

AB6015 City Council Question / Comment Matrix – UPDATED 02-15-2022 1.00 PM

Comment #	Submitted By	Comment/Question	Staff Response
1.A	Craig Reynolds	Am I correct that the ED element is the only new element to be added? What other elements are contemplated by state law or implemented by other communities that do NOT exist in ours? Recognizing we may not have the resources or time, to what extent would it be possible or wise to create a sustainability element?	<p>An Economic Development Element and a Parks and Recreation Element will be added to the Comprehensive Plan (<i>Plan</i>). The Parks and Recreation Element will essentially be a dynamic reference to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, without other goals and policies. Because the Parks and Recreation Element will be a reference to another plan that already went through its own public process, it should not involve a significant amount of drafting and refinement. The Economic Development Element, on the other hand, will include new goals and policies related to how the City will support the local economy. As such, the Economic Development Element has a much larger scope.</p> <p>Environmental and sustainability goals and policies are threaded throughout the existing <i>Plan</i>. This is proposed to continue. The scope of work also proposes adding a dynamic reference to the Climate Action Plan to the environmental goals in the Land Use Element.</p> <p>The Growth Management Act (GMA) required elements are established in RCW 36.70A.070 Comprehensive Plans – Mandatory elements. Any additional elements beyond those required are a local choice. Some communities have adopted other, optional elements, such as a Natural Resources Element or an Environment Element. Adding a “Sustainability Element” is possible; this would be a local choice. Creating a new element typically requires a fair amount time and resources. As new goals and policies are drafted, public outreach is needed to make sure that the new goals and policies are reflect the will of the community. The scope and public participation planned for the Economic Development Element is a good example of what adding a new element would entail.</p> <p>In terms of resources, drafting a new element is a significant commitment of staff time and would likely require additional funding for consultants. To return to the Economic Development Element as an example, the City will be hiring consultants to conduct two workshops and a survey to help with capturing public opinion about what issues should be a priority and assess whether the draft goals and policies track with community expectations. This consultant work will be in addition to the staff time drafting the element, staffing committee meetings, conducting stakeholder interviews, and ushering the element through the adoption process.</p> <p>Another consideration for adding a new element is whether that is the most effective way to address the issue. The natural environment is a good topic to highlight this point. The City has environmental policies throughout the various elements of the <i>Plan</i>. This means, for example, that the City has a goal and several policies to address the intersection of the natural environment and land use in the Land Use Element (LU Goal 18). As a result, natural environment topics related to land use are addressed within the overall land use framework of the <i>Plan</i>. That connection may not be as apparent if these policies were segregated into a separate element. A topic can be a point of emphasis within the <i>Plan</i> without having a separate element.</p>
1.B	Craig Reynolds	Am I correct that we do not currently have a housing needs assessment? If so, how have we avoided having one so far, and what motivates creating one now?	<p>A <i>Housing Needs Assessment</i> (HNA) was completed for the last periodic update in 2015. It needs to be updated for this periodic update. Preparing an HNA during the periodic review was discussed as part of the 2022-23 biennial budget process when the City Council allocated \$30,000 to complete this effort.</p> <p>The WA Dept of Commerce recommends cities prepare a housing needs assessment as part of their planning for growth. The recommendation is provided in WAC 365-196-410(2)(c). Beyond being recommended by the State, preparing a housing needs assessment is a best practice. The housing needs assessment will establish a data-driven understanding of housing need through the planning period. This will allow the City to make defensible decisions about planning for housing. Without defining the issues that the <i>Plan</i> is seeking to address, decisions on housing goals and policies run the risk of appearing arbitrary. Throughout the process, the City should take steps to ensure that planning decisions are not clearly erroneous (note: ‘clearly erroneous’ is the standard of review the Growth Management Hearings Board uses to evaluate appeals of the <i>Plan</i>). The housing needs assessment will help the City demonstrate that its housing goal and policy decisions are not clearly erroneous.</p>

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1.C	Craig Reynolds	Page 4 of the AB 19 describes a HNA as a “document that defines housing need across all income segments based on housing inventory and projected growth.” What does the word “growth” refer to in that sentence? If it refers to housing units, it seems like a tautology. If it refers to population, where does that estimate come from and what is the projected growth number?	<p>In this sentence, the word growth is used as a general term. Essentially, this is referring to population growth. Under GMA, population growth is determined by the WA State Office of Financial Management (OFM). The projected population growth then informs how many housing units and jobs can be expected (more people mean more housing units and jobs). Growth is then regionally allocated by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) then allocate that growth to the cities in King County. By the time growth projections have moved from OFM to PSRC and the CPPs, population growth is refined into housing and employment growth targets. The City participates in the process of determining growth targets.</p> <p>You can see the growth targets set by King County in the CPPs adopted by King County Ordinance 19384. The 2044 growth targets for Mercer Island are: <u>1,239 housing units by 2044 and 1,300 jobs by 2044</u>.</p>
1.D	Craig Reynolds	The document seems contradictory. In a couple of places it seems to suggest council adoption in May, and in other places it suggests April. Am I misunderstanding? Either way, this seems to be right against the deadline. Did you consider targeting an earlier completion date to allow for slippage? Or is there reason to believe slippage just will not happen?	<p>The adoption target outlined in the Scope and Master Schedule is April 2024. May 2024 is the target for filing the <i>Plan</i> update with the necessary County, regional, and state bodies. There is a short burst of filing required after CC adoption to submit the update to PSRC, WA Dept. of Commerce (Commerce), and King County. The adoption target is close to the deadline because there is a lot of work to complete, even with this being a surgical update.</p> <p>There is some slack built into the schedule throughout the life of the project. Slack is incorporated in the schedule by:</p> <p>(1) Leaving room for the Planning Commission to carry over discussion to another meeting. In general, the schedule avoids planning on having more than one element on the Planning Commission agenda per meeting. This will allow some flexibility if an additional meeting is needed for a given element, requiring topics to be doubled-up at one meeting.</p> <p>(2) Assuming that the Planning Commission will only discuss the <i>Plan</i> once a month. This adds slack because the Planning Commission can meet more frequently if needed. This leaves room in the schedule for the Planning Commission to meet a second time in the month if needed to continue discussion of a given draft.</p> <p>(3) Assuming three Planning Commission touches per element though some elements may not need all three. For most technical updates during the periodic review, the Planning Commission may not need three touches because the changes will be relatively minor. For example, the Capital Facilities Element updates are scheduled for three touches but are expected to be primarily updating the inventory and LOS analysis (mostly technical without much debate needed). In this case, the Planning Commission may not need to consider the potential amendments over more than two meetings. If Capital Facilities only takes two Planning Commission meetings (which is likely), it adds slack to the scope.</p>
1.E	Craig Reynolds	Table 2 LU-6 refers to “preserving” commercial space. Didn’t we already send to the PC a plan for “growing” such space?	Task LU-6 is on the scope of work so that during the update, the Town Center work currently underway ends up memorialized in the Land Use Element. A link between the Town Center development code amendments and the Plan should be established; the periodic review offers the opportunity to adopt the related policy. As noted in the scope, this is a local choice.
1.F	Craig Reynolds	Please tell me more about anticipated impact (high level) of SHB 1220	<p>The full scope of amendments required by SHB 1220 may not be known until 2023, when Commerce provides additional data and guidance as it implements this legislation.</p> <p>The changes to the GMA enacted by SHB 1220 will be considered in conjunction with other housing goals and policies during the periodic review. SHB 1220 expands some of the requirements for what housing needs the City must plan for in the Comprehensive Plan. These additional housing requirements will be evaluated in the Housing Needs Assessment. The HNA will identify potential policy responses to housing needs, including the expanded requirements established in SHB 1220. Then, the City will consider possible changes as part of the overall consideration of housing goals and policies. The proposed housing goal and policy update process is detailed in the scope, master schedule, and public participation plan.</p>

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1.G	Craig Reynolds	Page 384 of the urban growth capacity report suggests that we had no issues with aging infrastructure in 2015. Do we still believe that is true?	The table on page 384 of the UGC report summarizes the conclusions in the 2015 <i>Plan</i> . An update to infrastructure and capital facility inventories will take place during the periodic review. Updates to the inventories will identify what infrastructure and capital facility improvements will be required to accommodate the forecasted growth. Updating inventories and LOS analyses to identify needed infrastructure and facility improvements that will be needed to accommodate the forecasted growth is one of the central reasons a periodic review is required under GMA.
1.H	Craig Reynolds	What is the process for selection of members of the various contemplated “working groups”?	Each body (Planning Commission and City Council) can decide how they want to assign members to the work groups. The recommended process would be similar to the election of officers (nomination and a vote by the commission or council).
1.I	Craig Reynolds	What other ideas were contemplated for public outreach. I don’t, for example, see provisions for social media or emails beyond the “interested parties” list or snail mail. Why not?	The majority of online engagement will be directed through the Let’s Talk project page here . Social media will be used to provide the public with notice of upcoming meetings and events in communications throughout the project. One concern raised in staff discussion is that the greater number of outlets you have, the greater chance for error and slippage during updates, especially with limited resources. That said, the City will maintain an interested parties list once the Planning Commission convenes to review as is standard with all legislative reviews. A Let’s Talk page and dedicated web page will be maintained throughout the project. CPD staff will also work with Mason Luvera, City Communications Manager, on City communications through his standard methods along the way. This may need better description in the Public Participation Plan.
1.J	Craig Reynolds	What outreach / coordination happens with MISD?	The Mercer Island School District (MISD) is an important stakeholder. Their planning efforts are coordinated with the City <i>Plan</i> . For example, their Capital Improvement Plan is adopted by reference in Plan Appendix B . Planning with MISD will be coordinated during the periodic review if issues come up that require their input.

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