



BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AB 5617
October 15, 2019
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 5617: 2019 Comprehensive Plan Amendments (1 st Reading)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Receive presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:
		<input type="checkbox"/> Motion
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance
		<input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

DEPARTMENT OF:	Community Planning and Development Evan Maxim, Director
COUNCIL LIAISON:	n/a
EXHIBITS:	Draft Ordinance No. 19C-17 with Attachment "A"
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	3. Support the Leadership Team's Work Plan

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

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The City of Mercer Island may update the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan, the document that provides policy direction for City codes, programs, and other work, once every year. In November of 2018, the City Council passed [Resolution 1554](#) establishing the docket of Comprehensive Plan Amendments for 2019, identifying four amendment topics for review by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission initiated their review of the four docketed amendments in February of 2019.

The Planning Commission began their review of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments include:

Item 1: Remove Town Center specific subarea designations from the Land Use Element

The figures establishing subarea designations within the Town Center Map also appears in [Chapter 19.11](#) Mercer Island City Code "MICC", creating redundancy by having the same information in two documents. The subareas designations are distinct from the "Land Use Designation" and are a development regulation rather than a policy, making the MICC the appropriate location for this figure.

Item 2: Establish goals and policies to prevent and/or mitigate the impacts of climate change

This amendment creates two goals, and associated policies, that generally support activities currently underway to address and mitigate climate change. Aspirational policies supporting future action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are also proposed. The proposed amendment revises the narrative of the Land Use, Utilities, and Capital Facilities Element in order to add relevant historical context.

Item 3: Placeholder for the development of goals and policies supporting economic development on Mercer Island

Land Use Goal 14 has been revised and an associated policy has been added in support of economic development on Mercer Island.

Item 4: Goals and policies supporting the review and possible establishment of multi-modal transportation level of service

Policies supporting the creation of multimodal levels of service, together with policies guiding service levels were added to the Transportation Element. Levels of service are currently established for automobile use within the Transportation Element, which help guide future infrastructure improvements. The addition of policies supporting other transportation modes—specifically pedestrian, bicycle, and transit—will facilitate a systematic approach to infrastructure improvements for these modes.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

The decision to amend the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan should be based on the criteria contained within the City’s code. The first criterion requires amendments to be consistent with the Growth Management Act and countywide planning policies. Proposed amendment 1 would maintain land use policies consistent with the Growth Management Act and King County Countywide Planning Policies. Proposed amendments 2, 3, and 4 would advance planning goals of the Growth Management Act and are in consistent with existing King County Countywide Planning Policies.

The second criterion requires Comprehensive Plan amendments to either correct a technical error in the Comprehensive Plan or to address changing circumstances of the city. Proposed amendment 1 corrects the erroneous inclusion of a development regulation in the Comprehensive Plan, which is intended to be a policy document. Proposed amendments 2, 3, and 4 provide policy guidance for changing environmental, economic, and transportation needs affecting the community and Mercer Island.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission held five public meetings between February and August of 2019 to review the draft amendments and held a public hearing on October 2, 2019. The Planning Commission considered public testimony throughout the review process, including all the written comment. Public comment generally expressed support for the amendments related to addressing climate change and establishing policies supporting multi-modal transportation and suggested specific strategies to implement policy direction. Some public comment expressed concerns about the aspirational nature and broad scope of some of the amendments.

Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission thoroughly reviewed the amendments and unanimously recommended approval (see Exhibit 1, Attachment “A”). The Planning Commission Chair, Tiffin Goodman, will formally present the Planning Commission’s recommendation to City Council on October 15.

The Planning Commission recommended amendments were reviewed for internal consistency with the existing Comprehensive Plan and Mercer Island City Code, ensuring consistency between the amendments and these documents.

RECOMMENDATION

Set Ordinance 19C-17 for second reading and adoption on November 4, 2019 Consent Calendar.