

# Welcome

Financial Challenges Community Advisory Group  
& Guests

*Use the stickers and maps to show where you live and  
how long you've resided on Mercer Island*



**GET THE FACTS  
GIVE YOUR INPUT**  
Help Us Balance The Budget

# Introductions

Your City Manager, *Julie Underwood*

Your Finance Director, *Chip Corder*

*Other City staff* in attendance

Your facilitator, *Jenny Brailey*

# Introductions

*You!*

*When you think of “Mercer Island” what word or image comes to mind?*

# Why We Are Here

Learning (by CAG members, by City)

About the operating budget, capital budget, revenue options, etc.

Discussion

About the community's needs and wants, alternatives to a tax increase, consequences of expenditure cuts, etc.

Action

Recommendation to the City Manager

# Why We Are Here

## Consensus Recommendation

General agreement, not necessarily unanimous

# Why We Are Here

Cambridge English Dictionary: “a generally accepted opinion; wide agreement.”

Dictionary.com: “Majority of opinion,” “general agreement or concord; harmony.”

Merriam Webster: 1. (a) General agreement. Unanimity. (b) The judgment arrived at by most of those concerned. 2. Group solidarity in sentiment and belief.

“Consensus” is often preceded by: “common,” “general,” “growing,” “clear,” “overwhelming,” “political” -- i.e. Not unanimous.

Let the Learning Begin

Quiz!

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Working well together...How?

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# Working Well Together...In Your Words

Set clear goals and expectations

Focus on facts, not personalities

Get to know the people you're working with

Focus less on what people say than why they say it

Listen closely to others

Make sure all voices are heard, not just the last voice

Speak up when you disagree

Ask a lot of questions

Try to *add* to the process, not disrupt it or take it over

Try to understand others' interests

# Working Well Together...In Your Words

Expect some give and take;  
not everyone will get their  
way

Stay engaged!

Put aside biases

Be respectful and courteous

Maintain an open mind

Don't take things personally

Consider the whole  
community, beyond your  
own interests

Have a shared  
understanding of the issues

Everyone should be  
working from the same data

Don't micromanage the City  
(who stocks the Coke  
machine)

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# Working Well Together

The CAG **Charter** clearly defines our purpose, ground rules, and the roles of participants.

# Charter

- **Purpose**

- Review projected deficits 2019-2024
- Explore solutions: more taxes, fewer services, alternative “service delivery” options
- Provide a consensus recommendation to the City Manager on operations and/or capital levy for November 2018 ballot
- If service cuts are recommended, provide City Manager with guiding principles

# Charter

- **Logistics**

- 5 meetings, November through April (11 hours)
- Homework required
- Subgroup meetings in between (if helpful and needed)

# Charter Ground Rules

## Equal Voices

- Each member is an equal participant in the process and has equal opportunity to voice opinions and contribute ideas. CAG members recognize the legitimacy of the interests, concerns and goals of others, whether or not they agree with them.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Commitment to Learning

- CAG members are committed to making a special effort to listen carefully, ask pertinent questions, and educate themselves about the interests and needs of City residents. They are responsible for keeping in mind the interests of all Mercer Island residents, even as they bring their own opinions to the table or represent specific interests or positions.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Speak Up

- Members are encouraged to share their thinking out loud, to get all the group's best thoughts out in the open to enrich the discussion; silence is agreement.



# Charter Ground Rules

## Keep An Open Mind

- CAG members are open to learning new information and considering perspectives different from their own.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Ask Questions

- Questions of clarification are encouraged. Members should speak up if they feel there is any area of confusion or more information is needed.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Speak for Oneself

- CAG members may bring input from others, but it is understood that each member speaks for her/himself.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Civility, Courtesy and Respect

- CAG members commit to treating each other with civility, courtesy and respect so that meetings are comfortable for all.
  - Be attentive to the speaker
  - Let others finish speaking before you begin
  - Avoid side conversations or disparaging comments
  - Focus conflicts on the issues, not the personalities
  - Disagree agreeably – look for opportunities for agreement (practice “yes, and” rather than “no/yes, but”)
  - Keep mobile devices turned off and stored away

# Charter Ground Rules

## Stay on Track

- In light of the limited time available to complete its work, CAG members commit to making a concerted effort to focus on the topics under discussion and work toward consensus.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Strive for Consensus

- In striving for consensus, CAG members commit to actively looking for ways to find agreement.
  - Consider something that you may disagree with, and consider “if” something changed how you might be able to move to consensus
  - Put another way, if a CAG member cannot live with the direction, she/he must offer an alternative.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Share Information with the Broader Community

- CAG members are encouraged to discuss the City's budget issues with Mercer Island residents outside of CAG meetings, in order to share their knowledge and bring others' opinions and perspectives back to the group.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Civility in Community Conversations

- Each member who discusses the CAG's work with the broader community commits to fostering conversations that share the same courteous, civil, and constructive tone as CAG meetings.



# Charter Ground Rules

## No Surprises

- Out of respect for other CAG members, any member who plans to share information with the broader community that is **unexpected** should first inform her/his colleagues on the CAG.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Come Prepared

- CAG members accept the responsibility to come to meetings prepared for the discussions by reading any materials provided in advance. Members are also encouraged to ask questions between meetings and review the information provided in response by the City or other sources.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Attend Every Meeting

- Each member commits to attend all meetings. Alternatives are not being designated in this process. If a member must miss part or all of a meeting, she is responsible for asking another committee member to represent her interests or position at the meeting. The member may also submit written comments that will be shared with the group.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Subgroup Meetings

- If a majority of the CAG approves, subgroups of 3-4 members can be assigned to conduct more detailed study of specific areas of interest (ex: City's budget forecast details, staffing costs...) between CAG meetings. City staff are available to meet with subgroups to provide information and answer questions. Subgroups will report back to the full CAG at the next meeting.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Feedback Encouraged

- Members are welcome and encouraged to submit feedback to the facilitator or the City regarding the meetings, either after meetings or between them, via email or phone.

# Charter Ground Rules

## Accountability

- Members of the CAG commit to helping hold each other accountable for following the Ground Rules.

# Roles

## Facilitator Role

- Help CAG stay focused, on track
- Ensure full participation and inclusiveness
- Remind us of Ground Rules as needed
- Neutral
- Write draft recommendation for CAG approval

# Roles

## City Staff Role

- Information and Analysis
  - Subject matter expertise (budget, HR, depts.)
  - Perspectives on City government
- Answer your questions
- Staff subgroup meetings
- Flip-charting and note-taking



# Roles

## City Councilmembers' Role

Observers

# Roles

## Observer Role

- All are welcome!
- You are welcome to **share your thoughts** with the CAG during breaks, before/after CAG meetings, or in writing via the facilitator; no public comment period during CAG meetings.
- Abide by CAG Ground Rules

# CAG Workplan

- Operating budget – 2 meetings (5.5 hrs)
- Capital budget – 1 meeting (3.5 hrs)
- Final recommendation – 1 meeting (2 hrs)

# CAG Workplan

Date & Time	Topics
Saturday, January 6, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Operating Budget: Challenges, Options. Group Discussion and Questions.
Monday, February 5 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Operating Budget: Discussion and Preliminary Recommendations
Saturday, March 3 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Capital Budget: Challenges, Options. Group Discussion and Questions. Preliminary Recommendations for Capital Budget.
Monday, April 2 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Discussion and Final Recommendations on Operation and Capital budget challenges.

# Getting to One Each Other

## More About You...Pair and Share

- 1 Why did you want to serve on the CAG?
- 2 Is there a particular interest/idea you care about, or group you represent?
- 3 What 1-2 skills/strengths do you bring to help the group work well together?

# Brainstorm

## Your Questions

What questions do you want answered during our next 4 CAG meetings?  
Big picture questions...specific and detailed questions...areas of confusion you want clarified...rumors to be addressed... (Flip-charting responses)

# Final Notes...

## Prioritize brainstorm list

As you leave, use your stickers...

## Next meeting

January 6, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (MICEC). Snacks provided.

Thank you!  
See you in January!

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