

Proposed amendments to the public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Plan

1. Transportation Element, Goal 12:

Promote bicycle and pedestrian networks that safely access and link commercial areas, residential areas, schools, ~~and~~ parks, and transit, within the City.

2. Land Use Element, text on page 5:

Beginning in 2022, the City began composing a Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan establishes strategies for the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled to meet its adopted greenhouse gas reduction goals address climate change. Those strategies are an important step to move the City forward in its response to the changing climate. Where needed, goals and policies were amended or added to this Land Use Element to support the strategies in the Climate Action Plan, including amendments to the policies under goals 26, 27, and 28.

3. Housing Element Policy 1.4.M

1.4.M Neighborhoods in which environmental health hazards, including noise and light pollution, -are minimized to the extent possible.

I proposed this policy in the Housing Work Group, which was included after I explained what it meant, but looking at it again, it would be better to not have a policy that doesn't come across easily, if you didn't have a career in environmental health, as I did. I think keeping the broad language is helpful for things that may come up in the future, but it would be more useful to include specific language as well in order to provide a policy basis for possible improvements in regards to light and noise pollution, which are problems now.

Here are several references to health impacts of exposure to light and noise pollution. I have mislaid reference to racial and income disparities in exposure to these source of pollution, but will forward prior to the meeting on May 29.

Here are references to health impacts of exposure to light pollution:

1. Dark Sky International quoting American Medical Association: "American Medical Association findings of an increasing body of scientific evidence that implicates exposure to blue-rich white light at night to increased risks for cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease."

<https://darksky.org/news/ama-report-affirms-human-health-impacts-from-leds/>

2. American Heart Association: "People continuously exposed to bright, artificial light at night may be at increased risk of developing conditions that affect blood flow to the brain and having a stroke

according to research published today in **Stroke**, the peer-reviewed scientific journal of the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association.”

<https://newsroom.heart.org/news/more-exposure-to-artificial-bright-outdoor-nighttime-light-linked-to-higher-stroke-risk>

Here are references to exposure to noise pollution:

1. Harvard Medicine: “They’ve shown that noise pollution not only drives hearing loss, tinnitus, and hypersensitivity to sound, but can cause or exacerbate cardiovascular disease; type 2 diabetes; sleep disturbances; stress; mental health and cognition problems, including memory impairment and attention deficits; childhood learning delays; and low birth weight. Scientists are investigating other possible links, including to dementia.”

<https://magazine.hms.harvard.edu/articles/noise-and-health>

2. EPA: “Noise pollution adversely affects the lives of millions of people. Studies have shown that there are direct links between noise and health. Problems related to noise include stress related illnesses, high blood pressure, speech interference, hearing loss, sleep disruption, and lost productivity. Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) is the most common and often discussed health effect, but research has shown that exposure to constant or high levels of noise can cause countless adverse health effects.”

<https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/clean-air-act-title-iv-noise-pollution>

Adam Zack


From: Carolyn Boatsman
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:40 PM
To: Adam Zack
Cc: Alison Van Gorp
Subject: Additional information re: light pollution and health effects

Hi Adam. Would you please pass on to Commissioners this additional reference re: light pollution? Thank you.

Commissioners: This reference describes how light pollution exposure is greater in poorer, non-white neighborhoods. This is easy to spot anecdotally when observing multifamily housing in mixed use areas. Most of Mercer Island's affordable housing is and will be located in the Town Center and Commercial Office Zone where the risk of light pollution is the greatest.

The policy language, however, is meant to highlight light pollution, in general, as an environmental health issue that may need attention.

<https://appliedsciences.nasa.gov/our-impact/story/brighter-neighborhoods-harm-human-health>

	<p>Brighter Neighborhoods Harm Human Health NASA Applied Sciences</p> <p>A newly emerging field of study is connecting the bright lights of U.S. cities at night to poorer human health.</p> <p>appliedsciences.nasa.gov</p>
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Adam Zack

From: Chris Goelz
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Alison Van Gorp
Cc: Adam Zack
Subject: Re: 5/29 Agenda Packet timing

Hi Alison

I don't want to miss the deadline for submitting comments. So let's consider my draft F-3 submitted:

Try to mitigate through regulation any impacts of moderate density housing on traffic, on-street parking and pedestrian safety, especially in those areas close to transit.

Still open for suggestions. Just not sure when I'll be back on email.

Chris

From: Chris Goelz <Chris.Goelz@mercerisland.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:28 AM
To: Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>
Subject: Re: 5/29 Agenda Packet timing

Hi

Just a couple of typos if you think it's worth it --

in F-3 – "effecting" should be "affecting"

in F-6 – "commutes" should be "commuters"

Then there's this:

F-3: Identify regulations that can reduce the following impacts when establishing regulations for moderate density: • More people parking on neighborhood streets; • Traffic and parked cars effecting pedestrian safety; • Reduced parking requirements in areas close to transit causing more residents to park on the street; and • Loss of mature trees and landscaping when new development occurs

How about this instead?

Try to mitigate through regulation any impacts of moderate density housing on traffic, on-street parking and pedestrian safety, especially in those areas close to transit.

Any suggestions?

I'm thinking that the tree thing isn't really a thing. I don't have any reason to think that the new middle housing units will be bigger than the McMansions that we're currently building – so I don't see that they present a particular threat to mature trees. And I certainly don't think they should be encumbered with additional regulation re trees.

Thanks.
Chris

From: Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 4:16 PM
To: Chris Goelz <Chris.Goelz@mercerisland.gov>
Cc: Adam Zack <adam.zack@mercerisland.gov>
Subject: RE: 5/29 Agenda Packet timing

Hi Chris – Happy to chat on Tuesday. I'm open 10-11 or 4-5.

-Alison

From: Chris Goelz <Chris.Goelz@mercerisland.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2024 3:14 PM
To: Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>
Subject: Re: 5/29 Agenda Packet timing

Hi Alison

I have a couple of questions about the process at the meeting. I'd like to see a softening on the parking mandates, but am trying to figure out if it's worth raising and, if it is, how best to do it. (Do you deal with the comment from WDFW that we should replace our making minimums with parking maximums?)

Maybe we can chat for a few minutes on Tuesday.

Thanks.
Chris

From: Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>
Sent: Friday, May 17, 2024 4:30 PM
Subject: 5/29 Agenda Packet timing

Planning Commissioners – I wanted to briefly follow up regarding the updated meeting schedule and timing of the next agenda packet. As you know, next Wednesday's meeting has been canceled. As such, the next packet will be for the 5/29 meeting, which we would typically send out by the end of next week. However, with the large volume of material that will be included in this packet, we are aiming to get it out as soon as possible to give you more time for review. We are working with our consultant teams

EXHIBIT 2

to complete the exhibits and we are planning to publish the packet by Tuesday at the latest. This will give you a full week in advance of the Public Hearing to review the materials. If you have questions during your review that you would like to discuss with staff prior to the hearing, please let us know. We can schedule one-on-one or small group meetings with commissioners if needed.

Thanks,
Alison

Adam Zack

From: Adam Ragheb
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 7:12 AM
To: Adam Zack
Subject: Re: Comments for Wednesday's Meeting Based on Received Public Comments

Hi Adam,

Thanks for the input and suggestions. Per your suggestions, I've reworded everything into a motion format. I've also attempted to split some things between revisions and findings. Please find my proposed motions below which can be considered to replace the comments distributed yesterday.

All proposed motions are based on public comments received for the 5/29 Public Hearing on the Transportation Element.

1. I move that we add to our findings: "Transportation Element Policy Goal 4.9 received two strong public comments. One comment mentioned the word socioeconomic as a possible alternative. During a brief discussion, it was brought up that key definitions related to this goal are not currently contained within the Comprehensive Plan document.
2. I move that we add to our findings: "Transportation Element Policy Goal 4.10 received three public comments asking that we note that off-street parking is important to families and those who are handicapped."
3. I move that we 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."
4. I move that we amend Transportation Element Policy 3.3 on Page 4 to add "and retain trees" per public comment. 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."
5. I move that we add to our findings: "In relation to Transportation Element Policy Goal 12.4 on Page 10, the Council should consider this in conjunction with the trend of eBikes moving to personal ownership from organizational ownership since the technology's original inception and ensure no Sound Transit study efforts are being duplicated.
6. I move that we revise the second to last paragraph on Page 19 from "Link light rail runs through Mercer Island along the median of I-90 with a station located north of the Town Center, between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE. The light rail provides frequent connections to Seattle, Bellevue, and other regional destinations." to "Link light rail is planned to run through Mercer Island along the median of I-90 with a station located north of the Town Center, between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE. It is planned for the light rail to provide frequent connections to Seattle, Bellevue, and other regional destinations.

EXHIBIT 2

7. I move that we revise the second to last paragraph of Page 21 of the Transportation element from “The Mercer Island lot is typically fully occupied during weekdays. A number of the users of this lot do not reside on the Island.” to “According to the Fourth Quarter 2017 Park and Ride Utilization Report prepared by King County, the Mercer Island lot is typically fully occupied during weekdays although photographs and public testimony note that the lot is often less than full in 2024 post-COVID. A number of the users of this lot do not reside on the Island.”
8. I move that we revise the second paragraph of Page 23 from “The opening of the East Link light rail line provides an additional travel option between the Town Center and regional destinations. “ to “The analysis assumes the opening of the East Link light rail line in 2023, which will result in an additional travel option between the Town Center and regional destinations.”

From: Adam Zack <adam.zack@mercerisland.gov>

Sent: Monday, June 3, 2024 10:27 AM

To: Adam Ragheb <adam.ragheb@mercerisland.gov>; Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>

Subject: RE: Comments for Wednesday's Meeting Based on Received Public Comments

Hi Adam,

Thanks for sending this in. I will forward your comments to the rest of the PC. A couple of suggestions for Wednesday:

- I recommend being prepared to propose each amendment by motion, like we did for Carolyn Boatsman’s amendments.
- Items labeled “goals” below are policies, so ideally you would phrase your motions something like “motion to amend Transportation Element *Policy X* as follows ...”
- If you’re proposing edits to other text within the element, please identify the page and line number from in the motion if possible. (“Motion to amend the Transportation Element text on page X, line X, as follows ...”)This will help keep the direction and record clear as to what should be amended.
- Other requests of staff such as drafting new or alternate language can be made by motion so they PC can indicate they are interested in a staff drafted alternative before we put time into preparing an alternative. The PC can then consider the staff draft at the next meeting.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or comments. See you on Wednesday!

Thanks,

Adam Zack

Senior Planner

City of Mercer Island – Community Planning and Development

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From: Adam Ragheb <adam.ragheb@mercerisland.gov>

Sent: Sunday, June 2, 2024 9:35 PM

To: Adam Zack <adam.zack@mercerisland.gov>; Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>

Subject: Comments for Wednesday's Meeting Based on Received Public Comments

Hello,

I've pasted my comments for Wednesday's meeting below (none on Utilities and Capital Facilities).

- Goal 4.9 -- Based on a public comment and a commenter's use of the word "socioeconomic," and absent a specific definition of a number of related terms from the city to be included in the documents and future code, I would like to see Staff propose language that uses the word "socioeconomic." It is more inclusive, less ambiguous, and appears to be closer to the intent of the King County Planning Policy guidance.
- Goal 4.10 – We received 3 out of 6-7 written public comments noting the importance of off-street parking for handicapped and families. Based on this and previous parking discussions, I propose the following new goal to immediately follow Goal 4.10 – "4.11 Address the needs of people who drive, either not by choice or required by circumstances (e.g., those working multiple jobs, persons with disabilities, families with children, and their passengers), in the development of programs and policy that relate to off-street parking."
- Based on a public comment, revise "The regional Mountains-to-Sound Trail runs" to "The regional Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail." This is the terminology present on the official website
- Goal 2.6 – Add "and retain trees" per public comment
- Goal 12.4 – We received two written public comments on this that raised good points – we should discuss this as a Commission through the lens of eBikes moving to personal ownership from organizational ownership with the same shift in charging infrastructure. Also, weren't similar programs already studied by the City? What does Sound Transit do regarding studying this, if anything?
- Can Staff give a detailed answer/response to the public comment regarding Town Center Intersections? From what I recall this comment has popped up a number of times so I think we owe the member(s) of the public a definite response/clarification of intent.
- Per public comment let's revise "Link light rail runs through Mercer Island" to "Link light rail is planned to run through the Mercer Island." I know we discussed this as a Commission a while ago, but since then progress on the I-90 bridge has gone backward. Let's stick to facts in the narrative sections of the documents.
- A public comment stated that Park n Ride utilization numbers are "completely false" (their words, not mine). Let's refrain from removing the source of the data as it originally stood (the 2017 KC report). We also now have photographs showing and a statement articulating less than 100% utilization from a nearby resident who is quite active with providing public comment – we ought to acknowledge those data, dated 2024. As edited to remove the now 7-year old source of those data, the statement is misleading to the public.
- Public comment regarding keeping "analysis assumes the opening of the East Link" ought to be incorporated. When performing analyses it is important to note assumptions and this assumption is particularly important as it turned out to be incorrect. The wording as currently proposed states that the line is open on MI, which is patently false!

Thanks,

-Adam Ragheb