



**June 18, 2024**

Ms. Jessi Bon  
City Manager  
City of Mercer Island  
9611 S.E. 36th Street  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

**RE:** Annual Performance Review by the Mercer Island City Council (June 2023-May 2024)

**Dear Jessi,**

On behalf of the Mercer Island City Council, it's my pleasure and privilege to present to you your annual performance review. This letter not only acknowledges your remarkable leadership and achievements over the past year but also reflects our heartfelt appreciation for your dedication and strategic insights that have profoundly benefited our community.

### **Exceptional Leadership Amidst Facility Challenges**

Your response to the discovery of asbestos in City Hall was a display of exemplary leadership. Addressing the problem directly, you initiated comprehensive environmental monitoring and assessments, developing detailed cost estimates for remediation. The comprehensive environmental assessment, along with seismic assessments of the buildings, provided the basis for the council to consider a new combined Public Safety and Maintenance Building. This decision not only addresses the immediate issue but also replaces two facilities that are at the end of their lifecycle. Your initiative clearly reflects your deep commitment to the well-being of city employees, your grasp of government priorities, and a keen understanding of the broader desires of the Mercer Island community.

The closure of City Hall and the resulting displacement of staff and disruption to the Police Department presented a significant challenge. However, your visionary approach in charting a course for a new facility while effectively triaging current facility needs was both forward-looking and indicative of your strategic foresight. This new building will be designed to meet the specific needs of our police and public works teams, highlighting

your prioritization of community welfare and your ability to navigate through complex situations with determination.

### **Effective Advocacy and Legislative Achievements**

Your pivotal role during the 2024 State Legislative Session was instrumental in championing Mercer Island’s interests. Through effective collaboration with city staff, lobbyists, and state lawmakers, you ensured that our city's perspectives were prominently advocated for, particularly in key areas such as behavioral health, housing (especially affordable housing), public safety, and environmental conservation. Additionally, the City was successful in securing \$3.5 million in grant funding for waterfront improvements at Luther Burbank Park.

### **Leadership Across Varied Initiatives**

Your stewardship has been critical in advancing a wide range of city initiatives, improving public works, community engagement, public safety, and operational efficiency. Noteworthy accomplishments include:

- **Regional Fire Services Agreement:** The City completed a months-long effort to shift fire and EMS operations to a regional fire services model with Eastside Fire & Rescue.
- **Bike Skills Area Opening:** The new Bike Skills Area at Deane’s Children’s Park opened on November 15, the culmination of a multi-year effort to relocate this popular amenity. Extensive community engagement and the dedication of City staff, contractors, and volunteers resulted in a safe and fun facility for bike riders to enjoy.
- **YFS Fentanyl Awareness Programming:** YFS staff held a presentation with the DEA at the community center covering fentanyl dangers. More than 150 community members attended the DEA’s “one pill can kill” presentation on current risks involving the illicit fentanyl marketplace.
- **Mercer Island Thrift Shop Progress:** MITS exceeded its goal of increasing revenue by 10% in 2023, ending at nearly 16% growth overall. They leaned into growing volunteers in the production roles of the shop, seeing a 26.2% increase in production hours in 2023.
- **High Visibility Police Investigation:** MIPD began working a missing persons case, which quickly transitioned to a kidnapping case and then into a homicide case. The case was exceptionally complicated with few leads and many unusual fact patterns to investigate. Detectives’ fast work led to the suspects being in custody in less than three weeks, bringing closure to the victim’s family.
- **Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network (PSERN):** Staff participated in the planning and development of PSERN for the past few years, resulting in a new digital system that allows first responders, particularly police and fire, to better communicate and dispatch emergency and other government services countywide.

- **MICEC Rentals:** The Mercer Island Community & Event Center exceeded its rental booking goal by almost 20%.
- **Seafair:** With record-breaking attendance for 2023, Police, Fire, Recreation, and Public Works staff helped manage Seafair impacts, including new crowd control methods at Groveland Beach Park.
- **Summer Celebration:** The Island’s signature event saw record-breaking turnout in 2023, drawing thousands into Town Center, Mercedale Park, and Luther Burbank Park. SC 2023 also marked the return of the parade.

### Preparation for Future Successes

Under your guidance, Mercer Island is well-positioned for future achievements. Your ability to juxtapose immediate needs with long-term objectives has been instrumental, with initiatives like the Comprehensive Plan Update and the Long-Term Regional Transit Commuter Parking Project highlighting your strategic vision.

- **Town Center Parking Plan:** A detailed process to improve access options to and around Town Center, the Town Center Parking Study was completed in 2023. This led to the development of a parking and access strategy for Town Center, known as the Town Center Parking Plan, which was adopted in November 2023. The identified strategies and recommendations will make Town Center parking more functionally available, usable for different drivers, and supportive of other options for non-driving to and around Town Center.
- **Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update:** In early 2022, the Council approved the scope of work and schedule for the Comprehensive Plan update, which includes over 30 element-specific changes required by state, regional, and King County planning policies, including a new Economic Development Element, a robust Housing Element update to comply with state statute, and a new Parks Zone to be completed this year.
- **Long-Term Regional Transit Commuter Parking Project:** A preferred site concept for the Town Center Long-Term Regional Transit Commuter Parking Project at the former Tully’s site was a surface commuter parking lot on the former Tully’s and adjacent City-owned properties in Town Center to serve auto and bicycle commuters using the future Sound Transit light rail station. The Council approved the preferred site concept setting to reach the goal to deliver commuter parking in Town Center.
- **Automated Water Meter Project:** The City is conducting an Island-wide replacement project to deploy 7,900 new water meters as many of the Island’s meters are past their useful life. This effort will reduce water loss and improve leak detection efforts.
- **Luther Burbank Dock and Waterfront Renovation:** The project includes the replacement of many of the dock structures, plaza renovations, Boiler Building stabilization, and beach and access improvements. Construction work will take place in 2024 and 2025, resulting in a revitalized waterfront area at Luther Burbank Park for all users to enjoy.

## Resilience in the Face of Unforeseen Challenges

Your effective management ensured the continuity of city services amidst the closure of City Hall, further emphasizing your capacity to address challenges proactively. Your strategic planning for the future of City Hall reflects your resilience and commitment to the City's enduring success. The work to transform the Slater Room into the new Council Chambers and the relocation of the Municipal Court to Newcastle's City Hall happened quickly and efficiently, showing your ability to mobilize staff in emergent situations.

In addition, the water emergency that started in early April has required you to redirect resources to ensure that the process to restore water supply to the Island is handled with tact, poise, and concern through a future-focused lens. While staff have been working on repair options, the highly technical nature of the repairs will require additional time and will not be complete until mid to late summer. With the backup line not being able to supply enough water to keep up with the higher water demand typical during the summer months, water conservation and curtailment efforts will need to be enacted. This work, needing to happen at the same time as you are navigating the City Hall closure, adds to the pressure to manage multiple priorities.

## Infrastructure Investment

The City Council's priority to “make once-in-a-generation investments to update and modernize aging infrastructure, capital facilities, and parks” has led to significant progress:

- **Luther Burbank Shoreline Restoration:** A comprehensive restoration of the South Luther Burbank Shoreline Trail was completed, opening to park users last fall. Trail users are now able to walk from the docks to the swim beach on an all-weather accessible trail.
- **Sunset & 77th Intersection Improvements:** Crews finished a capital project to improve pedestrian safety at this busy intersection, including adding a new crosswalk signal.
- **Sewer/SCADA Equipment Project:** The City has been upgrading the equipment and communications systems at 17 sewer pump stations and select emergency generators around the Island. Phase 1 in 2023 consisted of site investigations and equipment procurement. Phase 2 is in process with the installation and testing of the new equipment.
- **Water Reservoir Improvements:** Reinvestment work on the City's two four-million-gallon water reservoir tanks began in the fall of 2023 and will continue into the winter of 2024 with the coating replacement to protect the underlying steel from corrosion.
- **East Seattle Neighborhood Water Improvements:** Construction started in October to lay new 8-inch ductile iron water main, installing over 3,000 feet of pipe along 60th Ave and on SE 32nd St up to West Mercer Way and on 62nd Ave SE.

- **Sewer Basin 40 Project:** Teams are installing 12,000 feet of cured-in-place-pipe (CIPP) into existing sewer mains to prevent groundwater seepage and stormwater runoff inflow into the sewer network at Sewer Basin 40, located in and around the Mercerwood Neighborhood.

## Forward-Looking

As we continue to enhance our facilities and pursue a more integrated and efficient municipal service model, recognizing and parsing customer-facing civic functions from public safety and maintenance will be crucial in shaping a thriving, inclusive, resilient, and accessible Mercer Island for many generations. Two long-term planning efforts that stand out are:

- **Financial Management Software:** Work continues on implementing the City's new enterprise-wide financial management software. This year's long process is getting closer to completion. The software is fully configured, and staff are working on the transfer of data, staff training, testing, and more. The implementation and launch of this new software will modernize financial reporting, accounts payable, and capital project management.
- **Facility Condition Assessment:** Work continues on the City's comprehensive Facilities Conditions Assessment with a primary focus on the Public Works Building, in addition to the development of the Public Safety and Maintenance Building and replacement strategies for City Hall. As staff resumes the Assessment later in the year, the development of a long-range facilities plan will ensure that there is a strategy for renovation or replacement to extend the life of the current or future facilities and ensure continuity of services

## Conclusion

Jessi, your leadership has been a beacon of excellence, guiding Mercer Island through times of challenge and change. The City Council deeply appreciates your unwavering commitment and visionary approach. We are excited to continue this journey with you, building on our shared achievements and facing future challenges with optimism and unity.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Salim Nice". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping "S" and "N".

**Mayor Salim Nice**  
City of Mercer Island

Enclosures: Work Plan Update, Legislative Priorities, City Council Letter to Community.



# City of Mercer Island

## 2023-2024 Work Plan Matrix

Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Administrative Services</b>															
Review and update citywide policies regarding human resources, finance, purchasing, fleet, and others.	50%	Jan-21	Sep-24					■	■	■					
Continue implementation of HRIS software to centralize employee data, payroll, and benefits. This work is ongoing.	80%	Jan-21	Dec-24					■	■	■	■				
Negotiate new Collective Bargaining Agreements with bargaining groups: (1) Police and Police Support bargaining groups for the years 2025 through 2027. (2) AFSCME bargaining group for the years 2025 through 2027. (3) Fire bargaining group for the years 2023 through 2025.	10%	Jan-24	Dec-24					■	■	■	■				
Conduct a Citywide Classification & Compensation Study.	80%	Feb-21	Jun-24					■	■						
Develop a citywide compensation policy and philosophy subject to review and approval by the City Council.	50%	Apr-22	Apr-24					■	■						
Conduct a biennial public opinion survey in 2024 to inform the 2025-2026 budget process.	0%	Jan-24	Dec-24					■	■	■	■				
Complete GIS Utility Network Data Upgrade Project by Q2 2023.	100%	Feb-22	Jun-23	■	■	■									
<b>City Attorney's Office</b>															
Defend the 2017 Settlement Agreement with Sound Transit to ensure modifications to North Mercer Way that allow passenger transfers to and from bus and light rail at the East Link Station do not adversely impact traffic patterns or public safety for community residents.	100%	Jan-21	Jun-25					■	■	■	■	■	■		
Support the City Manager's Office as they evaluate the leadership structure of the Fire Department and prepare a long-term recommendation. Fire Department leadership is current performed through contract with Eastside Fire & Rescue.	100%	Jan-23	Dec-23												
Support Administrative Services as they negotiate new Collective Bargaining Agreements with bargaining groups: (1) Police and Police Support bargaining groups for the years 2025 through 2027. (2) AFSCME bargaining group for the years 2025 through 2027. (3) Fire bargaining group for the years 2023 through 2025.	20%	Jan-23	Dec-27					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Support Community Planning & Development in their efforts to complete 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by Q2 2024 as directed by the City Council in March 2022.	25%	Mar-22	Jun-24					■	■						
Support Community Planning & Development in their efforts to review and report back to the City Council on the effectiveness and impacts of the 2017 Residential Development Standards code amendments included in the Residential Code (MICC 19.02) Identify opportunities to streamline permitting processes.	10%	Jan-23	Jun-25					■	■	■	■	■			

Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>City Manager's Office</b>															
Prepare for the opening of the Sound Transit Light Rail Station in 2025. Work with internal teams and other agencies to ensure safe design and implementation.	75%	Jan-21	Jun-25												
Administer the Sound Transit Settlement Agreement to include tracking of appropriations and expenditures, contract management, and submission of invoices.	Ongoing	Jan-21	Jun-25												
Evaluate the leadership structure of the Fire Department and prepare a long-term recommendation. Fire Department leadership is current performed through contract with Eastside Fire & Rescue.	100%	Jan-23	Jun-23												
Oversee the Comprehensive Facilities Assessment to include the Annex Building at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center, City Hall, the Maintenance Facility, and the Luther Burbank Administrative Building. This project will evaluate the remaining useful life of these buildings and identify alternatives to replace or repair. The project is anticipated to be complete by Q2 2024, with initial recommendations capital project recommendations prepared for the 2025-2026 budget.	30%	Nov-22	Jan-26												
Support Community Planning & Development in their efforts to review and report back to the City Council on the effectiveness and impacts of the 2017 Residential Development Standards code amendments included in the Residential Code (MICC 19.02) Identify opportunities to streamline permitting processes.	10%	Jan-23	Jun-25												
Oversee the activation of the former Tully's Property to serve as a satellite police precinct. Evaluate the potential expansion of the police volunteer program to include volunteers at the satellite police precinct to include preparation of a 2025-2026 budget proposal.	20%	Jan-24	Feb-25												
<b>Community Planning and Development</b>															
Complete 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by Q2 2024 as directed by the City Council in March 2022.	50%	Mar-22	Oct-24												
Coordinate with the State Department of Commerce, the Puget Sound Regional Council, King County, and other King County jurisdictions on regional growth planning including affordable housing target development.	80%	Jul-21	Dec-24												
Review and report back to the City Council on the effectiveness and impacts of the 2017 Residential Development Standards code amendments included in the Residential Code (MICC 19.02) Identify opportunities to streamline permitting processes.	10%	Jan-23	Jun-25												
Compile and analyze potential improvements to the development codes and propose such for the annual docket as appropriate.	55%	Jan-23	Dec-25												
Index and digitize old records to make them easily accessible to the public and continue to provide support for public records requests. This work is ongoing.	Ongoing	Sep-22	Dec-23												
Analyze and implement measures to reduce building, planning, and land-use permit plan review times through appropriate staffing and on-call support levels. Routinely analyze data and gather feedback from customers to inform decision-making and process improvements.	25%	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Update the construction codes according to state requirements by Q2 2023.	90%	Jan-23	Jun-24												
Complete a Parking Study for Town Center.	100%	May-22	Dec-23												
Business Code Zone Amendment.	100%	Oct-22	Jun-23												



Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Finance</b>															
Conduct a phased implementation of the new financial management software system. This entails grouping software system modules that power core business processes being phased into production while progressively going live with additional ancillary modules as the implementation progresses. Completion date for core financials is Q4 2023, with the entire financial management software system going live in Q3 2025.	50%	Dec-22	Dec-25												
Complete a cost allocation methodology analysis to identify the full costs of services provided by internal service departments by Q4 2024.	90%	Jan-21	Dec-24												
Engage the City Council and organization for the highest and best use of the City's American Relief Plan Act (ARPA) fund allocation. Track all funds and meet all federal reporting requirements. This work is ongoing through the biennium.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Ongoing												
Develop a Special Revenue Fund to track permit revenues in the Community Planning and Development Department for implementation by Q1 2025.	25%	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Assist Public Works with the completion of the Water Meter Replacement Project by Q3 2024.	40%	Jul-21	Dec-25												
Transition to monthly financial reports. Implementation of this goal is tied to procurement and implementation of the new financial software.	50%	Dec-22	Dec-25												
<b>Fire</b>															
Review and provide data driven updates specific to fee collection policies (transport fee, Fire Marshals permitting, GEMT, etc.), new or updated requests for contracts, and/or strategies to the City Manager in September of each year.	100%	Jun-22	Sep-24												
Coordinate with Administrative Services and Finance to update the new Master Fee Schedule annually to include all associated fire permit fees.	Ongoing	Jan-22	Ongoing												
Engage with regional partners to train up to six personnel to become Red Card certified to assist with both Mercer Island and regional urban interface and wildland related emergencies by Q4 2023. This type of training will be ongoing.	100%	Jan-23	Jul-23												
Purchase King County Public Health certified defibrillators for 911 response by Q3 2023.	100%	Oct-22	Nov-23												
Develop lesson plans for approximately 10 public education related topics (Home Safety, Exit Drills, Smoke Detector Education etc.) by Q4 2024.	100%	Jan-23	Sep-23												
<b>Municipal Court</b>															
Conduct court security assessment. Work to improve court security in line with Washington State General Court Rule guidelines.	100%	Feb-23	Ongoing												
Assess, plan, and implement updated procedures and technology of the Court. Move to add audio and video upgrades with grant funding recently received from the State. Utilize the grant funding to implement paperless court file maintenance which will include outside pleading filings, discovery and records request transfers, and court file depository and usage.	75%	Dec-22	Dec-24												



Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Police Department</b>															
Prepare for the new Light Rail station, to include response protocols and pedestrian and vehicles safety considerations. This work is ongoing.	90%	Jan-21	Mar-25												
Continue the Interlocal Agreements for Marine Patrol Services with Hunts Point, Medina, and Yarrow Point. Track time and resources spent in each marine jurisdiction to inform the cost allocation model the City utilizes to charge contract cities. Work with the Finance Department to complete an overhead cost analysis to inform updates to the Interlocal Agreements by Q4 2023.	75%	Apr-22	Jun-24												
Collaborate with public safety partners to acquire and implement the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network (PSERN) for public safety communications by Q4 2022.	100%	Jan-21	Dec-23												
Proactively combat crimes through crime prevention and education programs, by leveraging social media outreach and rigorous investigation efforts. This work is ongoing.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Continue the Community Academy, Coffee with a Cop, Paws on Patrol, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and National Night Out. Support the Parks and Recreation Department through participation in community-wide special events.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Collaborate with the City Manager’s Office on the activation of the former Tully’s Property to serve as a satellite police precinct. Evaluate the potential expansion of the police volunteer program to include volunteers at the satellite police precinct to include preparation of a 2025-2026 budget proposal.	20%	Jan-24	Feb-25												
<b>Public Works</b>															
Develop Standard Operating Procedures for Cityworks (asset management system) by Q3 2023. - Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) for Cityworks by Q3 2023. - Increase staff skill and competency in the Cityworks platform through ongoing trainings. This work is ongoing.	25%	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Collaborate with the City Manager’s Office on the development of the Comprehensive Facilities Assessment to include the Annex Building at the Mercer Island Community & Event Center, City Hall, the Maintenance Facility, and the Luther Burbank Administrative Building.	30%	Nov-22	May-24												
Work with King County and Recology to update solid waste rates per the new proposed solid waste rates anticipated in 2023 and 2024.	100%	Jan-23	Mar-24												
Implement the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Project (“SCADA” Project) by Q4 2023.	75%	Jan-21	Nov-25												
Complete the Water Meter Replacement Project by Q3 2024.	40%	Jul-21	Dec-25												
Luther Burbank Docks reconfiguration and repair project.	40%	Jun-20	Dec-25												
Develop Joint Master Plan for Clarke Beach and Groveland Beach Parks by Q4 2023.	20%	Mar-22	Dec-24												
Continue with ongoing soil and groundwater remediation at the former Honeywell Site and City Maintenance facility. Compliance is necessary to obtain a No Further Action letter from Department of Ecology.	80%	Jan-21	Dec-26												
Begin to implement the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan. This work is ongoing.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Ongoing												
Work proactively with King County Metro and Sound Transit to minimize impacts to City infrastructure (streets and utilities), traffic (cars, pedestrians, bicycles), and the public by the sewer interceptor and MITI projects and ensure that City infrastructure is restored to City standards. This work is ongoing.	75%	Jan-23	Ongoing												

Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025					
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Adopt the Climate Action Plan by Q2 2023. Begin Council directed implementation of strategies and actions from the adopted Plan by Q4 2024.	95%	Jan-23	Dec-24														
Complete costing analysis, review interlocal agreements, and work with the Mercer Island School District (MISD) to draft a new Master Facility Use Agreement to include facilities shared/jointly maintained between the MISD and the City by Q4 2023.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Dec-24														
Complete the Site Characterization for soil and groundwater at Fire Station 91 by Q4 2022.	95%	Jan-21	Dec-24														
Athletic Field Replacement Projects as included in the 2022 PROS Plan. Projects include: (1) Island Crest Park North Field Turf and (2) South Mercer Playfields Turf Replacement & Ballfield Backstop Update.	95%	Jun-22	Oct-24														
Reservoir Pump Replacements.	45%	Mar-22	Dec-24														
Reservoir Improvements.	45%	Mar-22	May-25														
First Hill Booster Station Generator Replacement.	25%	Jun-22	Dec-24														

## Parks & Recreation

Complete implementation and integration of Civic Optimize, a software tool which will enhance the permit and rental process, increase customer satisfaction, and optimize staff review efficiency. Research, develop and implement procedures for the use of technology-based tools by Q4 2024 to improve customer service and reduce permit turnaround times.	75%	Jan-23	Ongoing														
Establish resource needs, program implementation, and evaluation tools in preparation for the future expansion of recreation services to include various youth, senior, and adult programs.	75%	Jan-23	Jun-24														
Achieve MICEC rental occupancy level of 1,500 bookings by end of Q4 2023; 2,000 bookings by end of Q4 2024.	100%	Jan-23	Dec-23														
Achieve drop-in programming participation of 2,000 individuals to the fitness room and 6,000 drop-in sports participants by end of Q4 2023.	100%	Jan-23	Sep-23														
Expand drop-in programming to increase diversity of offerings by 25-50% by Q1 2024.	100%	Jan-23	Mar-24														
Collaborate with local community organizations to partner on special events, programs, volunteerism, and other community engagement opportunities.	90%	Jan-23	Ongoing														
Expand and enhance opportunities for recreation service sponsorships and park asset and property donations.	75%	Jan-23	Dec-24														
In collaboration with the Finance Department and Capital Projects Team, revisit the funding plan (aka the sinking fund) for the replacement of synthetic turf athletic fields.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Dec-24														

Project	PROGRESS	START	END	2023				2024				2025			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Youth and Family Services</b>															
Work with the City Manager on a stabilization plan for YFS revenues. This work is tied to recovery of Thrift Shop operations and development of a long-term funding strategy. This work is ongoing.	Ongoing	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Provide food support for residents facing food insecurity, which currently includes grocery gift cards. Re-evaluate food pantry operations as Pandemic recovery efforts allow as part of the comprehensive Emergency Assistance policy update.	80%	Jan-23	Jun-24												
Integrate and expand Trauma-Informed Approaches (TIA) Organizational Development.	100%	Jan-23	Jun-23												
Increase Thrift Store annual revenues by 10% each year of the biennium based on FY 2022 gross revenues.	50%	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Grow Thrift Store volunteer service hours by 15% in 2023 and 10% in 2024 to increase engagement of the volunteer labor pool by Q4 2024.	50%	Jan-23	Dec-24												
Transition YFS operations to ensure compliance with HIPAA standards by Q4 2022.	100%	Apr-21	Nov-23												
Complete the update to the YFS policy and procedures manual by Q4 2022. Policies related to financial assistance programs may require City Council review and approval.	100%	Oct-21	Nov-23												

# CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

## 2024 State Legislative Priorities



The City will advocate for the following issues and will include its support for the priorities of its partners the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington Cities Insurance Authority.

### Increase Resources for Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Prevention

The City is a direct provider of mental health counseling services through school-based and community programs while also relying on regional public health infrastructure for specialized care and crisis response. Priorities include:

- **Increased prevention and intervention resources** targeting Fentanyl and other substances.
- **Funding to expand** community- and school-based mental health services for youth.
- **Opportunities to integrate** behavioral health and first responders for enhanced crisis response.

### Support for Affordable Housing

The City champions a proactive stance, using novel tools and incentives to enhance housing supply and affordability. Priorities include:

- **Transit-oriented growth**, prioritizing housing and infrastructure investments near major transit, tying it either to affordability mandates or to the City's housing targets under ESSHB 1220 (2021). This harnesses regional transportation investments to boost mobility, expand affordable housing, and protect the environment.
- **Enhancing current programs** and supporting mechanisms that bolster state and regional housing programs, like the Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH).
- **Flexible and adaptable funding methods**, including a local Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), ensuring revenues benefit low- to moderate-income households.
- **Local control** and acknowledgment of the work that cities are already doing to improve walkability and parking policies to support housing needs. The City opposes any blanket regulations that would overlook local nuances and requirements. The City opposes housing density increases outside of the Town Center.

### Support Public Safety Measures on Auto Theft and Property Crime

The City supports law enforcement strategies that protect our community and businesses. Priorities include:

- **Further expanding** the list of eligible offenses for pursuits, including auto theft and some property crimes, allowing cities to develop policies tailored to their communities.
- **Additional State resources** to fund auto theft and property crime reduction programs.
- **Revise the Public Records Act** to exempt Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) security footage from disclosure.

# CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

## 2024 State Legislative Priorities



### Capital and Grant Support for Essential Public Services

The City is seeking State funding for public safety programs and Climate Action Plan implementation, including:

- **Funding for Mercer Island Marine Patrol Boat Replacement:** The City of Mercer Island State-certified Marine Patrol Unit was founded in 1982 and provides marine patrol services to Medina, Bellevue, Renton, Yarrow Point, and Hunts Point for their water-based services with just three vessels. Two vessels are near the end of their useful life, and the City is seeking \$1.2 million for the estimated replacement costs.
- **Funding for Seafair Water Safety Program:** The City of Mercer Island Marine Patrol coordinates Seafair safety operations on Lake Washington, providing first responder and boating safety services. The City is seeking \$100,000 annually to support the funding needs for this critical public safety program.
- **Funding for Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure Plan:** The City adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2023 and is seeking \$300,000 to fund the development of an Island-wide Electrical Vehicle Charging Plan.
- **Funding for Compact Electric Sweeper:** The City is seeking \$310,000 to purchase a compact electric sweeper to clean sidewalks, paths, and park areas inaccessible to the large street sweeper. This specialized equipment will improve operations efficiency, reduce the use of gas-powered equipment, and aid in stormwater management.

### Preserving and Protecting the Environment

The City encourages **solar power usage**, equipment and **fleet vehicle electrification** and other legislation, partnerships, and funding that incentivizes and supports the City's adopted **Climate Action Plan**.

### Opposition to Expansion of Tort Law Liability

The City's liability insurance pool costs continue to rise due to costly verdicts, inflation, and expanded liabilities imposed by legislative actions and judicial interpretation of the law. In partnership with Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA), the City **opposes legislation expanding tort law liability** and the remedies available under tort law. If the legislature approves expansions, then special funds must be developed to cover these costs.

### Revising the Property Tax Cap

With the recent and ongoing impacts of inflation, the City's ability to keep pace with growing costs is inhibited by the 1% property tax cap that has been in place for over 20 years. The City supports **tying the tax to inflation and population growth factors with a new cap not to exceed 3%**. This allows local elected officials to adjust the local property tax rate to better meet community needs and keep up with the costs of providing essential services like police, fire, transportation, and valued community amenities like parks. With the current 1% cap, the City's General Fund is projected to have a structural deficit in 2025-2026.

# **A Message to the Community from the Mercer Island City Council Regarding Planning for the Development of a Replacement Public Safety and Maintenance Building**

**March 6, 2024**

Last week, your City Council took a pivotal step in the future of City operations by unanimously approving the costing and design <sup>[1]</sup> for a new Public Safety and Maintenance Building on the current City Hall campus. This facility would house the City's Police Department and public works crews, providing a safe and functional facility that meets the urgent needs of our City today.

The motion, put forward by Deputy Mayor Rosenbaum during the Council's annual planning session <sup>[2]</sup>, demonstrates a collective commitment to enhancing the safety and well-being of our employees and community. The existing Public Works Building is well beyond its useful life and hasn't met our needs for some time. The closure of City Hall only exacerbated this challenge, displacing staff across all teams and the specialized functions of our Police Department.

Careful evaluation and planning brought us to this path forward. Building a new facility serving both our police and public works teams meets the unique needs of both departments in a much more efficient manner. The City Manager will now commence planning for this new facility, with a preliminary scope and cost estimate due in Q2 2024.

What does this mean for a future City Hall and the rest of the City's teams? We continue to discuss opportunities for a home in Town Center – a shift that represents a generational investment in a more accessible, efficient, and community-focused downtown City Hall. These decisions are not just about buildings and staffing but about laying the groundwork for a more connected, safe, and vibrant Mercer Island. We'll continue to keep you updated on Let's Talk <sup>[3]</sup>, the City's public engagement platform.

The success of last week's Council Planning Session reflects extensive preparation by City staff and the Council's supportive and collaborative spirit aimed at recognizing the valuable contributions of all City employees. Together, we are able to navigate the complexities of our current challenges and make informed decisions that reflect the priorities and needs of you, our residents.

A great deal of dedication, insightful discussions, and strategic decisions have set in motion what we believe will be a very positive trajectory for the City of Mercer Island. These initiatives will bring about meaningful and positive changes in our community – we look forward to working across the Island to articulate this vision and we're excited to see the impact our collective efforts will have for the Island's future.

## **Mercer Island City Council**

*Mayor Salim Nice*

*Deputy Mayor Dave Rosenbaum*

*Councilmember Lisa Anderl*

*Councilmember Jake Jacobson*

*Councilmember Craig Reynolds*

*Councilmember Wendy Weiker*

*Councilmember Ted Weinberg*

**Source URL:**<https://www.mercerisland.gov/citycouncil/page/message-community-mercer-island-city-council-regarding-planning-development>

**Links**

[1] [https://letstalk.mercergov.org/city-hall-closure-and-planning/news\\_feed/council-directs-city-manager-to-commence-planning-for-a-new-public-safety-and-maintenance-building](https://letstalk.mercergov.org/city-hall-closure-and-planning/news_feed/council-directs-city-manager-to-commence-planning-for-a-new-public-safety-and-maintenance-building) [2] <https://www.mercerisland.gov/citycouncil/page/city-council-planning-sessions> [3] <https://letstalk.mercergov.org/city-hall-closure-and-planning>