CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL  7:00 PM

APPEARANCES
This is the time set aside for members of the public to speak to the Commission about issues of concern. If you wish to speak, please consider the following points:

- Speak audibly into the podium microphone
- State your name and address for the record
- Limit your comments to three minutes

_The Commission may limit the number of speakers and modify the time allotted. Total time for appearances: 15 minutes_

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Minutes from September 17, 2014

REGULAR BUSINESS  7:10 PM

Agenda Item #1:
2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Transportation Element
Review changes to the text and figures of the Draft Transportation Element of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Agenda Item #2:
2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use Element
Review sustainability additions to the Draft Land Use Element of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

OTHER BUSINESS
Staff Comments
Planned Absences for Future Meetings
Announcements & Communications
Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: October 15, 2014

ADJOURN
CALL TO ORDER:
Chair Friedman called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM in the Council Chambers at 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, Washington.

ROLL CALL:
Chair Jon Friedman and Commissioners Craig Olson, David McCann, Bryan Cairns, Steve Marshall, Suzanne Skone and Vice Chair Richard Weinman were present. City staff was represented by Katie Knight, City Attorney, Scott Greenberg, Development Services Director, George Steirer, Principal Planner, Lindsay Brown, Planner, and Patrick Yamashita, City Engineer. Also representing City staff is John Davies and Michael Lapham of KPG, the City’s consultant group for the Transportation Element.

APPEARANCES:
No one from the public requested to address the commission.

MINUTES:
Chair Friedman clarified that Vice-Chair Weinman called the meeting to order, which is a correction to the draft minutes. Chair Friedman moved to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes.

REGULAR BUSINESS:
Agenda Item #1a – 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update (Transportation Element)

Lindsay Brown, Patrick Yamashita, John Davies and Michael Lapham presented on proposed Transportation Element changes, including a detailed explanation of transportation level of service metrics and how they manifest throughout the City. A majority of the commission requested the following:

1. Amend goal 2.5 to explicitly state exploring impact fees and transportation benefit districts.

2. Change 4.7 to read “Promote the mobility of people and goods through a multi-modal transportation system as identified as the Mercer Island Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.”

3. Change 5.7 second sentence to read: Identify implemental actions that improve….

4. Ensure consistent numbering of goals and policies throughout the Element.

5. Change 10.3 and add the following underlined: (3) reduce the type or size of development or deny development.

6. Investigate policy and legal options to address and discourage cut-through traffic from I-90 on to local streets.
Chair Friedman opened the discussion for public comment and testimony; no members of the public wished to speak to Agenda Item 1.

Commissioner Cairns moved to adopt LOS D, seconded by Commissioner Weinman. The motion was countered by McCann, recommending adoption of LOS C for suburban areas, and LOS D for the Town Center. There was no second on the countermotion.

Chair Friedman moved to vote on Commissioner Cairn’s motion to adopt LOS D. The motion passed with a 5-2 vote, with Commissioners Skone, Cairns, Friedman, Weinman, and Olson voting yea and Commissioners Marshall and McCann voting no.

**Agenda Item #2 – DCI14-001 Code Interpretation**

Scott Greenberg, Development Services Director, provided a summary of the code interpretation.

Planning Commission asked questions of Scott Greenberg. Vice-Chair Weinman moved to approve Administrative Interpretation 14-01 as provided in Exhibit 2. Commissioner Olson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Item #1b – 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update**

After discussing Agenda item #2, the Planning Commission reviewed the working draft memorandum to the City Council that was attached as Exhibit 5 to Agenda item #1. The commission made minor corrections to the memorandum, with a final version developed during the meeting. Commissioner Marshall moved to approve forwarding the memorandum to the City Council. Chair Friedman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

There were no staff comments.

**PLANNED ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:**

Commissioner Skone will not be at the October 1st meetings. Chair Friedman stated that he will not be at the October 15th or November 5th meeting. No other absences were announced.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next Planning Commission meeting will be October 1, 2014.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Lindsay Brown, Planner.
To: Planning Commission
From: Lindsay Brown, Planner
Subject: Agenda Item 1 – 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Transportation Element
Date: September 25, 2014 for the October 1, 2014 Meeting

Exhibits:
1. 2005 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element with proposed changes in “track changes” format
2. Comments from Robert Thorpe received April 29, 2014

Action Requested:
1. Receive a majority approval by the Planning Commission to include Exhibit 1 in the Draft 2015 Comprehensive Plan for the public hearing, with clear direction on any additional changes needed. Direct staff to return on November 5th with the Draft Transportation Element text, policies and figures, in addition to any changes requested by the Commission.

Summary of Recommendations
This Planning Commission meeting focuses on two major aspects of the Transportation Element, the text and figures. Below is a summary of key changes made to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Updated Existing Transportation Conditions from 2004 Transportation Element
   The City’s transportation consultant KPG conducted a thorough inventory of existing traffic volumes during peak traffic conditions at all arterial street intersections throughout the island. This data was gathered in Spring of 2014 and combined with traffic capacity improvements completed since 2004 to determine existing intersection Level of Service (LOS).

2. Updated Future Conditions to 2035
   KPG used WSDOT’s planned changes to I-90, Sound Transit’s East Link project, and land use/population projections to forecast 2035 traffic volumes and LOS.

3. Transportation Improvements through 2035
   The recommended changes to the Draft Transportation Element include two new tables.

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Table 2: Recommended Project List 2015-2035 lists and describes the location of recommended transportation improvements through 2035. Many are also identified in the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Memorandum
Facilities Plan. A 20-year, long-range list of transportation improvements can help guide future transportation investments by informing the TIP. The TIP is updated annually and includes both motorized and non-motorized transportation projects identified and funded over a six year planning horizon. The Recommended Project List 2015-2035 identifies improvements that should be considered in the future to maintain traffic operations consistent with the City’s adopted Level of Service. Table 2 includes cost estimates for each of the projects, as requested by the Planning Commission.

Table 3: 2035 Intersection Operations- Baseline and Recommended Improvements shows the impact the recommended improvements in Table 2 would have on arterial-arterial intersections in 2035. The table shows the traffic operation of each intersection in 2035, both with the recommended improvements and without, expressed in LOS. Every intersection would perform at LOS D or better in 2035 in both the AM and PM peak hours if transportation improvements were made consistent with recommendations.

4. Updated Policies per Commission Direction
   Staff made a few policy changes based on direction received during the September 17, 2014 Planning Commission meeting discussing the Transportation Element, most notably changing the policy establishing the City’s LOS for arterial intersections from C to D.
TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The intent of the Transportation Element is to establish program, policies, and projects to guide the development of Mercer Island transportation system in support of the City's vision for the future. The policies are designed to guide the actions of both the City, as well as private the decisions related to individual developments.

The Transportation Element provides an inventory of Mercer Island’s existing transportation system and includes all modes of travel — auto, truck, bicycle, bus, and pedestrian. In addition, a section focuses on the special transportation needs of the Town Center.

Objectives of the Transportation Element

The construction of I-90 in the late 1980's created many opportunities for changes to the Island's road network. In 1985, Entranco Engineers compiled a report on the impact of I-90 on the City's transportation system. Most recently in 2004, Perteet Engineering provided analysis of existing and future vehicle traffic and level of service (LOS) standards.

Based on this analysis, the City of Mercer Island has created three main objectives within its Transportation Element:

- to develop multi-modal goals, policies, programs and projects which support implementation of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan,
- to define policies and projects that encourage the safe and efficient and effective development of the transportation system, and
- to comply with legislative requirements for multi-modal transportation planning.

Washington State's 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA) outlined specific requirements for the Transportation Element of a city's comprehensive plan. It calls for a balanced approach to land use and transportation planning to ensure that a city's transportation system can support expected growth and development. In addition, it mandates that capital facilities funds be adequate to pay for any necessary improvements to the transportation system. Finally, the city must adopt specific standards for the acceptable levels of congestion on its streets; these standards are called level of service (LOS) standards.

At the federal level, the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21 as it is commonly called) and subsequent updates to this law have been
focused on the preservation and improvement of existing transportation facilities and funding on creating a multi-modal approach to transportation planning. For Mercer Island, transportation projects combining improvements for auto, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians have a much greater chance of receiving state and federal gas tax grant funds than those that focus solely on widening the road to carry more single-occupancy vehicles.

Other legislative requirements addressed by the Transportation Element include the King County 2012 Countywide Planning Policies, the 1991 Commute Trip Reduction Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 1990 federal Clean Air Act Amendments. Each of these laws emphasizes closer coordination between a jurisdiction’s land use planning and its approach to transportation planning.

Transportation Today

Most of Mercer Island’s streets are two lane residential streets with low to moderate volumes of traffic. Island Crest Way, a north-south arterial which runs the length of the island, is an exception to this rule because it is a principal feeder route to I-90. East and West Mercer Way, and Gallagher Hill Road are also major traffic carriers from the north-central portion of the island. In addition to I-90, the remaining street system is made up of arterial streets, the local street network which provides access to other streets and private residences and properties.

Transit service on the island centers on the Park and Ride lots in the I-90 corridor, and fixed route service which travels along Island Crest Way.

Mercer Island has over 56 miles of off-road, trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel. A regional trail runs across the north end of the Island along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Upcoming Changes

Regional changes to the transportation system will likely change how Mercer Island residents travel and live. The I-90 center reversible lanes will be replaced by the Sound Transit East Link light rail line, slated for completion in 2023. A new light rail station at the Town Center will provide access to destinations in Seattle, Bellevue and Redmond. In addition, carpools and other high occupancy vehicles (HOV) will no longer travel on the center reversible lanes, but will instead access new dedicated HOV lanes. Finally, the possibility of I-90 tolling may change regional travel patterns and potentially change the travel behavior of Mercer Island residents.

In sum, these regional changes will likely affect travel and land use development patterns, particularly for the north end of the Island. The changes will also provide new opportunities for the island and will support the vision and development of the Town Center.
Land Use Assumptions – The Comprehensive Plan

Mercer Island’s Comprehensive Plan, of which the Transportation Element is a part, must be internally consistent. This means that the various requirements in each element must not contradict one another. Of particular importance is the relationship between the Transportation Element and the Land Use Element.

Local transportation projections forecasts used in this element are based on Mercer Island growth targets for housing and employment that are established through the process described in the Land Use Element, regional traffic forecasts by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and local traffic counts and specialized transportation modeling. Within the 2004-2014 to 2022 planning period, housing on Mercer Island the City’s growth target is expected to increase by 1,437 to 2,320 new housing units. 800 and 1,160 new jobs are expected to be generated on the Island during this 20-year period.

Mercer Island is a largely residential community bisected by Interstate 90, one of the most heavily traveled freeway corridors in Washington State. Mercer Island has managed to avoid most of the congestion and adverse traffic impacts seen in other suburban cities in the Seattle area. Outside the I-90 corridor and portions of Island Crest Way, the Town Center, nearly all of Mercer Island’s streets are two-lane, residential streets with homes on one or both sides. Congestion problems on the island are largely limited to the principal routes to the I-90 freeway.

The Land Use Element defines Mercer Island’s strategy for managing future growth and physical land development for the next 20 years. Proposed transportation improvements, policies and programs are consistent with the vision of the Land Use Element. The Land Use vision emphasizes continued reinvestment and redevelopment of the Town Center to create a mixed-use pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented environment. Most of the forecasted housing units needed to accommodate additional population and jobs will be located in and around the downtown core. Outside of the Town Center, the lower density residential nature of the remainder of the island will be maintained with low forecasted changes in household growth.

Transportation Today

Most of Mercer Island’s streets are two-lane residential streets with low to moderate volumes of traffic. Island Crest Way, a north-south arterial which runs the length of the island, is an exception to this rule because it is a principal feeder route to I-90. East/West Mercer Way rings the island and provides two connections with I-90 as well. SE 40th Street and Gallagher Hill Road are also major traffic carriers from the north-central portion of the island to I-90. The remaining street system is made up of a local street network which provides access to other streets and private residences and properties. Transit service on the island centers on...
the Park and Ride lots in the I-90 corridor, and fixed route service which travels along Island Crest Way.

Mercer Island has over 56 miles of off-road, trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes for non-motorized travel. A regional trail runs across the north end of the Island along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Town Center Plan**

The Town Center Plan for Mercer Island was developed in 1994 through a cooperative effort of City staff, consultants and the Town Center Streets Citizens Design Task Force. Specific objectives include:

- Enhancing access to existing and future development in the Town Center while, at the same time, discouraging through traffic from penetrating the Town Center core.
- Emphasizing pedestrian, transit and bicycle access, safety and mobility throughout the Town Center, to reduce the need for vehicular travel within the downtown area.
- Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment along 78th Avenue SE which will encourage pedestrian-oriented retail development between SE 27th and SE 29th Streets.

The plan for a Sound Transit Link Light Rail station located on the I-90 corridor between 77th Avenue SE and 80th Avenue SE will continue to focus multimodal development and population growth within the Town Center area.

The form and character of the development that has occurred within the Mercer Island Town Center reflects community vision and planning of the last twenty years.

Comment [JD3]: Moved from Section IV.
II. TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

The following transportation goals and policies have been developed to guide transportation decisions for Mercer Island. They have been crafted to be consistent with all other Comprehensive Plan elements, including most importantly, the Land Use Element. They also serve to further articulate and implement the City Council’s vision for the future.

The goals and policies were also developed with the recognition that past transportation and land use decisions largely define the existing transportation system as well as most of the issues and choices the community will face in the future. Following the Goals and Policies are sections on the Existing Transportation System and Future Conditions and Financial Analysis. The Goals and Policies were written with the constraints, data and opportunities of those sections in mind.

Goals and Policies

GOAL 1: To encourage the most efficient use of the transportation system through effective management of transportation demand and the transportation system.

1.1 The City of Mercer Island encourages measures to reduce vehicular trips consistent with the city’s adopted Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Plan. Encourage measures to reduce vehicular trips using Transportation Demand Management strategies such as preferential parking for carpools/vanpools, alternative work hours, bicycle parking, and distribution of information and promotion of non-motorized transit and ridesharing options.

1.2 The City of Mercer Island encourages——Encourage businesses and residential areas to explore opportunities for shared parking and other parking management strategies.

1.3 The City of Mercer Island employs transportation system management (TSM) techniques to improve the efficient operation of the transportation system including, but not limited to: traffic through and turn lanes, management of street parking, signals and other traffic control measures.

GOAL 2: To receive the maximum value and utility from the City’s investments in the transportation system.

2.1 The City of Mercer Island places a high priority for transportation expenditures on
2.2 The City of Mercer Island will continue to prioritize its expenditures in the transportation system recognizing the need to maintain existing transportation assets, meet adopted service level goals, and emphasize continued investments in non-motorized transportation facilities.

2.3 The City of Mercer Island will look for opportunities for private sector participation in the provision, operation and maintenance of the transportation system.

2.4 The City of Mercer Island will coordinate street improvement projects with utilities, developers, neighborhoods, and other parties in order to minimize roadway disruptions and maintain pavement integrity.

2.5 Transportation investments are expected to be financed primarily from local sources. However, the City of Mercer Island will explore all available sources for transportation funding, including grants, impact fees and other local options as authorized by the state legislature, if implementation of the adopted land.

2.6 Prioritize transportation investments in centers that promote mixed-use vision results in the need for more capital and compact development and provide multimodal access to regional transit facilities than can be financed through current financial resources.

GOAL 3: To minimize negative transportation impacts on the environment.

3.1 The City of Mercer Island will work to reduce total vehicle miles traveled through implementation of transportation demand management measures and other techniques.

3.2 The City of Mercer Island will use sound design, construction and maintenance methods to minimize negative impacts related to water quality, noise, and neighborhood impacts.

3.3 The City of Mercer Island will work with WSDOT and other agencies to minimize impacts on island facilities and neighborhoods from traffic congestion on regional facilities, implementation of ramp metering on regional facilities, and provision of transit services and facilities.

3.4 The City of Mercer Island will construct transportation
improvements with sensitivity to existing trees and vegetation. 

Tree removal and pruning will be limited to that necessary for maintenance of safe roadway and trail conditions.

GOAL 4: To provide transportation choices for travelers through the provision of a complete range of transportation facilities, and services.

4.1 The City of Mercer Island will work with King County Metro during the update of its Six-Year Plan; the City will also work with Sound Transit, and other transit providers during the creation and amendment of their long range system plans to develop and ensure adequate transit services to meet the needs of the island, including:
- maintain existing and encourage new public transit service on the Island;
- provide convenient transit connections to regional activity centers, including the Seattle CBD, Bellevue, the University of Washington and other centers;
- provide convenient transit service for travel on Mercer Island and enhance connections to regional transit stations including the proposed Link light rail station; and
- investigate potential new services including demand responsive transit for the general public, subscription bus, or custom bus services or school buses on a space available basis.

4.2 The City of Mercer Island will work to provide for and encourage non-motorized travel modes consistent with the Comprehensive Park, and Recreation, Open Space, Arts Plan and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan.

4.3 The City of Mercer Island will support opportunities to facilitate transfers between different travel modes through strategies such as:
- provision of providing small park and ride facilities throughout the island; and;
- improving pedestrian access to transit with on and off road pedestrian improvements.

4.4 The City of Mercer Island will investigate opportunities for self-supporting park and ride lots for Mercer Island residents only.

4.5 The City will investigate opportunities for use of innovative methods for pedestrians crossing streets, including use of colored and textured pavements within the City.

4.6 The City will encourage site and building design that promotes pedestrian activity and the use of transit and ridesharing opportunities, and the use of transit.
4.6 The City will promote the development of pedestrian linkages between public and private development and transit in the Town Center District.

4.7 Promote the mobility of people and goods through a multi-modal transportation system consistent with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan.

GOAL 5: To fully comply with local, regional, state and federal requirements related to transportation.

5.1 The City of Mercer Island will meet the requirements of the Growth Management Act.

5.2 Meet the requirements of the federal and state Clean Air Acts, and will work with other jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region to achieve conformance with the State Implementation Plan.

5.3 The City of Mercer Island will meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and apply these standards to development of the transportation system.

5.4 The City of Mercer Island complies with the Commute Trip Reduction requirements of the state through the adoption and continued implementation of their CTR plan. (See Appendix A).

5.5 The City of Mercer Island will assist regional agencies in the revisions and implementation of the Destination 2030 plan, Transportation 2040 (PSRC), the Regional Transit Plan, and the WSDOT Highway System Plan, and the 2007-2026 Washington Transportation Plan and subsequent versions of these documents.

5.6 The City of Mercer Island will work with the participants of the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) to coordinate transportation planning for the Eastside subarea.

5.7 Comply with state initiatives and directives related to climate change and greenhouse gas reduction. Identify implementable actions that improve air quality, reduce air pollutants and promote clean transportation technologies.

GOAL 6: To ensure coordination between transportation and land use decisions and development.

6.1 The City of Mercer Island will strive to ensure compatibility between transportation facilities and services and adjacent land uses, evaluating aspects such as:

- potential impacts of transportation on adjacent land use;
- potential impacts on the operation of the land development and activities.
on transportation facility/service caused by activities on adjacent land/facilities and services; and
• need for buffering and/or landscaping alongside transportation facilities.

6.2 The City of Mercer Island will develop strategies to manage property access along arterial streets in order to preserve their transportation function.

6.3 To the extent possible, the City of Mercer Island will strive to route traffic around neighborhoods so as to minimize traffic impacts and foster a “pedestrian friendly” environment.

6.4 In the project development review process, the City of Mercer Island will evaluate transportation implications including:
• congestion and level of service;
• connectivity of transportation facilities and services from a system perspective;
• transit requirements/needs for travelers and for transit operators; and
• non-motorized facilities and needs for travel by non-motorized travel modes; and
• potential density bonuses in return for inclusion of transit supportive actions.

6.5 Ensure that transportation improvements, strategies and actions needed to serve new developments shall be in place at the time new development occurs or be financially committed and scheduled for completion within six years.

6.6 As part of a project’s SEPA review, the City shall review the project’s impact on transportation and may require mitigation of on-site and off-site transportation impacts. The City shall mitigate cumulative impacts of SEPA-exempt projects through implementation of the Transportation Improvement Program.

6.7 The City shall adopt standards and procedures for measuring the transportation impact of a proposed development and for mitigating impacts.

6.8 The City of Mercer Island will participate in the review of development and transportation plans outside its boundaries that may have an impact on the island and its transportation system, and will consider the effect of the City’s transportation plans on other jurisdictions.

6.9 The City of Mercer Island encourages “Encourage transit friendly”, bicycle and pedestrian principles in the design of projects including:
• locating structures on the site in order to facilitate transit and non-motorized travel modes;
• placing and managing on-site parking so to encourage travel by modes other than single occupant vehicles;
• provision of convenient and attractive facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
• provision of public easements for access and linkages to pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities.

6.10 The City recognizes that travel by single occupant vehicle is, and for the foreseeable future may continue to be, the dominant mode of transportation. The City will require adequate parking and other automobile facilities to meet anticipated demand generated by new development.

GOAL 7: To provide a safe, convenient and reliable transportation system for Mercer Island.

7.1 The City of Mercer Island will include in the City’s roadway design standards, requirements for facilities that accommodate travel by all travel modes.

7.2 The City of Mercer Island will provide a safe transportation system through maintenance and upkeep of transportation facilities.

7.3 The City of Mercer Island will monitor the condition and performance of the transportation system to compare growth projections with actual conditions, assess the adequacy of transportation facilities and services, and to identify locations where improvements may become necessary.

7.4 The City of Mercer Island will monitor traffic accidents, citizen input/complaints, traffic violations, and traffic growth volumes to identify and prioritize locations for safety improvements.

7.5 Where a need is demonstrated, consider the use of devices, signage, traffic controls, or other strategies to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.

7.6 The City of Mercer Island will maintain policies, criteria and a process to determine when, and under what conditions, private roads and privately maintained roads in the public right-of-way or private roads should be accepted for public maintenance and improvement.

7.7 Coordinate with local and regional emergency services to develop priority transportation corridors and develop...
GOAL 8: **To** Preserve adequate levels of accessibility between Mercer Island and the rest of the region.

8.1 The I-90 Memorandum of Agreement was amended in 2004. Any future modification to such access for Mercer Island traffic must comply with the terms and conditions of the MOA, as amended, and must properly mitigate the impacts of any reduction in Mercer Island traffic mobility and capacity, as set forth in Resolution 1337.

8.2 The City recognizes Continue to recognize I-90 as a highway of statewide significance.

8.3 The City of Mercer Island will Work with King County Metro and the Sound Transit to ensure adequate levels of transit service linking Mercer Island to the rest of the region.

8.4 The City of Mercer Island will Work with WSDOT, King County Metro, and the Sound Transit to ensure the provision of adequate Park and Ride capacity for island residents.

8.5 The City of Mercer Island will Continue to maintain an effective role in regional transportation planning, decisions-making and implementation of transportation system improvements.

GOAL 9: **To** Balance the maintenance of quality island neighborhoods with the needs of the island’s transportation system.

9.1 The City of Mercer Island shall use a consistent approach to resolve neighborhood street issues.

9.2 The City of Mercer Island will develop a method to Strive to the extent possible to minimize traffic impacts to neighborhoods and foster a “pedestrian-friendly” environment.

9.3 The City of Mercer Island will Address parking overflow impacts on neighborhoods caused by major traffic generators such as schools, businesses, parks, and multifamily developments.

9.4 The City of Mercer Island will Provide facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists designed in keeping with individual neighborhood characteristics.

9.4 The City of Mercer Island will Work with King County Metro to provide public transit vehicles and services that are more in scale with the city’s neighborhoods and its local road network.
9.5 The City of Mercer Island will maintain comprehensive street classification, design guidelines and standards that determine the appropriate function, capacity, and improvement needs for each street/roadway, while minimizing construction and neighborhood impacts.

GOAL 10: To maintain acceptable levels of service for transportation facilities and services on Mercer Island.

10.1 The City of Mercer Island establishes Level of Service (LOS) “C” defined as stable traffic flow with acceptable delays at intersections as the City’s transportation level of service standard required under GMA for the intersection of arterial street intersections.

10.2 Use the level of service standard to evaluate the performance of the transportation system and guide future system improvements and funding.

10.3 Implement the following strategy when vehicle capacity or funding is insufficient to maintain the LOS standard: (1) seek additional funding for capacity improvements, (2) explore alternative, lower-cost methods to meet level-of-service standards (e.g., transportation demand management program, bicycle corridor development or other strategies), (3) reduce the types or size of development, (4) restrict development approval, and (5) reevaluate the level of service standard to determine how it might be adjusted to meet land use objectives.

10.4 The City of Mercer Island will ensure that its level of service policies are linked to the land use vision and comply with concurrency requirements.

10.5 Revise the Transportation Element if the Land Use and/or Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan are changed to maintain a balanced and consistent plan.

10.6 Monitor the transportation impact of growth in households and employment in relation to the land use assumptions used to forecast traffic growth in the Transportation Element.
GOAL 11: To Establish parking standards that support the land use policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

11.1 The City of Mercer Island will continue to implement flexible parking requirements for Town Center development based on the type and intensity of the proposed development; the site location, the potential for parking impacts on the adjacent uses; the opportunities for transit, carpooling or share parking; and the objective to enhance shared parking; and potential for enhancements to the pedestrian environment in the site design.

11.2 Maintain the current minimum parking requirements of three off-street spaces for single family residences, but may consider future code amendments that, allow for the reduction of one of the spaces, provided that the quality of the environment and the single family neighborhood is maintained.

11.3 The City of Mercer Island may restrict support business development in the downtown area by prioritizing on-street parking spaces in the Town Center for short-term parking to support business development in the downtown area, and will encourage the development of off-street joint-use parking facilities for long term parking in the Town Center.

GOAL 12: Promote bicycle and pedestrian networks that safely access and link commercial areas, residential areas, schools, and parks within the City.

12.1 Maximize the safety and functionality of the bicycle system by enhancing road shoulders.

12.2 Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan, which provides for a safe, coordinated system of bikeways, walkways and trails, including through bicycle routes, to meet existing and anticipated needs for non-motorized transportation. This Plan should be coordinated with other transportation planning efforts and periodically updated.

12.3 Emphasize non-motorized improvements that provide alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles and ensure that bike transportation remains an important component of community identity.

12.3 Study opportunities for use of innovative methods for pedestrians crossing streets, including use of colored and textured pavements within the City.
III. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes and inventories the current travel patterns and transportation system serving Mercer Island, including land, water and air transportation. Major transportation modes serving Mercer Island include automobiles, non-motorized modes such as walking and biking, and public and school transit.

Travel Patterns - How Mercer Islanders Move About

Mercer Island is predominantly an upper-middle class city with relatively high levels of vehicle ownership and personal mobility. Approximately three quarters to two-thirds of the households on Mercer Island have two or more vehicles, while less than three-fourths percent of households have no vehicle at all. This high reliance on the automobile is confirmed by commuter trip patterns from Comparing the 2012 American Community Survey (US Census) data with the 2000 US Census. These data show that over 76% a number of changes are observed.

The percent of Mercer Island residents who commute to work by driving alone, has dropped from 76 percent to 71 percent, those who take a bus or carpool to work decreased from 17 percent to 14 percent, and seven percent of island residents those who work at home, increased from 7 percent to 10 percent. The average travel time to work for Mercer Island residents is 20 to 24 minutes, which is similar to below the regional averages of 27 minutes.

The most complete source of travel pattern information for the Island is the regional travel model developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). This model estimates existing and future travel patterns based on computer simulations derived from Census data and surveys of trip makers throughout the region. For the 2000 base year (which corresponds to the most recent Census), the number of work trips from Mercer Island to Seattle has decreased from 68% in 1990 to 55% in 2000. The number of work trip destinations to Eastside and other work sites accounts for 42% of all work trips from Mercer Island. The number of Island commuters who work at home has decreased from approximately 10% in 1990 to 7% in 2000.

A November 2013 WSDOT Mercer Island Travel Survey found that 55 percent of commute trips originating on the Island traveled west towards the Seattle and 45 percent traveled east towards Bellevue.

Roadway Network

According to the 2000 Census, Mercer Island residents own an average of two vehicles per occupied housing unit. Twenty-three percent of Island residents own three or more vehicles.
These vehicle ownership figures are slightly higher than the King County average for vehicles per household (1.79) and residents with three or more vehicles available per household (21%). The PSRC’s travel models also forecast future travel patterns for the year 2030. Although total travel to, from and within Mercer Island is expected to increase by about 20 percent between 2000 and 2030, the major travel patterns described above are expected to remain the same.

The Transportation System - Facilities & Services

1. Land Transportation

Mercer Island is currently served by a variety of land transportation facilities and services. Automobiles, public transit and school transit utilize the island’s road network. Pedestrians and bicyclists use trails and paths as well as the road network. This section describes current facilities and services provided for each of these travel modes.

A. Roads
Mercer Island has over 75 miles of public roads. Interstate 90 (I-90) runs east-west across the northern end of Mercer Island, providing the only road and transit connection to the rest of the Puget Sound region. I-90 is a six lane divided highway with an additional two center HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes across the island. On Access to the I-90 on-ramps and off-ramps to I-90 are provided at East Mercer Way, Island Crest Way, West Mercer Way, 76th Avenue SE, and 77th Avenue SE. On- and off-ramps to the reversible center HOV lanes are provided at 77th and 80th Avenue SE, Island Crest Way, and East Mercer Way.

There are a number of changes occurring to the I-90 corridor in preparation for Sound Transit light rail, scheduled for completion in 2023. These include the addition of westbound and eastbound HOV lanes to the I-90 mainline with ramps providing access to the HOV lanes at
Transportation - 16

80th Avenue SE. The reversible HOV lanes down the center lanes of the I-90 facility will become the dedicated rail corridor for Sound Transit light rail.

On the island, most of the road network on the island is comprised of 2-lane local streets serving the island’s residential areas. Arterials, Arterial roadways, comprise approximately 25 miles, or one third, of the system. In addition to public roads, there are numerous local streets and private roads serving individual neighborhoods and developments on the island.

Roadways on the island are classified into different categories according to their purpose and physical characteristics. The categories are:

- **Principal Arterials** carry the highest volumes of traffic and provide the best mobility in the roadway network. They do this by limiting access to adjacent land uses, and having fewer traffic control devices and these roads generally have higher speed limits, higher traffic volumes, and limit access to adjacent land uses.

- **Secondary Arterials** connect with and augment principal arterials and generally have a higher degree of access to adjacent land, lower traffic volumes and lower travel speeds.

- **Collector Arterials** provide for movement within neighborhoods, connecting to secondary and principal arterials; they typically have low traffic volumes and carry little through traffic.

- **Local Streets** provide for direct access to abutting properties and other connecting local streets; they carry low volumes of traffic at low travel speeds and, Local streets are usually not intended for through traffic.

Individual streets are assigned classifications based on several criteria, including the type of travel to be served, the role of the street in the overall street network and transportation system, physical characteristics, traffic characteristics, and adjacent land uses. Based on City Staff recommendations, the City Council periodically reviews and updates the street classification system, its criteria and specific street classification designations. Figure 1 show the street functional classifications.

Figure 1 illustrates the system and its classifications. Figure 2 shows existing roadway conditions. Features describing the shoulder types and sidewalk locations. Figure 3 shows the number of travel lanes and posted speed limits, and the location of 12 signalized intersections and four signalized non-motorized crossings, existing traffic volumes on this network.

Traffic volume measures are an amalgam of traffic counts taken over an extended period of time. They are a snapshot of traffic volumes that were present when the counts were taken. Current traffic volumes may differ from...
those shown here depending upon changes in road configurations elsewhere in the community and/or changes in the public's travel patterns. They should be used only as first indicators of where road deficiencies may be and where further traffic analysis is warranted.
Level of Service Standard

Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of the quality of traffic flow and congestion at intersections and roadways. LOS is defined by the amount of delay experienced by vehicles traveling through an intersection or on a roadway. LOS is based on an A-F scale with LOS A representing little or no delay to LOS F representing extreme delay.

Under the Growth Management Act, each local jurisdiction is required to establish a minimum threshold of performance for its arterial roadways. Cities use this standard to identify specific actions to maintain the adopted LOS standard. The City of Mercer Island has established its Level of Service standard as LOS D at intersections of two arterial streets. This standard applies to the operation during either the AM or PM peak periods.

This LOS D standard is consistent with the WSDOT standard for Interstate 90 and its ramp intersections. I-90 is designated as a Highways of Statewide Significance under RCW 47.06.140.

Traffic Operations

For transportation planning purposes, traffic operations are typically analyzed during the busiest hour of the street system, when traffic volumes are at peak levels. On Mercer Island, the peak hour of traffic commute, which typically falls between 4:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon (PM peak hour). Traffic counts were collected at 39 intersections throughout the Island.

Selected counts for the AM peak hour were also collected to provide an understanding of the transportation system during the morning commute, which typically peaks between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM.

The analysis shows that during the AM and PM peak hour, all intersections operate at LOS D or better for existing 2014 conditions, with two exceptions. The intersection of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way operates at LOS F during the morning peak hour and at LOS E during the afternoon peak hour. The intersection of N Mercer Way/77th Avenue SE operates at LOS E during the morning and afternoon peak hours. Figure 5 shows the existing 2014 LOS at key intersections during the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Parking

Prior to the 1994-96 CBD Street Reconstruction Project, there were a total of 230 on-street parking spaces. Most parking in the City is provided by off-street parking lots, along residential access streets, or by on-street spaces in select areas of the Town Center within Mercer Island’s Town Center. Upon completion of the Town Center streets reconstruction, on-street parking spaces are projected to decrease to approximately 140. Diagonal parking is permitted on the south side of SE 27th Street, east of 76th Avenue SE, and parallel parking is allowed on portions of the other streets in the downtown.
In 2001, the City implemented a permit parking program for the northern most streets on-street parking in the Town Center in response to overflow conditions at the Mercer Island Park and Ride lot. This program preserves selected public on-street parking spaces for Mercer Island resident use, between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 AM, Monday through Friday. All Mercer Island residents are eligible for a Town Center District permit which will allow them to park on Town Center streets during the specified hours.

Another additional permit parking program was developed for residential streets north of the Sound Transit park and ride lot on North Mercer Way. This program only allows residents of the area to park on city streets between 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM, weekdays.

Together, these programs reduce overflow parking from the Park and Ride lot on City streets by off-island commuters, many of whom travel to their destination via the Mercer Island Park and Ride transit stop.

Outside the Town Center, most parking for non-residential land uses is provided in dedicated off-street parking lots attached to the specific use. Examples are parking lots serving the shopping center at the south end of the island, and those at schools, churches and community centers. Parking is allowed on most residential access streets, or on the adjacent shoulder, and supplements the driveways serving the homes and off-street lots serving multi-family developments.

Overflow parking continues to be an issue in a number of areas, including and without limitations, neighborhoods adjacent to the high school and adjacent to a limited number of multi-family housing developments on the west side of the Town Center.
Figure 1 - Functional Classifications
Figure 2 - Existing Roadway Conditions

REVISED

Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan
August 2004 Update
Existing Roadway Conditions
Figure 2
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

With an inventory of over 56 miles, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are a valuable asset for the residents of Mercer Island. These facilities are used for basic transportation, recreation, going to and from schools, and they contribute to an important element to our community’s quality of life. These facilities contribute to our community’s quality of life. In 1996, the City developed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan to establish a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The plan focused on encouraging non-motorized travel and improving the safety of routes near the Island’s elementary schools. Of the 47 projects identified in the plan, 38 of the projects were either fully or partially completed during the first 12 years of the plan.

In late 1995 the City Council instructed the Road and Trails Board to review the 1990 Comprehensive Plan and develop a new plan that is consistent with the City of Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan. Over the next year the Board held several public meetings and open houses to gather input on what residents wanted. A 2010 update to the plan included vision and guiding principles, goals and policies, an existing and future network, a list of completed projects, revised facility design standards, and a prioritized list of projects. The plan emphasizes further development of safe routes to schools, completion of missing connections, and application of design guidelines.

A regional trail runs across the north end of the Island along the I-90 corridor providing a convenient connection to Seattle and Bellevue for pedestrians and bicyclists. The majority of streets in the Town Center include sidewalks. In addition, there are sidewalks near schools and select streets. Throughout the island there are paved and unpaved shoulders and multiuse trails that provide for pedestrian mobility. The bicycle network is made up of designated bicycle facilities including bicycle lanes and sharrows, and shared non-motorized facilities including shared use pathways, off-road trails, and paved shoulder areas. Figure 25 shows the pedestrian and primary bicycle facilities on the island as identified by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan.

In preparing the plan, the Road and Trails board worked to balance the often conflicting priorities of safety, use, the environment, local character and cost. The trade-offs were guided by several principles:

Arterial corridors are shared-use assets, incremental solutions are preferred, appropriate facilities balance our community values, expected uses and the site, the Mercer Ways are a unique and valuable community asset, Maintenance, parking and speed control policies affect the use of these facilities, the cost of construction, reconstruction and ongoing maintenance needs to be balanced with the perceived benefit of each project.
On August 5, 1996, the City Council adopted the Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities Plan. With the adoption of the plan, the Council dissolved the Road and Trails Board. The role the Board used to plan in the City was subsequently divided between the Council and staff.

The Plan guides staff and Council in decision making—specifically in relation to the Capital Facilities Element of the City of Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan.

The City identified the development of roadside shoulders on East, West and North Mercer Ways as a priority project in the 2005–2010 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These and other transportation project funding decisions are made consistent with City policy goals. Projects are coordinated with other capital projects to gain with greatest effect.

Copies of the adopted 20-year Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities Plan are available at City Hall.

Public Transportation

The King County Department of Metropolitan Services (Metro) provides and the regional transit agency Sound Transit provide public transportation services for Mercer Island and throughout King County. Metro provides three There are four major types of service offered on the island: local fixed route service, regional express service, and custom bus service. and Access service.

Local fixed route service operates on the arterial roadway system, and provides public transit service for most of the island, connecting residential and activity areas. Generally, service is provided on 30-minute headways during the peak hour and on one-hour headways midday. Service headways (i.e., the time between buses on a route) and frequent stops along the routes result in relatively slow travel times compared to private autos. Transit passengers tend to be “transit dependent” travelers, such as those too young to drive, people unable to drive, or those people who do not have access to a private vehicle.

Regional Express service, which also operates on fixed routes, is oriented toward peak hour commuter trips between Mercer Island and major employment and activity centers off the island. Express service is designed to pick up riders at central collection areas such as park and ride lots, and stop less frequently along the route to major destinations. Express service is provided west and east along I-90 into Seattle and Bellevue, and is provided by King County Metro and Sound Transit.

Custom bus service includes specially designed routes to serve specific travel markets, such as major employers, private schools, or other special destinations. These services are typically provided during peak commute hours, and operate on fixed routes with limited stops. At least two Custom bus routes are service is currently provided, one to between the Jewish Day School in...
Bellevue, Mercer Island Park and another to Ride and Lakeside School and University Prep in Seattle.

Access Service provides door-to-door transportation to elderly and special needs populations who have limited ability to use public transit. Access covers trips within the King County METRO transit service area.

Figure 4 shows the current transit routes serving the island. In September 2014, King County Metro reduced bus service throughout its service area due to revenue shortfalls. On Mercer Island, the changes reduced the number of routes from six to two. Other service reductions have affected Mercer Island Park and Ride, which was reduced from ten routes to three King County (201, 204 and 216), and two Sound Transit (550 and 554) routes. Some of the remaining routes were provided with expanded service hours.

Route 201 serves the western portion of Mercer Island providing service from the Mercer Island Park and Ride lot, along 78th Avenue SE, West Mercer Way, East Mercer Way, SE 70th Place, and SE 68th Street to Mercer Village Center. This route operates only on weekdays and has only two morning and one afternoon trips.

Route 204 provides service between the Mercer Island Park and Ride lot and the Mercer Village Center. This route travels on 78th Avenue SE, SE 40th Street, 86th Avenue SE, Island Crest Way, and SE 68th Street to the Mercer Village Center. The route operates every 30-60 minutes from approximately 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays.

Park and Ride

The Mercer Island Park and Ride is located north of I-90 on N Mercer Way near Mercer Island’s Town Center. The Park and Ride has 447 spaces and is served by Metro and Sound Transit buses.

The existing Mercer Island Park and Ride, with 257 spaces, is located north of I-90 in downtown Mercer Island, and is the largest park and ride on the island. It is owned and operated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

Sound Transit proposes to replace the existing 257-vehicle surface parking lot with a two-story, partially below ground, 450-space parking structure, an increase of 193 spaces. The adjacent bus pull-out areas on both the north and south sides of North Mercer Way will be lengthened, the adjacent sidewalks widened and transit shelters installed to improve waiting and boarding areas for transit users. Construction is expected to begin in 2006.

Based on a ridership survey performed by Metro Transit in 2001, this park and ride is filled to capacity on a daily basis before 8:00am and is used by both Mercer Island residents (approximately 43%) and commuters who reside east of Mercer Island (approximately 57%).

Fourth Quarter 2013 Park and Ride Utilization Report prepared by King Transportation - 25
County, the Mercer Island lot is typically fully occupied during weekdays.

To supplement park and ride capacity on the island, Metro has leased two private parking lots for use as park and ride lots, located at the Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, Merc Island United Methodist Church, and at the Mercer Village Center. These lots are described in Table 1. Together, they provide an additional 6069 parking spaces for use by Island residents.
Figure 4 - Comprehensive Trail Plan

Legend

- Trails
- Roads
- Shoreline

A Detailed Trails Map is available at City Hall

Not to Scale
Table 3: Mercer Island Park and Ride Locations and Capacities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Cars Parked</th>
<th>% Spaces Occupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mercer Island Park and Ride</td>
<td>7800 N Mercer Way</td>
<td>257-447</td>
<td>258-447</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer Island Presbyterian Church</td>
<td>84th Ave SE &amp; SE 37th St.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Church</td>
<td>70th Ave SE &amp; SE 24th St.</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer Village Center</td>
<td>84th Ave SE &amp; SE 68th St.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


School Transportation

The Mercer Island School District (MISD) provides bus transportation for public Kindergarten through 12th grade students on Mercer Island. The MISD operates 32 bus routes with a total of 35 buses to provide this service. On average, the school district serves 2,278 students on a daily basis (2003-2004), or around 55% of the total school population. Approximately 40 scheduled bus routes during the morning and afternoon. In addition, the District provides free Orca cards to high school students who live more than one mile from Mercer Island High School and do not have either a parking pass or are not assigned to a district bus.

Rail Services & Facilities

There are no railroad lines or facilities on Mercer Island. In the region, the Burlington Northern Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad companies provide freight rail service between Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, and other areas of Puget Sound, connecting with intrastate, interstate and international rail lines. Amtrak provides scheduled interstate passenger rail service from Seattle to California and Chicago. Major centers in Washington served by these interstate passenger rail routes include Tacoma, Olympia, Vancouver, Everett, Wenatchee, and Spokane.

Air Transportation

Mercer Island does not have any air transportation facilities or services. Scheduled and chartered passenger and freight air services are provided at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in SeaTac, and at the King County International Airport in south Seattle.

Water Transportation

Mercer Island does not have any public water transportation services. Lakemont dock, a public boat launch providing access to Lake Washington, is located at the foot of 97th Avenue SE. The city's other public boat launch is on the east side of the island, off of East Mercer Way, under the East Channel Bridge. Port services and facilities are provided by the Port of Seattle in Seattle. Public ferry services between Seattle and Edmonds and Kitsap County are provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation.
IV. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – FUTURE NEEDS

Growth Management Act Requirements

This section describes the future year transportation needs, particularly in terms of traffic volumes and road capacities, and the process used to identify them. The Growth Management Act requires the City to forecast traffic demands for at least ten years into the future, identifying where future improvements may be necessary in order to accommodate future population and traffic growth. The Act goes on to require the City to develop financing strategies which will implement the "growth-related" traffic system improvements within six years. Conditions and analysis used to identify future transportation needs and improvements.

"Level of Service" Analysis

Mercer Island analyzes its arterial road transportation needs and capacities in terms of its established Level of Service (LOS) "C" standard—the community's measure of maximum tolerable traffic congestion. The analysis is based on traffic counts that have been collected over a number of years and projected into the future. The LOS analysis is used to anticipate and respond to transportation system "deficiencies" in a timely and effective manner. However, because traffic volumes change with changing travel and growth patterns, LOS analysis is a continual process. With that caveat, the data and analysis that follows should not be regarded as precise, final conclusions. Instead, the projections and results should be indicators of where future traffic planning and data collection should occur before commitments to physical improvements are made.

Traffic volumes and levels of service were forecast for 2022, the 20-year planning horizon established for the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan.

Town Center Street Plan

The Town Center Plan for Mercer Island was developed through a cooperative effort of City staff, consultants and the Town Center Streets Citizens Design Task Force. The primary concept behind the Town Center Street Plan was to support the Downtown Mercer Island Vision Plan adopted by the City in mid-1993 and the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element adopted in December, 1993. Specific objectives included:

Enhance access to existing and future development in the Town Center while, at the same time, discouraging through traffic from penetrating the Town Center core.

Emphasize pedestrian, transit and bicycle access, safety and mobility throughout the Town Center, particularly among planned residential, commercial and retail uses, to reduce the need for vehicular travel within the downtown area.
Create a pedestrian-friendly environment along 78th Avenue SE, which will encourage pedestrian-oriented retail development between SE 27th and SE 29th Streets.

Transportation Improvements for the Town Center

In 1996, Town Center District streets were renovated and resurfaced with new asphalt, new street lights, widened and improved sidewalks (at least 8 feet wide), new curbs and gutters, additional street trees and art inlays at intersections. Detailed descriptions of the planned improvements are available in the City’s Development Services Department.

Implementation of the Town Center street improvements began in 1994, with construction of improvements to 77th and 78th Avenues SE; construction on the easterly portion of SE 27th Street began in June 1994. The remaining improvements were constructed in 1995 and 1996. Funding for the Town Center street projects was provided through a combination of ISTEA grants matched by local funds from the City of Mercer Island. Transit in the Town Center focuses transit service increases on the I-90 corridor, rather than on additional north-south service on the island. Future service increases on the island will most likely concentrate on Island Crest Way and are not expected to impact the downtown area.

Adequacy of Town Center Street Plan

An issue which arose during the development of the Downtown Streets Plan was whether the transportation system would be adequate to support the growth planned for the Town Center. The Downtown Vision Plan calls for more retail, residential and commercial activity than currently exists in the Town Center, and the reduction of roadway capacity for some facilities. Questions were raised about the ability of the proposed street plan to accommodate Town Center growth along with other growth on the island. A detailed analysis of the traffic demand and the capacity of the revised street system was analyzed by KJS Associates in 1994. In 2004, Perteet Engineering examined the possible need for new traffic signals on SE 27th Street at 77th Avenue SE and 78th Avenue SE as a result of proposed developments in the Town Center. They also examined existing vehicle volumes and future trip projections. The analysis of current and future traffic flows on the downtown streets confirmed that the transportation plan for the Town Center is sufficient to maintain acceptable levels of traffic congestion. Specific findings of the analysis revealed that:

The majority of travel from regional facilities to the rest of the island will not go through the Town Center. The principal connections to the I-90 freeway are located at Island Crest Way, the West Mercer interchange, and the East Mercer interchange. Although Island Crest Way runs along the east side of the Town Center, traffic on this arterial does not impact the Town Center due to the physical and visual separation provided by the retaining walls along Island Crest Way. Drivers bound for the Town Center must exit Island Crest Way at SE 30th Street in order to reach the Town Center street system. Since there will not be much growth in through traffic in the Town Center due to the physical and visual separation provided by the retaining walls along Island Crest Way, the new traffic signals proposed by KJS are not needed.
Center, the Downtown Street Plan does not have to provide excess capacity for through traffic. The mixed-use development and pedestrian orientation of the Downtown Vision Plan will reduce vehicular trip generation rates for new development by about 15 percent, compared to typical suburban centers. This means that the total average daily traffic (ADT) into and out of the Town Center will increase by about only 30 percent, or 9,500 ADT at full build-out of the Town Center.

Future levels of service with three lane streets and roadway improvements will maintain LOS C or better at all locations in downtown. The existing four-way stop signs will work well for many years. Traffic signals should be installed at downtown intersections only when warranted by actual traffic volumes.

Street System Outside of the Town Center

For travel demand forecasts outside the Town Center a growth rate of one percent per year was used. This assumption is based on the projected growth patterns for Mercer Island, and historical growth patterns in traffic on the street network. Population and employment growth on the island that will affect traffic levels through the 20 year planning period is expected to be low. Annually, this amounts to about one percent growth per year. The majority of this growth is anticipated to be in and near the CBD, and is not likely to significantly affect traffic elsewhere on the island. Table 5 and Figure 6 show estimated future traffic volumes, volume-to-capacity ratios, and expected levels of service (LOS) for selected locations around Mercer Island.
Table 5 - 2022 Traffic Volume Forecast for Mercer Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Arterials</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th># of Lane</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>2004 Volume</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
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<th>2024</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>Island Creek Way</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>South Creek Way</td>
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<td>16,208</td>
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<td>West Mercer Way</td>
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<td>11,520</td>
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Collector Arterials

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<tr>
<th>Arterial</th>
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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
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Arterials in the Downtown Area

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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<th>LOS</th>
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<th>LOS</th>
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| Collector Arterials

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<th>Capacity</th>
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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
<th>LOS</th>
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<th>V/C Ratio</th>
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LOS Definitions

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<tr>
<td>0.26</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
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Future Travel Demand

The future traffic volumes were forecast for the year 2035 based on the City's land use and zoning, as well as the housing and employment growth targets, as identified in the King County Buildable Lands (2014) report. More than 70 percent of new households and 76 percent of new jobs are forecasted to occur within the Town Center.

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. The potential for tolling on the I-90 bridge is expected to result in minor reductions to mainline I-90 traffic volumes and on-island traffic volumes and patterns.

Overall, the traffic growth in the Town Center is forecast to increase by 35 percent between 2014-2035, an annual growth rate of 1.5 percent annually. Town Center traffic growth was adjusted to reflect the higher potential for pedestrian and transit trips. Outside of the Town Center traffic growth is expected to be low with approximately 10 percent growth between 2014-2035, an annual growth rate of 0.5 percent annually.

The resulting forecasted traffic volumes directly reflect the anticipated land use, housing, and employment growth assumptions for the island.

Baseline Traffic Operations

The 2035 baseline traffic analysis uses the forecasted growth in traffic, planned changes to the regional transportation system, and the roadway and intersection improvements identified in Mercer Island’s 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Results of the 2035 baseline traffic operations analysis shows that five intersections would operate at LOS E or F by 2035 if improvements are not made to the intersections. In the vicinity of the Town Center, the three intersections of N Mercer Way/77th Avenue SE, SE 27th Street/80th Avenue SE, and SE 28th Street/80th Avenue SE would operate at LOS E or F during the AM or PM peak hours, without improvements. Outside of the Town Center the two intersections of SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way and SE 68th Street/Island Crest Way would operate at LOS F during either the AM or PM peak hours, without improvements.

Figure 6 shows the future baseline traffic operations at the study intersections assuming only improvements identified in the 2015-2020 TIP.

Recommended Improvements

In addition to the baseline projects identified in the City’s 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program, a future needs analysis developed a list of recommended improvements. The
future needs analysis identified select projects from the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to improve non-motorized safety and connectivity. Additional roadway and intersection improvement projects were identified based on the operational and safety needs through 2035. Figure 7 shows the recommended transportation projects for the next 20 years. Table 2 provides a map identification, describes the location and details for each of the projects, and estimates a project cost. The table is divided into two main categories of project types:

Non-Motorized Projects – The listed projects include new crosswalk improvements and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These projects are identified projects from the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan that connects residential areas to schools, parks, regional transit and other destinations.

Intersection/Road Projects – Roadway projects are those that increase the capacity and safety of an intersection or roadway segment. The projects include the maintenance of existing roadway segments to ensure that the city’s current street system is maintained.

The recommended improvements identifies a total of $55.0 million dollars of transportation improvements over the next 20 years. About 73 percent ($40.0 million) of the total is for street preservation and resurfacing projects to maintain the existing street system. Another 18 percent ($9.8 million) is for non-motorized system improvements. The remaining 9 percent ($5.2 million) is for traffic operational improvements at intersections to maintain LOS operations.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>MAP ID</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
<th>COST ($)</th>
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<tr>
<td>NM-1</td>
<td>PBF Plan Implementation</td>
<td>Annual funding for non-motorized improvements.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D1.</td>
<td>810,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM-2</td>
<td>Safe Routes to School - Biennial</td>
<td>Biennial funding for safety improvements near schools.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>100,000 Every other year</td>
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<td>NM-3</td>
<td>Safe Routes - Madrona Crest (86th Avenue SE) Sidewalk</td>
<td>Sidewalk between SE 38th to SE 39th Street.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D2.</td>
<td>510,000</td>
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<td>NM-4</td>
<td>Safe Routes to School - New Elementary School</td>
<td>Pedestrian improvements to support the new elementary school.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D3.</td>
<td>454,000</td>
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<td>NM-5</td>
<td>Island Crest Way Crosswalk Enhancement - SE 32nd Street</td>
<td>Add Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at existing pedestrian crossing.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D4.</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM-6</td>
<td>84th Avenue Path (SE 39th to Upper Luther Burbank Park)</td>
<td>Add a gravel shoulder pedestrian facility.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D5.</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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<td>NM-7</td>
<td>East Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (From 6600 block to south end of E Mercer Way)</td>
<td>Add a shoulder for non-motorized users.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D6.</td>
<td>1,067,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM-8</td>
<td>West Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (7400-8000 Block)</td>
<td>Add a shoulder for non-motorized users.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project D7.</td>
<td>417,500</td>
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<td>NM-9</td>
<td>West Mercer Way Roadside Shoulders (8000 block to E Mercer Way)</td>
<td>Add a paved shoulder (east side) for non-motorized users.</td>
<td>PBFP: Project WMW 8.</td>
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<td>NM-10</td>
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<td>PBFP: Project WMW 7.</td>
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<td>JUSTIFICATION</td>
<td>COST ($)</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>NM-11</td>
<td>78th Avenue SE - SE 32nd Street to SE 40th Street</td>
<td>Improve with sidewalks, bicycle lanes/sharrows to connect with the Town Center.</td>
<td>PBFP: Project N16.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intersection Projects (I) / Road Projects (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-1</td>
<td>SE 24th Street/W Mercer Way</td>
<td>Add southbound left turn pocket (re-channelize).</td>
<td>East Link/Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-2</td>
<td>77th Avenue SE/N Mercer Way</td>
<td>Traffic signal* or add center receiving lane.</td>
<td>East Link/Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<td>I-3</td>
<td>SE 27th Street/80th Avenue SE</td>
<td>Traffic signal.</td>
<td>East Link/Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-4</td>
<td>SE 28th Street/80th Avenue SE</td>
<td>Traffic signal.</td>
<td>East Link/Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-5</td>
<td>SE 40th Street Corridor (East of Island Crest Way)</td>
<td>Install dedicated left turn signal phase and turn pocket.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Project C3.</td>
<td>758,800</td>
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<td>I-6</td>
<td>SE 40th Street/Gallagher Hill Road</td>
<td>Add eastbound left turn pocket</td>
<td>Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<td>I-7</td>
<td>SE 53rd Place/Island Crest Way</td>
<td>Traffic signal.</td>
<td>Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<td>I-8</td>
<td>SE 68th Street/Island Crest Way</td>
<td>Traffic Signal/Roundabout*</td>
<td>Fails to meet LOS Standard</td>
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<td>R-1</td>
<td>Street Preservation/Maintenance</td>
<td>Street resurfacing based on PCI rating.</td>
<td>2015-2020 TIP: Projects A1, B1-B2,C1-C10, E1-E3.</td>
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*Cost estimate reflects higher cost option of alternative actions.

Total 2015-2035 Projects 54,862,800
Traffic Operations – with Recommended Improvements

With the recommended improvements, the intersection operations will meet the City’s LOS standard for intersection operation and the transportation system will provide a better network for pedestrian and bicycle travel, allowing greater mobility for island residents. In addition, improvements to regional transportation facilities will allow accommodate growth in housing and employment, which will to be focused in the Town Center, where residents can be easily served by high capacity transit. Table 3 compares the 2035 intersection study locations with baseline and with the recommended improvements for each of the AM and PM study locations. The baseline improvements includes the roadway and intersection improvements identified in Mercer Island’s 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program. The recommended improvements are those additional improvements that are needed to meet the City’s LOS standard.
### Table 3. 2035 Intersection Operations - Baseline and Recommended Improvements

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<th>2035 PM Peak Hour</th>
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<td>With Baseline</td>
<td>With Recommended</td>
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<td>Improvements</td>
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<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>--</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merrimount Dr/Island Crest Way</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>SE 53rd Place/E Mercer Way</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE 68th St/E Mercer Way</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment [lnb13]: New table not shown in track changes for clarity.
Figure 6 – 2004 Traffic Volumes, V/C Ratios & Level of Service
Deficiencies in the Road System

Mercer Island’s current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes projects to remedy safety, operational and physical deficiencies through 2010. Beyond 2010, projected deficiencies must be verified by a detailed traffic engineering analysis. Therefore, additional congestion relief projects will be identified as the TIP is updated. Based on updated traffic counts, the following locations appear to exceed the City’s level of Service standard of C: Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street; Island Crest Way south of SE 40th Street; Island Crest Way north of SE 40th Street and SE 40th Street east of Island Crest Way.

The City adopted the 2005-2010 TIP in May 2004, prior to the most recent analysis that indicated possible current deficiencies.

For the purpose of concurrency compliance, locations needing improvements will be identified for further evaluation in the next TIP. Prior to any commitment of funds, the City will perform additional traffic analysis to verify actual conditions.

Updated traffic counts and preliminary data show deterioration on ten roadway segments. Additional information, including verification of the predicted deficiencies with more detailed traffic count data is required before the City can identify a specific improvement project at these locations. These deficiencies will be examined as part of the arterial roadway reconstruction projects identified in Years 2005 to 2010, in the adopted TIP.

The TIP also includes a 2005 construction project, jointly funded by the City and Mercer Island School District, to improve access and parking at Island Park Elementary School. This construction project will reduce congestion and eliminate traffic delays created by daily school and school bus traffic on Island Crest Way north of SE 68th Street.

In the Town Center, no locations currently exceed the adopted LOS standard, however, the segment of 77th Avenue SE north of SE 27th Street is expected to exceed the LOS standard C in 2022. The adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes a traffic signal project to be installed at this intersection, when warranted. This improvement should manage congestion and return the adopted standard LOS C.

The City will monitor locations identified for current and future deficiencies and review roadway and intersection operations in 2010 to verify the forecast. Access and channelization improvement projects will be added to the TIP after 2010, if necessary.

The traffic forecast and Level of Service analysis for these streets should be regarded as “worst case” scenarios and do not reflect policy or reductions in projected traffic growth from implementation of the Commute Trip Reduction Ordinance. Therefore, new traffic counts should be conducted to verify the traffic volumes on these...
roadways before physical or operational improvements are made.
V. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Transportation Investments

Since incorporation in 1960, the City has consistently made (or required through private development) transportation investments that have preceded and accommodated population growth and its associated traffic growth. This strategy has enabled the City to make significant improvements in the community's neighborhood streets, arterial roads, pavement markings, streets signs, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities.

In recent years, the City has relied on gas tax revenues ($450,000 in 2014) and real estate excise tax ($1,500,000 in 2014) to fund local transportation projects. Historically, the City has relied upon an annual distribution of approximately $470,000 (1999 dollars) in state gas taxes to finance local transportation projects. However since 1985, the City has increased annual transportation funding sources to include state-shared Vehicle Registration Fees ($190,000 per year) and Real Estate Excise Taxes ($500,000 per year). Given the City's transportation financial policies (1994), Mercer Island will contribute approximately.

In 2014, the City is considering a Transportation Benefit District that will add a $20 per vehicle fee to provide an estimated $350,000 annually to support transportation needs. Combined the City anticipates approximately $2.3 to $2.6 in annual revenues, $1.2 million per year to the City Street Fund.

Combined with supplemental federal and state grant funding, Mercer Island will be able to maintain and improve its transportation system over the next twenty years. Current transportation resources, when extended out over the twenty years, should be sufficient to accomplish the following:

- Maintain the City's arterial street system on a twenty year (average) life cycle;
- Maintain the City's residential system on a thirty-five year (average) life cycle.
- Maintain, improve and expand the City's pedestrian/bicycle system over the next twenty years.

Maintain transportation and growth concurrency as outlined and improve the transportation and Land Use Elements. (This assumes that no additional capacity improvements will be needed.)
Table 6 below summarizes system to meet the City’s Transportation Financial Policies, and long-term transportation reinvestment strategies, forecasted housing and employment growth targets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Facility</th>
<th>Level of Service</th>
<th>Current Capacity Deficiencies</th>
<th>New Capital Cost (Capacity)</th>
<th>Annual Reinvestment (Average)</th>
<th>Financial Policy (Source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arterial Streets</td>
<td>LOS &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>4 Locations currently</td>
<td>To be</td>
<td>$550,000</td>
<td>Street Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Streets</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>Street Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Center</td>
<td>LOS &quot;C&quot;</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>Street Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing and New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities</td>
<td>Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities Plan</td>
<td>To be assessed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>Street Fund</td>
</tr>
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</table>
VI. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Program and Policy Implementation

The following actions by the City of Mercer Island and other jurisdictions will be necessary to effectively implement the program and policy elements of this transportation element:

Transportation System - Streets, Transit, Non-Motorized

- Develop local neighborhood traffic control plans as necessary to address specific issues.
- Develop a program for monitoring transportation adequacy to compare projections to actual conditions and identify locations where improvement may become necessary.
- Implement TSM techniques to control traffic impacts.

Planning - Standards, Policies, Programs

- Periodically update the City’s inventory of transportation conditions, functioning level of service and projected levels of service.
- Complete the plan for non-motorized transportation, improvements consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan, including a review of the Comprehensive Trails Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Plan and its design standards.
- Develop a comprehensive street classification system to identify facilities appropriate for automobile, truck, transit, bicycle and pedestrian uses.
- Develop a neighborhood parking program to address parking overflow impacts from schools, businesses, parks and multi-family housing.
- Revise design standards as necessary to comply with ADA requirements.
- Continue to involve the public in transportation planning and decisions.
- Develop "transit friendly" design guidelines for project developers to follow.
- Develop policies, criteria and a process to determine when, and under what conditions, private roads and privately-maintained roads in public rights of way or private roads should be accepted for public maintenance and improvement.
- Implement the City’s adopted Commute Trip Reduction program.

Financial Strategies

- Implement Secure funding to implement the adopted 1999-2004 Capital six-year Transportation Improvement Program.
- Actively pursue outside funding sources to pay for adopted
Transportation improvements and programs.

Transit Planning

- Work with Metro to test the feasibility of replacement or augmentation of current transit services, with demand response services.
- Work with Metro, King County and other jurisdictions to explore alternative methods of providing service to establish more reasonable mode split goals for Mercer Island consistent with regional requirements, such as developing a demand responsive service throughout the island.
- Work with Metro and the Regional Transit Authority to site, design and construct high capacity transit and parking facilities consistent with Land Use and Transportation Policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mercer Island supports the long-range transit service policies and concepts included in the King County Department of Metropolitan Services (Metro) Long Range Policy Framework for Public Transportation (October 1993). Particular attention should be given to implementing the Dial-a-Ride transit (DART) portion of the concept for Mercer Island. Some of the considerations to be assessed in evaluating potential demand response service include:

- **Density:** The area should have relatively low density so that the service is not overwhelmed with excess demand.
- **Service Focal Point:** If a service focal point or anchor is available it can facilitate the transfer process for travelers with different destinations, especially if it is served by regular fixed route service.
- **Productivity:** As a general guideline, demand response service should be considered as a replacement for fixed route service that is operating with less than five passengers per service hour.
- **Potential for Private Contracting:** Due to relatively low productivity levels, demand response service can require high levels of subsidy per passenger. Private contractors may be able to provide the service for lower costs due to greater flexibility with labor.

In looking at Mercer Island, general purpose demand response service (as opposed to service restricted to the disabled) could be practical in the northern portion of the island. Service in this area is provided by Metro Transit. There is currently a service focal point at the Park and Ride lot which is served by 10 other routes. Several of these routes have coordinated schedules. Thus, a demand response service with a fixed departure time from the park and ride lot would provide convenient transfers to multiple destinations.
VII. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS & REQUIREMENTS

The Growth Management Act of 1990 requires that local comprehensive plans be consistent with plans of adjacent jurisdictions and regional, state and federal plans. Further, there are several other major statutory requirements with which Mercer Island transportation plans must comply. This section briefly discusses the relationship between this Transportation Element and other plans and requirements.

Other Plans

The Transportation Element of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan is fully consistent with the following plans:

Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan — The Transportation Element is based on the needs of, and is fully consistent with the Land Use Element.

King County Countywide and Multicounty Planning Policies — Mercer Island’s proposed transportation policies are fully consistent with PSRC’s multi-county and King County’s countywide and multi-county planning policies. However, the mode split goals developed for Mercer Island by the PSRC under county Policy T-10 appear to be too optimistic and require further refinement.

Vision 2040 — Vision 2040 builds upon Vision 2020 and Destination 2030 to articulate a coordinated long-range land use and transportation growth strategy for the Puget Sound region. Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Element and Transportation Element supports this strategy by accommodating new growth through redevelopment of the Town Center which is near existing and proposed future transportation improvements by concentrating along the I-90 corridor.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan — The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is currently developing a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to implement Vision 2020. Since the MTP is being developed in accord with Vision 2020 plans, The Transportation Element will be consistent with the MTP.

Regional Transit System Plan — Sound Transit’s Regional Transit System Plan (RTP) lays out the Puget Sound region’s plans for constructing and operating a regional high capacity transit system. Both the Land Use and Transportation Elements directly support regional transit service and facilities, and are consistent with the RTP.

METRO Long Range Plan For Public Transportation — The King County Department of Metropolitan Services (Metro) has prepared a long range public transportation plan for King County that details service concepts for local areas within the county. Metro’s service concept for Mercer Island is...
generally consistent with the Transportation Element. However, Mercer Island’s plan stresses demand response service more than Metro’s plan does. This issue can be worked out between the jurisdictions as service changes are considered and implemented.

Plan Requirements

The Transportation Element of the Mercer Island Comprehensive Plan meets the following regulations and requirements:

**Growth Management Act** — The Growth Management Act, enacted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 and amended in 1991, requires urbanized counties and cities in Washington to plan for orderly growth for 20 years into the future. Mercer Island’s Transportation Element conforms to all of the components of a comprehensive transportation element as defined by GMA.

**Commute Trip Reduction** — In 1991, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Commute Trip Reduction Law which requires implementation of transportation demand management (TDM) programs to reduce work trips. In response to these requirements, Mercer Island has developed its own CTR program to reduce work trips by City employees. There are two other CTR-affected employers on the island; both have developed CTR programs.

**Air Quality Conformity** — Amendments to the federal Clean Air Act made in 1990 require Washington and other states to develop a State Implementation Plan (SIP) which will reduce ozone and carbon monoxide air pollutants so that national standards may be attained. The Central Puget Sound area, including King County and Mercer Island, are currently designated as “non-attainment” areas. The plans, programs and projects included in this Transportation Element are consistent with the requirements of the Central Puget Sound SIPs for ozone and area is designated as a carbon monoxide maintenance area, meaning the area has met federal standards, but is required to develop a maintenance plan to reduce mobile sources of pollution.
Figure 1
Street Functional Classification

- **Principal Arterial**
- **Secondary Arterial**
- **Collector Arterial**
- **Local Road**
- **Private Streets**

Disclaimer: This data was developed for internal use by the City of Mercer Island and are intended to be a general purpose digital reference tool. The City makes no representation or warranty with respect to the accuracy or currency of these data sets, especially in regard to labeling of surveyed dimensions, agreement with official sources such as records of survey, or mapped locations of features.
Figure 2
Existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Crosswalk Signals
- No/Limited Shoulder
- Paved Shoulder 1-Side
- Paved Shoulder 2-Sides
- Shoulder/Path 1-Side
- Sidewalk/Path 1-Side
- Sidewalk/Path 2-Sides

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Figure 3
Existing Arterial Roadway Inventory

- 2 Lane Road
- 3 Lane Road
- 4 Lane Road

Posted Limit
SPEED LIMIT 25
SPEED LIMIT 30
SPEED LIMIT 35

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Figure 5
Existing Intersection Level of Service

- Peak Hour
- No Data
- A-C
- D
- E
- F

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Figure 7
Recommended Projects

- Non-Motorized Improvements
  - Non-Motorized Intersection Improvement
  - Roadway Improvement
  - Intersection Improvement

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Date: 9/25/2014
Fig8_recommendedProjects
Recommended Considerations – West Mercer Way, bike way additions north of the old Boys and Girls Club (28th) to Groveland Park Entrance (58th)

1. A. Widen East Shoulder of West Mercer Way for two blocks: SE 30th to SE 32nd – Shoulder available, removes curb, add 4’-5’ bikeway Note: Should have been included in road resurfacing, forces bikes into roadway

   B. Install drainage – 2 blocks, 32nd to 28th, add bike lane to complete to 24th Ave NE, 4’-5’ lane

2. West Mercer Elementary/West Mercer Way

   A. Add bike lane – 200-250’ at school entrance, revise only area on West Mercer where curb extension forces bikes into traffic, at point buses enter school creating a significant safety/traffic flow issue

3. East Side – West Mercer 57th -58th – North of entrance to Groveland Park

   A. Short term: have city brush bank on curve to improve line of sight – driveways at 5800 and 58th entrance to Groveland Park

   B. Remove 6-8 dangerous Alders/Cut back on curve – improve sightline for 47th, one way to West Mercer as well as driveways north and south

   C. Cut back on curve back

      1.) 30” high, 2’ -3’ east of trail then cut back at 2:1 slope

      2.) 2:1 slope above cut #1 to top of bank (still preserves Heritage Cedar tree and Black Pines/Purple Plum trees) adjacent to drive to 5800 West Mercer Way.

      Property owner will provide easement, design, and landscaping support.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert W. Thorpe, AICP
5800 West Mercer Way
Mercer Island, WA 98040
To: Planning Commission
From: George Steirer, Principal Planner
Subject: Agenda Item 2 – 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Land Use Element
Date: September 24, 2014 for the October 1, 2014 Meeting

Exhibits: A. Draft 2015 Land Use Element with proposed changes in “track changes” format

**Action Requested:** Review the additional proposed changes located on pages 3 and 19 of Exhibit A. Direct staff to return on November 5th with the Draft Land Use Element, in addition to any changes requested by the Commission.

**Summary of Land Use Element Recommendation**
The Planning Commission previously requested that the Land Use Element be provided with the Transportation Element, as a way to review the two elements together. This would help to evaluate any changes in the Transportation Element that would potentially affect the Land Use Element.

While additional changes to the Land Use Element are not recommended due to changes in the Transportation Element, an introduction (page 3 of Exhibit A) and three additional sustainability policies (page 19 of Exhibit A) are recommended to be added.

After further review of the scope of work approved by the City Council, staff is recommending adding the sustainability goals based on feedback from the City’s Sustainability and Communications Manager.
LAND USE ELEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Mercer Island prides itself on being a residential community. As such, most of the Island’s approximately 6.2 square miles of land area is developed with single family homes. The Island is served by a small Town Center and two other commercial zones which focus on the needs of the local population. Mixed-use and multi-family developments are located within the Town Center. Multi-family development also rings the Town Center and the western fringe of the smaller Commercial Office Zone.

Parks, open spaces, educational and recreational opportunities are highly valued and consume a large amount of land. The Island has over 467 acres of park and open space lands including small neighborhood parks and trails as well as several larger recreational areas, including Luther Burbank Park and the Lid Park above the Interstate 90 tunnel. One hundred and fifteen acres of natural-forested land are set aside in Pioneer Park and an additional 150 acres of public open spaces are scattered across the community. There are three elementary schools, one middle school and a high school owned and operated by the Mercer Island School District. In addition, there are several private schools at the elementary and secondary education levels.

The community strongly values environmental protection. As a result, local development regulations have sought to safeguard land, water and the natural environment, balanced with private property rights. To reflect community priorities, development regulations also attempt to balance views and tree conservation.

For many years, Mercer Island citizens have been concerned about the future of the community’s downtown. Past business district revitalization initiatives (e.g. Project Renaissance in 1990) strove to overcome the effects of “under-capitalization” in the Town Center. These efforts sought to support and revitalize downtown commercial/retail businesses and devised a number of recommendations for future Town Center redevelopment. Growing out of previous planning efforts, a renewed interest in Town Center revitalization emerged in 1992 -- one looking to turn the 33 year old downtown into the vital economic and social center of the community.

In 1992 the City of Mercer Island undertook a major “citizen visioning” process that culminated in a broad new vision and direction for future Town Center development as presented in a document entitled “Town Center Plan for the City of Mercer Island”, dated November 30, 1994. The City used an outside consultant to help lead a five day citizen design charrette involving hundreds of island residents and design professionals. This citizen vision became the foundation for new design and development standards within the Town Center and a major part of the new Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in the fall of 1994. At the same time, the City invested about $5 million in street and streetscape improvements to create a
central pedestrian street, along 78th Avenue and route the majority of vehicular trips around the core downtown onto 77th and 80th Avenues. Specific new design and development standards to implement the Town Center vision were adopted in December of 1995. The Mercer Island Design Commission, city staff and citizens used these standards to review all Town Center projects until 2002.

In 2002, the City undertook a major planning effort to review and modify Town Center design and development guidelines, based on knowledge and experience gained from the previous seven years. Several changes were made in the existing development and design standards to promote public-private partnerships, strengthen parking standards, and develop public spaces as part of private development. Another goal of the revised standards was to unify the major focal points of the Town Center including the pedestrian streetscape of 78th Avenue, an expanded Park-and-Ride and Transit Facility, the public sculpture garden, and the Mercerdale Park facility. As a result, the following changes were made to the design standards:

- Expanding sidewalk widths along the pedestrian spine of 78th Avenue between Mercerdale Park on the south and the Sculpture Garden Park on the north,
- Identifying opportunity sites at the north end of 78th for increased public spaces,
- Requiring that new projects include additional public amenities in exchange for increased building height above the two-story minimum, and
- Increasing the number of visual interest design features required at the street level to achieve pedestrian scale.

The changes to the design and development standards were formulated by a seven member Ad Hoc Committee composed of citizen architects, engineers, planners and several elected officials. Working for three months, the Ad Hoc Committee forwarded its recommendations to the Planning Commission, Design Commission and City Council for review. The revised Town Center Development and Design Standards (Mercer Island City Code Chapter 19.11) were adopted by City Council in July 2002 and continue to implement the Town Center vision.

The City’s efforts to focus growth and revitalize the Town Center through targeted capital improvements, development incentives and design standards to foster high quality development are now bearing fruit. As of June 2005, 86 new units had been constructed, 394 units were in various stages of advanced construction, and 420 units were in the permitting pipeline. A total of 112,000 square feet of commercial will be added to the Town Center as a result of projects built since 2001, under construction or in the permitting pipeline. Between 2001 to 2007, 510 new housing units, and 115,922 square feet of commercial area was constructed in the Town Center. Between 2007 and August 2014, 360 new housing units, and 218,015 square feet of new commercial area was constructed.

During 2004, the City engaged in a major effort to develop new design standards for all non-single family development in zoning districts outside the Town Center. This effort also used an Ad-Hoc process of
elected officials, design commissioners, developers, and architects. The design standards for Zones Outside of Town Center were adopted in December 2004. These standards provide new direction for quality design of non-residential structures in residential zones and other multi-family, commercial, office and public zones outside the Town Center.

Updates to this document were made in 2014 to comply with CPP including updated housing and employment targets.

In 2014, the city began a process to review the vision for the town center. The new vision includes an extensive public process, and may result in changes to the Town Center Plan. The Land Use Element specific to the Town Center will be reviewed and updated as appropriate following this process.

In 2006, a grassroots effort of Island citizens led the City to modify the vision statement in its comprehensive plan to include language embracing general sustainability, and in May 2007 the Council committed to a sustainability work program as well as a specific climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2050, which was consistent with King County and Washington State targets. Later in 2007, the Council set an interim emissions reduction goal (often called a “milepost”) for City operations of 5% by 2012.

From 2010 to 2014, with the entire community’s sustainability in mind, the City has implemented a wide range of outreach programs, efficiency campaigns, alternative energy initiatives, land-use guidelines, and other natural resource management measures designed to minimize the overall impacts generated by Island residents, for the benefit of future generations. Due to the 20-year horizon envisioned by this comprehensive plan, it is especially appropriate to include measures that address the long-term actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, ideally in collaboration with other local governments. Actions that the City will take in the management of its own facilities and operations are addressed in the Capital Facilities Element of this plan.

These measures, and others under consideration, are identified in more detail in a rolling 6-year Sustainability Plan, to be adopted in 2015, which will guide the City’s internal and external actions while taking into account the interrelated issues of climate change, population change, land use, public infrastructure, natural resources management, quality of life, public health, and economic development.

Comment [g1]: Sustainability language added, per the approved scope of work
II. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Town Center

The Town Center is a 76-acre bowl-shaped area that includes residential, retail, commercial, mixed-use and office-oriented businesses. Historically, convenience businesses -- groceries, drugstores, service stations, dry cleaners, and banks -- have dominated the commercial land uses; many of them belonging to larger regional or national chains. Retailers and other commercial services are scattered throughout the Town Center and are not concentrated in any particular area. With a diffused development pattern, the Town Center is not conducive to “browsing”, making movement around the downtown difficult and inconvenient for pedestrians, physically disadvantaged persons and bicyclists.

Mercer Island’s downtown is located only 3 miles from Seattle and 1 mile from Bellevue via I-90. I-90 currently provides critical vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access to the Town Center as well as the rest of the Island. Regional transportation plans anticipate future development of a high capacity transit system in the I-90 corridor. In light of recent and potential future public transportation investments in the I-90 corridor and in keeping with the region’s emerging growth philosophy, redevelopment and moderate concentration of future growth into Mercer Island’s Town Center represents the wisest and most efficient use of the transportation infrastructure.

As required by the Growth Management Act of 1990, the Land Use Element presents a practical and balanced set of policies that address current and future land use issues. An inventory of existing land uses (Table 1 and 2 below) and a forecast of future development and population trends (Section III.) provide a backdrop for issues and policies. Subsequent sections IV and V address major land use issues and policies for the Town Center and non-Town Center areas.

Table 1. Town Center Land Uses & Facts
Snapshot (December 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Land Area</td>
<td>76.5 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Net Land Area (excludes public right-of-way)</td>
<td>62.2 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Floor Area (includes all uses)</td>
<td>1,657,482 square feet (27% office, 22% retail, 49% residential, 2% public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Floor Area – Ratio</td>
<td>0.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>796</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Net Residential Density</td>
<td>13 units/acre (Approx. 60 units/acre on sites with residential uses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: This table includes two mixed-use projects currently underway construction as of June 2005 (i.e. Island Market Square and Building A of The Mercer.) Several additional significant projects are in the development pipeline and are tentatively expected to begin construction on or before 2007.
Areas Outside the Town Center

Single family residential zoning accounts for 90% of the Island’s land use. There are 3,705 acres zoned for single family residential development. This compares to 76 acres in the Town Center zones, 19 acres for Commercial Office zone, and 99 acres in multi-family zones (Table 2). City Hall is located in a Commercial Office zone, while other key civic buildings such as the Post Office and the Main Fire Station are located in the Town Center and City Hall. Many of the remaining public buildings, schools, recreational facilities and places of religious worship are located in residential or public areas zones.

Approximately 95% of all residential land on Mercer Island is currently developed. Over the last thirty years, most public facilities have been re-constructed, or have planned additions, in sufficient quantities to serve current and projected populations. This category includes schools, parks and recreation facilities, streets and arterials, municipal offices and fire stations. Future re-investments in these facilities will primarily improve the reliability and function of the community’s "infrastructure" rather than adding significant new capacity. [Refer to the Capital Facilities Element for a more in-depth discussion of public facilities.]

Single family residential zones designate a number of different lot sizes and densities including 8,400 sq. ft., 9,600 sq. ft., 12,000 sq. ft. and 15,000 sq. ft. Of the 3,300 acres in these zones, approximately 145 remain unimproved. Most unimproved lots are small parcels and/or are platted building lots within previously developed neighborhoods. Some additional capacity exists in larger lots which can be subdivided. However, during the planning horizon, the City expects an average of roughly six subdivisions a year, the majority of which will be short plats of four or fewer lots.

The most densely developed neighborhoods are found on the Island’s north end. This includes East Seattle and First Hill as well as neighborhoods immediately north and south of the I-90 corridor and areas along the entire length of Island Crest Way.

The least densely populated neighborhoods are ones with the largest minimum lot size and are designated as Zone R-15 (15,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size). These neighborhoods, generally located along East and West Mercer Way, contain the greatest amount of undeveloped residential land and often contain extremely steep slopes, deep and narrow ravines and small watercourses. Because environmentally sensitive areas often require careful development and engineering techniques, many of these undeveloped lands are difficult and expensive to develop.

Generally, Mercer Island’s oldest neighborhoods are situated on a fairly regular street grid with homes built on comparatively small lots 40 to 60 years ago. Interspersed among the older homes are renovated homes and new homes that are often noticeably larger. Newer developments tend to consist of large homes on steeply pitched, irregular lots, with winding narrow private roads and driveways. Many residential areas of Mercer Island are characterized by large...
mature tree cover. Preservation of this
greenery is an important community value.

Most Mercer Island multi-family housing is
located in or on the borders of the Town
Center. However, two very large complexes
straddle I-90 and are adjacent to single
family areas. Shorewood Apartments is an
older, stable development of nearly 600
apartment units. It was extensively
remodeled in 2000. North of Shorewood
and across I-90 is the retirement
community of Covenant Shores. This
development will have a total of 255
living units, ranging from independent
living to fully assisted living.

There is one Commercial/Office (CO) zone
outside the Town Center. It is located along
the south side of the I-90 corridor at East
Mercer Way and contains several office
buildings, including the Mercer Island City
Hall. In the summer of 2004, the
regulations in the CO zone were amended
to add retirement homes as a permitted use
with conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Land (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Family - R-8.4</td>
<td>779.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family - R-9.6</td>
<td>1399.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Center - TC</td>
<td>77.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures above include adjacent right-
of-way.

For land use and transportation planning
purposes, Mercer Island has not been
designated as an Urban Center in the Puget
Sound Regional Council’s Vision 2020. As
such, Mercer Island will not share in the
major growth of the region, but will
continue to see new employment and
residential development, most of which will
be concentrated in the Town Center.
Employment will continue to grow slowly
and will be significantly oriented towards
serving the local residential community.
Transit service will focus on connecting the
Island to other metropolitan and sub-
regional centers via Interstate 90 and the
region’s high capacity transit system

Table 2. Land Uses Outside Town Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>ACREAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business - B</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Office - CO</td>
<td>19.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily - MF-2</td>
<td>42.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily - MF-2L</td>
<td>7.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily - MF-3</td>
<td>53.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Institution - P</td>
<td>284.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Business - PBZ</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family - R-12</td>
<td>77.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family - R-15</td>
<td>1277.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. GROWTH FORECAST

Residential and Employment 20-year Growth Targets

The King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) establish growth targets for all of the jurisdictions within King County. The CPPs were initially adopted in 1992, and have been amended several times since then. Elected officials from King County, the Cities of Seattle and Bellevue, and the Suburban Cities Association meet as the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). This Council makes recommendations to the County Council, which has the authority to adopt and amend the CPPs. During 2012, the GMPC worked with an inter-jurisdictional team of King County Planning Directors to determine an equitable distribution of the growth targets throughout the County. It was agreed that the City of Mercer Island would plan to accommodate 2,000 new housing units and 1,000 new jobs over the 2001-2031 planning period. During 2012, the GMPC worked with an inter-jurisdictional team of King County Planning Directors to determine an equitable distribution of the growth targets throughout the County. It was agreed that the City of Mercer Island would plan to accommodate 2,000 new housing units and 1,000 new jobs over the 2001-2031 planning period. Between 2006 and 2031, GMA requires jurisdictions to plan for 20 years of forecasted growth, so the growth target time horizon was extended out to 2035. (See Table 3.)

Table 3 - Growth Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Growth Target (in units)</th>
<th>Employment Growth Target (in jobs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original growth target, 2006-2031</strong></td>
<td><strong>Original growth target, 2006-2031</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GMPC Targets</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjusted growth target, 2006-2035</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adjusted growth target, 2006-2035</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Target</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,437</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Target</strong></td>
<td><strong>800 additional jobs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2,320 total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,320 total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment and Commercial Capacity

According to the 2002 Puget Sound Regional Council, as of March 2010 Eastside Economic Forum Report, there are approximately 7,883 total jobs on Mercer Island. Based on estimates done by the Suburban Cities Association and the City of Mercer Island, there are approximately 4,292 jobs in the Town Center alone. The City’s analysis completed to inform the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report shows that According to the 2002 King County Buildable Lands Report, Mercer Island has the capacity for a total of 2,373 new jobs; well in excess of the 1,160 growth target for which Mercer Island must have sufficient zoned land to accommodate, 1,248 new jobs, with an additional 228 jobs from planned developments. Approximately 25,000 sq. ft. of new commercial space was completed in 2002-2005. In addition, approximately 59,000 sq. ft. of new commercial space was under construction with an additional 28,000 sq. ft. of commercial development currently in the entitlement process.

Residential Growth

1 Housing Analysis Appendix, Exhibit J-1, page A-17.

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The Comprehensive Plan contains three types of housing figures: a capacity estimate, a growth target, and a housing and population forecast. Each of these housing numbers serves a different purpose.

### Housing Capacity

As required in a 1997 amendment to the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.215), recent growth and land capacity in King County and associated cities have been reported in the King County Buildable Lands Report.

The capacity estimate identifies the number of new units that could be accommodated on vacant and redevelopable land under current zoning. The capacity estimate is not a prediction of what will happen, merely an estimate of how many new units the Island could accommodate based on our current zoning code, the number and size of vacant properties, and some standard assumptions about the redevelopment potential of other properties that could accommodate additional development.

According to the Buildable Lands Report, the City of Mercer Island has the capacity for 2,271 additional housing units on properties designated for residential uses through new development on vacant lands and/or through redevelopment of underutilized lands. Based on zoning and redevelopment assumptions done in 2012, about 1,279 new housing units could be accommodated in single family zones, 1,434 new housing units could be accommodated in multifamily zones and 1247 units could be accommodated in mixed-use zones the Town Center.

The housing capacity numbers, particularly in the mixed use zones (Town Center), are currently under review. Based on recently permitted projects and closer observation of redevelopment factors, the City is analyzing the current Town Center capacity estimates and believes capacity in the Town Center may be more than originally thought. Redevelopable land in the Town Center was determined based on a preliminary analysis of those parcels which currently have an improvement to land value ratio of .5 or less and are not in public or utility ownership. Additionally, townhomes and condominium properties were not considered redevelopable, and only those properties allowing 2.5 residential units or more are included in the analysis. The City believes that there may be capacity in the Town Center for as many as 1300 additional multifamily units. Future assumed densities for this preliminary figure were based on the density of recently permitted projects (2/3 mixed-use, 1/3 commercial only). This methodology used in the 2014 Buildable Land Analysis is the same as a similar methodology used in the 2007 Buildable Lands Report. This capacity is in addition to those projects which are currently under construction.

The City is revising the capacity estimates based on recent construction and development trends in the Town Center and concerns about critical area limitations in single family zones. The City will provide new official capacity estimates for all portions of the Island in the next Buildable Lands Report in 2007.
Housing Targets

As mentioned above, the City has a King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) 2035 housing target of 2,320 new units. The housing target represents the number of units that the City is required to plan for under the Growth Management Act. The housing target is not necessarily the number of units that will be built on Mercer Island over the next two decades. Market forces, including regional job growth, interest rates, land costs, and other factors will have a major influence on the number of actual units created.

Housing and Population Forecast

The third type of housing figure contained in the Comprehensive Plan is a local housing forecast. Table 4 contains a housing unit and population forecast for 2010 through 2030 and 2020 conducted by City planning staff at the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), using a parcel-based land use model called UrbanSim, based on existing zoning and land use designations. The City conducted this preliminary forecast in response to new construction and development interest that is higher than was anticipated when the GMPC growth targets were established in 2002.

The City anticipates an increase in housing units at an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.25% between 2010 and 2040, for a total housing unit increase of approximately 21% over this 30-year period. This represents an increase of approximately 1,856 housing units and 4,193 people over 30 years. The City forecasts 10,662 total housing units and a total population of 26,229 by 2020. The rate of population growth is expected to be slightly less than housing growth over the same period due to the expected continued decrease in household size.

The Housing Unit and Population forecasts are informed estimates based on several factors, such as growth trends for new single family and accessory dwelling units over the last several years, Puget Sound Regional Council forecasts of future household size, Town Center development under construction and in the development pipeline, and a closer examination of redevelopment potential on the Island based on local knowledge and property data analysis. In particular, the City looked closely at improvement to land value ratios and sites known to be under consideration by development interests, transportation systems and demand modeling, and real estate market fluctuations.

Given the uncertainty of future market forces, periodic reviews of housing and population forecasts should be made to evaluate the future growth assumptions. Adjustments to this forecast will also be necessary if the projections on household size and population growth vary significantly from those forecasted. Planning staff predicts that PSRC’s multifamily unit growth estimates in particular are likely to be surpassed as early as 2020, based on current pipeline development in the Town Center in addition to the pattern of larger, mixed use developments adding 100-200 units at a time to the City’s multifamily housing supply. However, based on all available information, the City will likely meet our established 20-year growth target, perhaps as early as 2016 if this forecast is accurate. The City will continue to monitor housing unit, population growth and market trends,
and adjust land use, transportation, and capital facilities planning as necessary prior to the next major Comprehensive Plan update in 2023.

Housing Density

The average allowed density in the City of Mercer Island is more than 6.2 dwelling units per acre. This figure is based on the proportional acreage of each land use designation (or zones) that allows residential development, the densities permitted under the regulations in place today for that zone, and an assumption that the average practical allowed density for the Town Center is 99.16 units per acre. Since there is no maximum density in the Town Center and density is controlled instead by height limits and other requirements, the figure of 99.16 units per acre represents the average density overall achieved net density of the last four recently approved mixed-use projects in the Town Center constructed since 2006. Even if the land area and density of the Town Center is not included, the average Island-wide allowed density would still be approximately 4.8 dwelling units per acre.
Table 4 – 2010-2040/2020 Housing Unit and Population Forecast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall Household Size (1)</th>
<th>SFR Units (2)</th>
<th>Multifamily Units (3)</th>
<th>Total Increase in units per decade</th>
<th>Total Housing Units</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-2010</td>
<td>2.4859</td>
<td>6,873</td>
<td>2,236,169</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8,324,120</td>
<td>22,690,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Census)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 (Census)</td>
<td>2.5486</td>
<td>7,201,684</td>
<td>2,257,813</td>
<td>485349</td>
<td>9,458,856</td>
<td>24,053,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031-2050</td>
<td>2.5345</td>
<td>7,349,024</td>
<td>2,266,623</td>
<td>958,157</td>
<td>9,615,687</td>
<td>24,355,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Forecast)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Forecasts of average household size were obtained from Puget Sound Regional Council (2003). 2010 household size data obtained from the 2010 Census. All other data is from PSRC, using their 2013 Forecast parcel-based land use model using Urban Sim.

2. Forecasts of Single Family Residential (SFR) Units are based on the trend of net new single family home (new construction minus demolitions) building permits for the last six years. Actual SFR construction may be higher if select known large acreage sites are put on the market during the planning period or due to other change in market factors.

3. Forecasts of Multifamily Units are based on a conservative set of factors and assumptions. These include projects currently under construction, in the development pipeline, and parcels with a high likelihood of redevelopment based on known developer interest and very low improvement to land value ratios. Assumed densities were determined from a sample of six recently completed or permitted projects (4 mixed-use and 2 commercial). Please contact Development Services Group for more information.

4. Forecasts of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are based on a trend line projection of ADU permits issued since 1995.
### IV. LAND USE ISSUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Center</th>
<th>Outside the Town Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Town Center land designated for commercial retail, service and office uses is much larger than the local population can support. This has contributed to a historical pattern of relatively low private investment in downtown properties. Consequently, the Town Center consists of principally one story strip centers, surrounded by vast parking lots (FAR of only 0.23); a typical suburban sprawl-like development.</td>
<td>1. The community needs to accommodate two important planning values -- maintaining the existing single family residential character of the Island, while at the same time planning for absorbing a relatively small amount of population and housing growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Few business developments interact with one another. Some retail and office buildings are free-standing, often isolated, without a coherent, concentrated core area conducive to walking and browsing. The lack of a downtown center or core has likely been a significant impediment to private investments in the Town Center.</td>
<td>2. Accessory housing units are allowed by City zoning regulations, and offer a new way to add housing capacity to single family residential zones without disrupting the character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In 1994, the City made significant street improvements in the Town Center, which have resulted in a more pedestrian-friendly environment. However, more needs to be done on the private development side to design buildings with attractive streetscapes so that people will have more incentive to park their car and walk between shopping areas.</td>
<td>3. Commercial Office and PBZ zones must serve the needs of the local population while remaining compatible with the overall residential character of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Town Center is poorly identified. The major entrance points to the downtown are not treated in any special way that invites people into the business district.</td>
<td>4. Ongoing protection of environmentally sensitive areas including steep slopes, ravines, watercourses, and shorelines is an integral element of the community's residential character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. View protection is important and must be balanced with the desire to protect the mature tree growth.</td>
<td>5. Within the bounds of limited public resources, open space and park land must be preserved to enhance the community's extraordinary quality of life and recreation opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Within the bounds of limited public resources, open space and park land must be preserved to enhance the community's extraordinary quality of life and recreation opportunities.</td>
<td>6. View protection is important and must be balanced with the desire to protect the mature tree growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. There is a lack of pedestrian and transit connections between the Town Center, the Park and Ride, and Luther Burbank Park.</td>
<td>7. Within the bounds of limited public resources, open space and park land must be preserved to enhance the community's extraordinary quality of life and recreation opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. LAND USE POLICIES

Town Center

Mercer Island’s business district vision as described in “Your Mercer Island Citizen-Designed Downtown” was an important step in galvanizing community support and understanding for future Town Center development. It is the basis for much of what is new in the comprehensive plan. This common vision is essential for revising the Town Center land use policies and for updating the Zoning Code with new standards and guidelines for development.

The following focus areas have been established for the Town Center: Gateway Focus Area, Mixed Use Focus Area, Mid-Rise Office Focus Area, Residential Focus Area and Auto-Oriented Focus Area.

Gateway Focus Area: The purpose of the gateway focus area is to provide the broadest mix of land uses in the Town Center, oriented towards pedestrian connections and regional transit access along I-90.

Mixed Use Focus Area: The purpose of the mixed use focus area is to provide mixed retail, office, and residential uses at a level of intensity sufficient to support transit service.

Mid-Rise Office Focus Area: The purpose of the mid-rise office focus area is to provide an area for office use with ground floor retail in close proximity to transit and the I-90 corridor.

Residential Focus Area: The purpose of the residential focus area is to encourage low-rise, high-density housing in the Town Center. Three residential focus areas have been established (Northwest, Central and South) with varied height restrictions to allow a better transition to the single-family residential to the south.

Auto-Oriented Focus Area: The purpose of the auto-oriented focus area is to provide a location for commercial uses that are dependent on automobile intensive uses.

GOAL 1 Create a mixed-use Town Center with pedestrian scale and connections.

1.1 A mixed-use core should be located adjacent to a regional transit facility and be of sufficient size and intensity to create a focus for Mercer Island.

1.2 The following pedestrian-oriented land uses should continue to develop over time in the Town Center: retail shops, professional offices, restaurants, services, lodging, residences, and community/recreational facilities.

1.3 Street-level retail, office, and service commercial uses should reinforce the pedestrian-oriented circulation system. Site improvements should enhance streets and sidewalks.

1.4 Building facades should provide visual interest to pedestrians. Street level windows, minimum building set-backs, on-street entrances, landscaping, and articulated walls should be encouraged.

1.5 A minimum floor area ratio should be established which provides the economic incentives for
redevelopment; provides sufficient intensity to support transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and creates a focus for social, cultural and commercial activities and supports the design elements of the plan.

1.6 A base building height should be established in the Town Center in order to encourage community values such as pedestrian-scale Town Center designs, respect for views, creation of visual interest and identity and incorporation of important public amenities. Additional stories up to a maximum of five (5) stories should be allowed when site development provides for amenities such as ground floor retail spaces, art, public gathering spaces, underground parking, affordable housing units, pedestrian connections, special landscaping and site design features, special building form/design features and transit-oriented design features.

The land area devoted to parking should be reduced by encouraging structured and underground parking for higher intensity uses. Improved access to transit, bicycle, pedestrian and shared parking facilities should be encouraged to reduce trip generation and provide transportation alternatives, particularly for secondary trips once users reach the Town Center. However, the City recognizes that the automobile may remain the primary mode of transportation for most Town Center trips. The City will continue to require new development to meet minimum parking ratios and provide adequate facilities to meet expected demand by auto users.

1.7 Parking structures should not dominate the street frontage. Retail uses should be encouraged on the first floor of street edges of parking structures to improve the visual effect and interest.

1.8 Building and street designs as well as other public facilities should accommodate the needs of physically disadvantaged persons, remaining consistent with the goals and objectives of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

GOAL 2 Create a prominent Encourage further development and enhancement of the Gateway Focus Area within the Town Center.

2.1 A Gateway Focus Area developed through a public-private partnership should be located within the northerly portion of the Town Center, near the I-90 corridor.

2.2 The Gateway Focus Area should reinforce the mixed-use area by creating a place suitable for informal gathering or public events, such as community events, celebrations, and concerts.

2.3 The form of the Gateway Focus Area should be coherent and memorable. It should include seating areas and be enhanced by such features as trees and flower displays, fountains, art and open spaces.

2.4 Pedestrian access should be provided from the Gateway Focus Area to the surrounding areas. Buildings should be
oriented toward street and public spaces.

2.5 Uses supportive of the needs and interests of youths, families, senior adults and physically-challenged persons should be encouraged in the Gateway Focus Area.

GOAL 3 Establish a Encourage further development in Mid-Rise Office Focus Area in close proximity to retail and transit.

3.1 Future demand for office space development should utilize the land located in the Town Center and the Commercial Office zone.

3.2 Safe and accessible underground parking areas and parking garages should be encouraged or placed to the rear of buildings to maintain pedestrian scale at the street level.

3.3 A maximum building height of five (5) stories should be established which meets the same objectives for building height as in the core area. Special care should be given to landscaping, mass and roof forms of buildings to provide visual interest from residential areas located on the hillside surrounding the downtown.

GOAL 4 Encourage development of low-rise, high-density housing in the Residential Focus Areas of the Town Center.

4.1 A higher concentration of residences should be located within the Town Center boundaries and provide for the major focus of residential growth within the community.

4.2 The higher density residential uses should provide a mix of housing types, including townhouses, condominiums, and apartments and should be attractive to the needs of a variety of housing markets including current Mercer Island homeowners.

4.3 A range of multi-family residential densities should be allowed within the Town Center. Higher density and bulk should be allowed where the topography can accommodate such conditions without negatively affecting surrounding residential neighborhoods.

4.4 Maximum achievable building heights should be five (5) stories in the Town Center in the Gateway, Mixed Use, Mid-Rise Office, and Residential-Northwest areas. Maximum building heights should be four (4) stories in the Residential-Central area of the Town Center three (3) stories in the Residential-South area of the Town Center, and two (2) stories in the Auto-oriented Focus area. Additional stories above an established base height should be allowed when site development provides for public amenities such as ground floor retail spaces, art, public gathering spaces, underground parking, affordable housing units, pedestrian connections, special landscaping and site design features, special building form/design features and transit-oriented design features.

4.5 The streetscape should be enhanced by articulating building facades, orienting entrances to the street, and through the provision of landscaping and art.
4.6 Residential garages should be positioned to reduce their visual impact on the street.

GOAL 5 Direct uses which rely solely on auto trips to locate in the Auto-Oriented Focus Area on the periphery of the Town Center.

5.1 New auto-oriented uses should be encouraged outside the commercial core on the periphery of the Town Center and parallel to the major Island arterial, Island Crest Way.

5.2 While all uses that are allowed in other Town Center Focus Areas should be allowed in this area, auto-intensive uses including drive-in banks, service stations and automotive repair services should be encouraged.

5.3 Landscaping should be provided to soften and screen the visual impact of parking lots and service areas.

5.4 Uses should respect the neighboring residential uses in terms of aesthetics, noise and automobile traffic.

Economic Development Policies

GOAL 6: Continue to encourage vitality and growth through the support of economic development activities on Mercer Island.

6.1 Establish the Town Center as an active and attractive commercial node, including the use of gateways, wayfinding and signage, and links to transit.

6.2 Maintain a diversity of downtown land use designations.

6.3 Support economic growth that accommodates the required employment growth target of 1,228 new jobs from 2006-2035, with recognition of regional growth targets, by maintaining adequate commercial zoning capacity, infrastructure, and supportive economic development policies. Create an environment for private investment that relies on economic incentives as the primary mechanism for achieving the Downtown Vision.

6.4 Create a center, accessible for vehicles but with an emphasis on the needs of pedestrians, including the needs of senior citizens, youths and physically-challenged persons.

6.5 Integrate residential, retail, civic and transit uses in the downtown Town Center.

6.6 Create a memorable and desirable downtown for Mercer Islanders, visitors and shoppers to enjoy.

6.7 Create a healthy economic environment where downtown Town Center businesses can serve the needs of Mercer Island residents as well as draw upon broader retail and commercial market areas.

6.8 Look at ways to streamline permits for business renovations that do not include substantial redevelopment, such as tenant improvements.
6.9 Actively work with the Chamber of Commerce, Mercer Island Rotary Club, Mercer Island Lions Club, and other community groups to identify ways the City can support the local business environment.

6.10 Support and encourage home-based businesses in the City, provided that signage, parking, storage, and noise impacts are compatible surrounding uses.

6.11 Work to enhance transportation, parking, electronic, and other infrastructure for business development on Mercer Island.

6.12 Coordinate with other agencies and jurisdictions to encourage business retention.

Land Use Policies Outside the Town Center

GOAL 7: Mercer Island should remain principally a low density, single family residential community.

7.1 Existing land use policies, which strongly support the preservation of existing conditions in the single family residential zones, will continue to apply. Changes to the zoning code or development standards will be accomplished through code amendments.

7.2 Residential densities in single family areas will generally continue to occur at 3 to 5 units per acre, commensurate with current zoning. However, some adjustments may be made to allow the development of innovative housing types, such as accessory dwelling units and compact courtyard homes at slightly higher densities as outlined in the Housing Element.

7.3 Multi-family areas will continue to be low rise apartments and condos and duplex/triplex designs, and with the addition of the Commercial/Office (CO) zone, will be confined to those areas already designated as multi-family zones.

7.4 As a primarily single family residential community with a high percentage of developed land, the community cannot provide for all types of land uses. Certain activities will be considered incompatible with present uses. Incompatible uses include landfills, correctional facilities, zoos and airports. Compatible permitted uses such as education, recreation, open spaces, government social services and religious activities will be encouraged.

GOAL 8 Achieve additional residential capacity in single family zones through flexible land use techniques.

8.1 Use existing housing stock to address changing population needs. Accessory housing units and shared housing opportunities should be considered in order to provide affordable housing, relieve tax burdens, and maintain existing, stable neighborhoods.

8.2 Through zoning and land use regulations provide adequate development capacity to
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accommodate Mercer Island’s projected share of the King County population growth over the next 20 years.

8.3 Promote a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of people who work and desire to live in Mercer Island.

8.4 Promote accessory dwelling units in single-family districts subject to specific development and owner occupancy standards.

8.5 Encourage infill[Infill] development on vacant or under-utilized sites that are outside of critical areas and ensure that the infill is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.

GOAL 9: With the exception of allowing residential development, commercial designations and permitted uses under current zoning will not change.

9.1 The Planned Business Zone uses on the south end of Mercer Island are compatible with the surrounding single family zone needs. All activities in the PBZ are subject to design review. Supplemental design guidelines have been adopted.

9.2 Commercial uses and densities near the I-90/East Mercer Way exit and SE 36th Street are appropriate for that area. All activities in the CO zone are subject to design review and supplemental design guidelines may be adopted.

9.3 Inclusion of a range of residential densities should be allowed when compatible in the Commercial Office (CO) zones. Through rezones or changes in zoning district regulations, multi-family residences should be allowed in all commercial zones where adverse impacts to surrounding areas can be minimized. Housing should be used to create new, vibrant neighborhoods.

9.4 Social and recreation clubs, schools, and religious institutions are predominantly located in single family residential areas of the island. Development regulation should reflect the desire to retain viable and healthy social, recreational, educational, and religious organizations as community assets which are essential for the mental, physical and spiritual health of Mercer Island.

GOAL 10: The protection of the natural environment will continue to be a priority in all Island development. Protection of the environment and private property rights will be consistent with all state and federal laws.

10.1 The City of Mercer Island shall protect environmentally sensitive lands such as watercourses, geologic hazard areas, steep slopes, shorelines, wildlife habitat conservation areas, and wetlands. Such protection should continue through the implementation and
10.2 Land use actions, storm water regulations and basin planning should reflect intent to maintain and improve the ecological health of watercourses and Lake Washington water quality.

10.3 New development should be designed to avoid increasing risks to people and property associated with natural hazards.

10.4 The ecological functions of watercourses, wetlands, and habitat conservation areas should be maintained and protected from the potential impacts associated with development.

10.5 The City shall consider utilizing best available science during the development and implementation of critical areas regulations. Regulations will be updated periodically to incorporate new information and, at a minimum, every seven-eighth years as required by the Growth Management Act.

10.6 Encourage low impact development approaches for managing stormwater and protecting water quality and habitat.

10.7 Services and programs provided by the City with regards to land use should encourage residents to minimize their own personal carbon footprint, especially with respect to energy consumption and waste reduction.

10.8 The City’s development regulations should encourage long term sustainable stewardship of the natural environment. Examples include preservation and enhancement of native vegetation, tree retention, and rain gardens.

10.9 Outreach campaigns and educational initiatives should inform residents of the collective impact of their actions on local, county, and state greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

Parks and Open Space Policies

GOAL 11: Continue to maintain the Island’s unique quality of life through open space preservation, park and trail development and well-designed public facilities.

11.2 More specific policy direction for parks and open space shall be identified in the Parks and Recreation Plan and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Plan. These plans shall be updated periodically to reflect changing needs in the community.

11.3 Acquisition, maintenance and access to public areas, preserved as natural open spaces or developed for recreational purposes, will continue to be an essential element for maintaining the community’s character.

11.4 View preservation actions should be balanced with the efforts to preserve the community’s natural vegetation and tree cover.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Line</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Future land use decisions should encourage the retention of private club recreational facilities as important community assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>Provide recreation and leisure time programs and facilities that afford equal opportunities for use by all Mercer Island residents while considering the needs of non-Mercer Island residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>Provide a system of attractive, safe, and functional parks, and park facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>Preserve natural and developed open space environments and trails for the benefit of all existing and future generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>Provide a broad representation of public art through cooperation with the Mercer Island Arts Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>Funding for existing facilities should be a top priority and should be provided at a level necessary to sustain and enhance parks, trails and open space consistent with the Parks and Recreation Plan, the Trails Plan and the Capital Facilities Element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>Promptly investigate open space acquisition opportunities as they become available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>Pursue state and federal grant funding for parks and open space improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1 To implement land use development and capital improvement projects consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan.

1.1 To focus implementation of the Comprehensive Plan on those issues of highest priority to the City Council and community: Town Center development, storm drainage, critical lands protection, and a diversity of housing needs including affordable housing.

1.2 To create opportunities for housing, multi-modal transportation, and development consistent with the city’s share of regional needs.

1.3 To make effective land use and capital facilities decisions by improving public notice and citizen involvement process.

1.4 To continue to improve the development review process through partnership relationships with project proponents, early public involvement, reduction in processing time, and more efficient use of staff resources.

1.5 To continue to improve the usability of the "Development Code" by simplifying information and Code format; eliminating repetitious, overlapping and conflicting provisions; and consolidating various regulatory provisions into one document.

1.6 Mercer Island has consistently accepted and planned for its fair share of regional growth, as determined by the GMPC and the King County CPPs. Build out of the City is approaching, and could occur by 2035 or shortly thereafter. In the future, therefore, the City will advocate for future growth allocations from the GMPC which reflect its community vision, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations; environmental constraints; infrastructure and utility limitations; and its remaining supply of developable land.”

Town Center Streetscape Master Plan

In 1994, a master plan was developed for the Town Center downtown streetscape after active citizen input in the visioning process. The master plan resulted in wider sidewalks along 78th Avenue, and placement of planters and street furniture on a pedestrian-friendly scale. The plan also requires any new projects over the minimum 2-story height, to include public amenities in its design.
Figure 1 - Land Use Map

Mercer Island Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan is intended to be a generalized depiction of land use. The map is not a description of zoning boundaries nor should it be interpreted on a site specific basis.

Legend
- Town Center
- Commercial Office
- Multi-Family MF-2
- Multi-Family MF-2L
- Multi-Family MF-3
- Neighborhood Business
- Single Family R-8,4
- Single Family R-9,6
- Single Family R-12
- Single Family R-15
- Public Facility
- Park
- Open Space
- Linear Park (1-50)

The Mercer Island City limits delineates the communities’ Urban Growth Area. The City limits are contiguous with the Mercer Island Lake Washington Shoreline.
Figure 2 - Town Center Map

Mercer Island Town Center Zone Focus Areas
Figure 3 - Town Center Development and Businesses
Figure 1- Land Use Map

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The Mercer Island City limits delineates the communities’ Urban Growth Area. The City limits are contiguous with the Mercer Island Lake Washington Shoreline.
Figure 2 - Town Center Map

Mercer Island Town Center Zone Focus Areas

LEGEND:
- Town center boundary
- Focus Area
- Gateway
- Island Link Station
- Residential Hill
- Residential Center
- Residential South
- Auto Oriented

NORTH

0 375 750 Feet

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