Phase 2 (where parking was to be built) under the old development code. He requested a copy of the development agreement the City and the developer signed.

The City Manager noted that it had been 15 years since the City conducted a thorough re-write of the Town Center development regulations but that in order to do so again they would need to conduct an economic analysis of the Mercer Island Town Center market.

Councilmember Grausz polled the Council on their willingness to achieve a marquee or town square in exchange for additional height, as much as 8-10 stories high. Councilmember Cero disagreed saying the Town Center was already too cavernous. The Council majority agreed to limit building heights except for mixed use as referenced above and to move away from large parking lots and keep parking below ground.

Councilmember Jahncke raised a concern about the loss of mobility for Islanders and recommended that mitigation money be pursued to resolve this issue. He also requested that strategy discussions on mobility and mitigation be placed on the work plan for 2009.

Councilmember Basset recommended a larger transportation discussion, citing parking as one aspect. He recommended more analysis on getting people out of their cars, the shortage of METRO service, etc.

The City Manager suggested, and the Council agreed to, a study session to review transportation issues on the Island and to consider opportunities for meaningful mitigation to offset the loss of the center road way on I-90. He shared a Sound Transit graph comparing a dearth of bus service throughout the day and during peak times on Mercer Island with projected light rail transit services. He commented that light rail transit won’t adequately serve the Island, nor mitigate loss of I-90 center lane mobility, if users are unable to get to it.

The Council agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to talk to regional entities about the mobility issues that Mercer Island faces within the context of regional needs. Councilmembers Grady, Litzow and the Mayor agreed to be on that committee.

2009 WORK PLAN

The City Manager added the following new items to the 2009 Work Plan that were agreed upon in the planning session:

- City-school partnerships (buses, ballfield maintenance, MIYFS counselors)
- $1 million for Boys and Girls Club - PEAK
- Bike and pedestrian plan
- Island Crest Way and Merrimount
- I-90 (expansion joints and tolling)
- ST2 East Link DEIS Mitigation
- Sustainability – (regional barriers, demonstration project, Bainbridge Island, Green Ribbon Committee)
- I-90 transportation review (mitigation list);
- Town Center partnership opportunities
- Park capital levy
- Ordinances to support drug/alcohol efforts

Next the group discussed other items to add to the Work Plan:

1. Planning Commission code amendments to allow daycares in private residences (Council consensus);
2. Renton Airport (4 Council members against, 3 in favor)
3. Historic building designation interlocal with King County (as long as it’s owner initiated and the County has historical landmark funds) (4 Council members in favor, 3 against);
4. Council review of Channel 21 access policies (6 Council members in favor, 1 against)
5. Tent city—next steps briefing in executive session (4 Council members in favor; 3 against)
6. Taping executive sessions (6 Council members against; 1 in favor)
7. Southend fire station (4 Council members in favor; 3 against)

Councilmember Bassett suggested Mercer Island give $5,000 and become a sponsor of Leadership Eastside, an organization intent on cultivating community and government leadership on the Eastside. The City Manager recommended using leftover money from other projects. This sparked a discussion and clarification that pursuing similar projects under $10K are at the City Manager's discretion.

Councilmember Cero informed the Council that in February or March there will be a proposal before the Council to name a cove near the Roanoake to honor Hugh Riley, a Mercer Island veteran who participated in the D-Day landing at Normandy, France.

After a round-robin discussion of how the planning session went, the Mayor complimented Councilmembers on the respectful discussion and relaxed atmosphere at the session. He also praised the agreements made and the extensive amount of work accomplished.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.