



# PLANNING COMMISSION CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

**PCB 24-16**  
**June 12, 2024**  
**Special Business**

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	PCB 24-16: Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review: Deliberations	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Prepare a recommendation to the City Council	

<b>STAFF:</b>	Alison Van Gorp, CPD Deputy Director Adam Zack, Senior Planner
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review Open House and Survey Summary Report</li> <li>2. Planning Commissioner Comments</li> <li>3. Public Comments</li> <li>4. Public Comments Tracked by Element</li> </ol>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning Commission (PC) with additional information as requested so that they can continue deliberating their recommendation.

- On May 1, 2024, the City held the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Open House (Open House) and opened an online survey. The online survey was open from May 1 to 20;
- The initial results of the online survey were provided to the PC with [PCB 24-12](#), with a note that a summary report would be available at a later date;
- On May 29, 2024, the PC held a public hearing on the proposed Comprehensive Plan update and continued deliberations to June 5, 2024;
  - An initial draft of findings was provided with [PCB 24-13](#) Exhibit 1;
  - The public hearing drafts of the Comprehensive Plan elements were provided with [PCB 24-13](#) Exhibits 2-8;
- On May 29, 2024, consultants from BERK Consulting Inc. delivered a report summarizing the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Open House and online survey (Exhibit 1);
- On June 5, 2024, the PC continued deliberating its recommendation to the City Council; and
- The PC will resume deliberating its recommendation to the City Council on June 12, 2024, with a focus on the Land Use, Housing, and Economic Development elements.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

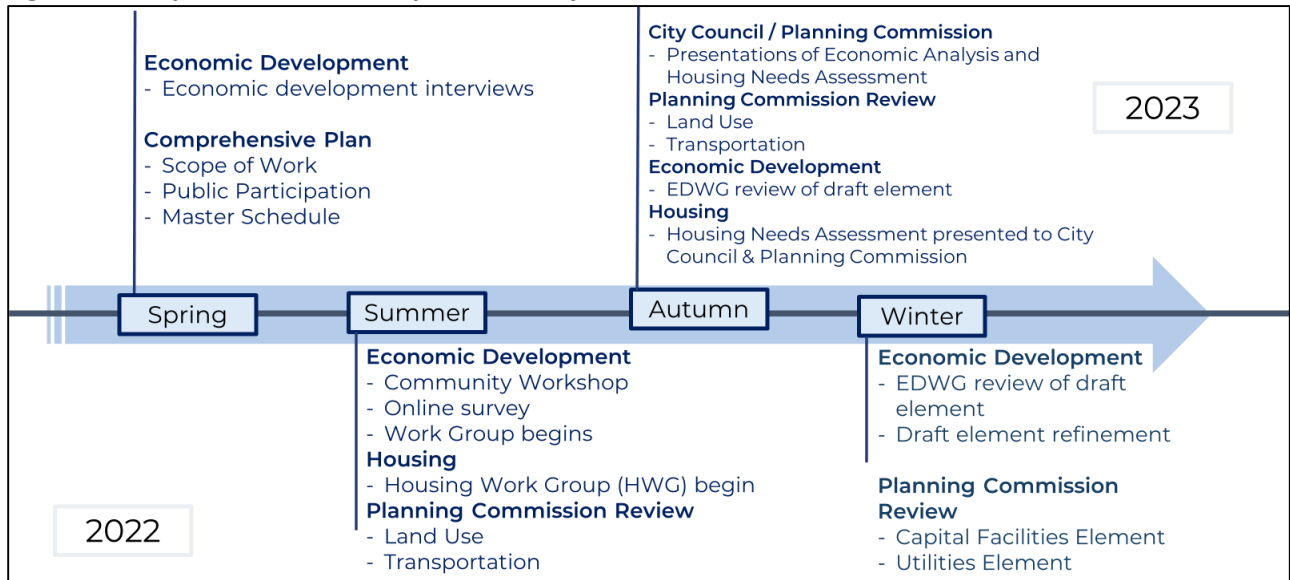
The public can submit written comments regarding the Comprehensive Plan periodic review to [comp.plan@mercerisland.gov](mailto:comp.plan@mercerisland.gov). Public comments submitted by 4:30 PM on Tuesday June 11, 2024, will be provided to the Planning Commission in advance of the meeting on June 12. Comments received after June 4 will be provided to the Planning Commission at a later meeting.

## BACKGROUND

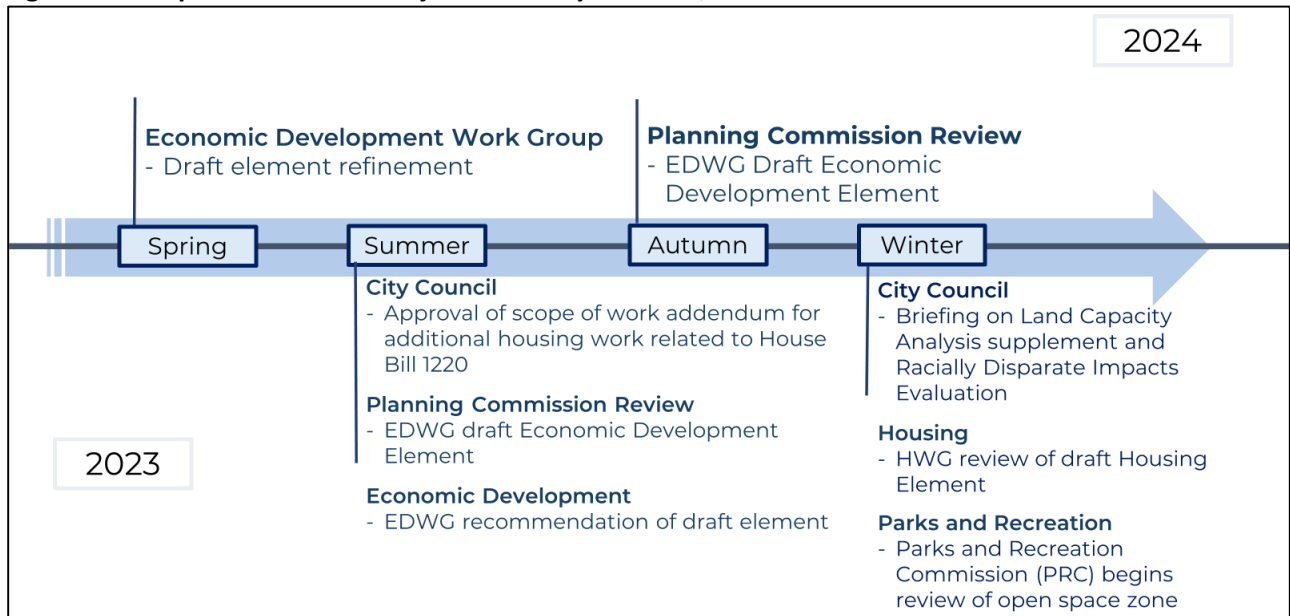
The City has been engaged in the periodic review of its Comprehensive Plan since March 2022, when the City Council approved the Scope of Work, Master Schedule, and Public Participation Plan with [Resolution No. 1621](#). At public meetings over the last two years, the PC has prepared public review drafts of each element slated for update and the new Economic Development and Parks and Open Space elements. The public was able to comment

on the drafts during the public meetings and submit written comments throughout the periodic review process. The periodic review process to date is summarized in figures 1, 2, and 3.

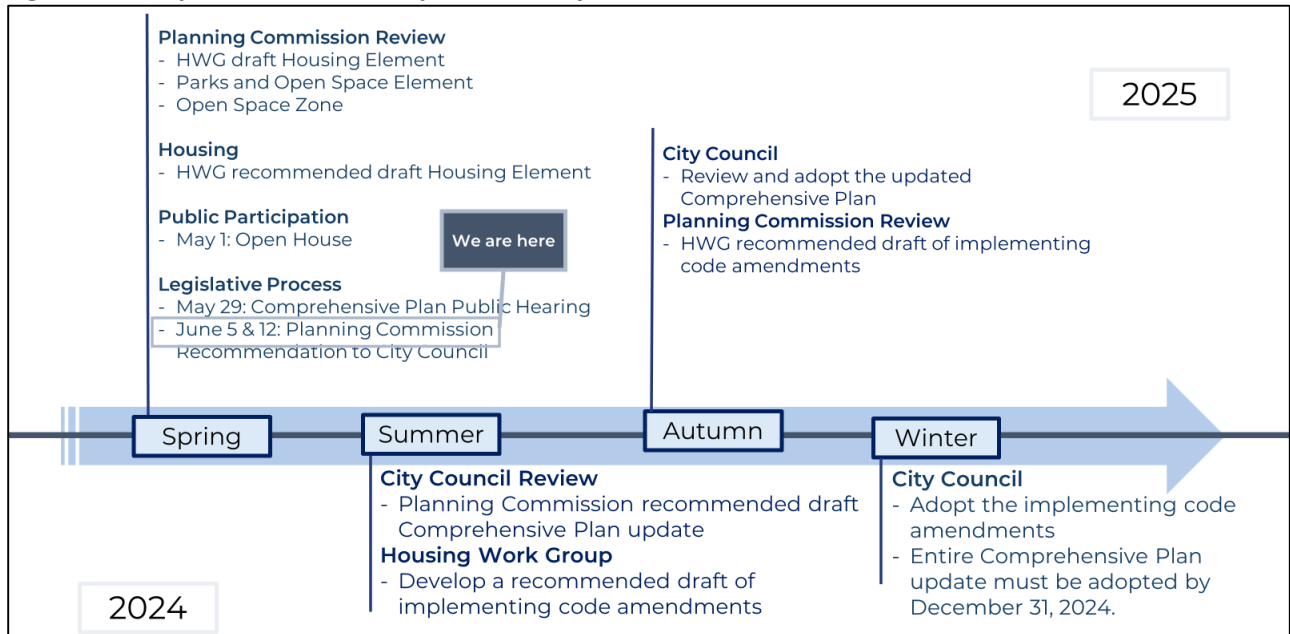
**Figure 1. Comprehensive Plan Project Summary Timeline, 2022-2023.**



**Figure 2. Comprehensive Plan Project Summary Timeline, 2023-2024.**



**Figure 3. Comprehensive Plan Project Summary Timeline, 2024-2025.**



### Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review Open House and Survey Summary Report

The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Review Open House and Survey Summary Report (Summary Report) provides an overview of the feedback the City gathered during the Open House on May 1 and the online survey it conducted from May 1 to 20, 2024 (Exhibit 1). The PC already received the results of the online survey with [PCB 24-12](#). The input detailed in the Summary Report can help the PC as it considers its recommendation to the City Council. Input from the survey was already incorporated into the staff recommended findings provided in [PCB 24-13](#).

### June 5 Recap

On June 5, 2024, the PC continued deliberating its recommendation to the City Council. The deliberations focused on the Transportation, Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Parks and Open Space elements. During the meeting the PC approved three motions to address public comments on the Transportation Element. The approved motions were:

Add to the PC findings: “Transportation Element Policy Goal 4.10 received six public comments asking that we note that off-street parking is important to families and those who are handicapped.”

Correct the phrase on Page 2, third paragraph from “The regional Mountains-to-Sound Trail runs along the I 90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.” to “The regional Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail runs along the I 90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.”

Amend Transportation Element Policy 3.3 on Page 4 to add “and retain trees” per public comment [PUB-1]. It currently reads “Construct transportation improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation. Encourage programs that plant trees in unused portions of public rights-of-way.” And as-amended would read “Construct transportation improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation. Encourage programs that plant trees and retain trees in unused portions of public rights-of-way.”

Additionally, one motion was tabled for discussion later. A tabled motion requires a majority vote from the PC to resume consideration of this motion. Another option for addressing the tabled motion without further discussion

is to make a motion to “lay on the table”. By adopting the motion to "lay on the table," a majority has the power to halt consideration of a question immediately without debate. This motion requires a second and is not debatable or amendable. Laying the motion on the table would call an immediate vote on the motion, giving the PC the option to quickly resolve the motion if desired.

The tabled motion was:

Add to the PC findings: “Transportation Element Policy Goal 4.9 received two strong public comments. During a brief discussion, it was brought up that key definitions related to this goal are not currently contained within the Comprehensive Plan document.

### **Transportation Policy 4.9**

Proposed Transportation Policy 4.9 states: “Implement transportation programs that address the needs of and promote access to opportunity for underserved communities, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, people with low or no incomes, and people with special transportation needs, while preventing and mitigating displacement of these groups.” This policy was drafted to align with the King County Countywide Planning Policy (CPP) T-9, which states: “Implement transportation programs and projects that prevent and mitigate the displacement of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, people with low and no- incomes, and people with special transportation needs.”

To follow up on Planning Commission questions at the June 5 meeting, staff have researched the definitions of the terms used in Transportation Policy 4.9. The King County [CPPs](#) include a glossary (see page 112), but it does not include the term “Black, Indigenous, and People of Color”. The glossary does include definitions of some other pertinent terms, such as “historically underserved communities” and “extremely low-income households”. In addition, it may be helpful to note, King County [declared racism a public health crisis](#) in 2020 and has since undertaken many anti-racist policies and programs, with an focus on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color specifically.

## **ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

### **Comments**

The PC has received 15 public comments and three Planning Commissioner comments as it has deliberated its recommendation to City Council from May 29 to June 5, 2024. The comments provided by Planning Commissioners are provided in Exhibit 2. Public comments received to date are provided in Exhibit 3. An expanded comment tracking table is provided in Exhibit 4. The PC has requested staff make some recommendations concerning the public comments to assist in their making a recommendation. The Public Comments Tracked by Element in Exhibit 4 includes additional staff commentary as requested by PC and each comment listed by Comprehensive Plan Element.

Many of the public comments that propose amendments to the draft text of the Comprehensive Plan are labeled “Policy Choice” in Exhibit 4. Comments marked as “policy choice” propose an alternative approach to that taken in the current draft. The PC may recommend an amendment to address these comments. Making such an amendment would likely represent a substantial change in policy direction and would require additional review to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains internally consistent. Some comments in the Exhibit are marked as “Word Smithing.” These are comments proposing an alternate wording for non-policy and non-goal parts of the draft element. The PC can amend the text as proposed by a word smithing comment without changing the policy direction, but further consistency analysis would be required to ensure that the amendment does not conflict with policies elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan.

The City has received comments on the Comprehensive Plan update from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) (PCB 24-12, Exhibit 6). Staff has reviewed those comments

and recommends the two amendments listed in Table 1. The other agency comments that do not have a staff recommendation are optional, proposing amendments over and above those required for compliance. The PC can consider these optional comments and, if desired, staff will draft a recommended amendment based on those comments if requested.

**Table 1. Staff Recommended Responses to Other Agency Comments.**

Comment Proposed By	Element	Policy Amendment
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)	Land Use	Amend Policy 19.6: "Important wildlife habitats including forest, watercourses, wetlands, <u>riparian areas</u> , and shorelines should be connected via <u>intentional infrastructure planning and natural areas linkages</u> including walking paths along forested road rights-of-way.
WDFW	Land Use	Amend Policy 19.7: " <u>View preservation actions should be balanced with the <del>efforts requirement</del> to preserve the community's natural vegetation and tree cover along shorelines.</u>

**NEXT STEPS**

Making a recommendation to the City Council at the meeting on June 12 will conclude the PC review of the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. Before the end of the year, the PC will review and make a recommendation to the City Council on proposed amendments to the development code to implement the updated Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

If commissioners would like to propose changes to the public hearing draft elements, please be prepared to make a motion. The motion should include at least: (1) the element name, (2) goal or policy number, and (3) the specific amendment proposed. To the extent possible, please provide the proposed amendment in writing by the end of the day on Monday, June 10, 2024, so other commissioners have the opportunity to review the proposed amendment.

Continue deliberations and consider the recommended motion provided in [PCB 24-13](#): "Motion to recommend adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan as amended to the City Council."