



## BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

**AB 6061**  
**April 19, 2022**  
**Regular Business**

### AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 6061: Contract Lobbyist	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Approve lobbyist scope of work, authorize the City Manager to issue a Request for Proposals for lobbyist services, and appoint a City Council ad-hoc committee to review and interview qualified consultants.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	City Manager		
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jessi Bon, City Manager		
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a		
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. RFP for Contract Lobbyist Position		
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	2. Articulate, confirm, and communicate a vision for effective and efficient city services. Stabilize the organization, optimize resources, and develop a long-term plan for fiscal sustainability.		

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ n/a
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ n/a
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ n/a

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to authorize the City Manager to issue a Request for Proposals for lobbyist services and appoint a City Council ad-hoc committee to review and interview qualified consultants.

- The busy 2022 Washington State Legislative session required a significant amount of attention and engagement by the Mayor and City Council, the City Manager, the Leadership Team, and other City staff.
- The Mayor and City Manager debriefed and the conclusion of the legislative session and decided to put forth a recommendation to pursue a contract lobbyist. The level of work required during the last legislative session is simply not sustainable with current resources.
- The discussion of pursuing a contract lobbyist was discussed at the City Council's annual Planning Session and there was consensus to move forward with an RFP process now.
- City Council authorization is needed to commence an RFP process to retain a contracted lobbyist with the understanding that the contract award will also be accompanied by an appropriation request.
- The City Council is also requested to appoint an ad-hoc committee to assist staff with screening the proposals and making a final recommendation to the City Council.

- Staff are intending to issue the RFP by the end of April and return to the City Council with a recommendation in June.

## BACKGROUND

State and federal regulations have a significant impact on communities at the local level and require the action and advocacy of City Council and staff. The issues that Mercer Island Councilmembers and leadership tracked during the 2022 legislative session include items such as:

- Housing legislation including [ESHB 1660](#) and [HB 1770](#)
- Police reform legislation
- Open Public Meetings Act legislation
- The State budget, including the Public Works Trust Fund

Councilmembers and City leadership dedicated a substantial amount of time responding swiftly to these issues by engaging with the Mercer Island community, communicating with elected officials, and developing statements and positions to represent the interests of Islanders.

## ISSUE/DISCUSSION

Given the experiences of the recent legislative session, the City Manager with support of the Mayor, is advancing the request to begin the process of selecting a contract lobbyist ahead of the 2023-2024 biennial budget process. To effectively prepare for the next State legislative session, a lobbyist should be retained no later than this summer.

A lobbyist will provide lobbying expertise at the state and federal level, facilitate communication between legislators, regulators, and key staff, and respond quickly to identify where and how to apply leverage at during the legislative process.

### Scope of Work

The following lobbyist duties are summarized from the proposed scope of work contained in Exhibit 1:

- Assist in the development of legislative priorities for the City.
- Develop and implement strategies to successfully promote the City's legislative priorities.
- Represent the City's legislative objectives to members of the Washington State Legislature and appropriate legislative committees, the Governor's Office, state agencies, and legislative staff as well as appropriate federal representatives and appropriate committees, and federal agencies.
- Monitor state and federal legislation, legislative committees, state agencies, rulemaking, and the activities of appropriate interest groups which pertain to the stated City interests, goals, and objectives.
- Monitor and track Congress and the federal government for policy issues and funding opportunities for the City of Mercer Island.
- Recommend appropriate City action regarding pertinent legislation.
- Identify opportunities for City staff and elected officials to testify before legislative committees and subcommittees and assist in preparation of testimony to be given.

- Attend City Council meetings as well as meetings with City staff.
- Provide written and oral reports to the City Council and City Manager on the status of pertinent legislation and of the lobbying activity/efforts of the Consultant.
- Provide support on City efforts and initiatives beyond the legislative session to position the City to advance its objectives.

### **Estimated Cost**

Staff have compiled a number of sample lobbyist contracts from peer jurisdictions and have concluded that there is a significant range in the current rate and scope of services for lobbyist contracts in the Puget Sound region, and even more variability in Federal lobbying contracts. The low range for state lobbyist contracts is about \$80k annually and goes up from there.

Given that the final scope of work has yet to be determined, the staff recommends reviewing submissions from the RFP, selecting a consultant, and commencing negotiations on a draft contract. The final recommendation and contract award will be brought to the City Council for approval at a future meeting.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If approved, the City Manager will proceed with the RFP process. A “short list” of qualified firms for the lobbyist position will be identified and scheduled for an interview with the City Council Ad-Hoc committee and staff. A final recommendation will be brought forward to the City Council in June.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Approve lobbyist scope of work and authorize the City Manager to issue a Request for Proposals for lobbyist services.
2. Appoint a City Council Ad-Hoc committee to review and interview qualified consultants.