



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

**AB 6541
September 17, 2024
Regular Business**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

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| TITLE: | AB 6541: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Receive the City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendations and Complete Deliberations on the Proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan Amendments | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION: | Complete deliberations on the proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan amendments and provide direction to the staff on next steps. | |

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| DEPARTMENT: | Community Planning and Development |
| STAFF: | Jeff Thomas, Community Planning and Development Director Adam Zack, Senior Planner |
| COUNCIL LIAISON: | n/a |
| EXHIBITS: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation – Transportation Element (CC-88) 2. City Council Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation – Economic Development Element (CC-179) 3. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Parking Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development Element 4. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Sustainability and Environmental Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development Element 5. City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Cultural Arts, Emergency Management, and ADA Goals and Policies Matrix – Economic Development, Land Use, Parks and Open Space, and Capital Facilities Elements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5a. Updated Land Use Element Track Changes (Reference Only) 5b. Updated Parks and Open Space Element Track Changes (Reference Only) |
| CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY: | n/a |

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to receive the recommendation from the Ad-Hoc City Council Committee, complete deliberations on City Council proposed amendments to the draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan, and direct staff to finalize the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan for public review and comment.

- On September 3, 2024, the City Council formed an Ad-Hoc Committee for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and referred seven proposed City Council amendments to this Committee for review and to prepare a recommendation for consideration by the full City Council.
- The Committee met on September 5 and 6, 2024 to complete its assigned work.
- On September 17, 2024, the City Council will receive, review, and approve the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations (**see Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2**).
- The City Manager performed a review of the Ad-Hoc Committee's recommendation to ensure consistency with other planning documents. The City Manager has prepared a summary of potential policy overlaps/conflicts for City Council review and consideration:
 - **Exhibit 3:** Reconciliation of proposed Transportation and Parking Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation on Economic Development Element).
 - **Exhibit 4:** Reconciliation of Sustainability and Environment Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation Economic Development)
 - Given the turn time between City Council meetings, this reconciliation is being presented to the full City Council as there was not an opportunity to hold another meeting with the Ad-Hoc Committee.
- The City Manager and staff also reviewed the Land Use Element and discovered that a section of goals and policies related to arts and culture and emergency management were omitted from the draft materials reviewed at the September 3, 2024 City Council meeting. These materials and recommended changes are presented as **Exhibit 5**.
- The staff are seeking final direction from the City Council on the recommendation from the Ad-Hoc Committee (**Exhibits 1 & 2**). In addition, the City Council may also wish to review and accept or reject the recommendations in **Exhibit 3, 4 & 5**.
- Taken together, the final direction from the City Council will inform the final development of the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan, which will be available for no less than 30 days for public review and comment.

BACKGROUND

The City began the 2024 periodic review of its Comprehensive Plan in March 2022, when the City Council approved the Scope of Work, Master Schedule, and Public Participation Plan (see [Resolution No. 1621](#)). Per the WA Growth Management Act (GMA), the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic review must be adopted by December 31, 2024.

The Planning Commission (PC) prepared public hearing drafts for each Comprehensive Plan Element, except for the Shoreline Master Program, over the course of 24 public meetings between March 2022 and May 2024. Drafts were posted to the [project website](#) for public review throughout the PC review process. The public had the opportunity to comment on the drafts throughout the process, including public comment opportunities during each PC meeting.

On May 29, 2024, the PC conducted a public hearing on the draft Comprehensive Plan and began deliberating on its recommendation to the City Council. These deliberations continued at meetings on June 5 and June 12.

On June 12, 2024, the PC finalized its recommendation to the City Council and handed off their recommendation on July 16, 2024.

The following is a summary of key events and dates which have occurred during and since the last City Council meeting on July 16, 2024:

- **July 16, 2024:** The City Council received the Planning Commission draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan ([AB6510](#)) and established by motion a process and schedule for City Council proposed amendments to be submitted to staff during the August recess in preparation for deliberation on September 3, 2024.
- **July 25, 2024:** The WA Department of Commerce (Commerce) provided comments to the City on the draft 2024 Comprehensive Plan (Exhibit 2).
- **July 29, 2024 through August 12, 2024:** The City Council submitted proposed amendments to staff.
- **August 14, 2024:** Staff shared a preview of the City Council proposed amendment matrix with Each Councilmember for review of errors and omissions as well as an opportunity for Councilmembers to withdraw any proposed amendments.
- **August 21, 2024:** Staff shared with Councilmembers the preliminary drafts of exhibits for the September 3, 2024 meeting.
- **September 3, 2024:** The City Council completed deliberations on approximately 150 proposed City Council amendments in various categories with seven proposed amendments being referred to an appointed City Council Ad-Hoc Committee for further consideration and recommendation. The Ad-Hoc Committee members were Mayor Nice, council members Reynolds and Weinberg as well as Jen Dean, the Chief Executive Officer of the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce.
- **September 5 & 6, 2024:** The City Council Ad-Hoc Committee met to consider and formulate recommendations on the remaining seven proposed amendments.

Comprehensive Plan Elements

The Comprehensive Plan is composed of topic-specific elements that establish goals and policies. The goals detail what the City would like to accomplish in the next 20 years. The policies establish the high-level strategies the City will use to achieve its goals. The goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan elements are implemented through regulations, programs, and projects. The City Council will determine which actions the City will take to implement the updated goals and policies after the Comprehensive Plan elements are adopted.

Drafting New Elements

The City Council approved scope of work for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update included a substantial reworking of the Housing Element and development of two new Comprehensive Plan Elements: the Economic Development Element and the Parks and Open Space Element ([Res. No. 1621](#)).

In 2023, the approved scope of work was supplemented with additional tasks for the Housing Element in response to updated statewide requirements ([Res. No. 1645](#)). The Council-adopted scope of work included the formation of a Housing Work Group and Economic Development Work Group composed of Planning Commissioners and Councilmembers. These two work groups prepared the initial drafts of the Economic Development and Housing Elements, which the Planning Commission reviewed, refined with some amendments, and recommended for adoption to the City Council.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation (Exhibits 1 and 2)

There were two issues for the Ad-Hoc Committee to consider and formulate recommendations on – one City Council proposed amendment related to the Transportation Element and six City Council proposed amendments related to the Economic Development Element:

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation on Transportation Element (Exhibit 1)

The City Council proposed amendment referred to the Ad-Hoc Committee related to the Transportation Element stated:

Add a new Transportation Element Policy 11.4: “Explore the creation of policies to discourage residents of Town Center from using City streets and public parking facilities in place of building-provided parking facilities.”

City Council direction to the Ad-Hoc Committee was to consider replacing this proposed amendment with a proposed policy to reference the Town Center Parking Plan by reference. After consideration, the recommendation of the Ad-Hoc Committee included as **Exhibit 1** is to replace proposed amendment CC-88 with:

Add a new Transportation Element Policy 11.4: “Adopt the 2023 Town Center Parking Plan and its successors by reference.”

Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation on Economic Development Element (Exhibit 2)

The six City Council proposed amendments referred to the Ad-Hoc Committee were related to the Economic Development Element. Two of these were substantial rewrites and the other four were surgical amendments. The Ad-Hoc Committee considered all these proposed amendments in its recommended draft, new log number CC-179 included as **Exhibit 2** as follows:

| City Council Proposed Amendment Log # | Ad-Hoc Committee Result |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| CC-4 (Mayor Nice) | Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179 |
| CC-166 (CM Reynolds) | Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179 |
| CC-167 (CM Reynolds) | Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179 |
| CC-168 (CM Reynolds) | Strike |
| CC-169 (CM Reynolds) | Strike |
| CC-172 (CM Weinberg) | Integrate into Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation CC-179 |

City Manager Reconciliation of Proposed Economic Development Element (Exhibits 3 and 4)

The City Manager performed a review of the Ad-Hoc Committee’s recommendation to ensure consistency with other plans. Through this work a number of potential policy overlaps/conflicts were identified for City Council review and consideration. These items are summarized in the following exhibits.

- **Exhibit 3:** Reconciliation of proposed Transportation and Parking Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation on Economic Development Element).
- **Exhibit 4:** Reconciliation of Sustainability and Environment Goals (from Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation Economic Development)

Given the short turn time between City Council meetings, this reconciliation is being presented to the full City Council as there was not an opportunity to hold another meeting with the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Arts and Culture and Emergency Management (Exhibit 5)

The City Manager and staff also reviewed the Land Use Element and discovered that a section of goals and policies related to “arts and culture” and “emergency management” were omitted from the draft materials reviewed at the September 3, 2024 City Council meeting. Specifically, Land Use Element Goals 22, 23, 24 and 25 from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan were not copied into the Planning Commission recommendation. These goals and policies have now been brought forward, reviewed for consistency and proposed for amendment as appropriate in Exhibit 5.

In addition, the cultural arts policies proposed by the Ad-Hoc Committee to be included in the Economic Development Element were reviewed for consistency with other plans. Those policies that potentially overlap or conflict with existing plans were also summarized in Exhibit 5 for City Council review and consideration.

Updated track changes drafts of the Land Use Element as well as the Parks and Open Space Element (Exhibits 5A and 5B) are provided for reference.

NEXT STEPS

As directed by the City Council at its September 3, 2024 meeting, staff will be finalizing the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan after the September 17, 2024 meeting and making this draft available for public review and comment for a period of not less than (30) calendar days.

During this public review and comment period, the City Attorney will also be completing a final legal review for GMA compliance. Should any legal matters require amendments, they will be brought forward for City Council discussion at first ordinance reading.

Following these reviews is public review and comment period, dates are reserved on the City Council Planning Schedule to ensure completion of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by the end of the year:

- **November 5, 2024:** Consider public comment received on the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan and complete first reading of an ordinance to adopt the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.
- **November 19, 2024:** Complete second reading of an ordinance and adopt the 2024 Comprehensive Plan effective December 31, 2024.

NOTE: There will be other dates this fall for the City Council to consider adopting amendments to the Mercer Island City Code (MICC) necessary to maintain consistency with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. Necessary MICC amendments will relate to parks/open space zoning and Town Center development regulations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

To complete final deliberations allowing for the drafting and public review of the 2024 City Council Comprehensive Plan, the following motions are recommended in the order they appear below:

Approve the City Council Ad-Hoc Committee recommendations:

1. **Recommended Motion – Approve Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation for item CC-88:**

“Move to approve the Ad-Hoc Committee recommended amendment for item CC-88 and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 1.”

2. Recommended Motion – Approve Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendation for item CC-179:

“Move to approve Ad-Hoc Committee recommended amendment for item CC-179 as contained in Exhibit 2 to allow for further City Council deliberation. and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 2.”

3. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of parking goals and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element related to parking and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 3.”

4. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of sustainability and environmental goal and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element related to sustainability and environment and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 4.”

5. Recommended Motion – Approve City Manager reconciliation of cultural arts, emergency management and ADA goals and policies

“Move to approve City Manager recommended amendments to the Economic Development Element, Land Use Element, Parks and Open Space Element and Capital Facilities Element related to cultural arts, emergency management, and ADA and direct staff to incorporate into the 2024 City Council Draft Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibit 5.”

Alternative Motions:

Alternative motions will be prepared to address Exhibits 3, 4, and 5 and to address any other proposed amendments submitted by City Council members in response to these agenda materials.