [here, AB 5965](#)), and staff began developing a scope for the 12-month project in coordination with the Council Sustainability Committee.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

The formal launch of the CAP process commenced with a new [City webpage](#) for general background information, and a new [Let's Talk campaign page](#) to house the public engagement activities and associated materials.

The public engagement process kicked off in December 2021 with an online community meeting drawing 63 attendees. A related online survey addressed the same questions as those covered at the kickoff meeting, and drew an additional 82 responses, mostly from individuals who were not at the kickoff. See demographic information, event summaries, and thematic analysis contained within Exhibits 2 and 3.

CONSULTING SUPPORT

The City solicited proposals for CAP consulting support, and early in 2022, selected the Seattle-based Cascadia Consulting Group (Cascadia) from among six applicants. Cascadia has assisted dozens of communities along the West Coast in developing and writing their Climate Action Plans, brings a great deal of local expertise and extensive support services to Mercer Island's CAP, including public engagement, emissions data analysis, suggested GHG mitigation measures, and ultimately, drafting of the Plan itself including graphic design.

During the current stage of the CAP process, Cascadia has completed reviewing a wide range of City planning documents and policies (such as the Comp Plan, PROS Plan, Transportation Improvement Plan, etc.) to ensure that the CAP harmonizes with existing climate-related work, that prior achievements are captured appropriately, and that progress is properly reflected. See Exhibit 4 - Audit of Existing City Policies and Plans.

Cascadia is also in the process of organizing and analyzing municipal and community emissions data from 2017-2020, in order to update the City's emissions inventory. While the City has continued to collect raw data since 2016, a full calculation of total and per capita emissions (i.e., Carbon Dioxide equivalent, or CO₂e) has not been performed since 2016, when the City ended its contract for a prior tracking platform known as Scope 5. In the interim, the City has published a number of more [general tracking metrics](#) on its sustainability webpages. Once this catch-up work is complete, Cascadia will also generate a "wedge analysis" that graphically depicts the relative contribution of various GHG actions at the federal, state, and local level, and

the amount of reduction that is yet to be attained by Mercer Island in order to meet its adopted emissions goals through 2050.

A great deal of work on locally-relevant greenhouse gas reduction measures has been completed recently, and can be found in the heavily-researched [Climate Action Toolkit](#), published by King County, as well as in freshly-adopted CAP's from other cities, also produced by Cascadia, such as Bothell and Issaquah. In addition, Mercer Island's larger neighbors (namely Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond) have all completed extensive recent updates to their existing CAP's and assessed progress toward their published emissions goals. This exhaustive body of work means that Mercer Island has a very large pool of vetted and tested GHG actions to draw on and should be able to progress very efficiently towards the Draft Goals and Actions phase even before the Wedge Analysis is complete.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Starting in November 2021, the City has used a wide range of channels to build general awareness of the CAP process and the opportunities to engage. These range from Council Meeting presentations to news releases and website updates, to social media posts and newsletter articles, and coverage in the local MI-Reporter newspaper. A summary of general outreach and awareness activities, as well as media coverage, is available as Exhibit 5 - Summary of Outreach and Promotion.

In addition to the community kickoff meeting held in December, and a staff kickoff meeting held in March, more meetings are now scheduled with the City Council, as well as the Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Arts Council, and Utility Board. It is anticipated that the next formal opportunity for widespread public feedback and engagement will be when the Draft Goals and Actions are issued in Late May or early June. Ongoing general feedback will still be incorporated from the City's Let's Talk forum and from input gathered at various pop-up events, such as Earth Day, the Farmers Market, etc.

The full breadth of the CAP's anticipated outreach and engagement components are explained in detail in Exhibit 1 – Draft Engagement Plan, and Cascadia will walk Council through the various components during its presentation.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the many resources available itemizing relevant GHG actions, and public input to date, Cascadia will begin the Draft Goals and Actions document in close collaboration with staff and the Sustainability Committee.

At this time, the next scheduled appearance before the full City Council is set for this summer (likely July), when Council will review the set of drafted Goals, Strategies, and Actions after they have been refined and improved by public feedback.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report and provide staff direction on the Climate Action Plan community engagement process.